

Women Users in Public Libraries of Baruipur Subdivision, District of South 24 Parganas

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Abstract

The present study focused on the services of public libraries, and the population under study involved women users of public libraries in the Baruipur subdivision of district South 24 Paraganas. The majority of women users are not aware of information technology applications, but they want to use modern facilities for their own self-development and also for activities related to their family programs. A study was conducted at the libraries, which tried to play an essential role in the improvement of women's empowerment and potency in our society. The majority of the women visit libraries in all 7 blocks to collect information about the literature and storybooks used. The main findings of the study are that women visit libraries rarely and that the majority of women users are housewives. However, various information resources of the library are not sufficient to meet the needs of women users, and the infrastructure and facilities of the library have to be improved. It concluded that the library has to play a traditionally vital role in the improvement of women in our society.

Keywords: Public libraries, Baruipur sub-division, women, users, Kultali, Bhangar, Jaynagar, Sonarpur.

1. Introduction

In India, women are living in bad conditions and have been suffering from various problems since independence (Sasi, 2014). The Government has implemented several programs to improve the conditions of women, like education, health, social equality, etc. Referring to the Census Report of India, 2011 (West Bengal), the Baruipur subdivision of South 24 Paraganas district has a 73% rural population. In such a state-of-the-art report, the male-female ratio of the population has been found to be high, as the majority of women live in the villages. Adding to that, they have not made any extraordinary developments at all in their living conditions, i.e.,

their economy, education, or social condition. It can be mainly attributed to the non-availability of education and information on the market due to rising technologies and social media.

In the midst of such a foggy environment of educational pin-points, libraries are evaluated as a matter of knowledge-exercising areas for the people of library and information science subject fields. Libraries are the most nurtured places, acting as agents for every society at the educational, informational, political, economic, and health functions of information services (Kasimini & Rajendra, 2018). Libraries are such agencies dedicated only to the purpose of collecting, preserving, transmitting, and securing the widest and most efficient use of the records of people by the society of which they are a part.

New technology and fast-changing information scenarios have created endless promises for those who seek information. In modern society, people need a great deal from information services so that in different areas of life, information can be presented to enjoy a modern knowledge-based society, influenced by the technological developments of information systems, i.e., computers, wifi networks, and telecommunications (Fidishun, 2007).

This study aims to evaluate the different activities of the public libraries regarding issues related to rural women in our country. The context has been observed in the Baruiपुर subdivision, where the services of most libraries in seven blocks of semi-urban and rural areas are in a weak position because of the lack of adequate facilities and inadequate information resources used by the women users.

2. Literature review

According to Bishop et al. (1998), rural and isolated women face particular barriers to their access to good-quality information. Transportation problems and a lack of access to services are common difficulties faced by women living in rural and remote areas.

According to George (2007), the information networks that were supposed to make access to information easier for women remain out of their reach, especially in rural areas where physical access is difficult due to bad roads and poor infrastructure.

Fidishun, D. (2007), women in the study used the library Website and also indicated that they used online databases to some extent in the public library but more frequently through other institutions. The women in this study also announced the importance of the library as a

place: a place of space for yourself, of discovery, and of improvement.

It was, however, important to these women to be able to find books at the library and to access traditional library services, such as librarians who can offer assistance. Women are likely to be the ones who search for information for children and carry them to the library; many wish to give their children the prospect of studying to actually understand the library and reading. Finally, the women surveyed valued the library as a place, finding it to be somewhere they could find privacy from their busy lives, attach to society, or give back to their society. To the women in this survey, the library is still an important organization, even in an ever-increasing world of information. (Agosto, D. E., Kimberly L. Paone, & Ipock, G. S. 2007).

Audubon, R., Essmat, S., & Aabo, S. (2011). Women users reported uses that were involved and linked to the system world of work, education, organization, and proper information, as well as uses connected to the life world of meaning, culture, and independence by the public library.

Luo, L., and Park, T. V. (2013) stated that isolation and loneliness, coupled with enormous responsibility, create the need for rural women to have access to education, information, and awareness about health problems.

The National Health Policy (2017) mentioned 'equal access for women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational safety, and social security.

Kasimini, C., and Rajendra, N. (2018) focused on the fact that the government has to put in lots of hard work to improve public libraries to global principles through computerization and

networking of riches in the globalized information, communication, and Technology environment. Various information sources in the library are not sufficient to meet the needs of women users, and the infrastructure and facilities of the library have to be improved.

A study by Pandeewaran, C., Chellappandi, P., and Bhattacharya, S. S. (2021) It has been observed that the services of most libraries are in a weak position due to a lack of adequate facilities and insufficient information resources.

3. Objectives of the study

1. To find out the frequency of use of Public libraries by women
2. To know the frequent visits and time spent at the public libraries by women.
3. To validate the purpose of visits to the public library.
4. To evaluate the information sources used in the library by women users.
5. To find out the use and awareness of Information and Communication Technology tools and services in public libraries by women for empowerment.

a. Statement of the problem

The study is entitled "Women Users in Public Libraries of Baruipur Subdivision, District of South 24 Paraganas.

- Views and awareness towards the usage of public libraries in rural areas among women

b. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to examine the women users of the public library in the seven blocks of the Baruipur subdivision district of South 24 Paraganas.

