

Brecha entre investigación y práctica bibliotecológica. Cómo reducir la distancia

The gap between research and library
practice. How to reduce the distance

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Bridging the Gap between Research and Library Practice. Leadership Training for Public Librarians: INELI South Asia Programme

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INTRODUCTION

The advent and spread of digital information and communication technologies (ICT) has significantly touched every aspects of people's life. It has dramatically changed the way people live, learn, work communicate including the way they find, access and use information. ICT has often seen as an opportunity because of its positive effects; enabling communities to develop social, cultural and economic capital in a manner that would make qualitative changes possible at the personal and community level (Canadian International Development Agency 2002; United Nations Development Programme 2004; World Bank 2003). The public libraries have always been engaged in providing access to

* Authors acknowledge the assistance of Project Coordinators D. Rojarani and K. Siranjothi towards the INELI-ISA section of the chapter.

information and catering to the needs of individuals and community they serve. Yet, the transformation took place in the information landscape due to rapidly changing ICT, creation and provision of easy access to vast amount of information and ever changing user behaviours have challenged the traditional role of public libraries and librarianship demanding it to evolve as “connectors, cultural and community hubs and community leaders” (Arabella Advisors 2015, 4). Public librarians need new skills and training to meet the challenge and lead their libraries towards this new direction. For this they need to improve their leadership skills and abilities to be “innovators, risk takers, excellent communicators who see themselves as agents and partners of change in their communities” (Arabella Advisors 2015, 4). Recognising the importance more and more libraries, organisations, governments have given priority to leadership training in their strategic plans and national policies (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2003; Libraries Task Force 2016, Peachey 2017). Arabella Advisors has identified 30 international library leadership training programmes in 83 countries, but they found that need for training exceeds the number of training programmes (Arabella Advisors 2015). This is especially true for the librarians in the economically disadvantaged countries in South Asia region who are unprepared to face the changes and thus seeking leadership skills training that helps them to become community leaders and transform their libraries to community hubs.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF EMERGING LIBRARY INNOVATORS (INELI)

International Network of Library Innovators (INELI) is a project of the Global Libraries initiative of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation initiated in 2011. Primary goals of INELI are (Gipson 2012, 380-382):

1. Create an international network of future library leaders to build and sustain public libraries throughout the world.

2. Explore or address global library issues that have the potential to stimulate, expand, or improve public library service.
3. Enhance the leadership skills of new professionals to enable them to re-envision public libraries for the future to meet the unique needs of the people in their respective countries.

The global INELI began with two international cohorts, then replicated across 8 regions (i.e. Latin America, Ibero- Americana, Balkan, Oceania, MENA, Sub-Saharan, ASEAN, India and South Asia) in 25 countries.

INELI INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA (INELI-ISA)

INELI-ISA is an e-learning model for public librarians, implemented by M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) in India since 2015. The primary goal of the programme is to develop innovative leadership skills of public librarians as community trailblazers and can reposition libraries as critical community hubs for driving community development through information and knowledge services. The programme has two specific objectives:

1. Creating a network of community trailblazers as library innovators through a professional leadership course, leading change, empowering communities through their libraries.
2. Creating a fully functional Regional South Asia INELI Network for collective action and advocating change.

There are four cohorts with first two being National cohorts from India, the third from the South Asian cohort from Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The fourth is experiential, innovators from the State of Tamil Nadu, India who are currently engaged in INELI short term course. There are a total of 55 innovators participating in the 24 months online learning curriculum, on building leadership, innovative capabilities and community skill building. Each cohort meets twice at convening's

organised in trending public libraries in Asia, Oceania, and Europe. This study examines the leadership progress and changes of first three cohorts.

The programme is facilitated through the e-learning platform providing learning curriculum and convening organised, as a platform to engage, discuss, and provide opportunities to share learning from globally evolving and trending libraries.

The Global Library programme was adapted to meet the South Asian requirements and has learning modules currently not covered in Library and Information Science curriculum. For achieving the overall objectives, MSSRF has applied the concept the ask (Attitude, Skill and Knowledge) and has included the aspects of social and environmental development that is needed for delivery of need based community services through libraries.

