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**Roles of Public Libraries in Socio-Economic Developments in Rural Area in the Digital Age
with Special Reference to Government District Library- Ahwa**

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Abstract:

The present study highlights the roles of public libraries in the socio-economic development of rural areas in the digital age with special reference to the Government District Library- Ahwa. A total no. of 60 questionnaires were distributed to a library, using a survey to collect data. Out of which 45 users gave their responses. The study found that all respondents indicated that they were using the public library for reading purposes. Followed by 75.56% respondents to prepare competitive exams, 71.11% to improve general knowledge, and very few users using the library for other purposes. The majority 53.33% of users had excellent opinions about the information

resources and services available in the public library. The result shows the views of the various users on the benefits of the library for their development. In which the highest 71.11% respondents reported that their general knowledge has increased and very few 28.89% respondents reported their social and cultural values related information has increased.

Keywords: Library, Public library, Socio-economic development, Rural area, District library-Ahwa

Introduction:

A public library is a social institution which is directly connected to the society and plays an important role in the well-being of the society. It provides free knowledge, literacy by self-education to the people of the society. Also, as an information dissemination centre, as an entertainment centre and contributes to the evolution in the field of science and technology. Public libraries play an important role in promoting the development of rural communities in rural areas. Rural area public library users' information needs to be different from other public library users. The development of the rural community only leads to the development of the entire country. Therefore, an attempt has been made here to find out who are the users of public libraries in rural areas, what are their information needs, and users' opinions regarding the information services and resources of the libraries.

Socio-economic Development:

In the socio-economic context, development means the improvement of people's lifestyles through improved education, incomes, skills development and employment. It is the process of economic and social transformation based on cultural and environmental factors.

Socio-economic development is the process of social and economic development in a society. Its purpose is to maintain the social and physical well-being of the nation and its people, as well as to achieve the highest level of human development.

- <https://byjus.com/ias-questions/what-is-the-purpose-of-socio-economic-development/>

Literature Review:

Santos (2009) discussed in his paper the role of public libraries in society as a focal point for local economic development adapted to Southern Common Market countries. This paper provides information about the Bleiweis services that contribute to the economic development of the community. Also listed are two examples of services including the Silkeborg Library in Denmark, which provides business information services for local small enterprise businesses and the Croydon Library Service in England, which offers electronic business records.

Basheer and Kaliyaperumal (2015) describe their paper on the roles of public libraries in society for socio-economic developments. It shows that the libraries disseminated various information on many issues related to agriculture, employment opportunities and educational aspects for the social and economic development of society. But more improvements were needed in terms of its collection. In terms of competitive exams many improvements were needed in digital resources as many users were visiting the library for competitive exam preparation.

Mallik and Nayek (2018) wrote an article on the role of public library in development of socio-economic status of Lodha community with a view to identify the socio-economic conditions of Lodha community in Sena and ChandanaMauza at Keshiyari Block, West Medinipur, West Bengal, as well as recommended some suggestions for their betterment. From this article it

known that it was necessary to create a public library in every rural area and to make economically backward people aware about the need and importance of rural public libraries.

Biswas and Mahato (2020) wrote an article on the relationship between public libraries and local-economic development, the role of public libraries in local-economic development of West Bengal, considering the role of public libraries in local-economic development and community development. It is understood that funding was a major constraint for public libraries. Most of the reading material in public libraries was outdated. Also, it was important to have continuous training for library staff.

Objectives of the study:

- To know the different types of users visiting the public library.
- To know the users purposes of visiting to a public library.
- To study the various types of information services provided by public libraries from the users' point of view
- To study the role of public library for socio-economic development through dissemination of information on education, employment and entrepreneurship and creating general awareness among users.
- To study users' opinions towards available information resources and services.

Research Methodology:

A method is a way of systematically solving a problem. So it is very important to choose the right research method for the research. A survey method of research has been used for the present study. The researcher designed a structured questionnaire to collect information from the users. After that, the public library was visited and taking the permission of the librarian, also a

questionnaire was given face to face from the users. A total no. of 60 questionnaires were distributed to the Government District Library- Ahwa, out of which 45 users' gave their responses. Then the obtained data were organized through tables and charts. Also Microsoft Excel has been used for analysis.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Table-1 Gender wise Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	27	60.00
Female	18	40.00
Total	45	100

Table-1 describes the gender wise distribution of respondents. From which it is clear that total 45 respondents gave their responses. It includes 27 (60%) male and 18 (40%) female respondents. Which shows that male respondents are more than female respondents.