4. Methodology

The present study was conducted using a survey method using a questionnaire. A simple random method of sampling was used in the Study. Primary data were collected mainly through questionnaires, interviews, and observation. Two different questionnaires were prepared for the library and the women's users. In the Baruipur subdivision, twenty libraries and their female users were randomly selected for the study. Women were more than 2000 in number. The actual numbers of women users in the collection of data; the purpose samples: 739 respondents were received out of 2000 questionnaires distributed by the researcher. In this study, student and senior citizen data were also collected but not analyzed; only women aged 15 to 60 were taken for data analysis and interpretation. For data analysis, the percentage method was adopted.

5. Scope of the Study

The topic of the research study is "Women Users in Public Libraries of Baruipur Subdivision, District of South 24 Paraganas". The target respondents were all taken as users of those twenty libraries only included in this study.

The geographical area of this study is confined to seven blocks of Baruipur subdivision, district of South 24 Paraganas. The target group of this study includes women library users in seven blocks of Baruipur Subdivision.

6. Data analysis and interpretation

In the Baruipur subdivision, which is beside the metro city Kolkata, the researcher evaluates the women to get all the facilities and develop their own perceptions, education, social, and cultural. Baruipur subdivision is located near the metropolis but is in a rural area, so women must

identify themselves in order to use the library and be enriched. Baruipur subdivision has 7 blocks; in this study, blocks are mentioned differently and identified as being better for women's performance educationally and socially.

A study of the assessment of Public libraries by the women users of the Baruipur subdivision District of 24 Paraganas (West Bengal) was conducted using the survey method and questionnaire tool. The questionnaires were collected from 739 respondents from the 20 public libraries. The collected data was analyzed in the form of tables and graphs, with the required interpretation as below.

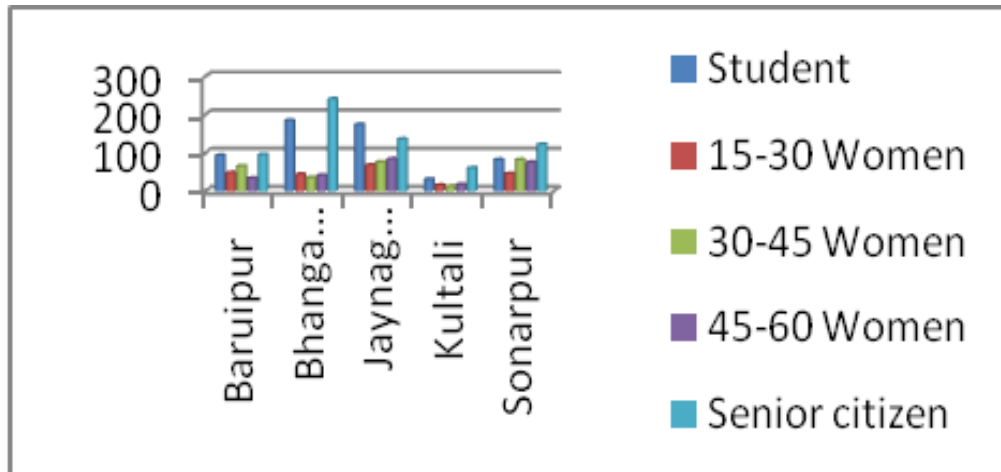
Table 1 above shows the age distribution of the female users. In this study, the age of users was divided into five categories, namely students of age 15–30 years, women of age 30–45 years, the 45–60 years age group, and seniors. The study shows that the users were in the student category,

and the rest were all kept in the category of women of different age groups.

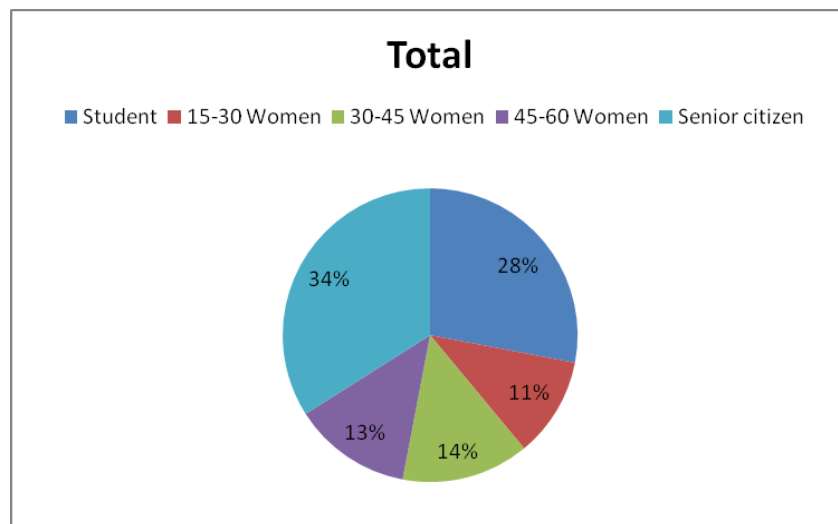
From the table, 28% of the respondents at Baruipur belonged to the student category, followed by 45% of the women respondents at Bhangar, 32% at Jaynagar, 23% at Kultali, and 28% at Sonarpur. Women of 15–35 years of age, 14% of the respondents were at Baruipur, followed by 11% at Bhangar, 13% at Jaynagar, 11% in Kultali, and 8% in the Sonarpur area. The women respondents in the 30–45 years age group were 19% of the respondents at Baruipur, followed by 9% of the respondents at Bhangar, 14% at Jaynagar, 9% at Kultali, and 15% at Sonarpur. In the 45–60 years age group, 10% of the respondents were at Baruipur, followed by 10% of the respondents at Bhangar, 16% at Jaynagar, 13% at Kultali, and 14% at Sonarpur. In the women in the senior age group, 28% of the respondents were at Baruipur, followed by 59% of the respondents at Bhangar, 25% at Jaynagar, 44% at Kultali, and 22% at Sonarpur.

