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Mehtab Alam Ansari Dr.

Aligarh Muslim University, mehtabalamansari1@gmail.com

Shamim Aktar Munshi

Aligarh Muslim University, munshishamim14@gmail.com

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# Building Public Library Collection in India: A Study of Book and Non-book Material

**Mehtab Alam Ansari**

Associate Professor, Dept. of Library and Information Science, Aligarh Muslim University,  
Aligarh, India

Email: [mehtabalamansari1@gmail.com](mailto:mehtabalamansari1@gmail.com)

**Shamim Aktar Munshi**

Senior Research Fellow, Dept. of Library and Information Science, Aligarh Muslim  
University, Aligarh, India

Email: [munshishamim14@gmail.com](mailto:munshishamim14@gmail.com)

## Abstract

*India is the second most populous country in the world. It has 29 states and 7 union territories. The state of West Bengal with nineteen districts has a well-established public library system. The present study covers the district of Murshidabad which has 160 public libraries, in total. Significantly, three categories of public libraries namely rural library, town/sub-division library and district library exists in whole district. Covering 21 public libraries with representation of all categories of libraries, the present work aims to study the collection development of material. Data for the present study has been collected through well-structured questionnaire. Study also highlights the various aspects which contributed in building collection in studied libraries. Precisely, these are donation from Member of Legislative Assembly, donation from Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation, complimentary copies from the authors, etc. Findings suggest that no-uniform growth has been witnessed in surveyed libraries.*

**Keywords:** Public Library, Collection Development, India, West Bengal, Murshidabad.

## Introduction

The purpose of any library is to provide service that is relevant to its community. However, this is not possible without proper collection. Public library is public property where every person such as teacher, doctor, farmer, businessman and many other person can use information without any discrimination. According to IFLA/UNESCO (2010), public libraries have “an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by giving the individual access to a wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas and opinions”. It further point out that “the primary purposes of the public library are to provide resources and services in a variety of media to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and personal development including recreation and leisure” (IFLA/UNESCO, 2010).

With more than 1.2 billion people, India is the second most populous country in the world. Having a total area of 3,287,263 *sq. km.* spread over 29 states and 7 union territories, India ranks seventh in the world. The literacy rate is 74.04 % (Census of India, 2011). The state of West Bengal in India has a population of more than 91 million spread on 19 districts. However, pre-dominant population speaks Bangla language.

Murshidabad district which is comprised of five subdivisions such as Berhampore, Domkol, Lalbag, Kandi and Jangipur with 26 blocks. Majority of the population in this district is Muslim (66.28%). The literacy rate of the district is 66.59% (Males 69.95% and Females 63.09%) (Census of India, 2011). Pre-dominated population of the district is engaged in agriculture related actuates. The present paper aims to find out the collection development and management of public libraries in Murshidabad district of West Bengal.

**Table 1:** Background Information

<b>Some Facts</b>	<b>India</b>	<b>West Bengal</b>	<b>Murshidabad District</b>
Area	3,287,263 <i>sq. km.</i>	88,725 <i>sq.km.</i>	5316 <i>sq. km.</i>
Total Population	1,324,171,354 approximate	91, 276, 115 approximate	71,02,430 approximate
Rank in population	2 <sup>nd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> (Within India)	4 <sup>th</sup> (In West Bengal)

Female/Male ratio	943	950	958
Population density	394.3/km square	1029 /km square	1334/km square
Literacy Rate	74.04%	77.26%	66.59%
Total no. of Districts	640	19	-
Total no. of Sub-Divisions/Tehsils	Approximately 1358	66	5

Source: Census of India, 2011

## Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To examine the collection development policy in India.
- To analyse the pattern of budget allocations in West Bengal.
- To know the procedure used for acquisition of documents in public libraries.
- To ascertain the usage of library collections in public libraries

