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EVALUATION OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES BY THE USERS OF MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL

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Abstract

Libraries and information centres accumulate information and achieve the users' information needs. The users' information need varies according to their different fields of interest. The library professionals and information centres need to fulfil the changing needs of the users. Through users' studies, we get the idea of where the users are using optimal information and know where the library must improve the services. A study was carried to gauge the services provided by the public libraries to the users of Murshidabad District, West Bengal. Survey methods and questionnaire tools were applied to conduct this study. The study found that users improve their reading skills in several ways by using public libraries. It was found that the users need more services like computer facilities, photocopies facility, beverage facility, newspapers, magazines, more subject related books, and journals publicly libraries of Murshidabad District.

Keywords: Public Library; Library Services; Library Users; Murshidabad District; West Bengal

1. Introduction

Every activity of a person whether it is economic, education, health, business, industries, or development is organized through learning. These organizations could also be different kinds but constantly changed in contributing to learning and knowledge, of which library is one within them. A library could also be small or big but falls under the broad categories of library systems like Academic, Special, Public, National Libraries. A library is that the outcome of the man's struggle against monopoly and concentration of human knowledge within the hands and few. The concept of democratization of data came within the 19th

century in England as an outcome of the long renaissance. Libraries and other similar memory institutions are the organizations that collect process, organize, disseminate, and distribute information/ knowledge recorded within the documents. Since knowledge is so vital for all-around human development, all the memory institutions are engaged in handling and managing knowledge. In additional traditional science, a library may be a collection of books. Consistent with IFLA/UNESCO library manifesto 1994 reads the subsequent key missions that relate to education, culture, and information literacy should be at the focal point of the public library services (IFLA/UNESCO, 1994). Today's libraries maintain a repository and provide access points for both print and digital resources. Libraries resources are available in the form of audio and visual materials in numerous formats, including microforms (microfilm/microfiche), audiotapes, CDs, cassettes, video games, videotapes, DVDs, e-books, maps, audiobooks, prints documents, and lots of other electronic resources. Through library digitizations, now library electronic resources can be accessed even through online platforms.

2. Background of the study

2.1. West Bengal library system

West Bengal features a developed library system. The public Library Act was enacted in West Bengal in 1979. There are 2821 libraries and Community Libraries cum Information Centres (CLICs). These libraries form a four-level structure. State Central Library is within the top or initial level. There are seven District /Special status government libraries and 25 government-sponsored District libraries within the second level. Within the third level, there are 240 Sub-divisional/Town libraries (most of the government-sponsored). Within the fourth level, there is around 328 government-sponsored primary unit of libraries, 1885 government-sponsored rural libraries, and around 341 Community Libraries cum Information Centres (CLICs). Aside from these libraries, there are about 2200 registered libraries. Community libraries cum Information Centres are established within the Gram Panchayats. Gram Panchayat is that the local self-government unit at the rural level. In West Bengal, 3362-gram panchayats are having a mean area of 25.4 sq. km. In each of those gram panchayats, the typical population is around 23,236. The govt is trying to supply a minimum of one library each on every gram panchayat. In 1740-gram panchayats, there is no library. In 440 of those gram panchayats, CLICs are found out and in other remaining Panchayats more CLICs will

gradually come up. These public libraries have a crucial contribution in supporting the tutorial and cultural needs of the community (Bandyopadhyay and Majumdar, 2006).

2.2.Public Libraries in Murshidabad District

Murshidabad District is a well-populated area, most of them come under rural areas; overall there are about 300 public libraries for the people to use. If we see at the background where a substantial proportion is below the poverty level, and we know that education and reading are interrelated, and education is vital for earning a better livelihood. The public libraries also provide free services like preschool storytime to encourage the quiet study, early literacy, and work areas for college kids and professionals, or book clubs to encourage appreciation of literature in adults. Public libraries typically allow users to acquire books and other materials to borrow outside the premises temporarily and it provides references services, photocopy Services, Referral Services.

2.3.Use of Public Libraries

We designed the elemental attitude of the study to shape our survey within the museum and library services. There are basic needs for information, like addressing personal situations, recreation or informal learning, formal education as teachers and students, or workplace activities. Besides, some information is needed for activity and other such reasons. The feature above is formed because information users make choices framing structure sources providers and means of access when information needs or wants to arise. These choices depend on such factors as the user's perception of quality, reliability, etc. of data available from sources and providers and simple use or cost of using. The survey is meant to watch choices made up of among many alternatives.

2.4.Usage of Public Libraries

The respondents were asked to point the importance of public libraries services to the area people of Murshidabad District. Within the public libraries, most 70% of the respondents are regular and only 30% of respondents are not regular. Within the Murshidabad District public libraries, 65% of the respondents were using 1-2 hours, 30% of the respondents were using 3-4 hours, and the remaining 5% of the respondents are using 5 hours spent within the public libraries. Regarding the utilization of public libraries, 88% of respondents are using them for

the last 1-8 Years and 12% of the respondents are using public libraries in the last 9-15 Years. However, quite half of the respondents are using public libraries regularly.

