



Non-Members and Non-Users of Public Libraries: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Public Libraries are the backbone of any society and they play a vital role for the development of the society. But presently many people do not use Public Library. This paper identifies the carelessness of public library authorities and library personnel to change non-members and non-users to member-users. This paper also explains how to redesign the existing public library services based on the suggestions received from sixty respondents of six different categories. Lastly a sociological study has also been made to identify the possible difficulties faced by the respondents to be member and also to use the library. The study shows that only 44% members are actively using the library services. Library services are not up to date due to the negligence's of library personnel and due to non-availability of infrastructural and technological setup.

Key Words: *Public libraries, non- member users, member users, mobile library service etc.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

According to “IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto” the **public library** is the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision- making and cultural development of the individual and social groups. The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Services have to be physically accessible to all members of the community. Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison. These days a librarian does a lot more than check out materials and shelve books. Technology expert, information detective, manager, literacy expert, trainer, community programming coordinator, reader’s advisor, children’s storyteller, material reviewer, and buyer are just a few of the hats a public librarian wear.

But in this study area, Library has no Librarian and the Library Personnel do not carefully handle this task. They give only traditional services which are given by a Library. No such initiative is taken by

him to change non-members and non-users to member-users. Only hand bills are distributed according to “Boi Dharo Boi Poro Prakalpa”. No ICT infrastructure available in this Library. There is only one public library namely Swaraj Jnan Bhandar is offering library services in the study area. Total number of members in this Library is only 1400, out of the total population 15,200 of the study area as per Census 2011.

State wise present scenario of Public Libraries in India:

No. of public libraries in different States and Union Territories											
State name	State Central Library	State / Spl. Library	District Central/ District Library	Regional/ Divisional/ Sub-divisional Library	City Library/ Town Library	Panchayat/ Rural/ Village Library	Mobile Library	School Public Library	Other types of Library	NGO / trust run by Public Library	Total
Andaman and Nicobar Island	1		1	16							18
Andhra Pradesh			13	4	179	782					978
Arunachal Pradesh	1		21	22	2	72					118
Assam			26	15		199					240
Bihar	1		20	16		155					192
Chandigarh	1			1	4	1				1	8
Chhattisgarh	1		27								28
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1					9					10
Daman & Diu			2								2
Goa	1		1	7	1	126					136
Gujrat	1	3	26		84	182				3168	3464
Haryana	1		19	7							27
Himachal Pradesh	1		11		2	13		918			945
Jammu & Kashmir	2	2	22	51	22	41					140
Jharkhand	1	3	6	9	2						21
Karnataka	1		30		26	5766	13		962		6798
Kerala	1	1	3	5	8405						8415
Lakshadweep	1			9							10
Madhya Pradesh			36	5						1	42
Maharashtra	1		35	6	1					12148	12191
Manipur	1		12							144	157
Meghalaya	1		7								8
Mizoram	1		5							500	506
Nagaland	1		11			610			8		622
Orissa	1		17	1							27
Pondicherry	1		1	2	38	39					81
Punjab	1		14								15
Rajasthan	1		33	7		282					323
Sikkim	1		3	6						3	13
Tamilnadu	1	1	32	314	1612	1915	14		733		4622
Telangana	1		31	2	537	99				2	672
Tripura	1		7	10	1	7				20	46
Uttar Pradesh	1		75		2	200				295	573
Uttaranchal / Uttara Khand			9	16						22	47
West Bengal	1	1	26		236	2216				2771	5251
Total	31	11	582	531	11154	12714	27	918	1703	19075	46746

Sources: <http://rrrlf.nic.in/>

Though, India is fast developing country public libraries still remains largely underdeveloped. After 72 years of independence public library are still

crying for establishment and maintenance in the country. Growth and development of public libraries in general has been remarkable. But according to the

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) standards, there should be one public library for every 3,000 people. Thus, with over one billion people, India needs more than 343,000 public library units.

Out of 30 states and 6 union Territories in India only 18 states and one Union Territory have been enacted library legislation Tamil Nadu is the first state to do so followed by Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka etc. Out of these states only in six states library legislation provision has been made for the

collection of library cess, Viz., Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Haryana and Goa. The remaining states do not have any provision for library cess in the absence this they have to depend upon state government grants. This is one of the major drawbacks for the overall development of the public library system in India. There were so many other problems in the development of Public Library, like: The Lack of National Coordination, Not in Government Primary Agenda, People Awareness Problem, Low Literacy Rate, Low Budget Problem etc.