Table-2 Age wise Distribution of Respondents

Age	Respondents	Percentage (%)
15-30 years	21	45.67
31-45 years	13	28.89
46-60 years	7	15.55
More than 60 years	4	8.89
Total	45	100

Table-2 indicates the age wise distribution of the respondents of the public library. The table clearly shows that out of 45 respondents, 21 (45.67%) respondents were aged 15 to 30, 13 (28.89%) respondents were aged 31 to 45, 7 respondents (15.55%) were aged 46 to 60 years, while 4 (8.89%) respondents were above the age of 60. This indicates that the majority of the 21 (45.67%) respondents using the libraries were aged 15 to 30. A very few 4 (8.89%) respondents were under the age of more than 60 years.

Table-3 Educational status

Educational status	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Up to secondary	2	4.44
Higher secondary	9	20.00
Graduate	18	40.00
post-graduate	11	24.45
More than postgraduate	5	11.11
Total	45	100

The above table-3 shows the educational status of the respondents. From this it can be seen that out of a total 45 respondents, a maximum of 18 (40%) respondents had Graduate degree and 11 (24.45%) respondents had a post-graduate degree. Whereas 2 (4.44%) secondary, 9 (20%) higher secondary and 5 (11.11%) had more than a postgraduate qualification.

Table-4 Occupation wise Distribution of Respondents

Occupation	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Student	23	51.11
Researcher	0	0
Government employee	3	6.67

Private employee	6	13.33
Housewife	4	8.89
Unemployed	5	11.11
Senior Citizen	4	8.89
Farmer	0	0
businessman	0	0
Labor	0	0
other	0	0
Total	45	100.00

Table-4 shows the occupational situation of the respondents. The results showed that various types of users visited the public library, including students, government employees, private employees, housewives, unemployed and senior citizens. Among the 45 users 23 (51.11%) were students, 3 (6.67%) Government employee, 6 (13.33%) private employee, 4 (8.89%) housewife, 5 (11.11%) were unemployed and 4 (8.89%) were senior citizens, who used the public library. When researchers, farmers, businessman's, laborers, etc. has not visited public library.

Table-5 Frequency of Library Visit by the Respondents

Library Visit	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Daily	17	37.78
Once a week	13	28.89
Twice a week	3	6.67
Once a month	10	22.22
Occasionally	2	4.44
Total	45	100

Table-5 indicates the frequency of library visits by the respondents. From this it can be seen that out of 45 respondents, the majority of the 17 (37.78%) respondents visited the library every day. While 13 (28.89%) once a week, 3 (6.67%) twice a week, 10 (22.22%) once a month and 2 (4.44%) respondents visited library occasionally.

Table-6 Purpose of Library Usage by the Respondents

Purposes	Respondents	Percentage (%)
For reading	45	100.00
For research purpose	0	0
To increase general knowledge	32	71.11
To prepare for competitive exams	34	75.56
To get agriculture related information	23	51.11
To strengthen interpersonal relationships	0	0
To get health and family welfare information	21	46.67
To get information about current social problems and events	11	24.44
To know national / international information	23	51.11
To improve professional efficiency	13	28.89
To get information about social awareness and development	20	44.44
For entertainment	15	33.33
To get information about social and cultural values	13	28.89
Creating social and community groups	0	0
To get information about employment and entrepreneurship	25	55.56

