

Establishment of a Model Library and Community Development Centre (LCDC) at Poigai Panchayat as a Project: A Case Study

¹Hariharan, A. (Dr.) and ²Karunai Raghavan, K.

¹Project Director, LCDC, Poigai and Founder President, SALIS, hariharan.arunachalam@gmail.com

²Librarian, National Engineering College, Kovilpatti, karunairaghavan@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper describes the establishment of a model LCDC at Poigai village using the author's own fund to empower the communities living in the Poigai Panchayat. The role of public libraries and the need for establishing an LCDC at each panchayat are explained. The paper gives the details of the work involved and the amount spent in setting up the centre such as library building renovation work, purchase of furniture, subject-wise books purchased, list of magazines and newspaper subscribed, purchase of HW, SW and other resources. Recurring costs to maintain the centre activities in this model are given. Services and activities of the centre, promotional activities and skill development programmes for the community planned and conducted by the centre are elaborated. A detail of the library software, a mobile app used by the centre, and library website created for the LCDC is described. The budget requirements to replicate this model in other Panchayats by the state government are discussed in this paper.

Keywords: Community Library, Community Development Centre, Poigai, AutoLib, Empowering Community.

Introduction

The library plays a major role in the development of any society. The library provides access to knowledge resources and lends its resources to users for their development. The library is the heart of any academic institution and a social hub for a society. The services and functions of libraries have been rapidly changing since the beginning of the 21st century due to the impact of the ICT revolution and the knowledge explosion. The cost of establishing and maintaining libraries is a big challenge worldwide, particularly, for public libraries. Various types of libraries, such as academic, public, research, and special libraries, have been established to provide specific services to their target audience or groups.

Public Library

Public libraries are the libraries established and maintained mostly by governments using public money and offering free services to the public. Some public libraries are established and maintained by NGOs, individuals and by the local community. The library provides services free of cost to all, irrespective of gender, race, religion, culture, language, location, and rich or poor. IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto states that "the public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups. It underpins healthy knowledge societies through providing access to and enabling the creation and sharing of knowledge of all sorts, including scientific and local knowledge without commercial, technological, or legal barriers".¹ Public libraries continue to be places for education and self-help, and

offer an opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds. They offer an opportunity for everyone to learn and to pursue self-improvement²

Community Library

The role of libraries is mainly to provide access to library resources and lending services. But communities today expect much more from libraries than the lending of books. The community needs diverse information specific to the development of the community. That is why community libraries have evolved to provide services to satisfy their specific needs and offer various skill development programmes to empower the community. Developed countries like the US, UK, Canada, Germany, Singapore, etc. renamed most of their village or public branch libraries located in the villages or towns as Community Libraries or LCDC and added new services and programmes specific to all ages and groups in the community besides their routine library services. Many of the branch and village libraries in these countries introduced community-needed services also. According to ALA, Libraries³ are open to all and create a common bond for all living in a community. It further states that LCDC builds a strong and vibrant community by connecting people and ideas for strengthening and developing the community. Their patrons are of all ages in the local community, irrespective of gender, race, religion, culture, language, and location. Community people need a variety of information from diverse sources for education, agriculture, healthcare, small-scale industries, finance, art, sports, entertainment, animal husbandry, and need specific skill development programmes for all - toddlers, kids, students, young adults, women, and seniors, etc. The Community Libraries locate, collect, and evaluate such information on demand or in anticipation, store it in computers or information KIOSKS, and provide the information online or offline in their local language whenever they need it. They used to interact with the local community whenever they conducted programmes and got their feedback. Based on the feedback, they modify their programmes periodically. The author personally visited a few library and community centres in the US, such as Bascom Library and Community Centre, Village Square Library, Evergreen, San Jose Public Library in San Jose City⁴, University Community Library at San Diego⁵ in California State, and the community library in Seattle, Washington State to get the first-hand information about the community services they offer. Some of the community services and programmes offered by these community libraries for all ages are given below:

Digital Literacy Programmes - computer classes for beginners, online self-taught computer courses, virtual reality, and coding classes

Education – about higher education courses, scholarships, project skill development programmes

Kids - Teen reads, Storytime, assist homework, online tutoring, art, and painting

Students - student help, online homework help, teen reach community programmes, IDEAS lab and maker space, STEM projects and games, technical support to students, library card programme and career guidance

Borrow Programmes - borrow a Chrome book, iPad, Laptop borrow and a wi-fi hotspot

Extension Library Services - mobile library services, books on bikes, etc

Establishment of a Model Library and Community Development Centre (LCDC)...

