PUBLIC LIBRARIES CIRCUMSTANCES IN PASCHIM MEDINIPUR: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Public library, which is called as the peoples' university. In this aspect libraries can take the pioneer role as an efficient role for acquiring, organizing and making information available. Well-structured questionnaires administrated personally to collect the data. It depicts the situation and the condition of the public libraries of Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal. To identify the real situation the study is rendered on the collection through language, collection development, reader facilities, etc. It focused on the IT (Information Technology) of the libraries. This paper examines the status of services provided by rural public libraries of West Bengal, and then looks at the roles and the sources of funding of these rural public libraries and pinpoints problems bedeviling them. It concludes by recommending ways of revamping the rural public libraries from their miserable situation.

KEYWORDS: *Library, Information Society, Rural Library, Public Library, Information Technology*

INTRODUCTION

Public libraries arise worldwide along with growth in education, literacy, and publications. Every country has its own public library history with influential leaders. Monarchs, wealthy people, and philanthropists have all made a contribution to society in the form of public library development. Rural public libraries are important institution as academic and socio-cultural organization for the rural people. Rural public libraries in West Bengal are part of the State Government in terms of administration and budget procedures. Majority of the population in this state lives in rural remote areas. Most of the inhabitants of these rural areas are without education. The library can have an important role in the advancement of knowledge. For having a real change in the bottom and base of the society we need literacy movement, popular science movement, co-operative movement and cultural movement at the same time. We need to involve more and more people in such movements through integrated and coordinated approach of some local community centers. Public library, which is called as the peoples' university can be made the coordinating centre of all such movements in a locality. People who live in a society should have up to date information about nature society and self. (P.S.G.Kumar 2003) Only libraries are supposed to be collecting the information, preserve and process and provide library services to the people. Hence a library is considered as an important social institution without which no social can develop fully as a modern society. Dr. Ranganathan gave a

detailed comprehensive definition of the library as 'It is a public institution or establishment charged with the care of the collection of book of the duty of making them accessible of those who require to use of them accessible of those who require to use of them and the task of converting every person in its neighboring in to habitual library goal and reader of them'. The public library as it is understood today is multipurpose informative, adductive and cultural agency and is considered to be an intellectual, powerhouse which strives to fulfill and meet the educational, cultural and information needs of the public by providing documents containing information relating to their fields of specialization, activities, professions and occupations, It makes them aware of the economic, social cultural and political development that take place around them and is also considered to be an institution for recreational value for positive use of their leisure time.
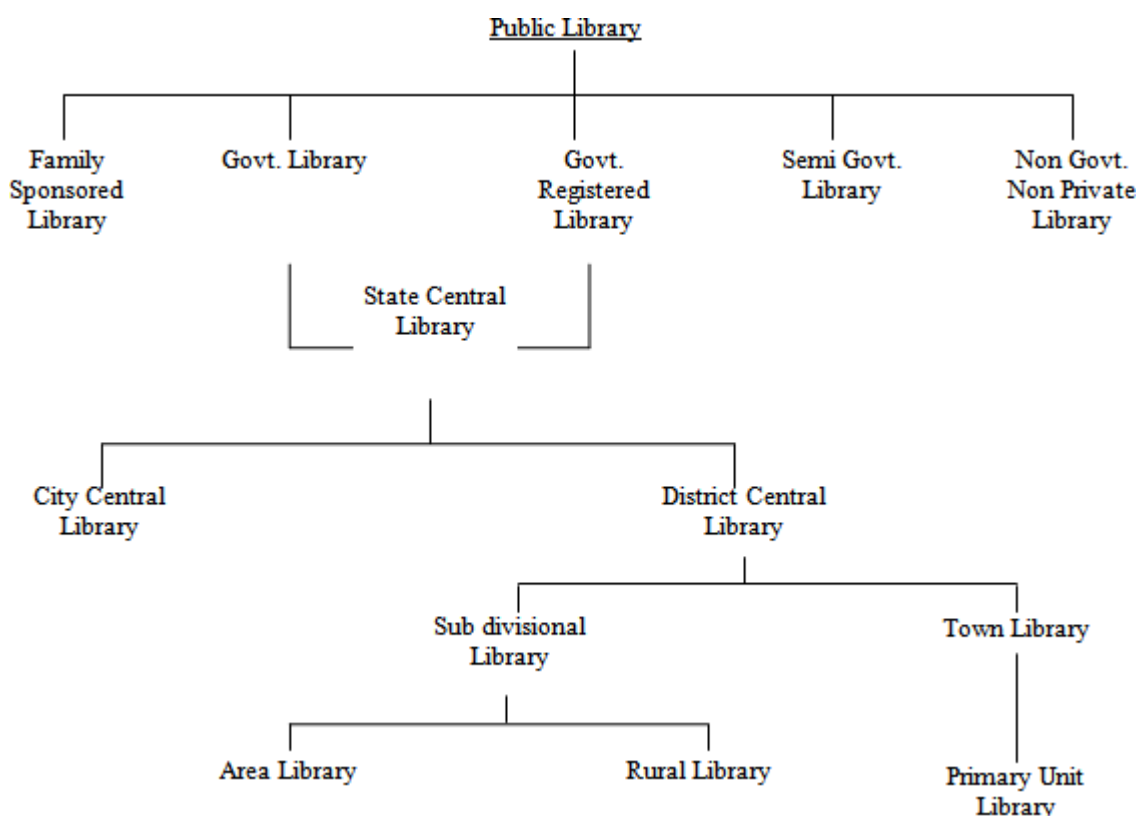