## Early Developments

Although, India has a long and rich history of libraries but developments related to public libraries have been witnessed only in the first quarter of the last century. Hellings noted that “In the early twentieth century, S.R. Ranganathan began his legendary work towards establishing public libraries in India like those he saw when visiting the United Kingdom” (Helling, 2012). However, the first major initiative that was taken by the government of India in the post-independence period was the appointment of Sinha Committee. Unfortunately, committee did not show satisfaction with regard to the public library system in India. Libraries were reported as a ‘stagnant pool of books’ and users were required to put down the monetary deposits difficult to be afforded by lower classes. The committee, notably, recommended the major overhaul of public libraries based on hierarchical system of state library networks and uniform library legislation (Ghosh, 2005). It further recommended revision of the curriculum used to educate library professionals (Joshi, 2010). Another significant development had been witnessed, in 1972, in the form of the establishment of the Raja Ram Mohan Library Foundation (RRRLF). The RRRLF is a multifaceted organisation that works in many ways to improve the conditions of public libraries in India. For instance, the RRRLF funds 28 state libraries and acts as a resource and training centre for the creation of public libraries all over India (Ghosh, 2005).

## National Library Policy in India

It was ascertained that the pathetic condition of public libraries in India has been due to absence of any national level body. Having realized this vacuum, a committee was set up under the chairmanship of Prof. D.P. Chattopadhyay to formulate a National Policy on Library & Information System (NAPLIS). The committee submitted its report in 1986. Following that, another committee examined the report and suggested an action plan for its implementation (Bhattacharjee, 1999). The empowerment committee submitted in 1988 and an implementation cell was created to implement its recommendations within a period of six months. Subsequently, a working group under the Joint Secretary was constituted to examine its recommendations for implementation. The working group submitted its report in July 1993 and suggested implementing only 29 of 60 recommendations made by the NAPLIS (Wani, 2008). However, level of progress from state to state is highly variable. Significantly, some states have announced e-government projects, some have also launched technology literacy initiatives, but surprisingly few of them have done nothing (Nikam *et al*, 2004).

**Table 2:** Library Legislation in Indian States

S. No	State of Name	Year of Library Legislation Act
1.	Tamil Nadu	1948
2.	Andhra Pradesh	1960
3.	Karnataka	1965
4.	Maharashtra	1967
5.	West Bengal	1979
6.	Manipur	1988
7.	Haryana	1989
8.	Kerala	1989
9.	Mizoram	1993
10.	Goa	1993
11.	Odisha	2001

12.	Gujarat	2000
13.	Uttaranchal	2005
14.	Rajasthan	2006
15.	Uttar Pradesh	2006
16.	Lakshadweep	2007
17.	Bihar	2008
18.	Chhattisgarh	2009
19.	Arunachal Pradesh	2009

## Scope of the Study

India is a diversified country with the second largest population next to China and the seventh largest country on the basis of the area (3,287,263 sq. km.). It has more than 1,210,854,977, population which is spread over the 29 states and 7 union territories. According to Census of India, 2011 the overall literacy rate is 74.04 %.