The programme has 13 modules encompassing (audio/video), offering topics on current library leadership skills, trends, community engagement and need based services, building evidence through data collection, access to information and community services, team building and interpersonal skills are a few to name. There are independent and group assignments to complete, facilitated by both online learning coordinators and the mentors.

The programme content is hosted on Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) platform and can be accessed via both web and mobile app.

Convening's are international platforms, organised in partnership with public libraries, for the selected innovators. They meet face-to-face, engage, review challenges and reflect using other's experiences. A convening is semi-structured workshop providing varieties of training, discussions, and visits to the trending libraries. Hands on leadership training are given by a leadership trainer to strengthen their capabilities. The visiting libraries are selected based on trends, need based services, inclusive, smart, and self-sustaining approaches, using advanced ICTS, local partnerships, environment consciousness, and alignment with UN-SDGS. MSSRF designs each convening based on the changing trends in library landscapes.

There are some non-completions, of a maximum of three from each cohort, not able to give their time. Those who have completed all modules and have participated in convenings, graduate with a certificate of recognition as INELI Innovators and Community Trailblazers. The graduated INELIans are the drivers of the Asia Network of Library Innovators' Foundation (ANLIF).

Within this context this study examines the changes/influence the programme has on its innovators.

METHODOLOGY

This study is an attempt to examine the influence that INELI South Asia program has had on its innovators, their libraries and communities. Primarily, the goals are to find out, first the change the programme has made in innovators as librarians; second, the most useful leadership skills learnt through the programme that helped innovators in transforming their libraries and finally, innovators awareness of the best ways to positively impact their community.

To answer these research questions thoroughly, the study employed an integrated multi-method qualitative research design which included the following components:

- Critical analysis of secondary data to evaluate and understand the library leadership, particularly with regard to public libraries, library practices and librarians' perceptions of 21st century public libraries and library training programmes in South Asia.
- Qualitative analysis of primary data of innovators (= programme participants). A number of methods were used to collect primary data including questionnaire surveys, face-to-face interviews, online interviews, discussions and participant observations. Except for the questionnaire survey which was administrated at the very end of the programme, other methods were used at different stages of the programme with a representative sample of innovators.

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An online survey was carefully designed keeping in mind the main goals of the study. The survey included questions on innovators' demographic information and their skills, attributes, views and opinions. Except for the questions about demographic information, all other questions in the survey were open-ended. The survey was first tested with few non-innovators, reviewed and modified and then published on 'SoGoSurvey' website. An invitation with the purpose of the survey and web link was sent to all 55 innovators of cohorts 1, 2 and 3 via email and WhatsApp group message. *Table 1* shows the total number of innovators belong to each cohort and the country representation.

Table 1. Total Number of Innovators, Cohort and Country

| Country | Cohort 1 | Cohort 2 | Cohort 3 | Total |
|------------|----------|----------|----------|-------|
| Bangladesh | | | 4 | 4 |
| India | 21 | 17 | 4 | 42 |
| Maldives | | | 1 | 1 |
| Myanmar | | | 2 | 2 |
| Nepal | | | 2 | 2 |
| Sri Lanka | | | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 21 | 17 | 17 | 55 |

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with a total of 10 innovators representing all 3 cohorts during the convening workshop held in Tiruchirappalli (Trichy), India from 6-13 February 2020. Participant observations were made and discussions were held at convening workshops and visits to innovators libraries. The study also used the data gathered from online interviews and discussions conducted at different stages of the programme including selection interviews and course assignments mentoring sessions. These enabled to assess and understand innovators background, skills, views and opinions prior to and after the programme. Interviews were not recorded but notes were made for subsequent analysis. The same procedure was followed to record the observations and discussions.

Multi-sourced data was analysed using Grounded Theory (GT) approach (Bryant 2017; Charmaz 2006; Corbin and Strauss 2008). However, it should be stressed that in this study GT has not been applied as a methodology because the aim of the study was not to develop a theory, but instead to develop categories and thematic analysis. This method was chosen because GT provides a flexible as well as a systematic approach to analysis.

As mentioned above even though the literature relevant to the topic of the study was analysed, a traditional literature review section was not included in the chapter. Instead, the analysed literature is incorporated into the results and discussion under appropriate themes.

