

**Local History Collection in the Government
Sponsored Public Libraries in 24 Parganas (South):
A Critical Review**

**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
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**BY
SUDESHNA MOITRA**

**DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
KOLKATA – 700032
WEST BENGAL, INDIA**

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Certified that the thesis entitled

“Local History Collection in the Government Sponsored Public Libraries in 24 Parganas (South): A Critical Review” submitted by me for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts at Jadavpur University is based upon my work carried out under the Supervision of **Dr. Chaitali Dutta, Retired Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, Jadavpur University**

And that neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted before for any degree or diploma anywhere / elsewhere.

Countersigned by
the Supervisor:

(Dr. Chaitali Dutta)

Dated :

Candidate :

(Sudeshna Moitra)

Dated :

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“The struggle ends when the gratitude begins” – Neale Donald Walsh

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Sudeshna Moitra

Research Scholar
Department of Library and Information Science
Jadavpur University

Dedicated to

My Father

Late Deba Prosad Maitra

..... We couldn't bring him back from the battle of COVID-19 Pandemic

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List of Abbreviations

A.D.	:	<i>Anno Domini</i>
A.M.	:	<i>Ante meridiem</i>
ALA	:	American Library Association
APA	:	American Psychological Association
B. Lib. Sc	:	Bachelor in Library Science
B.C.	:	Before Christ
BLIS	:	Bachelor in Library and Information Science
C. Lib. Sc.	:	Certificate in Library Science
C-DAC	:	Centre for Development of Advanced Computing
CDB	:	Community development block
CDP	:	Collection development policy
CLIC	:	Community library and information centres
CLIS	:	Certificate in Library and Information Science
COL	:	Century-old rural library
D & PD	:	Development & Planning Department
DCBB	:	Duftary-cum-book binder
DCNW	:	Duftary-cum-night watchman
DDC	:	Dewey Decimal Classification
DDMD	:	District Disaster Management Department
DL	:	District Library
DLO	:	District Library Officer
DMEELS	:	Department of Mass Education Extension and Library Services

DPI	:	Directorate of Public Instruction
GIS	:	Geographic information system
IACS	:	Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science
ICT	:	Information Communication Technology
IFLA	:	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
IMAX	:	Image MAXimum
IUCN	:	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JLA	:	Junior Library Attendant
LA	:	Library Assistant
LCSH	:	Library of Congress Subject Headings
LH	:	Local history
LHC	:	Local history collection
LHM	:	Local history material
LIB	:	Librarian
LLA	:	Local library authority
Ltd.		Limited
M. Lib. Sc	:	Master in Library Science
MCQ	:	Multiple choice questions
MLIS	:	Master in Library and Information Science
MOU	:	Memorandum of understanding
MSME	:	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
n.d.	:	No date
NCE	:	National Council of Education
NGO	:	Non-government organization
OH	:	Oral history

OHA	:	Oral History Association
OPAC	:	Online public access catalogue
ORGCC	:	Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner
P.M.	:	<i>Post meridiem</i>
Ph.D.	:	Doctorate of Philosophy
PL	:	Public library
Pvt.		Private
RIDF	:	Rural Infrastructure Development Fund
RKM	:	Ramakrishna Mission
RRRLF	:	Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation
SDL	:	Sub-divisional library
SEZ	:	Special economic zone
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WWF	:	World Wildlife Fund
Yr.	:	Year

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Peoples' quests for knowing the 'unknown' exist for time immemorial. Transmission of knowledge occurred through many of the ways since the historical past. There was a time knowledge was transmitted in oral form only since no method of writing was discovered then. With time, human civilization continued to strive for better methods of communication which ultimately led to the discovery of writing methods. When human civilization discovered the convenient way of transmitting knowledge through graphic records, writing methods started to take their final shapes. As knowledge has thus been started to get accumulated the form of graphic records, people started thinking about its preservation and conservation for the future. Thus the concept of 'library' came into existence where wisdom and knowledge of great thinkers have been stored for the benefit of future generations (Chakrabarti and Banerjee, 2016). With the passage of time and evolution of human society, the concept of 'library' has also been evolved and libraries have become inseparable parts of society. For the sake of the community, the concept of 'public library' had emerged where common people can get access to knowledge resources and satisfy their knowledge thirst. With time public library (PL) becomes the center for cultural awakening, aesthetic appreciation, and promoting literacy as well as supporting lifelong and universal education for the common masses. PLs have doors freely open to everyone at any point where inquisitive people can get the touch of wisdom and satisfy their knowledge craving.

From the very beginning, very few associations and organizations started working in favour of libraries, library professionals, and library users across the globe. International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is leading among them which was founded in Scotland in 1927 with the aims to "promote high standards of provision and delivery of library

and information services” and to “encourage widespread understanding of the value of good library & information services” all over the world. This Federation collaborated in UNESCO in formulating its vision and mission towards the development and success of PLs across the world, thus ‘IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto’ was created in 1949 in Paris and afterward ratified in 1994. In recent past, IFLA celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the publication of ‘IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto’ in November 2019.

The ‘Public Library’ as defined by the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1994) is “the local gateway to knowledge provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups”. It is also stated in the Manifesto that “promoting awareness of cultural heritage”, “favouring cultural diversity” and “supporting the oral tradition” are some of the key missions of the PL. It is a ‘democratic’ institution that provides access to knowledge and information for common people regardless of their age, sex, race, caste, religion, nationality, language, or social status. Not only promoting universal education, but PLs also work as the ‘cultural hub’ for every community where the common people can have instant access to any information related to their locality. The PL became the only place where people can strongly relate themselves to their cultural flavour and fluency. It is also believed that promoting cultural progress is perhaps the most significant aspect of today’s PL services. PLs are situated in diverse regions which may be culturally, socially, economically, or geographically similar or dissimilar, having similar or different cultural constituents and backgrounds. It is one of the major goals of PLs to become successful vectors and repositories of the indigenous or local cultural history of respective regions or localities. This local cultural storage may contain pictures, paintings, photographs, artworks, audio-visual materials, and also documentary sources. PLs of every region should make such provisions that

common people of that locality will get the opportunity to touch their own cultural, social, economic history of evolution. Collective memories which pass orally through generations after generations needed to be stored and preserved. These describe the past experiences of a community that enlighten the future. In studying the history of a nation, or a community, or a local place, these local history materials (LHMs) have an immensely crucial role to play. In this regard, a thorough investigation is essential to investigate the present scenario of local history collections (LHCs) in PLs to assess how far they are successfully doing their duties as conservators and propagators of local cultural heritage in the community.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Given the above considerations, the research problem is stated as follows:

Local history collections in the Government sponsored public libraries of 24 Parganas (South): a critical review.

The research problem gave rise to some research questions which were resolved during the study. The research questions are as follows:

- I. Do Government sponsored PLs in the district of 24 Parganas (South) have sufficient collections of LHMs?
- II. Do they play a crucial role in helping community people to find out their cultural roots and identity?
- III. What is the real scenario of the existing LHCs in Government sponsored PLs of 24 Parganas (South)?

- IV. What are the administrative shortfalls to develop the same?
- V. What are the major problems faced by these PLs of the district to develop new LHCs, or to maintain an existing one?
- VI. What are the attitudes of local community users as well as library personnel towards the significance of LH?
- VII. How far the users are satisfied with existing LHCs of these PLs? What are their specific demands and personal opinions in developing new collections of LHMs?

1.3 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The present study is primarily confined to the Government sponsored PLs of the district of 24 Parganas (South) of West Bengal. There are a total of one hundred and fifty-six Government sponsored PLs in the district (data obtained from the official website of West Bengal Public Library Network, Department of Mass Education Extension & Library Services, Government of West Bengal), among which a total of twenty-six libraries have been selected keeping in view the time constraint of the investigation. The sphere of the present study includes one district library, ten subdivisional libraries, nine town libraries, and six century-old rural libraries. The ten subdivisional libraries consist of four upgraded town libraries which are century-old in age, and six upgraded town libraries which do not cross century according to their year of establishments. The nine town libraries consist of four century-old town libraries. The remaining six libraries are simply 'rural' libraries that crossed century by their respective years of establishments. The purpose of selecting district, sub divisional and town libraries is their considerably large collections; this is obvious due to their administrative categories. Century-old libraries have been

selected keeping in view their ages which carry witness of time, thus some significant LHCs are expected for obvious reasons.

The investigation is divided into two major sections covering library personnel's organizational points of view and users' points of view towards LH. The first section focuses on the geographical and administrative locations of libraries, their age (according to the year of establishments), general infrastructure, collection, circulation, membership details, library personnel records, general administration, and automation. However the major focus in this section has been set on the presence of LHCs, variety of LHMs, compatible infrastructure, and physical facilities, related services to users, recording users' demands, librarians' or staff' requirements for necessary setup for LH, difficulties faced, and LH publicity measures. The second section focuses on library users' personal information and their library orientation. However, the prime focus has been set on their interest, awareness and basic knowledge, preferences, satisfaction level about LH, specific demands for related infrastructural facilities, collections and services, library staff' behaviour and cooperation, shortfalls of collections and services, and requirements for publicity of LHCs.

1.4 OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of the present study is to review critically the LHCs in the district of 24 Parganas (South) in West Bengal. However, the other objectives of the study are:

- To find out the actual scenario of LH information resources present in the Government sponsored PLs of the district.

- To compare the existing collections of the PLs on local historical facts of their respective locations.
- To find out the present situation of PLs' LHCs in terms of their existing resources, diversity, organization, infrastructure, and physical facilities, services, manpower, automation, difficulties, user's demand for LH, publicity for LH, awareness of library staff and users, and such other pertinent and significant parameters.
- To assess users' interest and need for LH information and how far they are satisfied with the existing collections and services of PLs of the district.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the findings crucial for formulating a sustainable blueprint for LHC development in PLs of the district.
- To identify the key issues from the findings which are the major causing factors for the creation of the gap between ideal and reality.
- To propose a generalized model appropriate for developing an effective LHC in PLs of the district.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

To resolve the research questions and to attain the objectives stated previously, various methods of investigation have been employed. An attempt has been made in this section to briefly describe the overall methodology.

1.5.1 PHASES OF THE STUDY

The research work has been gone through different phases of the study.

In the first phase, the researcher was mainly involved in consulting various literature at the national and international levels with special emphasis on LHC development in PLs. The researcher tried for a thorough study that represents retrospective as well as current situations in India and other parts of the world.

In the second phase, the researcher conducted a pilot survey containing the district library, two subdivisional libraries, two town libraries, and four rural libraries to take an idea about the basic awareness and knowledge of PLs for LH, the existing collections, if any, and the future plans. After the survey, the final sampling has been done. District library, subdivisional libraries, and town libraries have selected as they at least have some existing LHCs and have some futuristic goals to enhance the same. In general, rural libraries have pathetic conditions in terms of LHCs, services, and awareness. Only century-old rural libraries have been selected with the expectation to have some collection due to the age of the libraries as per their respective years of establishments. To carry out the whole study, two sets of questionnaires have been constructed carefully to collect data from library personnel and users. The researcher visited every library at least twice for interviews and the collection of data. In the field study, other than Librarians, available library staff were also asked about the LHCs, services, and community people's demands. Users available in the library during field visits were approached to respond to the questionnaire. Observations were documented properly.

In the third phase, all the collected data were gathered and analyzed critically. The findings were written in report form. Finally, the thesis has been written incorporating all the observations, findings, and necessary recommendations for further developments.

1.5.2 POPULATION SAMPLE

The population sample consists of 26 Government sponsored PLs in the district of 24 Parganas (South). This sample further comprises 1 (one) district library, 10 (ten) subdivisional libraries, 9 (nine) town libraries, and 6 (six) century-old rural libraries (Table 1). The samples are selected after consulting the list of PLs of the 24 Parganas (South) district, provided by the Department of Mass Education Extension & Library Services, Government of West Bengal. The sample population is representative of all the subdivisions of the district. Library related general administrative and infrastructural data, LH related specific data are collected from Librarians or Library-in Charges (in absence of Librarian). These data were analyzed to find out library personnel's perspectives.

For the analysis of users' perspectives, a total of 228 users were approached randomly for the responses. Among them, 26 users refused to respond and 202 users ultimately responded. General information about the users was collected from them. Among them, a total of 127 were found to have interest, inclination, and basic awareness about LH. So, LH related specific data has been collected from these 127 users.

Table 1.1 Names and addresses of sample libraries

S. No.	Library name	Address
1.	District Library	P.O. – Charashyamdas, South 24 Parganas, Pin – 743503
2.	Vivek Sangha Town Library	Vivek Nagar, Jhil Road, P.O. – Santoshpur, South 24 Parganas, Kolkata – 700075
3.	The Behala Town Library	5, Roy Bahadur Road, P.O. – Behala, South 24 Parganas, Kolkata – 700034
4.	Barisha Pathagar	37, K.K. Roy Chowdhury Road, P.O. – Barisha, South 24 Parganas, Kolkata – 700008
5.	Mudialy Library	Q216, Umesh Neogy Road, P.O. – Garden Reach, South 24 Parganas, Kolkata – 700024
6.	Prativa Library	Banerjee Para Road, Sarsuna, South 24 Parganas, Kolkata – 700061
7.	Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library)	Vill. – Uttarpara, P.O.- Joynagar, Majilpur, South 24 Parganas, Pin – 743337
8.	Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar	P.O. – Diamond Harbour, South 24 Parganas, Pin – 743331
9.	Brati Sangha Pathagar	32, Dr. Umesh Mitra Road, Budge Budge, South 24 Parganas, Pin – 743319
10.	Baruipur Town Library	Kulpi Road, Baruipur, South 24 Parganas, Kolkata – 700144
11.	Baruipur Public Library	Baruipur Puratan Bazar, P.O. – Baruipur, South 24 Parganas, Kolkata – 700144
12.	Sarangabad Bandhab Pathagar	Sarangabad, via. – Budge Budge, South 24 Parganas, Kolkata – 700137
13.	Rajpur Sadharan Pathagar	Aghore Sarani, P.O. – Rajpur, South 24 Parganas, Kolkata – 700149
14.	Kodalia Haranath Binapani Library	Haranath Basu Road, South 24 Parganas, Kolkata – 700146
15.	Deshgourab Pathagar	Garia Station Road, P.O. – Garia, South 24 Parganas, Kolkata – 700084
16.	Bakhrabat Public Library & Free Reading Room	Vill.+P.O. – Bakhrabat, South 24 Parganas, Pin – 743377
17.	Baharu Shyamsundar Public Library & Free Reading Room	Vill.+P.O. – Baharu, South 24 Parganas, Pin – 743372

18.	RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhaban Sub Divisional Library	Vill. + P.O. – Sarisha, South 24 Parganas, Pin – 743368
19.	Sagar Town Library	Vill.+P.O. – Harinbari, South 24 Parganas, Pin – 743373
20.	Vidyabhusan Library	K.C. Bose Road, Vill. – Changripota, Subhasgram, Kodalia, south 24 Parganas, Pin – 743350
21.	Purandar Smriti Mandir Pathagar	Vill. – Mahinagar, P.O. – Malancha Mahinagar, South 24 Parganas, Pin – 700145
22.	Canning Public Library	P.O. – Canning Town, South 24 Parganas, Pin – 743329
23.	Karanjali Unnati Bidhayani Pathagar	Vill.+P.O. – Karanjali, South 24 Parganas, Pin – 743348
24.	Madarat Bandhab Pathagar	Vill.+P.O. – Madarat, South 24 Parganas, Pin – 743610
25.	Joychandi Pathagar	Vill.- Srikrishnapur, P.O. – Sukdebpur, South 24 Parganas, Pin – 743503
26.	Hemkali Library	P.O. – Dakshin Gobindapur, South 24 Parganas, Pin - 700145

Source:

https://www.collegeadmission.in/Other%20Information/Library/India/State_Wise/WestBengal/Govt_Sponsored/Govt_Sponsored_Libraries-South24Pgs.pdf

1.5.3 QUESTIONNAIRE

Two sets of structured questionnaires have been designed to collect data from the Librarians or Library-in-Charges and library users. Structured questionnaires help a researcher to collect specific data from the target population within a specific time limit. It is important to stick to the specific subject and objectives of the investigation; these factors are carefully considered in framing questionnaires.

1.5.4 DATA COLLECTION

Required data have been collected through carefully constructed two sets of questionnaires.

The first set is designed for Librarians or Library-in-Charges to collect data and information about the PLs. This set is further subdivided into two sections, viz., the first section asks questions about general administrative and infrastructural facts and the second section contains questions regarding LHCs and services of libraries.

The second set is designed for user communities coming to use the library resources. This set is further subdivided into two sections, viz., the first section is designed to collect users' personal information and their general awareness about PL. The second section contains questions to collect data and information about users' specific interests or inclination and awareness regarding LH study.

1.5.5 RESEARCH METHODS

The Survey method is adopted to obtain data in structured questionnaire formats from the chosen sample. Every library is visited personally and library personnel was approached to respond to the specific questionnaires. Users coming to use library reading rooms were also approached to fill up the specific questionnaires. The libraries are surveyed thoroughly to take an idea about their present physical conditions and service status.

1.5.6 TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Following tools and techniques have been employed to collect data from all categories of respondents as well as to infer fruitful findings of the present investigation:

1.5.6.1 INTERVIEW

Library personnel and library users were interviewed in a semi-structured way to obtain data about their respective perceptions regarding general administration and organizations of the libraries, as well as regarding specific collections and services related to LH. The researcher also talked to other library staff than Librarian or Library-in-Charge in every library and their experiences were recorded grossly, without a questionnaire, for further review.

1.5.6.2 OBSERVATION

During surveying every library, the researcher employed an observation technique for a critical review of the present scenario of the library. Official records, unofficial data kept by library personnel, relevant documents, etc. whichever was produced, were observed to ascertain the present conditions.

1.5.7 INFORMATION SOURCES USED

Several primary and secondary sources of information are used by the researcher. Documentary and non-documentary sources, viz., annual reports, various record books of libraries, Government orders, annual reports of the Department of Mass Education Extension & Library Services, Government of West Bengal, photographs, illustrations, etc. have been consulted. Electronic information sources like website content are also used several times for relevant purposes. Human and institutional sources are also consulted several times to collect the necessary information.

1.5.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from the respondents have been tabulated and analyzed keeping in view the objectives of the study. Data are represented with the help of tables and charts with apposite interpretations. Some recommendations have been suggested after careful analysis of data so that sustainable developments can be achieved by libraries.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significant role of PLs in protecting the community's history and traditional culture is acknowledged since long back. PLs always play a pivotal role in the collection, preservation, maintenance, and propagation of the traditional culture of local communities having historical values, for the sake of posterity. Every PL should carry an exhaustive representation of the local

historical and cultural inheritance of the locality or area or region in where it is situated. Collection and management of local historical information sources which represent various communities' own evolutionary courses, require special methods, equipment, and dedicated attitude of the library staff. In the proposed research work, the researcher tries to find out the present scenario of LHCs in Government sponsored PLs of the district of 24 Parganas (South); their development, related services, users' attitudes, etc. have also been incorporated under the study. Several recommendations have been given as suggestive measures for improvement after investigation and minute observations. The researcher also tried to propose a model of how a well-organized LH section can be created in a PL with minimal effective changes in available infrastructure. This proposed model has been prepared based on research outcomes and can be adopted as a generalized model for the PLs of the district.

1.7 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.7.1 PUBLIC LIBRARY

PL is largely regarded as the People's University. They are the perpetuating centers for education, culture, and research on topics of local importance and national weightage (Raju, 1985). It is a local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic platform for lifelong learning, independent decision-making, and cultural development of the individual and social groups (IFLA/ UNESCO Manifesto). According to it, PLs are the living force for education, culture, and information; it is also an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual wellbeing through

the minds of men and women. The services of the PL are provided based on equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language, or social status. Specific services and materials must be provided for those who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example, linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, or people in hospital or prison.

Information is an indispensable part of human life. People always seek information to make progress in individual life, enrich the cultural understanding, and to live hassle-free life (Lal, 2018). Users of all age groups must find material relevant to their needs. Collections and services of PLs have to include all types of appropriate media and modern technologies as well as traditional materials. High quality and relevance to local needs and conditions are fundamental. The material must reflect current trends and the evolution of society, as well as the memory of human endeavor and imagination. Collections and services should not be subject to any form of ideological, political, or religious censorship, nor commercial pressure (Maity, 2018).

Since the beginning, the PLs served as the local information centers making the source of knowledge readily available to the public. The local community from the local fund or individual benevolence could not achieve the services of a PL. Public leaders, scholars and learned societies have realized that the only way to establish and develop a PL system is through legislation. The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, 1972 stated that “The public library should be established under the clear mandate of law”, which is substantiated by the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994 as;

“The public library shall in principle be free of charge. The public library is the responsibility of local and national authorities. It must be supported by specific legislation and financed by

national and local governments. It has to be an essential component of any long-term strategy for culture, information provision, literacy, and education”.

1.7.2 PUBLIC LIBRARY AND LOCAL CULTURE

The PL has strong coordination and relation with society and, since long back, it caters to society and communities from various aspects. Preservation and promotion of local cultural heritage are the crucial functions that PL plays most largely. ‘Culture’ is a broad term encompassing various aspects of human life including arts, customs, beliefs, values, institutions, language, and technology, etc. The culture of a particular society largely reflects similar ways of thinking and behaviour of its members (Ekwelem, 2011). Cultural heritages are parts and parcel of any society’s tradition. Local culture is very often regarded as ‘popular culture’; it means the culture of the common masses that are widely accepted by people and propagated through generations within a community. Every child in a community should be introduced to the immense value and significance of his own ethnic identity; and that is why the inclusion of the idea of local and popular culture should be introduced in the formal education system and propagated through PLs as continuing education (Moran, 1985). UNESCO categorized cultural heritage into various types viz., tangible, intangible, ethnographic, and industrial. Till World War II, cultural heritages were mainly denoted by tangible objects viz., monuments of architecture, buildings of historical importance, archeological sites, books, manuscripts, works of art, or any other object having historical, archeological, or artistic significance. In the post-war era, serious efforts were made to prepare and present an expansive definition of ‘cultural heritage’ including ‘tangible’ and ‘intangible’ counterparts of the concept. In 1982, UNESCO provided a definitive concept of

cultural heritage in the Mondiacult World Conference on Cultural Policies held at Mexico City (University of Illinois [UOI], 2017):

“The cultural heritage of a people includes the works of its artists, architects, musicians, writers and scientists and also the works of anonymous artists, expressions of the people’s spirituality, and the body of values which give meaning to life. It includes both tangible and intangible works through which the creativity of that people finds expression: language, rites, beliefs, historic places and monuments, literature, works of art, archives and libraries.” (UOI, 2017)

This is the reason dramatic arts, languages, and traditional music, etc. have given equal importance in the preservation issues of cultural heritages (Gorman, 2007). The immensely valuable local cultural heritages have unique importance that reflects collective memory and experiences of any community, as part of the society. This is the responsibility of both government and civil societies to protect them. Being the ‘local gateway to knowledge’, a PL is a vital place for obtaining knowledge and information regarding the popular and local culture of any place where the library is situated (Maity, 2018). For preservation, maintenance, and display of historically significant local cultural resources, the convergence of cultural services to the regular PL services proved to be beneficial for boosting the quality of library services, local economy, and greater satisfaction of community needs (Robinson, 2011). It can help common people to get in touch with their own cultural identity which they tend to lose due to physical migration as well as psychological relocation from the root. Migration leads to the evolution of multicultural societies consisting of small communities having various cultural identities. PLs have several significant roles to play in providing services to such multicultural societies, with distinctive management objectives and policies (Acevedo, 2005). Preservation of precious local cultural resources is a challenge to PLs since long back. As the ‘social institution’, PLs are

expected to satisfy the educational, intellectual, and cultural demands and aspirations of local communities with the library services (Agboola and Bolanle, 2013). Library professionals are expected to exhibit a friendly responsible attitude towards the preservation of local cultural heritages including both tangible and intangible varieties. Acting as ‘cultural intermediaries’, PLs should provide user communities ample access to those valuable resources (Smart, 2017).

1.7.3 LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION IN PUBLIC LIBRARY

LH is the social and cultural aspects of the history of a geographically restricted area, with special emphasis on the local community. As a ‘social institution’ PL plays a crucial role in the social and cultural progress of the community it serves. A collection of books and other non-book materials such as maps, photographs, illustrations, sculptures, and many more such materials unique to a specific locality and the community residing there, are collectively called the ‘LH Collection’ of a PL. The central objective of a PL-based LHC is to provide an information service to all sectors of the community, as well as provisions for the security and conservation of unique materials are also major concern of any PL (Pearson, 1988). Usually, this service is performed in favour of and active participation of the community therein (Forsyth, 2019). In many cases, the local community comes forward to save its cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible. Such active participation of local communities with PLs results in successful preservation of the collective memory and historical records of the local areas (Harden, 2001). This proved to be beneficial for the long-term viability of LHCs in PLs for the sake of posterity. Many attempts have been made to study the growth of the locality and associated developments of its various institutions, culture, and footprint over the years. It is

found that PLs have essential responsibilities to preserve local culture and historical source materials of the area or region where it is situated (Odiase, 1978).

Alongside collections of printed materials, acquisition of LHMs is a genuine purpose of PLs serving in favour of the scholarly and research world (Fladby, 1987). Besides meeting the changing demands of local user communities through LH services, PLs are also serving the scholarly demands regarding vast dimensions of research works on multicultural communities and ethnic groups within communities through such collections and services (Cooke, 1992). There are also immense possibilities of research on community involvement in developing LHCs in PLs (Forsyth, 2019). With the changing dimensions of globalization, newly found concepts have emerged in this field. For effective formation and development of such collections require a peaceful relationship between the library and residents which, in turn, gives rise to the concept of ‘co-production’, a minute shift from the concept of ‘participation’. The co-production should be reconsidered to the missions and objectives of the PL (Sachiko, 2007). Thus LHC development policies are to be framed in such a way that assists in meeting these two aspects of user demands, i.e. community demand and research demand. PLs have significant roles in the development of education, research, culture, and economy of a community and provide support to emerging trends of research works on various topics of LH (Raju, 1985; Leonard and Ngula, 2013; Lal, 2018).

Developing LHCs in PLs demands minute observations and detailed conception on local culture and heritage. Being a ‘community library’, a PL should collect and preserve valuable assets like local historical materials. It is also beneficial if PLs collect not only past information but also about people, places, and the events of current times which will soon be LH (Cooke, 1996; Nilson and Thorell, 2018). It is essential to adopt a systematic approach in acquisition and

storage policies regarding LHCs in PLs. Once the collection has been set up, proper measures are to be taken for the proper organization of these LHMs relating to their respective localities. Expensive and rare materials may be photocopied or microfilmed and recorded for use by local people. Special classification schemes and indexing tools are essentially required taking into account local areas and significant local events (Kojima, 1987). It is also an important activity of a PL to cover LH as everyday history from stock development to communication and publicity work. As a cultural body, the PL has a significant role in tracing, presenting, safekeeping as well as preservation of LHCs related to a region or a community (Carvalho, 1988).

1.7.4 LOCAL HISTORY MATERIALS AND COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

From a much earlier period, librarians of PLs were absorbed in collecting large numbers of documents mainly of local interest in their collection. Among the fascinating documents held in PLs are manuscripts, maps, wills, newspaper cuttings, inventories, pictures, registers, letters, minute-books, handbills, certificates, petitions, indictments, accounts books, treaties, acts, local newspapers, and writs, of local areas (Kargbo, 2007). LHMs comprise every information resource that represents a local area in terms of its comprising communities, languages, culture, religion, and socio-economic characteristics (Chattopadhyay, 2011). An apt collection of LHMs in a PL assists in the increase of cultural awareness of local community members and also the socio-economic development of a local area.

There are so many interesting materials reflecting the cultural identity of any locality. Not only books or similar kinds of printed materials, art and designs, topographical prints, drawings and watercolours, street directories, electoral registers, city plans, papers of small craftsmen,

tradesmen and manufacturers, etc. also occupy significant positions as attractive LHMs (Girvan, 1985). Cuttings and indexes of local newspapers from long before to the current times reflect the social and economic developmental pathways of a local area. The stock of old pictorial materials, engravings, postcards, photographs, transparencies, filmstrips, maps, etc. play immensely important role in a LHC of a PL; that is why the concept of local studies library has come up with time (Petty, 1981). Rare books written by local prominent personalities and/or written involving local perspectives containing rare provincial information are the real treasures of LHCs of PLs or local studies libraries (Maxted, 1998). Any piece of information on the history of a local area is a precious LHM, whatever may be the physical form. It is also evident in many of the countries around the globe that a PL often contains items of greater uncommonness than that of the renowned treasures in national and university libraries. In the past three decades, many PLs across the world made outstanding progress in the identification, collection, organization, conservation, and dissemination of LH resources to their users (Bundy, 1999). With time, PLs try to be sustainable through the expansion of library services regarding LHCs. This causes the evolution of a new popular concept of ‘Friends of libraries’; they are the volunteers coming from local communities who attach themselves to the LHCs of PLs. They become segmented into small sub-groups and work independently but in coherence to the common focus of the library. Together these sub-groups create a constructive impact on the LHC and bear the responsibility of making such precious collections popular, attractive, and fruitful to the users and even non-users throughout the world (Partridge, 2001). It is a crucial service of PLs to provide intellectual access to the full variety of local historical information sources to the local communities, general users, and researchers.

Libraries and librarians are critical in providing resources in an age of information but the demands for a wide variety of new topics, expanding curricula, the influx of new technologies, and shrinking finances, are some of the factors that have had a resounding impact on collection development (Samantaray and Samantaray, 2014). These elements have changed the complexion of collection development in libraries, thus compelling librarians to be conscious of their effort. General appeal to local historians and other collectors to make donations of material to supplement to the PL is a well-proven strategy to form full-fledged LHC under limiting fund and manpower (Petty, 1981). A well-developed LH library is capable to meet the changing needs and expectations of ethnic groups in its community, through user training, promotion, and active participation of all working parties.

The acquisition of LHM is a challenging job for librarians and historians as it demands long persistent effort. In Hungary, political and economic changes have widened democracy and led to a significant increase in the demand for information on local events and LH, but privatization practice in the publishing sector had compelled to develop possible solutions, including changing the legal structure to acquire local publications for the relevant county library, establishing exchange systems, and increasing the use of computer applications (Kappel, 1996). Timely availability of LHMs is closely associated with proper library management, software up-gradation, automation of the bibliographic description of existing LHMs, viz., newspaper clippings, maps, photographs, drawings and designs, etc. Inclusion of automated descriptions these invaluable materials into a common database are essential, so that wide spread LHCs of different local areas throughout the nation can be identified and appropriate measures can be taken for integrating and automating their intellectual access by any interested person (Martin & Heath, 1994).

1.7.5 ORAL HISTORY

Oral history (OH) refers to the formal, rehearsed accounts of the past which are presented by the culturally sanctioned tradition-bearers (Nyhan and Flinn, 2016). It also refers to kinds of informal conversations among the members of a family, friends, or neighbours; it is the recording, preservation and interpretation of historical information, based on the personal experiences and opinions of the speaker (Deshpande, 2017). Most persons of any community grow up listening to the stories about the past from their ancestors' spoken words. Personal recordings, interviews of relevant persons or communities, and conversations among family and community members, printed anthology of stories about past times, etc. are different prominent forms of OH. It may take the form of eye-witness evidence about the past, but can include folklore, myths, songs and stories passed down over the years by word of mouth (Grele, 1987). While it is an invaluable way of preserving the knowledge and understanding of older people, it can involve interviewing younger generations also. OH is a remarkably rich form of LHMs, evolved its way with the popularity of media and broadcasting, and scaled its picks in the age of audio-visual technology, documentation, and archiving. More to mention, a state funded collaborative project involving the Toledo-Lucas County Library System, a university faculty, and a local production company has produced several television-quality DVDs and lesson guides on local Afro-American history to expand the library's OH collection (McKether and Melissa, 2011). More recent OH work has developed its distinctive forms in other areas of the world. As a significant LHM, OH interviews need serious evaluation in terms of significance regarding the context of historical events, reliability of the narrator, and proper methods of conducting an OH interview. There are so many crucial steps that are to be necessarily followed by a local historian before, during, and after an OH interview (Grele, 1987).

Collecting OH is time taking and to some extent expensive task; but once it is done well, it becomes a precious evidential record of a LH event. The most fascinating feature of OH is its accessibility; users can access a well-planned OH collection on-site as well as from remote sources as well (Palmer, 1983). Since it is chiefly stored in the form of an audio record, it is quite easy to access remotely. Though it is also found that OH interviews are transformed in the form of the written documents so that another parallel mode of conservation can be achieved. That is why documentation of OH demands specific skills and technical expertise from the collectors. OH can give a voice to individuals and groups who are sometimes marginalized in ‘conventional’ histories – the working classes, women, and ethnic minorities, for instance. They are the groups of “without history” can be the subject of OH that will provide new information, alternative explanations, and different insights which are of huge value (Samuel, 1976, Weisman, 2014).

