

RURAL INFORMATION COLLECTION PROCESS AND THE LIBRARIES: A STUDY BY OBSERVATION METHOD

Abstract :-Rural information collectors are mainly the reporters, correspondents, readers, writers, librarians, social workers, political activists, educationists etc. The librarians have the key role in the collection process of information in the rural areas. Rural libraries are the centers of collection, preservation and dissemination of rural information. This process can be effectively studied by observation method of research.

Introduction:

Rural information is collected by the newspaper houses mainly through the correspondents or the reporters. Apart from them the writes, organisations or institutions, political parties, Govt. departments etc. also send rural information to the newspaper houses and sometime the newspapers also collect the information from these sources by their own drive.

Some data or information is collected by the newspapers houses from the ready reference sources of the library. So, the components involve in the collection of rural information are as follows:-

- (i) Reporters.
- (ii) Correspondents.
- (iii) Readers.
- (iv) Writers. (a) Article or feature writers.
(b) Creative writers.
- (v) Library & Information centres.

The Reporters:

Reporters are responsible persons for the concerning newspapers for the day to day reporting of incidents and events. "Whatever may be the case, a reporter is to collect the information depending on its importance and report it to the press. One moral responsibilities that lies with the reporter is that the information he passes to the press for wider dissemination should be correct to the best of his knowledge. In order to establish the authenticity of the report, he has to check and cross-check at various vital points. Suppose, due to police firing some persons have been injured; When the reporter reaches the spot, he may get different figures from different persons as to the number of person injured, and different views as to the cause of firing. To establish the actual number of persons injured, he may have to go to nearby doctors and hospital where the persons have received first aid or have been admitted for treatment. He may also visit the nearby police station to get correct data

as to number of injured persons and determine the cause of firing. He may also interview local M.L.A.'s or MP's, relatives of the injured people and other responsible citizens of the area to build up his entire report".

Generally, the reporters of Assam are from the township. They visit the villages when any incidents occur. Due to lack of road facility, financial assistance etc. some reporters do not visit the spots due to which we do not get actual truth from such reports. The reporters from the District or sub-divisional headquarters collect most of the incidental information from the police personals. 'We visit the rural area when any incident happens or events occur. We take help of police, the village heads, well wishers and the leadings persons of the rural area as the sources of information" (Interview with the press club members, Bilasipara Press Club, Dist. Dhubri : Assam).

Correspondent:

According to 'random house dictionary', correspondent is a person employed by a news Agency, periodical or the like to gather, report or contribute news, articles etc. regularly from a distant place. The newspapers are generally published from the cities or township which are far from the villages. So, correspondents are engaged in the rural area who are not only responsible to report the day-to-day events but also to send socio-cultural or economic features, articles etc.

In Assam there are about five hundred correspondents in the rural areas. There is an organisation of correspondents namely "All Assam Press Correspondents Union" where 73% members are from the villages. There are another organisation like "All Assam Journalists Union" where 65% are rural correspondent, "Sodou Asom Gramya Sangbadik Sangstha" (All Assam Rural Journalist Union) where hundred percent members are rural journalist. In the state scenario more than 70% correspondents are rural correspondents. These correspondents are not fully paid. They are provided remuneration against their reports or writes up. But the correspondents take the key role in the collection of rural information. Apart from incidental events there may be the news of flood damage, lack of health services, lack of educational facility or any such problems or public grievances. These rural correspondents rarely get any facility from the newspaper houses. Rural journalism is yet to be developed as a profession and the correspondents provide their Service just to reflect the rural problems and grievances and they take it as their social service. These rural scribes have made the newspaper a prime media of rural information. Now in every newspaper, specially the vernacular dailies, separate page are allotted for regional news where most of the rural news are published. Rural information published in the front page are very less in comparison to the regional pages. Most of the rural news are published late in the newspapers as these are received late in the newspaper houses due to communication problem. The rural correspondents depend on postal service. It takes at least three days to receive any news information from village

areas to the news paper office by these postal services. Telephone facilities are rarely found in the rural areas. Fax, E-mail are out of imagination in the remote villages where electrification has not been done till now. So the correspondents are not satisfied with the published news items. Even then, the rural information has been flowing continuously by the newspapers with the great efforts of such correspondents who serve from the nook and corners of the country side.

