

The Condition of Public Library in West Bengal: A Case Study of the Malda District Library

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Abstract

In modern society the library has become known as a cultural organ. The library plays a vital role in the overall development of the society. The library is a social institution, where regardless of their social standing. The book without the reader is as useless as the reader without the book is helpless. If the relationship between the book and the reader is intimate, then the book is meaningful and the author and the reader are happy and proud. The best vehicle book in education.

Education and libraries are intertwined. Library is the holder and carrier of civilization. The library has been carrying the mortality and civilization of the people for ages. Library is the key to improving culture. The usefulness of the library in this country is nothing less than a hospital and more than a school-college. Students reading interest increases through the library.

This paper will aim at exploring the nuances of the condition of public library in west Bengal. The paper will focus on the secondary data and primary data gathered from 50 people residing in Malda.

Key Words-Library, Education, Reader, Evolution, Society, Development

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This is the eleventh year after the completion of hundred years of public library services in 2007. The history of public library services in India was introduced by Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekward in way of free compulsory elementary education backed by libraries in 1883 in the district of Baroda, in colonial India. The Maharaja accepted W.A. Borden's proposal and a network of free public libraries consisting a state central library, four district or divisional libraries, forty-five town libraries, and more than a thousand village libraries was planned. Thus, Borden played a leading role for the establishment, management and organization of public libraries in India. Borden also conducted the first formal library-training programme in India at Baroda in 1911. The names of Maharaja Sawai Man Singh of Jaipur and Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab will be remembered with appreciation in the history of library services in India. The Maharaja of Tanjaur started the famous Saraswati Mahal Library in 17th century A.D. It remains a unique institution in its nature of collection and services (Sathikumar 1993, p. 18). The Delhi Public Library was established in 1951 under the joint auspices of UNESCO and Government of India to serve as a model public library for Asia.

The 1951 census, the first conducted after independence, found 2,843 local governments in the urban and rural areas in India, of which 320 were rural district boards. Only about one third of local governments maintained public libraries, about 950. In addition, there were about 1,500 subscription libraries. So-called public libraries were primarily reading rooms with a few hundred books for reading on the premises. There are a total of 54,851 public libraries in India at present, of which, 30 state central libraries, 40 regional and divisional libraries, 364 district libraries, 4658 city/town libraries and 49,758 village libraries (Ramaiah, and Reddy, 2010). Out of 28 states and 7 union territories in India, only 17 states have enacted public library legislation (Ibid). A Public Library is regarded as the "People's University" as it caters to all sections of the public with information and supports the individuals in lifelong learning. As seen above most of the Indian states are offering free public library services, irrespective of public library legislation.

Education and libraries are intertwined. The history of the development of the public library may be said to be as old as that of education in India. During ancient times, the seekers of education stayed in the ashrams of gurus for several years. Many students joined ashrams from many neighbouring countries. Oral tradition of education was imparted where writing was not available for much of the early times. Writing tradition came a little bit later. This is evident from the written and recorded materials found in India. In the Ashrams the manuscripts were kept for use of the teachers and students as well as for the visitors. Big ashrams were known as Vidyapeeths, where numbers of teachers are engaged to teach the students like modern universities.

Libraries in ancient India developed at other famous centres of learning, such as *Vikramshila* and *Odantapuri*. Universities of ancient India, like Taxila and Vikramshala also had valuable collection on *Tantras* and manuscripts in their libraries. Chinese traveller Huen Tsang is known to have consulted at the library of Nalanda University (in Bihar)ⁱ in the seventh century and to have taken from here hundreds of treatises to China and Japan. This library was completely destroyed by Bakhtiar Khilaji, who invaded India in 1205 AD. Muslims ruled India in the Medieval Period and hence, it is also known as Mughal Period. All the succession of rulers, namely, Babur, Humayun, Akbar and Jahangir made their distinctive contributions to education and libraries. Babur established the first Mughal Imperial Library in 1526 and his son Humayun set up a library at Agra Fort with books, gilded pen cases, portfolios, picture books and beautiful works of calligraphy. After the death of Humayun, Akbar improved the management of library with some technical works and appointed calligraphers to copy good manuscripts. He also established a separate library for women at Fatehpur Sikri. Jahangir, another ruler of Mughal period, made a law that when a wealthy man died heirless, the property should be used for building and repairing schools, monasteries, libraries, and other institutions, which helped the development of libraries in late medieval period. During this period the library staff had distinct designations like *Nizam* (head librarian) and *Muhatin* (Assistant librarian) and these were assisted by scribes, illustrators, calligraphers and copyists. Though the British came to India primarily to establish trade and commerce, a number of educational institutions and libraries were established during their rule. The University of Calcutta (1857), University of Bombay (1879), and University of Madras (1907) were the first three universities were established along with their libraries. There were only nineteen Universities in India before 1947.