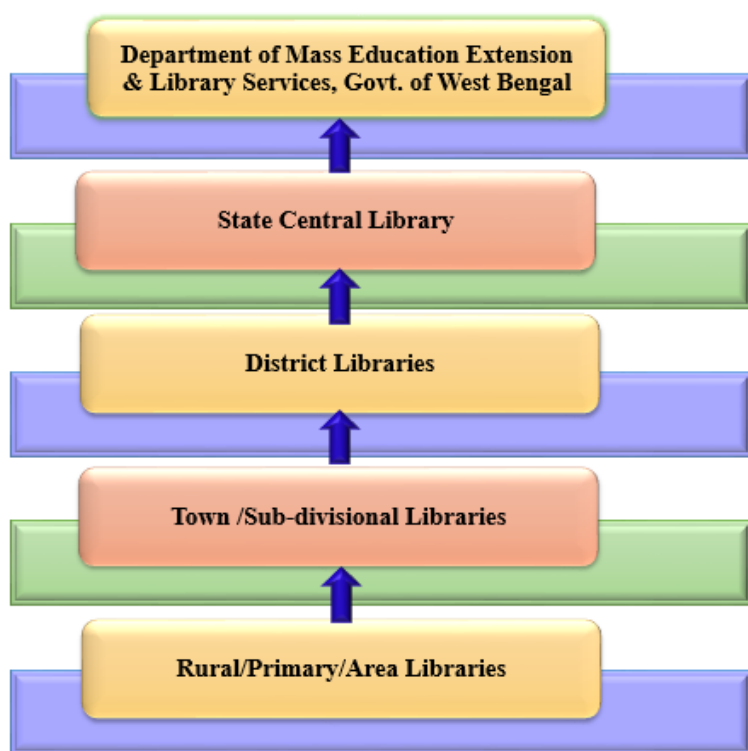
The state of West Bengal in India is the fourth most populated state which covers 88,752 sq. km area. The total population is 91,347,736 spread over 19 districts. The literacy rate is 77.08%. West Bengal is religiously diverse with multilingual and multicultural population. Pre-dominant population speaks Bengali language. As per the Census of India 2011, Hindu forms the majority with over 70% of total population. Muslims are the second largest population (27.01%). A tiny population also consists of Sikh, Christen and Buddhist in West Bengal. After enactment of the West Bengal Public Libraries Act in 1979, there has been a significant increase in number of public libraries in West Bengal. It is worthy pointing out here that the Public Library System in West Bengal comprises of 12 Government Libraries with State Central Library at the apex, 2460 Government Sponsored Libraries at different levels, and 7 Government Aided Libraries. There exists a three-tier library system in every districts viz. (i) Rural/Primary Unit/Area Libraries, (ii) Town/Sub-division Libraries and (iii) District Libraries (Annual Report of the Directorate of Library Services, 2011-12). However, the scope of the present study is limited to Murshidabad district.

Murshidabad is one of the oldest cities in West Bengal named after the Nawab Murshid Quli Khan. Spread over an area of 5316.11 sq. km. having 71, 02, 430 populations. Significant population of Murshidabad is engaged in agriculture. The literacy rate of the district is 63.88%. There are 160 public libraries in whole district of Murshidabad having three categories with composition as one district library, 9 town/sub-division libraries and 150 rural libraries. Notably, present study covers total number of 21 libraries with 1 district library, 5 town libraries/sub-division libraries and 15 rural libraries. Table 3 list of the name of all surveyed libraries.

**Table 3:** Name of libraries covered under Study

S. No.	Name of Public Libraries	Status of the Library	Year of Establishment	Degree of the Library
1.	Murshidabad District Library	District Library	1955	DL1
2.	Beldanga Prasanna Kumar Main Town Library	Town Library	1920	TL1
3.	Ramendra Sundar Smriti Pathagar	Town Library	1937	TL2
4.	Lalgola M.N. Academy Public Town Library	Town Library	1913	TL3
5.	Bandhab Samiti Lalbagh Sub-divisional Library	Town Library	1919	TL4
6.	Kandi Acharyay Ramendra Sundar Sub-divisional Library	Town Library	1963	TL5
7.	Trimohini Progressive Union Rural Library	Rural Library	1969	RL1
8.	Sarbodaya Sangha Rural Library	Rural Library	1967	RL2
9.	Netajee Pathagar	Rural Library	1948	RL3
10.	Kalitala Shridurga Library	Rural Library	1951	RL4
11.	Sargachhi Ramkrishna Mission Library	Rural Library	1897	RL5
12.	Kazisaha Nazrul Library	Rural Library	1967	RL6
13.	Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi Shaha	Rural Library	1998	RL7