Library Users, women categories, Age wise	Baruipur	Bhangar –I & Bhangar-II	Jaynagar –I & Jaynagar-II	Kultali	Sonarpur	Total
Students	93 (28%)	185 (45%)	174 (32%)	31 (23%)	82 (15%)	565 (28%)
15Years-30 Years. Women	48 (14%)	44 (11%)	68 (13%)	15 (11%)	45 (8%)	220 (11%)
30Years-45Years. Women	65 (19%)	35 (9%)	76 (14%)	12 (9%)	80 (15%)	268 (14%)
45Years-60Years. Women	34 (10%)	41 (10%)	84 (16%)	17 (13%)	75 (14%)	251 (13%)
Senior citizen	95 (28%)	241 (59%)	136 (25%)	60 (44%)	122 (22%)	654 (34%)
Total	335 (17%)	546 (27%)	538 (28%)	135 (7%)	404 (21%)	1958 (100%)

Table 1 Distribution of women users age by their age group at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas



Graph G1 Distribution of women users age group at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas



Graph G2 Graphical representation age of women users at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas

In the above graphs, G1 and G2 show that the majority of female users (654, or 34%) belonged to the senior age group in the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas.

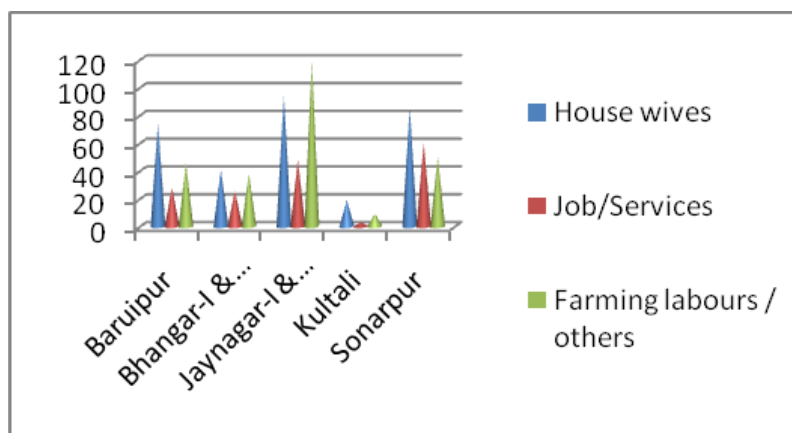
From Graph G1, it is clear that Bhanga I and II have the highest number of women users, like senior citizens, followed by female students in all other cases.

Profession of women user	Baruipur	Bhangar – I & Bhangar-II	Jaynagar –I & Jaynagar-II	Kultali	Sonarpur	Total
House wives	74 (50%)	41 (39%)	94 (36%)	19 (61%)	85 (44%)	313 (43%)
Job / Services	28 (19%)	26 (25%)	48 (18%)	3 (10%)	60 (30%)	165 (22%)
Farming labours / others	45 (31%)	38 (36%)	119 (46%)	9(29%)	50 (26%)	261 (35%)
Total	147 (20%)	105 (14%)	261 (35%)	31 (4%)	195 (26%)	739 (100%)

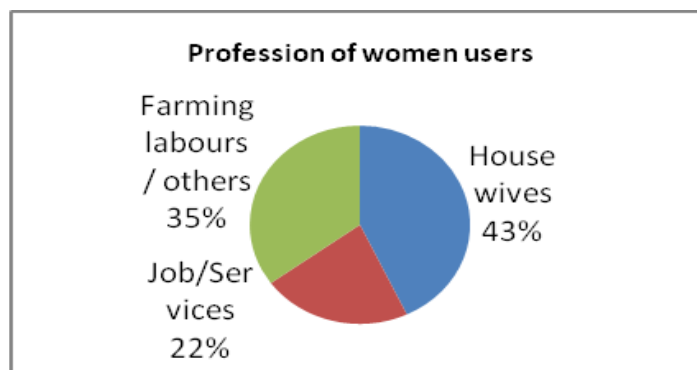
Table 2 Distribution of occupation the women users of Public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas

Table 2 shows the distribution of women users in the Baruipur subdivision by occupation. It was found that 22% of women users of the selected public libraries had their occupation as a job or service. 35% of women users were agricultural labor, wage labor, or workers in the cultivation sector. But the majority of the users (43%) were housewives in all 7 blocks. Kultali has the

maximum number of women users who are housewives, while Sonarpur has the maximum number of women users who have an occupation such as a job or service. Jaynagar I and II had the maximum number of women users who were in the agricultural sector or wage laborers.