2.5.Functions of Public Libraries of Murshidabad

Public Libraries are expected to perform the subsequent functions:

- a) To give information/documents to all or any people of the community
- b) To establish the proper contact between the user and the document/information
- c) To make library awareness to the public
- d) To establish an honest relationship with the public and secure support for the event of the public library
- e) To cater to a good sort of users and make use of the resources available within the library
- f) To uplift the youngsters and ladies and add more to social development
- g) To highlight social issues in the public domain
- h) To aware the common people about the value and importance of education

2.6.Evaluation of library services

The pressure of public budgets makes it essential to quantify the worth of public libraries to citizens and society. Library services can be both direct and indirect benefits, like use, opinion, and non-use values. Empirical data from a study of public libraries in Norway indicate that approximately 40% of their total value is motivated by direct use value, 20% by opinion value, which may be a potential use-value, and 40% by non-use value. Non-use values are thus a crucial component and therefore the exclusion of such values in cost-benefit analyses of library services may grossly underestimate public libraries' overall worth to society. The study stimulates motivations for non-use values of libraries and finds that 15-30% of the entire value is driven by 'global' altruism, directed toward others than the respondents own close familiars (Svanhild Aabø; Jon Strand, 2004).

3. Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the study are to gauge the collections, Staffs, Teachers, Researchers, and Students services provided by the public libraries of Murshidabad district in West Bengal.

The specific objectives are as given below:

- 1) To assess the collections and services provided by the public libraries.
- 2) To evaluate the staffing patterns of Murshidabad district public libraries of West Bengal.
- 3) To find out the extent of satisfaction of users of the public library of Murshidabad district in West Bengal.
- 4) To know the expectations of users of the public libraries.
- 5) To study the performance of the public libraries of Murshidabad district in West Bengal.
- 6) To identify the issues faced by the users of Murshidabad district in West Bengal.

4. Literature review

A review has been made on some of the relevant important literature. Many authors from national and international have extensively written on the public library system. A comprehensive study is made on the public libraries and the role of the local and government organizations' contribution in the development of public libraries.

In the study, Rumanian Nair (1974) has traced the history of the library movement in Kerala. The study describes its beginning, organizational movement, objectives, and programs of the Kerala Granthasala Sanghomits, and administrative setup. The study revealed that the Trivandrum library, established in 1829 is the first library in Kerala. The organized movement arose in Kerala with the establishment of Malabar Vayanasala Sanghom in Malabar in 1937. Travancore Granthasala Sanghom, which was established in 1945, was converted into Kerala Granthasala Sanghom and its services were extended in Kerala. It stressed the necessity of library legislation because it would facilitate the collection of finance, standard and adequate library service, and administrative efficiency. Menon (1976)

has traced the first history of the Trivandrum library. It gives an account of the various opinions about the year of its establishment, its founders, its different locations, recognition of it by the State, conversion of it into people's library before 1878, transfer of it to the govt in 1898, and construction of the new building in 1902 in commemoration of the jubilee of Victoria in 1897. It has been reported that the foremost important event within the early history of Trivandrum library is that the takeover of the library by the govt in 1898 and therefore the opening of its membership to the public. Biswas & Deb (2019) highlights the West Bengal public library was set up in 1979. The state has a state central library, district library, and other libraries at a lower level. The Directorate of Libraries manages the library, but currently, the number of public libraries is decreasing substantially. The role of the public libraries is to disseminate information instead of only leading and receiving books. The study was conducted in the Lalgola community development block of Murshidabad district, among the 100 parents, their daughters were awarded one-time Knyashree scholarship grants of RS. 25000 on attaining the age of 18 years. The objective of the study was to assess the role of public libraries in empowering women. Mollah, Anwaruzzaman, & Kundu (2012) highlight the college libraries of Murshidabad which was started in 1853, since over 150 years ago. The libraries have come across many shortages, like poor financial support, limited manpower, and inadequate infrastructure, etc. Most of the libraries are not well equipped with modern technologies and trained professionals. Libraries are found in pathetic states with low book collections, low annual expenditure to meet the need of the users. The study shows lack of books, periodicals, journals, reprography, and internet facilities are some of the major issues expressed by the users. Pharcy (2020) evaluated the public libraries in the Murshidabad District, West Bengal, and the extended usage of the public library resources and services by their patrons. The study is made on the profile of the 20 public libraries of Murshidabad district and 200 samples were collected to discuss the user's responses towards the libraries. Oh (2003) examined the complaining behavior of 456 public library users in South Korea's major cities. A complaining behavior model created in the marketing field can be applied in the public libraries as well. Olarongbe et. al. (2013) investigate the information needs and characteristics of the users of Oyo State Public Library, Nigeria. The study found the majority of the public library users were students and they needed information to support their academic education. The majority of the users acquired information through the internet and library. The major drawback of accessing needed information was the lack of relevant

materials. Through acquisitions of current relevant materials and periodic users' studies, public libraries can meet the need of the users.

5. Research Methodology

The study is conducted through a survey method. Surveys are often conducted in several ways. Within the survey method, primary data are often collected mainly through the questionnaire, interview, and observation. The total sampling size of the respondents is 150. Two different questionnaires were prepared for the librarian and the users. Data were collected from 20 public libraries including 10 each from rural and urban libraries. Out of the 20 libraries 80% of librarians are males and only 20% of librarians are females and as users 63% are males and 37% are females.

6. Data analysis and interpretation

A study of evaluation of library services by the users of Murshidabad District (West Bengal) was administered using survey method and questionnaire tool. The questionnaires were collected from 150 respondents from the 20 public libraries. The data analysis is listed below with charts and tables.