Though OH is a very subjective and personal form of evidence, this is also one of its great strengths. That is why oral traditions are often said to be ‘tools of historians’ (Kargbo, 2008). In the words of the Italian oral historian Alessandro Portelli, oral sources “tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, what they now think they did... Subjectivity is as much the business of history as the more visible ‘facts’...” (Portelli, 1981).

1.7.6 GENEALOGY OR FAMILY HISTORY

Genealogy is also known as family history. It is concerned with the study of families, identifying their ancestral roots, sketching their lineages, and reconstructing their past. There are several

tools that Genealogists use to find information about a family of interest. The most useful among them are taking oral interviews, the study of historical records, analysis of pedigree, and other such records. All these lead to determine relationships and bloodlines between the generations. The outcome of the study is often displayed in charts in the form of a tree or written as descriptions.

Originally, the study of family history was connected with drawing royal, noble, or religious lines of ancient times. At that period it was a practice to transmit the genealogical information orally to the descendants. Over the centuries this branch of study expanded its scope, different innovative methods were evolved to record the information, and gradually a large number of people found it interesting to pursue it as a hobby (Fellows, 1985). Despite being evolved as a hobby, with time, genealogical studies started to be achieved with a professional outlook. Those who mainly are ‘hobbyists’, are interested to find out the history only of their ancestry, whereas, ‘professionals’ are engaged in conducting genealogical research, publish their innovative work on different genealogical methods, create their databases, and other products which may come to the use of hobbyists. But, in the end, both the hobbyists and the professionals aim to find out the whereabouts of their own or others’ ancestral lineages, their life story, scuffle, motivation, migration, socio-economic, political, and religious conditions (Nichols, 2012).

Apart from museums, archives, historical societies, and organizations, PLs play the most significant role in the collection, documentation, organization, preservation, and dissemination of genealogical information to society (Nilson and Thorell, 2018). A PL’s vital role is to promote the progress of genealogical research of that locality or area where it is situated. This, in turn, stimulates a deeper historical understanding of any community to the outsiders (Nichols, 2012). The PL has the responsibility to provide satisfactory service to the users who have an interest in

genealogical research by providing them relevant information through reference and referral services. Here comes the uniqueness of a PL where it serves as a community information centre, from where a person can find out the history of his neighbourhood, information about the inhabitants, and history of his own family and the whole community (Cooke, 1992).

As the interest in genealogy and family history has grown up day by day, the Library of Congress identified and marked genealogy and biography as the most popular subject categories (Campbell, 1979). More to mention, a study in the Edith M. Clark History Room, Rowan Public Library, North Carolina, U.S.A. has revealed the fact that the arrangement of genealogical collections according to Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) and Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) does not meet the demands of genealogical researchers. The library developed a new classification scheme in consultation with genealogists and local historians, which is slightly deviated from DDC. The new scheme is called 'RPL History Room Classification', according to which the entire genealogy collection is arranged primarily by geographic area and then by subject content, followed by author and time. Such classification scheme applies to other LHMs also (Blake and Stallings, 1997).

There are numbers of materials that are collected and preserved by the PLs as the basic genealogical records, such as land records supplemented with local government records, birth and death registrations in local government bodies, marriage registration records, cemetery records, personal probate, and will records, pedigrees and/or assembling of family group sheets on local families, federal and state census for a local community, and maps of local areas which is fruitful in genealogy as well as other history research (Wolf, 1942; Panum and Taht, 1998). To make all these genealogical resources useful to the researchers, the PL should offer its patrons well-planned and well-organized information services, which include a wide range of reference

as well as referral services including assisting and instructing researchers about genealogical research materials, both in print and digital formats, which may be helpful to them, rental service, interlibrary loan service, etc. (Fellows, 1985). In every condition, the PL should be ready to provide quality service to its users regarding such valuable collections of genealogy.

1.7.7 OTHER FORMS OF LOCAL HISTORY MATERIALS

LH reflects the overall ‘past’ of a community; in other words, it can be said that LH is the ‘collective memory’ of a community which journeys through many different layers of time. According to UNESCO, our past is revealed through intangible and tangible cultural heritage and, in a broader sense, history and LHMs mostly fall under the tangible heritage (Ogiwara, 2007). Some of these materials are collected from the local authority and some from the local people and ethnic groups. Commonly LHCs of a library are meant only for ‘reading’, whereas it is also found unusually in some instances where these materials can be borrowed by the users. The PL has the definite responsibility to acquire and preserve a wide range of LHMs related to its native community, which unfolds the economic, social, cultural, educational, and technological progress of the community (Paul, 1989).

There are many LHMs that a PL can collect and preserve; among these mainly include manuscripts, out-of-print and rare books, letters, personal memoirs, newspaper clippings, census reports, pamphlets, still photographs, historic maps, local maps and diagrams, posters, charts, handbills/leaflets, local information sources, like the geographical description of the locality, agriculture and industry-related information, evidence and descriptions of local movements, information produced in local formal and informal institutions, local administrative authorities,

and human sources of information, etc. All such materials constitute a substantial fragment of LHMs (Chattopadhyay, 2011). More to mention that different art forms and designs occupy a significant position in LHMs, viz., drawings, paintings and watercolours, local maps and city plans, topographical prints, designs of small craftsmen, tradesmen, and manufacturers, etc. (Girvan, 1985). In some PLs, LH takes its shape through some specific LHMs; these libraries attempt to trace out the LH of that region or community through the collection and preservation of some specific kind of materials only. Such libraries may collect and preserve rare photographs belonging to a certain time frame reflecting the historical, economic, social, and geographical changes during a specific time of that particular area where the library is situated (Huang, 2000). Old county maps are also of great importance in LHMs. Several PLs collect and preserve old county maps having immense historical significance, and the majority of these maps are collected through personal endeavours (Harrison, 1995). From the very beginning, visual media are commonly excluded from the list of significant LHMs in most of the PLs throughout the world. With time, advancements in new technologies bring back the due importance to visual media, particularly motion pictures, containing information relating to LH; slowly these materials started to be given appropriate attention while planning for setting up a LH library (Paul, 1989). Proper arrangement of such LHMs is another crucial factor so that dissemination can be performed without any difficulty. It is necessary that evidence of local events and other LHMs constituting ‘special collections’ of a PL, should be organized according to a special classification scheme taking into account local areas and important local events, and subject indexing is also necessary for such materials (Kojima, 1987). In some countries, the local government body supervises the production and development of LHMs, viz., bibliographies, private archival materials, estate and business records, documents and pictorial evidence of local

community, and oral memoirs, recorded either on tape or written down, for using them as research tools in LH research (Fladby, 1987). Not only the PLs, it is found in some countries that higher academic institutions also have created a rich collection of LHMs for promoting research in LH, and upgraded the online catalogue and web pages to protect these vulnerable ethnic and historical assets while still allowing access to them (Wood, 2004). In the PLs, stress has been given in collecting ‘rare’ items having local historical importance rather than collecting ‘famous’ items of LH which include regional newspapers, exclusive extra-illustrated editions of provincial histories, and a rare collection of documents acquired through gifts and/or donations. Through appropriate collection and preservation policies, a world of remarkable and useful collection of information on LH can be obtained.

1.7.8 PRESERVATION AND PUBLICITY OF LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS

Preservation generally means safeguarding a thing from harm and to maintain a perfect environment so that the thing will be unaltered over long periods. Regarding LHCs, it is an essential duty of any PL to collect, process, document, and preserve the rare materials that reflect the historical developments and culture of the locality where the library is situated. In various countries of the world, the government has taken legal initiatives to increase the level of collaboration between the local authorities and the PLs regarding the preservation and cataloguing of rare LHMs. Legal steps have also been taken by the Government to initiate the cooperation regarding the collection policies among legal deposit libraries of the country, to prepare a collaborative ‘Published Archive’ and to develop the concept of a repository of ‘National Bibliographic Resource’ (Phillips, 1998). While developing a LHC, materials must be

selected based on their usefulness in terms of quality, not on the physical structure of the materials. With time, PLs need to adapt to the concept of electronic preservation of such rare collections. Very rare and valuable LH resources need specific preservation techniques so that these can be protected from deterioration for a long. Preservation of these materials in various electronic formats imparts long life and protects them from human damage; electronic formats can also be easily kept, copied, and distributed to users. In such endeavours, local community people can be engaged in coordinating the collection development, and dissemination of LH information through the web (White, 2000).

While planning for LHC development, sincere care must be taken regarding the relevance of the collections to the needs of the local community. Since the character of a community is always changing with time, the PL has the responsibility to monitor the crucial changes; such transformations are needed to be reflected in the LHCs of the PL (Hall, 1987). That is the reason community members are essentially needed to be aware of the significance of LHMs preserved in the PLs of the nearby localities.

Over time, new technologies are being evolved for the collection, organization, and storage of huge amounts of information in libraries, including LH information. New technologies also enable the PLs to reach a much wider range of potential users, particularly those of younger generations who want the information to be available online. For various categories of LHMs, viz., photographs, genealogical records, OH records, letters and memoirs, documents of local government bodies, can conveniently be preserved digitally. This also allows their optimum use by the maximum users throughout the globe. For this, LHC requires number of publicity measures to be adopted by PLs so that it becomes popular not only among local communities but also among global users (Bijali & Khan, 2018).

1.8 STYLE OF REFERENCES

Citations of in-text and bibliographical references are done according to the guidelines given by the American Psychological Association (APA) in *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.), 2010.

1.9 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The present research work has been analyzed, organized, and presented in the following chapters:

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter containing the introduction proper, the significance of the study, statement of the research problem, scope and limitations of the work, objectives of the study, hypotheses formulated for the research, review of literature, methodologies adopted, and organization of the study for better clarification of the entire research work.

Chapter 2 presents an overview of the district of 24 Parganas (South). It describes the district's history; administrative setup; geographies like location, boundaries, the Sundarbans, climate, physiography, rivers, soil, floral and faunal diversities; people and the land like demography, languages and dialects, cultural profile, documentary legends, religion, education, industry, occupation, and economy, an attempt to provide the district's impression.

Chapter 3 describes the concept of the PL, its aims, objectives, and functions, etc. It describes the roles played by PLs on society, culture, and education, viz., on literacy, neo-literacy, and adult education. An attempt has been made to trace the historical development of PLs in India,

West Bengal as well as in the district of 24 Parganas (South); present administrative scheme of PLs in West Bengal; roles of various committees and commissions appointed by the Government of India from time to time. The chapter also illustrates the impact of important bills and acts of the country and the West Bengal PLs Act, role of the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) in the library development of the country, and the state.

Chapter 4 deals with various aspects of LH, viz., the concept, definition, problems, and value. The chapter describes various types of LHMs, the significance of OH, and genealogical sources of information. The chapter throws light on the inseparable relationship between LH and PLs in a locality, along with a detailed scenario of LHCs in PLs of the district in comparison to significant local historical facts of the respective localities.

Chapter 5 presents the actual condition of LHCs and services in the district of 24 Parganas (South). The ground reality has been interpreted in terms of their location, establishment, infrastructure, and physical facilities, membership details, library usage, general and LHCs, general and LH-oriented specific services, extension activities, internal administration, organization, and diversities of LHCs, users' LH-related information demands, difficulties in LHC development, awareness and cooperation of library staff, publicity measures undertaken in favour of LHCs, LH awareness of library staff and users, etc. This chapter also reveals users' perspectives in terms of users' satisfaction, expectations, preferences, demand, awareness, etc. regarding LHCs and services in PLs of the district.

Chapter 6 contains the findings of the study, major detrimental factors responsible for the creation of a gap between the expectations and the reality; this chapter also contains some recommendations as suggestions towards improvements and sustainable development.

Chapter 7 presents a generalized model suitable for planning an effective and viable LH section in PLs of 24 Parganas (South). This chapter also provides an insight into the plan of work towards saving LH, preservation of precious materials, and developing LH awareness among the community people to come forward for its documentation and conservation for posterity.

Chapter 8 contains the concluding section of the whole research work.

1.10 CONCLUSION

As referred to as ‘social institution’, PLs’ crucial roles in socio-economic and cultural developments are well recognized from the time long back. A PL in a locality is always considered as the cultural and recreational hub for the common people of that locality. Collection and preservation of local historical and cultural heritage is one of the vital responsibilities of a PL. This is the place where local community people can connect themselves to their own historical and cultural background which is the key component in one’s own identity as well as the identity of an entire community. Even in this era of globalization, PLs have much to do to connect to the common local people since history and culture are inseparable from the community’s individuality. PLs in the district of 24 Parganas (South) has also considerable opportunities to play this imperative role on peoples’ social and cultural identities since the district has immense sources of local historical and cultural treasures. Due to the tremendous diversification in literacy, socio-economic conditions, occupational scenario, and daily livelihoods of common people of the district, there are so many opportunities to get people connected to their historical background which may get fade or lost with time or in search for better livelihood. The present study is an attempt to depict the ground reality of the PLs of the

district in this aspect and how this situation can be uplifted with some effective initiatives which are the need of the hour to walk towards a better tomorrow.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter describes the main structure of the entire research work organized into various sections. The chapter also includes a detailed review of literature regarding the research work carried out earlier in different branches of the same subject field. The chapter provides glimpses of forthcoming chapters included in the present thesis to describe and analyse the research problem.

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Chapter 2

24 Parganas (South) – An Overview

2.1 BRIEF HISTORY

References of this landmass have been found in the *Mahabharata*, the *Raghuvansa*, and some of the *Puranas*. According to the last literary source, this land was delineated by the kingdoms of ‘Suhmas’ in Western Bengal and the ‘Vangas’ in Eastern Bengal (Hunter, 1893; Wilson, 1895). Later, in *Raghuvansa* it was stated that king Raghu defeated the Vangas and “established pillars of victory on the isles in the midst of the Ganges” (O’Mally, 1914). It is believed that these islands later condensed to form the present shape of the districts of 24 Parganas (North) and 24 Parganas (South). References of these Gangetic lands are found in the ancient literature of Greek and Chinese travelers and pilgrim viz., Ptolemy and Hiuen Tsiang. It is evident from the ancient maps of the second century A.D. that the lower part of this Gangetic delta was cut up by many rivers and estuaries, thus forming a net of adjacent islands. References of this region were found in ancient literature as ‘Samatata’ (upper Gangetic delta) which was rich in crops, fruits, etc. and prosperous in the economy. This region was situated somewhat to the west of present Sunderbans where the Gangasagar Sangam or confluence of Hooghly River and the Bay of Bengal is situated (Choudhuri, 2013). At the end of the fifteenth century, it is found in the poems of a Bengali poet *Bipradasa* and also from the book *Ain-i-Akbari* that the channel through which Bhagirathi-Hooghly River met the sea was a wide river through which major business persons traveled to the foreign countries, and this channel is nowadays known as *Adiganga* (O’Mally, 1914).

Ancient literary evidence of the first and second century A.D. and Greco-Roman descriptions mentioned the existence of a powerful and prosperous kingdom at the lower Gangetic delta, known as Gangaridi, Gangaridai, or Gangaridae. Their king was known as Jandamis (Choudhuri,

2013). There were so many differences in opinions regarding the geographical position of this kingdom. According to Greek literature, this kingdom was situated near the present day Jessore-Khulna districts of Bangladesh; some believed that Deganga of the present 24 Parganas (North) was the actual position of the Gangaridi kingdom. Greek astronomer Ptolemy mentioned the region between the rivers Adiganga and Bidyadhari as Gangaridi kingdom (Choudhuri, 2013). It is also believed by the majority of Indian historians that present day Sunderbans was entirely known as Gangaridi kingdom and the Gangetic port or Ganges port of this kingdom was the most famous and busy sea port of ancient Gangetic delta (Roy, 2017). Historians are confused about the geographical location of this port. It might have been situated in present Gangasagar Island or at Chandrakhetur in Deganga of present 24 Parganas (North). Another opinion said that it may be situated at Atghara near present Baruipur, at the bank of Adiganga. Historians didn't come to a consensus regarding the precise geographical location of the Gangaridi kingdom due to the unavailability of proper documentary evidence.

There exist so many opinions about the historical development of the Sunderbans region. Geologists and historians believed that Sunderbans was known as Shakadwip which was mentioned in many ancient literatures of India. The famous copper inscription of Maharaja Dommanpala was excavated from Rakshaskhali Island near Diamond Harbour. It was made sometime during 1193 A.D. where Sunderbans was described as Shakadwip, and it fell under the jurisdiction of the Samatata kingdom established by Pala King Govindapala (Majumdar, 1945). Later on, the entire Samatata along with Upabanga (lower Gangetic delta) delta were ruled by Satrajit, Samudra Gupta, Govinda Chandra, Lakshman Sen, Samsuddin Ilias Shah, Raja Ganesha, Jalaluddin Shah, and Hussain Shah, till 1576 A.D. (Choudhuri, 2013). There exist so many opinions about historical development of Sunderbans region. Geologists and historians

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The actual ruler Sunderbans and southern Gangetic delta of that time was King Pratapaditya who started his rule in 1587 and ended in 1610. His father Vikramaditya established the Hindu dynasty near Khulna district and his capital was Iswaripur, now a small village near Khulna (O'Mally, 1914). His son Pratapaditya shifted his capital to Chandikan or Dhumghat near Sunderbans for administrative ease. Pratapaditya was a real conqueror and extended the limits of his kingdom in a manner that surrounding countries also acknowledged his power (Roy, 2017). Later Pratapaditya assassinated his uncle Raja Basanta Rai and captured his dynasty situated between the present day Behala and Falta. This powerful emperor was defeated by Man Singh, Governor of Bengal during the Mughal dynasty from 1603 to 1611 B.C. in the battle of Dhumghat (O'Mally, 1914).

Bengal was ruled independently by these Kings for many years. It was during 1537-38, Portuguese came to Bengal for the first time. The entire Bengal including the southern Gangetic delta witnessed deplorable social and economic conditions during the Portuguese reign. In 1632,

the Portuguese army was finally defeated by Sultan Kasim Khan, but they start secretly residing in many regions of deltaic Bengal (Choudhuri, 2013).

After Pratapaditya, the Mughals occupied the Bengal. But Portuguese menace was started to sprout again. Besides them, Arakanese pirates also created severe disturbances in southern deltaic Bengal (Iqbal, 2011). British appeared in the middle of 1700 A.D. for business. The Nawab of Bengal, Mir Zafar handed over the zamindari of Bengal to the East India Company through a treaty on 15th July 1757, after the Battle of Plassey. The then Calcutta was the capital of the earliest colonial rule of the British; this colonial rule was continued uninterrupted till India's independence in 1947.

The existence of the name of the district '24 Parganas' was traced back to the 1757 Treaty where the deltaic Bengal was divided into 24 Parganas meaning 24 'complete divisions'. The divisions were Magura, Khaspur, Medinimalla, Ikhtyarpur, Baridhati, Kharijuri, Dakshin Sagar, Muragacha/Munragacha, Panchkuli, Melang Mahal, Hatiyagarh, Maydah, Garh, Calcutta, Paikan/Paithan, Manpur, Amirabad, Ajimabad, Shahpur, Shahnagar, Amirpur, Akbarpur, Baliya, and Basundi. Sunderbans did not fall under the jurisdiction of East India Company. After some time, Calcutta got separated from 24 Parganas and became the capital of Bengal (Choudhuri, 2013). After the Permanent Settlement of Lord Cornwallis in 1793, Sunderbans was added to 24 Parganas. After Sepoy Mutiny in 1824 and Wahabi Movement in 1831, district headquarters was shifted from Calcutta to Baruipur, and complete 24 Parganas district was formed including eight sub-divisions viz., Alipore, Diamond Harbour, Barasat, Baruipur, Dum Dum, Barrackpore, Bashirhat, and Satkshira (Majumdar, 1945).

In the year 1980, a decision was taken by West Bengal Government to divide the district 24 Parganas into two, having north and south portions. A special commission was appointed in this regard, and two separate districts of 24 Parganas (North) and 24 Parganas (South) were created on 1st March 1986 (Choudhuri, 2013).

2.2 ADMINISTRATIVE SETUP

The district of 24 Parganas (South) is divided into five sub-divisions known as Alipore Sadar, Baruipur, Diamond Harbour, Canning, and Kakdwip among which Alipore is the District Head Quarters (Subdivision, n.d.). According to the Census 2011, the District consists of 7 Municipalities, 29 Community Development Blocks (CDBs), 312 Gram Panchayets, 33 Police Stations, 37 Islands, and 1,996 villages among which 48 are uninhabited due to the presence of Sunderbans National Park (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner [ORGCC], 2011). The district headquarters is gradually shifted to the Baruipur subdivision due to its convenient location in the district. The distribution of 29 CD Blocks and 7 Municipalities (Statutory Towns) constituting five sub-divisions are as follows:

Table 2.1 Administrative setup of 24 Parganas (South)

SUB-DIVISION	MUNICIPALITY	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK	POLICE STATION
Alipore (Sadar)	Budge Budge, Maheshtala, Pujali	Thakurpukur-Maheshtala, Bishnupur-I, Bishnupur-II, Budge Budge-I, Budge Budge-II	Maheshtala, Bishnupur, Budge Budge, Nodakhali, Rabindranagar
Baruipur	Joynagar-Majilpur, Baruipur, Rajpur-Sonarpur	Sonarpur, Joynagar-I, Joynagar-II, Kultali, Baruipur, Bhangore-I, Bhangore-II	Sonarpur, Joynagar, Kultali, Maipit Coastal, Baruipur, Bhangore, Kolkata Leather Complex, Kashipur
Canning	-	Canning-I, Canning-II, Basanti, Gosaba	Canning, Jibantala, Gosaba, Basanti, Sunderbans Coastal
Diamond Harbour	Diamond Harbour	Mograhata-I, Mograhata-II, Mandirbazar, Kulpi, Falta, Diamond Harbour-I, Diamond Harbour-II, Mathurapur-I, Mathurapur-II	Usti, Mograhata, Mandirbazar, Kulpi, Falta, Diamond Harbour, Ramnagar, Mathurapur, Raidighi
Kakdwip	-	Kakdwip, Namkhana, Sagar, Patharpratima	Kakdwip, Namkhana, Dholarhat, Sagar, Patharpratima, Frazerganj

(Source: - s24pgs.gov.in/s24p/page.php?nm=Subdivision)

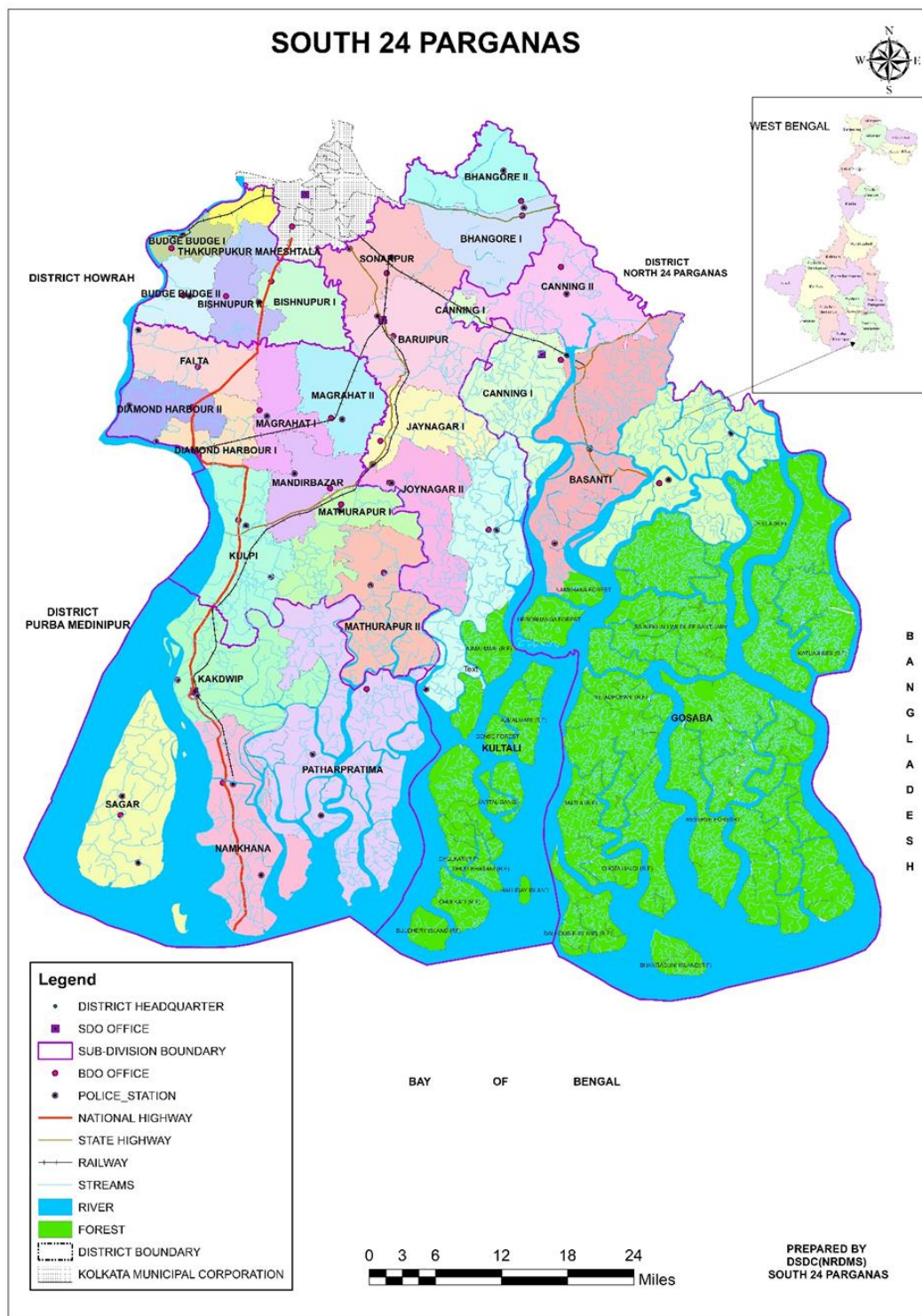


Figure 2A. District administration map of 24 Parganas (South) (source: <http://s24pgs.gov.in/s24p/>)

2.3 THE GEOGRAPHY

The geography of the district consists of a vast range of varieties and diversifications due to the co-presence of extreme urban life, uninterrupted rural life, and wildlife. Overcrowding at suburbs results in the expansion of Kolkata city; the city is now spread over parts of this district. The other areas remain as rural, though several rural areas form the boundaries of the Sunderbans National Park, the World Heritage Site.

2.3.1 LOCATION

The total area of the district of 24 Parganas (South) is 9960 square kilometers (ORGCC, 2011). The district lies between 20°20' North and 22°06' North latitudes, as well as between 88°20' East and 88°60' East longitudes (ORGCC, 2011). The district headquarters is Alipore (Sadar).

2.3.2 BOUNDARIES

The district is located at the southern-most part of the West Bengal state, having an irregular parallelogram shape. The northern and north-western boundaries consist of the district of 24 Parganas (North) and Kolkata Metropolitan areas, respectively. The Hooghly River marks the boundary at the west, separating the district from Hooghly, Howrah, and Purba Medinipur. The Bay of Bengal marks the southern-most limit of the district, and the eastern international boundary is bordered by Bangladesh.

2.3.3 THE SUNDERBANS

The Sunderbans was recognized as World Heritage Site in 1987 and later on recognized as Biodiversity Reserve in 1989. It is expanded over 9630 sq. km. and delineated by Dampier and Hodges line in the north, Ichhamati- Hariabhanga in the east, Baratala estuary in the west, and the Bay of Bengal in the south (ORGCC, 2011). The Sunderbans (name derived from the mangrove tree known as Sundari; *Heritiera minor*) is a cluster of nearly 102 low-lying islands in the Bay of Bengal of which 54 are inhabitable and 48 are occupied by mangrove forest, spread across India and Bangladesh; ten Police Stations of the district of 24 Parganas (South) fall under the jurisdiction of the Sunderbans viz., Sagar, Kakdwip, Mathurapur, Namkhana, Pathar Pratima, Harwood Point Coastal, Ganga Sagar Coastal, Frezerganj Coastal, Gobardhanpur, Dholahat, Mandirbazar, Raidighi, Kulpi (Sundarban Police District, n.d.).

This Biosphere Reserve is prominent for its unique mangrove-dependent life form, man-animal conflict, livelihood uncertainties of people living there, and mixed-religious cultural heritage. An area of 40,000 sq. km. (World Wildlife Fund [WWF], n.d.) with numerous tidal creeks, intricate interlacing drainage, and rich mangrove forest makes it a distinctive geographical region of the greater Ganga-Brahmaputra delta. This active delta region is formed by the fluvio-glacial sediment deposition of major rivers such as rivers Ganga, Brahmaputra, Padma, and Meghna, spreading over India and Bangladesh. It consists of a network of mudflats and islands created by accumulated sediment loads that these rivers carry from their Himalayan headwaters.

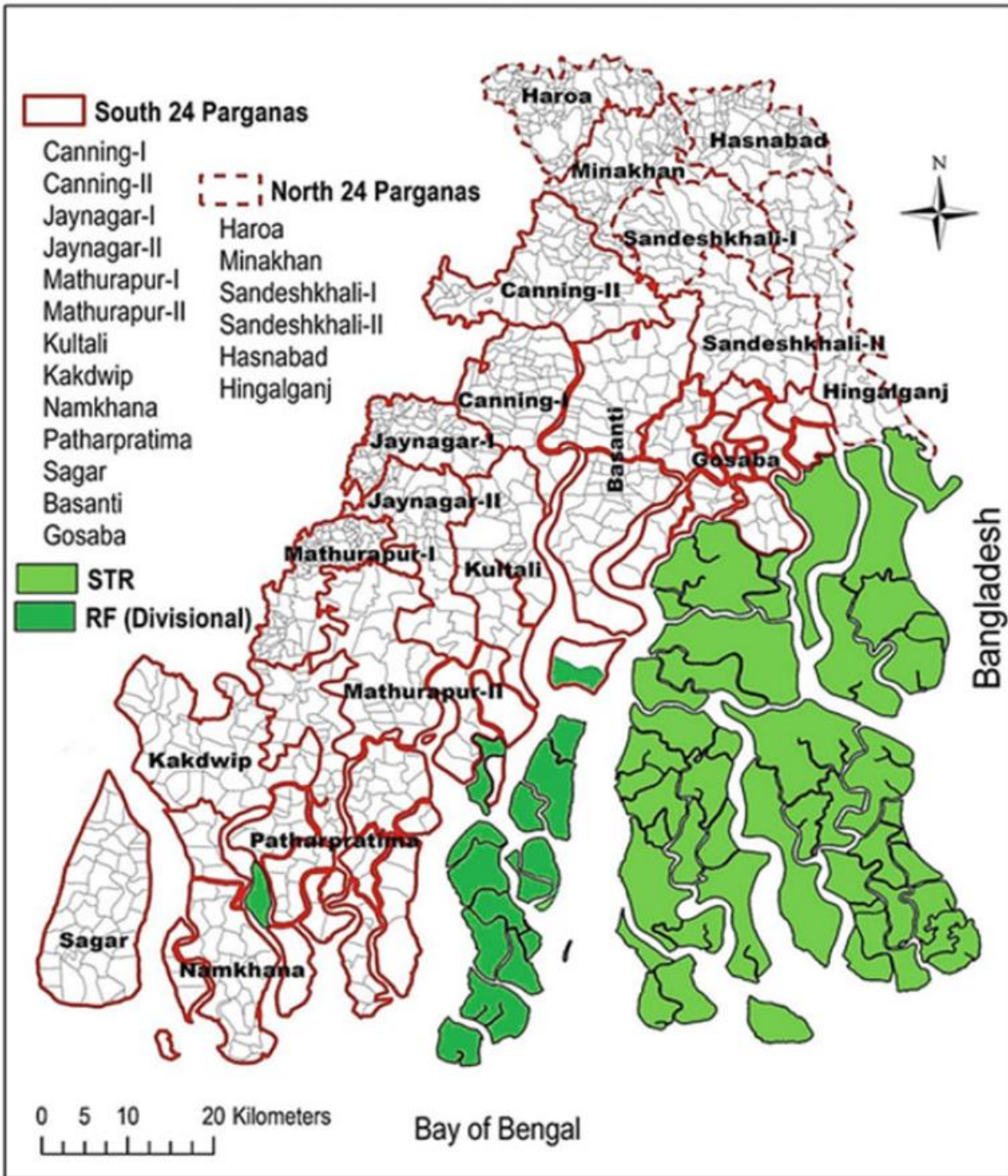


Figure 2B. Administrative setup of Indian Sunderbans; 24 Parganas (South) showed by solid red border and 24 Parganas (North) by dashed red border. (Source: Mistri and Das, 2020)

The Sunderbans is under threat due to climate change. In the past three decades, the sea level has been rising at an alarming rate due to the melting of the Himalayan glaciers and land subsidence. The intensity of cyclones over the Bay of Bengal has also been increased to a great extent. Before the 19th century, Indian Sunderbans were very sparsely settled (Eaton, 1990), with only scattered human settlements dating back to the 8th century (Hunter, 1876). A theory of depopulation of the Sunderbans in the middle ages is prominent from its physiographical testing of soil layers. Several reasons have been forwarded which range from earthquakes that led to sudden subsidence of the land (O'Malley, 1988), attacks carried out by Portuguese and Arakans (Sarkar, 2012), and a hostile environment leading to the destruction of human lives (Chakrabarty, 2009).

