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Promoting Library Cultures: The Roles of Libraries in Human Resources Development in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Since the library is the paramount destination for obtaining knowledge and information, it has been a matter of great regret that the culture of pursuing lifelong learning programs through libraries remains unstressed and unfamiliar in Bangladesh. People from all walks of life have not felt the necessity of going to libraries to seek information and obtain knowledge to solve their day-to-day affairs and resolve other problematic issues. The tradition of reading, learning, and researching is still in a deplorable state, and to this end, the development and expansion of “Library Culture” is too slow to fulfill the information needs of the common masses. The core objective of this study is to explore the processes to promote library culture in Bangladesh. The researchers have followed a qualitative approach to conduct the research, and defined the concept of Library Culture and formulated different means for its extension throughout the country. The researchers also focus on the roles of Library Culture in human resource development in Bangladesh. There is no denying that the promotion of library culture across the country can build a truly progressive and prosperous smart Bangladesh in the days to come.

Keywords: Library Culture, Meetings, Newsletters, Blogs, Leadership, and Human Resources.

1. Introduction

Since the beginning of human civilization, libraries have been playing crucial roles in major social organizations for socio-economic stimulus, cultural enrichment, and educational transcendence to accentuate the development of human beings by providing knowledge and

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information (Lamani, Talawar, and Kumbar, 2014). A civilized nation and enlightened society can be formed through the practice of gathering, sharing, and creating new knowledge and information. Libraries throughout the history of human civilization have been providing major impetus for building organizational support to bring forth advancement and development of human beings to improve their quality of life and socio-economic structures (Jharia, 2015). Therefore, the balanced development of a country depends on the management of its human resources. Moreover, Libraries lead human resource development initiatives at the apex of success in the age of massive exploration of information infrastructure and the emergence of web-based electronic services. (Kamble and Ghante, 2021).

The library is one of the key human resource agencies devoted to nurturing human capital through learning and innovation. Though managing Human Resources is an arduous and challenging task, libraries enhance the skills and competencies of the employees of an organization to become efficient in coping with all the challenges ranging from skills shortages, shifting demographics, technological development, and managing diversity (Khan and Hossain, 2015). In this age of massive digitization and information exploration, the promotion of library culture through personal contact, phone calls, library tours, leaflets, and other easier means of communication can expand lifelong learning programs and build up human resources to invigorate development activities (Chiparausha and Chigwada, 2018). In Bangladesh, government public libraries, along with non-government public and private libraries are playing crucial roles in educating a large portion of the common masses by enabling them not only to read and write but also to assist in making important decisions and formulating plans for the community's progress (Akter, 2017).

Bangladesh as a densely populated country in the world, is striving hard to educate the vast majority of its population in urban and rural areas. The government is working relentlessly to meet the criteria of sustainable development goal to establish a full-fledged library culture to spread literacy programs in every nook and cranny of the country. Though the government along with several NGOs and other charitable organizations is determined to set up more libraries to educate the unprivileged sections of society who have no access to higher education and scientific information, the overall progress is still trailing behind in developing and accelerating

library programs nationwide to keep pace with the industrialized and emerging developed countries in the race to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Bangladesh is trying to address the problems of enhancing knowledge-based society through private and public initiatives (Rahman and Islam, 2022).

Bangladesh is one of the emerging economic giants among third-world nations. It has ample potential to come into view as a rising global leader by turning its ever-growing population into human capital. The promotion of library culture on a large scale across the country will strengthen lifelong education programs to develop socio-economic structures and the continuous efforts of the people at the grassroots level and provide them with a scope to get involved in the development and innovative activities.

2. Literature Reviews

A literature review is crucial for obtaining a common understanding of the topic considered for research to develop new concepts and theories. The researchers have reviewed some related articles associated with the study.

2.1 International Perspective

Lal (2018) identified the social and cultural aspects of libraries in rural areas of India to conceptualize the pattern of information service, community development, rural empowerment, and trends of library usage among the grassroots population. He also focused on the missions and structures of public library systems in India and the emerging roles of public libraries in bridging the digital divide with the availability of ICTs and other web-based library services.