	Granthagar			
14.	Bankim Chandra library	Rural Library	1905	RL8
15.	Raghunath Club Govt. Sponsored Rural Library	Rural Library	1971	RL9
16.	Raghunathpur Deshbandhu Pathagar	Rural Library	1961	RL10
17.	Benadaha Siraj Smriti Pathagar	Rural Library	1978	RL11
18.	Jitpur Public Library	Rural Library	1978	RL12
19.	Pashla B.K.M. Library	Rural Library	1960	RL13
20.	Saraswati Library	Rural Library	1910	RL14
21.	Mangal Jan Rural Library	Rural Library	1976	RL15



**Figure 1:** Administrative Structure of Public Libraries in West Bengal



## **Review of Related Literature**

Kaur and Walia (2015) in their paper have attempted to find out collection development and management in the public libraries in Delhi. Authors pointed out those public libraries in Delhi are governed by the Government or its agencies and they compare public libraries in Delhi with the international standards for public libraries. Authors have further pointed out that the public libraries in Delhi are not making the desired efforts to reach out the public. Wani (2008) in his paper gave an over-view of public library development in India tracing its historical background and extending up to the present time. It describes initiatives under taken by private foundation and by local, state and central Government. Author has also described the characteristics of Indian society and relationship of Indian people with the public library. The study of Serebnick and Quinn (1995) intended to develop a method for measuring diversity of opinion in public library collection. Results of this study strongly suggest that diversity scores may differ significantly depending on subject area and position. Some of the results from this study are quite interesting for future researches including the present one. Study by Nous and Roslund (2009) explored collaborative collection development in the capital district library council public library, New York. Authors have argued that collaborative collection development is a useful tool that has traditionally been overlooked by public libraries. Significantly, authors have proposed a cure for Indian public libraries which are facing economic problems. Parker as cited in Perdue and Fleet (1999) that “money spent for books yields a capital asset in a community”. No library can hope to have all the collection even in a specific area today. Hence, Connell (2008) pointed out that “emphasis [must] shift from the number of core titles in the collection to the number of unique title that a library brings to a consortium”.

Public libraries strive to meet the wide range of community needs. Alpert (2006) in his paper discussed the growing and changing community needs in Miami-Dade Public Library System in the USA. Author highlights a significant point that the staffs face difficulty in the selection and catalogue materials in languages other than English. An almost same problem exists in Bengal public libraries as staffs are familiar only with English and Bengali language. However, sometimes books are received in languages other than these too. Jacob (1990) in her article described that how she managed to prepare collection development plan for Skokie Public Library. Notably, with the help of new plan, librarians and patrons could have easy access to all policies related to collection development. Similar efforts are needed

to be done in public libraries covered under present study. Another useful article is based on an interview with Barbara Genco (2007), director collection development, Brooklyn Public Library in which Barbara has explained twenty useful points regarding collection development in a couple of subjects.

Chris Jones mentioned the importance of collection development strategy. Author notes “A collection development strategy can provide librarian with a wealth of opportunities to address significant issues, particularly in the digital environment”. This paper considers the forces which are impacting on collection development. However, by and large, issues discussed in this paper are related with the digital world (Jones, 2001). Yet another study by the same author analysed the statistics from public libraries in New South Wales, Australia. Highlighting the importance of weeding out books in a library, author discovers that public libraries are prompt to refine their databases to reflect active membership. In the same way libraries should also make efforts to inject new titles into the collections. Notably, author’s findings could be related with any library and hence, this study is quite relevant for the present work (Jones, 2007). Study conducted by Emojorho (2011) examined the applications of ICT and collection management in Nigerian public libraries. Findings revealed that due to inadequate ICT facilities, people are not able to receive any ICT related training or workshop. Almost similar situation exist in Indian public libraries and therefore recommendations of Emojorho’s study can also have a bearing on the surveyed libraries.