Figure 1: Public Library System Structure in West Bengal

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of related literature is an important aspect of every research work. The purpose of the review of related literature is to gain background knowledge of the research topic. A relevant study on the review can help the researcher to formulate a sound research design and preparing appropriate tools for the successful completion of the study. The variables, data collection tools and statistical techniques used in the present study have been selected after a thorough study of the available literature in the field.

Parthasarathi Mukhopadhyay discussed about software framework for public library based web enable multilingual Community information services by utilising open standard and open source software.

R.Sultana (2014) conducted a study entitled "Rural Library Services: Lessons from five Rural Public Libraries in West Bengal", she recommend that rural libraries of West Bengal should maintain collections and other services for rural communities which aware them from farming to career opportunities. She studied that without literate and numerate society none of the thousand projects can be executed. Thus rural dwellers need educational support, the need of rural libraries.

Sharma (2009) analyzed the development of rural women by identifying the possible ways of educating them through distance mode of education. This paper focused on the women's way of being a distance learners and points out the crucial reasons why women attend open, distance, and flexible learning programmes as well as their objectives.

Majeed (2001) explained about social development and libraries service portfolio for a village library. The paper discussed as public library is recognized everywhere as a social institution in our society, it is still the place where books are issued to its members and very few of our libraries are functioning as nuclei to social activities in their area. The paper illustrated how village librarian in our state can function effective and also list of services.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To know the actual situation of the public libraries in West Bengal and the services rendered by them a survey is made in four public libraries in Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal. To reveal the real situation, the libraries are physically visited without giving any prior notice and the available situation of staff, services and users and non-users are surveyed through suitable questionnaires. Complete data could not be collected from a few of the libraries visited because of non availability of the librarian/Secretary during the time of visiting on some other reason.

The objectives are

- To study the collection and development of the library.

- ·To study the library services thoroughly.

- To study the house keeping activity, like acquisition, classification, cataloguing, issuing etc.

- To identify the problems faced by the public libraries in rendering library service.

- To identify the areas where change is needed to make the public libraries popular and useful to the public,

- To suggest a plan for proper development of the library services in the State.