Seifi, Habibi, and Ayati (2020) studied the effect of information literacy skills that motivate lifelong learning among the users of Iranian public libraries. They clarified that users at the secondary level found information literacy skills fruitful for solving problems and accomplishing their homework and assignments. They also revealed that many Iranian schools removed librarian positions due to the financial crisis, and the library services provided by these libraries happened to be of poor standard.

Mehra, Bishop, and Partee (2017) proposed a model to characterize the information context and business perspectives in Tennessee and other states in the United States of America. In this research, the researchers also pointed out many recent and potential roles of public libraries and highlighted the information needs of the entire community in the United States of America.

Jharia (2015) presented the roles of libraries in rural development and empowerment. He explored that rural libraries are striving hard due to inadequate collections, financial complications, and skilled human resources in the rural areas of India. He also proposed that the existing dilapidated condition of these libraries will be improved if the authority takes necessary initiatives for the enhancement of ICT facilities, the introduction of mobile libraries, and the initiation of digitization programs to provide necessary information services to the rural inhabitants.

Gamit (2018) discussed the roles and functions of academic libraries in developing Human Resources to cope with the ever-changing developed society and future advancement. He also viewed that academic librarians can contribute to implementing Human Resource Development programs and procedures by providing training, motivation, and counseling to the library personnel.

Mirzal (2021) emphasized the research trends in the Scopus database of the last ten years of rural libraries and the benefits of socio-economic development, including health and education. He also revealed that research on rural libraries is increasing gradually based on bibliometric analysis to map research trends.

Kamble and Ghante (2021) highlighted the present perspectives and roles of academic libraries in teaching, research, and other areas in higher educational institutions. They also revealed that academic libraries are providing many services outside the in-house collections by creating networks with other libraries.

2.2 Bangladeshi Perspective

Islam et al.,(2021) explored the present status of the Open Access movement in Bangladeshi libraries to gain some understanding of the accessibility to the world of scholarly publications and other research contents. The researchers investigated that Bangladeshi libraries are stumbling due to acute problems with high-speed internet connectivity and inefficient ICT experts to develop open access systems and services.

Basak (2017) investigated the information-seeking behavior of university teachers, research scholars, and library users within the poor infrastructural facilities that exist in the university libraries in Bangladesh.

Razzak and Islam (2022) redefined the roles of teaching libraries to meet the growing information needs of the students, teachers, researchers, and other stakeholders to create long-term learning atmospheres in the apex educational institutions. The researchers also put forward some guidelines to promote teaching librarianship programs at the university level.

Moniruzzaman (2019) revealed the overall status of Human Resource Management practices in Bangladesh and provided directions for future research that will help the researchers develop theories to portray a comprehensive picture of Human Resource Management practices of small and medium enterprises in Bangladesh.

Khan and Hossain (2015) studied the interrelations between various aspects of Human Resource Management and other concepts in the libraries at the university level in Bangladesh. The researchers also revealed that the human resource department can play an effective role in promoting library staff's careers and contribute much to enhancing the reputations of the university libraries through effective feedback and suggestions from the users.

The researchers have delineated library culture in this study to demonstrate its importance in the human resource development context. A good number of studies have been conducted on human resource development in Bangladesh. However, there have been no studies to explain library culture and the methods to spread library culture everywhere in Bangladesh. The researchers also emphasize how library culture deals with the large population by turning them into skilled and potential candidates to take part in development activities.

3. Objectives of the Study

The key objective of this study is to explore the ways of promoting library culture in Bangladesh.

The other objectives of this study are:

- a) To define the term “Library Culture” from the Bangladeshi perspective.
- b) To highlight the roles of library culture in the human resource development context.

4. Methodology of the Study

This study has been carried out to describe library culture specifically from Bangladesh’s present perspective and articulate different ways to promote library culture to produce quality human capital. In this study, the researchers used secondary data from different journal articles, conference papers, books, websites, and other important sources to obtain the objectives of the study. It is a qualitative research mainly designed to focus on the library’s promotional activities and roles of the libraries to develop human resources properly for bolstering development initiatives across the country.

5. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

In Bangladesh, the library movement has gained significance since the creation of some libraries in the early nineteenth century during the British colonial era. In 1851, the first public library was established in Jashore paving the journey of the library movement and laying a foundation for library culture in Bangladesh (Shuva and Akter, 2012). With time, library education, library profession, and professional values have changed with the rapid transformation of ITCs that have shaped the foundation of the modern library management system (Rahman, Khatun, and Mezbah-ul-Islam, 2011).

Since the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent country in 1971, tremendous progress has been made to popularize education for the common masses through libraries and the culture of learning beyond the academic periphery has started to flourish at a slow and steady pace (Akter, 2017). However, the growth of reading, learning, and researching through libraries is still dawdling compared to our neighboring India and other developed nations (Wani, 2008).

To spread education at the grassroots level, more libraries need to be established to serve the rural population with information and knowledge pertinent to their life and occupations. Moreover, every town and village must have a library that is specifically designed to support the proper reading environment for all age groups by providing ICTs and digital literacy equipment (Rahman and Islam, 2022).

Therefore, it is high time the government of Bangladesh took the necessary measures to expedite Library Culture across the country to keep pace with the rest of the world.

5.1 What is Library Culture?

Library culture is an approach to sharing knowledge and information among a group of people or a community of particular interests concerning their needs and requirements to accomplish personal, social, and economic undertakings by creating reading and learning habits through the library and information center. It aims to remove illiteracy from society and make a library center of excellence for all age groups. The more a community involves itself in gathering knowledge from books, magazines, periodicals, and other sources of information, the more “Library Culture” tends to flourish in society. Establishing libraries in every town and village with sufficient reading materials housed in a well-organized building can make “Library Culture” prominent for building up a knowledge-based society. With the availability of ICTs and other emerging digital technologies, library culture is getting in strong shape gradually. From the Bangladeshi perspective, library professionals have a lot of things to do to make

“library culture” popular among the common masses and prepare them as human capital.

