

Role of Public Libraries in the Use of Services of Nadakacheris by Citizens: A Case of Kalaburagi District, Karnataka State, India

N. Parvathamma* and Shoukat Ali

Department of Library and Information Science, Gulbarga University, Kalaburagi – 585106, Karnataka, India;
parvathi_glb@rediffmail.com

Abstract

An attempt is made to study the usefulness of e-Governance services offered in Nadakacheris, problems faced by citizens and status of public libraries which have major role to play in creating awareness about these services among Citizens. Majority of the users are between the age group of 21-40 years and 94 of them are graduates. Citizens from different walks of life such as farmers, employees in Government/private sectors, students and housewives are using the services of Nadakacheri. Major problems faced by the Citizens are lack of awareness about necessary documents to be carried. The study also recognizes the role of public libraries which are providing library services to the citizens, particularly in rural areas, where public libraries can be hub for integrated citizen's oriented services by adopting Information Communication Technology (ICT).

Keywords: e-Governance in Kalaburagi, e-Governance and Public Libraries, Nadakacheris

1. Introduction

The National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) is an initiative of the Government of India to make all government services available to the citizens of India via electronic media. NeGP was formulated by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEIT) and Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG). The Government of India approved the National e-Governance Plan, consisting of 27 "Mission Mode Projects" (MMPs) and ten components on 18 May 2006.

Government of Karnataka (GoK) has been a pioneer in using ICT for better governance and has been at the forefront in implementation of e-Governance initiatives in the country. GoK had conceived and implemented several e-Governance projects before announcement of the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) by Government of India (GoI) in May 2006. Centre for e-Governance is a society setup by the Department of Administrative

Reforms (DPAR), Government of Karnataka, under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act 1960. The area of operation of the Society extends to whole of Karnataka State (Government of Karnataka, 2017).

e-Governance implies technology driven governance using ICTs for delivering Government services, exchange of information communication transactions, integration of various stand-alone systems and services between Government-to-customer (G2C), Government-to-Business (G2B), Government-to-Government (G2G) as well as back office processes and interactions within the entire Government framework. Through e-Governance, Government services will be made available to Citizens in a convenient, efficient and transparent manner. The three main target groups that can be distinguished are Government, Citizens and Businesses/Interest Groups (About Kalaburagi, 2014).

Kalaburagi / Gulbarga is a District on the Deccan Plateau and was incorporated into a newly formed Mysore State (now known as Karnataka) through the States Reorganization Act in 1956.

*Author for correspondence

The Nadakacheri, also known as Atalji Janasnehi Kendra was launched in 777 Hoblis across the State on 25/12/2012. (a Hobli is a cluster of adjoining villages administered together for tax and land tenure purposes in the State of Karnataka. Each Hobli consists of several villages, and several Hoblis together form a Taluk). The Nemmadi project was started in 2006 by the e-Governance Department in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode through 802 tele centres across the State. The Deputy Commissioners of the Districts will be the overall in charge of the project at the District level. There are 17 Nadakacheries in Kalaburagi District (Nadakacheri, 2017).

A Public Library is a Library that is accessible by the general public and is generally funded from public sources, such as taxes. It is operated by librarians and library paraprofessionals. A Public Library declared to be eligible for aid and receiving aid from the State Government; and includes, any other library notified by the State Government as a Public Library (Karnataka Public Library Act 1965, 2017).

Libraries need to publicize their services in their local community. There is a feeling among a section of people that illiterates may not need libraries. It must be asserted that illiterate people are not ignorant people. Many of them are quite enlightened and are receptive to new ideas. They could be further enlightened by public libraries through their extension programs like lectures, discussions, film-shows, reading out books to them, etc. Libraries must serve as agencies for creating awareness and dissemination of relevant information.