RESULTS

Out of 55 innovators 31 (56.36%) responded to the online survey (*Table 2*). The analysis of their demographic information i.e. gender, age group, designation and experience is presented in the next section whilst the findings derived from combined analysis of survey data and the data gathered from all other sources is presented thereafter under the categories and thematic areas emerged.

Table 2. Details of Survey Responses: Total Number of Innovators, Cohort and Country

| Country | Cohort 1 | Cohort 2 | Cohort 3 | Total |
|------------|----------|----------|----------|-------|
| Bangladesh | | | 4 | 4 |
| India | 10 | 5 | 3 | 18 |
| Maldives | | | 1 | 1 |
| Myanmar | | | 2 | 2 |
| Nepal | | | 2 | 2 |
| Sri Lanka | | | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 10 | | 16 | 31 |

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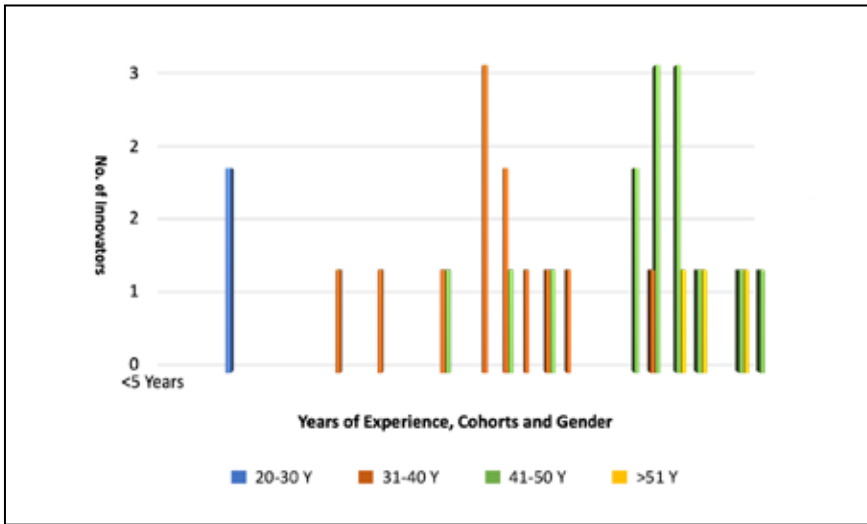
Out of 31 respondents majority (n=14) belong to the age group of 41-50 years and female (n=8) representation is greater than the male (n=6) representation. The next highest respondents (n=12) were from the age group of 31-40 years, with equal number of females (n=6) and males (n=6). Only 3 respondents (i.e. 1 female and 2 males) represented the oldest age group (>51) whereas 2 male respondents represented the youngest age group (i.e. 20-30 years). There is no much difference between overall gender representation as 15 females and 16 males responded to the survey (*Table 3*).

Table 3. Innovators Demographic Information – Gender and Age Groups

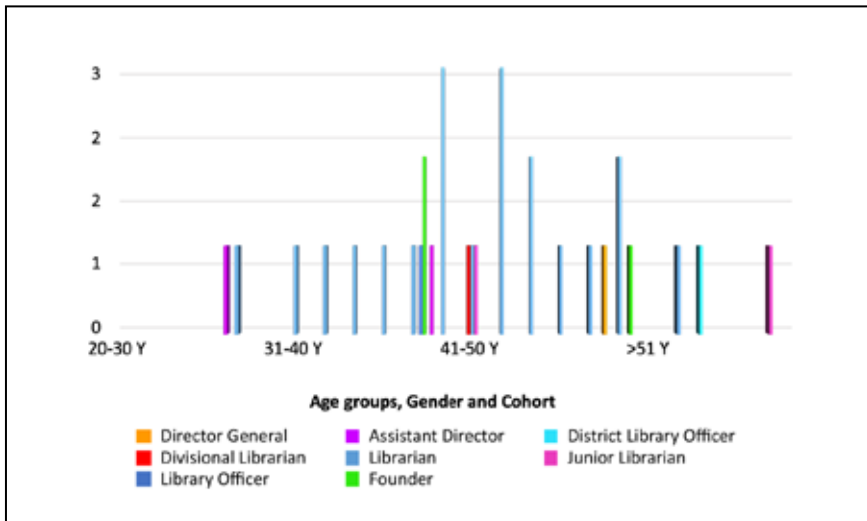
| Cohort | 20-30 Y | | 31-40 Y | | 41-50 Y | | >51 Y | | Total |
|--------|---------|---|---------|---|---------|---|-------|---|-------|
| | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | |
| 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | | 10 |
| 2 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 5 |
| 3 | | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | | 1 | 16 |
| Total | | 2 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 31 |