Present scenario of Public Libraries in West Bengal:

No. of public libraries in West Bengal										
State Central Library	State / Spl. Library	District Central/ District Library	Regional/ Divisional/ Sub-divisional Library	City Library/ Town Library	Panchayat/ Rural/ Village Library	Mobile Library	School Public Library	Other types of Library	NGO / trust run by Public Library	Total
1	1	26		236	2216				2771	5251

Sources: <http://rrrlf.nic.in/>

According to 2011 census, the population of west Bengal is 91,276,115. But according to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) standards, there should be one public library for every 3,000 people. So West Bengal needs more than 25000 public library units. Rural public libraries in West Bengal suffers from several loopholes like the lack of children books collection, lack of electronic services, lack of programming services, lack of infrastructure, lack of staffs, lack of reference books collection, shortage of sufficient materials, deficiency of current information, absence of mobile service, lack of information of development activities, lack of scientific & technological information etc.. In order to alleviate these lacks huge amount of funding is necessary. Financial problems are the major problem in this state. Though Library cess is very important thing for the development of Public Libraries, West Bengal has no provision of Library cess, they have to depend upon state government grants. This is one of the major drawbacks for the overall development of the public library system in West Bengal.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Sultana, Ruksana. (2014). in her paper “Rural Library services: lessons from five rural Public Libraries in West Bengal” gives a brief description

about rural Public Libraries’ services, problems associated with rural Library services etc.

Kamble, Shivanand D., Kumbar, B. D. and Patil, Rohit R. (2018). in their paper “The present scenario of public libraries in India: challenges and opportunities” gives a brief description about role of Central Government, National Mission on Libraries, Delivery of Book and News Paper Act, National Knowledge Commission, Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation for development of public Libraries. And advise the government on all matters pertaining to the library development in the country.

Singh, Manendra Kumar (2018). in her paper “Transforming the Public Library status in India” discuss the transformational need in public library, discuss why public library needs to transform in India and give the proper suggestion for transformation of the public library.

Mallik, Avijit. & Maity, Debabrata. (2019). in their paper “Public library scenario of Ghatal subdivision: a survey” gives a brief description about infrastructure facilities of the existing public libraries, users’ patterns and users’ satisfaction levels of the public libraries, different services provided by the public libraries and notable problems faced by the public libraries in Ghatal subdivision.

3. Objectives of the study:

i) To identify the possible difficulties faced by the respondents to be member and also to use the library.

ii) To know some suggestions from the respondents to redesign the existing public library services.

iii) To identify the possible carelessness attitude of the public library authorities and library personnel to change non-members and non-users to member-users.

iv) To study the present scenario of public libraries in the study area.

4. Database and Research Methodology:

4.1 Study area:

I have chosen Joteghanashyam village as the study area, purposively on the basis of convenience. Joteghanashyam is a village and a gram panchayat in Daspur II CD Block in Ghatal subdivision of Paschim Medinipur district in the state of West Bengal, India. There are seven villages under Joteghanashyam gram panchayat: Joteghanashyam, Satpota, Gourichak, Donabhanga, Gomokpota, Narayanchak and Nonanarayanchak. There is only one public library namely Swaraj Jnan Bhandar is offering library services in the study area and this public library is sponsored by Govt. of West Bengal and non-recurring grants from Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation.

4.2 Study Period:

The study period of the research work spreads over 1.07.2019 to 1.01.2020. Basically the primary data required for the research work have been collected over the stated period but the secondary data used for the study relates to a different period.

4.3 Sample design and size of sample:

As per 2011 Census of India Joteghanashyam village had a total population of 15,200. Out of the

total population only 1400 people get them registered for availing the library services of this particular library. I have taken about 4% registered users as sample size and a total of sixty respondents have taken for this study. For collecting the data I have followed the multistage stratified random sampling. I have classified the total population into six different categories, namely Student, Senior citizen, Unemployed youth, House wife, Farmers, Professionals then I have selected 10 respondent from each of the above six categories following the random sampling technique .

4.4 Sources of data

I have used both the primary and secondary data for our study. Secondary data have been collected from the different websites, journals, books, study reports and project reports whereas the primary data have been collected directly from the field of survey areas through structured questionnaire. We have collected the data through direct interview method.

i) Sources of primary data

Primary data have been collected from the selected respondent on the basis of a structured questionnaire and the respondents are selected on the basis of multistage stratified random sampling. To collect the data regarding the library services I have recorded the response of the library personnel of the studied library on a structured questionnaire.

ii) Sources of secondary data

Secondary data used in the research work have been basically collected from the Census of India 2011, Census data have been used for the purpose of having an overview of the study area.

4.5 Methodological and statistical tools:

To collect the data I have used the multistage stratified random sampling and to analyze the collected data I have used very simple statistical tools like percentage, average etc.