General - sharing library stories, cultural events- concert, music, health awareness programmes – yoga, fitness and entertainment, computer printing, community room rental, live chat, book club, family programmes, health awareness programmes, and social service.

San José Public Library in San Jose city is collaborating with San Jose School Districts to support student's academic and career achievement goals by providing a student library card. Students can access electronic resources and check out up to five items with no late fees⁶. Branch Libraries of the National Library of Singapore were renamed "Community Libraries" in 1995. The libraries are situated close to homes and provide services specific to the community⁷

Poigai: Poigai is a small village located in Kadayanallur Taluk in the Tenkasi district in Tamil Nadu. Pogai, Tripurasundrapuram, Kovilandanur, Kallampuli, and Chinnathambinadanoor are the villages that come under the Poigai Panchayat. Agriculture is the main source of income in these villages. There are elementary, middle, and high schools in Pogai village and elementary schools in other villages in the panchayat. The population of Poigai Panchayat is approximately 5000.

Need for LCDC at Poigai Panchayat: Most people in the panchayat are engaged in agriculture for their livelihood. Only a few have graduated from these villages, and they left the villages for jobs elsewhere. There is no library near to this panchayat and in the schools. People in the community are not subscribing to newspapers or magazines due to their economic condition. No proper sources of information or library resources are accessible to them for consultation. People do not have any forum to guide them. The author is the founder President of the Society for the Advancement of Library Science (SALIS). One of the objectives of SALIS is to promote reading habits, particularly among students and in society to make them information literate. He is engaged in promoting reading habits and community libraries. Therefore, the author felt a need for an LCDC in his native Poigai village to empower the communities living in Poigai Panchayat.

Library and Community Development Centre at Poigai Panchayat: The LCDC at Poigai Panchayat has been established within a short period of 2 months with the guidance of the SALIS and opened on 12th May 2022 for the communities. A grand inaugural cum reading promotion function was held on the same day.

Objectives and Purposes of the LCDC

The main objectives and purposes of the are:

- ☐ To provide library service to the community
- ☐ To provide access to information resources specific to their need
- ☐ To function as a school library by providing library services to the students
- ☐ To organize skill development programmes regularly for all ages to empower the community and thereby improve the standard of living of the community
- ☐ To conduct digital literacy programmes for the community people to bridge the gap of the digital divide
- ☐ To provide technology-enabled library services to the community by integrating software, app, smartcard, barcode, web, and cloud technologies by the centre and expose these technologies to the community to make them IT literate

- To transform society through library services
- To raise the literacy rate and standard of living of the people through community service

Service of the LCDC: The services offered by the LCDC are:

- Library services: lending books, reference service, library orientation
- IT services- Internet Service, Online Meeting with an expert- e-Services, E-mail
- Digital Computer Literacy programmes for students and youth
- For Youth and Women: Skill Development programme on various topics
- Awareness programmes – health, environmental, scientific farming, crop rotation, drip irrigation, insurance and animal husbandry, general insurance, etc.
- Employment/Self Employment/Self-help Group
- Coaching classes for TNPSC and other competitive examinations
- Kids - Storytelling- Drawing- Writing Exercise
- Students – Speech competitions, Essay writing, drawing, and Quiz
- Tuition for weak students – English and Mathematics
- Human Library
- Inter Library Loan – the issue of books to nearby schools, and villages
- Communication: WhatsApp Services, Facebook, E-mail, and Website