2.3.4 CLIMATIC CONDITION

Climate is an important natural factor that exerts a profound influence on the soil formation, drainage characteristics, groundwater condition, growth of natural vegetation, and various economic activities like agricultural operation, livestock rearing, fishing, location of industries and even the health of the local inhabitants also reveal the influence of climate on human activities.

24 Parganas (South) has a tropical monsoon climate having hot and humid weather throughout the majority of the time in a year, except the winter season during November to January. During summer the weather gets very hot as the temperature rises to 36.3 ° Centigrade (Geography, n.d.) in the daytime. The rainy season comes generally at the end of June; this season is full of humidity. The annual average rainfall ranges from 1750 to 1770 milliliters (Geography, n.d.).

Rainfall occurs mainly during rainy season which plays a crucial role in the agricultural profile of the district. The winter season is generally dry and without precipitation, and the mean temperature drops down to approximately 13.6° C (Geography, n.d.). Spring and autumn both seasons are very pleasant but their presence is comparatively weak in the seasonal cycles.

Due to its proximity to the Bay of Bengal, natural calamities go hand in hand with the district. Especially the Sunderbans fall into heavy cyclonic depressions, particularly during summer and monsoon. Such cyclonic storms (viz., *Aila* in May 2009) create a severe environmental impact on the district as well as the biodiversity of this World Heritage Site. Extensive research conducted from time to time on the climatic conditions and natural hazards of the lower Bengal revealed that frequently occurring natural calamities are closely interrelated with the presence of a declining delta which is comparatively new Himalayan fortification.

2.3.5 PHYSIOGRAPHY

The district may be largely divided into two distinct physiographic zones viz.,

(a) **The mature deltaic plain** of the north-west (also known as 'Stable' delta) (Development & Planning Department [D&PD], 2009) which forms mainly the Kolkata Metropolitan area is hardly affected by regular tidal action as it lies higher than the maximum tidal heights.

(b) **The active deltaic plain** which is the tropical deltaic lowland in the south-eastern part of the District forms the largest active delta of the world – the Ganges delta. The active delta belongs to the largest and most dynamic landform of the Bengal Basin (D&PD, 2009) which is covered by the typical tropical estuarine mangrove swamps and forests, popularly known as the Sunderbans.

This unique coastal region of the District is formed by the combined geographical contributions of fluvial and coastal activities.

2.3.6 RIVERS

The Hooghly is the principal river of the district, which is the West Bengal branch of river Ganga, after getting bifurcated from the river Padma in Bangladesh. Hooghly is the main tributary through which the Ganga flows south to the Bay of Bengal (Figure 2B). There are three major distributaries of river Hooghly which efficiently flowed out excess water during flood seasons, viz., Bhagirathi, Jalangi, and Mathabhanga (O'Malley, 1907).

South 24 Parganas is primarily a riverine plain of Ganga and its other tributaries. The Gangetic delta of the district, including Sunderbans, has an interlacing mesh of rivers which are the lifelines of the occupation of a large number of people residing in the deltaic regions; the deltaic parts of Sunderbans also receive alluvium from other major rivers flowing from the west such as Bidyadhari and Matla. Rivers like Piyali, Hariabhanga, Saptamukhi, Thakuran, Gosaba, and Raimangal are considered to be the second most important flows that meet directly or indirectly to the Bay of Bengal (D&PD, 2009). Once upon a time, these were used to be the distributaries of Ganga-Padma, with time they lost the connectivity to the main rivers and became dependent on tidal sources of water (O'Malley, 1907). Numbers of cross-connected canals are also present in the district, to facilitate irrigation.

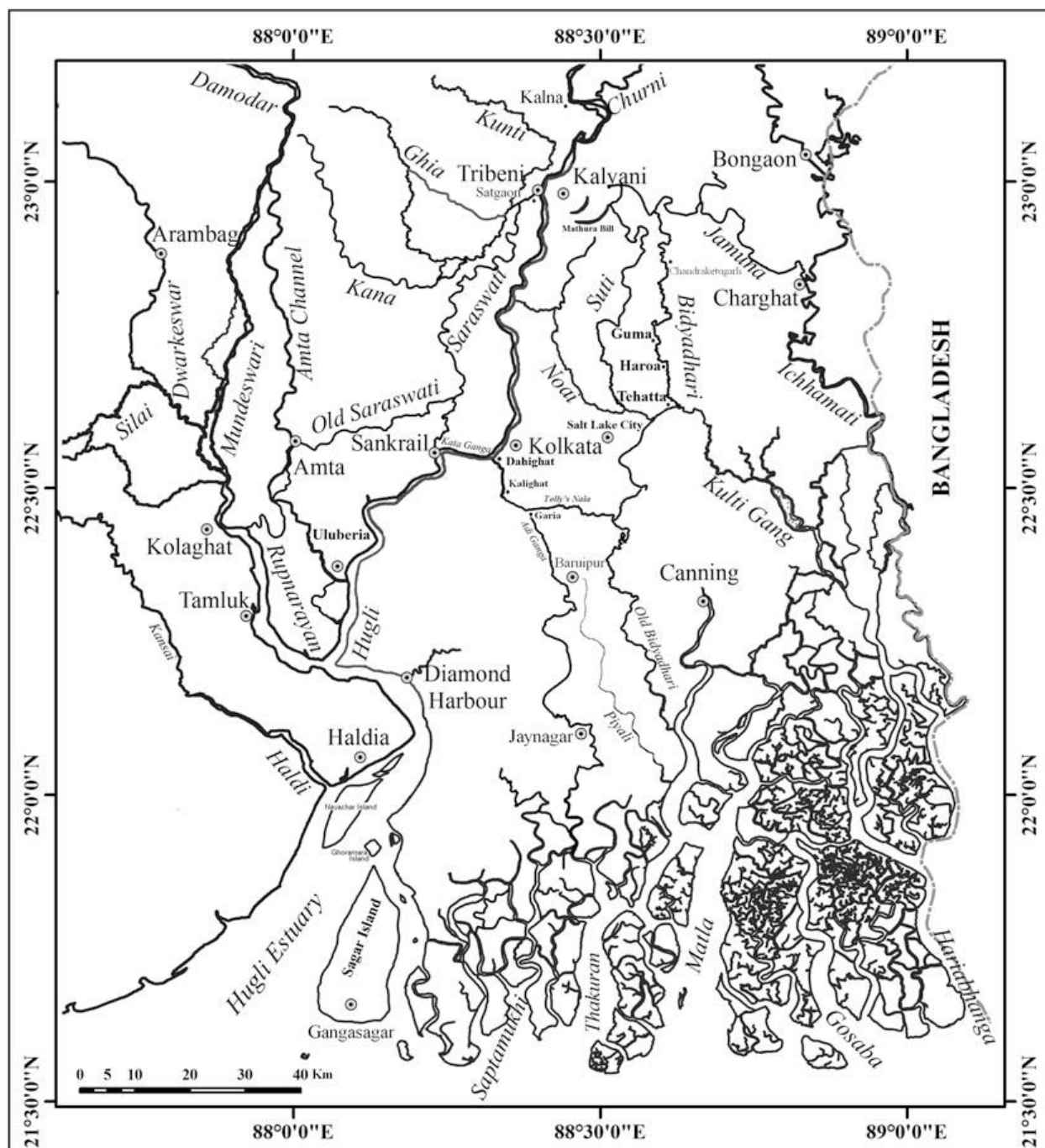


Figure 2C. Map of lower Bhagirathi distributaries flow through the 24 Parganas (North) and 24 Parganas (South) districts before emptying into the Bay of Bengal (Source Rudra, 2014).

The lower part of Ganga is known as Bhagirathi that flow through the main slope and form two channels. The main flow of Ganga that runs passes the Ghats of Kolkata followed by Garden Reach, Maheshtala, Budge Budge, Achipur, Birlapur, Falta, and Diamond Harbour. It carries the nutrient-rich water coming from the Himalayan glaciers which then gets nourished by monsoon water in the long journey. It eventually meets the Bay of Bengal and the alluvium load gets deposited and forms the Greater-Gangetic Delta; another minor flow known as Adi Ganga that flows through the lands to meet the same destination. However, the minor flow had lost its flow over the years due to the deposition of silts and discharge of urban sewage.

Another prosperous river was the Bidyadhari runs straight to the delta alongside the undivided district of 24 Parganas. River Bidyadhari is commonly referred to as the aged mother who tirelessly carried the alluvium of Ganga to shape the Gangetic delta to its present form (O'Malley, 1907). Bidyadhari was the cultural ground of ancient civilization called "Gangaridih civilization". Gangaridih was supposed to be a prosperous settlement having close naval contact with the Bay of Bengal. The Chandraketugarh on the bank of Bidyadhari were attacked by several western dynasties. However, the glorious past is now transformed into dust and archeological remnants are buried under the alluvial deposits. With the growth of Kolkata as an important metro city of eastern India, the Bidyadhari continues to be used for sewage disposal and flood control by excavating drainage canals up to the Bidyadhari river. The deposition of profuse city drainage over the three centuries made the river sluggish and partly stagnant. Moreover, it lost its connection with the main flow of Bhagirathi.

River Matla flows into the Sunderbans and it originated due to the union of three flows – Bidyadhari, Korotoa, and Rampura canal. Matla is a rain-fed river and takes completely

contrasting appearances in winter and monsoon. Matla is the longest and deepest river of the Sunderbans. The confluence of Matla and Bay of Bengal is very wide and navigable. Canning sub-division is situated at the bank of Matla. Among the other rivers and tributaries, Saptamukhi originates near the Sultanpur flows parallel to the Muriganga River, and eventually merges with it as it flows downstream. Namkhana, Bakkhali, Frezarganj, Mousuni, Henry, and Lothian islands lie within the course of the Saptamukhi and Muriganga rivers. Far East to the Saptamukhi, there flows the Jamira River intercalating through the 13 islands forming the Patharpratima block (District Disaster Management Department [DDMD], 2020. Hatania-Doania is a short tributary maintaining the connection between Muriganga and Saptamukhi separating Namkhana and Bakkhali Island. Gosaba river receives water from various tributaries of Raimangal and Matla and the island adjacent to it is also known as Gosaba.

2.3.7 SOIL

South 24 Parganas are is classified as lower Indo-Gangetic alluvial plains where soil feature varies from sandy loam to clayey depending on the water flow and riverine deposition of alluvium. Majority of the land area consists of loamy or sandy loam soils whereas some portions consist of clayey and clayey-loamy soils (Iqbal, 2011). Soils of the Sunderbans mangrove forest vary from other inland soils as they are subjected to the effects of salinity and waterlogging. They are commonly referred to as physiologically dry, occasionally semi-solid, medium-textured, and poorly consolidated, with 72-87 % silt content in the Indian part of Sunderbans (Ray, Majumder, Das, Chowdhury & Jana, 2014). Agriculture is the main pillar of the economy for the people of this district as it relies on satisfactory rainfall and relatively fertile soil

characteristics found here. Continuously increasing soil salinity in the brackish water parts is of major concern as most of the rivers and rivulets gradually lose their sediment carrying capacity.

2.3.8 FLORAL AND FAUNAL DIVERSITIES

24 Parganas (South) supports a rich reserve of flora and fauna thriving in a variety of ecological conditions. The district lies in close contact with the Bay of Bengal and the intricate riverine deltaic system in the south-eastern fringes. The riverine delta forms a unique estuarine ecosystem where a rich mangrove forest of 1,330 square km (ORGCC, 2011) is present, known as the Sunderbans. The Sunderbans ecoregion is known to be the largest riverine delta in the world while we consider the Indian (both south and north 24 Parganas) and adjacent Bangladesh Sunderbans together. Most of south 24 Parganas is mainly a part of the vast lower Gangetic plain. The southern part of the district exhibits excellent biodiversity, whereas in the northern section the species diversity of flora and fauna has been largely compromised due to human settlement and other issues of interference.

Floral components: The district is primarily comprised of mesophytic vegetation typical of the Gangetic plain except for the halophytic mangrove vegetation of the far south-eastern stretches of the Sunderbans delta (Danda, 2011). The intricate system of tidal rivers, canals, and creeks, dunes, saline soils, swamps, and marshes, define the texture of the Sunderbans delta. These ecosystems provide a suitable environment for the growth of the mangroves. The district has two types of forests, namely the ‘Salt Water Sundari’ forest and the ‘Low Mangrove’ forest (Danda, 2011), both have dense impenetrable undergrowth. In 24 Parganas (South), the gradient from salt water to brackish water to entirely freshwater fluctuates back and forth with the tides. The

intermediate zone of brackish water under the salt marshes is one of the most fertile areas of the world. The food chain is extremely diversified and the biomass productivity is several times more than that in the interior of the land or the outer sea (Ray et al. 2014). Mangrove forest and the salt water forest mostly comprise of Hargoja, Garjan, Hental, Tok Keora, Dhudhul, Poshur, Kalo Bain, Kankra, Moth Garan, Bokul Kankra, Tora, Khalsi, Karanja Bain, Jhamti Garan, Golpata, Gnewa, Sundari, Chak Keora (Barik & Chowdhury, 2014), etc.

Faunal components: The district is extremely rich in ichthyofauna. The dense mangrove forest of Sunderbans provides a unique ecological niche for the propagation of great varieties of palatable brackish water fishes like Parse (*Mugil parsia*), Bhetki (*Lates calcarifer*), Bhangar (*Mugil tade*), Hilsa (*Hilsa ilisha*), Tangra (*Mystus* sp.), etc. The common marine fishes alone are represented by more than 55 species belonging to 28 families (Habib, Neogi, Oh & Nahar, 2020).

Amongst the reptiles, Salt-water Crocodile is the prime component of the riverine system and is also considered to be the second most threatening predator of the mangroves next to tigers. The coastal borderline and the tidal creeks of the Sunderbans consist of a wide variety of turtles and terrapins such as northern river terrapins, olive ridley sea turtles, ground turtles, and hawksbill sea turtles Indian flap-shelled turtle species, etc. The Sunderbans and the semi-urban stretch of the Ganga basin once known to provide rich habitats to water monitor lizards as well as Bengal monitor lizards are undergoing rapid transformation causing their population decline.

The Sunderbans Biosphere Reserve supports a rich avifaunal diversity which includes many migratory species visiting in the winter for refuge. Among them four critically Endangered (White-rumped Vulture, Slender-billed Vulture, Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Baer's Pochard), four

Endangered (White-headed Duck, Masked Finfoot, Great Knot, Pallas's Fish Eagle), twenty Near-Threatened (Ferruginous Duck, Falcated Duck, Painted Stork, Black-necked Stork, Spot-billed Pelican, Black-headed Ibis, Oriental Darter, Great Thick-knee, River Lapwing, Eurasian Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Eurasian Woodcock, River Tern, Pallid Harrier, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Brown-winged Kingfisher, Mangrove Pitta), seven Vulnerable (Common Pochard, Swamp Francolin, Lesser Adjutant, Wood Snipe, Indian Spotted Eagle, Greater Spotted Eagle, Finn's Weaver) IUCN categories (WWF, n.d.).

A large variety of mammals, nearly fifty species are found in this district (Mallick, 2011). The district has a uniform distribution of Indian Flying Fox along with it few other micro-chiropteran bat species were recorded. The Sunderbans supports some remarkable mammalian species like Short-tailed Leaf Nosed Bat, Rhesus Macaque, Large Indian Civet, Small Indian Civet, Common Palm Civet, Mongoose, numerous species from Cat family, Indian Crested Porcupine, Indian Pangolin, Indian otter, Among the aquatic mammals Gangetic Dolphin, Black Finless Porpoise, Irrawaddy Dolphin, Leopard, Spotted Deer, Wild Boar, Barking Deer and majestic the Royal Bengal Tiger (WWF, n.d.). In the south-eastern part of this district, the mangrove forest has been declared as Sunderbans Biosphere Reserve as well as Sunderbans Tiger Reserve with an aim to preserving tigers and their prey base.

The mangroves are usually thickly populated by plenty of molluscan species viz., bivalves, snails, and crustaceans especially a wide range of crabs and other marine species which respond to the daily tidal rhythms. Various mangrove species are utilized by these animals as their food source (Barik & Chowdhury 2014). The estuarine tract of West Bengal is fortunate enough to

have a good supply of large quantities of seeds of tiger prawn during the early monsoon which continues to be available throughout the year. Tiger prawn generates substantive economy in the 24 Parganas (South) next to paddy cultivation.

2.4 PEOPLE AND THE LAND

2.4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC OUTLINE

The district of 24 Parganas (South) has a population of 81,61,961, which makes it the second most populous district in West Bengal after 24 Parganas (North), and the sixth most populous district in India (ORGCC, 2011). Population growth in this district had been always higher than the state average. Although the district is mainly rural (84 % population living in rural regions) (ORGCC, 2011), the rate of urbanization in 24 Parganas (South) remains high, particularly in the periods following independence (Mistry, 2015). Urban population constitutes 25.58% of the total population of the district (ORGCC, 2011). The people living close to Kolkata and commuting each day for their livelihoods are dissimilar from people who are living in rural areas or suburbs. The proximity to the Kolkata metropolis probably the sole cause for such a trend. These possess occasional inadequacy in law and order and infrastructural facilities to serve such a growing population in urban sprawl while villages also face administrative shortfalls. Social security of common mass living in remote parts of the district, particularly of the Sunderbans, is yet to attain satisfaction.

2.4.2 LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS

Bangla or Bengali is the predominant language used for communication and inscription if not the only one. Hindi and Urdu are occasionally spoken by few communities particularly in urban parts. In the district, lower middle-class people are the maximum in number and the majority of them have little exposure to institutional education. They speak in various dialects and literary variants which have a root connection with Bangla. The various spoken forms of Bengali used by the people from the land of Sunderbans is called *Sunderbani* dialect which has its uniqueness (Naskar, 2006).

2.4.3 CULTURAL PROFILE

It is mandatory for most people who depend on the forest for their livelihood to engage in rituals that involve worshipping local deities and goddesses. The struggle to conquer the natural hazards made the natives of Sunderbans believe in supernatural powers. A life that is isolated from the mainstream urban culture gets the chance to express itself in many ways and typically suits the local customs and beliefs. There are certain rituals as well as religious festivals observed in this Mangrove Forest. The pilgrims also worship certain Deities whom they consider as their saviors. Bonbibi is popularly worshipped in the Sunderbans as the savior of the natives. Bonbibi is believed as an omnipotent power looking after the dwellers of the forest, and is highly popular among both Hindus as well as Muslims (Mistry, 2015). Among all the Gods and Deities are Manik Pir, Olabibi, Manasa, Gazi Saheb, Sa Janguli, etc. But among these, Dakshin Ray holds a special place. Worshipping Dakshin Ray is a must for the people before they visit the forest

(Dasgupta, 2014). Legendary Dakshin Ray who is worshipped by all, irrespective of their caste and creed, is considered as the God of the Tigers. Apart from these cultural and religious practices, the cult of worshipping snakes, tigers, trees, and other entities among the forest natives is evidenced.

2.4.4 DOCUMENTARY LEGENDS

Mention of Sunderbans can be traced in numerous Bengali folklores centering on several deities and goddesses whose influence and faith are specific to the Sunderbans (Bonbibbi and Dakshin Ray) and the lower Gangetic Delta (Maa Manasa and Chand Saudagar) (Dasgupta, 2014). Manasa Mangal, a Bengali folk epic set in the Sunderbans includes a couple called Behula and Lakhindar. Heroine Behula's quest to bring her snake-bitten husband, Lakhindar, back to life (Das, 2020). Sunderbans have etched their place in several popular novels like Emilio Salgari along with others such as Shibshankar Mitra's Sunderbansey Arjan Sardar, Manik Bandopadhyay's Padma Nadir Majhi (Bandopadhyay, 1936). Sunderbans had its influence in Kunal Basu's short story "The Japanese Wife" (Basu, 2008), a subsequent film adaptation by Filmmaker Aparna Sen. The award-winning novel; "Hungry Tide" by anthropologist Amitav Ghosh also had depicted the living in Sunderbans (Ghosh, 2005). Moreover, Sunderbans has been the theme of non-fiction books such as "The Man-Eating Tigers of Sunderbans" (Montgomery, 2001). Numerous documentary films have been shot on Sunderbans as the subject, such as an IMAX production "Shining Bright (2003)" focused on the Royal Bengal Tiger (Chakrabarty. 2009), popular BBC TV series "Ganges" that documented the living in Sunderbans' villagers and livelihood of honey collectors.

2.4.5 RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

In 24 Parganas (South), Hinduism constitutes 63.17 % while Muslims are the next largest contingent with a significant 35.57 % of the total population (ORGCC, 2011). Representation of Christians, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists obscure and are all below 1 % (ORGCC, 2011).

A small Buddhist settlement in Achipur is near the Ganges is still present; while near about 600 Christian families are residing in Kabardanga-Nepalgunj area near Thakurpukur; they were previously non-Christians converts to Christianity (Chowdhury, 2013).

2.4.6 LITERACY RATE AND EDUCATION

The literacy rate of West Bengal is 77.5 % which makes the district to hold 8th rank in the West Bengal in terms of total literate persons in the state (ORGCC, 2011). The average literacy rate of district 24 Parganas (South) is 77.51 % as per 2011 census which is a considerable increase in comparison to 2001 Census. The male literacy of the district is 83.35 % and female literacy is 71.40 % in average (ORGCC, 2011). An increase in literacy rate creates different types of job opportunities and increases the work participation rate.

2.4.7 INDUSTRY

Majority of the large scale industries of the district, viz., jute mills, textile industries, engineering industries, etc. were set up during British period. At present, total number of industrial area in the

district is 7 and registered industrial units of the district are 6876, generating 416545 employments in ‘large and medium industries’ (Ministry of MSME [MMSME], 2019).

Among the small-scale, though well-known industries, surgical instrument manufacturing house at Baruipur, Moa trade of Joynagar, wooden puppet industry of Diamond Harbour, boat manufacturing units at Kakdwip (MMSME, 2019), etc. are worth mentioning. The prominent heavy industries of this district are Bhartia Steel Ltd., ACC Ltd., IFB Agro Industries Ltd., Dabur India Ltd., Bharat Margarine Ltd., Oscar Equipments Pvt. Ltd., etc. (Industry, n.d.) which generates considerable skilled and unskilled employment. Fish processing and drying are significant coastal livelihood as well as a profitable business option.

2.4.8 OCCUPATION

The inhabitants of this district are dependent mainly on agriculture and fishery. According to the Census Report of 2011, 11.99 % of the total population of the district is working as cultivators in agricultural land and 27.21% of the total population work as agricultural labourers (ORGCC, 2011). Approximately 8.13 % of people are working in household industries, and the largest percentage i.e. 52.68 % percentage people are engaged in different categories of occupation (ORGCC, 2011) viz., collecting honey from forest, fishing, boat-making, incense stick making, etc.

2.4.9 ECONOMY

The 24 Parganas (South) is a densely populated districts of West Bengal. While it shares district boundaries to the most populated metro Kolkata of the country, it also includes a vast expanse of deltaic Bengal in the form of the Sunderbans. At large, the economy of this district is based on its most precious natural resource which is agriculture. Fertile Gangetic plain is used for the cultivation of paddy, vegetables which are regular supplied to the main city nearby. Horticulture is another strong economic generator for the district. Followed by this shrimp culture in the estuarine parts of Indian Sunderbans is a livelihood option for the inhabitants. Good export quality harvest of shrimps is emerging as an economically viable alternative for marginal people living in the Sunderbans. Estuarine, inland, and capture fisheries are also important economic insurance of the people living in the sub-divisions like Canning, Diamond Harbour, and Kakdwip (D&PD, 2009). Non-timber forest products also sustain a portion of the forest user group living in the islands of Sunderbans. The district also consists of a special economic zone (SEZ) at Falta and a chain of small to heavy industries along the river Ganges. Small scale industries and cottage industries contribute to minor roles in the overall economy of the district.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter describes an overview of the district of 24 Parganas (South). Its administration, geography, history, economy, religion, etc. have been described in nutshell. It is kept in mind to provide glimpses of the district with significant information in a concise form. The presence of Sunderbans at the southernmost position of the district greatly influences its geographical, economical, occupational, and cultural profiles. The socio-cultural scenario of the district also plays a crucial role in the regular livelihoods of common people.

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Chapter 3

Public Library: The Concept, Genesis, and Development

3.1 PUBLIC LIBRARY: DEFINITION AND CONCEPT

Before going to the concept of 'Public Library' (PL), the first thing that comes into mind is 'what is a library?' The definition of 'library', in the majority of the definitional information sources, is given as the 'storehouse of books' or 'a collection of books'. It was in the 16th century when the definition of library incorporates the concepts of collection, storage, and reading. With time, libraries prosper and spread overdue to the combination of some social, political, and economic need arising in the society. Despite the prevalence of the oral tradition of communication, writing gained slow popularity, thus the importance of libraries was felt with time. At that period, most of the collections were private. The history of the PL to take root and grow was marked when Captain Robert Keayne of Boston Kayne, in his will, donated all his books to begin a collection for local people. Thus the first PL was set up which served the people for almost a century.

The IFLA/ UNESCO PL Manifesto (1994) defined PL as "... the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups."

PLs are meant for 'people', that's why it is said that PL is 'People's University'. It is responsible for providing information and knowledge to all the sections of the society irrespective of age, race, sex, caste, religion, nationality, language, or social status. The users belonging to all age groups can find their appropriate reading materials in a PL. According to Manifesto, a PL should incorporate suitable media and modern technologies, without forgetting the traditional knowledge and information resources of the locality. Thus, a PL must reflect, through its variety of collections, current trends as well as the evolution of society. The Manifesto also declares that the PL can be believed as a disseminating centre for education, information, and culture, as well

as an indispensable factor of fostering peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defined the term PL as "a nonprofit library maintained for public use and usually supported in whole or in part by local taxation" (Public Library, 2019).

The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus defined a PL as "a building where people can read or borrow books without having to pay" (Public Library, 2019). In Collins English Dictionary, PL is defined as "a library that is open to the public" (Public Library, 2019).

Coming nearer to home, in 1948, Dr. S.R. Ranganathan defined PL as "an institution maintained for and by the community primarily for the social purpose of providing an easy opportunity for self-education throughout life of every person and community".

The Advisory Committee for Libraries of India, 1957 (Verma & Singh, 2010) defined a PL as "a library

- Which is financed for the most part out of public funds;
- Which charges no fees from the readers and yet is open for full use by the public without distinction of caste, creed and sex;
- Which is intended as an auxiliary educational institution providing a means of self-education which is endless; and
- Which houses learning materials giving reliable information freely and without partiality or prejudice on as wide a variety of subjects as will satisfy the interests of the readers".

By analyzing these definitions, it is evident that the PL is a 'social institution' and should render its services to the users free of cost without any kind of distinction made by society. For this, the

PL should have sufficient financial support which must come from the end of the government. This, in turn, emphasized the need for legislation of PLs. Without legislative support, the dream of PL to become a "social institution operating in a dynamic environment of aspirations, expectations, and ideologies" will exist under the quoted texts only.

3.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC LIBRARY

When talking about the fundamental aims and objectives, the IFLA/UNESCO PL Guidelines for Development (2001) clearly stated the primary purposes of the PL are "to provide resources and services in a variety of media to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and personal development including recreation and leisure. They have an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by giving the individual access to a wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas, and opinions".

IFLA/ UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1949 (revised in 1972, 1994, and 2001 by IFLA) briefly pointed out the major aims and objectives of a PL as follows:

Education – "Supporting both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education at all levels". The PL should promote and provide every possible means to an individual or a group, which helps to get an education at every stage and to bridge up the gap between the individual and recorded knowledge. The PL should also act as an educational agency to encourage formal education, as well as self-education essential to develop skills required to cope with this changing nature of society.

Information – "The public library is the local centre of information making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users". Information is an essential component for the development of individuals and society. A user may be an individual or may come into group, all should have precise and in-depth information required to them, at the quickest possible time.

Personal Development: "Providing opportunities for personal creative development". To ignite the urge for personal creativity, people need free access to information and knowledge through different media. The PL is the only place where people get opened in front of the world of imaginary literary works, including in the native language which, otherwise cannot be achieved individually. This is one of the vital objectives of a PL.

Children and young people: "Creating and strengthening of reading habits in children from an early age". The PL is dedicated to providing access to information to users belonging to all age groups. Especially children and young people should be given more importance in this regard. Because fostering reading habits among children at an early age helps in developing their better perspective of life around which, in turn, contributes to the society itself.

Cultural development: The PL should support all the activities which are necessary to promote cultural and aesthetic development in the community. This can be accomplished by organizing different cultural programmes either individually or in collaboration with other local and regional organizations. Especially the PL in a locality should reflect the true colour of every community living in that locality.

Leisure: one of the major objectives of the PL is that the reading materials provided to the users should contain some amount of recreational and relaxing materials also, in parallel to serious

readings. This change in reading gives rise to relaxation and recreational pleasure which is crucial for the physical and psychological developments of the community.

The social role: In a community, the PL plays the role of 'the drawing room'. This is the place where people experience informal meetings with other members of the community. Thus, "using the PL can be a positive social experience".

American Library Association (ALA) describes the objectives of the public library as follows:

"To assist people to contribute to the growth of knowledge, make such use of knowledge as will promote personal and social well-being, develop their creative and spiritual capabilities, be more capable in their daily occupation, discharge political and social obligation, become better members of home and community, keep pace with progress in all fields of knowledge, educate themselves continually". (American Library Association [ALA], 2010)

The 'Father of Indian Library Science', Dr. S.R. Ranganathan said that the PL is a 'social institution'. According to him, the following are the key objectives of the PL system (Nair, 1996):

- It should help the life-long self-education of one and all;
- It should furnish up-to-date facts and information on all subjects to one and all;
- It should distribute, in an unbiased and balanced way, all shades of recorded views and thoughts to one and all, as a help in the discharge of their political functions in respect of local, national, and international affairs;

- It should contribute to productivity-drive by informing top managements of the latest trends in diverse enterprises, by ploughing back into the minds of researchers, designers, and technologists, every piece of relevant new thought, promptly and pin-pointedly;
- It should provide to one and all a harmless and elevating use of leisure;
- It should preserve the literary remains of humanity for posterity, as vehicles of culture and as source materials for antiquarian research; and
- It should work for the continued social well-being as the agency in charge of all socialized recorded thought.

3.3 FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC LIBRARY

According to IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1994), the key missions of the PL should "relate to information, literacy, education, and culture" from the core of the services. The Manifesto describes the key missions as:

1. "Creating and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age;
2. Supporting both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education at all levels;
3. Providing opportunities for personal creative development;
4. Stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people;

5. Promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievement, and innovations;
6. Providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts;
7. Fostering intercultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity;
8. Ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information;
9. Supporting the oral tradition;
10. Providing adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interest groups;
11. Facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills;
12. Supporting and participating in literacy activities and programmes for all age groups, and initiating such activities if necessary."

In 1959, the Committee on 'The Structure of the Public Library Services in England and Wales' (Chairman, Sir Sydney Roberts) stated that "the essential function of a public library is to supply to any reader, or group of readers, the books and related materials for which they may ask. This provision should take precedence over all ancillary services and should, of course, include a reference library where the reader may consult not only the standard encyclopaedias, bibliographies and other works of reference, but specialized books and journals relating to his industry or profession or subject of research. It is the function of a public library not only to satisfy, but to promote, the desire for books and reading habits. Consequently the provision of a children's library with adequate stocks and expert guidance in the choice of books should be

regarded as an integral part of the library service." (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions [IFLA], 2001)

From the above-mentioned key missions of the PL, following essential functions can be enumerated:

- PL should act as a positive agency to bring changes in the society;
- It should develop reading habits among children as well as among young readers from an early stage;
- It should develop collection and provide services to the users without any ideological, political, religious or commercial censorship;
- Its services should be available freely to all, including people belonging to linguistic or religious minorities, people with disabilities, and people living far away from the library building;
- It should provide ample opportunities for creative, imaginary, and personal developments of the users;
- Its collection and services should reflect the cultural richness of a community and it should promote awareness regarding cultural diversity;
- It should strongly encourage oral tradition for its continuation and development;
- It should provide information which are appropriate and essential for the community members, and should provide community information services;

- The PL should act as an active agency for collection, preservation, promotion and propagation of local cultural tradition and rich cultural heritage, which exists in all possible diversified forms;
- It should play a key role in supporting crucial activities like life-long education and adult education in the community. It should also take initiative in starting literacy programme, wherever it is necessary.

3.4 TRADITIONAL AND CHANGING ROLES OF PUBLIC LIBRARY IN DIFFERENT SPHERES OF THE SOCIETY

3.4.1 ON SOCIETY

The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary and Thesaurus defined 'society' as "a large group of people who live together in an organized way, making decisions about how to do things and sharing the work that needs to be done. All the people in a country, or in several similar countries, can be referred to as a society" (Society, 2019). Society is a place where people live together by forming small communities or groups which belong to different age, professions, mind, academics, and so on. The members of these communities always try to systematize the literary and intellectual output in an organized way. This organized knowledge and information can be used by the community members when need arises, as well as can be disseminated and propagated to other communities and successive generations. These may satisfy their academic needs, professional needs, cultural needs, or any kind of special needs. When a community

belongs to a stable condition in respect of political, economic, and social prosperity and tranquility, another need arises, which is called 'leisure' or 'recreational need'. Traditionally a PL meets all such needs of society.