The majority of respondents had above 20 years of experience (n=13) and thus fall into late career professionals category. As one could easily presume, except for one respondent who belonged to 31-40 years age group, all the others were from older age groups of 41-50 years (n=9) and above 51 years (n=3). The second largest respondents (n=8) were late mid-career professionals with an experience range of 11-15 years. Interestingly, in this category 6 respondents were from the age group of 31-40 years and only 2 respondents were from the age group of 41-50 years. There were 6 respondents with 16-20 years of experience range who fall into early late-career professionals. They equally represented the age groups of 31-40 (n=3) years and 41-50 (n=3) years. The lowest number of respondents (n=4) were from mid-career professionals (n=2) with experience range of 6-10 years and early career professionals with the experience of less than 5 years. They belonged to age groups of 31-40 years (n=2) and 20-30 years (n=2) respectively (*Graph 1*).

Graph 1.1 Innovators Experience



Graph 1.2 Innovators Designations



Educational backgrounds among early, mid, late-mid, early-late, and late-career professionals had no much difference as all respondents had undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Library and Information Science (LIS) except for 3 mid-career respondents who had non-LIS degrees. Amongst the postgraduate degree holders there were 3 respondents with doctoral (PhD) degrees.

Designations of respondents range from the Director General to Junior Librarian and Founder of the library. However, amongst them majority were 'Librarians' (n=20). The representation in all the other designations were small; for e.g. Director General n=1; Assistant Directors n=2; District Library Officer n=1.

Respondents came from a variety of backgrounds such as age groups, education, designations, and different career levels (i.e. from early to mid to late-career) and experience. The results derived from the analysis thus portray a broader picture of the context with different dimensions.

KNOWING SELF

Leadership involves self-management and managing relationships with others. Hernon and Rossiter find this characterization as Emotional Intelligence (EI) (Hernon and Rossiter 2006). Leadership and management literature emphasizes that cognitive intelligence and academic credentials are alone not enough to be successful in the 21st century library profession (Hernon and Rossiter 2006; Goleman, *et al.* 2004). Instead they argue that EI competencies are also equally needed to succeed. EI is defined as a set of abilities that allows us to recognise and control emotions in ourselves and others (Goleman, *et al.* 2004). Self-awareness (being aware of your emotions) is identified as first major category amongst the four categories (i.e. self-management, social awareness and relationship management) by Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee in their EI competencies framework. Hernon and Rossiter also found self-awareness as one of the most prized EI trait (Hernon and Rossiter 2006).

The influence of self-awareness is increasingly being recognised as a significant characteristic of outstanding leadership. Amongst the positive benefits of self-awareness improving confidence, communication and job performance were identified highly (Sutton, *et al.* 2015).

The results clearly demonstrated participants' improved understanding of self, increased confidence and realisation of their own potential. Reflecting on themselves majority of participants described themselves as more *focused, goal-oriented, confident, self-motivated and self-initiated* persons than before. Despite of being *duty-minded and hardworking* persons, they found themselves as *monotonous, goal-less, routine-workers* before joining in INELI programme.

“Now I am more focused, motivated and confident person. Before that I was not sure about myself. INELI taught me to see things differently and am now doing things differently.” - (Cohort 2 participant).

“I am not a stereotype librarian anymore. Earlier I was just doing routine things without much enthusiasm. Now I am confident and have set targets to achieve” - (Cohort 1 participant).

“I used to be a complaining person –didn't see bright side of things so bit frustrated. Instead of complaining, later I realized that I have to find my own ways and start things off- and only then could make a difference”- (Cohort 3 participant).

Whilst identifying self-awareness as one of the critical leadership traits, Schreiber and Shannon stated “Leaders who know themselves are able to maximize their strengths, learn new skills, and know when to get out of the way of those who can do it better” (Schreiber and Shannon 2001, 47). As can be seen from aforementioned excerpts and also from the results presented in next sections, this study also agrees with their view.