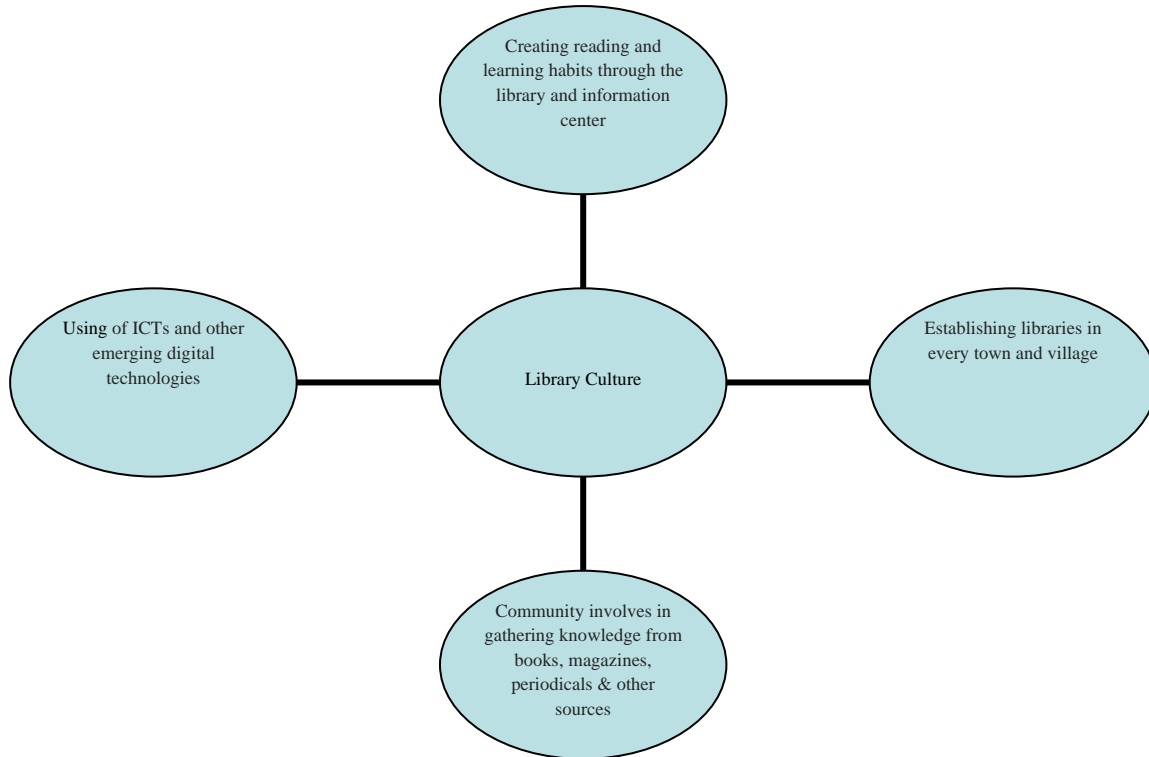


Figure 01- Process of Expanding Library Culture in Bangladesh

5.2 The Ways of Promoting Library Culture in Bangladesh

Bangladesh as an overpopulated country has always been fighting hard to educate the ever-growing populace with its limited resources. Here, the number of public and private-funded libraries is too insignificant to spread the light of education to all. Hence, the existing libraries are not serving properly due to people’s inertia and ignorance to use the library resources. The majority numbers of people do not have a concrete idea about the services and functionalities of a library. The promotion of library culture can change the traditional pace of library movement and turn the library's hubs for educational transcendence, social communications, and cultural fulfillment on a massive scale. Here are some ways to be followed for the promotion of library culture across the country.

Personal Contact

Users are the main consumers of any library or information center. Hence, providing prompt library services to the user community is the main motto of any library professional. The culture of reading books, magazines, periodicals, and other sources of information makes the library a worthwhile place for general people to fulfill their needs and requirements. In Bangladesh, the culture of going to the library to read books, getting information, and seeking new knowledge is not very popular compared to the advanced and other developing countries. Many people hardly apprehend the necessity of going to the libraries. However, to make a significant portion of our community people information literate and skillful citizens of the state, librarians need to make their strategies convenient enough to make people enthusiastic about the library. Therefore, librarians must establish active communication with the community members to give them a comprehensive picture of the library resources and services.

Meetings

Library professionals can also arrange regular meetings to inform the masses about the materials available to them and take note of the materials and resources they want to avail themselves of for solving their day-to-day modus operandi and fulfilling their information needs. However, the meetings can be conducted with the direct presence of the community members or through online platforms to ensure ease in placing their urges and increase their participation. Librarians must be very cordial to the suggestions and complaints made by users to improve the quality of services and bring transparency to the library's managerial activities.

Direct Mailing

With the rapid advancement of the Internet and emerging technologies, electronic mail or mailing has become a popular means of communication. Direct mailing services can be of great assistance to library professionals to put library resources in the grip of the end users to disseminate information and knowledge among the masses.

Displays of Library Resources

Display of the library resources is the most convenient option to reach the user community with all the library resources available for use. Displaying library resources will create enthusiasm among the users, and they will find the library and information centers worthwhile places to visit off and on to gather knowledge and information. Library professionals can arrange exhibitions to provide a comprehensive picture of the library and its overall collections.

Direct Conversation

Library professionals can have a direct conversation with the user community about their requirements and concentrate on enriching the library's collection to par with the user's demands and requirements. Regular conversations and feedback from the users help the Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals to become proactive in formulating collection development policies and prudent in rendering better services.

Newsletters

Newsletters can be one of the best media for promoting a library's activities, resources, and other information to the end users. Library professionals must emphasize the preparation of newsletters both in printed and online formats to cover the relevant aspects of the library, news and views of the user communities, librarian's opinions, and other details. However, the newsletters can be delivered to the users via email or distributed directly as printed documents to keep them well-informed and connected to the library or information centers.

Library Tours

Many people in our society have no sound knowledge about the library or information center. There is a misconception that prevailed strongly in the mindset of many people that bookstores are libraries or they treat both concepts in the same way. Therefore, librarians and concerned authorities can arrange library tours occasionally to familiarize the common masses with the library and the functionalities of a librarian.