The 'IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Guidelines for Development' (2001) stated that "The public library is the local centre of information making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users". Over time, the new century has settled down which marked the beginning of the information age. This changed the concept and shape of the information demand of the society, and a great diversification of knowledge occurred due to these changes. In PL, all can have information free of cost. In most of the developed countries, the society is becoming institution-dependent and further improvements in the socio-economic conditions of that particular society depend largely on those institutions. The PL as an indispensable 'social institution' becomes the witness of the changes. Library professionals have positively changed their working efficiencies and capabilities towards meeting the changing necessities and demands of society. PLs encourage and allow development and extension of ideas, help in their active generation, not their passive absorption. The inclusion of ICT in every corner of society enhances the role of Information throughout human life (Dutta, 2014). In such conditions, the PL plays an important role in the political, economic, and social development of society.

3.4.2 ON CULTURE AND RECREATION

The PL plays an immensely important role in the preservation and propagation of the cultural heritage of the society by large. It is the only place where persons belonging to different socio-economic conditions, having different backgrounds, residing in distant geographical areas and

different demographic constituencies meet and exchange their views. Nowadays, when PLs are standing in front of the question of existence, cultural exchanges and activities are effective ways to attract people towards the library. It is an important role of the PL to preserve and propagate the collective and memory and experience of a community as a whole, which the library primarily serves (Chakrabarti, 2016). The PL becomes a cultural hub not only for the community people, but it can also be the same for other cultural associations and organizations of the society. PLs should have ample space within the library premises where cultural activities can be organized and people can take part to express their cultural potentials, which is a powerful means of recreation too. Lectures, talks, bookfair, cultural exhibitions, rally etc. can be arranged to involve the local people. It is an indispensable responsibility of the PL to promote and preserve the cultural heritage of the local area and local people. Any information regarding local culture in any form is collected and arranged in the library and a display of the same is necessary. Thus, a PL becomes the centre for LHC. A nation is developed by its cultural achievements and development of the PL system of a country is 'conditioned by a popular urge for social, economic and intellectual improvements' (Ghosh, 2005). Not only promoting and exchanging cultural views, preservation and restoration of cultural heritage for coming generations of the community, is a crucial role of the PL. It is also stated that "the digital divide, the most important challenge faced by the PLs, can be met by the libraries mainly through the cultural repositories. So, the preservation of the collective memory and experiences of the people it serves is a very important function of the PL" (Chakrabarti, 2016). Regarding the possibility of a PL becoming a centre for LHC, it can also be mentioned that "this cultural storage may consist of publications, archival records, sound and audio-visual materials, photographs, artworks, pictures, paintings, etc. These

ought to support scholarly and cultural activities of the library, and will be a cultural hub of the nation" (Chakrabarti, 2016).

3.4.3 ON EDUCATION

Education is one of the basic rights of every human being. Education is crucial for personal development and higher levels of education are the essential pre-requisites for the economic sustainability of a person's personal life (Killacky, 1983). Proper education brings a sense of flexibility and diversity in one's personal view of the world. Being a people's university, a PL may play a vital role in bringing the light of education to the life of the common masses. They play an important role in complementing the formal education system regarding adult education. Adult education is often viewed as 'lifelong learning' or 'continuing education', meaning acquiring knowledge throughout one's life for personal or professional developments. People who do not get opportunities to get a formal education from schools, colleges, or universities, etc. may satisfy their knowledge thirst through adult or continuing education (Stone, 1953). PLs have much scope to support such people who participate in continuing education by providing appropriate resources. Even illiterate people can be served through different special resources viz., educational films, audio-visual materials, etc., and such other various mass communications means which in turn can make them literate (Chakrabarti, 2016). Adult education can be imparted through formal or non-formal methods. Informal adult education can be largely supported by PLs in the community for the personal development of an individual. Where there are opportunities for formal continuing educations, much help can be obtained from PLs of nearby localities. The continuing education of an adult person is often accompanied by self-education which helps is

harmonious personality development and one's societal development (Zemaitaityte, 2016). It is a big challenge for society to provide appropriate reading resources to the neo-literates. Here PL plays an important role to support continuous learning. Not only print resources, but the PL can also provide a wide range of digital resources to its users in accordance with their dynamic information needs. Digital information resources also include interactive resources which can be very much helpful for neo-literates (Chakrabarti, 1993). Literate people should also be provided with suitable reading resources so that they can continue learning. Otherwise, the majority of the adult literates get themselves discontinued from the stream of gathering knowledge and improving their livelihoods. That is why in global perspectives PLs are often regarded as the evolving 'third space' in human life after home as the 'first space' and trusted workplace as the 'second space' (Dutta, 2014).

3.5 HISTORY OF PUBLIC LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA: A BRIEF ACCOUNT

3.5.1 ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL PERIOD (BEFORE 1200 A.D. – 1757 A.D.)

With the emergence of light of education in human civilization, the concept of libraries emerged as well. People started educating themselves; scholarly publications needed to be kept and preserved in a secure place gave birth to the library. In ancient India, the first generation libraries were set up mainly by Kings, Emperors, eminent scholars, major capitalists, etc. These libraries were a kind of 'private' in nature and their use was restricted. With the spread of the light of education, significant centres for learning were established, among which Nalanda, Vikramshila,

Taxila, Odontapuri, Sompuri, Vallabhi, etc. made their separate identity. All of these universities had their library which was outstanding in their set up as well as their resource collection were brilliant. Among these, Nalanda reached an unparalleled height in education and learning. It has a huge library housed in three multistoried buildings and was famous for its brilliant collection of manuscripts. This library was established by King Devapala. Vikramshila and Taxila were famous for their precious collection of manuscripts on tantras (Gul & Khan, 2008). These academic libraries were meant to be used mainly by the students and teachers and eminent scholars of the centre of learning. Anyone who took interest in education and learning was able to use the resources of these libraries. Nalanda university library was set on fire by Bakhtiar Khilji in 1200 AD and was ruined completely. At that time, Buddhists, Jains, and Hindus separate took a significant part in the spread and cultivation of education and learning. They set up several institutions from religious points of view and most of them possessed big libraries.

During the medieval period, the development of libraries got further impetus at the time of the Mughals. Most of the Mughal emperors were great patrons of education, learning, art and culture which marked the 'Golden period' of Indian history. Mughal emperor Babur established the Mughal Imperial library in 1526 which was the first of its kind. It mainly housed rare manuscripts and books, some inherited and some collected from different parts of the kingdom. After Babur, his son Humayun developed the library and set up another library at Agra Fort. Akbar, the son of Humayun, was the greatest Mughal emperor of all times. He improved the management of this ancestral library, developed it by adding many manuscripts and works of calligraphy, appointed Sheik Faizi as the manager of the library, and established a separate library for women at Fatehpur Sikri (Dutta, 1970). After Akbar, his son Jahangir also managed the library carefully by appointing staffs. It was during the reign of the next emperor Aurangzeb

when education, literacy, and the development of libraries faced strong opposition. During the Mughal period, some affluent and scholar Muslims and Hindus also established libraries at their interest in manuscripts, religion and history. All of these libraries were meant for personal use.

Among the native rulers of medieval India, Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab, Maharaja of Tanjaur, and Maharaja Sawai Man Singh of Jaipur were great patrons of education and learning. They took great initiatives to establish and promote libraries within their respective ruling territories. One of such significant efforts was the 'Saraswati Mahal Library' which was established in the 17th Century A.D. by the Maharaja of Tanjaur (Kaula, 1977).

3.5.2 BRITISH PERIOD (1757 – 1947)

Libraries in ancient and medieval periods had restricted admission and meant mainly for personal use. It was time when the British came to India in the 1760s, the concept of 'PL' slowly started making its sense and the PL movement emerged at the budding stage. Some of the British traders were very much interested in education and learning of Oriental Culture. From 1690 onwards, Calcutta started becoming a centre of settlements by European and British traders. The Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge established the first Circulating Library of the country in Calcutta in 1709 (Nema, 2010). Afterwards Circulating and Subscription Libraries started functioning in Madras and Bombay. These libraries were mostly funded by the European residents of that particular town. A subscription amount was required to get membership in these libraries; so, naturally, the libraries were used by people of affluent societies.

Out of the interests and inquisitiveness of British and Europeans towards Indian culture, the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal was established in Calcutta in 1784 and Bombay Royal Asiatic Society in 1903 in Bombay. In the meantime, the universities started coming into existence in India. The University of Calcutta was established in 1857, the University of Bombay in 1879, and the University of Madras in 1907. All these universities had large well-resourced libraries. The library of the University of Calcutta opened in 1873 to the students, scholars and teachers of the university. These libraries spread the light of education in society, thus enlightened the common people to get interested in more reading. In May 1808 the Government of Bombay enacted the 'Delivery and Registration of Publications Act'. It was a significant step towards the establishment of PLs in the country in the true sense. The Calcutta Library Society was established in 1818 and started functioning as a full-fledged library in 1819. Due to the initiatives of some enlightened British officials and educationists of Calcutta, the Calcutta PL was established in 1835 which was later developed into the National Library of India in 1948 (Nair, 2004). In Madras Presidency, a small library was set up as a part of the Madras Museum in 1860 by Jesse Mitchell. Later it was developed as an independent PL in 1890 and named 'Connemara PL', which can be claimed as the earliest PL of the country in the true sense (Kaula, 1977). After independence, this library became the State Central Library of Tamil Nadu. Between 1829 and 1891, several libraries were set up in various parts of the country viz., Travancore, Kolhapur, Cochin, Adyar, Gaya, Bhavnagar, Jammu and Kashmir, and Kathiawar and so on.

In India, the PL movement said to have started in 1906 by Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad III of erstwhile Baroda State. He was the first Indian ruler to introduce free and compulsory elementary education in 1907, within his kingdom (Wani, 2008). He realized the importance of the library in education as well as to enlighten the lives of common people. He issued an order to

his ministry to set up circulating libraries with financial assistance from the State. During his visit to the USA in 1906, he was overwhelmed by the library services of the country and minutely observed the role of libraries on community development. He invited William Alanson Borden, librarian of Young Men's Institute, Connecticut, to Baroda to organize library services in the country. Accepting his invitation Borden came to Baroda in 1910 and appointed as the Director of State Libraries. He surveyed the existing library system and recommended the best services and making library services free in Baroda. The Library Department was created by the Maharaja in 1911 to organize libraries and to set up an efficient library network consisting of state central libraries, divisional libraries town libraries and village libraries into one chain system (Nema, 2010). Thus W.A. Borden played a crucial role in the establishment, organization, and management of the PL system in India.

The Calcutta Public Library which was established in 1835 in Calcutta and became operational and opened to the public in 1836. This library was shifted to Metcalf Hall in 1844. The war of independence in 1857 made Europeans withdraw financial support and cooperation of all sorts from this library in 1899 (Rao, 1961). As a result, the library got devastated. The then Viceroy and Governor-General Lord Curzon visited the library personally in 1899 and found the library in a standstill condition. He took the initiative to amalgamate the library with the Official Imperial Library of the East India Company. Thus, the new Imperial library was born by the enactment of the Imperial Library Act, 1902 and declared open to the public in January 1903 in the Metcalf Hall (Rao, 1961). After independence, this library was converted into the National Library of Indian and placed at Belvedere Palace in Calcutta.

3.5.3 POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD (1947 ONWARDS) AND LIBRARY LEGISLATION IN THE COUNTRY

PL development was accelerated after independence when Central and State governments considered libraries as an integral part of education and literacy. Thus PL found its place in the Planning Commission of the country and consequently in Five-Year Plans from 1951 under the heading of 'Improvement of Library Services'. Central and State governments started formulating library policies towards making PL services free to all and funding PLs by the public. That was the first step towards library legislation (Ray, 2005). The Government found it inevitable to bring all the PLs to "be established under a clear mandate of law". The IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, 1994 clearly stated that "The public library shall in principle be free of charge. The public library is the responsibility of local and national authorities. It must be supported by specific legislation and financed by national and local government. It has to be an essential component of any long-term strategy for culture, information provision, literacy and education". The enactment of the Madras Public Libraries Act in 1948 was a milestone as it was the first library legislation in the country; Dr. S.R. Ranganathan played a significant role in this regard (Nair, 1996). The establishment of Delhi Public Library in 1951 was another significant event. This library was established under UNESCO Public Library Demonstration Pilot Project to adopt the policies laid down in the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto and to function as a model PL for the country. Delivery of Books Act (DB Act) was passed in 1954 which stated that each publisher of the country had to deposit one copy of its publication to each of the four libraries, which were the National Library in Calcutta, the Asiatic Society Library of Bombay, the Connemara Public Library of Madras, and Delhi Public Library.

After the first library legislation in Madras in 1948, other states became encouraged to come forward towards bringing their library services under the legislation. These successive legislations included Andhra Pradesh Public Libraries Act 1960, Karnataka Public Libraries Act 1965, Maharashtra Public Libraries Act 1967, West Bengal Public Libraries Act 1979, Haryana Public Libraries Act 1989, Kerala Public Libraries Act 1989, Mizoram Public Libraries Act 1993, Goa Public Libraries Act 1993, Gujrat Public Libraries Act 2001, Orissa Public Libraries Act 2001, Uttaranchal Public Libraries Act 2005, Uttar Pradesh Public Libraries Act 2005, Rajasthan Public Libraries Act 2006, Bihar Public Libraries PL Act 2007, Pondicherry Public Libraries Act 2007/2008, Chattisgarh Public Libraries Act 2008, and Arunachal Public Libraries Act 2009.

3.6 RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY LIBRARY FOUNDATION (RRRLF)

1972 was the landmark year in the history of the library movement towards a constructive future. It was the Silver Jubilee year of India's independence from the British administration. It was the 'International Book Year' promoting reading habit among common people in general through the catch line "Books for All". Also, the year was the bicentennial birth anniversary of Raja Rammohun Roy, and in this significant year the Central Government established Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) at Kolkata as a part of the bicentenary birth celebration of this great social reformer.

RRRLF is an autonomous organization established and fully funded by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. It is registered under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961. It acts as the central agency for the development and support of the PL system as well as to

promote library movement throughout the country. The organization has its headquarters at Kolkata, with zonal offices at New Delhi (Northern zonal headquarters), Chennai (Southern zonal headquarters) and Mumbai (Western zonal headquarters). The zonal offices monitor and control the activities of the organization in respective regions, especially in rural areas.

The major objectives of RRRLF are to promote the PL movement in India by providing financial and technical assistance to libraries as well as to such organizations which are engaged in promoting library development throughout the country (Sharma, 2016). RRRLF promotes research in the field of library development and also publishes literature on the same. Another significant objective is to provide assistance and advice to the Government in formulating policies, drafts, etc. regarding PL system development and all concerned matters as well to help propagate the PL legislation in the country.

RRRLF extends the hands of assistance to PLs through matching and non-matching schemes of activities. Assistance through matching scheme indicates sharing of resources on a matching basis with States/ Union Territory Administrations. The scheme is effective as developed states 50:50, developing and lagging states 60:40; and North-Eastern states 90:10. The major objectives of the matching scheme are to assist PLs (Matching scheme, n.d.):

- To build up well-developed storage of books and other reading materials
- To build up Rural Book Deposit Centre and develop Mobile Library services
- To arrange for seminars, workshops, training programmes, library awareness programmes, book exhibition, etc.
- To purchase library furniture, storage materials, and essential items for users

- To increase the accommodation
- To modernize library services
- To engage Library and Information Science graduates and post-graduates as trainees

Under the non-matching scheme, RRRLF provides full assistance to PLs from the foundation's resources. The extents of the non-matching scheme are as follows (Non-matching scheme, n.d.):

- To build up adequate storage through central selection of books
- To assist NGOs who assist PLs (assistance is provided on a 75:25 basis where 75 % is Foundation's contribution)
- To develop RRRLF Knowledge Corner in every PL
- To celebrating 50/100/125/150 years of establishment of PLs
- To assist the Children's library or develop separate sections for children (RRRLF Children Corner) within the PL
- To collect and assemble library statistics through official and non-official agencies
- To assist in organizing national-level seminars, workshops, and training programmes
- To assist centrally-sponsored libraries
- To assist the digitization of books and other significant reading materials

Besides the matching and non-matching schemes of activities, RRRLF took up the Digital Library Initiative which includes digitization of rare books, journals, manuscripts, pre-independence newspapers and such other rare and invaluable copyright-free resources which are

housed in the PLs in the country. Thus National Digital Repository will be developed which will, in turn, be made available to common people. RRRLF also undertakes several promotional activities, encourage research-oriented activities, gives awards for outstanding performance, etc. in the field of Library Services. New guidelines for the development of the PL system have been formulated by the Foundation from time to time. The Foundation plays a significant role in preparing National Policy on Library and Information System.

3.7 HISTORY OF PUBLIC LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN WEST BENGAL

The establishment of early libraries in undivided Bengal was the initiative of mainly Christian missionaries for religious purposes. In 1698, missionaries established 'Christian Gyan Bistarini Sabha' which has a library rich in religious books. But it was meant for internal use only, not for the public. Reverend James Long established some libraries in Kolkata and adjacent areas for the spread of Christian ideology and education. Libraries were established under the patronage of other religions also. Lord Warren Hastings established Calcutta Madrasa in 1781. The library of the Madrasa was rich with books and manuscripts in Arabic and Persian languages. The Library of Mahabodhi Society was established in 1891, having a valuable collection of Buddhist religious literature.

With the settlement of British people in Calcutta and other parts of Bengal, the concept of 'Circulating Library' started gaining popularity. It was known from the 'Bengal Gazette' (first ever newspaper of undivided Bengal) of James Augustus Hicky or 'Hicky's Gazette' (started publishing from 1780) that, an Englishman John Andrews started a circulating library in the Old Fort in 1780 (Roychaudhury, 1988). The library was very much popular among the British

citizens residing in Bengal and due to this reason the library was shifted from Old Court to Calcutta in 1782. It is known from the 'Calcutta Gazette' that, another two circulating libraries were established in Calcutta during the 1780s. Later, in 1787, Cock, Maxwell and Co. took over these two libraries and established a large circulating library named 'Calcutta Circulating Library' which was continued till 1792. With time, Calcutta was flooded by the establishment of several circulating libraries which gained popularity mainly because of British residents (Kumar, 2011).

The early library movement was initiated with the settlement of British citizens and the spread of English education system in undivided Bengal. In 1780, The Asiatic Society was established by the eminent Indologist Sir William Jones. The Society library has a rich collection of reading materials on Indology and other Asiatic subjects. Eminent Indologist Sri Rajendralal Mitra was the Librarian of the Society. This library remained open for Indian people from 1830 onwards. Fort William College was established in 1800 to train British Officers in Indian languages. This library had a rich collection of books and manuscripts on Indology. In the early nineteenth century, several general educational institutions and special institutions were established, viz., Hindu College (now Presidency University), Serampore College, Oriental Seminary, General Assembly (now Scottish Church College), Calcutta Medical College, Bengal Engineering College, St. Xavier's College and many more, all of them had libraries of their own.

The first-ever collective initiatives towards developing a functional 'public' library in the true sense were the steps towards the establishment of Calcutta Public Library in 1935. In this year, the Calcutta Sheriff invited the residents of the city to felicitate the then Governor-General Sir Charles Metcalfe on account of the enactment of new Press Law. At that programme, the establishment of 'Metcalfe Hall' was sanctioned and it was decided that the building will be dedicated to a 'Public Library'. On 31st August 1935, a public gathering was organized in

Calcutta which was presided over by Sir John Peter Grant towards taking a constructive decision for establishing a PL in Calcutta. Thus 'Calcutta Public Library' came into existence and it was opened for the public on and from 21st March 1936. In 1944, the library was shifted from Fort William to Metcalfe Hall. W.H. Stacy was appointed the first librarian of Calcutta Public Library, who was succeeded by Sri Peary Chand Mitra (Nair, 2004).

The Calcutta Public Library ran successfully over two decades as joint endeavours of Indian and European nations. After the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the scenario started changing slowly. The Europeans started boycotting Indian joint ventures. As a result, the Calcutta Public Library started losing its popularity and also started suffering from acute financial problems. One of the library officers of the then government, A. Mackenzie, proposed some correctional measures to revive the ill condition. He proposed –

"1. The Library and all its appurtenances to be made over to the Municipality of Calcutta, to be by it maintained in perpetuity as a free library for the town and suburbs, to which all respectable citizens shall be admitted for reading and study on the premises; all invested funds so transferred to be subject to any trusts changes now existing.

2. This Free Library to be supplemented by a 'Lending Department' open only to subscribers and the holders of shares in the old (present) Public Library. The management of the Library in all departments to be vested in a council composed of as follows:

- i. Six nominees of the Municipality;
- ii. Four elected representatives of the proprietors of the old (present) Library;
- iii. Two nominees of the Bengal Government;

The Free Library to be opened from 6 A.M. to 10 P.M. daily; the cost of books, papers and periodicals, establishment, and lighting to be borne by Municipality;

v) The Lending Department to be open between the hours of 10 A.M. and 5 P.M. on all weekdays; the cost of books etc., and establishment to be met from subscription, etc." (Nair, 2004)

These suggestions were accepted by the Library Council and the responsibility of the Library was transferred to Municipality. This, in turn, became the fatal point of destruction of Calcutta Public Library. The Library emerged into severe financial crisis and became a mere repository of books".

In 1901, Lord Curzon became the Governor-General of India. He was a learned person and had a keen interest in the development of PLs. He noticed that two libraries in Calcutta were not in working conditions, one was the Imperial Library which was restricted to be used only by Government officials, and another was the Calcutta Public Library. He inspected both the libraries and decided to buy the later one. In 1902, the Imperial Library Act was passed and the Calcutta Public Library was merged with the Imperial Library. In 1903, The Imperial Library, in its final shape, was shifted to Metcalf Hall and finally opened to the public. John Macfarlane was appointed as the first Librarian of Imperial Library. In 1923, the library was shifted to the Government building at Esplanade East. Khan Bahadur K.M. Asadullah was the last librarian of Imperial Library till 1947 (Wani, 2008). After independence, in 1953, the first Education Minister of India, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad declared the Imperial Library as the National Library of India and the library was opened to the common people of the country.

Right after independence, the PL development in Bengal had no definite direction. The libraries run by the local community were taken over by the Government and given the 'Sponsored' status. The matters related to the PL were under the direct control of the Education Department of the Government of West Bengal. From 1947-1977, the Directorate of Education continued to publish 'Report on Public Instruction in West Bengal' every year. In 1961, the Education Department published a circular named 'Development of Library Services in West Bengal' in which the courses of action taken towards constructive development and progress of the PL system in the state were discussed in detail. It was known from the circular that, an ad-hoc grant of Rs. 1, 06,100 was sanctioned for distribution to the existing libraries for the public for improving their book-holdings and equipment. Simultaneously, grants were also sanctioned for the establishment of reading-rooms and library centres attached or adjacent to the Adult Education Centres for the specific purpose of providing facilities for post-literacy education to the neo-literates' (Roy Chaudhury, 1988). During this long 30 years, 762 Government-sponsored and Government libraries were set up throughout West Bengal. But most of the libraries were in disastrous situations, such as tremendous financial crisis, staff shortage, poor management, lack of effective coordination, pitiable salary structures, and so on. The situation continued till West Bengal Public Libraries Act came into force in 1979.

3.7.1 WEST BENGAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES ACT, 1979

It was a long way before West Bengal felt the need for legislation of PL system in the state. During the rule of the Left Front Government, The West Bengal Public Libraries Act was passed in the state legislature on 12th September 1979. After the enactment of the Act in 1979, it was

amended further in 1982, 1985, 1999, 1994, 1998, and 2003. The objectives of the Act are stated into its Preamble as "to provide for the establishment of public libraries in the state of West Bengal and to regulate, guide, control and supervise libraries as also to provide for a comprehensive rural and urban library and information service in the state of West Bengal" (Ray, 2005).

The Act made the provisions for

- Constituting a State Library Council with the Minister-in-charge of Library Services as the Chairman "for the purpose of advising the Government on the management of State Library Council, on matters relating to policies and programmes for the development and management of public libraries and public library system and on such other matter as may be referred to it".
- Determining the functions of a PL.
- Clarifying the matters related to the establishment of a Directorate of Library Services as well as appointment and functions of the Director of Library Services.
- Constituting a Local Library Authority in each district (except the areas which came under the jurisdiction of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council and Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad) "for the purpose of organizing and administering public libraries in the state" and clarified the constitution of the Authority.
- Role and functions of the District Library Officer as the ex-officio Member-Secretary of the Local Library Authority.

- Providing separate provisions for the constitution of Local Library Authorities in the areas came under the jurisdiction of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council and Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad.
- Clearly describing the power of a Local Library Authority
- Clarifying the nature, scope and functions of the Government-sponsored PLs as well as the finance and accounts of the same.

3.7.2 PUBLIC LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN 24 PARGANAS (SOUTH)

At present, the district of 24 Parganas (South) has 1 (one) District Library, 18 Sub-divisional/Town Libraries, 30 Primary Unit Libraries and 107 Rural Libraries (Department of Mass Education Extension and Library Services [DMEELS], 2018). The district has a long history of PL movement which started originally to store the patriotic literary works as well as arms and ammunitions during Swadeshi movements in Bengal. Today's PLs which crossed the century were most of the storehouses of such patriotic literature. Eminent revolutionaries such as Manabendra Nath Roy, Satkari Bandyopadhyay, Pandit Shibnath Shastri, Deven Mishra, Pandit Dwarakanath Vidyabhusan, Girishchandra Vidyaratna, folk poet Bijaylal Chattopadhyay, were the sons of the soil and played a pivotal role in establishing such libraries to spread patriotism among the common people of the district.

The first-ever PL of the district is 'Mudialy Library' at Garden Reach which was established in 1876 A.D. near the Bichali Ghat locality, primarily with the aim was to enlighten the local people through education and culture. Four persons, such as Sri Rasiklal Ghosh, Sri Harish

Chandra Pal, Sri Nagendranath Mitra and Sri Sharat Chandra Bandyopadhyay were the pioneers who established the library at the ancestral house of Sri Nagendranath Mitra. Later on, in 1889 A.D., another PL was established in the nearby Fatehpur area, namely 'Boy's Union Study' by an educated person of the locality Sri Manaranjan Bandyopadhyay. Due to the proximity of these two libraries, both of them started facing problems due to a very negligible number of users. The problem was solved by Sri Jatindranath Mitra alias Sadhu Bhaakinkar who proposed to merge these two libraries; as a result, these two libraries got amalgamated and the present structure of the Mudialy Library got into final shape. This library started to get financial assistance from the year 1981 by the Government of West Bengal. Before independence, the library movement in 24 Parganas (South) was spread over the major localities adjacent to Adiganga, such as Rajpur, Boral, Kotalia, Gobindapur, Baruipur, Dakshin Barasat, Joynagar-Majilpur, Kakdwip etc. From the very beginning of the Bengal renaissance, the library movement of the district of undivided 24 Parganas started to take its final shape.

From 1953 onwards the library movement in the district got accelerated when rural libraries became an integral part of Local Library Councils and included in the mainstream movement. Later on, when Left Front Government came into power in 1977, the library movement in all the districts of West Bengal got a new ray of hope. Through the enactment of the West Bengal PLs Act in 1979, a separate Department formed by the Government of West Bengal. Overall administration of PLs in each district was started to be supervised by the District Library Officers (DLOs). Through the enactment of the West Bengal Public Libraries Act, the Local Library Authority (LLA) in 24 Parganas (South) was created to look after the District Library which was established in 1956 at Vidyanagar under Moukhali Gram Panchayat and Bishnupur-2 Panchayat Samity. In 1988, the Department of Mass Education Extension and Library Services

was created to establish and sponsor new libraries, promote optimum use of library resources, as well as to spread the basic education among the common masses in every district including 24 Parganas (South) (DMEELS, 2018). The district branch of the Bengal Library Association also took a leading part in strengthening the library movement in the district. The association also played a significant role in accelerating community information services in the district of 24 Parganas (South). Noteworthy persons who played pivotal roles in spreading the library movement during the Left Front reign in the district were Sri Ratanmani Bhattacharya of Rajpur, Sri Hemen Majumder of Baruipur, Pandit Amar Krishna Chakraborty of Ramnagar, Sri Narottam Halder of Kakdwip, Sri Biren Mishra of Madarat, Sri Sudhir Banerjee of Joynagar-Majilpur, and some other leading personalities (Majumdar, 2008).

Enactment of the West Bengal Public Libraries Act in 1979 ushered in a new era in the PL movement in the district of 24 Parganas (South). Creation of posts viz., DLO and LLA proved to be beneficial for the development of the PL system in the district (Ray, 2005). At that time Bengal Library Association played a very crucial role in making PLs the heart centre of adult literacy. Gradually PLs in the district started to get accepted by the local people as their information centres.

PL development also got acceleration during the political reign of the United Front Government in West Bengal. Bholanath Brahmachari and Hansdhwaj Dhara were two leading personalities who worked tirelessly in favour of the PL movement in Sundarban. A large number of PLs got affiliation from the Left Front Government which also marked the development of PLs even in the interior villages of the district of 24 Parganas (South).

3.8 PRESENT SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN WEST BENGAL

In West Bengal, the entire library systems and services come under the purview of the Department of Mass Education Extension & Library Services. The Department executes the target programmes through its two Directorates viz., Directorate of Mass Education Extension and Directorate of Library Services. Before enactment of the West Bengal Public Libraries Act in 1979, all the library-related matters of the Government were controlled by the Social Education Branch under the Directorate of Public Instruction (DPI) of the erstwhile undivided Education Department of West Bengal. Later on, in 1980, the Social Education Branch got abolished and the Directorate of Library Services was established under the then undivided Education Department. Later on, in 1988, the Department of Mass Education Extension was formed which included the Adult and Social Education Directorate as well as the Directorate of Library Services. Thus, the Department of Mass Education Extension and Library Services became the administrative head for two functional wings or Directorates viz., Library Services and Mass Education Extension itself (Brief history of the Directorate of Library Services, n.d.).

At the time of enactment of the West Bengal Public Libraries Act in 1979, a total of 762 Government and Government-sponsored PLs were functioning in the entire state. After the Act was enacted in 1979, a total of 1710 PLs (Government and Government Sponsored) were established afresh and they started functioning under the Directorate of Library Services. Besides these libraries, seven libraries that were run by non-Government organizations were started to get financial aids from the Government through the Directorate of Library Services.

At present, the PL system of West Bengal is composed of 12 Government Libraries (1 State Level, 7 District Level and 4 Sub-divisional/Town Level), 7 Government-aided Libraries (1 at

Howrah, 4 at Kolkata, 1 at Nadia and 1 at 24 Parganas (South), and 2463 Government-sponsored (19 District Level, 232 Sub-divisional/Town Level and 2209 Rural/Primary Unit/Area Level) Libraries (DMEELS, n.d.). The entire library system comes under the direct control of the State Central Library which is the apex library of the state. At the district level, the PL system is arranged into a 3-tier system consisting of District Library at the first tier, Sub-divisional/Town Libraries at the second tier and Rural/Primary Unit/Area Libraries at the third or lowest tier. The administrative setup of the Department of Mass Education Extension & Library Services consists of the Minister-in-Charge of the Department at the apex. He is followed in the downward direction by the Principal Secretary, Commissioner, Joint Secretary(s), Deputy Secretary(s) and Assistant Secretary(s). The Assistant Secretary(s) is further followed by a number of departmental officials who are working under two different Directorates namely Directorate of Mass Education Extension and Directorate of Library Services. They are also arranged in administrative tiers from upward to downward directions. In each of the Directorates, Director is the highest administrative officer followed by Joint Director(s), Deputy Director(s), and Assistant Director(s) to assist him; at the district level, there are departmental officials including District Library Officers (DLOs) and other Government employees of the Department who are working at different districts of the state. Activities of the Directorate of Library Services can be categorized as regular activities and specialized activities.

Regular activities – The Directorate look after and control the following matters on regular basis:

- Libraries of the entire state and their activities are administered regularly
- Bibliographical control helps librarians to prepare constructive collection development policies

- Library services in the state are controlled through the creation of a relevant database
- Book fairs are regularly organized in the districts
- Career guidance centres are running in different libraries
- Non-government and non-sponsored libraries are given financial assistance
- Community Library and Information Centres (CLICs) are established in districts
- The matching Grant Scheme of the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) is implemented
- Financial Assistance is regularly given to libraries under the RIDF scheme
- A Certificate course in Library Science is conducted at regular intervals and library personnel at district levels are imparted in-service training.