Graph G4 Graphical representation of occupation of women users in Public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas



Graph G3 Distribution of occupation of women users in Public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas

Graph G3 depicted that the majority of users were housewives, followed by farm laborers and other wage laborers in the overall blocks of Baruipur subdivision, though Jaynagar I and II had the maximum number of women users who

were in the agricultural sector or wage laborers. Graph G4 shows that most of the women users were housewives (43%) in the Baruipur subdivision, taking all the blocks together.

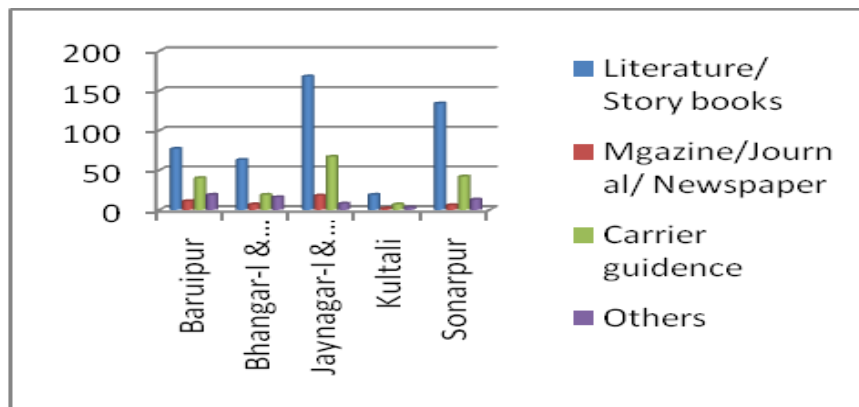
Material Used	Baruipur	Bhangar -I & Bhangar-II	Jaynagar -I & Jaynagar-II	Kultali	Sonarpur	Total
Literature / Story books	77 (52%)	63 (60%)	168 (64%)	19 (61%)	134 (68%)	461 (62%)
Magazine/ journal / newspaper	11 (7%)	7 (7%)	18 (7%)	2 (6%)	6 (3%)	44 (6%)
Career guidance books/ Magazine	40 (27%)	19 (18%)	67 (26%)	7 (23%)	42 (22%)	175 (24%)
Others	19 (12%)	16 (15%)	8 (3%)	3 (10%)	13 (7%)	59 (8%)
Total	147 (20%)	105 (14%)	261 (35%)	31 (4%)	195 (26%)	739 (100%)

Table 3 Distribution of women users used the material in public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas

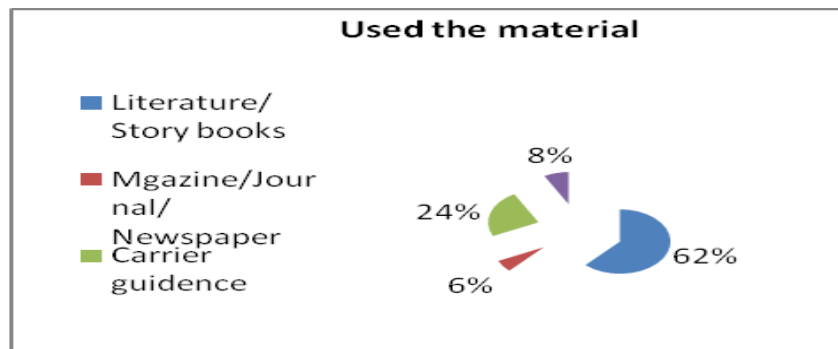
The library provides books and other printed newspapers of general knowledge, which are powerful information resources and indispensable means of imparting knowledge to users. These information resources were helpful for users' professional development and careers. Therefore, the researcher tried to understand the use of different information sources by the women users of the seven blocks of the Baruipur sub-division of South 24 Parganas.

The analysis of the data related to the use of different information sources by the women users is presented in Table 3. It was found that 62% of overall female users used Literature or

Storybooks from public libraries, followed by Career Guidance books and magazines (24%). Only 6% of women users used magazines, journals, or newspapers from the public libraries. Selected public libraries in Sonarpur had the maximum number of women users (68%) who used Literature / Story books In terms of Career Guidance books, Baruipur had to have highest no. of women users (27%). Taking magazines, journals, and newspapers into consideration, Baruipur, Bhangar I and II, and Jaynagar I and II heading list with 7% of women users.



Graph G5 Distribution of women users used the material in public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas



Graph G6 Graphical representation of women users used the material in public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas

From Graph G5, it is clear that in the public libraries of all the blocks, literature and story books were the most popular choice among the women users, followed by Career Guidance books.