Five Year Plans and Government Initiatives for Libraries in India

1951-1956

It was the first five-year plan for educational development that includes a proposal for improvement of Library Service. This proposal envisioned a network of libraries throughout the country. In that period, nine state governments, i.e. Assam, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Punjab, PEPSU, Rajasthan, Savarashtra, Bhopal, and Vindhya Pradesh, decided to establish State Central Libraries.

1956-1961

During this period, government allocated funds to set up a national network of libraries among its 320 districts. The result is that, most of the states established State Central Libraries and District Libraries as the main distributing centres.

1961-1966

At this time, the system of central government aid to the states was changed, and funding for libraries was kept low. It was at the discretion of individual states to take initiative and to develop their public libraries. The programme to assist state governments in establishing state central libraries, district central libraries, and block development libraries was abandoned. The decision was a major setback to the development of public libraries. In this, four national libraries were established at Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras.

1969-1974

During this time period, the plan was proposed that describes the substantial sum for the social education programme. A much lower sum was allocated.

1974-1979

This plan included measures to strengthen the buildings, collections, and staff of the central and state libraries, as well as strengthening the district, block, and village libraries. During this period, attempts were made to develop a district-level library system, so that district library could act as a leader for the smaller libraries in the district. The adult education programme was the hallmark of this plan.

1980-85

This plan emphasized establishing a network of rural public libraries to sustain literacy and disseminate information to rural areas. It discussed the necessity of integrating school and college libraries with the system of public libraries.

1985-90

In this period, the Commission's aim was to tackle the needs of 90 million people in the Adult Education Programme. For this the network of libraries was to play a role in the development of literature for neo-literates. The library systems were to be made strong enough with specific attention in areas of improvement of facilities at national level institutions.

1992-97

During this period it was proposed to reorganize the Central Reference Library into the National Bibliographical and Documentation Centre, which would also have a computer centre. The Delhi Public Library set up two new libraries in its service area. RRRLF created programmes to help state central libraries purchase reprographic equipment, to help libraries process rare books, and to give special assistance to networks of public libraries that were at least 100 years old (Planning Commission India, 1992).

1997-2002

During the 9th five year plan, the National Library, Kolkata, undertook several major initiatives to upgrade and modernize its collection building programme, reader services, and conservation of library material. The major activities completed during the period were automation of the circulation system in the lending section, setting up of a local area network, improved reader services, and more efficient collection management. The conservation activities in the library got a major advance with the purchase of modern equipment to preserve rare books and other materials. The Central Reference Library, Kolkata computerised various functions during the Ninth Plan. As a result, the publication of the *Indian National Bibliography* is now up to date, with records available online. Funds were provided to the Delhi Public Library and Central Secretariat Library, Delhi, for acquisition of new material in different languages and media as well as for modernizing their infrastructure. The benefits of these efforts can be seen in improved reader services, networking, and resource sharing. The Central Secretariat Library organized a number of computer training programmes for resource sharing, standardization of cataloguing formats, and co-operative acquisition. Funds for modernizing and computerization were also provided from central grants to the Connemara Library, Chennai, Thanjavur Maharaja Serovji Sarasvati Mahal Library, Thanjavur and the State Central Library, Mumbai. Besides these, the RRRLF provided assistance to public libraries across the country for collections and storage, construction, and seminars and workshops (Planning Commission India 1997).