Website

Website is the best way to promote library's books, non-books, journals, periodicals, and other items of knowledge and information to the user community. With the availability of the Internet, social networking sites, and other platforms, people are keeping themselves updated by visiting different websites or web pages. If a library can design dynamic websites with every detail about the library and its collections, users may feel encouraged to visit the library to meet their information needs.

Podcasts

Similar to talk radio, podcasts are audio programs that are made accessible in digital form for Internet download. A podcast series typically has one or more recurrent hosts talking about a specific subject or current event. A podcast's discussion and substance might be either meticulously scripted or entirely improvised (Gray, 2023). Library professionals may put all the research materials and records of all the library collections into audio format through podcast platforms.

Blogs

A blog is a well-known platform with a specific use where people may share knowledge or opinions on a range of subjects. The data was presented in reverse chronological order, so the most current entry would be at the top (Forsey, 2020). Librarians can share library resources through blog sites to notify the end users about the current issues relating to library collections and keep them up to date about new items of knowledge and information.

Web2.0

Web 2.0 refers to websites and programs that employ user-generated content for the benefit of users. Greater user interaction and collaboration, more widespread network connectivity, and improved communication channels are the major characteristics of Web 2.0 (Yasar, 2023). The application of Web 2.0 technologies to bring smoothness and flexibility to library services and collections is labeled as "Library 2.0" by library specialists and information scientists (Patil,

2014). Throughout web 2.0 technologies, librarians find ways to create user-generated content and link between users and libraries to make the best use of the libraries and library resources.

Short movies

Movie is a powerful medium for dispersing essential messages to the people at the grassroots level. A short movie is a type of short-length movie mainly produced to serve a definite purpose (Kappor, 2023) Library professionals can create awareness about the importance of libraries, rules of usage of the library resources, comprehensive pictures of library collections, and other important issues through short movies and documentaries. The promotional activities relating to library culture can be effectively conveyed to the common masses through the visualization of the library building, bookshelves, readers, and other aspects to create impressions towards libraries in the minds of common people.

No development project becomes successful without the active participation of an educated and skillful population. Therefore, it is indispensable to eliminate the existing digital divide between urban and rural areas by spreading library culture to educate the general people to turn them into skilled human capital. The government along with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other charitable organizations should work hand in hand to extend library culture initiatives throughout the country to materialize the dream project "Sonar Bangla" aiming to make Bangladesh free from illiteracy, hunger, and poverty. Hence, public and private initiatives can enhance the culture of gathering knowledge and information among the common masses by restructuring new dimensions of a knowledge-based society.

6. Human Resource Development

Human resource development is the unification of managerial processes and operative functionalities designed specifically to produce well-trained and competent human capital capable enough to face ensuing challenges and handle effectively what is coming next as major setbacks (Mondal, 2020). The balanced development of a country largely depends on the management of human resources effectively to meet all the development criteria and standards necessary to cope with developed nations and face the challenges of the 21st century. The

advancement of a society depends on the quality of human resources produced under relentless supervision and tireless efforts to add new dimensions for spearheading the stimuli necessary for the robust socioeconomic development of a country (Moniruzzaman, 2019).

6.1 Role of Library Culture in Human Resource Development

Libraries, in this communication, can play a significant role in dealing with a large population by turning them into skilled and potential candidates to take part in development activities. Therefore, librarians can adopt plans and policies to capitalize on human resources in the best possible ways to ensure maximum use of library resources to enhance their skills and capabilities. Expansion of library culture can contribute in the following areas to producing human capital for sustainable development in education, the economy, and other sectors in Bangladesh.