Special Activities - There are some specialized activities which are as follows:

- The libraries which are under the control of the Directorate of Library Services became computerized and brought under network with the assistance of RRRLF.
- Rare books of PLs got digitized with the help of C-DAC, Kolkata and RRRLF.
- With the assistance of RRRLF, bibliographic data of all books available in PLs of the state got retro-converted.
- Community information services are rendered with the assistance of RRRLF.
- With the assistance of the National Mission for Manuscripts, the preservation of documents in PLs is going on.

- State Central Library and North Bengal State Library, both the libraries became modernized and computerized under the scheme of National Mission on Libraries.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter describes the concept of the PL, its diversified attributes, and its impact on various sectors of society. The gradual development of PL in India from ancient time to the present has been discussed concisely. Special emphasis has been given to the PL development and movement in West Bengal as well as in the district of 24 Parganas (South). Present administrative structure and different functions of the Department of Mass Education Extension and Library Services have also been described in short.

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Chapter 4

Local History

4.1 CONCEPT

'Local history' (LH) is the study of the cultural and social aspects of history in a geographically restricted area focusing on the local community. It is concerned with the history related to the life of local communities, but the geographical consideration should not be greater than the 'common provincial unit' (Goubert, 1971). Here the term 'community' refers to the people residing within the same geographical area, having the same language, similar livelihood and similar lifestyle demands. Sometimes people having different professions form different types of groups or communities despite living within the same geographical boundary. In general, people having similar kind of identities constitute groups or communities within themselves who generally do not cross the geographical boundaries of their own.

The term 'Local History' comprises of two different words viz., 'Local' and 'History'. An amalgamation of these two concepts gradually gave birth to this new multifaceted discipline. In general, LH is a subject of interest of the common people from earlier times, though elite historians did not consider it as a discipline of dignity. History is concerned with the past events of a nation, whereas LH not only indicates the past life of a nation but also the past life of local and/or regional communities. This is the basic reason for putting LH at the last order in the geographical categorization of History (Aktekin, 2010). The obvious curiosity of human nature about the unusual aspects of his past always made LH appealing to almost everyone. Despite full involvement in everyday chores, people always have a keen interest to get information regarding his root to satiate his inquisitiveness.

Before the beginning of the twentieth century, the elite historians' class, especially the American historians believed that LH works are somewhat 'dedicated amateurs' which present the lives of local communities in a distorted way (Phythian-Adams, 1991). At that time, some of these

criticisms were found partially true as many of the LH related writings exhibited a lack of proper research. Later on, with the rise of eminent personalities emerging from locally inhabited communities, particularly in the field of American politics, LH study and research gradually started establishing their significance in the geographical categorization of history.

4.2 DEFINITION

The Longman Dictionary defined 'Local History' as "the history of a particular area". Several attempts were made many times by various historians to define LH; A. Rogers (1977) defined LH as "The study of the past of some significant local unit, developing as a community, in its context and compared with such other units" (Goksu & Somen, 2019); in the same year, Stephens defined LH as the "study of the past of smaller communities such as a town, rural, or suburban area, or a city neighbourhood" (Aktekin, 2010). According to the former author, LH is not at all different from any other traditional branch of history, so he expressed "local history occupies that stratum in historical studies below the national level but above the level of individual". While defining LH, Pierre Goubert (1971) stated that "We shall call local history that which concerns a village or a few villages, a small or middle-sized town (a large harbour or a capital is beyond the local scope), or a geographical area not greater than the common provincial unit (such as an English county, an Italian contado, a German Land, a French bailiwick or pays)" (Goubert, 1971). Carol Kammen (1986), in her legendary book 'On Doing Local History' defined LH as "...a study of past events, or of people or groups, in a given geographic area – a study based on a wide variety of documentary evidence and placed in a comparative context that should be both regional and national" (Kammen, 2002). LH typically

represents the social and cultural aspects of communities restricted within a pre-defined geographical boundary which should be a smaller area like a town or a village or a collection of villages or towns having a much smaller area than a country. LH is often called 'radical history' since it described the history of the common, the mundane, and the bottom-lined. Elite historians consider LH as the 'history of bottom' while assuming the academic history at the top of the elitist 'history tree', thus defines the position of LH on the geographical categorization of history (Willis, 2016). Despite that, LH is a powerful instrument that combines several disciplines related to the traditions, culture, rituals, and economics of different local communities that make their identity.

In the USA, courses in LH have been incorporated into the curricula of academic history and social studies at virtually every level. The LH course materials describe the most popular and unusual approaches for the learning and documenting LH, viz., conducting walks through the neighbours, studying architectures, roads parks, travelling to heritage sites, conducting interviews with local elderly people, discussing with local communities by showing slides and historical photographs, and analysis of various local documents that can be available at local Government offices or in personal collections of local elderly persons (Lowe, 1977).

Dealing with LH in the early days was limited to illustrating important national events in a particular locality or local associations with nationally important people. LH is often documented by local historical societies formed to preserve a local building or other sites with historic value. Many works of LH are compiled by amateur historians working independently or archivists employed by various organizations. Many authors considered LH studies are more often performed by dedicated amateurs' i.e. local historians are often enthusiastic newcomers keen to work and publish the findings in their locality.

4.3 PROBLEMS WITH LOCAL HISTORY STUDY

Sometimes LH research is tagged with the term 'narrow study' by the formal history researchers. Local historians are often accused of expressing their ideas, views and opinions regarding the LH of a particular community or region that they represent as 'local history'. These problems are sometimes associated with the following concepts:

4.3.1 ANTIQUARIANISM

The term originated from the Latin word antiquaries meaning something that pertains to the ancient era. Encyclopaedia of Irish History and Culture stated that "the word antiquarianism meant the study of ancient cultures and civilizations specifically, and mainly referred to those of Greece and Rome" (Jamieson, 1971). This concept was made familiar among historians by the English archaeologist and antiquarian Sir Richard Colt Hoare. The term was prevalent till the late eighteenth century and its essence primarily lies in the experimental evidence of historic past, that's why Sir Hoare wrote "We speak from facts, not theory" while defending antiquarianism in the world of elite history.

Antiquarianism is 'the indiscriminate collection of facts for their own sake, without any sense of questions to be answered, or relationships to wider issues' (Jamieson, 1971). In the literature, it is agreed that antiquarianism can be a danger in LH studies and LH must not include antiquarianism without serious thought. To avoid antiquarianism, Lowe (1977) suggested that local themes should be chosen very carefully according to their importance. Jones (1981) argued that not all knowledge is worthwhile knowledge so in using LH the subject matter must be relevant to the whole course and the local material must be in itself worthwhile. Malcolm (1990)

said that effective LH teaching requires asking and trying to answer specific historical questions. She also emphasized that "the task of the local historian is to go further than just chronicling of events".

Although antiquarianism and history are very closely related, formal historians do not consider antiquarianism in a positive sense since the focus of the latter one is very narrow. In contrast, history focuses on the broader implications of historical events rather than gathering mere evidence related to the past. To a greater extent, antiquarianism related to archaeology since it is closely related to the study and collection of antique objects that may be an antique book, or a painting, or an artifact, or anything old and valuable.

4.3.2 PAROCHIALISM

The term 'Parochialism' was first used in 1971 by A. Jamieson in his book 'Practical History Teaching'. In the book, he considered "narrow inward-looking parochialism" is a common problem in LH study and research. Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines 'parochialism' as "the fact of only being interested in small issues that happen in your local area and not being interested in more important things" (Parochialism, 2019). The Cambridge English Dictionary defines it as "the quality of showing interest only in a narrow range of matters, especially those that directly affect yourself, your town, or your country" (Parochialism, 2019). Lowe (1977) stated that LH can be parochial when "it is done for its own sake or it is so narrowly focused that one loses sight of the larger context of which it was a part". Several local historians believed that national background should be kept in mind while studying and researching LH of a region. If LH is not identified with national trends, there is every chance that community members will

overstate the importance of their locality. Parochialism is such a problem where this greater sense of historical area study gets affected by the narrow local research orientation of the local historian (Malcolm, 1990). In general, parochialism is the condition when an LH researcher suffers from limitations of views and gets stuck into the narrower concepts of the focal area.

4.3.3 OVERSIMPLIFICATION

Parochialism eventually leads to oversimplification, another problem with LH researchers. Cambridge English Dictionary defines 'oversimplification' as "the action of describing or explaining something in such a simple way that it is no longer correct or true" (Oversimplification, 2019). Oversimplification tends to reduce the actual causes for an event in such a way that there remains no genuine connection between the causes and effects of the event. That is why in philosophical research, 'oversimplification' is referred to as the 'reductive fallacy' (Malcolm, 1990). The only solution to overcome the problem is to study the broad problems, which have national importance, from the local evidences. That is why Lowe (1977) stated that "...local studies must always go hand in hand with learning about general history".

4.3.4 OBSCURE

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines 'obscure' as something which is "not clear and difficult to understand and see" (Obscure, 2019). In the Merriam-Webster Dictionary it is defined as something which is "not clearly seen or easily distinguished" and "not readily understood or clearly expressed" and "relatively unknown" (Obscure, 2019). Many local historians represent

the less-known LH facts or newly discovered concepts regarding the lives of ancient communities to the world that is not even well understood by him also. Research trends in LH revealed that many social, cultural and religious LH findings were poorly or vaguely represented due to the absence of clear knowledge of the concerned local historian. This is a major crisis by which LH study and research is affected frequently.

All the difficulties are closely connected with some queries often raised by local historians. Many of them suffer from the indecisiveness of what type of LH is available regarding a community or a locality, and how that LH should be recommended for future study. Furthermore, local historians sometimes become puzzled about selecting proper documents or non-documentary evidence that properly reflect LH of the area under consideration (Morrill, 1981). Confusions are also created while determining the sources of LH materials (LHMs), circumstances under which they were created/ written, the agility of the sources, necessary steps to be taken to preserve those invaluable materials and such other factors. Answers to these questions are crucial for LH research outcomes.

4.4 VALUE OF LOCAL HISTORY STUDY

As people belong to a society that changes through many ups and downs in the course of its historical journey, every member of it is its partner. That is why no one is out of history of his/her past. There are lots of benefits of studying LH of any region and the society within. Some of these can be listed below –

1. LH study helps people to know about their past and to know their ancestral history.
2. It reveals the historical journey of a society and its inhabitants just like a building and its occupying persons.

3. People get to know about their societal changes and how those changes influenced their present lives.
4. LH study provides opportunities to the community members to get in touch with different tangible and visible objects, materials, and places that carry the long heritage of their past generations where they live.
5. LH study searches for stories of community contributions to great revolutions or path-breaking incidents as well as present them in the understandable and palatable form to the present members of the community,
6. Besides searching out for a contributory history of the communities and persons belonging to them, LH research provides improvised ways to preserve these invaluable sources of past information.
7. LH promotes a deep understanding of historical events and cultures that initiates local values to the common people.
8. LH study and research provide a frame to the people of a region or a community to make out their roots or identities.
9. LH brings interest to the study of the historical relevance of a locality that attracts enthusiasts.
10. It provides hands-on training to enthusiasts on historical methods.
11. Children are required to know about the LH of their respective communities so that they can take pride in their ancestors as well as learn to value the historical heritages.
12. During the times of rapid and millennial changes in the course of a community's history, LH plays a pivotal role in increasing social cohesion.

13. Proper preservation of LH of a region promotes tourism of that specific locality as well as of surroundings, particularly of historical places.
14. LH study and research are necessary for the survival of museums and archives of the locality.

4.5 LOCAL HISTORY MATERIALS

By definition, LHMs are wide range of descriptive objects connected with the history of a region, below the national level, such as the history of states, provinces, districts, cities, or towns. LHMs are the basic elements of an information support system for the socio-economic development in a region that is generally smaller than a country. The term 'local history material' was first used in the United States of America during the serial publications on 'American History' started in the year 1902, which is still continuing (Chattopadhyay, 2011).

While developing a good LHC, the basic and most obvious trend is to get confined or limited by books only. There is vast range of various kinds of printed and non-print documents including artifacts, paintings, photographs, sculptures, models, relics etc. which can make a good collection of LH. The majority of the documents demand serious preservation and restoration efforts from the collectors. Moreover, the collection should also be sufficiently described so that historians can make full use of them while reconstructing the historical scenario. Not only historians, common people, local inhabitants, LH enthusiasts, genealogists, LH researchers, and oral history specialists will also be benefitted from such collections. The collection policy is another aspect that needs to be dealt with foresight, caution and care during designating an LHM followed by subsequent inclusion into the PL. There are various types of printed and non-printed sources of LH with further divisions of various LHMs:

Table 4.1. Significant LHMs

PRINTED DOCUMENTS		
Books	Books written on local area or books with chapter on local area or written by the local authors. Out-of-print and rare books of LH value	
Non-book materials	Magazines / Serials	Periodicals, magazines, serials, published by local organizations
	Memorial Volume	Memorial volume on local personalities/local events
	Reports / Minutes / Proceedings	Various types of reports published by the Government and the Non-Government organizations and proceedings of the meetings valuable for LH study.
	Pamphlets/Hand Bills / Leaflets	Handbills, leaflets of local events/celebrations should be preserved for future documentation purpose.
	Newspaper & Newspaper Clippings	Newspapers published locally covering local news events and Newspaper clippings on local events/news
	Post cards, Posters & charts	Concerning the local area or related to local area. For example, posters and charts on immunization programme like pulse polio and others should be displayed in the local PL.
	Puthis or ancient manuscripts	Literary genre; Written by local poets or on local tales of spiritual and religious importance
	Maps & topographical prints	Historic maps, representative collection of local maps and road maps, Toposheets of an area
	Census reports	Current and past volumes of population census report of the locality
	Deeds, MOUs	Relevant to the local area, important hand over of properties, link ups of local bodies with other prestigious organizations
	Still photographs	Photographs of events and persons etc.
NON-PRINTED SOURCES		
Oral history	Recording, preservation and interpretation of historical information, based on the personal experiences and opinions of the speaker. Interviews of distinguished citizens, elderly people, socially marginalized/oppressed groups, freedom fighters, people with special skill, local historians are considered to be the component of OH of a place.	
Music	Recordings of musical notes or written musical texts by local popular	

	musicians or poets, and popular folk music associated with daily chores of local community lives.	
Genealogy or Family history	Genealogy is also known as family history. It is concerned with the study of families, identifying their ancestral roots, sketching their lineages and reconstructing their past.	
Different art forms	Drawings and paintings	Portraits of local renowned personalities, paintings depicting local culture, customs etc. Collection of sketches on local places.
	Relics	Remains of items used in long past by the local people of antique value.
	Sculptures	Sculptures are artistic representation of local historic events or personalities, in three-dimensional structures, made of stone, rock, clay, and wood, metal, plastic or any other hard material.

Table 4.2. LH information sources

DOCUMENTARY SOURCE	INSTITUTIONAL SOURCE	HUMAN SOURCE
• Population Census data current sources and from the past • GIS data on Local Block, Police station, Gram Panchayet, Panchayet Samity, stadium etc. • Burning ghat & burial ground • Religious places • Ancient history or archaeological evidences	• Educational Institutions (formal and non-formal; primary to apex) • Health Service Centres • Administrative Offices • Non-government organizations (NGOs)	• Specialists in various sect of life (Doctors, M.Ps, M.L.As, Advocates, Administrators / Managerial personalities, Social workers and Artists, socially oppressed groups, freedom fighters, people with special skill)
Nature of information: Name, GIS information, phone no. of sites mentioned.	Nature of information: Name, Address, phone no. & subjects taught and any other relevant important in those institutions.	Nature of information: Name, Address, phone numbers.

4.6 ORAL HISTORY: THE UNKNOWN TREASURE

The 'Oral History Association' of United States of America defines Oral History (OH) as "... A field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events" (Oral History Association [OHA], 2019). It is referred to as 'history in the spoken form'. "Oral history is both the oldest type of historical inquiry, predating the written word, and one of the most modern, initiated with tape recorders in 1940s and now using 21st-century digital technologies" (OHA, 2019). LH researchers often get confused with the type of information sources that can be referred to as a true OH. Eminent oral historian Donald A. Ritchie (1994) described in his book 'Doing Oral History' that, "Oral history does not include random taping.....nor does it refer to recorded speeches, wiretapping, personal diaries on tape, or other sound recordings that lack the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee." It has always been stressed upon the factor of the live conversation between a well-prepared interviewer and an interviewee, recorded in audio or video format. In short, OH is worth preserving oral testimony of past events, persons, or places which is hidden within persons, not written anywhere and coming out through well-planned interviews and preserved in audio and/or video formats. OH interviews and records of personal audio memoirs are used by researchers of a wide range of disciplines.

4.6.1 COLLECTION

OH is the memory of a person about his/her experience regarding the historical pasts. The only method of gathering such oral information is to conduct a carefully designed interview with the memoirist to collect historical evidence. Before conducting an OH interview, the interviewer

should gather some basic knowledge about the subject whether it is about a historical event or a famous personality of the locality. Sometimes, it is impossible to find any published work for the same purpose. In that condition, the interviewer should spend some time in informal chatting on the subject of the interview with the interviewee, before starting the formal OH interview session.

It is extremely important to get the necessary permission from the interviewee before starting the OH interview. Since OH interviews are unconventional sources of information for many types of research on LH, recording and making transcripts require legal permissions (Nickerson, 2003). The procedures should either be completed in written form with the signature of the interviewee on legal documents, or the interviewee should be asked to give oral permission for the same and the permission to be recorded properly.

The interview location should be in a quiet environment, preferably in a closed room having no background sound. The recording equipment should be tested accurately before using them for such interviews. The interviewee and interviewer should be sitting on opposite sides and the microphone should be placed in between, closer to the interviewee for the recording of better quality sound. It is also essential to switch off the air conditioner of the room as well as switch off the mobile phones, as their continuous signaling process may create mechanical noise in the microphone.

There should be a carefully constructed questionnaire in the hands of the interviewer. Though one should not rigidly stick to the pre-fixed set of questions, rather interview should be free-flowing. The interviewer should be careful regarding certain matters, viz., questions asked should be 'open' type as far as possible, rather than 'closed' type, with simple words and devoid of phrases or jargons (Nickerson, 2003). The interviewer should be free of any kind of bias

towards the subject of the interview and do not try to suggest any answer to the memoirist; i.e. interviewer should be a good listener. Such situations often arise since the interviewer obtains some knowledge about the subject before the interview, but avoiding such situations makes an OH interview free of personal biases.

After the interview, the disc or the tape which contains the audio should be kept in a box with a label containing the date of the interview and the name of the interviewee or memoirist. A small description of the interview in one or two sentences having the subject of the interview should be written and placed inside the box. Presently various digital technologies are used to preserve OH records viz., optical media, flash chip, etc. (Moitra & Dutta, 2017).

4.6.2 SIGNIFICANCE

Since long back, OH represents the historical perspectives and sentiments of common masses that is why it is known as the alternative to conventional history. It is a powerful instrument for an in-depth understanding of historical events. Oral histories are personal experiences of common people about how they faced history through generations. Not only historical events, but OH also carries trails of traditional local culture, viz., folklores, myths, stories, etc. which pass through generations. In early times, history was considered an 'elite' subject since it did not incorporate the history of the marginalized section of society. It results in bias reconstruction of historical events. OH first made the mark as 'parallel history' since marginalized communities got the opportunity to express their experiences through the course of historical developments. Since OH involves human interactions, it allows asking questions on history. Sometimes a particular community's cultural heritage does not get appropriate recognition in written history due to the

historian's personal bias or absence of sufficient knowledge in this regard. Through OH only, the community's cultural practices get proper recognition and appreciation in the course of history. For in-depth understanding and research on any LH discipline, researchers have to depend on OH sources since these are primary. This valuable source of information can be collected easily with establishing communication with other persons, thus promoting human interactions. This enhanced interaction may lead to the discovery of newer perspectives of an already established historical fact. The subjectivity of oral sources of information presents a clear and concise version of local historical events or local cultural heritage and thus discovers newer aspects of historical experiences. OH portrays a sound picture of future generations about how the past was and what is the root of the community, in the light of new interpretations. It brings the essence of local cultural traditions in lucid and interesting ways so that members of the future generations can easily recollect them and bring them to their further future.

4.6.3 EVALUATION AND USE

OH has always become a valuable source of new knowledge about the past as it imparts newer perspectives to the historical facts which are unavailable in traditional historical sources; thus making OH a prominent subject in the social history discipline. OH is the recollection of human memory which provides an insight into the reflection of the past, thus it incorporates implicit bias. During the interview, the narrator unconsciously must include his/her emotions in describing the past through which the community sustained on its capability. For this reason, using OH sources calls for a critical evaluation before believing a history (Palmer, 1983). So it is important to evaluate the oral historical sources of information very critically. The reliability of

the narrator and his /her relationship with the subject of the interview is the first step in such assessment. More than one interview on the same subject should be analyzed so that disparity or inconsistency, if any, can be identified. An OH interview always carries the narrator's expression of identity, consciousness and culture; that is why it is always regarded as a 'personal record'. Not only from the end of the interviewee or narrator, the interviewer's personal choice of asking particular questions, is also a crucial parameter for critical evaluation of OH sources. The interviewer must drag the narrator's recollection of memory to the centre of the subject, otherwise, it becomes quite common that memory distorts and nostalgia takes over the narration. Despite being a valuable treasure in social history, OH should be analyzed critically before its concrete use.

4.7 GENEALOGY: TRACING THE FAMILY ROOT

Genealogy broadly referred to as 'Family History' which is the study of families, their lineages and history. It is the study of family lineages of prominent local persons who are sons of soil and famous in various fields in their lives. The study of genealogy is an interesting discipline and family lineages can be traced out by applying various methods, viz., oral interviews, studies of family records, family photographs, historical records about the family, etc. which can reveal the lineage and kinship of a family. Genealogical information is widely used by social science researchers and it is an important LHM (Lenstra, 2012). Not only of a family, but genealogical research can also be done of a particular community, or clan, or a religious or social group, etc. But in most of instances, genealogy popularly refers to family history only. Genealogical information are generally represented in 'tree' forms, or sometimes they are documented as written narratives.

4.7.1 COLLECTION AND SERVICES

Genealogy collection is generally placed with LHCs as most of the times, it includes the family history of local prominent persons. Genealogical information are searched for in-depth research on LH, so appropriate reference services are essential for such collections. Community services are also necessary to meet basic inquisitiveness as well as basic research needs of the immediate community which a PL serves. Referral service is also essential for effective genealogy service. For this, genealogy collection can be developed on cooperative basis involving nearby public libraries. If a specific genealogy reference service cannot be provided to patrons, the general reference service of the library should include genealogy assistance to its patrons, as reference service is rendered on LHCs.

4.8 LOCAL HISTORY AND PUBLIC LIBRARY: THE INEXTRICABLE RELATION

Day to day demand of the people for information depends on the socio-economic conditions of an area. Socio-economic factors, including the demands, are earnings for living; transportation or communication facilities; political condition and role of government; market and commercial place for the development of the standard of living; electricity; roads; educational institution; health services; library; audio-visual centres; entertainment centres, i.e. cinema halls, auditorium, stadium, publishing enterprises etc. These play an important role in the enlargement, revision and change of lifestyle as well as the development of the socio-economic background of general people. We can realize these factors of socio-economic development from a strong LHC. LH is so significant and so vastly important that almost every literate person must give something of himself to its study. While speaking about the national heritage, it is part of the duty of every

person to pass it on to future generations. The local historians must continue to promote the local historical societies to the common people of the localities or regions under study.

Local information professional or librarian of a PL should be well acquainted with the demands of the local people and he has to do the collection and preservation of the LH successfully according to the demand/needs of the local people. The library and information professional(s) should be well equipped with the social aspects of any locality or area. Local academic and public libraries must continue their efforts to preserve the documents and records of the present so that historians may continue to understand the pattern of history. Being a 'social institution', a PL must perform some duty towards community people; collection, organization, and preservation of local cultural heritage is one of the significant roles played by PL towards the society.

4.9 OVERVIEW OF LOCAL HISTORY AND CORRESPONDING COLLECTIONS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF 24 PARGANAS (SOUTH)

4.9.1 SUB-DIVISION: ALIPORE (SADAR)

a) Mudialy Library - This is the oldest PL of the district which was established in 1876 and got sponsorship from the Government in the year 1981.

Significant LH of *Garden Reach – Metiabruz*:

Garden Reach- Metiabruz area is situated in close proximity to the city of Kolkata. The last *Nawab* of *Awadh*, *Wajid Ali Shah* was deported by Lord Dalhousie to *Garden Reach* where he lived rest of his life as a pensioner of British Government. His *Begum* established the *Shahi Masjid* in this area, and the *Nawab* was buried in the *Sibtainabad Imambara* in *Metiabruz*. Besides, *Firdous Mahal* was established here by *Shams Jaan, Begum* of *Murshidabad* who was a close friend of the *Begum* of *Nawab Wajid Ali Shah* (Sripantha, 1990). From that time onwards, *Garden Reach-Metiabruz* area was developed as the oldest tailoring industry in India. Being situated beside the river of *Ganga*, *Garden Reach* has an ancient dockyard which was used by Lord Robert Clive to enter Bengal for the first time in history. The dock was established in 1780 by Cornell Henry Watson where he also established a huge ship factory; it was an extremely interesting place for people to visit at that time. At present the place is known as *Watgunge*, near *Khidderpore Dock* (Middya, 2010). Founder of the Asiatic Society of India, Sir William Jones, build a farm house beside the river where he breathed his last. *Suriname Ghat* on the bank of river *Ganga* at *Garden Reach* carries the remembrance of the migration of huge number of Indian workers to Caribbean country for sugarcane plantation from 1873 to 1916 (Choudhuri, 2013).

LHC present in library (See Appendix III):

- Books - 7
- Local news bulletins - 2
- Leaflets - 2
- Souvenir - 1

- Newspaper clipping - 1

b) Behala Town Library – This library was established in 1903 and got sponsored in 1967. It is situated at the *Behala* 14 no. bus depot which is very near to *Behala* Tram depot.

Significant LH of *Behala*:

Behala was formerly known as *Roynagar* as there was a huge royal garden of *Raja Basanta Roy*. The *Roynagar Math* (Playground of *Roynagar*) is still present. Today's Diamond Harbour Road (NH 117) was built by East India Company and was called *Rajar Raasta* (The King's Road), to connect Kolkata and *Falta* dockyard (today's Special Economic Zone). There is a 250 years ancient temple of Goddess *Kali* at *Behala* Tram Depot, known as *Siddheswari Kali*, established by local notorious decoits. Ancient *Sonar Durga Bari* (the Golden *Durga* Temple) was established by *Shri Jagatram Mukherjee*, descendent of *Shri Harsha Dev* (renowned courtier of *Maharaja Ballal Sen*). *Nityagyan Sancharini Sabha*, founded in 1853 by *Shri Becharam Chatterjee* to stop spreading Christianity, on *Brahma Samaj* Road (today's *Behala Brahma Samaj*, established by Pandit Shibnath Shastri during 1897-1902). The first ever 'Dog Race Course' in India was in *Behala*. Bengal Flying Club, the first ever flying club of Bengal, established by Sir Biren Roy (descendent of *Raja Basanta Roy*) in 1928. Sir *Biren Roy* was pioneer in designing the architecture of an airplane. He made the first indigenous airplane of the country, named *Meghdoot* (Choudhuri, 2013).

LHC present in library (See Appendix III):

- Books – 3
- Souvenirs – 3
- Leaflets - 4

c) **Barisha Pathagar** - This library was established in 1904 and got sponsored in 1969. At present it is situated in *Barisha* just behind the famous *Chandimela* ground.

Significant LH of Barisha:

Barisha has a very wealthy cultural-historical background as the Zamindars of the then 'Kolikata' village were the residents of this locality. The founder of the former city of 'Calcutta', Job Charnock purchased three villages (Sutanuti, Gobindapur and Kolikata) on behalf of East India Company, from the Zamindar Ray Choudhury's. Later on, these three villages amalgamated to form the present Kolkata city. So this settlement is older than the city of present Kolkata. The ancient residential house of Ray Chaudhury's is still present in Barisha. Founder Zamindar of this family, Sri Lakshmikanta Majumder started puja at the sacred Kalighat Temple of Kolkata (Roy, 2017). Later on, he was honoured by the British Government by giving him the title 'Ray Chaudhury'. His descendent Sri Mahesh Chandra Ray Chaudhury established the famous temple of local Goddess Devi Chandi and started the famous annual Chandi Mela Utsav, observed for the last 200 years. Ray Choudhury's also established Dwadash Shivmandir (12 Shiva temples) at Barisha and the famous Karunamoyee Kalibari of Goddess Karunamoyee Kali at the locality of Tollygunge (Mandal, 2002).

LHC present in the library (See Appendix III):

- Books – 5
- Large photographs - 13
- Brochures - 2

d) Prativa Library - This library was established in 1906 and got sponsored in 1981. It is presently situated in Sarsuna, beside Sarsuna Girls' High School and Sarsuna Law College.

Significant LH of Sarsuna:

Raja Basanta Roy of Behala established his leisure garden or Bagan Bari at Sarsuna (Choudhury, 2013). In addition, he also built a strong fort at Raigarh in Sarsuna which has got abolished with time. Legendary Bengali poet Kavi Kazi Nazrul Islam resided for a short period of his life in Sarsuna. One of the largest refugee settlements of West Bengal developed after the 1972 post-Bangladesh war at Sakuntala Park.

LHC present in the library (See Appendix III):

- Books – 2
- House Journals - 4
- Souvenirs - 4
- Newspaper clippings - 5
- Report - 1
- Memoir - 1

e) Brati Sangha Pathagar – The library was established in 1946 and got sponsorship from the Govt. in the year 1979. The library is situated at Budge Budge town and falls under the Budge Budge Municipality jurisdiction.

Significant LH of Budge Budge:

This city, situated just beside the river Ganga, is one of the important oil depots of India (O'Malley, 1914). The largest oil refinery of ancient Bengal was situated in Budge Budge. During the Muslim reign in Bengal, a huge fort was created by Muslim rulers to store arms and ammunitions. Lord Clive captured it in 1756 before attacking the then Calcutta. Later the arms were carried from the fort of Budge Budge to Fort William, Calcutta. Regarding the nomenclature of the place, W.W. Hunter mentioned in his 'Statistical Account of Bengal' that "Budge Budge (Properly Baj-Baj, a muddy pool)" (Middya, 2010). Century-old temples of Goddess Khuki Kali and snake deity Manasa are very famous. Swami Vivekananda arrived in Bengal from the Chicago Parliament of Religion at the Budge Budge Ferry ghat in 1897. The royal house of Mahishya zamindars, called Mandals is still present at Bawali and famous as Bawali Rajbari. This place is the witness of defamed Budge Budge riot and the Komagata Maru (April 1914) incident where twenty people were died because of firing by Indian Imperial Police. There are remains of the first sugar factory of undivided 24 Parganas, established by a Chinese citizen Tong Achieu, and the China Temple at his cemetery in Achipur. Budge Budge is the birthplace of Abdul Jabbar, an eminent journalist and popular author of Bengal folk culture. Multinational Shoe Company Bata established a factory and here and employee housing settlements were named Batanagar.

LHC present in the library (See Appendix III):

- Books - 2
- Leaflets - 3

f) Sarangaad Bandhab Pathagar – This library was established in 1934 and got sponsored in the year 1959. It is situated in Ward no. 35 of *Maheshtala* Municipality.

Significant LH of Sarangabad:

No significant LH is found on *Sarangabad*.

LHC present in the library:

The Library-in-charge couldn't display any LHM in the library.

g) Joychandi Pathagar – This century-old rural library was established in 1904 and got sponsorship in the year 1980. This library is situated in the *Srikrishnapur* village of *Ramkrishnapur-Barhaanpur Gram Panchayat*, under *Bishnupur-2 Panchayat Samity*.

Significant LH of Srikrishnapur:

The remote village of *Srikrishnapur* has temple of Goddess *Siddheswari Kali* which is more than two hundred and fifty years old and most-probably established by an ancient local *Brahmin*

priest family. A huge religious gathering and *mela* is arranged every year on the occasion of establishment of the temple during summer. There is also a temple of *Dakshin Roy* at *Srikrishnapur*. *Dakshin Roy* is the most controversial and popular form of God throughout the district of 24 Parganas (South). His name was found in ancient local literature *Raymangal* written by *Krishnaram Das*, and in *Bonbibir Johurnama* written by *Marhum Munshi Khater Sahib* (Naskar, 1999). He is worshipped mostly as a 'Head' which is also known as *Baramurti*, and is worshipped with huge devotion by the local people of Sundarban and lower Gangetic delta of Bengal (Sarkar, 2012). Secular worship place *Khane Khodar* is also a very famous religious place for both Hindus and Muslims.

LHC present in the library (See Appendix III):

- Book - 1
- Souvenir - 1
- Leaflets - 2

h) District Library – This is the apex library of the PL system of the district of 24 Parganas (South). It was established in the year 1956. The library had only 1542 books when it started its journey in a room in the student hostel of *Vidyanagar* School. Later on the new building was inaugurated in 1958 and the library shifted to it. Presently it is situated at *Vidyanagar* village in *Moukhali Gram Panchayat* under *Bishnupur-2 Panchayat Samity*.