LIMITATIONS

For any research based study the major factor responsible for its success is the availability of sufficient time for proper data collection, reaching out to the target population and approaching them for answering is the survey question. The scope of this study is being provided by four selected libraries in Paschim Medinipur district

- Chandrakona Road Agrani Sangha Pathagar

- Deshapran Pathagar Town Library

- Baharasole Aloklagna Pathagar

- Lenin Granthagar, Pingboni

METHODOLOGY

Most of the study we find of a particular subject level of thought and ideas. Here the subject field in obviously Library and Information Science. But the investigator has in mind to focus the scenario or a particular are basically a rural area where public libraries have abominating factors over the society. It is of course true that there are a lot of thing to focus, which are invisible to the inhabitants. For this study the following methodologies are used for collection of data. These are

- Primary data are collected by field survey with questionnaire.

- Secondary data from the website.

- Telephonic conversation with the staff of respective rural libraries.

- Interview of some staff of rural libraries.

  It includes:

- Data collection

- Data analysis

Table 1: Working Hours of the Libraries

Time	Number of Libraries
11 A.M. to 6 P.M.	Lenin Granthagar, Pingboni
12 Noon to 7 P.M.	0
1 P.M. to 8 P.M.	Chandrakona Road Agrani Sangha Pathagar
	Deshapran Pathagar Town Library
	Baharasole Aloklagna Pathagar

Table: 1-This table reveals that 90% of libraries are opened at 1PM.

It is found form the table that out of 50% of libraries were established during 1961's and 1970's

This table reveals that only 1 library was sponsored during 1981's. Maximum number of libraries sponsored

deals with number of staff in each individual library. Most of the libraries has one/ two staffs

it is clearly shown that all of libraries have separate reading room facilities

This tables provides us a clear vision of the average number of regular users (i.e., how many members daily visit the library). We find the largest number of daily uses is 15 in Chandrakona Road Agrani Sangha Pathagar.

Table 2: Year of Establishment

Year	Number of Libraries
1947-50	Deshapran Pathagar Town Library
1951-60	0
1961-70	Chandrakona Road Agrani Sangha Pathagar
	Baharasole Aloklagna Pathagar
1971-80	0
1981-2000	Lenin Granthagar, Pingboni
2001-2018	0

Table- 2: It is found form the table that out of 50% of libraries were established during 1961's and 1970's.

Table 3: Year of Sponsorship

Year	Name of Libraries
1947-50	0
1951-60	0
1961-70	Chandrakona Road Agrani Sangha Pathagar
1971-80	Deshapran Pathagar Town Library
1981-2000	Lenin Granthagar, Pingboni
	Baharasole Aloklagna Pathagar
2001-2018	0

Table: 3- This table reveals that only 1 library was sponsored during 1981's. Maximum number of libraries sponsored 1981's-2000's.

Table 4: Total Number of Staff

Name of the Libraries	Number of Staffs	Required Staffs
Chandrakona Road Agrani Sangha Pathagar	2	3
Deshapran Pathagar Town Library	2	3
Lenin Granthagar, Pingboni	1	2
Baharasole Aloklagna Pathagar	0	2

Table - 4: Table 5 deals with number of staff in each individual library. Most of the libraries has one/ two staffs.

Table 5: Separate Reading Room

Response	Number of Libraries
Yes	4
No	0

Table: 5, it is clearly shown that all of libraries have separate reading room facilities.

Table 6: Average Number of Regular Users

Sl. No.	Name of the Libraries	Average Number of Regular User	Collection Development According to User
1.	Chandrakona Road Agrani Sangha Pathagar	15	5500 (apx.)
2.	Deshapran Pathagar Town Library	12	14000 (apx.)
3.	Lenin Granthagar, Pingboni	4-5	5200
4.	Baharasole Aloklagna Pathagar	2-3	4800

Table: 6- This tables provides us a clear vision of the average number of regular users (i.e., how many members daily visit the library). We find the largest number of daily uses is 15 in Chandrakona Road Agrani Sangha Pathagar.

Table 7: All Libraries are Audited Every Year to Evaluate Their Prosperity

Responses	Number of Library
Yes	4
No	0

Table: 7- All libraries are audited every year to evaluate their prosperity.