**Table 4:** Total Book Collection and Annual book Budget (In US Dollar) for books in District Libraries, Town/Sub-division Libraries and Rural Libraries

S. No.	Degree of the Library	2011-2012		2012-13			2013-2014			2014-2015		
		Book Collection	Annual Budget	Book Collection	Annual Budget	Additional Collection	Book Collection	Annual Budget	Additional Collection	Book Collection	Annual Budget	Additional Collection
1.	DL1	51622	453	52825	679	1203	54242	815	1417	55431	862	1189
2.	TL1	14158	330	14996	263	838	15599	326	603	16159	313	560
3.	TL2	16212	242	16904	241	692	17611	281	707	17978	223	367
4.	TL3	16535	230	17123	252	588	17763	300	640	18383	310	640
5.	TL4	10516	199	11235	374	719	11845	257	610	12304	265	459
6.	TL5	11451	200	12197	205	746	12991	358	794	13631	383	640
7.	RL1	5494	91	5786	91	292	6125	120	339	6379	95	254
8.	RL2	2550	107	2734	108	184	3114	113	380	3384	131	270
9.	RL3	4423	127	4686	91	263	4912	94	226	5227	140	315
10.	RL4	2991	107	3276	92	285	3537	91	261	3789	102	250
11.	RL5	6156	117	6421	122	265	6728	98	307	6993	95	265
12.	RL6	4709	95	4939	99	230	5146	78	207	5376	101	230
13.	RL7	4358	103	4612	83	254	4856	74	244	5112	112	256
14.	RL8	5836	80	6145	104	309	6354	94	209	6684	151	330
15.	RL9	4825	86	5016	94	191	5314	101	298	5609	132	295
16.	RL10	5430	74	5795	77	365	6098	91	303	6415	135	317

17.	RL11	4722	65	4945	83	223	5156	88	211	5440	122	284
18.	RL12	5612	85	5892	93	280	6116	102	224	6392	116	276
19.	RL13	4532	79	4987	123	475	5214	95	227	5435	104	221
20.	RL14	6015	95	6345	112	330	6723	110	378	7013	128	290
21.	RL15	5111	82	5312	86	201	5587	86	275	5873	99	286

**Table 5:** Availability of non-book materials in District Library, Town/Sub-division Libraries and Rural Libraries

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Degree of the Library</b>	<b>Maps/Atlas</b>	<b>Video cassettes</b>	<b>CDs/DVDs</b>	<b>Any other</b>
1.	DL1	9	---	25	1
2.	TL1	6	15	150	---
3.	TL2	12	---	21	---
4.	TL3	4	---	11	---
5.	TL4	6	---	19	---
6.	TL5	5	---	15	---
7.	RL1	2	---	---	---
8.	RL2	2	---	---	---
9.	RL3	---	---	4	---
10.	RL4	5	---	---	---
11.	RL5	1	---	4	---
12.	RL6	3	---	---	---
13.	RL7	2	---	---	---
14.	RL8	1	---	---	---
15.	RL9	7	---	5	---
16.	RL10	4	---	---	---
17.	RL11	2	---	---	---
18.	RL12	1	---	2	---
19.	RL13	3	---	---	---
20.	RL14	2	---	---	---
21.	RL15	2	---	---	---

## **Methodology**

Data for the present study has been collected through survey method. One of the investigators has personally visited each library and distributed questionnaires among the staff of the library. Investigator found attitude of staff of all libraries quite positive. They enthusiastically filled-in questionnaires. Although, the questionnaire was designed to be exhaustive, some points were added later. Notably, this area could not be covered in sufficient detail due to lack of information. Notably, this was mainly in case of various events being organised by surveyed libraries. Furthermore, interaction with the staff has removed doubts regarding some terms used in the questionnaires. It was found that this interaction helped staff to understand some questions. Thus, this interaction has brought objectivity in the study. Apart from questionnaire and interaction, official records like invoices, gazettes have also been consulted. Investigator has also taken some snapshots of receipts related to payments and accounts available in offices of these public libraries.