LEARNING TO LEAD

It is believed that leadership can be learned and developed and not something one is born with (Bennis and Nanus 1985; Kouzes and Posner 2012). Bennis and Nanus clearly stated that “Leadership seems to be the marshaling of skills possessed by a majority but used by a minority. But it is something that can be learned by everyone, taught to everyone, denied to no one” (Bennis and Nanus 1985, 27).

LIS literature offers a wealth of studies focusing on leadership competencies (attributes, traits, skills, characteristics) that librarians need to possess. As pointed out by Mason and Wetherbee (2004), although there is no common agreement about what constitutes the core body of leadership skills studies do agree that “certain personal traits and characteristics are especially important for leaders and for the exercise of leadership” (Mason and Wetherbee 2004, 188).

In their leadership core competency model Ammons-Stephens, *et al.* listed 17 skills under four central competencies namely: cognitive ability, vision, interpersonal effectiveness and managerial effectiveness (Ammons-Stephens, *et al.* 2009). By providing an overview of different models Stueart and Sullivan presented an extensive list of necessary characteristics needed for effective leaders (Stueart and Sullivan 2010). Young, Powell and Herson (2003) too reported a comprehensive list of highly ranked leadership attributes by both academic and public library directors under three main categories i.e. managerial attributes, personal attributes and areas of knowledge (Young, Powell and Herson 2003). As stated above although the groupings or the categories of competencies varied all these research commonly identified ability to work with other groups and individuals, advocacy, communication, Integrity, knowledge of trends and innovations, current library practices, building partnerships, teamwork, vision, motivation, strategic planning, collaboration, flexibility/adaptability, networking, delegation, critical thinking, accountability, and empathy, as leadership skills that are essential for becoming an effective leader (Ammons-Stephens, *et al.* 2009; Young and Herson 2003; Goulding, *et al.* 2012; Mullins and Linehan 2006; Stueart and Sullivan 2010; Chow and Rich 2019).

Participants reported a range of leadership skills which they learnt through INELI programme i.e. communication, collaboration, partnerships, networking, creativity, time management, team building, positivity, critical thinking, delegation, capacity building, vision, planning and delivery, and advocacy. Amongst these, *communication, collaboration, partnerships and networking* were mentioned by almost all participants.

Communication is a core competency included in most leadership models. Library leaders work with various groups and individuals such as library staff, library boards, decision-makers, potential funders and communities. They need to be skilled communicators to maintain strategic relationships with these groups (Young, Powell and Hernon 2003). In this rapidly changing socio-political-economic-information environment it is important public libraries to be included in the government strategies. Undoubtedly communication skills are utmost important to advocate for public libraries (Goulding, Walton and Graham 2012) and to promote the invaluable contribution public libraries make to society and communities. Communication skills are also essential and central to developing networks, collaboration and partnerships. One participant stated that:

“I tried my best to develop partnerships with an NGO but all my attempts were failed. Thanks to the programme I realised the reason – nothing else but communication. I have not clearly communicated my plan”. – (Cohort 2 – participant).

This same point was stated by several participants at number of occasions. Interestingly, several participants mentioned networking was quite new to them but found extremely useful for the improvement of services:

“networking is something new to me – my understanding about it was very different to what I learnt – when networking think beyond library sphere – be open and network with different organisations and individuals”. – (Cohort 1 – participant).

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Especially considering the current constrained socio-economic-political environment no public library can meet all the needs of its communities on its own. Thus, partnerships, collaborations, and networks with other related organisations, allows public libraries to fulfil their community's needs by increasing available resources and introducing new services.

Results demonstrated that participants have built relationships with various community groups, individuals, volunteers and organisations. Except for very few from Cohort 3 all participants have formed Reader's Forums with the collaboration of community which are very active and supportive for offering various community services. Another library has collaborated and partnered with 'self-help' organisations and provide continuous programmes which provides self-employment opportunities for housewives.

Many participants revealed that they were able to learn management skills such as time management, team building and delegation. Although leadership and management are two different concepts to be an effective leader both these skills are equally required (Le 2015, 300-314).