1. Gender wise distribution of survey sample

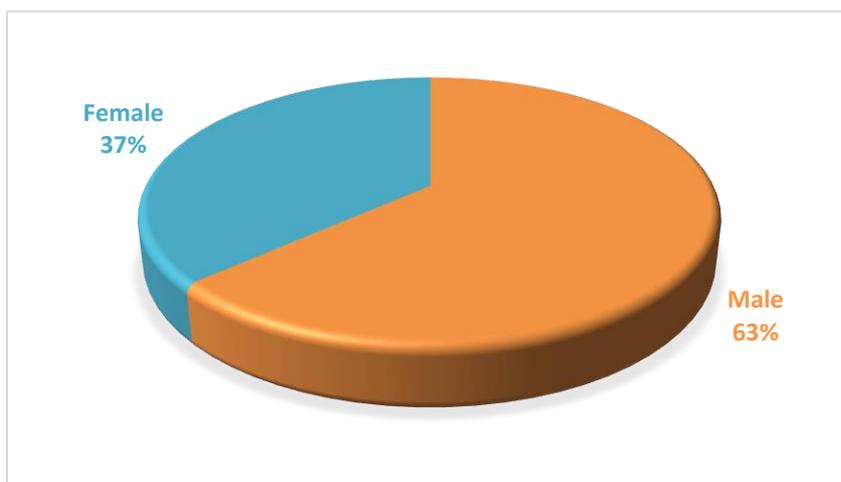


Figure. 1 Gender wise distribution of survey sample

The above figure no.1 shows, out of a total of 150 respondents, most of the respondents 63% are males and 37% of respondents are females. It shows majority of the respondents were male participants.

2. Age-wise distribution of survey sample

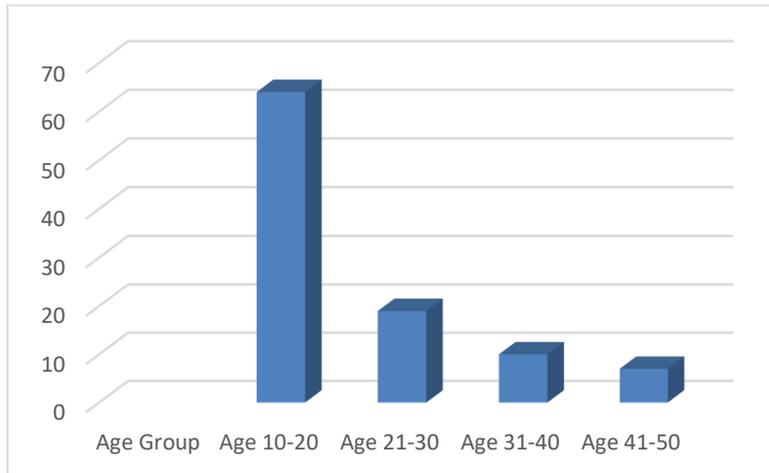


Figure. 2 Age-wise distribution of survey sample

Many people are using public libraries in Murshidabad District and these users belong to different age groups. Of the total, the majority 64% of respondents belong to 10-20 years age group, 19% belong to the 21-30 years age group, 10% belong to the 31-40 years age group, 7% belong to 41-50 years age group.

3. Educational qualifications of the users

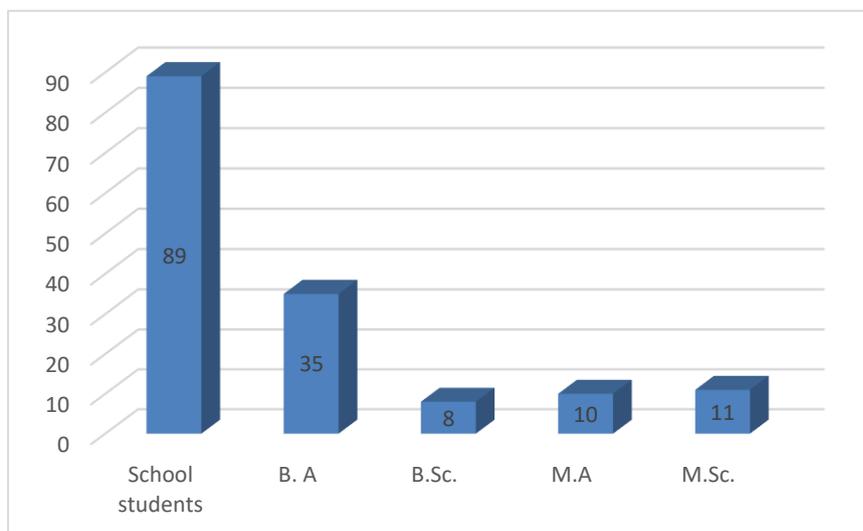


Figure. 3. Educational qualifications of the users

The above graph no.3 shows, majority 59% of the respondents using the public libraries are school students, 23% of respondents are B. A (Bachelor of Arts), 7% of the respondents are M.Sc., and 6% of the respondents are M.A and 5% of the respondents are B.Sc. The study indicates school students are often users of these public libraries in the Murshidabad District.

4. Occupation of the users

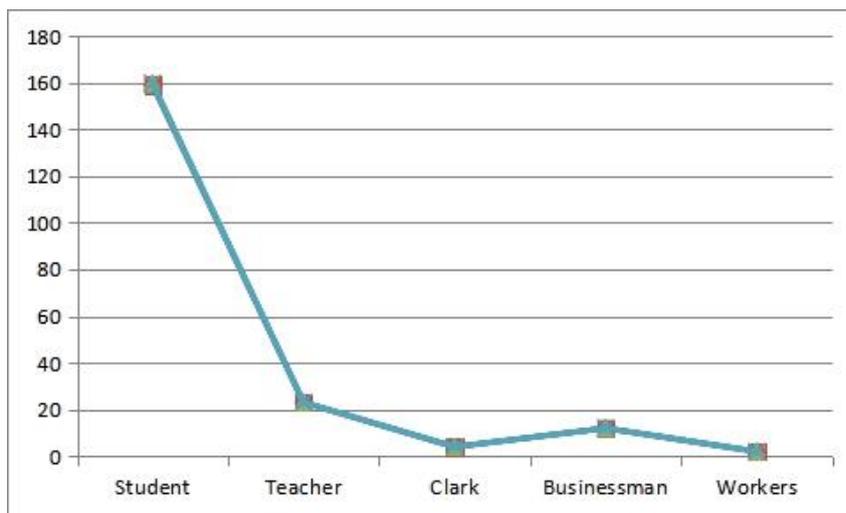


Figure. 4. Occupation of the users

The above figure no.4 shows, majority 79% of the respondents are students visiting these libraries for various reasons, 11% of the respondents are Teachers, 6% of the users are Businessman, 2% of the respondents are Clarks, and 2% of respondents are workers who are using public libraries in Murshidabad District.