## **Findings of the Study**

### **Selection and Acquisition of Books**

During the month of November and December, each library informs their users to come up with their suggestions regarding procurement of new books. Subsequently, suggestions are noted down in registers maintained by each library. Later on, in a central meeting consists of library committee members and representative from state government short list the books from the wish list as per the availability of funds. Since, Murshidabad is a Muslim dominated area, and books related to Islam are given top priority in the selection process. Notably, many Non-Muslims also read these books with interest. Another criteria followed in the selection of the books is to procure books which have won national and International awards. Also, preference is given to those books which are suggested by more number of users.

### **Library Collection in Bengali Language**

Public libraries in Bengal are having approximately 80% of their collection in Bengali language. English collection range between 10-15%. Rest of the collection is available in Hindi and Urdu languages. Among these languages, Hindi books are usually those which are donated by Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation, Kolkata as discussed elsewhere in the paper. Very few books are available in Urdu language too which are read by old persons.

As far as availability of non-book material is concerned, the number of subscribed magazines in District Library (DL1) and Beldanga Town Library (TL1) are more in English than Bengali language. This owe to the fact that both this libraries are urban-based with more number of English- knowing people. Moreover, subscribed magazines essentially carry articles useful for preparations of competitive examination. These magazines are therefore consulted by convent educated youth preparing for civil services and other competitive examinations. However, same pattern is not seen in case of newspapers as users prefer to read newspapers in vernacular languages. On being asked, they revealed that they read newspapers for news items and hardly read editorial or literary columns.

### **Donations from Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation**

RRRLF is a central autonomous organization financed by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. RRRLF is the nodal agency of the government of India to support public library services and systems and promote public library movement in the country commensurate with the objectives as embodied in its Memorandum of Association. Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation is listed under the Societies Registration Act of 1961 of West Bengal. RRRLF is to function as a promotional agency, an advisory and consultancy organization, a funding body of public library development in India. Significantly, each library receives 30-40 books in each year from RRRLF in Hindi language. It is done for the promotion of Hindi which is the official language of India.

### **Donations from Member of Legislative Assembly**

Murshidabad district is having 22 Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA). Significantly, some of the MLA donates ten thousands Indian rupees to town/sub-division libraries and five thousands Indian rupees to rural libraries. Significantly, this amount is utilized this for the purchase of text-books with aim to support poor students studying in standard VIII right up to graduation. Some of the beneficiary students reported that due to their humble background, they were unable to purchase books prescribed in their syllabi. However, availability of these text-books in respective public libraries has played a notable role in carrying on their studies.

### **Library Collection with Respect to Population**

Table 7 shows the ratio of the book collection to the population of each area. This table also displays ranking of surveyed libraries. As per IFLA/UNESCO Public Library

Guidelines, collections should be between 2 to 3 items per capita (IFLA/UNESCO, 2010). However, only four libraries i.e. RL1, RL14, RL13 and RL4 have adequate book collection for total population. Notably, these all four libraries are in rural areas of Murshidabad. Reasons for having more book collection are three: first, these four libraries have submitted proposals for releasing special grants due to overwhelming demands from their users. Second, Member of Legislative Assemblies of these area have donated more funds in comparison to others. Third, greater number of gifts items has been received by these libraries.

**Table 6:** Library Membership with Respect to Population of Different Regions of Murshidabad District

S. No	Degree of Library	Location Name of the Library	Library Membership				Total Population	Ratio
			Children	Adult Male	Adult Female	Total		
1.	DL1	Berhampore	1635	3635	2422	7692	195,223	0.03
2.	TL1	Beldanga	494	683	165	1342	29,205	0.04
3.	TL2	Kandi	944	1640	422	3006	55,632	0.05
4.	TL3	Lalgola	448	670	215	1333	31,698	0.04
5.	TL4	Lalbagh	433	291	93	817	23,425	0.03
6.	TL5	Kandi	591	1129	440	2160	55,632	0.03
7.	RL1	Trimohini	73	373	27	473	8,838	0.05
8.	RL2	Jhowbana	55	150	07	212	8,785	0.02
9.	RL3	Patikabari	42	250	70	362	11,232	0.03
10.	RL4	Kalitala	126	169	25	320	1,549	0.20
11.	RL5	Sargachhi	549	316	122	987	11,793	0.08
12.	RL6	Kazisaha	236	110	88	434	6,459	0.06
13.	RL7	Khagra	122	310	151	583	13,489	0.04
14.	RL8	Gorabazar	56	401	115	572	5,200	0.11
15.	RL9	Choa	284	790	210	1284	17,672	0.07
16.	RL10	Kanapara	295	132	20	447	1,578	0.28
17.	RL11	Benadaha	07	262	84	353	15,114	0.02
18.	RL12	Jitpur	72	432	207	711	11,016	0.06