Tenth Five-Year Plan (Action Plan)

The Planning Commission proposed further modernization of central and public libraries during the Tenth Plan. A national bibliographic database would be developed to encourage resource sharing, networking, and to improve reader services. The Commission resolved to strengthen public library infrastructure through the RRRLF. The Tenth Plan focused on upgrading existing libraries, including private collections, and widening the programme for bibliographic control and documentation. To make readers services more comprehensive and effective, the National Library is expected to act as the ultimate referral centre for various subjects. To keep pace with the latest developments in information technology in public libraries, the upgrading and networking of central and state libraries was also planned (Planning Commission India 2002) The Government of India appointed a committee in 1957 to report on the status of public library development in the country called the Sinha Committee, after its chair, the late Dr. A.P. Sinha, who was at that time Director of Public Instruction in Bihar. The committee submitted its report to Dr. K.L. Shrimali, who was Minister for Education, on the 12th of November, 1958. The Committee described the situation as dismal and called libraries in most cases, “a stagnant pool of books,” because new books were not added regularly. The committee at the same time observed that wherever large collections did exist, they were not fully used because of rigid rules. Library users were not trusted and were required to deposit large sums of money as a kind of insurance, which lower income people could not afford. According to the report, as of March 1954 there were 32,000 libraries in India, with a little more than 7,100,000 books and a total circulation of about 37,700,000. The report observed that genuine public library service was rarity, and that public library service throughout the country was unsatisfactory. The committee recommended creating state library networks based on uniform library legislation.

Another positive step taken by the Central Government was the establishment of the Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) at Calcutta on May 22, 1972, as a part of the bicentenary celebrations of the birth of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a social reformer of the early 19th century. Its objectives are library development in general and rural library development in particular. It provides financial assistance to public libraries in the form of matching grants. It assists State Central Libraries and District Central Libraries, which has helped many states and Union Territories develop rural public library services.

In 1985, a committee was set up under the chairmanship of Prof. D.P. Chattopadhyay to formulate a National Policy on Library & Information System (NAPLIS) (Chatoopadhyay, 1998). The Committee submitted its report in May 1986. Following that, another committee looked at implications of the report and created an action plan for its implementation (Bhattacharjee 1999, p. 19-20). The Empowerment Committee submitted its report in April 1988 and an Implementation Cell was formed to implement its recommendations within a period of six months (p. 20). Yet another Working Group, under the Joint Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Culture, was constituted to examine its recommendations for implementation.

Present Status

As far as study is concerned it was studied that the current status of the public library system in India is difficult to ascertain and describe, as a consolidated picture is not accessible. There are twenty-eight states and seven union territories in India. All have their own public library systems, structure, and pattern of financial assistance. Twelve of the states have enacted library legislation and rests are in process to give service without legislation.

The 1951 census, the first conducted after independence, found 2,843 local governments in the urban and rural areas in India, of which 320 were rural district boards. Only about one third of local governments maintained public libraries, about 950. In addition, there were about 1,500 subscription libraries. So-called public libraries were primarily reading rooms with a few hundred books for reading on the premises.

The Delhi public library deserves special mention. It was founded in 1951 as the first UNESCO Public Library Pilot Project under the joint auspices of UNESCO and Government of India¹. The purpose of the library was to adapt “modern techniques to Indian conditions” and to serve as a model public library for Asia (Verma & Agarwal, 1994, p. 8). The establishment of Delhi Public Library, the involvement of union government in the public library movement, and the enactment of public library legislation in some states are the main factors which contributed to the improvement of public libraries after independence.

Although the government of India allotted funds for public library development in its five-year plans, this funding was not connected to effective planning. It was found that, during the end of the 20th century, college and university libraries face enormous challenges and opportunities. As campuses move into the information age, the mission and role of the library is being redefined. While the amount of information libraries need to acquire continues to increase, the resources available to do so are insufficient. The growing universe of print-based publications and digital documents on the one hand, and the declining universe of library budgets on the other, can be handled confidently by adopting certain strategies, such as by developing critical thinking skills, as well as promoting information literacy at large. In the near future, users should expect timely access to quality information.