5. Educational qualifications of the Librarian

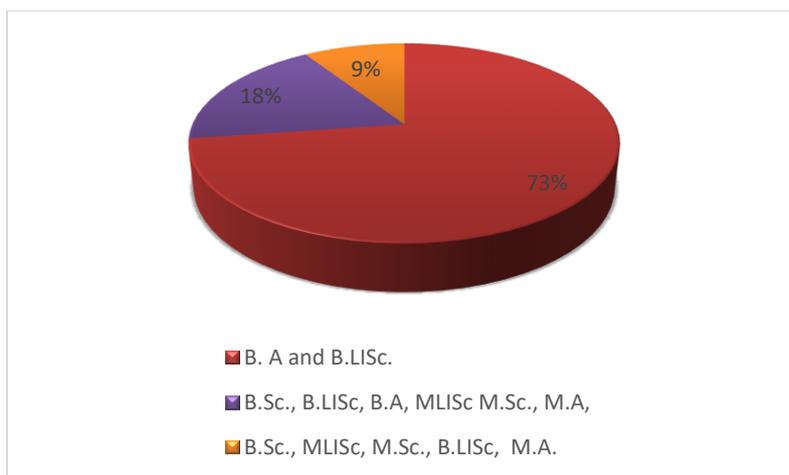


Figure 5. Educational qualifications of the Librarian

The above figure no.5 shows, majority of the respondents 73% of Librarians are B. A, B.LISc., 18% Librarians are B.Sc., B.LISc., B.A, MLISc M.Sc., M.A, and 9% Librarians are B.Sc., MLISc, M.Sc., B.LISc, M.A qualification holders. It shows most of the public librarians have least qualifications, the reason might be they have recruited at the early year.

6. Library’s annual budget

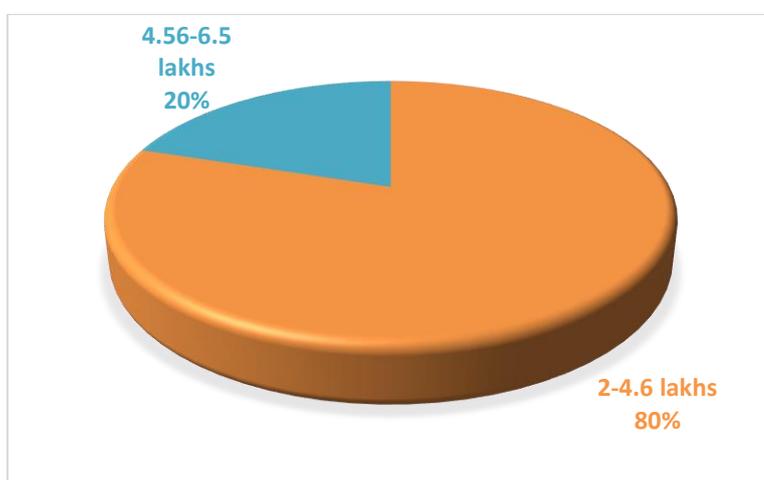


Figure 6. Library’s annual budget

The above figure no.6 shows that the majority 80% of libraries annual budget is 2-4.5 lakhs, and 20% of libraries annual budget is 4.56-6.5 lakhs. The study shows most of the public libraries have less annual budget.

7. Library annual budget for the last five years

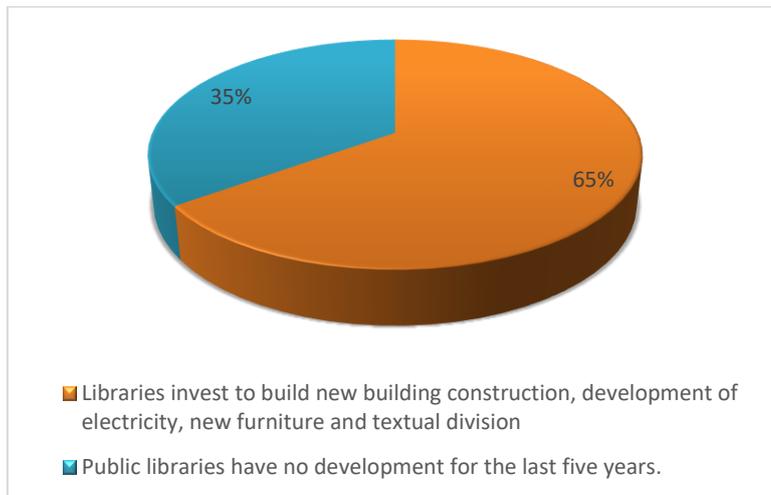


Figure 7. Library annual budget for the last five years

The above pie chart figure no.7 shows, 65% of libraries invest to build new building construction, development of electricity, new furniture, and textual division and 35% of public libraries have no development for the last five years.