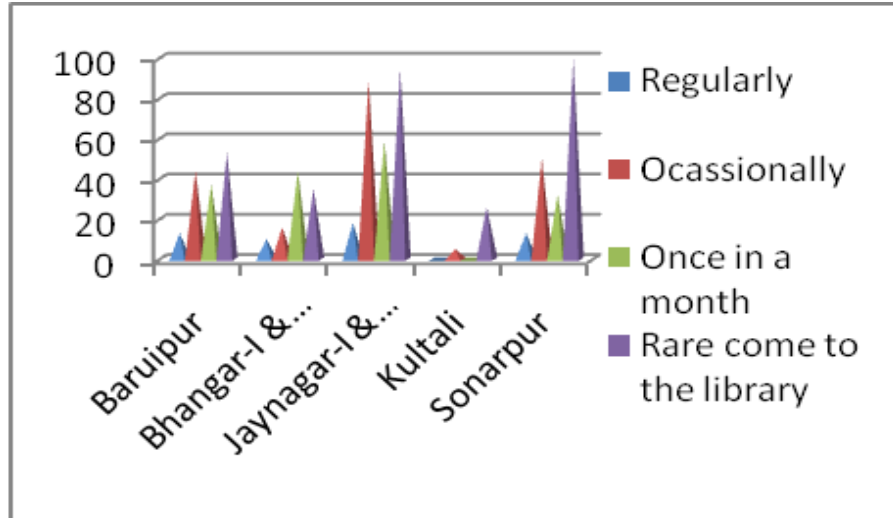
Graph G6 shows that the majority of the female users (62%) used the Literature and Story books in the selected public libraries of all the blocks of Baruipur sub-division, while only 8% frequently used other sources of information.

In order to measure the use of the public library in general, it was important to determine the

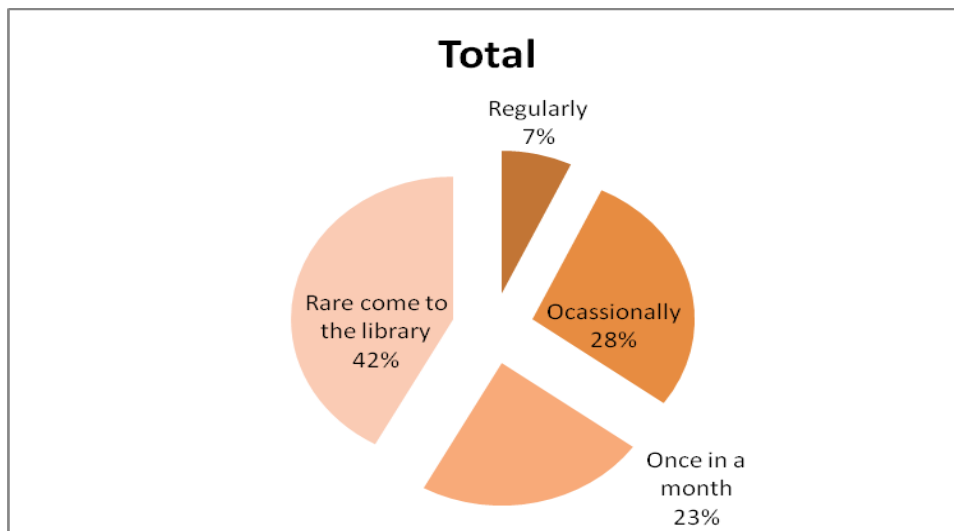
frequency of library use and the time spent in the library. Here, the data from the library register was analyzed to determine the frequency of using a public library by women users. The results were presented in Table 4. It was a surprising finding that a majority of women users (42%) used to come to the libraries rarely. In this case, Kultali was leading the list, with 84% of women users using the libraries in this block rarely, while none used them regularly. Overall, 28% of women users came to the libraries occasionally, and only 7% came regularly. There were 23% of women users who came and used the libraries once a month.

Frequency	Baruipur	Bhangar – I & Bhangar - II	Jaynagar – I & Jaynagar - II	Kultali	Sonarpur	Total
Regularly	13 (9%)	10 (10%)	18 (7%)	0 (0%)	13 (7%)	54 (7%)
In a week	44 (30%)	16 (15%)	89 (34%)	5 (16%)	50 (26%)	204 (28%)
Once in a month	37 (25%)	44 (52%)	59 (23%)	0 (0%)	32 (16%)	172 (23%)
Rare come to the library	53 (36%)	35 (33%)	95 (36%)	26 (84%)	100 (51%)	309 (42%)
Total	147 (20%)	105 (14%)	261 (35%)	31 (4%)	195 (26%)	739 (100%)

Table 4 Distribution of frequency of women users in public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas



Graph G7 Distribution of frequency of women users in public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas



Graph G8 Graphical representation of frequency of women users in public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas

Graph G7 shows that Baruipur was on top in terms of female users (10%) of the public libraries who visited the libraries regularly than other blocks, while female users from Jaynagar I and II (34%) visited the libraries occasionally

than other blocks. In the above Graph (G8), the overall analysis shows that the majority of female users visited the libraries rarely (42% in the selected blocks).

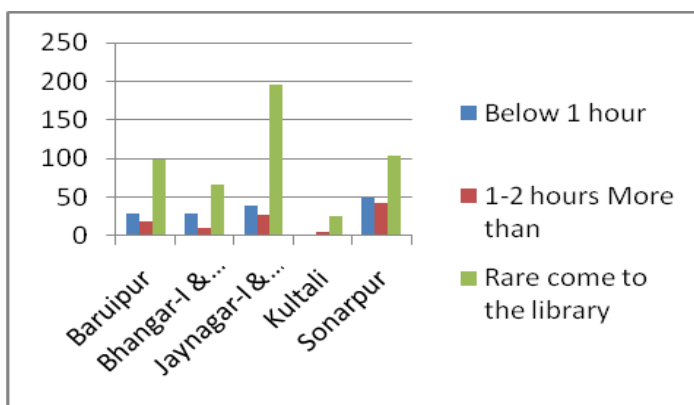
Time Spent	Baruipur	Bhangar – I & Bhangar-II	Jaynagar – I & Jaynagar-II	Kultali	Sonarpur	Total
Less than 1 hour	29 (20%)	29 (27%)	38 (15%)	1 (3%)	48 (25%)	145 (20%)
1 hour or more	19 (13%)	10 (10%)	28 (11%)	5 (16%)	43 (22%)	105 (14%)
Rarely spent any time	99 (67%)	66 (63%)	195 (75%)	25 (81%)	104 (53%)	489 (66%)
Total	147 (20%)	105 (14%)	261 (35%)	31 (4%)	195 (26%)	739 (100%)

