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USE OF RAILWAY STATION LIBRARIES



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ABSTRACT

Reading occupies a pivotal role in the life of a man which opens the doors of the treasures of knowledge. The quality of nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. This can be achieved by increasing the reading habit among public. Reading especially is a resource for continued education, for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, for gaining information through media, especially newspapers, books, radio, television, and the computers. Working time of library is a barrier to people working in different offices. Similarly while travelling in train or waiting for train many people are wasting their time. Railway station libraries can make a solution to this problem.

This paper focuses on the use and benefit of implementing and networking libraries in the Railway stations.

KEYWORDS : Library; Railway station library; Reading habit.

1. INTRODUCTION

We all are traveling a lot in our daily life using different conveyances. Reasons for traveling include recreation, tourism, educational purpose, for job etc. For long distance journey now a days people prefer train journey because train journey is cheaper and comfortable than any other means. In India all trains are operated by the government. Indian Railways (IR). IR is the third largest rail network in the world. Tracks running well over 60,000 kilometers help connect about 7500 stations, ferrying nearly 20 million people every day.

We get lot of free time, when we wait for the train. Reading is a lifelong skill, and successful people never stop reading new books. Books help to give us a greater understanding of the world around us which introduce new characters, new environments, new cultures, new philosophies and

new ideas and might even help to build new skills. Similarly, reading regularly helps to build your vocabulary and your semantic comprehension, giving you greater communication skills.

2. RAILWAY STATION LIBRARY

Library is a place where documents containing knowledge and information are being stored, technically and scientifically processed, properly preserved and made easily accessible to the users, without loss of time. Railway station library is library for railway passengers and railway staff. It is usually found that railway passengers need to wait for the train and there is nothing else to do than just sit and wait. By starting a Railway Station Library we can increase the reading habit as well as save the time of railway passengers more pleasant and useful while waiting for trains. A massive investment in railway station libraries is needed to make them true information resource centers for the layman.

The first Railway station library of Europe was opened in the station of Haarlem (in the Netherlands) on September 21st 2011. The library is especially developed for travelers who visit the station regularly. The library, which has the backing of Dutch Railways and the provinces of North and South Holland, is located in the old signal box on the station's central platform. The 150 square meter building has a collection of 1500 magazines and books, ranging from literature to comics. The library is open during the morning and evening rush hour, five day a week. In September 2014, at Rumia, in the northern Poland a railway station library opened, which combines the functions of railway station, public library and cultural center, serving both the local community and tourists traveling to Polish seaside.

The aim and scope of this paper is focused on utilizing the waiting time of railway passengers more pleasant and useful as well as to increase reading habit among public, because the quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The concept of railway station library can be opened in any one of the important Railway stations in Kerala as a test run. If it is found useful more railway stations are expected to be equipped with a library in the station. By this more qualified librarians will get new job opportunities. In India till this date there is no library in the railway stations. The library should open round the clock. The study also aims to formulate suggestions to the administrators in preparing enrichment programme for better use of the library.

3. PREREQUISITES FOR RAILWAY STATION LIBRARIES

A good library consists of good users; large collection, maximum fund and better services to the user community. The following are the main factors making a good railway station library.

3.1 Users

Users can enter into the library after submitting their voter's identity card or aadhar card. The person in charge of the library, verify the identity card and enter their name and address. The persons who can make use of Railway library are;

1. Railway staff
2. Passengers who are waiting for their train
3. Season ticket passengers
4. Local public

3.2. Collection

1. The collection of a library can be books, magazines ranging from literature to comics. It may be

purchased by using Railway fund or donations from persons or institutions.

2. Newspapers
3. Children's literature
4. Digital collection
5. On line (Internet) connection.

3.3. Fund

Books and magazines can be purchased by using railway fund. MP's funds can be utilized for setting up a library in railway stations. The membership fee can be used for daily routines work of library. For railway staff, season ticket holders and local public yearly membership fee can be charged. For other passengers a minimum amount (ie; Rs.10/-) can be charged for one hour. For additional hours he/she has to pay additional Rs.5/-. The library fine can be used for raising library fund. The library can take the aid of local public library.

3.4. Information Resources and Services

1. Reference Service
2. E mail checking
3. OPAC
4. News papers and Magazines
5. Books ranging from literature to comics
6. Talking books & Braille service (Downloadable e-audio books)
7. Information regarding cultural history of the place
8. Daily cultural activities of that town
9. Information about places to visit and important festivals of that place
10. Separate children's sections with CD player and story books. This will attract children to library and increase their reading habit.
11. Exhibitions related to history of railway and trains

4. ADVANTAGES OF RAILWAY STATION LIBRARIES

1. Increase reading habit
2. Utilization of time pleasantly and fruitfully
3. Facility for checking e mail while traveling
4. By starting a separate children's section, more children's are attracted to library and this will increase their reading habit.
5. Information displayed in the notice board, ie; information about cultural history of place, places to visit, important festivals etc will be useful for tourists from other countries and persons new to that place.
6. By starting networked libraries the possibility to borrow a book at one station and return it at another one.

5. CONCLUSION

Railway station libraries can work as knowledge centers and contribute to lifelong learning. By starting a Railway Station Library we can increase the reading habit as well as we can use the waiting time of railway passengers more pleasant and useful. The quality of nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. This can be achieved by increasing the reading habit among public. A massive investment

in railway station libraries is needed to make them true information resource centers for the layman.

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