Readers:

The readers also help in the collection of rural information for the newspapers. Every newspapers are having special column for the readers as 'letters to the editor'. In this column most of the letters are found from the rural areas, where such newspapers are circulated. This may be due to the more problems in the village areas and high interest for the newspapers by the readers of the rural areas. Some time readers directly inform about any events by telephone or some time they come to the office in an organised way to the newspaper houses to inform their problems and grievances (Interview, Ajit Kr. Bhuyan, editor *Ajit* and *Natun Samay*.)

Writers:

Numbers of famous writers of our country are from the country side. The villages teamed with natural beauty encourage them to write. The socio-cultural enrichment, linguistic variety etc. also are another factor which have made the villages as the fertile ground of literary creation. The writers prepare their various articles based on the sources of the villages and send them to the newspapers which are published according to standard and authenticity. We get two types of writings from the rural areas- the articles and features and the creative writings like story, novels, poem etc. The articles are mostly the socio-political, cultural, economic, environmental, women related, children related etc. the novel, stories, poems etc. of the rural writers reflect overall country life in an artistic manner.

The libraries and information centres:

The libraries with ready reference services greatly help the reporters and correspondents in the collection or rural information for the newspapers. The reference sources like dictionaries, encyclopedias, glossaries, thesauri, yearbooks, census and statistical reports, hand books, guides, manuals, illustrations, bibliographies, autobiographies, Atlases, Gazetteers, directories etc. are used by the journalist to know the meaning, definition, synonyms, usage, etymology, spellings, inflected forms etc. of words publications available in the library. Illustrations are very much necessary for the journalists. Library and information centre have a separate cell for preservation of illustrations. Information about organisations, leading personalities, special works etc. are found in the directories, autobiographies, biographies, Gezetters, reviewing periodicals, bibliographies etc. which are stocked in the library. Apart from reference service the journalist can have document delivery service for the library. Document delivery service is concerned with the supply of

documents to the users on demand either in original or its photocopies. Not confined to the users supplying of photocopies, modern computers and telecommunication technologies have made it possible to transfer the text of documents to long distances via telecommunication lines or via satellites at extremely fast speed almost instantly. A media person can avail these facilities from the community information centres which are set up in each of the blocks of the state by the state Government. Of course these are not set up in the village areas but they can have rural information data from these centres.

Some organisations, or institutions directly send press releases to the newspapers houses. Those are published by newspapers according to their importance and authenticity.

Thus by many ways – the rural information are collected in the newspaper houses. The editors and publishers also help to collect rural information by encouraging reporters, correspondents, readers and writers by their editorial articles, personal contact and progressive plans and programmes.

All the leading dailies organise correspondents meet at least once in a year to inform their guidelines and policies regarding the collection of information in the rural areas.

The publishers also help in the collection of rural information. Of course their view point is business. They try to give importance to those areas where the market is available. In Assam a recent trend has been noticed that the newspaper houses specially the vernacular newspapers has started to publish different editions from the village-townships. For instance “Asomiya Pratidin” publish separate edition from Bongaigaon, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, “Amar Asom” has separate edition from Kokrajhar & Jorhat, “Aji” publishes separate edition from Sivasagar and so on. These are the marketing policy taken by the publisher which have influenced the rural areas. Such editions have created new scopes to publish more news items in the paper.

But at the same time, it has a negative effect also because such editions are confined to a particular region and the rural information do not have coverage in the whole state. As a result the rural people deprived from the right to expression in the whole state. Even then this new (200>) trend has revolutionized in the publication of rural information and new field of job has been created for the rural journalists.

FINDINGS : information cycle in the rural areas:

The producers, collectors, processors and the disseminators complete the information cycle. In the rural areas information producers are the public. Govt., non-govt. organisations etc. and the nature*. The reporters and the correspondents are the collectors and the agents, librarians or the information professionals are the

disseminator of information. In the rural area newspaper takes the key role to fulfill the information cycle. Newspapers collect the rural information from the public by the reporters and correspondents and these are processed in the editorial desks by the editing staffs like editor, subeditor etc. The processed or edited news information are published in the newspaper and distributed by the agents in the countryside. Apart from the individual families newspapers are distributed in the libraries of the rural areas which is the social place of reading. The libraries also take the responsibility of preservation of the newspapers and documentation service of the news information.

So, the information cycle in the villages which creates newspaper can be explained by the following way –

The producers are nature, people, Govt., Non-Govt., organisations and Industrialists etc.

The collectors are reporter, correspondents and writers etc.

The processors are editor, sub-editor etc.

The distributors are agents and the libraries etc.