Vision and advocacy have been often discussed as essential leadership skills in the LIS literature (Ammons-Stephens, *et al* 2009; Chow and Rich 2019; Kreitz 2009, 531-554; Martin 2018, 1-29; Mullins and Linehan 2006; Young, Powell and Herson 2003). As Martin stated a leader with a vision foresee future needs, questions the practices of today, and set directions for the library to move (Martin 2018). Yet, in this study only one participant who belonged to the oldest age group, most experienced and higher designation categories reported vision and advocacy as an important leadership skills learnt:

"There is nothing where there is no vision. So first be a person of vision.
- Develop a vision that sets a direction for the library – communicate it and advocate for it" – (Cohort 2 – participant).

The same participant further continued "If you don't see the future how you can be innovative".

Results demonstrated that participants have mostly learnt managerial, interpersonal or people skills than cognitive skills. Most LIS research also emphasise interpersonal skills or people skills as an important leadership skill that librarians need to develop and use (Mullins and Linehan 2006; Schachter 2009, 49). As Martin reported “a library leader who possesses strong inter- and intrapersonal and communication skills, can successfully lead change, and can create a vision for the future of the library” (Martin 2018, 22).

DELIVERING CHANGE

As defined in the IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines public library “provides access to knowledge, information, lifelong learning, and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic and employment status and educational attainment” (Koontz and Gubbins 2010).

Except for two all the other participants in this study reported before attending INELI programme their targeted user groups were youth, children, senior citizens and students. Orphans and tourists groups were mentioned by two libraries. However, it was clearly visible from survey, discussions and observations the difference in their perceptions about their user groups after attending INELI. As can be seen from summarised quotations below all participants stated in one voice that they should plan and set up services for ‘all communities’.

“You can’t exclude any – we must serve ‘All’ our communities”; “Our service must be for all”; “We need to go out and approach all – especially non-users”

Most participants stated they have included differently able people, under-privileged communities such as sex-workers, unemployed people, drivers, house-wives, trans-gender communities and institute like prisons, orphanages and hospitals in their user community.

This change was also visible from the services they delivered before attending INELI and the services introduced after INELI. Lending, reference, mobile library, photocopying, reading promotion activities, educational programmes, cultural events, book exhibitions, celebration of library days, art and other literary competitions were the services they provided before their exposure to the INELI programme.

Carnegie UK Trust policy report on public libraries (Peachey 2017) reported even though the people value public libraries as a centre for community services, they are much less likely to regard libraries as important to themselves personally. Thus, the report recommends increasing tailored, personalised services to its people.

As many participants stated, they used to be 'conventional or traditional librarians providing routine services'. However, since the introduction of the INELI program, participants have focused more on providing community-based services. Coaching sessions for competitive exams such as Indian Administrative Services, Counselling sessions for drug addicts and their parents, forums for community based issues and good governance, vocational training for job-seekers, yoga classes, music classes, digital literacy for senior citizens, programmes to improve literacy, English language classes, health clinics and health awareness programmes for all age groups, self-employment training for women and provide space in the library to sell their products and provide social space for elderly and others who may have limited options for socialisation and for various community activities are among some of the new community based services introduced.

It was apparent that they have been able to introduce these new community services and continuous programming because of the excellent partnerships they have built up with individuals, groups such as readers' forums, friends of the library, volunteers, NGOs and other organisations. At the same time involving readers' forums and friends of the library groups had mutual benefits. Membership of these groups is mostly comprises of senior citizens like pensioners. Involving them in activities such as raising money, hosting events and serving as resource persons that directly

support the library make them feel better and recognised. This was clearly evident during visits to libraries and discussions held with participants also revealed the same as summarised below:

“Readers’ forums, Friends of Libraries, volunteers are our great asset in delivering out-reached, non-traditional services”.

“Partnerships not only help us to provide new services it gives recognition and satisfaction to partners as well”.

The special roles public libraries can play in engaging and building community are widely discussed in the literature (Goulding 2009; Audunson 2005; Scott 2011; Willingham 2008). Some of the newly initiated services (i.e. library as a space for community activities, forums for community and governance issues, involvement of volunteers and senior citizens in library programmes and activities) clearly supports this and demonstrates public library’s ability and capacity towards playing these roles.