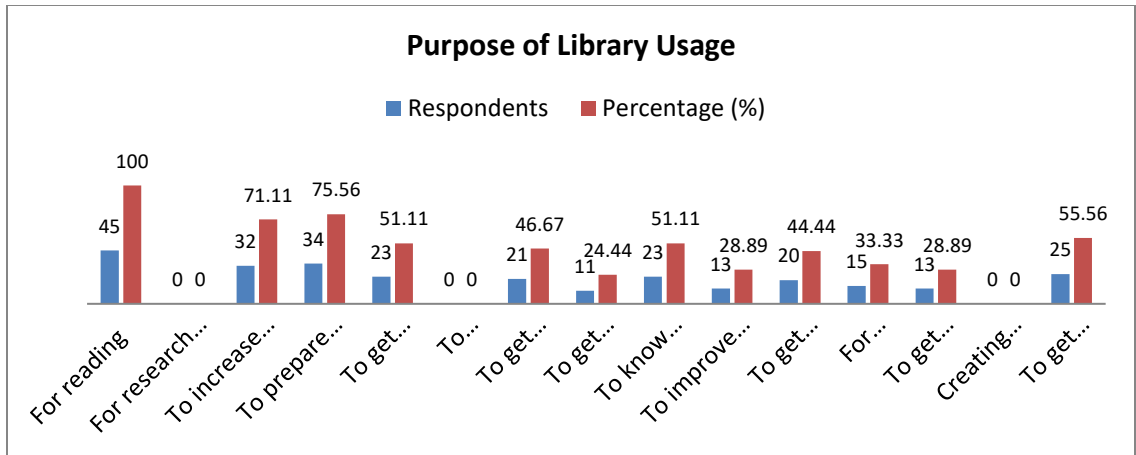


Chart-1 Purpose of Library Usage by the Respondents

From table-6 and chart-1 revealed that users visited the public library for various purposes. The majority of all respondents indicated that they used the public library for reading purpose. Followed by 34 (75.56%) respondents to prepare competitive exams, 32 (71.11%) to improve general knowledge, 23 (11.11%) to get agriculture related information and know national/ international information, 21 (46.67%) to get health and family welfare information, 11 (24.44%) to get information about current social problems and events, 13 (28.89%) to improve professional efficiency and get information about social and cultural values, 20 (44.44%) to get information about social awareness and development, 15 (33.33%) for entertainment, 25 (55.56%) to get information about employment and entrepreneurship and 3(6.25%) used the library for other purposes.

Table-7 Types of Reading Material Used by the Respondents

Reading material	Respondents	Percentage (%)
General books	20	44.44
Reference books	23	51.11
Competitive exam books	34	75.56

Novel	17	37.78
Newspapers	43	95.56
Magazines	27	60.00
Non-book material	0	0
Other	6	13.33

Table-7 indicates that out of the total 45 respondents, most of the 43 (95.56%) respondents used newspapers. followed by 34 (75.56%) competitive examination books, 27 (60%) magazines, 23 (51.11%) reference books, 20 (44.44%) general books, 17 (37.78%) novels and 6 (13.33%) used other reading materials.

Table-8 Users' opinions about the information resources and services available in the library

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Excellent	18	40.00
Good	24	53.33
Average	3	6.67
Not satisfying	0	0
Total	45	100

Table-8 presents the views of the users' on the information resources and services available in the public library. It is clear that out of 45 respondents, the majority of the 24 (53.33%) users' opinions were excellent, followed by 18 (40%) good and only 3 (6.67%) user opinions were average.

Table-9 Users' opinion about the following factors that enhance socio-economic development through library use

Factors Affecting Socio-Economic Development	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Increase in general knowledge	32	71.11
Increase of knowledge about employability and entrepreneurship	23	51.11
Knowledge of national / international information	21	46.67
Improve business efficiency	20	44.44
Increasing information about awareness of social and cultural values	13	28.89
Increasing information related to agriculture or other employment	23	51.11
increasing information about social awareness and development	26	57.78
Interpersonal relationships are strengthened	0	0
Helpful in creating social and community groups	0	0
Increase information about health and family welfare	15	33.33