Infrastructure: Permission was obtained from the panchayat president to use the existing old panchayat building for LCDC. Necessary civil, carpentry, electrical, and painting work was carried out. Pictures depicting children reading books, the LCDC logo, knowledge map were drawn outside the building, and important quotations about libraries are written on the wall. Colorful large charts that children can use to learn are purchased and hung on all sides of the wall. Fans and lights were fitted wherever necessary. The building has one reading room measuring 350 sqft and one stack room measuring about 120 sq.ft. (Photo 1). Customized steel book racks, reading tables and chairs, a magnetic notice board, magazines and a newspaper stand fit into these rooms were ordered, purchased, and installed. Required library registers such as accession, issue, member visit, visitor, stock, statistics, membership, and magazine registers are purchased, and necessary entries made for use. About 1120 books (Table 2) on various subjects were carefully chosen and purchased from publishers in Chennai, Bangalore, and New Delhi to satisfy the needs of all ages-toddlers, children, young, adults, elders, and groups – women, farmers, students, people doing small business, etc. in the community. A few CDs on English grammar, rhymes, etc. also bought. These books were technically processed as given in Table 2.

Newspapers and Magazine: Three Tamil dailies, one English newspaper, and four teen magazines are subscribed for the LCDC (Table 3)

Centre-in-charge: A part-time librarian cum centre in-charge was appointed to manage the centre, provide library services, and organize programmes under the guidance of the LCDC advisory committee. The amount spent on establishing the LCDC under each category and recurring costs for staff and subscriptions to newspapers and magazines are given (Table 1). The author spent Rs. 8,86,000 lakhs to establish the centre from his own funds and spent Rs. 10,000/- as recurring costs every month from May 2022.

AutoLib Library SW: LCDC needs a user-friendly library software and mobile app with an interface in Tamil and English so that the community people can easily use the software. The AutoLib Library Software – Bilingual – Advanced version and AutoLib – Android Mobile app were selected, purchased, and customized to suit the needs of the local community and implemented on Amazon AWS⁸. The software has many modules such as: database creations for various types of resources, members, transactions, search and browse, reports, non-book materials, journals, e-resources, e-books, clippings, gate entry, stock, and admin. The second part of the software is International OPAC for search, browsing, and navigation, including reserving, renewing, bookmarking, and giving a review.

The Library Mobile App includes search, browsing, and navigation features such as reserve, renew, bookmark, write a review, communicate with the library, make suggestions, and request books or services.

Self-check-out and check-in is a unique feature available in the app. Library users may use the facility to search for a book in the library, locate the book in the rack, scan the barcode pasted on the book, and self-issue of the book by using the mobile app. This facility saves manpower requirements, cost, and time. The App can be downloaded from the Google Play store⁹.

Table: 1 Amount Spent on Establishing the LCDC

No.	Amount spent for LCDC – under various Budget head	Amount
	A Building Renovation	
1	Civil, carpentry and electrical work, whitewash, and related work	15000
2	Electrical fittings – fans and lights, sunshade, and related work	17000
3	Painting, drawing, name board, erection of board etc.	15000
	B. Purchase of furniture, books, software, App and other resources	
1	Book racks, reading tables, chairs, newspaper and magazine stand, magnetic notice boards, etc	85000
2	Registers, notebooks, rubber stamps, seals, stationery items, Membership cards, certificates, bookmark, pouch, accessories etc.	15000
3	Library Books, charts, CDs, etc	150000
4	Laptop or PC, mobile phone, printer, barcode scanners, smart card cum barcode ID cards, extension boards ,and other accessories	100000
5	Library Software, Mobile app,cloud hosting, and customization charges	150000
	<i>B.Total cost for establishing the centre (excluding building maintenance, staff and recurring expenses)</i>	500000
	C.Technical Processing Cost	
1	Technical processing of books – data entry, writing accession on books and registers, pasting due date slip, fixing stamp, writing other registers	25000
	D.Recurring Cost – Subscription. Internet and Programme - per year	
1	Subscription of 3 Tamil newspapers 1 English newspaper, 15 magazines, broadband charges for Internet, books, etc @ Rs.8000/month	96000
	E. Recurring Cost - Manpower Cost per year	

Establishment of a Model Library and Community Development Centre (LCDC)...

