

# Community Engagement in Developing Public Libraries: Issues, Challenges and Suggestions

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## *Abstract*

*Public libraries are an essential partner for individuals, groups, businesses and governments and indeed, for society itself. Public libraries have always contributed to local economic development through traditional services, such as providing access to educational and training opportunities, patent searches, proactive services etc. In the new Information era, Information and Communication Technologies have been contributing to a significant part of the economy of the developing countries. Information, knowledge and communication are the lifeblood of economic and social interaction. The advent of scholarly communication technologies and their increased use have changed the Library scenario from physical to virtual. It is the contribution of ICT and impact of Internet that information processing, storing, searching, dissemination and uses have become expeditious, easy and user-friendly. So to cope up with the above and to develop the public libraries to the present digital era, community engagement is very much essential for the development of both the public libraries and the society. The details of community engagement in developing public libraries, its importance, various issues and few suggestions for solving the problems are explained and discussed in this paper. The paper concludes that library services have been quite effective at involving local people in the simpler forms of community engagement.*

**Keywords:** Public Libraries, Community engagement, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), economic development, Digital Information