Significant LH of *Vidyanagar* and *Amtala*:

Nadabhanga, is the nearest village of *Vidyanagar* famous for more than century-old *Gostho Utsav* (Mandal, 1999). There is an ancient temple of Lord *Shiva Khargeswara*, at nearby *Jayrampur*. The temple was established by local prosperous farmer Sri Jayram Halder. This is one of the oldest and very few examples of *Atchala* style architecture of temples in West Bengal. The temple has intricate designs which was done with lime i.e. calcium carbonate, bearing close resemblance with terracotta styles (Naskar, 1989). Every year thousands of people participate and enjoy in *Gajan Utsav* of Lord Shiva. *Vidyanagar* College and *Vidyanagar* School are situated just besides the library building; these were responsible for flourishing literacy and higher education in the locality for many years.

LHC present in the library (See Appendix III):

- Books – 51
- Souvenirs - 12
- Map - 1

i) Deshgourab Pathagar – This Government sponsored PL was established in 1981 at Ward no. 5 under the *Rajpur-Sonarpur* Municipality. The library is situated at *Garia* Station Road, just beside the *Garia* railway station.

Significant LH of *Garia*:

Garia was the ancient prosperous business place beside *Adiganga*. A small but busy port was situated here which was known as *Manikgunj Ghat*; this port was the property of the Tagore family of *Pathuriaghata* who regularly used this place for business transactions outside Kolkata (Choudhury, 2013). *Sri Basanta Kumar Banerjee*, a local businessman established a temple of Goddess *Kali* at the *Manikgunj Ghat*, and its ruins are present till date beside the *Khal* (*Adiganga*). The idol of Goddess *Kali* later shifted to nearby *Boral* village and re-established as Goddess *Tripurasundari*. At that time *Adiganga* was a functional river that was extensively used to travel to other cities besides the Bay of Bengal. Today's *Baishnabghata* near *Patuli* was the place where *Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* spent some days beside *Adiganga* before he finally left for *Nilachal*, i.e. today's *Puri* at Orissa (Sarkar, 2012).

LHC present in the library (See Appendix III):

- Books - 4
- Local magazine - 3

j) Vivek Sangha Town Library – It was established in 1950 and got sponsorship from the Government of West Bengal in the year 1980. The library is presently situated at *Vivek Nagar*, *Jadavpur* and is easily accessible from *Jadavpur* railway station.

Significant LH of *Jadavpur*:

During early the British period, *Jadavpur* was mainly inhabited by milkmen who supplied milk to the city of then Calcutta. Thus named after *Yadavas*, this place was named *Jadavpur*. It was the pioneer region in general, science and technical education since the late nineteenth century. Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS) was founded by Dr *Mahendra Lal Sircar* in the year 1876. It is the oldest institution in India that imparts education on major branches of basic science (Choudhuri, 2013). National Council of Education (NCE) was established in 1906 with inspiration by *Satis Mukherjee* as the leading unit of the Dawn Society. Later on in 1928, Bengal Technical Institute was renamed as College of Engineering and Technology. Under the purview of NCE, Bengal College of Engineering and Technology converted to *Jadavpur University* in 1955 and Dr *Triguna Sen* became the first Vice-Chancellor of the University.

LHC present in the library:

The Library-in-charge couldn't display any LHM in the library.

4.9.2 SUB-DIVISION: BARUIPUR

a) Bandhab Library – This library is also known as Joynagar Town Library which was established in 1276 B.S. and got Govt. sponsorship in the year 1957. It is situated in the Uttarpara at Ward no. 11 under the Joynagar-Majilpur Municipality.

Significant LH of *Joynagar-Majilpur*:

These two villages are situated opposite sides of the Joynagar-Majilpur railway station between which Joynagar village was older. The village 'Joynagar' was named after popular local Goddess Joychandi; an approximately 300 years old deity was established by Sri Gunananda Matilal (Sarkar, 2012). On the occasion of the establishment of the temple, a huge annual celebration takes place during Bengali month Jaistha and the sacred ceremony is known as Besh Parivartan (dress change) of the Goddess. Ramgopal Mitra, an employee of Saborno Ray Choudhuri of Barisha, started zamindari in Joynagar. They established Dwadash Shiva Mandir (twelve temples of Lord Shiva) along with Dolmancha beside Mitraganga, among which one temple has been destroyed with time. Joynagar is extremely famous for the Moya, a unique indigenous sweet made of a flattened puff of Kanakchura rice and liquid jaggery during winter only. This sweet is even exported to various countries throughout the world.

Majilpur village was comparatively younger than Joynagar and created over the dead bank of river Adiganga, thus named Majilpur. Shibnath Shastri was the son of the soil of Majilpur whose ancestor Srikrishna Udgata escaped from Jessore to the dead bank of Adiganga near Sundarban (Choudhuri, 2013). Majilpur was a prominent centre for spreading western education especially among women of neighbouring villages. The ancient temple of Goddess Dhanwantari Kali at Padmapukur in Majilpur is extremely famous and the religious gathering for Besh Parivartan (dress change) ceremony during Bengali month Baishakh is the biggest religious celebration of Majilpur (Mandal, 2002).

LHC present in the library (See Appendix III):

- Books – 30
- Local literary magazines – 2
- Local magazines of folk culture - 12
- Local research magazines - 2
- Souvenirs - 6
- Local newspapers - 2
- Photographs - 45
- Clay idols of local deities
- Special collection of books on Sri Kalidas Dutta.

b) Rajpur Sadharan Pathagar – This library was established in 1877 and got sponsored by the Government of West Bengal in the year 1981. The library is situated at Ward no. 15 under Rajpur-Sonarpur Municipality and on the connecting road of Rajpur crossing and Sonarpur Railway Station.

Significant LH of Rajpur:

Situated at eleven miles south to the then Calcutta, Rajpur was one of the nerve centres of Sanskrit education in ancient Bengal. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Rajpur-Harinavi, Changripota-Langalberia was the most prosperous region in south Bengal which was a pioneer in Sanskrit language and literature education (Sarkar, 2012). Many eminent Sanskrit

stalwart persons or Pandits used to teach Sanskrit to a huge number of students coming from various parts of the Bengal. Thus, the region was famous as 'Dakshin Nabadwip of Bengal' (at that time Nabadwip of Nadia district was the best Sanskrit education centre of Bengal).

The majority of the historians of Bengal believed that Rajpur village was established by Madan Roy, a friend of Raja Pratapaditya. He established the Anandamayi Kalika Mandir at Rajpur which is present at Dashani Para till date. Rajpur is famous for its two hundred years old temple of the local Goddess of viral disease, Olabibi. The temple of Bhabanishwar Shiva is beautifully decorated with terracotta (ancient art of burnt clay) designs. Bipadtarini Kalibari (temple of Goddess Kali) is extremely famous in Rajpur even today. Huge numbers of devotees gather here for the annual religious ceremony of the temple. The first Anglo vernacular school of south Bengal was established in Rajpur village in the year 1860 by the zamindar of Rajpur-Jagaddal Golok Chandra Ghosh. Rajpur is the birthplace of eminent Sanskrit pandit Girish Chandra Vidyaratna. He was contemporary to Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and was a professor of Sanskrit College.

LHC present in the library:

The Library-in-charge couldn't display any LHM in the library.

c) Hemkali Library – This century-old rural library was established in 1902 and got sponsorship in the year 1981. The library is situated at Dakshin Gobindapur in Langalberia Gram Panchayat under Sonarpur Gram Panchayat. The library is accessible from Baruipur-Garia main road as well as Southern Bypass.

Significant LH of Dakshin Gobindapur:

The village was named Gobindapur after Sri Gobinda Basu who was a descendant of Mahipati Basu, the Finance and War Minister of the Nawabs of Gourbanga (Choudhury, 2013). This is the famous Basu family of Kodalia and later Netaji Subhas Chandra Basu was born in this family. The zamindars of Behala and Barisha, i.e. Saborna Roy Choudhuri family sold three villages to the East India Company; Gobindapur was one of them which marked the foundation of today's Kolkata.

LHC present in the library:

The Librarian couldn't display any LHM in the library.

d) Vidyabhusan Library – This century-old primary unit library was established in 1309 B.S. and got sponsored in the year 1963. The library is situated at Changripota in Ward no. 18 under Rajpur-Sonarpur Municipality. This library is situated very near to Subhasgram railway station in Sealdah South Division and can easily accessible from the Baruipur-Garia main road.

Significant LH of Changripota/Subhasgram:

The ancient name of Subhasgram was Changripota. It was a part of the centre for excellence in language, literature, education and culture in ancient Bengal. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Rajpur-Harinavi-Changripota-Langalberia was the most prosperous region in south Bengal which was a pioneer in Sanskrit language and literature education, known as

Dakshin Nabadwip of Bengal (Sarkar, 2012). The most famous person of this soil was Pandit Dwarakanath Vidyabhusan; the library was named after him to pay respect to this eminent personality. He edited the ancient Bengali weekly newspaper Somprakash which was highly famous among educated upper-class people of the Bengal in the middle of the nineteenth century. He was the maternal uncle of Shibnath Shastri; he was born in Changripota in his maternal home. Changripota was also the birthplace of Dr Kartik Basu who established the renowned Bose's Laboratory. This Basu family is a branch of the famous Basu family of Kodalia.

LHC present in the library (See Appendix III):

- Books - 3
- Souvenirs - 3
- Special collection of Somprakash (in 23 volumes)
- Special collection of rare books

e) Purandar Smriti Mandir Pathagar - This century-old primary unit library was established in 1910 and got sponsored in 1983. It is situated at the Mahinagar village in Ward no. 20 under Rajpur-Sonarpur Municipality. This library can easily be accessed from Mallickpur railway station in the Sealdah South Division as well as Baruipur –Garia main road.

Significant LH of Malancha-Mahinagar:

It was the residence of Sri Mahipati Basu, the Finance and War Minister of the Nawabs of Gourbanga. The village Mahinagar was named after him. The Nawab gave him the name Subuddhi Khan after being pleased by his competency. His son Gopinath Basu was the Finance and Naval Secretary of Hussain Shah; he was also named Purandar Khan by the Nawab. There is still a village in between Baruipur and Rajpur which is known as Purandarpur. Purandar Khan defeated the king of Siahkhala in Hooghly and constructed a fort beside Adiganga in Mahinagar sometime between 14th and 15th centuries. Ruins of this fort spread up to Adiganga and can be seen even today. Purandar Khan built a huge garden of beautiful and rare flowers in Mahinagar sometime during the first half of the 16th century when he got retired from royal duties. That is why the village Malancha was named after this (Middya, 2010). The village Malancha was also known as Panchbati. The zamindar of Panchbati, Gouri Prasad Maitra established the Annapurna temple here during 1266 B.S. The famous leader of Forward Block Hemanta Basu born in Mahinagar (Choudhury, 2013). Descendant of the famous Basu family Sri Sundarbar Basu got Mallick title from the Nawabs of Bengal and got jaygirdari of a village which today is known as Mallickpur. The village on the west of Mallickpur is known as Khasmallick, which was also under the jaygir of Sundarbar Basu. Both the places were named after him (Middya, 2010).

LHC present in the library:

The Librarian couldn't display any LHM in the library.

f) Baharu Shyamsundar Public Library and Free Reading Room – This century-old town library was established in the year 1912 and got sponsored in 1868. It is situated at Baharu village in Baharu Gram Panchayat under Joynagar-1 Panchayat Samity. This library is well connected through the Baharu railway station in Sealdah South Division.

Significant LH of Baharu:

This place was known as Barukshetra in ancient Bengal and its mention was found in Mangalkavya (O'Malley, 1914). Baharu fell under zamindari of Sri Nandakumar Basu. He was the Dewan of East India Company at Kashimbazar, Murshidabad. Later he was transferred to the Customs House in Calcutta and established zamindari at Baharu. His royal residence is still present in Baharu. The music maestro of this district, Roybahadur Baikuntha Nath Basu was the descendent of this Basu family. Dewan Nandakumar Basu established the famous temple of Shyamsundar Jiu between 1821 and 1825. This temple was the first-ever temple in Bengal designed in the Jaipur style of art. The five Lord Shiva temples near Baharu Bazar are another famous religious destination of Baharu. These temples were also established by the descendants of the Basu family. Baharu also has the temple of Dharmaraj who was known as Babathakur. The deity of Dharmaraj has a striking resemblance with a local subaltern form of Lord Shiva Panchanan (Five-headed God) (Mandal, 2002). Dharmaraj is worshipped widely in various parts of the district in various names viz., Dharmanarayan, Yamraj, Dharma-niranjana, Babathakur, Suryadevta, Dharmasanatan, Yudhisthir, and many more (Naskar, 1999). The worship of Babathakur and the establishment of His temple at Baharu marked the confluence of the local ancient Dharma-niranja sect with Shaiva sect in deltaic Bengal (Sarkar, 2012). On the west side

of Baharu village, the Maydah village is very famous for the temple of Goddess Kali, known as Maydah Kalibari.

LHC present in the library:

The Library-in-charge couldn't display any LHM in the library.

g) Madarat Bandhab Pathagar – This century-old rural library was established in 1913 and got sponsored in 1965. The library is situated at Madarat village in Madarat Gram Panchayat under Baruipur Panchayat Samity. It is well connected to Baruipur railway station through roadways.

Significant LH of Madarat:

It is a small village very near to Baruipur. This village is very popular for the temple of Goddess Raksha kali (the Saviour Goddess). This place is a pilgrimage throughout the year. Noble Prize winner novelist Gunter Wilhelm Grass resided in Madarat village for some time while he took an active part in Peace Movement in Calcutta during the 1980s.

LHC present in the library (See Appendix III):

- Books - 3
- Souvenirs - 3
- Photographs - 18

h) Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library – This century-old town library was established in 1917 and got sponsored in 1981. The library is situated at Ward no. 18 under Rajpur-Sonarpur Municipality. It can easily be accessed through a roadway on Baruipur-Garia main road, beside Lalbari. The library building was established just beside the ancestral home of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Significant LH of Kotalia:

This place was a part of Dakshin Nabadwip of Bengal as it showed excellence in education, language, literature and culture during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This place is famous nationwide as the ancestral village of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The famous Basu family was initially residents of Mahinagar. Later on, Netaji's ancestors moved to Kotalia village; Sri Janaki Nath Basu, father of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose born here at their ancestral home. Later he moved to Cuttack where Netaji born in 1897. Eminent Sanskrit educationist Pandit Ananda Chandra Vidyabagish was the son of this soil. His son Gyanchandra Bhattacharya was the English teacher of Rabindranath Tagore. This small village is also famous as the birthplace of patriot Manabendra Nath Roy (M.N. Roy), the brave leader of the Indian National Movement (Choudhury, 2013).

LHC present in the library (See Appendix III):

- Books – 3
- Local newspaper - 1

- Local magazines - 4
- Souvenirs - 5
- Special collection – A museum
- Special collection of books

i) **Baruipur Town Library** – This subdivisional library was established in 1981 and got sponsored by the Government on the very next year. The library is situated in Ward no. 11 under Baruipur Municipality. The library building is situated on Kulpi Road which is within walking distance of the Baruipur Railway Station in Sealdah South Division.

Significant LH of *Baruipur*:

Baruipur was a major port city of ancient *Gangaridi* civilization and prominent Indo-Roman business centre around 200 years before. So many archaeological evidence of the *Maurya* and *Pala* dynasties in South Bengal were found near *Atghara* village of *Baruipur*. Mention of this place was found back in 1495 A.D. when poet *Bipradas* wrote *Manasar Bhasan*. W. W. Hunter in his book ‘Statistical Account of Bengal’ wrote that “Pan or betel-leaf is extensively grown in the village, when it derives its name (Barui, Literally Pan-grower)” (Middya, 2010). It was predominantly inhabited by prosperous betel farmers and tradesmen, locally named as *Barujibi*, thus named after them. During early nineteenth century, *Baruipur* was the headquarters of Salt Department of Bengal government, known as *Nimak Mahal*. Sri *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* spent a night at *Atisara* village in *Baruipur* before leaving for *Nilachal* (Puri). From then it was a prominent religious place of *Vaishnavism*. The popular *Bishalakshmi* temple was established by

Taramani Devi, wife of *Sanyasi Anandagiri Thakur*. Zamindars of Baruipur, the Roy Chowdhury's were initially the residents of Rajpur village. *Durgacharan Roy Chowdhury*, son of *Raja Madan Roy* of *Medmalla Pargana*, first came to Baruipur and established the zamindari. Zamindars of Baruipur established the *Bibimar Dargah* at *Baganipara* which is a common worship place for both Hindus and Muslims. The annual religious celebration is extremely popular among local people. Roy Chowdhurys also established famous temple of *Dakshin Roy* (The Tiger God) at *Dhapdhapi* near Baruipur and the *Gaji Sahib's Dargah* at *Ghutyari Sharif* near *Canning* on the name of *Fakir Mobaraq Gazi*. Roy Chowdhurys started the renowned *Rashmela* in Baruipur which is still going on; this secular gathering is more than two hundred years old and happens in the Bengali month of *Kartik*. During the rule of East India Company, Baruipur was a very prominent place area for high quality indigo cultivation and British indigo planters established their headquarters here. Renowned Bengali novelist *Rishi Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay* served as Deputy Magistrate at Baruipur Court during 1864 and 1870 and lived in Baruipur (Mandal, 2002). This place is also historically famous for inauguration of *Hindu Mela*, one of the major initiatives during *Swadeshi* movement of Bengal. Baruipur was witness of *Hindu Mela* in 1276 A.D., 1278 A.D. and 1279 A.D. (Choudhuri, 2013). Every time it was extremely successful and *Somprakash* newspaper published the detailed success stories in the issue of 12 *Chaitra*, 1279 B.S.

LHC present in the library (See Appendix III):

- Books - 15
- Souvenirs - 3

- Local magazine - 1
- Manuscripts – 2

j) Baruipur Public Library – This town library was established in 1935 and got sponsored in 1954. It is situated at *Puratan Bazar* of *Baruipur* town which is at a commutable distance from *Baruipur* railway station. The library is situated at Ward no. 8 under *Baruipur* Municipality.

Significant LH of *Baruipur*:

Same as *Baruipur* Town Library

LHC present in the library:

The Library-in-charge couldn't display any LHM in the library.

4.9.3 SUB-DIVISION: CANNING

a) Canning Public Library – This subdivisional library was established in 1933 and got sponsored by the Government of West Bengal in the year 1960. The library is situated in *Canning* Town, under *Matla-1 Gram Panchayat* and *Canning-1 Panchayat Samity*.

Significant LH of Canning:

In 1853, 'Port Canning' was founded on river *Matla* by Lord Dalhousie to shed the workload of Calcutta Port. The ancient name of Canning was *Matla Gram* (Naskar, 1989). To increase the importance of this port, Calcutta-Canning railways were started by the East India Company in the year 1862-63. All total twenty six ships came to Canning port till 1865-66; afterwards no ship anchored in the dock due to regular occurrence of storms over *Matla* River. Every construction work got stopped by 1871 and Port Canning Land Company started business here after getting *zamindari* of Sundarban from the East India Company (O'Mally, 1914). Finally the *zamindari* got abolished by Act of 1953.

Religious occasion *Brahma Puja* is noteworthy in Canning town. It started more than eighty years back by the local business owners. At present this religious celebration is extremely famous among all sects of the local people. A locally famous temple of Lord Shiva *Maheshwar* is situated near Golkuthi beside river *Matla*. The temple was founded by local famous personality *Shri Rajkrishna Naskar* in 1373 B.S. and was built by mason *Fakir Naskar* (Naskar, 1989). Huge religious gatherings happen during *Shivaratri*. *Kultali Sanskriti o Krishti Mela* is organized at regular basis.

LHC present in the library (See Appendix III):

- Books - 4
- Local magazines - 4

4.9.4 SUB-DIVISION: DIAMOND HARBOUR

a) Bakhrabat Public Library and Free Reading Room – This town library was established in 1926 and finally got sponsored in the year 1987. It is situated on the *Bakhrabat Road* which is connecting *Thakurpukur Bazar* to the *Bakhrabat*, in *Bakhrabat Gram Panchayat* under *Bishnupur-2 Panchayat Samity*.

Significant LH of *Bakhrabat*:

This place fell under the *zamindari* of *Mondal's* of *Bawali*. *Zamindar Sri Krishnacharan Mondal* of *Bawali* established the huge *Atchala* (temple architecture of ancient Bengal) styled *Radhaballavjiu's* temple near *Bakhrabat* which is more than two hundred years old. This place is famous for *Barakachari*, the worship place of Lord Shiva. Here the God is formless and saves people from diseases (Naskar, 1989). This worship place is immensely popular among common people throughout West Bengal, and thousands of devotees gather here for *puja* during the Bengali month of *Shravan*. *Bakhrabat road* was also frequently used by patriots during the *Swadesi* Movement of Bengal as it is situated very near to *Budge Budge* as well as river *Ganga*. This was the only roadway through which arms and ammunition were carried by the British to the Fort William in the then Calcutta (Choudhuri, 2013).

LHC present in the library (See Appendix III):

- Books - 6
- Leaflets - 5

➤ Photographs and paintings - 8

b) R.K.M. Vivek Bharati Patha Bhaban Subdivisional Library – This sub divisional library was established in 1965 with Government sponsorship. It is situated in Sarisha village of Kamar Pole Gram Panchayat under Diamond Harbour-2 Panchayat Samity. This library is under autonomy of Ramakrishna Mission.

Significant LH of Sarisha:

It was the only village in ancient Sundarban where local inhabitants started mustard cultivation, thus the village was named *Sarisha* ('mustard' in Bengali). During Company rule, this village was used as the auxiliary storage of yesterday's Diamond Harbour Dockyard, where ships of East India Company unloaded the outward cargoes (Choudhuri, 2013).

LHC present in the library:

The Librarian couldn't display any LHM in the library.

c) Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar –

This town library was established in 1979 and got sponsored in 1981. The library is situated at Ward no. 13 under Diamond Harbour Municipality; the library can be accessible at walking distance from the Diamond Harbour railway station in Sealdah South division.

Significant LH of *Diamond Harbour*:

Ancient name of *Diamond Harbour* was *Hajipur*. The East India Company established British Harbour Master & Customs Department here, thus the place was named *Diamond Harbour*. A Deep Water Dock was proposed to establish here to shed the load of the Calcutta Dock. Later on in 1833, after a thorough investigation, British Government nullified the project by saying the port “not likely to be neither economical for the shipping nor convenient for the trade” (O’Malley, 1914).

A fort was established here beside the river *Ganga* by East India Company to safeguard Calcutta from outside attack. Ruins of the fort are still present. An unusual local predominant God *Benaki*, was worshipped by farmers in some villages of *Diamond Harbour* who is unique in Bengal and still the practice is going on in *Digheswar, Pala, Birpala, Shankar, Parulia, Sehalampur* villages. The God is also known as *Benakibara* or *Benakibaramunda* i.e. the God is worshipped as a male ‘Head’ having two eyes only (Naskar, 1999).

LHC present in the library (See Appendix III):

- Books - 3
- Souvenirs - 4

d) Karanjali Unnati Bidhayani Pathagar – This century-old rural library was established in 1916 and got sponsorship from the Government in the year 1981. The library is situated at

Karanjali village in *Karanjali Gram Panchayat* under *Kulpi Panchayat Samity*. It can be accessed from *Kakdwip* railway station in *Sealdah* south division.

Significant LH of Karanjali:

Karanjali and Kantabenia were two overlapping villages that were rich in archaeological traces. Both the villages were prominent even during Pala and Sen Dynasties in Bengal. Both of the villages were prosperous places and Jainism was the predominant religion here during ancient time. Ghanteswari Devi temple in Kulpi and Parshwanath Temple in Kantabenia support this history. In Kantabenia village, Parshwanath is worshipped alongside Goddess Bishalakshmi in a huge Hindu temple. According to local religious believes, Jain Parshwanath is worshipped as an alternate form of village deity Panchanan Thakur (Five-headed Lord Shiva) in adjacent villages of Karanjali and Kantabenia (Mandal, 1999). There is also a large and gorgeous temple of local predominant God Babathakur (a subaltern form of Lord Shiva) and secular worship place of local Goddess Bibi Maa in Karanjali; the later place is very much popular among both Hindu and Muslim inhabitants.

LHC present in the library:

The library found closed.

4.9.5 SUB-DIVISION – KAKDWIP

a) Sagar Town Library – This subdivisional library was established in 1959. It is situated in the *Harinbari* village of *Ramkar Char Gram Panchayat* under *Sagar Panchayat Samity*.

Significant LH of Sagar Island:

Sagar Island is one of the largest human reclaimed lands in Indian Sundarbans. This island is composed of five small islands viz., *Sagar*, *Ghoramara*, *Suparidanga*, *Agunmari*, and *Lohachora*. This island is extremely famous for the hermitage of *Kapil Muni*; some of the Indian geographers believe that the temple of *Kapil Muni* was established sometime during 430 A.D. (Choudhuri, 2014). Every year *Gangasagar Mela* and the Holy Bath into confluence are organized in the auspicious occasion of *Makar Sankranti Utsab* during January.

LHC present in the library (See Appendix III):

- Books - 3
- Leaflets - 3
- Souvenirs - 2

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter gives an overview of the concept of LH; it includes its definition, core concepts, value, problems, and various types of LHMs including OH and genealogy. The chapter also throws light on the inextricable relationship between LH and PL; it discusses in detail, the local historical facts of the localities where the sample public libraries are present as well as LHCs of these libraries.

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Chapter 5

Present Condition of Local History Collection
in Government Sponsored Public Libraries in
24 Parganas (South): Analysis and
Interpretation

5.1 PRESENTATION OF DATA FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY SURVEY

The sample of the present investigation consists of total 26 (twenty-six) Government-sponsored public libraries in the district of South 24 Parganas, West Bengal. There are one District Library (DL), ten Sub-divisional libraries (SDL), nine Town Libraries (TL), and six century-old Rural Libraries (COL) (DMEELS, 2018). Data have been collected from library personnel and users, with the help of a questionnaires intended for this purpose. Some of the administrative data have been collected, wherever necessary, from Annual Reports of the Department of Mass Education Extension & Library Services. Here the investigator tried to tabulate, analyze and interpret the raw and abstracted data collected through questionnaire survey to represent the present actual condition of LHC in the libraries of the district.

The data obtained from detailed investigation and interview, have been tabulated and analyzed into two separate sub-sections. The first sub-section represents mainly the infrastructural, administrative and technical data, and related interpretations. The second sub-section represents the users' general information obtained from personal data that they gave in response to the questionnaires. This sub-section is also an overall representation of users' perspectives regarding collections, specialized services, maintenance, organization and other detailed qualitative factors on LH, provided by the public libraries of the district (Moitra & Dutta, 2019).

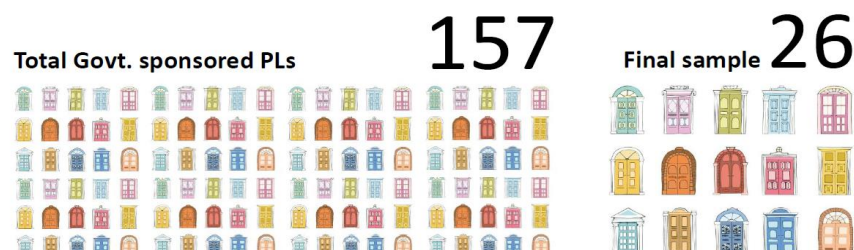


Figure 5A. Sample selection of Public Libraries in 24 Parganas (South)

5.1.1 GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DATA

Table 5.1 Category-wise distribution of libraries

Category of Library	DL	SDL		TL		COL	TOTAL
No. of Libraries	1	Century-old TL upgraded to SDL	TL upgraded to SDL	Only TL	Century-old TL	6	26
		4	6	5	4		
Percentage (%)	3.85	15.38	23.08	19.23	15.38	23.08	100

(DL- District Library; SDL- Sub-divisional Library; TL- Town Library; COL- Century-old Rural Library); Question no. –10

Table 5.1 presents the categorical division of sample libraries in the district. There is one (3.85 %) District Library. There is no such library established as Sub-divisional Library from the beginning. All the Sub-divisional Libraries are upgraded Town Libraries. All total ten (38.46 %) Town Libraries were upgraded as Sub-divisional Libraries, among which four (15.38 %) such libraries are century-old and six (23.08 %) libraries are only upgraded Sub-divisional Libraries. There are a total of nine (34.61 %) such Town Libraries which were not upgraded to Sub-divisional status and remained at Town status from the beginning. Among these, five libraries (19.23 %) belong to only the Town Library category and four libraries (15.38 %) crossed the century-old as per their respective years of establishment.

Table 5.2 Subdivision-wise distribution of libraries

Sl. No.	Sub division	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Alipore Sadar	1	100	6	60	2	22.22	1	16.66
2.	Baruipur	-	-	1	10	5	55.55	5	83.33
3.	Canning	-	-	1	10	-	-	-	
4.	Diamond Harbour	-	-	1	10	2	22.22	-	
5.	Kakdwip	-	-	1	10	-	-	-	-
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL - District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL - Town Library; COL - Century-old Rural Library); Question no.- 6

Table 5.2 presents the distribution of sample libraries according to the administrative subdivision of the district. The DL, 6 SDLs (60 %), 2 TLs (22.22 %) and 1 COL (16.66 %), i.e. a total of ten libraries are situated in the Alipore Sadar subdivision. A total of eleven libraries among the sample libraries, the majority of the TLs (55.55 %) and COLs (83.33 %) are situated in the Baruipur subdivision. Canning and Kakdwip, both sub divisions have one SDL each. The Diamond Harbour subdivision has one SDL (10 %) and two TLs (22.22 %), i.e. the subdivision has a total of three libraries.

Table 5.3 Geographical location wise distribution of libraries

Sl. No.	Location	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Urban (Municipality)	-	-	8	80	6	66.66	1	16.66
2.	Rural (Gram Panchayet)	1	100	2	20	3	33.33	5	83.33
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL - District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL - Town Library; COL - Century-old Rural Library); Question no. - 7

Table 5.3 shows the location of libraries as ‘Urban’ or ‘Rural’. It is found that a total of eight SDLs (80 %), six TLs (66.66 %), and one COL (16.66 %) are situated under various Municipalities which are categorized as “urban”. On the other hand, DL, two SDLs (20 %), three TLs (33.33 %), and five COLs (83.33 %) are situated under different Gram Panchayets which are categorized as ‘rural’. Thus, a total of fifteen sample libraries are urban in location and eleven sample libraries are rural in location.

Table 5.4 Year of establishment of libraries

Sl. No.	Year of Establishment	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	1876-1900	-	-	1	10	2	22.22	-	-
2.	1901-1925	-	-	3	30	2	22.22	6	100

3.	1926-1950	-	-	3	30	4	44.44	-	-
4.	1951-1975	1	100	2	20	-	-	-	-
5.	1976-2000	-	-	1	10	1	11.11	-	-
6.	2000 onwards	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL - District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL - Town Library; COL - Century-old Rural Library); Question no. - 2

Table 5.4 displays the chronological arrangement of libraries according to their respective years of establishment. It is found that three libraries (one SDL and two TLs) were established during 1876-1900. No COLs had been established during that period. Three SDLs (30 %) and two TLs (22.22 %) were established during 1901 – 1925. All six COLs (100 %) were established during that particular period. A total of eleven libraries were established during this period. A total of seven libraries (3 SDLs and 4 TLs) were established during 1926 – 1950. The DL, along with two SDLs (20 %) was established during 1951 – 1975. It is observed that only two libraries, one SDL (10 %) and one TL (11.11 %) were found between the years 1976-2000. No new library was established after the year 2001.

Table 5.5 Year of getting sponsored by the Government

Sl. No.	Year of getting Sponsored	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	1951-60	1	100	2	20	3	33.33	-	-

2.	1961-70	-	-	3	30	1	11.11	2	33.33
3.	1971-80	-	-	2	20	-	-	1	16.66
4.	1981-90	-	-	3	30	5	55.55	3	50
5.	1991 onwards	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL - District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL - Town Library; COL - Century-old Rural Library); Question no. - 9

Table 5.5 presents the chronological arrangement of libraries according to the year in which they got sponsored by the Government. It is found that the DL, 2 SDLs (20 %) and three TLs (33.33 %), a total of six libraries were sponsored during 1951-60. another six libraries which include three SDLs (30 %), one TL (11.11 %) and two COLs (33.33 %) were sponsored during 1961-70. A minimum number of libraries, i.e. only two SDLs (20 %) and one COL (16.66 %) were sponsored between the years 1971-80. During 1981 – 90, there is a sudden upraise in sponsoring public libraries from the end of the Government. At a time eleven libraries (43.31 %) were sponsored during this period which includes three SDLs (30 %), five TLs (55.55 %) and three COLs (50 %). No library was sponsored by the Government after the year 1991.