8. Establishment of Library

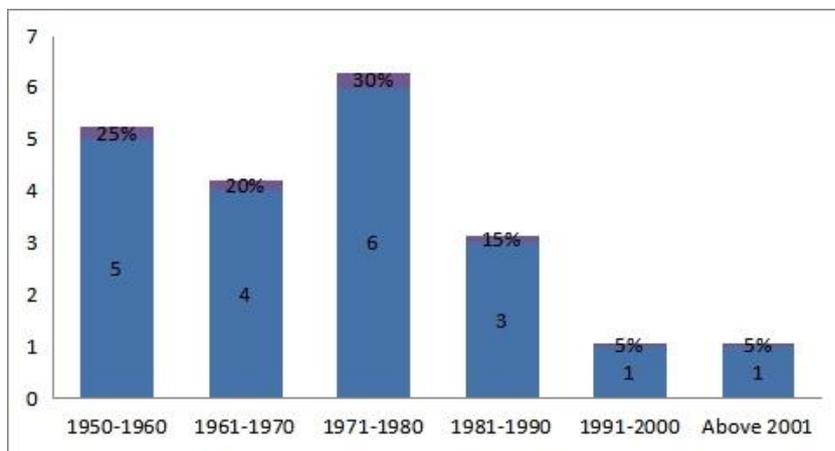


Figure 8. Establishment of Library

The above figure no.8 shows, 30% of libraries were established during 1971-1980, 25% of the libraries were established during 1950-1960, 20% libraries were established during 1961-1970, 15% libraries were established during 1981-1990, 5% libraries were established during 1991-2000 and 5% libraries were established after 2001.

9. Use of Public Libraries

Importance of Public Libraries in Murshidabad

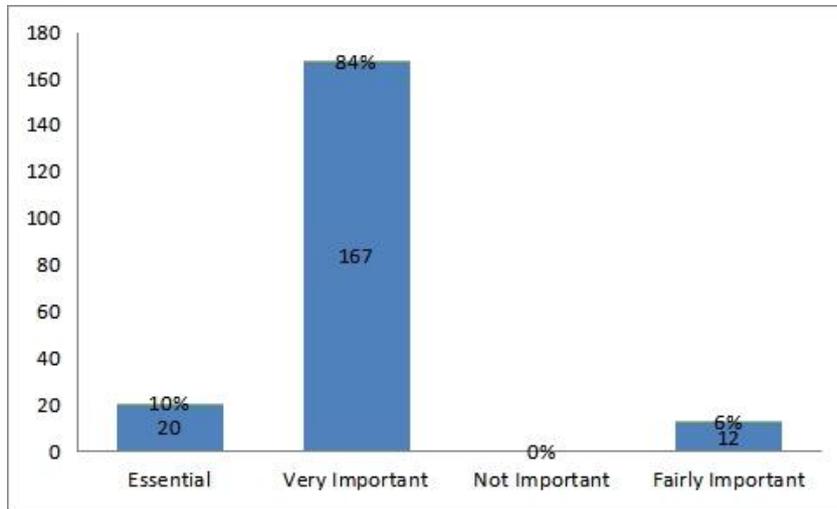


Figure 9. Importance of Public Libraries in Murshidabad

The respondents were asked to indicate the importance of public libraries services to the local community of Murshidabad District. The above figure no. 9 shows, most of the respondents 84% feel that public libraries are very important, 10% responds library is essential, and only 6% shows libraries are fairly important.

10. Use of Public Libraries in Murshidabad District

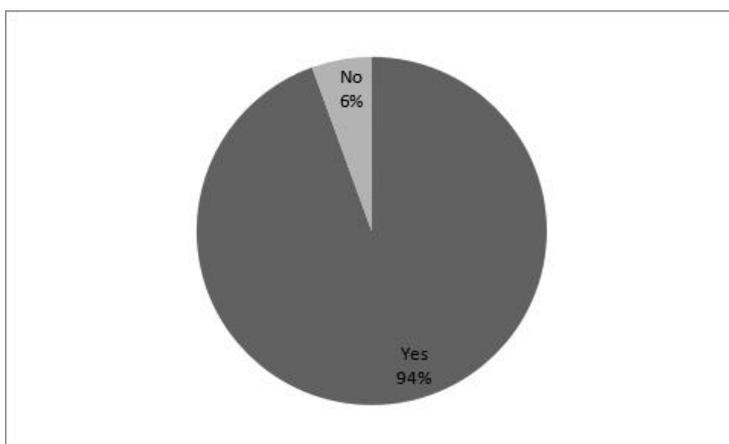


Figure 10. Use of Public Libraries in Murshidabad District

The above figure no.10 shows, most 94% of responses are regular users of the public libraries and whereas, only 6% of responses are not regular users of the public libraries. It shows most of the patrons are regular users of public libraries.

11. Visit the public library during the last 12th months.

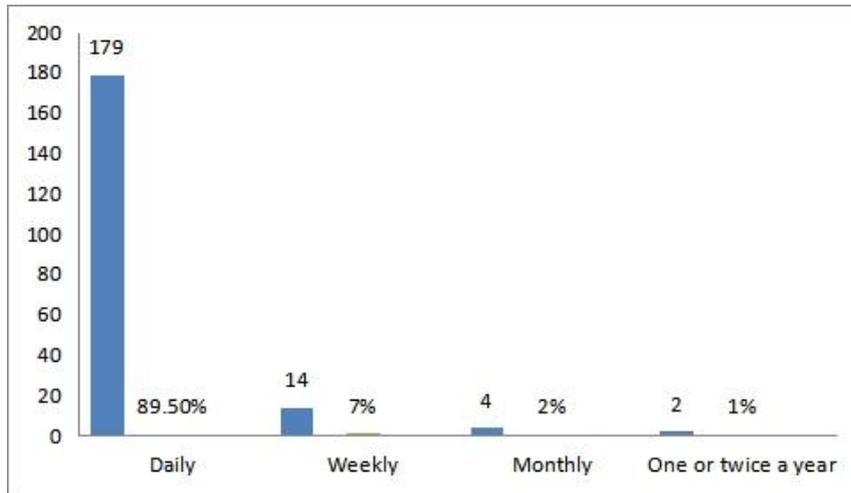


Figure 11. Visit the public library during the last 12th months.