Library Movement in India

The credit of establishing libraries for the public goes to Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekward (1852-1930) of Bar Theoda state. Borden was invited from United States of America to establish a network of libraries at state, district, *taluk* and village levels. Thus the library movement in India was initiated. In the more or less same decades, the library movement was spread to the states like Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, West Bengal and Kerala. Library movements are social movements and contributed to the formation of public opinion for the establishment of library system in various states of India. The aim of the library movement is to disseminate knowledge among the people and pathetic condition for better living. The old idea that a public library is a mere storehouse of books and the librarian is its custodian only became outdated. The library movement conceived that a public library is a “people’s university”.

In the library movement in Andhra Pradesh, the publication of *Granthalaya Sarvasvamu* which was started as a quarterly journal in 1915 is a land mark and currently it is being brought out as monthly journal. The stalwarts in the library movement in the Telangana region were Sarvashri K. Lakshman Rao, Madapati Hanumantha Rao, Suravaram Pratapa Reddy, K.V.Ranga Reddy, T.Ranga Rao, A Veerabhadra Rao, B.Rama Krishna Rao, M.Narsinga Rao and others. Thus, the library movement in Andhra Pradesh during this period helped not only the reading habits, but created a social consciousness among the people. It extended support to various social and political movements in Andhra Pradesh and made people evaluate the importance if public libraries.

The first Public Libraries Act in free India was enacted in the year 1948, named as Madras Public Libraries Act which paved the way for the development of Public Libraries in the ten composite Madras State. This Act was implemented in 1950 onwards in twelve Andhra District which formed part and parcel of the Composite Madras State. Subsequently, in 1955, Hyderabad Public Libraries Act was enacted for implementation in the ten Telangana region. With the states reorganization in the year 1956, the newly formed Government of Andhra Pradesh enacted a fresh act named as Andhra Pradesh Public Libraries Act (1960), which came into effect from 01-04-1960.

¹Public Library Systems are a key element in NATIS and should have prime consideration when Legislation is being considered. A Legislation base is essential for the development of Library systems. Legislation should make it mandatory to provide Library Services, but it should be capable of flexible and progressive implementation. The means should be willed as well as the ends. There is a need for a national focus with clearly defined responsibilities and powers. The nature of the national focus will vary, but will balance in varying degrees the two main forms of organizational structures centralized and decentralized. Library service must be equipped with controlling and / or advisory bodies which ensure they are responsive to democratic control and user interests. In West Bengal West Bengal: The West Bengal Public Libraries Act 1979 came into force.

Libraries and West Bengal

The formation of the Left Front Government in West Bengal was a culmination of decades of struggles by various sections of the people — workers, peasants, teachers, refugees and students — under the leadership of the Left, and its biggest component the CPI (M)². The Congress was severely punished by the people of the country for its authoritarian and anti-democratic actions in the general elections of 1977 and the Janata Party Government was formed at the Centre with Morarji Desai as Prime Minister. The Assembly elections in West Bengal were held shortly after the general elections in 1977. The people came out to vote in very large numbers to get rid of the reign of terror. The Left Front won by over three-fourth majority. While assuming office in 1977, the Left Front government was aware of the limitations of a State government in implementing pro-people policies within the existing Constitutional set-up. While the major responsibility of delivering services to the people was with the State Governments, financial resources were concentrated in the hands of the Centre. Keeping in mind this constraint, the Left Front government embarked upon a programme to provide immediate relief to the people and implementing alternative policies in spheres where the State government had some say. The major initiatives of the first Left Front government were to carry out thoroughgoing land reforms and establishing a vibrant Panchayati Raj. These historic initiatives broke the back of landlordism in the rural areas, empowered the poor peasantry and agricultural workers immensely and decisively changed the correlation of class forces in favour of the rural poor. Large sections of the rural poor, especially the dalits, *adivasis* and minorities, gravitated towards the Left and the CPI (M).