2	Manpower: Librarian cum Centre in charge, part-time housekeeping and programme coordinator, and minimum expenses for conducting programme and prices for winners @ Rs.10,000/month * 12 months	120000
F. Inaugural expenses		
1	Invitation, banner, audio video, photo generator gift for guests, gift books, bookmark, tea snacks and lunch for the community people, accommodation, generator, transport, and miscellaneous expenses	98000
Amount spent for total Project = A+B+C+D+E+F		886000

Bookmark containing information about the centre was printed and distributed to the members



LCDC – Building



LCDC - Inauguration News about LCDC – The Hindu Tamil Thisai



LCDC Name Board



Students in LCDC



Smart Card cum Bar coded Membership ID card

Address : Periya Pillaiyar Kovil Street, Poigai.

FAMILY PARTICULARS

Name	Relationship	DOB / Age
Kannammal	Husband / Wife	13-05-1961
Suresh C	Son / Daughter	09-12-1989
Pavithra	Son / Daughter	-

- நூலகம் மற்றும் சமூகதாய மேம்பாட்டு மையத்தின் விதிகளுக்கின்படி நடப்பேன் என உறுதியளிக்கிறேன்
- I undertake that I will follow the rules and regulations of the LCDC
- You are responsible for all resources borrowed on this card.
- Loss of this card must be reported immediately

Connecting Users to Library Resources through Innovative Technologies (SALIS

Figure No. 1: Photos of LCDC

One of the important features of this software is the ability to retrieve a list of resources available in the LCDC and free e-books and resources from selected open-source sites such as Google Books, DOAB, Open Library, Gutendex, DOAB, Google Scholar, arXiv, and CrossRef using a single search string based on federated search technology using their API. This feature ensures the members can find books (if available) in the library and free books or articles in pdf from selected open sources. Important links such as employment, scholarships, government schemes, agriculture, health programmes, loans, e-learning, MOOC courses, free e-books, and online tutorial have been added in OPAC.

Website: poigailibrary.wordpress.com: A simple website (in Tamil) has been created and is being maintained by the centre regularly¹⁰. The website has information about the library – collection, resources, newspapers, and magazines subscribed, how to become a member, present and past activities, and advisory committee. Members can register on the website for any new programmes. A brief report about all the past programmes is posted regularly.

LCDC Advisory Committee: The role of the advisory committee is to advise the LCDC to organize various need-based programmes for the community. The following are nominated for the LCDC advisory committee.

President of the Advisory Committee – President of the Poigai Panchayat

Members – All Ward members

Village Administrative Officer

Headmaster of the local schools attached to the Panchayat

2 Retired teachers/government officials

1 representative for women, farmers, adults, students and elders

Centre-in-charge – Convenor.

The committee meets regularly to plan and conduct skill-based community development programmes.

Monthly Skill development Programmes Conducted by LCDC: The following programmes /competition have been conducted since May 2022.

1. Storytelling on 29-5-2022. 22 children participated
Topic: *How to make your village a model village or how to make your village a green village or Community development through libraries*
2. Speech Competition on 18-06-2022. 18 students participated
Topic: *How to make your village as a model village*
How to make our village as a green village or Community development through libraries
3. Drawing competition on 18-07-2022. two streams – 21 students participated
Topic: *an animal or bird you like or your garden*
4. Kolam/Rangoli - 15-08-2022 - for Women residing in Poigai village – 12 women participated
5. Kolam/Rangoli - 02-09-2022 - for Women residing in Kallampuli village – 11 women participated

A panel of three judges was used to select the winners of the competitions. First, second and third prizes with a certificate given to the winners of all the above programmes. To encourage more

participation, consolation prizes and participation certificates are given to all the participants. The other activities listed will be conducted in the future

Promotional Activities

Several steps have been taken to promote the activities of the LCDC. Some of them are given below:

- ☐ LCDC is being maintained as a 'NO FEE Library'
- ☐ No membership fees /No deposit for borrowing books / Bookmarks to all members
- ☐ No overdue charges. Members must read 1 hour per day if they return the book one day late
- ☐ Smart card cum barcoded ID cards will be issued to the members without any charge
- ☐ Reading oath is administered - Programmes for promoting reading habits
- ☐ Free skill development programmes for all ages
- ☐ Annual Awards for best library users/regular visitors –under children, student, and women categories
- ☐ WhatsApp communication about all the programmes to the members regularly
- ☐ Details of the programmes are posted on the LCDC website