19.	RL13	Pashla	105	259	193	557	2,084	0.26
20.	RL14	Mahishal	112	304	84	500	2,144	0.23
21.	RL15	Kanupur	117	395	102	614	3,108	0.19

**Table 7: Ratio and Ranking of Book Collection and Population**

S. No.	Degree of the Library	Location Name of the Library	Total book collection	Total population	Ratio	Rank
1.	RL10	Kanapara	6615	1,578	4.19	1
2.	RL14	Mahishal	7013	2,144	3.27	2
3.	RL13	Pashla	5335	2,084	2.55	3
4.	RL4	Kalitala	3569	1,549	2.30	4
5.	RL15	Kanupur	5773	3,108	1.85	5
6.	RL8	Gorabazar	7223	5,200	1.38	6
7.	RL6	Kazisaha	5276	6,459	0.81	7
8.	RL1	Trimohini	6379	8,838	0.72	8
9.	RL5	Sargachhi	6893	11,793	0.58	9
10.	TL3	Lalgola	18083	31,698	0.57	10
11.	RL12	Jitpur	6292	11,016	0.57	11
12.	TL1	Beldanga	15759	29,205	0.53	12
13.	TL4	Lalbagh	12204	23,425	0.52	13
14.	RL3	Patikabari	4836	11,232	0.43	14
15.	RL7	Khagra	5012	13,489	0.37	15
16.	RL11	Benadaha	5340	15,114	0.35	16
17.	RL2	Jhowbana	2984	15,436	0.34	17
18.	TL2	Kandi	17878	55,632	0.32	18
19.	RL9	Choa	5509	17,672	0.31	19
20.	DL1	Berhampore	53816	195,223	0.27	20
21.	TL5	Kandi	13631	55,632	0.24	21

## Library Book Collection with Respect to Membership

Table 8 analyse data about ratio of book collection with respect to membership and provides rankings of all 21 surveyed libraries. Notably, calculated ratio is based on the proposed IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Guidelines as established collection should be between 2 to 3 items per capita (Queensland Public Library Guidelines). Table 8 shows that RL 11 has the highest ratio with 15.12 and RL 9 has the least ratio at 4.29. If we further group these libraries with range below 10 and above 10, there are nine libraries where ratio ranges between 4.29 and 9.57. In these nine libraries, six are rural, one each town/ sub-division library. Incidentally, district library (DL1) also falls in the same group. Another group consists of twelve libraries having nine rural, three town/sub-division libraries.

Group with more than ten ratios are having areas where information literacy rate is high and many philanthropist stays in these areas. It was brought into notice that these philanthropists have donated substantial number of books. Similarly, member of legislative assemblies have also donated more number of books in these public libraries. As far as RL11, which occupies top position, some of active Muslim organizations have donated large number of books in order to bring literacy among significant Muslim population residing in these areas.