After 30 years of Left Front rule, 84% of land in West Bengal is owned by small (2.5 acres to 5 acres) and marginal farmers (less than 2.5 acres) today, while the all-India figure is only 43%. Over 12 lakh acres of ceiling surplus vested land is lying with various State governments today but not being distributed among the landless. This shows the difference in the political will of the Left Front government in West Bengal and other State governments run by bourgeois parties. Moreover, around 56% of the total beneficiaries of land redistribution in West Bengal were dalits and *adivasis*. Dalits and *adivasis* also comprised over 41% of the registered sharecroppers. Till date, over 5.35 lakh women have been given joint *pattas* and 1.57 lakh women given individual *pattas* (ownership rights over land). Muslims have also benefited significantly from the land reforms programme. Proportion of land owned by Muslims in West Bengal is the highest among all Indian States which have a significant share (over 10%) of Muslim households in total rural households.

Reorganisation of the system of local government was one of the most important of the institutional changes brought about by the Left Front government. In the process, West Bengal has created a history of participation of the common people through the process of decentralisation, which is unique in India. A system of democratic elections to local bodies at *anchal* (local), block and district level was instituted: *gram panchayats* at the *anchal* level, *panchayat samitis* at the block level and *zilla parishads* at the district level. Elections to these local bodies were held in June 1978. The newly elected panchayats were involved with the execution of land reforms. Panchayats took the initiative in exposing *benami* (in other's names) land holdings, ensured the identification of excess land and the declaration of vested land and were also given charge of ensuring the legal rights of recipients of vested land and *bargadars* over land. The *panchayats* were also involved in arrangements for the provision of institutional credit for the beneficiaries of vested land and for *bargadars*. After the rural development projects were devolved to *panchayats* for implementation, the beneficiaries of land reform were given priority in the receipt of benefits from these projects. This was possible because through the *panchayat* election of 1978, a new leadership was established at the helm of the rural bodies from less privileged socio-economic backgrounds. The erstwhile village elite, including landlords and moneylenders, lost their dominance over the newly elected local bodies.

The Left Front government in West Bengal has undertaken several pro-people initiatives to ensure all-round development of the State. The Left Front government has ensured significant expansion in the spheres of public education and health. The number of schools in West Bengal has seen a substantial increase in the post-1977 period, with the number of secondary and higher secondary schools registering a four-fold increase, from 4600 in 1977 to over 22,500 in 2006. Accordingly, the number of students appearing for the secondary board examination has increased from a little over 2 lakhs in 1977 to over 7.5 lakhs in 2006. Around 80% of the indoor patients in West Bengal today are treated in Government hospitals. These reflect the commitment of the Left Front government towards human development. The Left Front government has also taken some important steps to provide social security to workers like introducing a provident fund scheme for unorganised sector workers for the first time in the country (nearly 7.9 lakh workers have already joined the scheme so far), providing financial assistance of Rs. 750 per month to workers of closed factories and tea gardens and providing social security to the construction workers. Another important development in the recent years from the point of view of self-employment in West Bengal is the phenomenal growth of Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The total number of SHGs in West Bengal reached 3.8 lakhs in 2005-06, involving nearly 38 lakh persons, 90% of whom

²Communist Party of India (Marxist) is popularly known in its abbreviation CPI (M)

are women. This has opened up new possibilities for employment generation and women's empowerment. When the seventh Left Front government assumed office in 2006, a dedicated Ministry to provide policy support to these SHGs was created.

A big achievement of the Left Front government in West Bengal is its record in safeguarding democratic rights. Notwithstanding the vicious campaigns unleashed against it from time to time by its opponents, the Left Front government continues to remain firmly committed to democratic values and principles. Its impeccable record in upholding secularism, dealing with communal elements with a firm hand and defending the rights of minorities is a welcome exception to the programmatic or pragmatic communalism practiced by the bourgeois parties and the state governments led by them. While dalits and *adivasis* across the country continue to be victims of caste violence, it is indeed heartening to find that West Bengal has an almost zero rate of atrocities against dalits and *adivasis*. Born out of the struggles against authoritarianism and State repression, it is the commitment of the Left Front government to democracy, which has won it enormous credibility in the eyes of the people of West Bengal and enabled it to complete thirty-three years in office. This overall impact has had an influence on the status of Libraries in the state. The Left Front government in West Bengal also spearheaded the initiative of a mass movement for libraries in the state. It was under the governance of this rule in the state that a Central State Public Library was also found in Kolkata. The Trinomool government after coming to power also had initiated sustenance of the structure but the overall impact of the Library especially public libraries came to a halt post 2010.