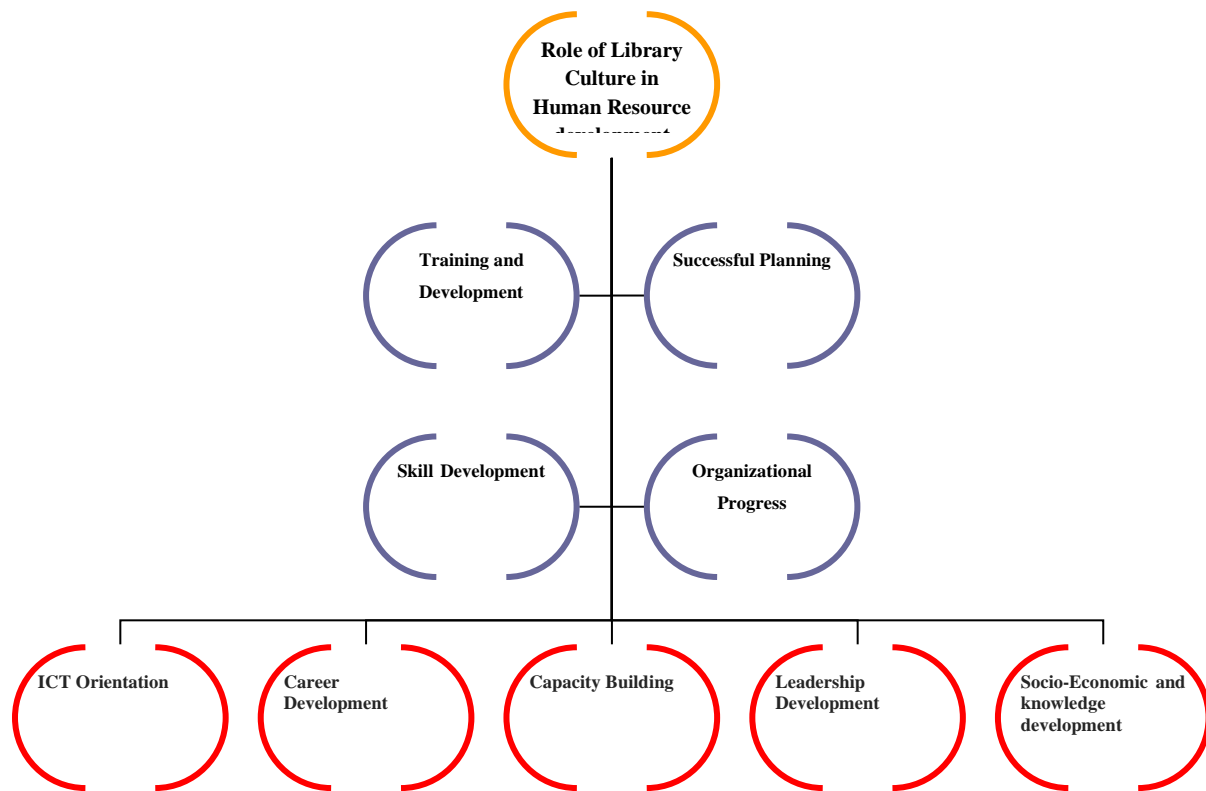


Figure 02: The Diagram of the Role of Library Culture in Human Resource Development

Training and Development

Libraries are the best place for making education and training programs easily available for all the citizens of a country. As a good number of people have no access to higher education and training programs, a library can be the hub for them to fulfill dreams beyond the limit by providing them the scope for obtaining the education to enlighten themselves and receive proper training to engage in productive and challenging jobs necessary for balanced development. Promoting the culture of motivating reading habits, learning new skills, mastering new experiences, and executing plans can boost confidence among the common people and help them do the right things at the right time.

Successful Planning

Every resource of a library is procured, processed, and stored for the users to help them gain experience and knowledge for successful planning before making any important decision about their life, profession, and other issues. Library authorities must design programs and policies for the stakeholders and end users to enable them to communicate freely and openly to share knowledge and ideas to make fruitful planning to achieve personal gains and organizational success.

Skill Development

Skilled and experienced human resource is the main driving force for the sustainable development of a country. Turning a vast number of populations into human capital requires a constant focus on skill development to make them competent and proficient. Libraries in this regard must be furnished with ICTs and other facilities to provide necessary training and education for skill development purposes.

Organizational Progress

The promotion of library culture on a massive scale brings smoothness and consistency in organizational development and transcendence. Trained and skilled employees can effectively handle managerial activities and operational functionalities of an organization. Library

professionals should arrange special training programs for the users to enable them to perform organizational duties and responsibilities by the book.