Table 5 Distribution of women users of time spent in public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas

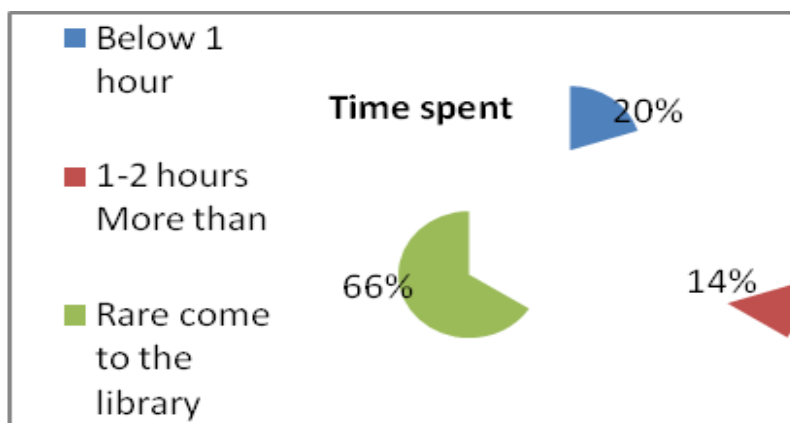
To determine how much time was spent in the libraries to use the materials and participate in the various events conducted by the libraries, library records were analyzed. The researcher considered four alternative time periods to find out how much time users spent in the public libraries per visit, and the results are shown in Table 5.

The overall analysis shows that the majority of female users (66%) came to the libraries rarely and spent very little time there. 20% of women

users spent not even an hour in the libraries, and only 14% of women users spent at least 1 hour or more. 22% of women users of Sonarpur public libraries headed the list in terms of visits and spent at least 1 hour or more in the libraries. Whereas women users (27%) in the libraries of Bhangar I and II visited the library but spent less than an hour there. Libraries in Kultali blocks had 81% women users who rarely spent any time in the libraries.



Graph G9 Distribution of women users of time spent in public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas



Graph G10 Graphical representation of women users of time spent in public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas

Graph-G9 shows that more female users from Sonarpur (22%) and Kultali (16%) blocks spent at least 1 hour or more in the libraries compared to other blocks. While a majority of the women users (81% of the Kultali block) used the libraries

rarely. Graph G10 showed that overall, 66% of women users spent very little time in the library, taking all the blocks together, while 14% spent 1 or more hours and 20% spent less than 1 hour in the libraries.

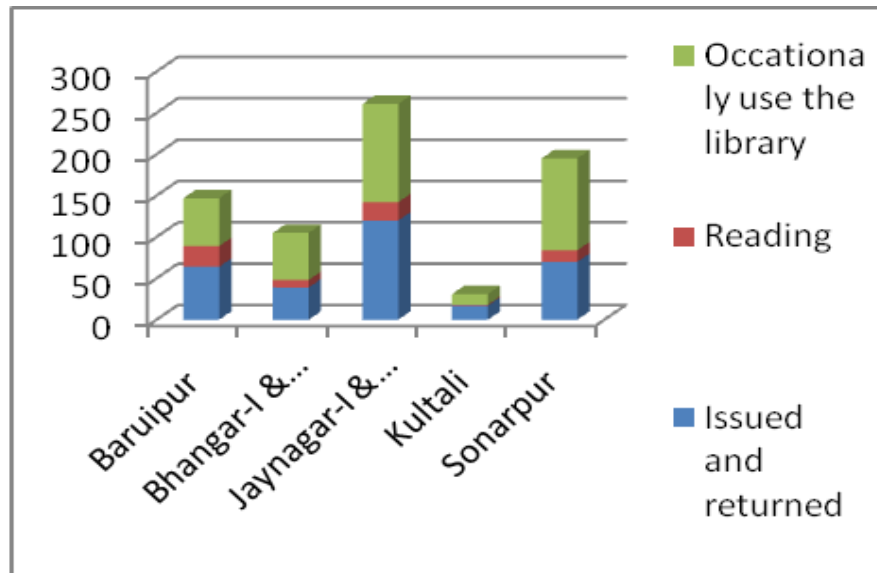
Purpose of library use	Baruipur	Bhangar – I & Bhangar-II	Jaynagar – I & Jaynagar-II	Kultali	Sonarpur	Total
Issued and returned	64 (44%)	39 (36%)	120 (46%)	17 (55%)	70 (36%)	310 (42%)
Reading	25 (17%)	9 (9%)	22 (8%)	1 (3%)	14 (7%)	71 (10%)
Sometimes(Irregular) use the library	58 (39%)	57 (54%)	119 (46%)	13 (42%)	111 (57%)	358 (48%)
Total	147 (20%)	105 (14%)	261 (35%)	31 (4%)	195 (26%)	739 (100%)