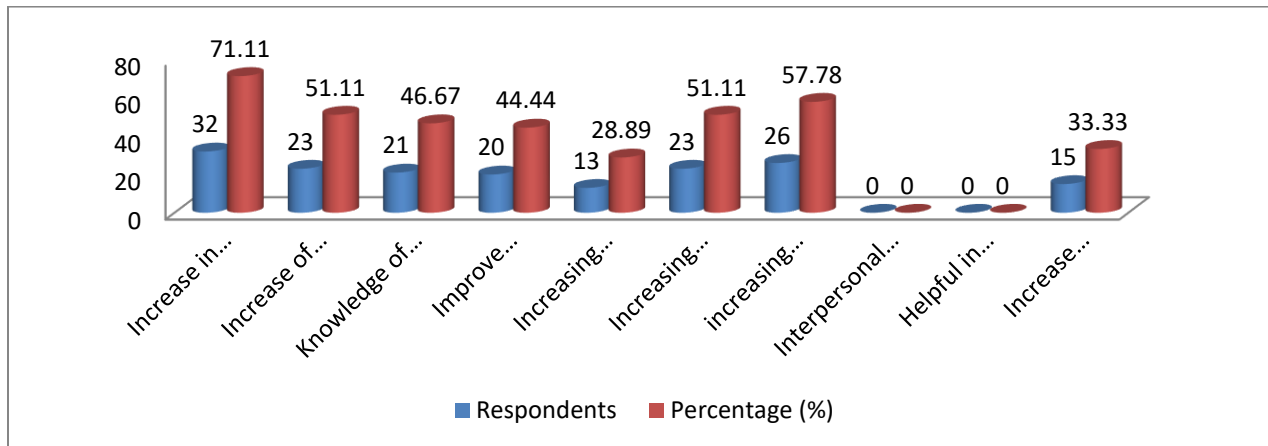


Chart-2 Users' opinion about the following factors that enhance socio-economic development through library use

A public library is a very important institution for all users of society. It provides different kinds of information to society. It leads to social, economic and mental development of the society. So here are the opinions of the different users about how the library is beneficial for their development. In which highest 32 (71.11%) respondents reported that their general knowledge has increased, followed by 23 (51.11%) respondents opinion about increase knowledge of employability and entrepreneurship, 21 (46.67%) respondents increase knowledge about national and international information, 20 (44.44%) respondents improve business efficiency, 13 (28.89%) respondents increase in information about social and cultural values, 23 (51.11%) respondents increase information related to agriculture or other employment, 26 (57.78%) respondents increased information about social awareness and development, also 15 (33.33%) respondents gave opinion about increased in health and family welfare information.

Findings:

- This study reveals that in the district library- Ahwa, male users were more than female users.
- The majority of 45.67% respondents using the library were aged 15 to 30 and a very few 8.89% respondents were under the age of more than 60 years.
- The result shows that a maximum 40% respondents had a graduate degree and 24.45% respondents had a post-graduate degree. Whereas 4.44% secondary, 20% higher secondary and 11.11% had a more than postgraduate qualification.
- Also, the results showed that various types of users visited to the public library, including students, government employees, private employees, housewives, unemployed and senior citizens. Among the 45 users, Most of the 51.11% were student users visited the public library.

- The majority of the 37.78% respondents visited the public library every day. While 28.89% once a week, 6.67% twice a week, 22.22% once a month and 4.44% respondents visited the library occasionally.
- All respondents indicated that they used the public library for reading purposes. Followed by 75.56% respondents to prepare competitive exams, 71.11% to improve general knowledge, 11.11% to get agriculture related information and know national/international information, 46.67% to get health and family welfare information, 24.44% to get information about current social problems and events, 28.89% to improve professional efficiency and get social and cultural values related information, 44.44% to get information about social awareness and development, 33.33% for entertainment, 55.56% to get information about employment and entrepreneurship and 6.25% used the library for other purposes.
- Majority of the 95.56% respondents used newspapers in the public library. Followed by 75.56% competitive examination books, 60% magazines, 51.11% reference books, 44.44% general books, 37.78% novels and 13.33% used other reading materials.
- The majority 53.33% users' opinions were excellent, followed by 40% good and only 6.67% user opinions were average.
- The result shows the opinions of the different users about how the library is beneficial for their development. In which the highest 71.11% respondents reported that their general knowledge has increased and very few 28.89% respondents reported their social and cultural values related information has increased.

Suggestions:

- Nowadays, competitive exams are organized for jobs and promotion in various types of government organizations. So as a more number of students use public libraries to prepare for competitive exams to get jobs, it is important to maintain new editions of various types of competitive books. Also, adequate infrastructure facilities should be provided for them.
- In public library most of the respondents used newspapers as reading material. Therefore, different reading materials should be made aware and encouraged to read different reading materials to make maximum use of other reading materials as well.
- Books should be exhibited from time to time to familiarize with different reading materials.
- Various programs should be organized for the users to make more use of the public library.
- Reading materials should be kept according to the aptitude, age group of the readers.

Conclusion:

A public library is a very important institution for all users of society. It provides different kinds of information to society. As well, public libraries provide reading facilities, infrastructure, etc. for their users. So in today's competitive age, many users use the library to prepare for various competitive examinations. Other users also visit the library for various purposes such as reading, entertainment, current affairs, etc. In this way, people of different faiths and castes living in society develop globally by receiving free informal education in public libraries. Public libraries also conduct a variety of economic activities in support of community development, through society develops. Thus, public libraries make an important contribution to

the social, economic and mental development of society. In consequence, the country and the world are developing.

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