A review of literature on libraries in the State reveals very few data. One study conducted by Ruksana Sultana in (*International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention* ISSN (Online): 2319 – 7722, ISSN (Print): 2319 – 7714 www.ijhssi.org || Volume 3 Issue 10 || October. 2014, pp.27-30) 2014 reveal the following: In rural public libraries of West Bengal, although the number of users of periodicals is higher than that of the other services, yet the value of library benefits from the periodicals is relatively smaller than that of other services. It is mainly due to the lesser per unit cost of daily magazine, etc than that of the books. The rural libraries play the vital role by providing the rural youth, the information of employment opportunities via Karmakhetra, Karmasangathan, etc. to the rural youths. Rural public libraries in this State can also be regarded as the centre of local and regional culture. It is manifested in the various library programming services provided by Hasanpur Milani Pathagar. Hence rural public libraries activity in West Bengal is not only confined that to economic aspect but also ramified to other social aspects. The empirical estimates of expenditure of & benefits from services of rural public libraries show that the benefits created are much higher than the expenditure for providing various library services. Rural public libraries in West Bengal behave like a welfare organization. Rural public libraries in West Bengal are financed mostly from the State aid, that is State Government plays the crucial role for human resource development of rural communities. The rural public libraries collect the membership fees / subscription fees from the users. The services provided by rural public libraries in West Bengal can be treated as the near-public good, not as the public good.

She further writes that a well informed society is considered as developed one. In this aspect libraries can take the pioneer role as an efficient „vehicle“ for acquiring, organizing and making information available. Public libraries are an integral part of any community, regardless of size. The development of any rural community is a positive indicator for the development of a nation. Information dissemination via rural public library is an essential ingredient for the development of the rural community. Unfortunately however, little attention has been given to the role of rural public libraries can play in the overall development of West Bengal. It has been observed that rural public libraries in West Bengal have not developed up to the mark. The principal victims of these under-developments have been rural community without having any individual means of becoming literate, due to them being too illiterate, too poor or too ill because of the information poverty. This paper examines the status of services provided by rural public libraries, and then looks at the roles and the sources of funding of these rural public libraries and pinpoints problems bedevilling them. It concludes by recommending ways of revamping the rural public libraries from their miserable situation.

This paper will look into a district library at Malda and analyse the condition. The total number of respondents to this survey was 50³. The District library is located at BadhRoad, English Bazar Municipality, Malda Town. It houses 72 thousand and 70 books over 37 subject categories. The library was set up in the year 1937. At present it has three staff members-the district librarian about to retire this year a guard (durwan) and a night guard. The library remains open for public between 1pm in the afternoon and 8 in the evening for six working days except the second and fourth Saturday of every month. The total no. of members is 4 thousand and 23 out of which only 4-5 members visit regularly. The no. of books under each subject category were not arranged. There is also no catalogue from where readers can choose and pick books of their choice. In order to

³ This data was collected as part of M. A. (P.G.) Dissertation in 2017 in the Department of Sociology, University of Gour Banga, Malda, West Bengal, India by the author under the supervision of Dr. Sudarshana Sen

do so readers need to pick up the way from the concerned authority and find out the book of their choice from the stack. The books are not arranged according to numbers in the stack.