Recently, the Government of India launched the Digital India campaign, which aims to ensure that Government services are made available to citizens electronically by enhancing and extending Internet connectivity. While expanding the digital infrastructure is an essential requirement to realize the aims of Digital India, digital empowerment of citizens, generating relevant information in local languages and scripts, and making such digital information accessible to all, especially to those living in rural areas will be the major requirement for the success of the e Governance. The Government has plans to extend access to digital information to all by expanding the coverage of Common Services Centres.

The one strong reason to consider public libraries as one of the stakeholders in Digital India initiative is that libraries provide a congenial atmosphere where people, irrespective of age, gender and other factors, feel free to have discussions, use resources and ask questions (Raghavan, 2016).

An example of public library facilitating e-Governance is the initiative of Gateshead Council's Library, London. People who live, work or study in Gateshead, have access to library service 24-hours a day, seven days a week through Web. 'Gateshead's 66,000 library users can get access to the system by calling into or telephoning any local library with their existing ticket number. Ghosh (2003) believes that 24x7 access library service can be provided in India also.

In this paper, an attempt is made to study the usefulness of e-Governance services offered in Nadakacheries in Karnataka State, problems faced by users and status of public libraries which have a major role to play in creating awareness among citizens about of these services and train them to be independent users of e-Governance services.

2. Scope

There are 17 Nadakacheris in Kalaburagi District. Among them, two Nadakacheris from each Taluk, viz, Aland, Jewargi and one from Kalaburagi (urban) are covered in the study. Further, two public libraries from Aland, Jewargi, one from Kalaburagi (urban) are chosen for the present study.

Major Objectives of the study are to find out:

1. Awareness about various e-Governance services;
2. Proximity of service centre to the residence of citizen;
3. Frequency of visits to e-Governance centre;
4. The extent of use of these services;
5. Benefits of these services;
6. Problem faced in using these services; and
7. Status of public libraries in the study area.

3. Methodology

A questionnaire was designed in regional language, Kannada. Data is collected through simple random sampling method and sample size is decided according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

Table 1. Details of study population

Sl. No.	Population	Kalaburagi Taluk (Urban) One Nadakacheri	Aland Taluk Two Nadakacheries	Jewargi Taluk Two Nadakacheries
1.	Total population	5,43,147	3,42,207	2,96,903
2.	Male	2,76,552	1,76,052	1,50,895
3.	Female	2,66,595	1,66,155	1,46,008
4.	Literacy	82.20%	63.55	57.95
5.	Sample size selected	38	76	76
6.	Response received	36	72	66
7.	Response rate	94.73%	94.73%	86.84%

Source: Census of India, 2011.

4. Use of e-Governance Services

Questionnaires were distributed in Nadakacheries of three Taluks (Table 1). A total of 190 questionnaires were distributed to the visitors of Nadakacheri. Only those who have completed at least 10 years of schooling (SSLC) were selected as the sample that was available at the time of visit by researcher.

5. Analysis

Table 2. Demographic details

Sl. No.	Age	No of respondents	Percentage
1.	10-20	03	01.72
2.	21-40	143	82.18
3.	41-50	16	09.19
4.	51-60	06	03.04
5.	61 – above	06	03.04
Qualifications			
6.	SSLC	53	30.45
7.	PUC	21	12.00

8.	Diploma	06	03.04
9.	Degree	94	54.02
Occupation			
10.	Student	19	10.09
11.	Employee in government sector	39	22.04
12.	Employee in private sector	19	10.09
13.	Farmer	39	22.04
14.	Business Community	09	05.01
15.	House wife	20	11.04
16.	Unemployed Youth	29	16.66

It is clear from Table 2 that a large number of respondents (82.18%) are in the age group of 21-40 years, and half of them are graduates. Citizens from different walks of life such as farmers, employees in Government/private sector agencies, students and house wives are using the services of Nadakacheri.