4.6 Analysis of Data: Following tables show the different aspects of the elected public library and the responses of the registered 1400 members.

Table-1

Categorizations of respondents and active library users

Serial no.	Categories of Respondents	Percentage of members (out of 1400 members)	Percentage of Registered users who visited the library (out of 1400 members)
1.	Student	10%	4%
2.	Senior citizen	30%	15%
3.	Unemployed youth	30%	10%
4.	House wife	15%	8%
5.	Farmers	5%	2%
6.	Professionals	10%	5%
	Total	100%	44%

Sources: Own survey

Table-2

List of services provided by the library

Services provided by this Library	
1	Lending service
2	Reading room service
3	Readers advisory service

Sources: Own survey

Table-3

Possible difficulties faced by the library users

Possible difficulties faced by the respondents to be a member and also to use the library services	Possible difficulties faced by the respondents to be a member and also to use the library services						Total
	Student (out of 10)	Senior citizen (out of 10)	Unemployed youth (out of 10)	House wife (out of 10)	Farmers (out of 10)	Professionals (out of 10)	
1. Lack of time.		1	1	4	2	4	12
2. Lack of necessity	3	2	2	2	2	1	12
3. Do not know about Public Library services	1	2	2	2	1		8
4. Opening hours not suitable			1	2	1	2	6
5. Irregularity of Library opening		2	2		2	2	8
6. No reason	6	3	2		2	1	14

Sources: Own survey

Table-4

List of suggestions for up gradation of library services

Redesign the existing public library system/services based on the suggestions received from sixty respondents of six different categories							Total
	Student (out of 10)	Senior citizen (out of 10)	Unemployed youth (out of 10)	House wife (out of 10)	Farmers (out of 10)	Professionals (out of 10)	
1. Well situated library buildings, well organized collection, good reading and study facilities		2	2	1	1	3	9
2. Community Information Services		1			3	2	6
3. Mobile Library Services / Book Mobile		2	1	4	1	2	10
4. ICT facility	3		3			2	8
5. Extension services, like: story times, Yoga, Audio equipment training, chess club etc.	3		2	1			6
6. User education programs			1	1			2
7. Sufficient opening hours		2	1	2	1	1	7
8. Others	4	3		1	4		12

Sources: Own survey

5. FINDINGS:

Table-1 Shows that, as per 2011 Census of India Joteghanashaym had a total population of 15,200. And only 1400 people are members in this Library. Out of 1400 registered members maximum members are from senior citizen and unemployed youth (30%) followed by housewives (15%), students and professional (10%) and farmers.

Interestingly it is observed that only 44% registered members are actively using the library services and 56% members are availing the library services rarely. Out of the active library users' senior citizen (15%) are the maximum active users followed by unemployed youth (10%), housewives (8%), Professional (5%), students (4%) and farmers (2%).

Table-2 shows that, no such services which are generally provided by a public library are not provided by this Library, which will make change to non-members and non-users to member-users.

Table-3 shows the reasons of not visiting the library by the registered members. The table shows that maximum registered members do not visit the

library without any reasons followed by lack of time, lack of necessities, lack of knowledge about the library services, irregularity of library opening and not having suitable opening hours of the library.

Table-4 shows the suggestion as received from the respondents for up gradation and redesign of library services. It is shows that following services and infrastructure facilities may results in up gradation of library services and may help in change to non-members and non-users to member-users-

- Mobile Library services
- Well situated library buildings, well organized collection, good reading and study facilities.
- ICT facilities

Hence it is suggested that the state government and local governments should ensure proper financial support for the proper growth of public library system. Collection of books like, children book, story book, subject specific book, competitive book, collection of at least 3 types of newspapers is very essential for attract the people. Also, the Public library system should give more emphasis for the acquisition

of Non-Book Materials like video, audio-books, Radio, tapes and films etc. to help illiterate and neo-literates in the rural areas.

6. CONCLUSION:

Public libraries are now acknowledged to be an indispensable part of community life as promoters of literacy, providers of a wide range of reading for all ages, and centers for community information services. This requires well situated library buildings, good reading and study facilities, as well as relevant technologies and sufficient opening hours convenient to the users. The librarian is an active intermediary between users and resources.

But from the study it is clear that these public libraries are failed to provide proper services to users as well as failed to fulfil social information needs. Finance is the only hurdle for the development of public libraries in India. Hence it is suggested that the state government and local governments should ensure proper financial support for the proper growth of public library system and recruit a Librarian, Library staff in this regard. Library staff will be very co-operative and helpful to attract the people for using the libraries. Also, people co-operation and willingness to use the Library is very important in this regard.

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