ICT Orientation

In this age of information and communication technologies, no development program gains ground without the orientation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to make human resources more resourceful and efficient in handling technical and critical issues. Introducing ICTs to bring swiftness both in managerial and operational aspects increases organizational performance. Libraries must be equipped with computers, internet connectivity, RFID, and automated and semi-automated technologies to habituate library personnel and end users with innovative technologies to enhance their capabilities and competencies.

Career Development

Promoting library culture on a broader scale can come with great assistance in developing goal-setting and idea-generating among the end users. In Bangladesh's present perspective, young generations are more concerned about their career due to the limited scope of the job markets. These youths need counseling and training to grasp the international markets to pursue their career outside the border. Libraries must be equipped with all the amenities to provide the unemployed youths enough to get ready for the competitive job markets. Librarians and other staff must work hand in hand to promote the library's roles and responsibilities in congruence with career development initiatives.

Capacity Building

Capacity building is closely associated with education, training, and human resource development initiatives (Enemark and Aalborg, 2008). Library resources are for the ultimate use of the end users. They can build up their capacity in critical thinking, decision making, and career building by exploiting the resources and services from the libraries. The knowledge and skills they gather from reading books and leveraging information technologies enable them to think outside the box.

Leadership Development

Leadership development refers to the tactical planning that an organization formulates to develop the leadership quality and skills of the employees. Developing leadership quality among employees requires pre-planned, pre-defined, and well-articulated procedures that a person gains to achieve competencies and efficiencies to accomplish assigned tasks of an organization (Bhasin, 2021). Promoting library culture through knowledge contents like books, non-books, e-books, e-journals, periodicals, newspapers, and any other items of information to the end users plays an important role in developing leadership quality among them.

Socio-Economic and knowledge development

The unwavering effort and tenacity of a knowledge-based society enable a civilization to thrive and attain its goal. The growth and progress of this knowledge-based society are largely dependent on the development of libraries and the expansion of library culture. Moreover, knowledge societies and skilled generations are more likely to develop to expedite all development activities and socioeconomic momentum to the next level. The more a nation focuses on the expansion of library culture among its populace with full-fledged information and communication technologies, the more socio-economic structure and knowledge economy tend to flourish to keep the constant march of a civilization on the right track and strengthen the foundation of a lifelong learning program.

7. Discussions and Conclusions

The creation of reading and learning habits among the common masses can expand lifelong learning initiatives and reinforce information literacy campaigns to a wider extent to build Bangladesh as a progressive and prosperous country. It is no more a secret that quality human resources is the main driving force to turn the wheel of a country's economy toward balanced and sustainable development. The promotion of library culture can build a knowledge-based society and enhance the skills and competencies of library users. The usage of Information and communication technologies in libraries brings ease in the delivery of library services and swiftness in promotional activities of library resources to the end users. Library professionals

must ponder over the sustainable growth and development of library culture across the country to keep the ever-growing knowledge-based society on the right track with necessary information services to keep pace with the developed nation and face the challenges of the fourth industrial revolution. Personal contact, direct mailing conversation, and regular meetings with the library users about the library's up-to-date phenomenon can create a congenial atmosphere for the progress of library culture in Bangladesh. However, library professionals must concentrate on the display of library resources through websites, blogs, podcasts, and any other digital platforms to create awareness among the common masses about the necessity of libraries and turn the illiterate and unskilled population into human resources to attain sustainable advancement in health, education, economy, and other sectors. The balanced and relentless progress of Bangladesh depends on the promotion of library culture to a great extent. The government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, with the cordial assistance of NGOs and international organizations, needs to develop a congenial atmosphere for the expansion of library culture in Bangladesh with logistic and financial support to form a knowledge-based society and skilled human resources to take the challenges of the 21st century and ensuing fourth industrial revolution.

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Declaration

The researchers have no conflict of interest regarding this research article entitled Promoting Library Culture to Develop Human Resources in Bangladesh. Moreover, this has been accomplished through self-finance. They did not receive any funds to complete this article. On the other hand, it has maintained research ethics throughout its projects.

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