UPLIFTING WELLBEING

Research and policy increasingly reports the need of changing the focus of public libraries from providing reading materials and digital resources to more community-centric services which can impact on community’s income, employment, education and learning, health, social connections, and civic engagement. By offering these community-centric services public libraries can directly contribute for uplifting of social, cultural, learning and economic wellbeing of its community (Peachey 2017). Public libraries make this transformation through promotion of reading and other cultural and creative activities, raising aspirations and building skills that help people to achieve their full potential, irrespective of their background, bringing communities together and providing trusted and practical support and advice (Libraries Task Force 2016). But on the other hand, how public libraries could continue these is considered as a major challenge that 21st century public libraries face.

Results revealed that participants in the study are already aware of both the role they can play and the challenges ahead fulfilling

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it. As demonstrated above, their approach has shifted from conventional to more community-centred services under the domains of social (i.e. reduce social isolation, inequality, connecting communities, and promoting health), cultural (i.e. promoting literature, arts, provide space for creative activities, provide venues for exhibitions, concerts, forums), Learning and education (i.e. supporting literacy, lifelong learning, improving skills for employment, helping people to make informed decisions) and economic (i.e. help job seekers, self-employment, training, coaching) that have contributed towards community wellbeing.

As one participant clearly stated and many others also shared in the survey participants believe that to face the challenge librarians need to:

“Work with community; identify their needs; make a library plan with innovative community-oriented programmes – sell it [advocate for it] and for this we need to improve our own skills – that’s what INELI gave us”
– (Cohort 2 participant).

In essence, their central view which revealed during discussions was “Know your community – Work for their needs - Involve them in the process – Walk along them”.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study clearly indicated the INELI Programme’s significant impact on participants in this region and consequently have showcased benefits of services for communities through public libraries. There is evidence of success in enabling and developing leadership capacity amongst participants, especially in building their confidence in and raising awareness of their own leadership abilities and potential. Nevertheless, the programme has largely helped them to develop other less tangible interpersonal traits and skills such as qualities associated with emotional intelligence, teamwork, creativity, motivation, communication,

partnerships and networking. While these characteristics are central to distinguishing the leadership from management, those are important in developing successful managers as effective leaders as recommended by Fisher and Sharp in their 'lateral Leadership' model (Fisher and Sharp 2004). Participants' increased awareness of how positive change can be made in the community through library has also a direct outcome of the programme. The range of new services introduced accordingly, particularly those in aligned with the United Nations -SDGS has positively impacted on their communities and thus have contributed directly for community wellbeing.

However, along with all these positive outcomes, the empirical evidence indicated some issues of the programme. Inappropriate selection of participants, especially at the future leader level was quite visible as some of the participants were already retired and some are about to retire even though the number is very small. Understandably, this has happened because the course lasted longer than it intended but required attention when selecting participants for future programmes.

As already discussed undoubtedly participants have learnt skills which they have already applied and introduced new services at their libraries but mostly without an integrated strategic plan. It was quite visible that in the absence of strategic and action plans the work they carry out are mostly person-oriented and not the system-oriented. These issues could be attributed to the leadership versus managerial skills issue discussed earlier.

All the participants were well aware that the course is available only in English. Yet, language was another issue which has direct impact on participants' performance in the learning platform because English is not the native language of participants. Thus, providing programme in the local language is an important consideration for the success of future programmes.

There are no leadership programmes specifically structured for public librarians in South Asia. Such distinct programmes must be seen as a necessity means to improve the knowledge and current trends for librarians and libraries. Addressing these shortcomings

particularly, making changes to content of the programme with greater emphasis on leadership areas, will definitely benefit public librarians in South Asia.

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La bibliotecología, como área que se dedica al estudio del conocimiento intencionalmente registrado, tiene dos vertientes: la profesional y la disciplinar. En cada uno de esos territorios, el practicante y el investigador de la bibliotecología hacen tanto una labor loable como aportes sustanciales; sin embargo, practicante e investigador pocas veces se observan y complementan. Hay diversos trabajos que han tocado el problema de la división o brecha entre práctica e investigación en bibliotecología; aun así, la convergencia entre ambas no se nota, por lo que ésta sigue siendo un tema pendiente.



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