Table 5.6 Working days (per week) of libraries

Sl. No.	No. of Working Days per Week	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	< 2	-	-	1	10	1	11.11	1	16.66
2.	2 – 3	-	-	2	20	2	22.22	3	50
3.	4 – 5	-	-	6	60	5	55.55	1	16.66
4.	6	1	100	1	10	1	11.11	-	-
5.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL - District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL - Town Library; COL - Century-old Rural Library); Question no. -18

The above table (Table 5.6) shows the number of working days per week, i.e. how many days the libraries are open in a week. The Government-sponsored public libraries enjoy six days a week in alternative weeks. The second and fourth Saturdays are holidays. These libraries open on the first, third and fifth Saturdays in every month. In the DL, only one SDL (10 %) and one TL (11.11 %) remain open all six days a week. The majority of the SDLs (60 %) remain open four to five days in every week. Some SDLs (20 %) are open two to three days and one SDL (10 %) is open only one day a week. In the case of TLs, only one (11.11 %) remains open six days a week. A maximum number of five TLs (55.55 %) remain open four to five days a week, some TLs (22.22 %) are open two to three days and one TL (11.11 %) remains open only one day a week.

50 % of the COLs reported that they remain open two to three days a week. One COL (16.66 %) found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.7 Membership details of libraries

Sl. No.	No. of Registered Members	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	1 – 500	-	-	6	60	6	66.66	4	66.66
2.	501 - 1000	-	-	1	10	2	22.22	1	16.66
3.	1001 - 1500	1	100	2	20	1	11.11	-	-
4.	1501 - 2000	-	-	1	10	-	-	-	-
5.	> 2000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL - District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL - Town Library; COL - Century-old Rural Library); Question no. - 17

Table 5.7 presents the statements regarding membership details of libraries. The table shows that the maximum number of libraries i.e. sixteen libraries, including six SDLs (60 %), six TLs (66.66 %) and four COLs (66.66 %) have registered membership between 1 – 500 members in total. Four libraries reported having 501 -1000 registered members. The DL, two SDLs (20 %) and one TL (11.11 %) have registered members from 1001 to 1500. Only one SDL (10 %)

reported that it has a total number of registered members from 1501 to 2000. No library has members more than 2000. One COL (16.66 %) did not respond as it was found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.8 Details of total collection of books

Sl. No.	Collection of Books	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	≤ 5000	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	33.33
2.	5001 - 10000	-	-	1	10	2	22.22	1	16.66
3.	10001 - 15000	-	-	2	20	5	55.55	2	33.33
4.	15001 - 20000	-	-	3	30	2	22.22	-	-
5.	>20001 – 25000	-	-	3	30	-	-	-	-
6.	≥ 25001	1	100	1	10	-	-	-	-
7.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL - District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL - Town Library; COL - Century-old Rural Library); Question no. - 21

Table 5.8 shows the statement regarding the total number of books in libraries. It is found that a total number of nine libraries have books ranging from 10001 to 15000. These libraries include two SDLs (20 %), five TLs (55.55 %) and two COLs (33.33 %). Two COLs (33.33 %) have less than 5000 books in their collections. One COL (16.66 %) did not respond. Maximum numbers of

TLs (55.55 %) have 10001 to 15000 books in the collections. The DL and only one SDL (10 %) reported having more than 25000 books.

Table 5.9 Average daily circulation (issue-return) of books

Sl. No.	Average Daily Circulation (Books)	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	≤ 10	-	-	3	30	5	55.55	4	66.66
2.	11 – 20	-	-	7	70	3	33.33	-	-
3.	21 – 30	1	100	-	-	1	11.11	1	16.66
4.	31 – 40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	≥ 41	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL - District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL - Town Library; COL - Century-old Rural Library); Question no. -19

Table 5.9 presents the statement about average counting of circulation (both issue and return) of books per day in sample libraries. It is seen that the daily average circulation rate is 10 or less than 10 books in twelve libraries in total. These libraries include three SDLs (30 %), five TLs

(55.55 %) and four COLs (66.66 %). The maximum number of SDLs (70 %) reported that the circulation of books in their libraries ranges from 11 to 20 per day. The DL, one SDL (1 %) and one COL (16.66 %) reported their circulation rate from 21 to 30 books per day. One COL (16.66 %) did not respond as it was found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.10 Average daily reading room use

Sl. No.	Average Daily Reading Room User	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	< 10	-	-	3	30	-	-	2	33.33
2.	10 – 20	-	-	4	40	5	55.55	2	33.33
3.	21 – 30	-	-	1	10	3	33.33	-	-
4.	31 – 40	1	100	1	10	-	-	-	-
5.	41 – 50	-	-	1	10	1	11.11	-	-
6.	≥ 51	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
7.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL - District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL - Town Library; COL - Century-old Rural Library); Question no. - 20

The above table (Table 5.10) presents the daily average library reading room usage by users as well as by non-users. A total of five libraries including three SDLs (30 %) and two COLs (33.33 %) reported their daily reading room usage as 10 or less than 10 users. It is seen that majority of the libraries which include four SDLs (40 %), five TLs (55.55 %) and two COLs (33.33 %) reported the average reading room usage between 11 to 20 users per day. One SDL (10% and three TLs (33.33 %) reported the average daily user attendance at the reading room between 21 to 30 users. The DL and another SDL reported the numbers between 31 to 40 users. Only one TL reported its daily reading room usage rate between 41 to 50 users. Only one COL (16.66 %) reported that its reading room is used for reading by 51 or more users per day. One (16.66 %) COL found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.11 Existing number of permanent staff present

Sl. No.	No. of Staff	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	≤ 2	-	-	5	50	5	55.55	3	50
2.	2 – 4	-	-	5	50	4	44.44	2	33.33
3.	5 – 7	1	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
4.	≥ 7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL - District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL - Town Library; COL - Century-old Rural Library); Question no. - 15

Table 5.11 indicates the existing number of staff working in the libraries. It is observed that a majority of thirteen libraries have a working staff of less than two, including five SDLs (50 %), five TLs (50 %) and three COLs (50 %). Eleven libraries that have a total number of working staff from 2 to 4; these are five SDLs (50 %), four TLs (44.44 %) and two COLs (33.33 %) in total. DL is the only library under sample which has a total number of working staff from 5 to 7. No library reported having more than seven working staff. One COL (16.66 %) found closed for having ‘no staff’.

Table 5.12 Existing staff positions of libraries

Sl. No.	Existing Staff Position	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	LIB LA DCBB DCNW	1	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
2.	LIB DCBB DCNW	-	-	2	20	-	-	-	-
3.	LIB DCBB	-	-	2	20	1	11.11	1	16.66
4.	LA DCBB	-	-	-	-	3	33.33	-	-
5.	Only LIB	-	-	1	10	1	11.11	2	33.33
6.	Only LA	-	-	4	40	2	22.22	2	33.33
7.	Only DCBB	-	-	1	10	1	11.11	-	-
8.	Only DCNW	-	-	-	-	1	11.11	-	-

9.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
Total		1	10	9	6				

(LIB – Librarian; LA– Library Assistant; DCBB – Duftary-cum-Book Binder or Peon; DCNW – Darwan-cum-Night Watchman); (DL - District Library; SDL - Sub-divisional Library; TL - Town Library; COL - Century-old Rural Library); Question no.16

The above table (Table 5.12) presents the staff positions in the respondent libraries. The staff positions are arranged in different combinations as observed in each library. It is seen from the Table that only DL of the District has all the staff with requisite numbers and positions. One library (3.85 %) has become closed for not having any staff at all. Only two SDLs (20 %) have three staff including the librarian, which combination is not available in any of the TLs and COLs. Only two SDLs, one TL (11.11 %) and one COL (16.66 %) reported having two working staff with librarian and DCBB. Three TLs (33.33 %) have two staff condition with LA and DCBB. There are a total of four libraries including one SDL (10 %), one TL (11.11 %) and two COLs (33.33 %) which have a librarian as the only working staff. A majority of the eight libraries which include four SDLs (40 %), two TLs (22.22 %) and two COLs (33.33 %), have LA as the only working staff in the libraries. There are one such SDL (10 %) and one TL (11.11 %) which currently running by only one working staff who is a DCBB. There is one TL (11.11 %) which is reported to have only one DCNW to run the library. One COL (16.66 %) found closed for not having any staff.

Table 5.13 Presence or absence of Librarian in the library

Sl. No.	No. of Staff	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	With Librarian	1	100	5	50	2	22.22	3	50
2.	Without Librarian	-	-	5	50	7	77.77	2	33.33
3.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
Total		1		10		9		6	

(DL - District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL - Town Library; COL - Century-old Rural Library); Question no. - 11

Table 5.13 shows the libraries which are running with or without a Librarian. It is found that the DL has the Librarian. Out of ten SDLs in the district, five (50 %) have librarians and another five (50 %) do not have. The TLs of the district are running ore compromisingly as seven TLs (77.77 %), out of nine, are running without a librarian; only two TLs (22.22 %) have librarians. Out of six COLs of the district, three (50 %) have librarians and two COLs (33.33 %) do not have any librarian. One COL (16.66 %) found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.14 Use of Computers by Librarians/ Library-in-Charges

Sl. No.	Use of Computers	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Yes	1	100	4	40	2	22.22	-	-
2.	No	-	-	6	60	7	77.77	5	83.33
3.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
Total		1		10		9		6	

(DL - District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL - Town Library; COL - Century-old Rural Library); Question no. 23

The above table (Table 5.14) reflects the scenario of using computers in sample libraries by librarians or library-in-charges in accomplishing daily work schedule. The DL uses computers on a regular basis in order to manage daily library activities. Only four SDLs (40 %), out of ten, use computers in library activities, whereas six SDLs (60 %) do not use computers at all. The scenario is more discouraging in TLs; seven TLs (77.77 %) out of nine do not use computers for any of the library management activities. The situation is worst in COLs because no COL uses computers for any of the necessary management doings of the libraries. One COL (16.66 %) did not respond due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.15 Availability of Internet connections in computers

Sl. No.	Internet connection available	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Yes	1	100	2	20	1	11.11	-	-
2.	No	-	-	8	80	8	88.88	5	83.33
3.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
Total		1		10		9		6	

(DL - District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL - Town Library; COL - Century-old Rural Library); Question no. – 24

Table 5.15 presents the data regarding the availability of Internet connections in computers of the public libraries. The DL has proper internet connections. Out of ten, only two SDLs (20 %) reported having Internet connections. Among nine TLs only one TL (11.11 %) reported that it has Internet connections intermittently. None of the six COLs reported to have Internet connections in computers. One COL (16.66 %) did not respond as it was found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.16 Presence or absence of non-book materials

Sl. No.	Non-book materials present	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Yes	1	100	9	90	5	55.55	1	16.66
2.	No	-	-	1	10	4	44.44	4	66.66
3.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
Total		1		10		9		6	

(DL - District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL - Town Library; COL - Century-old Rural Library); Question no. – 22

Table 5.16 presents the data regarding the availability of non-book materials in public libraries. The DL has non-book materials. Out of ten, nine SDLs (90 %) reported to have non-book materials, whereas only one TL (10 %) does not have. Among nine TLs only five TLs (55.55 %) said that they have non-book materials, whereas four TLs (44.44 %) do not have. Out of six COLs, only one COL (16.66 %) said that it has some non-book materials, whereas a large number of four COLs (66.66 %) reported not having any non-book materials in their collections. One COL (16.66 %) found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

5.1.2 LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION RELATED DATA

The following tables present the data regarding LHC of public libraries in the district of 24 Parganas (South).

Table 5.17 Presence or absence of LHC in the library

Sl. No.	Category of Library	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	LHC Present	1	100	9	90	8	88.89	2	33.33
2.	LHC Absent	-	-	1	10	1	11.11	3	50
3.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
	TOTAL	1		10		9		6	

(DL – District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL – Town Library; COL – Century-old Rural Library); Question no. - 25

Table 5.17 presents the data about the presence or absence of LHC in the sample libraries. It is observed that regarding the presence of LHC, the average scenario is not so disappointing in the district. The DL has a well-developed and organized LHC on South 24 Parganas and also on other districts of West Bengal. Among ten SDLs, nine libraries (90 %) reported having LHCs. On the other hand, out of nine TLs, a total of eight libraries (88.89 %) reported having LHCs in

libraries to serve their local user communities. Out of six COLs in the district, only two libraries (33.33 %) have, to some extent, small collections of LH related to their respective localities. One SDL (10 %), one TL (11.11 %) and three COLs (50 %) reported that they do not have any kind of LH related reading resources. No response can be collected from one COL (16.67 %) as it was found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.18 Presence or absence of separate LH section in the library

Sl. No.	Category of Library	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Separate LH Section Present	1	100	1	10	2	22.22	1	16.66
2.	Separate LH Section Absent	-	-	9	90	7	77.77	4	66.66
3.	Library closed (No staff)	-		-		-		1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL – District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL – Town Library; COL – Century-old Rural Library); Question no. - 26

Table 5.18 indicates the presence or absence of separate LH section in the sample libraries. It is observed that a little number of libraries in the district has separate LH section inside the library buildings. The DL has an organized completely separate LH section. Among the SDLs, only one library (10 %) reported having separate LH section and nine libraries (90 %) do not have the

same. Only two TLs (22.22 %) have a separate LH section out of nine TLs in the district. Out of the total six COLs, only one library (16.66 %) maintains a separate section for LH, the other four (66.66 %) libraries do not have. One (16.66 %) COL found closed due to the ‘no staff’ condition. The libraries which reported that they do not have any LHM in their collections obviously do not have separate LH section. Overall only 19.23 % libraries in the district have separate LH section inside the libraries and 76.92 % of libraries do not have the same.

Table 5.19 Libraries providing different services regarding LHC; Question - MCQ

Sl. No.	Services	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Lending	-	-	8	80	5	55.55	2	33.33
2.	Reading Only	1	100	1	10	3	33.33	2	33.33
3.	Reference	1	100	7	70	3	33.33	2	33.33
4.	Inter Library Loan	1	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	Referral	1	100	1	10	2	22.22	1	16.66
6.	OPAC	1	100	1	10	-	-	-	-
7.	No Service	-	-	1	10	1	11.11	3	50
8.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL – District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL – Town Library; COL – Century-old Rural Library); Question no. - 27

Table 5.19 reflects the number of libraries that provide specialized services regarding their LHCs. The question was a multiple choice question and sample libraries opted for more than one options. It is found that the DL renders almost all the services except lending of LHMs. The majority of the SDLs provide lending (80 %) and reading (10 %) services in combination with reference service (70 %). A very few of them provide other significant services like referral (10 %) and OPAC (10 %) services. One SDL (10 %) does not provide any LH related service at all. In the case of TLs, the majority provides lending (55.55 %) and reading (33.33 %) services, few provide reference (33.33%) and referral (22.22 %) services. No TL provides OPAC services regarding LHC. The almost same condition is prevalent in COLs also; none of them provides OPAC service. Out of a total of six COLs, three of them (50 %) do not provide any service regarding LH. Others provide lending (33.33 %), reading (33.33 %) and reference (33.33 %) services somewhat to an extent. One COL (16.66 %) found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.20 Types of LHMs present in the collection; Question – MCQ

Sl. No.	Types of LHMs	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Books	1	100	9	90	8	88.88	4	66.66
2.	Manuscripts	-	-	1	10	-	-	1	16.66
3.	Letters & Correspondences	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4.	Diaries & Memoirs	-	-	1	10	-	-	-	-
5.	Souvenir	1	100	4	40	-	-	1	16.66
6.	Local Magazine	1	100	5	50	5	55.55	1	16.66

7.	Local Newspaper	1	100	2	20	3	33.33	2	33.33
8.	Leaflet & Pamphlet	1	100	1	10	2	22.22	1	16.66
9.	Govt. Plans & Deeds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.	Map & Toposheets	1	100	-	-	1	11.11	-	-
11.	Photograph	1	100	1	10	3	33.33	1	16.66
12.	Painting & Sculpture	-	-	-	-	1	11.11	-	-
13.	Artifact	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14.	Relic	-	-	-	-	1	11.11	-	-
15.	Genealogy	-	-	-	-	1	11.11	-	-
16.	Oral History	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17.	Special Collection	-	-	-	-	1	11.11	-	-
18.	No Collection	-	-	1	10	1	11.11	3	50
19.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL – District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL – Town Library; COL – Century-old Rural Library); Question no. - 29

Table 5.20 presents the types of LHMs present in the collection of sample public libraries. The question was an MCQ and sample libraries opted for more than one options. It is observed that almost all the libraries think that LHMs are books only. This is the reason majority of the

libraries have little to moderate collections of books on the LH of their immediate locality. Among the sample libraries, the DL covers a variety of the categories of LHMs in its collection. A considerable number of libraries, i.e. over 50 % of the SDLs and TLs have local magazines and local newspapers in their collection. Out of ten SDLs, four libraries (40 %) have souvenirs of nearby educational institutions and social welfare organizations, whereas no TL reported having the same. The DL and only one TL (11.11 %) reported having maps in their LH collections. A total of five libraries, including DL, have leaflets and pamphlets of activities of local clubs, local social welfare organizations and/ or voluntary organizations. Only one TL (11.11 %) has a special collection of books (acquired through donation) on LH, some relics of local deities, and a genealogical record of a renowned local personality. There is only one SDL (10 %) which has diary and memoir in its collection. No library has any kind of oral history material, Government plans and deeds, letters and correspondences, and artifacts. One SDL (10 %), one TL (11.11 %) and three COLs (50 %) reported that they have no LHC at all. One COL (16.66 %) found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.21 Extension services provided by libraries regarding LHC; Question – MCQ

Sl. No.	Types of LH extension services	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	LHM Exhibition in Library	-	-	1	10	3	33.33	1	16.66
2.	Local Culture Promoting Programmes	1	100	5	50	6	66.66	1	16.66
3.	User Orientation on LH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

4.	Lectures and Talks by LH Experts	-	-	3	30	4	44.44	1	16.66
5.	Reading Circles	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	LH Awareness Rally	1	100	1	10	3	33.33	1	16.66
7.	Reference Service to Researchers	1	100	8	80	7	77.77	4	66.66
8.	Referral Service	1	100	1	10	1	11.11	-	-
9.	Personal Assistance	1	100	-	-	1	11.11	-	-
10.	No Extension Service	-	-	1	10	1	11.11	3	50
11.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL – District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL – Town Library; COL – Century-old Rural Library); Question no. - 28

Table 5.21 reflects the nature and different categories of extension services that are rendered by the sample libraries regarding their own LHCs. The question was a MCQ and sample libraries opted for more than one options. It is found from the survey that the DL provides the majority of the extension services regarding its own LHC. Among the rest of the libraries, eight SDLs (80 %), seven TLs (77.77 %) and four COLs (66.66 %) provide LH reference service to the researchers as well as to the general users. Cultural programmes promoting the local tradition and culture are frequently organized by many of the libraries as reported by the DL, five SDLs (50 %), and six TLs (66.66 %). Many libraries viz., three SDLs (30 %) and four TLs (44.44 %)

arrange for popular lectures and talks delivered by famous LH experts of the nearby or greater localities. Referral service is provided by the DL, one SDL (10 %) and one TL (11.11 %). No library arranges for user orientation programmes on LH and reading circles. Conducting LH awareness rally is a little common extension service as reported by the DL, one SDL (10 %), three TLs (33.33 %), and one COL (16.66 %). COLs, in most of the samples, are not active as expected in rendering such extension services. Apart from DL, only one TL (11.11 %) provides personal assistance to its users. A total of four libraries including one SDL (10 %), one TL (11.11 %) and three COLs (50 %) stated that they do not provide any kind of extension services or specialized services regarding LH of their immediate locality. One COL (16.66 %) found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.22 Physical facilities provided at LH section in library; Question – MCQ

Sl. No.	Physical Facilities	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Dedicated LH section	1	100	1	10	2	22.22	1	16.66
2.	Enough illumination	1	100	-	-	2	22.22	1	16.66
3.	Separate sitting arrangement	1	100	1	10	2	22.22	1	16.66
4.	Separate display area	1	100	1	10	2	22.22	1	16.66
5.	Dedicated computer	-	-	-	-	1	11.11	-	-
6.	Internet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

	connection								
7.	No separate physical facility	-	-	9	90	7	77.77	4	66.66
8.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL – District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL – Town Library; COL – Century-old Rural Library); Question no. - 30

Table 5.22 shows various physical facilities which are provided by the sample public libraries related to their own LHCs. The question was an MCQ and sample libraries opted for more than one options. It is observed that the DL provides the majority of the physical facilities as it has its own dedicated LH section. Besides DL, one SDL (10 %), two TLs (22.22 %) and one COL (16.66 %) reported that they have separate areas marked as LH section inside the library building. The DL, one SDL (10 %), two TLs (22.22 %) and one COL (16.66 %) said that they have display areas for LHMs in their reading rooms. Other than DL, one SDL (10 %), two TLs (22.22 %) and one COL (16.66 %) reported having separate areas inside their library reading rooms where interested users can sit and consult with various LHMs available in the respective libraries. Only one TL (11.11 %) has a dedicated computer for LH researchers and general LH users, though the same library does not have a separate section for LH. None of the libraries has an internet connection to the computers. The majority of the libraries including nine SDLs (90 %), seven TLs (77.77 %) and four COLs (66.66 %) do not have associated necessary physical facilities to access and use LHCs. One COL (16.66 %) found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.23 Statement regarding participation of Librarian in LHM selection in library;

Question – MCQ

Sl. No.	Participants	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Library Committee at State Central Library	1	100	9	90	8	88.88	5	83.33
2.	District Library Officer	1	100	9	90	8	88.88	5	83.33
3.	Librarian	1	100	3	30	1	11.11	1	16.66
4.	Library Users	1	100	2	20	-	-	1	16.66
5.	No Idea/ No Interest	-	-	1	10	1	11.11	-	-
6.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL – District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL – Town Library; COL – Century-old Rural Library); Question no. –31, 32

Table 5.23 reveals the picture of the participation of Librarian/ Library-in-Charge in the selection of LHMs for respective public libraries. It is reported by the DL, nine SDLs (90 %), nine out of nine TLs, and five COLs (83.33 %) that selection of LHMs as well as overall collection development policy is controlled centrally by the Library Committee at State Central Library including the appropriate authority, i.e. District Library Officer or DLO. The librarian of the DL

is also involved in the same process. Other than DL, only three SDLs (30 %), only one TL (11.11 %), and only one COL (16.66 %) reported that librarians are asked to get involved in the LHMs selection as well as overall collection development policy of the concerned libraries. A total number of four libraries, including the DL, two SDLs (20 %), and one COL (16.66 %) reported that they ask their regular users to place their demands while selecting reading materials, whereas none of the TLs do so. One SDL (10 %) and one TL (11.11 %) refused to answer the question as they do not have any idea or interest regarding involvement in LHM selection processes as well as overall collection development policies. One COL (16.66 %) found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition

Table 5.24 Specific requirements of libraries to develop and maintain LHC

Question – MCQ

Sl. No.	Requirements	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	More Space	1	100	1	10	2	22.22	3	50
2.	Increased Financial Assistance	-	-	4	40	4	44.44	5	83.33
3.	Adequate Staff	-	-	9	90	8	88.88	5	83.33
4.	Regular Staff Training	1	100	7	70	5	55.55	1	16.66
5.	Digitization Facility	1	100	2	20	1	11.11	1	6.66
6.	Restoration and Preservation Facilities	-	-	8	80	5	55.55	2	33.33
7.	Consultation With LH Experts	1	100	3	30	1	11.11	1	16.66
8.	No Opinion	-	-	1	10	1	11.11	-	-

9.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-		1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL – District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL – Town Library; COL – Century-old Rural Library); Question no.- 33

Table 5.24 stated the opinions of librarians/ library-in-charges regarding their specific needs to develop and maintain a well-organized LHC in their respective libraries. Requirement of space is more or less an important factor as reported by the DL, one SDL (10 %), two TLs (22.22 %) and three COLs (50 %). The survey reveals the picture of severe staff shortage in sample libraries. Nine SDLs (90 %) out of ten, eight TLs (88.88 %) out of nine and five COLs (83.33 %) out of six have reported that libraries are running compromisingly in this situation. Four SDLs (40 %), four TLs (44.44 %) and five COLs (83.33 %) reported that more financial assistance is required in this regard. A large number of libraries including the DL, seven SDLs (70 %), five TLs (55.55 %) and one COL (16.66 %) said that regular professional training of librarians/ other staff for the development and maintenance of LHC is urgently required. The DL and other four libraries reported having digitization facilities for the maintenance of LHCs. Again a considerable number of libraries viz., eight SDLs (80 %), five TLs (55.55 %) and two COLs (33.33 %) stressed restoration and preservation facilities for invaluable LHMs. The DL, three SDLs (30 %), one TL (11.11 %) and one COL (16.66 %) said that consultation with LH experts once in a while can prove to be beneficial for such initiative. The librarians/ library-in-charges of two libraries including one SDL (10 %) and one TL (11.11 %) refuse to express any opinion regarding these issues. One COL (16.66 %) found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.25 Statement of user demand for LH (Recorded in a yr.)

Sl. No.	Frequency of Demand	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Twice a week	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2.	Once a week	1	100	-	-	1	11.11	-	-
3.	Once in two weeks	-	-	2	20	2	22.22	-	-
4.	Once in a month	-	-	5	50	3	33.33	-	-
5.	Once in three months	-	-	1	10	-	-	1	16.66
6.	Twice a year	-	-	-	-	2	22.22	-	-
7.	Once a year	-	-	-	-	1	11.11	4	66.66
8.	Never	-	-	2	20	-	-	-	-
9.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL – District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL – Town Library; COL – Century-old Rural Library); Question no. - 36

Table 5.25 showed the frequency of user demand for LH in the sample public libraries. The entire data is recorded in a single year, by the librarian or the library-in-charge of each library. A considerable number of libraries which includes five SDLs (50 %) and three TLs (33.33 %) reported that users come to the library with LH related queries at least once in a month. The DL and only one TL (11.11 %) reported the frequency as once a week. One TL (11.11 %) and majority of the COLs (66.66 %) said that they hardly find such a user who is interested in LH,

thus they marked the frequency at an average of only once a year. As reported by two (20 %) SDLs and two (22.22 %) TLs, users generally come for LH searching once every two weeks. One SDL (10%) and one COL (16.66 %) reported the users to demand LH once in three months. Only two TLs (22.22 %) reported facing the users' LH-related queries six months in every year. No library reported the frequency of the same as twice a week. Two SDLs (20 %) reported that no user comes with any kind of LH-related query. One COL (16.66 %) found closed due to 'no staff' condition

Table 5.26 Methods of recording user demands for LH

Question - MCQ

Sl. No.	Methods of Recording User Demand	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Suggestion Box	1	100	7	70	2	22.22	1	16.66
2.	LH Demand Register	1	100	5	50	7	77.77	2	33.33
3.	Librarians' Meet	1	100	4	40	4	44.44	1	16.66
4.	Through E-mail	1	100	-	-	1	11.11	-	-
5.	No Specific Recording Method	-	-	1	10	1	11.11	3	50
6.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-		1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL – District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL – Town Library; COL – Century-old Rural Library); Question no. 34, 35

Table 5.26 presents the methods which are used to record the users' demand for LH in public libraries. The question was an MCQ and sample libraries opted for more than one options. It is observed that the DL is the only library in the sample which used a variety of methods, viz., suggestion box, demand register, personal meeting with users', and through e-mails to record the users' demand. Among the SDLs of the district, the majority of them (70 %) have a suggestion box to collect users' demands; a total of two (22.22 %) TLs and only one (16.66 %) COL has the same. A total of five (50 %) SDLs, seven (77.77 %) TLs and two (33.33 %) COLs use demand registers to record user' demands. Personal meetings with users by the Librarians are regularly conducted by four (40 %) SDLs, four (44.44 %) and only one (16.66 %) COL. None of the SDLs and COLs has reported to collect users' demands through e-mails; only one (11.11 %) TL reported having the facility. Some of the sample libraries, viz., one (10%) SDL, one (11.11 %) TL and half (50 %) of the COLs reported that they do not use any specific recording method for LH demand. One COL (16.66 %) found closed due to 'no staff' condition

Table 5.27 Frequency of reviewing user demands for LH

Sl. No.	Frequency of Reviewing User Demands	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Fortnightly	1	100	-	-	1	11.11	-	-
2.	Monthly	-	-	2	20	1	11.11	2	33.33
3.	Half-yearly	-	-	4	40	2	22.22	-	-
4.	Yearly	-	-	3	30	2	22.22	-	-

5.	Never	-	-	1	10	3	33.33	3	50
6.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL – District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL – Town Library; COL – Century-old Rural Library); Question no. 37

Table 5.27 presents the statement regarding the frequency of reviewing users’ demands for LH in the public libraries. It is seen that the DL (100%) and only one (11.11 %) TL reviews the users’ demands fortnightly. Two (20 %) SDLs, one (11.11 %) TL, and two (33.33 %) COLs review the same in every month. A large number of SDLs (40 %) and two (22.22 %) TLs reported the frequency as a half-yearly review. A total of three (30 %) SDLs and again two (22.22%) TLs review the users’ demands for LH only once a year. One SDL (10 %), a total of three (33.33 %) TLs and half (50 %) of the COLs reported that they never review the LH demands of users in their libraries. One COL (16.66 %) found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.28 Opinion on the need for publicity of LHC

Sl. No.	Opinion on Publicity of LHC	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Strongly Needed	1	100	4	40	3	33.33	1	16.66
2.	Not Needed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.	May be Needed	-	-	5	50	4	44.44	2	33.33
4.	No Opinion	-	-	1	10	2	22.22	2	33.33

5.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
TOTAL		1	10	9	6				

(DL – District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL – Town Library; COL – Century-old Rural Library); Question no. 38

Table 5.28 represents the opinions of Librarians and Library-in-Charges sample libraries regarding the need for publicity of LHCs in libraries. Including the DL (100 %), four (40 %) SDLs, three (33.33 %) TLs and one (16.66 %) COL opined that publicity for popularizing LHCs in public libraries is strongly needed. Five (50 %) out of ten SDLs, four (44.44 %) TLs and two (33.33 %) COLs remained in confusion and stated that publicity may be required to popularize LHCs in public libraries. A few libraries viz., one (10%) SDL, two (22.22 %) TLs and two (33.33 %) COLs stated that they have no opinion regarding this particular issue. None of the sample libraries negatively opined for the same. One COL (16.66 %) found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.29 Publicity measures for LH awareness among local communities

Question – MCQ

Sl. No.	Publicity Measures Adopted	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Library Brochure / Magazine	1	100	6	60	3	33.33	2	33.33
2.	Leaflet distribution	1	100	3	30	4	44.44	1	16.66

3.	LH-awareness Rally	1	100	3	30	2	22.22	1	16.66
4.	Public Address System	1	100	4	40	2	22.22	-	
5.	Posters / Notices	-	-	4	40	3	33.33	2	33.33
6.	Advertisement in Local Newspapers	1	100	4	40	2	22.22	-	
7.	Social Media	1	100	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
8.	No Measure Taken	-	-	3	30	5	55.55	3	50
9.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-		1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL – District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL – Town Library; COL – Century-old Rural Library); Question no. 39, 40

The above table (Table 5.29) describes the publicity measures taken by sample public libraries to make their respective LHCs popular among the local communities. The question was an MCQ and sample libraries opted for more than one options. It is seen that the DL takes a number of publicity measures to popularize the LHC of the library. A large several other libraries viz., six (60 %) SDLs, three (33.33 %) TLs and two (33.33 %) COLs use library brochures or library magazines for this purpose. A total number of three (30%) SDLs, four (44.44 %) TLs and one (16.66 %) COL distributes leaflets in the localities. LH-awareness rallies are conducted by three (30 %) SDLs, two (22.22 %) TLs and one (16.66 %) COL for at least once a year. The Public address system is used by four (40%) SDLs and two (22.22%) TLs. Posters or notices are regularly given by four (40 %) SDLs, three (33.33 %) TLs and two (33.33 %) COLs. A total

number of four (40 %) SDLs and two (22.22 %) TLs publish advertisements in local newspapers. Except the DL, only one (16.66 %) COL reported that it uses social media to propagate the news of its LHC. A considerable number of libraries viz., three (30 %) SDLs, five (55.55 %) TLs and three (50 %) COLs informed that they do not take any kind of specialized measures to make their LHCs popular among the local community members. One COL (16.66 %) found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

Table 5.30 Qualification of Librarian / Library-in-Charge

Question – MCQ

Sl. No.	Qualification		Librarian	Library-in-Charge
1.	Educational Qualification	Class VIII	-	1
2.		Secondary/ Madhyamik	-	-
3.		Higher Secondary	-	4
4.		Graduation	9	9
5.		Post Graduation	2	-
6.		Ph.D.	-	-
7.	Professional Qualification	No Professional Qualification	-	1
8.		C.Lib.Sc. / CLIS	1	5
9.		B.Lib.Sc. / BLIS	6	7
10.		M.Lib.Sc. / MLIS	2	-
11.	Library closed (No staff)	1	-	-

Question no. – 13,14

Table 5.30 indicates the educational and professional qualifications of librarians and library-in-charges. A total of nine librarians and nine library-in-charges reported their educational qualification as Graduation. Only two librarians have Post-graduation as their highest qualification. Four library-in-charges have Higher Secondary and one library-in-charge has Class VIII as their highest educational qualifications. Regarding professional qualification in Library and Information Science / Library Science, six librarians and seven library-in-charges reported to have Bachelor degree in the subject. Only two librarians possess a Master degree in Library Science. Five library-in-charges stated that they have done a Certificate course in library and information science/library science, whereas only one librarian reported the same. One library-in-charge does not have any professional qualification in the subject. None of the librarians or library-in-charges possesses a Doctorate degree in their basic subject or in the professional subject. One COL found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition, that’s why response couldn’t be collected.