Expert Committee: A High-Power Committee was appointed by the Govt. of Tamil Nadu to revamp the public libraries. The committee chairman, M. Rajendran, Vice-Chancellor, former Tamil University, and its member, Thiru.N.Avudaiyappan, former Director, Connemara Public Library, along with District Library officials of Tirunelveli / Tenkasi visited the centre on 14th June 2022 to study the model, services, and facilities of the centre and include them in their recommendations. The committee appreciated the initiative and gave a few suggestions.

Table: 2 Subject wise Collection

Call No	Subject	No
00	General and Computer Science	96
100	Philosophy	40
133.5	Astrology	28
200	Religion	22
340	Law	4
370	Education	15
370.113	Competitive Examinations	25
381	Commerce	9
435	Grammar	5
500	Science	82
510	Mathematics	5
600	Technology	15
610	Health	37
630	Agriculture	12
641	Cooking	19
650-658	Skill Development / Management	66
700	Art	5

Establishment of a Model Library and Community Development Centre (LCDC)...

823	English Stories, Grammar, and Essays	35
823	English Children's story books	171
894.811	Tamil Literature	15
894.811 1	Tamil Poem	15
894.811 3	Tamil Stories	257
894.811 4	Tamil Essays	5
912	Geography	2
920	Biographies	135
Total		1120

Model LCDC: The LCDC at Poigai was established as a model by the author with the guidance of SALIS. This model can be replicated in other panchayats in the state if the government wishes. There are 1612 branch libraries and 1915 village libraries under the Directorate of Public Libraries (DPL) in TamilNadu¹¹. The government may establish one LCDC in one village panchayat initially. The work can be entrusted as a project to SALIS. The cost of establishing one LCDC is:

- Rs.5.lakhs as one time cost for establishing the LCDC (a. for buying books and furniture, b. Library Books and, other resources and c. Laptop/PC, barcode scanner, and other accessories and d. Library software, App and Cloud hosting charges. (Table – 1)
- Rs.75,000 for buying one Information KIOSK
- Rs. 96,000 towards **recurring expenditure** for one year (a. Subscription of 3 Tamil dailies, 1 English Daily and 14 magazines, b. Internet charges (Table 3) and c. charges for conducting programmes.
- Rs.10,000 /- to SALIS for conducting training programmes in one centre including travel costs.

The training includes how to enter and maintain accession and other registers, assigning classification numbers, arrangement of books on the shelves, data entry in the software, search and retrieval of library resources, issue and return of books and other transactions, generation of reports, how to use the mobile app, online and offline library services, and routine maintenance of the centre, etc. The estimated minimum cost for establishing one LCDC in one panchayat is $\text{Rs.}5\text{L} + 0.75\text{L} + 0.96\text{L} + \text{Rs.}0.10\text{L} = \text{Rs.}6.81\text{L}$ (Table 1). The total estimated minimum cost for establishing 1 LCDC in 38 districts in Tamil Nadu as an experimental project is $6.81 \times 38 = 2.58$ crores. The cost does not include the building, building maintenance, and manpower costs. The one available building of about 500 sq. ft. may be identified by the panchayat and given to LCDC. DPL should provide one full-time staff member to manage and run the LCDC.

Librarian cum Centre-in-Charge: The DPL may appoint a qualified person with a degree in Library and Information Science. The post may be redesignated as Library and Community Development Officer (LCDO) as VAO's in villages. The experimental project can be monitored by the DPL, DCL of the concerned district and SALIS for a year and later can be replicated in other districts in a phased manner after incorporating necessary changes if required. The existing village and panchayat libraries may be renamed 'LCDC' by providing the necessary facilities described in this project. The State government may approach central funding agencies such as RRLF to fund the project to establish

community centres in all the panchayats in a phased manner. It is not possible for any government to maintain all the proposed panchayat LCDCs. Participation of the community is a must to maintain the LCDC and the community should contribute to augmenting the facilities of the LCDC for procuring computers, kiosks, books, magazines, and other resources. The Librarian and the LCDC advisory committee should take interest in mobilizing funds to support the activities of LCDC continuously from Government agencies, NGOs, the public, and individuals continuously.