I chose to select 50 respondents on the basis of accidental sampling method under non probability sampling. I had no other option because the time for the dissertation was fixed and I had to complete the work and submit it within the stipulated time after sitting through all classes. It is also true that I did not receive a copy of the list of members. As I could not get hold of the list and due to time constraints, my choice of sampling method was selected to non probability and accidental sampling. I visited the library often, not on a regular basis and also not on stipulated time and dates so that I could get hold of the variety of readers who visited the library through one month time. All were readers in the District Library. There were 4 (2 Male and 2 Female) readers in the age-group of 15-20, 12 readers in the age group of 20-25 (7 Male and 5 Female) and 10 readers in the age-group of 25-30 (7 Male and 3 female). Out of all 48 were Hindus and 2 were Muslims. 35 of them were unmarried. 16 out of 50 passed their Higher Secondary examination, 10 were Graduates, 15 were Post-Graduates and 9 were Research Scholars. Out of all 50 respondents, 30 were regular readers, 20 were irregular readers, 15 had regular attendance in the Register, 6 had lend books to take home for reading, 44 did not, that is they only could read in the Library Hall.

The rate at which these readers took to reading at the Library was: One hour/day: 20, 2 hour/day: 20, 3/day: 10// reader during day: 16, at night: 34. The reasons for them to visit the Library was as follows: 10 came for engagement with education in general, 5 came to enhance their knowledge of general affairs, 10 came to read newspapers, 3 came to read books on specialized areas, 4 came to read on literature. Maximum among them, for example, 45 out of 50 said a library had an important part in their lives, 47 out of 50 said they know about the advantages a library has for a person, but most that is 30 out of 50 said that the library in question did not have the adequate infrastructure to meet their demands. To the readers in the sample, 28 out of 50 said that the supply of books on demand was very poor. To most of the readers, sufficient lighting, good environment, support of the staff were adequate to attract them to the Library. But 44 out of 50 said there was a paucity of staff. On the other hand the records from the Office of the Library revealed there is a decrease in the membership in the last ten years. The library lost 38 members in contrast to the gain of only 10 new members. When questioned on a rating by the reader on the condition of the Library in comparison to any modern Library 32 out of 50 said it was of no comparison.

Conclusion

It is found that the public library system is a relation of information-provision scene. It was not present until the middle of the twentieth century, till the end of colonial era. The initial excited welcome of these institutions by both governments and public can be credited to the perception persisting at that time, so that they would serve as a solution to severe existing educational problems that could also serve as a tool in the process of national development. A threefold role was selected for these institutions for: a. providing information to development agents and agencies b. supporting formal and informal rural education programs through the provision of materials to both students and teachers' c. serving as centres for neighbourhood education and cultural activities. According to researchers, in spite of lofty ideals, the libraries have failed in their selected task and are currently not perceived as significant players in the process of national development. In this study, information was emphasized as an important factor in development but libraries were not assigned any role in the process. The lack of existing information services is commonly seen as one of the factors to this oversight on the part of developers.

Research shows that existing library services are not extensively used as the government used to withdraw their financial support that often brings about a fall down in services. According to Mchombu (2015), the findings of various surveys bearing testimony to this process as the overall percentage of users for all types of library services is not more than five percent. Similarly it is found that, with a population of more than twenty-three million people, only 1% to 2% of the population uses libraries.

The structure of Public Libraries in India is divided into two main aspects, rural and urban. Once a favourite spot for learners and scholars, most of the 70,000 plus public libraries in India have now turned into haunted houses with few visitors to grace their premises. This depressing image of the vital institutions may soon witness a change. The various stakeholders in revitalising public libraries in India under the Ministry of Culture are now eyeing at tapping the interest of the younger generation to reinforce substance and provide better resources to libraries in accordance with the needs of children. Spearheading this programme is Indian Public Library Movement (IPLM), supported by the Global Libraries initiative of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and hosted by NASSCOM Foundation in the New Delhi. Such initiatives are now needed to help libraries thrive and encourage readers to visit the libraries. The slow and steady changes such as global effects, internet services and the decline of the gentry who had uphold education and middle class values at the upmost had steadily declined in importance in the social scene. The omnipresence of technocrats, bureaucrats and red tapism has all contributed to the decline in the importance of a library especially a public library is a misfortune

to the mass. It also shows how the movement that had started such initiatives in early years after independence are showing signs of decay.

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¹Nalanda University is said to have a library in 600 A.D. with massive collection of manuscripts. The collection of the library was housed in three buildings, each having nine floors and three hundred rooms. This library was opened by the then Emperor of India, King Davapal.