Table 6 Distribution of purpose of library used by women users in public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas

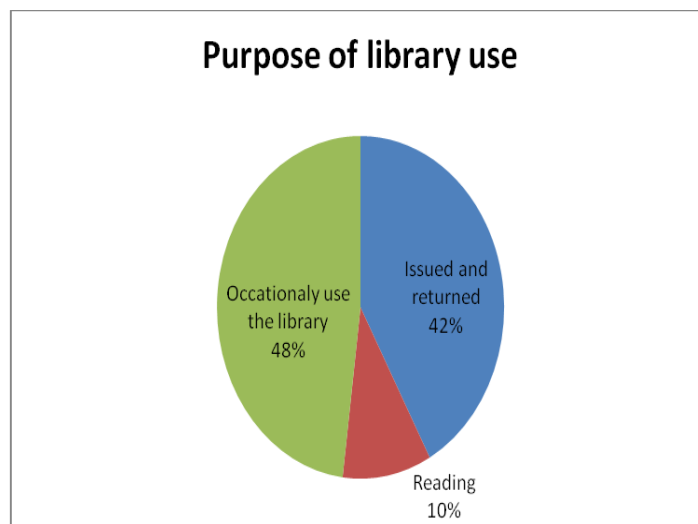
Public libraries are considered hubs for overall social development and play an important role in the cultural and socio-political development of society. Therefore, it plays an important role in collecting and organizing various sources of information to meet the different needs of the common people. Therefore, it was necessary to find out the different purposes of library visits by female users. In order to find out the different purposes of library visits by female users, the researcher asked the library staff about their opinions on the purposes of visits, and the data are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 shows that the majority of users from Jaynagar-I and II (46%), as well as a large number of users from Sonarpur (36%), Baruipur (44%), Kultali (55%), and Bhangar-I and II (36%), prefer issue-return of books when visiting

a public library. At the same time, 8% of users from Jaynagar I and II, 7% of users from Sonarpur, 17% of users from Baruipur, 3% of users from Kultali, and 9% of users from Bhangar I and II prefer to read books and other documents in the libraries. While Jaynagar-I and II (46%), a large number of female users from Sonarpur (57%), Baruipur (39%), Kultali (42%), and Bhangar-I and II (54%), occasionally visit the public libraries to participate in library activities. The overall analysis shows that the majority of female users (48%) are irregular visitors to public libraries. Only 42% of the users prefer to spend time in the libraries for issue-return when they visit the library. Only a small number (10%) visit the public library for reading.



Graph G11 Distribution of purpose of library used by women users in public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas



Graph G12 Graphical representation of purpose of library used by women users in public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Parganas

Graph G11 shows that using public libraries for reading was preferred by a very small number of women users in overall cases. A large number of female users from Sonarpur (57%), Baruipur (39%), Kultali (42%), Jaynagar I and II (46%), and Bhangar I and II (54%), occasionally visit the public library to participate in library activities. Kultali block has the highest percentage (55%) of

female users who issue and return books from the libraries, while Sonarpur has the maximum percentage (17%) of female users who use public libraries to read library materials. Graph G12 shows that a major percentage of female users used the library occasionally, followed by 42% of users who preferred to spend time on issues and return when they visited the library.

Purpose of library use	Baruipur	Bhangar –I & Bhangar-II	Jaynagar –I & Jaynagar-II	Kultali	Sonarpur	Total
Yes	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
No	147 (20%)	105 (14%)	261 (35%)	31 (4%)	195 (26%)	739 (100%)
Total	147 (20%)	105 (14%)	261 (35%)	31 (4%)	195 (26%)	739 (100%)

Table 7 Distribution of women users used the Internet/ Modern Technology public libraries at the seven blocks in Baruipur Subdivision of South 24 Paraganas

The Internet is nearly everyone's need in today's world and a frequently used medium for communication as well as providing information. The women users of the blocks were asked to give their opinion on whether the internet facilities are helpful for them to improve their educational, cultural, and socio-political development. Hence, researchers try to figure out the use and purpose of using the internet by women in libraries. The results are shown in Table 7, which shows that 0% of women users cannot use the internet facilities in the library and do not know anything about ICT or Internet facilities in public libraries.

7. Finding based on women users of the library data record

Age of respondents: It is found that 34% (654 no.) and 28% (565 no.) of the women are senior citizens and students, respectively, out of the total 1958 respondents (Table 1). The majority of the responses came from Sonarpur block, where 22% and 15% of the respondents were senior citizens and students, respectively. Kultali block has the highest percentage (44%) of senior citizen respondents, but the percentage of total respondents is very low (7%) compared to other blocks. Out of the total respondents, 11% were from the age group of 15–30 years, 14% were from the age group of 30-45 years, and 13% were from the age group of 45–60 years. Baruipur block has the maximum number of respondents in the middle age group of 15–60 years.