Table 8: Availability of IT

Sl. No.	Name of Library	No. of Computer	Library Software	Digital E-Resources	Internet Connectivity
1.	Chandrakona Road Agrani Sangha Pathagar	1	0	Nothing	Yes
2.	Deshapran Pathagar Town Library	1 (Not working)	Koha	CD-ROM, DVD, Maps, etc	Yes
3.	Lenin Granthagar, Pingboni	0	0	Nothing	No
4.	Baharasole Aloklagn Pathagar	0	0	Nothing	No

In the above table data has been collected with regards to the use of computers and other technology to provide information. The table shows those have computer also have the access to internet services and thus could provide e-resources to its users. This implies that the user did not get access to computer and internet services in rural libraries

FINDINGS

The theoretical problems are being discussed bellow on the light of the administration discrepancies of the public libraries

- The numbers of staffs appointed are not sufficient. Even there are some libraries till have vacant posts.

- The accommodation of library building and infrastructure facilities are insufficient.

- The book issue system uses in most of the libraries are not standard for smooth circulation. As a result lost of books are found frequently.

- Library inspection and auditing are carried on every year.

- Very few libraries use an authentic classification scheme like DDC.

- Financial support from the state government for the rural libraries is insufficient. As a result the budget allotted for purchasing of books, magazine and newspaper is not enough.

- The largest amount of the budget is allotted to purchase the books on literature 80% fiction, drama, short stories). So the books relating to rural interest like agriculture, fisheries, animal husbandries are being neglected.

- User educational programme are not arranged to attract the rural people to the library

SUGGESTION

- Vacant posts need be fulfilled immediately. Provision for more staff should be made for selective town libraries with high number of books, members and high per day use.

- We must re-organize our libraries accordingly to make them more useful to our younger generation.

- Libraries should organise more and more extension programmes. Proper external publicity should be made while organizing such programmes.

- More money is needed for collection development in rural libraries.

- Librarian's post need be sanctioned and filled up immediately for all the upgraded Town libraries. No librarian's post should be kept vacant.

- Library staff and committee members should take more active role in making new members. Library Week should be observed for taking venture for making new members.

- Provision of more space and more reading room seats are needed in many of the rural libraries.

- Rural library should try to increase their members and working as a community education centre.

- The library personnel should be trained with modern library operating technique (like information technology).

- All rural libraries should immediately introduce community information services in addition to normal library activities.

- More money is needed for collection development in rural libraries.

CONCLUSIONS

Public libraries have always been the door to learning for a great majority of the populations that they serve. They are knowledge centers and contribute to lifelong learning. The village is mixer community, with an unusual percentage of salaried employee and labors in organized sector. Agriculture and allied occupations are the dominant features of the economy. The village was a satisfactory provision of public service like education healthcare, transport, extension agencies in the field of agriculture; women welfare etc. illiteracy is a striking feature of the village community. The libraries have a small collection of books. Books on the various subjects are very limited, and are not well balanced and irrelevant in the sense that the book collection does not match either with the occupational interests, or the socio-economic profile of the community. Relatively the documents provided in the reading room (newspaper, magazines) appear to be satisfactory. The library users are belonging to the middle class in terms of social and economic status. Reading for recreation, or light fiction reading is the major use of the library. During the plan periods number of such library were gradually increasing but no systematic was followed. In West Bengal since 1977 during the regime of Left Front Govt. a programmatic system was followed. Almost equal number of library was distributed in each block and a system developed. But everything has not yet solved. There are many factors which need fresh attention. West Bengal public library system has not yet been established. There is a big gap between the money spent and service offered. This investigation aim to show the real picture of public library service is then present stage. One of our major conclusion is that most of the rural libraries or suffering from isolation. In a public library system integration is a must provision. But such a provision is missing here. Most of the management bodies are not functioning well. Panchayet samities are not directly linked with such libraries. A system should be developed so that a chain administrative link between District Library (DL) Town Library (TL) subdivision Library (SDL) and Rural Library (RL) is established.

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