The respondents were asked to inform the frequency of their visits to public libraries. The above graph no. 11 shows, most of the respondents 90% of them visit the public libraries on daily basis, 7% of the respondents visit the public library weekly, 2% of the respondents visit the public library monthly, and only 1% of the respondents visit the public library once or twice a year. The study shows most of the respondents visit the public libraries almost every day.

12. Documents collections of public libraries of Murshidabad District

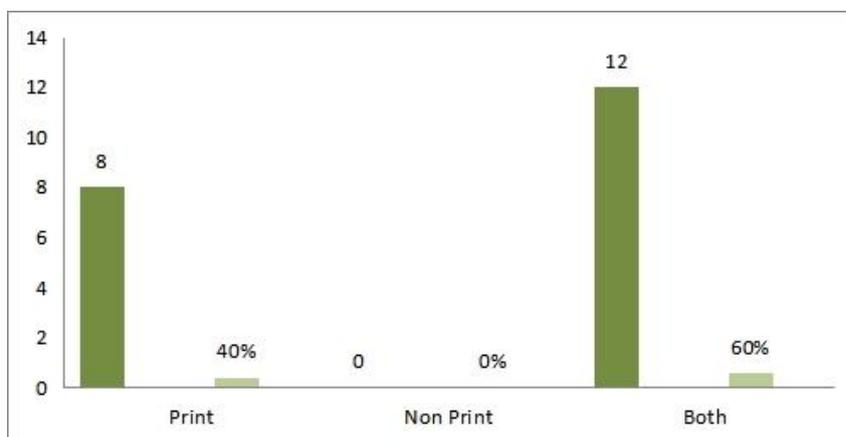


Figure 12. Collections of documents

The above figure no. 12 shows, majority 60% of collections are printed and non-printed, and 40% of collections are printed in the public libraries of Murshidabad District. It shows majority of the documents collections in public libraries are available in both printed and non-printed.

Special or Rare collections

The respondents were asked to indicate about the special or rare collection. The study found each of the libraries has no special or rare collections.

13. Total books of Public Libraries

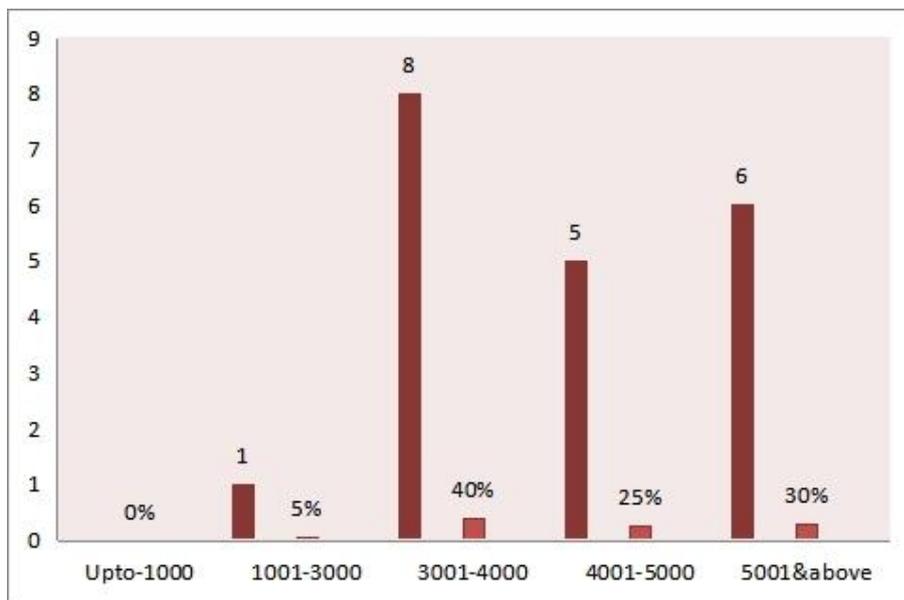


Figure 13. Total books of Public Libraries

The above figure no.13 shows, 40% of public libraries have 3001-4000 books, 25% of public libraries have 4001-5000 books, and 5% each of public libraries has 1001-3000 books, and 30% books are available 5001. The study shows the public libraries have adequate collections of books.