Table 3: List of Newspapers and Magazines Subscribed for the Centre

No.	Newspapers	Subject
1	The Hindu Tamil Thisai	General
2	Daily Thanthi	General
3	Dinakaran	General
4	New Indian Express	General
	Magazines	
1	Tamilarasu	General/Govt
2	Ananda Vikatan	General
3	Aval Vikatan	Women
4	Pasumai Vikatan	Agriculture
5	Ulavarin Valarum Velanmai	Agriculture
6	Champak	Children/Student
7	Thulir	Children/Student
8	Thumbi	Children/Student
9	Jantar Mantar	Science
10	Ariviyal Palakai	Science
11	Vignana Chiraku	Science
12	Arivuth Thendral	Science
13	Employment News	Job
14	Tamilnadu Nukarvor Kavasam	Consumer

School Libraries: School libraries may also be set-up with the required changes based on this model initially in the recently announced 26 schools of excellence and 15 model schools **but with a full time qualified librarian with a degree in Library Science on par with the librarian's post in Kendriya Vidyalayas to manage the libraries** to make the students information literate.

Conclusion

The establishment of the Library and Community Development Centre is the need of the hour, particularly in developing countries. The services offered by public libraries are general, whereas the community needs specific services for all ages and groups in the community for their development and to improve their standard of living. Many developed countries redesigned their branch libraries and village libraries as Community Libraries or LCDC by introducing many community-based services and programmes to meet the needs of the people. The author established a model LCDC in his native village of Poigai village using his own funds and gave a minimum requirement of resources and

budget in detail for replicating this model in other panchayats in the state. The state government may replicate this model by establishing LCDC in panchayats or converting or upgrading the existing village/branch libraries in stages by providing necessary resources as stated in this paper. Community libraries act as catalysts for the development of all sections of the community. The communities in villages and small towns can be empowered and the standard of living of the people raised by establishing LCDC and offering community services and skill development programmes as described by the author in this paper.

Acknowledgment

The author wishes to thank Mr. S. Jeyakumar, President of Poigai Panchayat, for allowing him to use the existing old panchayat building for LCDC, as well as Mr. A. Subramanian, Ward 1 Committee member, and Mr. C. Kathirvelmurugan, and SALIS for their guidance in establishing the center and carrying out the programs. The author also wishes his thanks to the people of Poigai panchayat for their cooperation and participation in the smooth function of the centre.

References

1. IFLA- IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 2022. Retrieved on September 02, 2022 from [https://repository.ifla.org/bitstream/UNESCO %20Public% 20Library%20Manifesto%202022.pdf](https://repository.ifla.org/bitstream/UNESCO%20Public%20Library%20Manifesto%202022.pdf)
2. ALA Resource Guides. Retrieved on September 02, 2022 from <https://libguides.ala.org/library-definition>
3. Impact on Community Development. Retrieved on September 04, 2022 from <https://www.ala.org/tools/research/librariesmatter/impact-community-development>
4. San Jose Public Library: Locations. Retrieved on September 04, 2022 from: <https://www.sjpl.org/locations>
5. University Community Libraries. Retrieved on September 16, 2022 from <https://www.sandiego.gov/public-library/locations/university-community-library>
6. San José Student Library Card. Retrieved on September 15, 2022 from: <https://www.sjpl.org/stude>
7. Singapore Infopedia. Retrieved on August, 10 2022 from: https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_887_2005-01-24.html
8. LCDC AutoLib software on cloud. Retrieved on August 10, 2022 from: <http://107.21.126.204>
9. LCDC AutoLib Mobile App on Google Playstore. Retrieved on August 12, 2022 from <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.autolib.poigai>
10. LCDC website. Retrieved on August 18, 2022: www.poigailibrary.wordpress.com
11. DPL. Retrieved on September 18, 2022 from: <https://tamilnadupubliclibraries.org/>