Occupation of female users: It was found that the majority of the respondents were housewives (43%), followed by agricultural laborers or wage laborers (35%), and only 22% had jobs or services (Table 2). The percentage of women users who are housewives varies from block to block, with the highest percentage in Kultali (61%) and the lowest percentage in Baruipur (50%). The percentage of women who are

farming laborers is also higher in Jaynagar I and II (46%) than in the other villages. The percentage of women who are employed in jobs or services is highest in Sonarpur (30%) and lowest in Kultali (10%). This reflects the fact that the second-largest majority of the women users of public libraries in these blocks were mainly workers in Agriculture.

Material used by female users: The percentage of readers who read literature or story books varies from block to block (Table 3), with the highest percentage in Sonarpur (68%) and the lowest percentage in Baruipur (52%). This suggests that Sonarpur has a strong culture of reading for pleasure among the women users, while Baruipur may have a more practical focus on education and career. The percentage of readers who read magazines, journals, and newspapers is also relatively low in Kultali (6%) and Sonarpur (3%) though the interest in reading these resources is low in all the blocks (<10%). This suggests that all the blocks may have a less informed and engaged population. The percentage of women readers who read career guidance literature is relatively low, though it is the second-highest resource used by women users in all the blocks. This suggests that there is a lack of awareness about the importance of career planning in these communities. The percentage of readers who fall into the Other Resources category is relatively small in all the blocks. The data shows that there is a wide range of reading interests among the women users of these blocks, but that there is also a significant lack of awareness about the importance of career planning, current awareness, etc. The table also suggests that the women users of the public libraries in Sonarpur have a stronger culture of reading for pleasure than the other blocks.

Frequency of female library users: The most common frequency of visits is "once a month", followed by "Rarely come to the library" (Table

4). The percentage of people who visit the library "once a month" varies from block to block, with the highest percentage in Bhangar I and II (52%), and the lowest percentage in Kultali (0%). The percentage of people who visit the libraries rarely is also relatively high in Kultali (84%), followed by Sonarpur (51%), but it is lower in the other blocks. The percentage of people who visit the library "Regularly" is highest in Bhangar-I and II (10%), followed by Baruipur (9%). Though the data reflects that the regular visits by women users of the public libraries in all seven blocks are relatively low (7% of the total surveyed population), The percentage of people who visit the library "Occasionally" is highest in Jaynagar I and II (34%), Baruipur (30%), and 28% of the total surveyed populations. The reason for the rare or occasional visits to the libraries by women users may be because of distance to the library, availability of other forms of entertainment, etc.

Time spent in the library by female users: The analysis of the data in Table 5 shows that the majority of the users visit the library infrequently (66%), and Kultali is leading the list with 81% of women users of public libraries in this block coming to the libraries rarely, followed by Jaynagar I and II (75%). A low percentage of women users (14%) use the library for 1 hour or more in all seven blocks, and out of these blocks, women users (22%) of public libraries in Sonarpur use the library for 1 hour or more, which is the highest among the blocks. The percentage of women users who spend "Less than 1 hour" on the internet is lowest in Kultali (3%) and highest in Bhangar I and II (27%).

Purpose of women's library visits: From the surveyed population, it is found that a majority of women users of the public libraries in the seven blocks use the libraries occasionally, while 42% of the total population prefers to issue and return books from the library. Baruipur has the highest percentage (17%) of female library users who

read library materials (Table 6). In the Kultali block, it is evident that the majority of the women users (55%) in this block prefer to issue and return books, but public libraries in this block also have a high percentage of women users (42%), who use libraries rarely or occasionally.

Internet used by women users in Public libraries: The study reveals that Public libraries in Baruipur Subdivision do not provide ICT and internet facilities to the users; therefore, none of the women users use modern technologies with internet in the public libraries of the seven blocks.

8. Conclusion

Public libraries play an important role in providing access to information and resources for people of all backgrounds. In the Baruipur subdivision of the district of South 24 Paraganas, women are a significant user group of public libraries. The entire public library system is undergoing rapid change because of the improvement and development of our society. For women's empowerment, libraries and their utilization play a very important role. The majority of the women users of the public libraries in the seven blocks under this study are not aware of the applications of information technology in an era when ICT is a daily need. Public libraries are an important part of humanity because they provide effective and well-organized facilities for women's academic improvement and skill development. Hence, there is a high need for successful orientation programs, workshops, seminars, etc. for women users of the libraries for better user involvement. Women users will be able to develop awareness through the accessibility of required information in public libraries and the support of regular reading habits. The library is a place of peaceful knowledge and thought.

9. Suggestions

The public libraries of Baruipur Subdivision have sufficient resources but don't have any electronic Resources with modern technologies. Hence, the library authority should improve the digital and Internet resources in public libraries. They may install a number of computers with internet connections as per the requirements of the women users.

- A greater level of communication between library staff and users is needed for the maximum utilization of the resources.
- Conduct career guidance classes on various courses, examinations, programs, and projects offered by the new policy through the government.
- Provide better Internet services in the library for the formal and non-formal educational and other purposes of its women users.
- Marketing of the library and information products by the public library authorities is also a requirement in remote places to attract more women users to the libraries.
- Public libraries in the seven blocks may take up individually or collaboratively various projects that would facilitate women's empowerment.
- There are a number of ways to improve access to public libraries for women in Baruipur subdivision. One way is to increase the number of libraries in rural areas. Another way is to offer more programs and services that are specifically designed for women. Libraries can also work to create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for women.

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