**Table 8:** Ratio of Book Collection with Membership

S. No.	Name of the Surveyed Library	Degree of Library	Total Library Membership	Total book collection	Ratio	Rank
1.	Benadaha Siraj Smriti Pathagar	RL11	353	5340	15.12	1
2.	Bandhab Samiti Lalbagh Sub-divisional Library	TL4	817	12204	14.93	2
3.	Kalitala Shridurga Library	RL10	447	6615	14.79	3
4.	Sarbodaya Sangha Rural Library	RL2	212	2984	14.07	4
5.	Bankim Chandra library	RL14	500	7013	14.02	5
6.	Lalgola M.N. Academy Public Town Library	TL3	1333	18083	13.56	6
7.	Trimohini Progressive Union Rural Library	RL1	473	6379	13.48	7
8.	Netajee Pathagar	RL3	362	4836	13.35	8
9.	Bankim Chandra library	RL8	572	7223	12.62	9

10.	Kazisaha Nazrul Library	RL6	434	5276	12.15	10
11.	Beldanga Prasanna Kumar Main Town Library	TL1	1342	15759	11.74	11
12.	Kalitala Shridurga Library	RL4	320	3569	11.15	12
13.	Pashla B.K.M. Library	RL13	557	5335	9.57	13
14.	Mangal Jan Rural Library	RL15	614	5773	9.40	14
15.	Jitpur Public Library	RL12	711	6292	8.84	15
16.	Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi Shahar Granthagar	RL7	583	5012	8.59	16
17.	Murshidabad District Library	DL1	7692	53816	6.99	17
18.	Sargachhi Ramkrishna Mission Library	RL5	987	6893	6.98	18
19.	Kandi Acharyay Ramendra Sundar Sub-divisional Library	TL5	2160	13631	6.31	19
20.	Ramendra Sundar Smriti Pathagar Shahar Granthagar	TL2	3006	17878	5.94	20
21.	Raghnath Club Govt. Sponsored Rural Library	RL9	1284	5509	4.29	21

## Discussion

During almost four decades, since the West Bengal Public Library Act has been passed, the government of West Bengal paid attention for the collection development programme in all levels of public library system. As shown in table 4, collection size has increased moderately during the period of 2011-2015. Availability of non-book materials of district library, town/sub-division libraries, and rural libraries are also good. However, with the changing environment, user expectation also get changed. Therefore, collection development should be build-up as per the community needs. In this era of wide use of Internet, public libraries should also procure web sources as pointed out by Jones (2001). The collection of public library should also heterogeneous as homogeneous collection does not attract public. Furthermore, due to budget constraints, public libraries are not able to serve the needs of users in Murshidabad district. Therefore, there is an urgent need to arrange finances from other sources to avoid the loss of users. This arrangement is more needed during difficult economic times as pointed out by Nous and Roslund (2009).

It is also important to convince notable personalities and philanthropist for more donations and gifts to the public libraries so that information literacy rate can be improved. Though, collection in all the surveyed libraries falls in accordance with the IFLA Public Library Guidelines, nevertheless, and collection of digital materials is totally absent in all the surveyed libraries. Significantly, library collection with respect to population is quite satisfactory in all 21 surveyed libraries. However, these libraries should also refine their borrower databases to reflect active membership as suggested by Jones (2007). Finally, it is suggested through this study that public libraries in West Bengal should also pay attention to implement information technology in order to boost-up services.

## **Conclusion**

The West Bengal Public Library System (WBPLU) is a four-tier with State Central Library at the apex and Rural libraries at the bottom. District library and Town/Sub-division libraries comes in between State Central library and rural libraries. Murshidabad district is having 21 libraries comprising district, town/sub-division and rural libraries. Pre-dominant collection in these libraries is in Bengali language. As far as collection is concerned, only four libraries are having collection in accordance with IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Guidelines, 2010. Incidentally, all these libraries are located in rural areas. However, all 21 surveyed libraries are having adequate book collection with respect to membership. Variations in growth of book collection owes to substantial donations by philanthropists and member of legislative assemblies from these areas. However, it has been observed that allocation of budget to these libraries is quite meagre and hence, substantial increase is needed in this age of high inflation. Finding of this study shows that growth in the collection is related with the print documents. Unfortunately, electronic documents in all surveyed libraries are having no presence. In addition to that, collection of international language such as English should be developed further in order to provide its exposure to local population. Further, in this era of ICT, no serious efforts have been made to automate these libraries.

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