Table 3. Extent of usefulness of services of Nadakacheri

Advantage		Opinion about service			
		Very useful	Useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful
1.	Simple procedure	--	--	106 (60.09%)	11 (06.32%)
2.	Quick Complaint handling	06 (03.04%)	03 (01.72%)	72 (41.37%)	11 (06.32%)
3.	Maintenance of Schedule	--	--	86 (49.42%)	25 (14.36%)
4.	Time saving	--	--	117 (67.24%)	12 (6.8%)
5.	Transparency increased compared to manual system	126 (72.41%)	27 (15.5%)	--	17 (09.70%)
6.	Trust between Govt and Citizens has increased	--	17 (9.19%)	141 (81.03%)	16 (09.77%)
7.	Rural Citizens benefited compared to manual system	122 (70.11%)	28 (16.09%)	--	24 (13.79%)
8.	Confidentiality	30 (17.24%)	--	--	--

Respondents have rated the usefulness of services at Nadakacheri in Table 3. Majority of the respondents feel that e-Governance has been very useful in increasing transparency (72.41%) and has benefited rural people more (70.11%). However, they do not find the procedure to be simple, time-saving and punctual.

Table 4. Problems faced while availing services

Problem faced availing service		Respondents	Percentage
1.	Lack of awareness about required documents	129	74.13
2.	Need for attestation by Notary-	92	52.87
3.	Require too many documents	62	35.05
4.	Application forms not available to avail the service	113	64.09
5.	Difficulties in filling the application in English	32	18.39
6.	Staff are not friendly	50	28.18

Table 4 shows the problems faced by respondents while availing these services in Nadakacheris. Major problem faced are lack of awareness about necessary documents to be carried (74.13%), requirement of Notary attestation on all the documents to be submitted online (52.87%) and Non-availability of

the print application forms in the Nadakacheris itself (64.09%). Since most of the services are in English language, they find it difficult to fill in the details (18.39%) and 28.18% of the respondents find that the staff are not friendly.

Table 5. Role of e-Governance initiatives in removing discrimination among citizens

Sl. No.	Attributes	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Not at all	06	3.4
2.	Don't know	16	9.19
3.	To some extent	36	20.68
4.	Greater extent	61	35.05
5.	Not responded	55	31.60

Table 5 shows that 61 respondents (35.05%) find that e-Governance helps in removing discrimination among Citizens to a great extent. However, 3.4% have opinion that the situation has not at all changed and 55 (31.60%) have not responded.

6. Role of Public Library

The public library, local gateway to knowledge, provides an avenue for lifelong learning, independent decision-making, and cultural development of the individual

and social groups. It plays a role in provision of easy, personalised access to information (Chakraborty, 2008).

The City Central Library of Kalaburagi, branch library, Aland, Jewargi and Grampanchayat libraries of Nimbarga and Nelogi were chosen as they are located near the Nadakacheris and these libraries have significant impact over the people of Kalaburagi District including children, students and senior citizens. The above five libraries collectively have nearly half million books and 34 professional staff members. Computers and Internet facility is available in the City Central Library. More than 50% of the respondents visited the libraries at least twice a week.

Table 6. Purpose of visit to library

Sl. No.	Purpose	Respondents	Percentage
1.	To read newspapers and magazines	114	78.08
2.	To borrow books	11	07.53
3.	For exams preparation	11	07.53
4.	To improve general knowledge	10	06.85

7. Conclusions and Suggestions

Karnataka State is in the forefront in implementing e-Governance services in administration and has attempted to bring these services closer to common man through Nadakacheries. The users believe that e-Governance has brought in greater transparency and has benefitted rural citizens. Some of the issues that seem to affect the utility of these services relate to: timeliness, customer friendly staff and lack of awareness about documents to be carried to Nadakacheries, Non availability of print forms and language barriers, not very customer-friendly staff manning e-Services in Nadakacheries are some of the major problems faced by users. Given that many of those using the e-services of Nadakacheris are also regular visitors to the public library, it is proposed here that the Government and authorities should seriously consider making public libraries serve as portals for e-services. The public libraries in the area can play an important role in creating awareness about these e-Governance services among citizens and train them to become independent users of these services. There is a need to upgrade the ICT infrastructure on these libraries and train the library staff in use of these technologies.

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