14. Using classification scheme

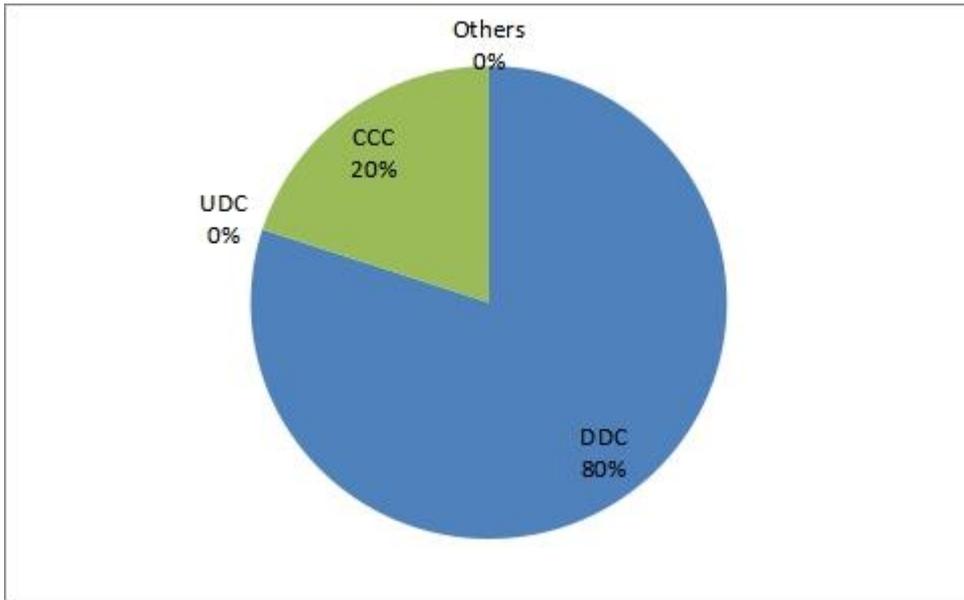


Figure 14. Using the classification scheme

The above figure no.14 shows, most of the respondents 80% of libraries are using the DDC classification scheme, and 20% of libraries are using CCC Classification Scheme. It shows most of the public libraries are using DDC classification scheme.

15. Library Automation Software

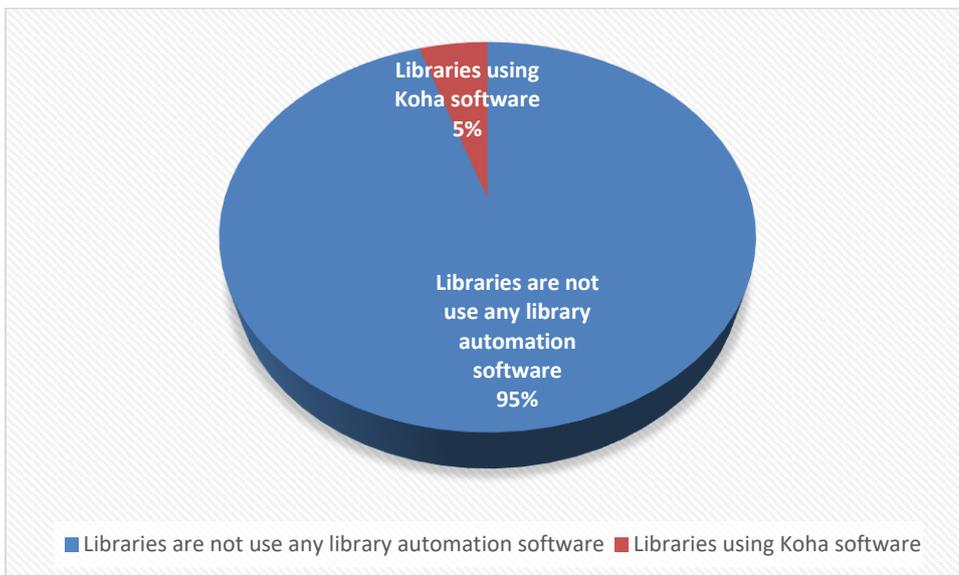


Figure 15. Library Automation Software

The above figures no.15 show, most 95% of the libraries are not using any library automation software, but 5% of them are using Koha, particularly in the town Libraries. It shows most of the public libraries are still traditional libraries and need upgradation of modern technologies.

Library services

16. Services Provided by Libraries

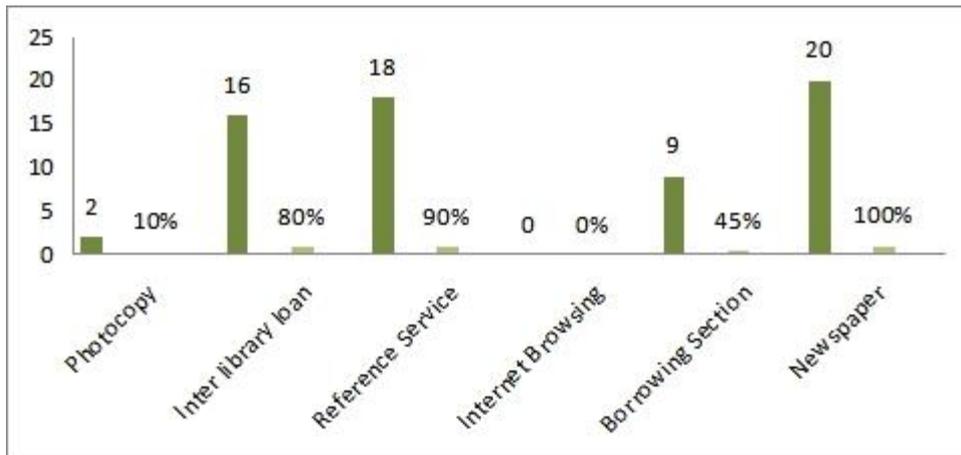


Figure 16. Services Provided by Libraries

The above figures no.16 shows, 100% libraries have their Newspapers facilities in the Public Libraries, 80% of libraries have Interlibrary-loan facilities, 45% libraries have their Borrowing Section, and 10% of libraries have their Photocopying facilities.

Facilities available in Public Libraries

Circulation facility:

According to the respondents, each of the public libraries of Murshidabad District has its circulation facilities. It shows all the public libraries have well-functioning circulation section for check in, check out and public interaction.

Photocopy facility:

In the study it was found, 90% of public libraries do not have their photocopy facilities and 10% of public libraries have their photocopy facilities. It shows most of the public libraries have reprographic facilities.

Reading room facility:

In the study, the people were asked about reading room facilities in the public libraries and 100% of the respondents have informed there is reading room facilities in every public library of Murshidabad District. It shows all the public libraries have reading room facilities for their patrons.

Audio-visual facility:

When the people were asked about audio-visual facilities in the public libraries, 95% of public libraries don't have audio-visual facilities, and only 5% of the public library have their audio-visual facilities. It shows most of the public libraries do not have any electronic preservation facilities.

Furniture facility:

In the survey, it was found 100% of public libraries have comfortable furniture. It shows all the public libraries have good infrastructure facilities to give comfortable environment to its readers.

Exhibition facilities:

When the people were asked about the Exhibition facilities. The public libraries do not have Exhibition facilities. The study shows the public libraries should initiate to set up exhibition facilities for displaying new books arrivals and showcase the books which are valuable and make the users aware about the availability, to increase the maximum use of the library resources.

Meeting or lectures room facility:

According to the respondents, 85% of public libraries have their meeting or lectures room facility and 15% of the public libraries do not have their meeting or lectures room facility. It shows most of the public libraries have meeting and lectures room facilities for their patrons to sit and discuss in the library buildings.

Evaluation of Public Library

Satisfaction with the information in Public Library in Murshidabad District

The respondents were asked to indicate the user's satisfaction with the information books in the Public Libraries, 75% of the respondents are not satisfied with the information of public libraries of Murshidabad District and 25% of the respondents are satisfied with the information of public libraries.

Current affairs and current information

The respondents were asked to talk about the current affairs and current information in the public libraries of Murshidabad District. Each of the libraries properly provides current affairs and current information. The public libraries are maintaining UpToDate information's for their patrons.

Problems faced by the users

When the respondents were asked about the problem faced with the public libraries. Then most 94% of respondents did not face any problems in the public libraries and only 6% of respondents have faced problems due to lack of staff. The study shows the public libraries have good services and has comfortable environment for the users to access the resources.

Users' problem while using in the Public Libraries

The users are facing many problems while using public libraries. Most of the users are not aware of many facilities such as contacting libraries utilizing telephone or getting information through the website. It is the librarian's responsibility to inform the users about the various facilities and services provided by the public libraries. From the result, it is more evident that public library users are expecting more journals, current affairs, books, magazines, new subject books, competitive exams books etc. The user reviewed the public libraries computers do not have internet facilities and there are no rare or special collections.

7. Suggestions from the respondents

In this study, the users experienced different types of difficulties. The following are the few suggestions to be carried out in that area. All the books are to be arranged properly on the shelves, the users feel it is difficult to access the required books, so proper arrangements of

the books should be done. During the summer season in the covered atmosphere of the library, the users feel suffocations, so proper air conditioners facilities should be installed. The public libraries should invest more on procuring books, journals and give internet facilities to their patrons. The library professionals should encourage the library users and they should help and co-operate pleasingly with patience and thus cordial and congenial atmosphere must be created. Newspaper clippings must be placed on the notice board for the quick reference of the users of the library. Most of the libraries does not photocopy facility, so they need to establish a photocopy facility. There should drinking water facility and washroom for users in the libraries. Through good infrastructure and facilities will increase the number of users of the public libraries.

8. Conclusion and findings

The study was conducted by surveying 'Evaluation of the Public Library Services by the users of Murshidabad District, West Bengal'. The study found that users improve their reading skills in different ways by using public libraries. It was found that the users need more services like photocopies facility, computer facility, drinking water facility, more subject related books, and journals in public libraries of Murshidabad District. In these public libraries, 94% of respondents are regular users and only 6% of respondents are irregular users. The majority of 58% of the respondents were using 1-2 hours, 37% of the respondents were using 3-4 hours, and the remaining 5% of the respondents were using 5 hours in the public libraries. The majority 79% of the respondents are students visiting these libraries for various academic reasons, such as 11.5% of the respondents are Teachers, 6% of the users are Businessman, 2% of the respondents are Clarks, and only 1.5% of them are Workers who are using public libraries in Murshidabad District. In the public libraries, 63% of the users were males and the 37% of user were females. Majority of the respondents, 64% are between the age group of 10-20, 19% are between age group of 21-30, 10% are between the age group of 31-40 and 7% are between the age group of 41-50. Then the respondents were asked to inform about the use of public libraries, 88% of respondents are using the public libraries for the past 1-8 Years and 12% using for the past 9-15 Years. Of the total 90% of users visit the public libraries on daily basis, 7% of the users visit the public library weekly, 2% of the users visit the public libraries monthly, and a few 1% respondents visit the public library once or twice a year. Overall, 60% of collections are non-printed and 40% of collections are printed in the public libraries of Murshidabad District. Most 90% of the libraries have a separate

section for children, and 10% of libraries have no separate section for children in the Public Libraries of Murshidabad District. The study found most 85% of public libraries have their meeting or lectures room facilities and 15% of the public libraries do not have their meeting or lectures room facilities. It was found most 80% of the public libraries issue the books for 7 days and only 15% of public libraries issue books for 15 days. The respondents were asked to indicate the user's satisfaction with the information sources in the Public Libraries, 75% of the respondents are not satisfied and only 25% of the respondents are satisfied with the information of public libraries of Murshidabad District. Almost all the respondents like to use and utilize the services and facilities available in the public libraries. Therefore, the public libraries need to increase their resources to encourage more patrons to utilise public libraries facilities.

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