Table 5.31 Difficulties faced by Librarians towards forming a proper LHC

Question – MCQ

Sl. No.	Nature of Difficulties	DL		SDL		TL		COL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Inappropriate Collection Development Policy	-	-	4	40	4	44.44	1	16.66
2.	Reluctance of Appropriate	-	-	8	80	3	33.33	2	33.33

	Authority								
3.	Insufficient Funding	-	-	5	50	2	22.22	1	16.66
4.	Staff Shortage	-	-	10	100	7	77.77	5	83.33
5.	Lack of Staff Training	1	100	5	50	2	22.22	-	-
6.	Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities	1	100	2	20	4	44.44	4	66.66
7.	Non-enthusiast Librarians/Library-in-Charges	1	100	5	50	3	33.33	2	33.33
8.	Lack of interest of local community	1	100	8	80	4	44.44	3	50
9.	No Idea	-	-	-	-	2	22.22	-	-
10.	Library closed (No staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66
TOTAL		1		10		9		6	

(DL – District Library; SDL – Sub-divisional Library; TL – Town Library; COL – Century-old Rural Library); Question no. – 41

Table 5.31 describes the nature of various difficulties or hitches that are faced by librarians / library-in-charges when they took initiative to develop a separate LHC or to enhance the existing LHC in their respective libraries. The question was a multiple choice type question and respondents selected more than one options to register their responses. It is found that staff shortage is an acute problem which is reported by all the ten SDLs (100 %), seven TLs (77.77 %)

and all the respondent COLs (83.33 %). Four SDLs (40 %), four TLs (44.44 %) and one COL (16.66 %) reported that inappropriate collection development policy is also a major problem they are facing from time to time to develop a relevant collection of LH. A large number of libraries viz., eight SDLs (80 %), three TLs (33.33 %) and two COLs (33.33 %) reported reluctance of authorities as a barrier to developing a proper LHC in the library. Lack of staff training regarding LH related activities and services is the another problem as reported the DL, five SDLs (50 %) and two TLs (22.22 %). Absence of adequate infrastructural facilities is one of the problems as reported by the DL, two SDLs (20 %), four TLs (44.44 %) and the majority of the COLs (66.66 %). A considerable number of libraries viz., the DL, five SDLs (50 %), three TLs (33.33 %) and two COLs (33.33 %) reported that librarians/library-in-charges are to some extent non-enthusiastic about developing LHC in their libraries. Reluctance or lack of interest of the local community is another key hindrance faced by librarians/library-in-charges as reported by the DL, eight SDLs (80 %), four TLs (44.44 %) and three COLs (50 %). Two TLs (22.22 %) refused to answer the question. One COL (16.66 %) found closed due to ‘no staff’ condition.

5.2 PRESENTATION OF USERS' RESPONSES TOWARDS COLLECTIONS AND SERVICES OF LOCAL HISTORY IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

This is the second sub-section of the investigation where data were collected from library users through a carefully constructed sample survey questionnaire. During multiple visits to the libraries, a total of 228 (two hundred and twenty eight) users were found reading in the free reading rooms of the sample libraries. Each of them was requested to fill up the survey questionnaire. Among them, a total of 26 (twenty six) users refused to respond due to their

personal reasons, and 202 (two hundred and two) users finally responded and agreed to fill up the questionnaires. General information of all these 202 users were collected and the basic reasons for which they are using nearby public libraries are recorded. All these 202 users answered up to Question no. 13 in the users' survey questionnaires. From Question no. 14 onwards, only those users responded and continued filling up the questionnaires that reported by themselves to have a basic concept about the term 'local history' as well as had some awareness and interest about the same. Thus the sample size of the users got reduced to a number of 127 (one hundred and twenty seven) who were finally able to complete the entire questionnaire for users.

5.2.1 GENERAL INFORMATION (Obtained from Personal Data of Users)

The general information mainly contains the personal information as well as PL oriented basic awareness of 202 users who primarily agreed to respond to the survey questionnaire. Data were collected through a carefully constructed sample survey questionnaire; after collection, the collected raw data were analyzed, tabulated, and finally represented as the following tables:

Table 5.32 Age and sex-wise distribution of users

Age (Yr.)	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
18 – 27	38 (26.95 %)	23 (37.7 %)	61 (30.2 %)
28 – 37	26 (18.44 %)	19 (31.14 %)	45 (22.27 %)
38 – 47	21 (14.9 %)	0	21 (10.4 %)
48 – 57	12 (8.51 %)	4 (6.56 %)	16 (7.92 %)

58 – 67	18 (12.76 %)	6 (9.84 %)	24 (11.88 %)
68 – 77	23 (16.31 %)	7 (11.47 %)	30 (14.85 %)
78 and above	3 (2.13 %)	2 (3.28 %)	5 (2.47 %)
Total	141 (100.00)	61 (99.99)	202 (99.99)

Question no. - 3, 4

Table 5.32 presents the distribution of the sample population of users according to sex and age. It is seen that the majority (61 %) of the users belong to the age group between 18 to 27 years. The remaining population consists of users belonging to other age groups. Among these remaining users, it is observed that most of the users (22.27 %) belong to 28 to 37 years of age, followed by users (14.85 %) having ages 68 to 77 years. No female user is found in the age group between 38 to 47 years thus forming only 10.4 % of total users. A very few (2.47 %) users are found in the age group of 78 years and above.

Table 5.33 Residential location-wise distribution of users

Residential Location	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Urban (Municipality)	58 (41.13 %)	44 (72.13 %)	102 (50.5 %)
Rural (Gram Panchayet)	83 (58.87 %)	17 (27.87 %)	100 (49.5 %)
Total	141 (100.00)	61 (100.00)	202 (100.00)

Question no. – 2

Table 5.33 reveals the use of public libraries by users residing in urban and rural areas (according to their postal addresses). Among 141 male users, 58 (41.13 %) reside in urban areas which come under the jurisdiction of different Municipalities and 83 (58.87%) in rural areas which come under different Gram Panchayets. In the case of 61 female users, a total of 44 (72.13 %) reside in urban areas and only 17 (27.87 %) in rural areas. The overall picture shows that a little more than half of the users (50.5 %) come from urban areas and others (49.5 %) come from rural areas.

Table 5.34 Occupation-wise distribution of users

Occupation	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Student	49(34.75 %)	33 (54.1 %)	82 (40.59 %)
Service	14 (9.93 %)	4 (6.56 %)	18 (8.91 %)
Own Business	9 (6.38 %)	0	9 (4.45 %)
Agriculture	3 (2.13 %)	0	3 (1.48 %)
Retired Person	41 (29.08 %)	13 (21.31 %)	54 (26.73 %)
Unemployed	25(17.73 %)	0	25 (12.38 %)
Others	0	11 (18.03 %)	11 (5.44 %)
Total	141 (100.00)	61 (100.00)	202 (99.99)

Question No. – 5

Table 5.34 represents the distribution of user communities according to their occupational status. Among the total 141 male users, the highest number belongs to the student community which is 49 (34.75 %); it is followed by the retired persons which is 41 (29.08 %) in number, and 25 (17.73 %) male users are found unemployed. Among these male users, small numbers viz., 14 (9.93 %) users are working in various service sectors, 9 (6.38 %) users found having their own business and only 3 (2.13 %) users found engaged in an agriculture-related occupation like farming. Among the female users also, the majority i.e. 33 (54.1 %) are students. Retired female users are 13 (21.31 %) in number, only 4 (6.56 %) users are engaged in different service sectors, and 11 (18.03 %) female users have responded who are home-makers. No female user is found unemployed, and none of them has any kind of personal business or is engaged in any kind of agriculture-related occupations.

Table 5.35 Educational qualification-wise distribution of users

Educational Qualifications	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Below School Final / Madhyamik	3 (2.13%)	0	3 (1.49 %)
School Final / Madhyamik	18 (12.76%)	4 (6.56%)	22 (10.89%)
Higher Secondary	27 (19.15%)	19 (31.15%)	46 (22.77%)
Graduation	74 (52.48%)	35 (57.37%)	109 (53.96%)
Post Graduation	17 (12.05%)	3 (4.92%)	20 (9.9%)
Others	2 (1.42%)	0	2 (0.99%)
Total	141 (100.00)	61 (100.00)	202 (99.99)

Question No. – 6

Table 5.35 indicates that a total of 109 (53.96 %) users have completed their Graduation in which 74 (52.48 %) are male and 35 (57.37 %) are female; followed by 46 (22.77 %) users who completed the Higher Secondary degree. A total of 22 (10.89 %) users have their highest qualification as School Final or *Madhyamik*. 3 (4.49 %) users have found who have lower qualification than School Final or *Madhyamik* degree, and all of them are male users. Only 20 (9.9 %) users have found have a Post-graduation degree of which 17 (12.05 %) are male and 3 (4.92 %) are female users. Only 2 (0.99 %) male users reported to have vocational degrees, but no such female user is found.

Table 5.36 Statement regarding sources of information on public library

Sources of Information	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Printed Sources	20 (14.18%)	19 (31.15%)	39 (19.31%)
Human Sources	93 (65.96%)	26 (42.62%)	119 (58.91%)
Public Address System	17 (12.06 %)	8 (13.11%)	25 (12.37%)
Social Media	4 (2.84 %)	5 (8.19%)	9 (4.45%)
None	7 (4.96 %)	3 (4.92 %)	10 (4.95 %)
Total	141 (100.00)	61 (99.99)	202 (99.99)

Question No. – 7

The above table (Table 5.36) represents the sources from which users get aware of the nearby public libraries. It is observed that the majority of male (65.96 %) and female (42.62 %) users get information about public libraries from human sources only. A total number of 39 (19.31 %) users reported that they got aware of the printed sources of information regarding nearby public libraries. The public address system is another source of relevant information as reported by 17 male (2.84 %) and 8 female (13.11 %) users. A very little number of users (4.45 %) reported to getting information from social media like Facebook. Other 10 users (4.95 %) said that they did not get such information from any of the sources mentioned and come to the public libraries out of their requirements.

Table 5.37 Membership status-wise distribution of users

Membership Status	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Member	82 (58.16 %)	43 (70.49 %)	125 (61.88 %)
Non Member	59 (41.84 %)	18 (29.51 %)	77 (38.12 %)
Total	141 (100.00)	61 (100.00)	202 (99.99)

Question No. – 8

Table 5.37 indicates the numbers and respective percentages of male and female users who are either members or non-members of the sample public libraries. It is observed that a total of 125 (61.88 %) users, having 82 (58.16 %) males and 43 (70.49 %) females, have a membership to

libraries. On the other hand, 77 (38.12 %) users are found who are not members of libraries but use the free reading rooms, 59 (41.84 %) of them are male and 18 (29.51 %) are female users.

Table 5.38 Distribution of users according to library use

Library Use (in Yr.)	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
≥ 5	23 (16.31 %)	17 (27.87 %)	40 (19.8 %)
6 - 10	12 (8.51 %)	22 (36.06 %)	34 (16.83 %)
11 - 15	25 (17.73 %)	14 (22.95 %)	39 (19.31 %)
16 - 20	13 (9.22 %)	8 (13.11 %)	21 (10.4 %)
21 - 25	15 (10.64 %)	0	15 (7.43 %)
26 - 30	42 (29.79 %)	0	42 (20.79 %)
≥ 30	11 (7.8 %)	0	11 (5.44 %)
Total	141 (100.00)	61 (99.99)	202 (100.00)

Question No. – 9, 10

The above table (Table 5.38) reflects the data related to the tenure of users as members or non-members in sample libraries. Observations revealed that a large number of users i.e. 42 (20.79 %) users are using libraries from 26 to 30 years which are all males. 25 (17.73 %) male users and 14 (22.95 %) female users reported using public libraries from 11 to 15 years. There is a large number of 42 (19.8 %) users who are using public libraries for less than 5 years;

Table 5.39 Frequency of library visit of users

Frequency	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Everyday	0	0	0
Once in Two Days	25 (17.73 %)	0	25 (12.38 %)
Once / Twice a Week	38 (26.95 %)	4 (6.56 %)	42 (20.79 %)
Once / Twice a Month	24 (17.02 %)	14 (22.95 %)	38 (18.81 %)
Rarely	21 (14.9 %)	8 (13.11 %)	29 (14.35 %)
No Fixed Schedule	33 (23.4 %)	35 (57.38 %)	68 (33.66 %)
Total	141 (100.00)	61 (100.00)	202 (99.99)

Question No. – 11

Table 5.39 presents the frequency of library visit by the users which indicates that none of the users uses the library every day. Only 25 (17.73 %) users, who are all males, come to libraries once in two days. A total of 68 users (33.66 %) which is the maximum in number, reported that there is no fixed schedule for them to come to libraries. 21 male (14.9 %) and 8 female (13.11 %) users reported using libraries rarely. A considerable number, i.e. 42 (20.79 %) users among which 38 (26.95 %) male and 4 (6.56 %) female users told to come to libraries once or twice a week. Coming to libraries once or twice a month has been told by a total of 38 (18.81 %) users among which 24 (17.02 %) are male and 14 (22.95 %) users are female

Table 5.40 General purposes of users to visit library

Purpose	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Study	26 (18.44 %)	31 (50.82 %)	57 (28.22 %)
Research	9 (6.38 %)	2 (3.28 %)	11 (5.44 %)
Preparation for Competitive Examinations	38 (26.95 %)	25 (40.98 %)	63 (31.18 %)
Newspapers and Magazine Reading	54 (38.3 %)	3 (4.92 %)	57 (28.22 %)
Recreation	14 (9.93 %)	0	14 (6.93 %)
Total	141 (100.00)	61 (100.00)	202 (99.99)

Question No. – 12

The above table (Table 5.40) indicates the general purposes of user communities to visit public libraries in their nearby localities. It is revealed that a total of 63 users (31.18%) come to libraries in search of reading materials for various competitive examinations, among which 38 (26.95 %) users are male and 25 (40.98 %) users are female. A total of 57 users (28.22 %) reported the purpose as a general study of different reference books and another 57 users (28.22 %) reported the general purpose of reading daily newspapers and the latest issues of popular magazines. A very few, i.e. 11 users (5.44 %), among which 9 (6.38 %) are male and only 2 (3.28 %) are female, responded that their general purpose as the research work. Total 14 users (6.93 %) who are all males (9.93 %) reported that they come to nearby public libraries for recreation. None of the female users reported the same.

5.2.2 AWARENESS REGARDING LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

This section contains users' awareness about their LH as well as awareness and interested in LH collections of public libraries they are currently using. Since all the interviewed users did not have the same, only 127 users completed the questionnaires containing LH related queries. The collected raw data were analyzed, tabulated and represented under the following tables:



Figure 5B. User sample survey

Table 5.41 Statement regarding broad purpose of LH study by users

Purpose	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Exploring Local Culture	21 (23.6 %)	14 (36.84 %)	35 (27.56 %)
Exploring Community History	8 (8.99 %)	7 (18.42 %)	15 (11.81 %)
Interest in Local Famous Personalities	27 (30.33 %)	13 (34.21 %)	40 (31.49 %)
Interest in Genealogy	11 (12.36 %)	2 (5.26 %)	13 (10.24 %)
Interest in Oral History	19 (21.35 %)	1 (2.63 %)	20 (15.75 %)
Others	3 (3.37 %)	1 (2.63 %)	4 (3.15 %)
Total	89 (100.00)	38 (99.99)	127 (100.00)

Question no. –17

The above table (Table 5.41) represents the broad purposes of the users coming to public libraries and who feel interest in LH related studies. It is observed that a total of 40 users (31.49 %), among which 27 (30.33 %) are male and 13 (34.21 %) are female, have interests in knowing about the famous personalities of the nearby localities. 21 male users (23.6 %) and 14 (36.84 %) female users, i.e. a total of 35 users (27.56 %) reported their interests in exploring their local cultures. A considerable number of users, i.e. 20 (15.75 %) expressed their interests in oral history related studies, among which 19 users (21.35 %) are male and only 1 (2.63 %) are female users.

Table 5.42 Frequency of LHC use by users

Frequency	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Everyday	0	0	0
Once in Two Days	0	0	0
Once / Twice a Week	4 (4.49 %)	3 (7.9 %)	7 (5.51 %)
Once / Twice a Month	13 (14.6 %)	7 (18.42 %)	20 (15.75 %)
Rarely	27 (30.34 %)	6 (15.78 %)	34 (26.77 %)
No Fixed Schedule	45 (50.56 %)	22 (57.89 %)	66 (51.97 %)
Total	89 (99.99)	38 (99.99)	127 (100.00)

Question No. –16

Table 5.42 presents the frequency of using LHC in public libraries by their users. It is found that a maximum number of users, i.e. 66 users (51.97%) do not have any fixed schedule for LH study in libraries, among which 45 (50.56%) are male and 22 (57.89%) are female users. 27 (30.34 %) male users and 6 (15.78 %) female users reported their frequency of using LHC in public

libraries as ‘rarely’. A total of 20 (15.75 %) users, i.e. 13 (14.6 %) male and 7 (18.42 %) female users stated that they do the same in the frequency of once or twice a month. A very few, i.e. a total of 7 users (5.51 %) study LH in public libraries at a frequency of once or twice a week. None of the users reported doing the same on every day or once in two days.

Table 5.43 Statement regarding use of preferable LHMs by users

Question type – MCQ

Local History Material	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Book	89 (100 %)	38 (100 %)	127
Manuscript	0	0	0
Letter and Correspondence	2 (2.25 %)	0	2 (1.57 %)
Diary and Memoir	2 (2.25 %)	0	2 (1.57 %)
Souvenir	11 (12.36 %)	3 (7.89 %)	14 (13.38 %)
Local Magazine	53 (59.55 %)	28 (73.68 %)	81 (63.78 %)
Local Newspaper	62 (69.66 %)	25 (65.79 %)	87 (68.5 %)
Leaflet and Pamphlet	1 (1.12 %)	0	1 (0.79 %)
Government Plan and Deed	0	0	0
Map and Toposheets	4 (4.5 %)	1 (2.63 %)	5 (3.93 %)
Photograph	27 (30.34 %)	14 (36.84 %)	41 (32.28 %)
Painting and Sculpture	36 (40.45 %)	13 (34.21 %)	49 (38.58 %)
Artifact	0	0	0
Relic	8 (8.99 %)	0	8 (6.3 %)
Genealogy	9 (10.11 %)	0	9 (7.08 %)
Oral History	4 (4.49 %)	1 (2.63 %)	5 (3.93 %)
Special Collection	4 (4.49 %)	1 (2.63 %)	5 (3.93 %)
Total	89	38	127

Question No. – 22

It is seen from the above table (Table 5.43) that all the users, i.e. 127 (100 %) users use books to study LH. A total of 87 (68.5 %) users and 81 (63.78 %) users reported using local newspapers and local magazines subscribed by public libraries. A large number, i.e. a total of 49 (38.58 %) and 41 (32.28 %) users use paintings and sculptures, and photographs available in the libraries, for study of LH. Some of the users, i.e. 14 (13.38 %) users reported using souvenirs as a source of LH related information. None of the users uses manuscripts, artifacts, government plans and deeds for the LH study. Others, viz., 9 (7.08 %) users, 8 (6.3 %) users, and a total of 15 users reported to use genealogy, relics, maps and toposheets, oral history and other special collections possessed by libraries. A very few users, i.e. a total of 5 users indicated that they prefer to use letters and correspondences, diaries and memoirs, and leaflets for studying LH.

Table 5.44 Satisfaction level of users regarding LHC of library

Level of Satisfaction	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Highly Satisfying	7 (7.87%)	2 (5.26%)	9 (7.08%)
Moderately Satisfying	22 (24.72%)	12 (31.58%)	34 (26.77%)
Not at All Satisfying	37 (41.57%)	16 (42.11%)	53 (41.73%)
Not Sure	23 (25.84%)	8 (21.05%)	31 (24.41%)
Total	89 (100.00)	38 (100.00)	127 (99.99)

Question No. – 19

Table 5.44 reflects the users' satisfaction regarding LHC of public libraries. It is observed that only a few users viz., 7 (7.87 %) male and 2 (5.26 %) female users are highly satisfied. A total of 34 (26.77 %) users which include 22 (24.72 %) male and 12 (31.58 %) female users reported to be moderately satisfied with the LHC. A large number of 53 (41.73 %) users, having 37 (41.57 %) male and 16 (42.11 %) female users, reported that they are not at all satisfied with the present collections of local historical materials in public libraries. A total of 31 (24.41 %) users which include 23 (25.84 %) male and 8 (21.05 %) female users, said that they do not have enough clear idea about the nature and varieties of LHMs. That is why they used to study whichever LHMs are available in their nearby public libraries.

Table 5.45 Opinion regarding the need for separate LH section

Opinion	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Highly Needed	29 (32.58%)	14 (36.84%)	43 (33.86%)
Not Needed	20 (22.47%)	7 (18.42%)	27 (21.26%)
May be Needed	27 (30.34%)	9 (23.68%)	36 (28.35%)
No Opinion	13 (14.6%)	8 (21.05%)	21 (16.53%)
Total	89 (99.99)	38 (99.99)	127 (100.00)

Question No. – 20

It is observed in the above table (Table 5.45) that a large number of 43 (33.86 %) users, including 29 (32.58 %) male and 14 (36.84 %) female users reported having separate LH section

as ‘highly needed’. 20 (22.47 %) male and 7 (18.42 %) female users told that they do not need separate LH section in public libraries. A total of 36 (28.35 %) users, having 27 (30.34 %) male and 9 (23.68 %) female users told that they are not sure on the same. 13 (14.6 %) male users and 8 (21.05 %) female users i.e. a total of 21 (16.53 %) users expressed that they do not have any opinion on this particular issue related to local history collection of public libraries.

Table 5.46 Satisfaction level regarding physical facilities at LH section

Opinion	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Highly Satisfying	14 (15.73 %)	3 (7.9 %)	17 (13.38 %)
Moderately Satisfying	30 (33.71 %)	13 (34.21 %)	43 (33.86 %)
Not at All Satisfying	38 (42.7 %)	18 (47.37 %)	56 (44.1 %)
No Opinion	7 (7.86 %)	4 (10.52 %)	11 (8.66 %)
Total	89 (100.00)	38 (100.00)	127 (100.00)

Question No. – 18

Table 5.46 reflects the measurement of users’ satisfaction level regarding separate LH section inside public libraries. The majority of 56 (44.1%) users, including 38 (42.7%) male and 18 (47.37 %) female users reported the condition as ‘not at all satisfying’. A total of 43 (33.86 %) users reported that they are moderately satisfied. Only 14 (15.73 %) male and 3 (7.9 %) female users, i.e. total of 17 (13.38 %) users said that they are highly satisfied. Total 11 (8.66 %) users, including 7 (7.86 %) male and 4 (10.52 %) female users told that they do not have any opinion in this regard.

Table 5.47 Necessary infrastructural requirements of users for LHC; Question – MCQ

Requirements	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Separate Study Area	65 (73.03 %)	32 (84.21 %)	97 (76.37 %)
Sufficient Illumination	59 (66.3 %)	30 (78.94 %)	89 (70.07 %)
Comfortable Sitting Arrangements	38 (42.7 %)	11 (28.94 %)	49 (38.6 %)
Display Area for LH Materials	34 (38.2 %)	8 (21.05 %)	38 (29.92 %)
Dedicated Computer	29 (32.58 %)	5 (13.16 %)	34 (26.77 %)
Internet Connection	75 (84.27 %)	26 (68.42 %)	101 (79.53 %)
Total	89 (100.00)	38 (100.00)	127 (100.00)

Question No. – 21

The above table (Table 5.47) represents users' specific demands for better infrastructural support towards LHC in public libraries. It is observed that the maximum number of 101 (79.53 %) users demanded Internet connection in the computers of public libraries. A considerably large number of 97 (76.37 %) users needed a separate study area for LH inside the library, and 89 (70.07 %) users demanded for sufficient illumination in the study areas. Comfortable sitting arrangements are required by 49 (38.6 %) users, including 38 (42.7 %) male and 11 (28.94 %) female users. A total of 38 (29.92 %) users reported the requirements of display areas for LHMs in the library and dedicated computers for LH related studies are required by a total of 34 (26.77 %) users.

Table 5.48 Local history related services received by the users; Question – MCQ

Services	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Lending	85 (95.5%)	34 (89.47%)	119 (93.7%)
Reading	89 (100%)	38 (100%)	127 (100%)
Reference Service	66 (74.16%)	18 (47.36%)	84 (66.14%)
Inter Library Loan	7 (7.86%)	3 (7.9%)	10 (7.87%)
Referral Service	18 (20.22%)	7 (18.42%)	25 (19.68%)
OPAC Searching	6 (6.74%)	5 (13.15%)	11 (8.66%)
Total	89 (99.99)	38 (99.99)	127 (100.00)

Question No. – 25

The above table (Table 5.48) shows the services received by the users when they come to public libraries in search of LHMs. It is seen that all the users coming to libraries for LH related studies receive reading service from the concerned libraries. Next to that, the maximum number of 119 (93.7 %) users, inclusive of 85 (95.5 %) male and 34 (89.47 %) female users receive lending service. A large number of 84 (66.14 %) users reported getting reference service and only 25 (19.68 %) users get referral service regarding LH related queries. Only a few 11 (8.66 %) users and 10 (7.87 %) users reported that they receive OPAC searching and inter-library loan services respectively from the libraries.

Table 5.49 LH related extension services as found useful by the users; Question – MCQ

Extension Services	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Exhibition of LHC	43 (48.31 %)	34 (89.47 %)	77 (60.63 %)
Local Culture Promoting Programmes	58 (65.17 %)	22 (57.89 %)	80 (63 %)
User Orientation	26 (29.21 %)	18 (47.36 %)	44 (34.64 %)
Lectures and Talks	13 (14.6 %)	2 (5.26 %)	15 (11.81 %)
Reading Circles	9 (10.11 %)	0	9 (7.08 %)
LH Awareness Rally	32 (35.95 %)	18 (47.36 %)	50 (39.37 %)
Reference Service for Research	4 (4.5 %)	1(2.63 %)	5 (3.94 %)
Referral Service	28 (31.46 %)	5 (13.15 %)	33 (25.98 %)
Total	89 (100.00)	38 (100.00)	127 (100.00)

Question No. – 26

Table 5.49 represents users’ opinion regarding the usefulness of LH related extension services in public libraries. It is found that 80 (63 %) users found local culture promoting programmes as the most useful extension service this includes 58 (65.17 %) male and 22 (57.89 %) female users. A large number of 50 (39.37 %) users, inclusive of 32 (35.95 %) male and 18 (47.36 %) female users reported LH awareness rally is the most useful extension service. User orientation is the most useful as opined by 44 (34.64 %) users, including 26 (29.21 %) male and 18 (47.36 %) female users. 28 (31.46 %) male and 5 (13.15 %) female, i.e. a total of 33 (25.98 %) users feel that referral service is an essential extension service. A total of 15 (11.81 %) users preferred lectures and talks on the relevant subject as the most useful, and only 9 (7.08 %) users preferred

reading circles the most in this regard. A very few, i.e. 5 (3.94 %) users found reference service for LH research as the most useful extension service.

Table 5.50 Awareness of library staff regarding LHC

Opinion	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Enough Aware	14 (15.73 %)	11 (28.95 %)	25 (19.69 %)
Moderately Aware	39 (43.82 %)	13 (34.21 %)	52 (40.94 %)
Not Aware	23 (25.84 %)	6 (15.79 %)	29 (22.83 %)
Completely Ignorant	13 (14.6 %)	8 (21.05 %)	21 (16.54 %)
Total	89 (99.99)	38 (100.00)	127 (100.00)

Question No. – 24

Table 5.50 reflects the degree of LH related awareness of library staff from the users' point of views. It is found that only 25 (19.69 %) users, which include 14 (15.73 %) male and 11 (28.95 %) female users, think that they are enough aware of such collections in their libraries. The majority of the users, i.e. 39 (43.82 %) male and 13 (34.21 %) female users reported them as 'moderately aware'. A total of 29 (22.83 %) users reported that library staff are not aware of the LHC. A total of 21 (16.54 %) users, inclusive of 13 (14.6 %) male and 8 (21.05 %) female users think that the PL staff are 'completely ignorant' in this matter.

Table 5.51 Response time of library staff regarding local history related queries

Response Time (in Minutes)	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
< 5	3 (3.37 %)	0	3 (2.36 %)
5 to <10	26 (29.21 %)	11 (28.95 %)	37 (29.13 %)
10 to < 20	42 (47.19 %)	20 (52.63 %)	62 (48.82 %)
Unable to Locate	18 (20.22 %)	7 (18.42 %)	25 (19.69 %)
Total	89 (99.99)	38 (100.00)	127 (100.00)

Question No. – 27

It is seen from the above table (Table 5.51) that the maximum number, i.e. 62 (48.82 %) of respondent users, which includes 42 (47.19 %) male and 20 (52.63 %) female users reported that library staff take an average of ten to almost twenty minutes in response to LH related queries. A total of 37 (29.13 %) users reported the time as five to almost ten minutes. Only a very few i.e. 3 (2.36 %) users, who are all male, said that they get a response to such queries in less than five minutes. 18 (20.22 %) male and 7 (18.42 %) female, i.e. a total of 25 (19.69 %) users reported that library staff are always unable to locate the relevant LHMs of their requisitions.

Table 5.52 Cooperation of library staff in response to LH related queries

Attitude	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Highly Cooperative	18 (20.22 %)	15 (39.47 %)	33 (25.98 %)
Moderately Cooperative	35 (39.33 %)	7 (18.42 %)	42 (33.07 %)

Non-cooperative	27 (30.34%)	12 (31.58 %)	39 (30.71 %)
Reject Outright	9 (10.11 %)	4 (10.53 %)	13 (10.24 %)
Total	89 (100.00)	38 (100.00)	127 (100.00)

Question No. – 28

Table 5.52 shows the library staff' cooperation towards LH related queries of users, from users' points of view. The majority of 42 (33.07 %) users, i.e. 35 (39.33 %) male and 7 (18.42 %) female reported that staff are moderately cooperative in this regard. A large number of 39 (30.71 %) users reported that library staff shows non-cooperation while facing such queries. A considerable number of users, i.e. 18 (20.22 %) male and 15 (39.47 %) female users said that they always receive proper cooperation from the library staff in response to such information need. A total of 13 (10.24 %) users including 9 (10.11 %) male and 4 (10.53 %) female users reported that library staff reject their LH related queries with total non-cooperation and always show the reason as 'non-availability' of required LHMs.

Table 5.53 Users' perspectives regarding shortfalls of LHC and related services in library;

Question – MCQ

Users' Perspectives	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
LHC is not up to my expectations	8 (9.99 %)	0	8 (6.3 %)
LHC is unrecognizable	32 (35.95 %)	3 (7.9 %)	35 (27.55 %)
LHMs are overlapping and	15 (16.85 %)	12 (31.58 %)	27 (21.26 %)

misplaced			
LHC is not up-to-date	4 (4.5 %)	0	4 (3.15 %)
Reading Room atmosphere is not conducive for intensive study	26 (29.21 %)	22 (57.9 %)	48 (37.8 %)
No personal assistance to find out LH resources	35 (39.32 %)	23 (60.52 %)	58 (45.67 %)
Waiting time is too long	20 (22.47 %)	17 (44.73 %)	37 (29.13 %)
Library staff are non-cooperative	38 (42.7 %)	11 (28.94 %)	49 (38.58 %)
Total	89 (100.00)	38 (100.00)	127 (100.00)

Question No. – 23

The above table (Table 5.53) represents the users' perspectives regarding LHC in sample public libraries. It is seen that absence of 'personal assistance' in finding appropriate LH resources is the major shortfall as reported by 58 (45.67 %) users, including 35 (39.32 %) male and 23 (60.52 %) female users. A total of 49 (38.58 %) users, including 38 (42.7 %) male and 11 (28.94 %) female users pointed out the major shortfall as the non-cooperation of library staff. A total of 48 (37.8 %) users reported the non-conducive atmosphere of free reading rooms for LH study, whereas total of 37 (29.13 %) users reported that waiting time for retrieval of LHMs by library staff is too long to bear. A total of 35 (27.55 %) users said that LHC are unrecognizable in public libraries, and 27 (21.26 %) users said that these resources are often misplaced and overlapping with other reading resource categories. 8 (6.3 %) persons in total who are all male users reported that LHC in public libraries they are using are not up to the mark according to

their expectations; a few i.e. 4 (3.15 %) users who are again all male users, responded that the collections of LHMs are not up-to-date at all.

Table 5.54 Users’ opinions regarding need for advertisement and publicity for LH awareness

Opinion	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	58 (65.17 %)	24 (63.16 %)	82 (64.57 %)
No	10 (11.23 %)	9 (23.68 %)	19 (14.96%)
Not Sure	21 (23.6 %)	5 (13.16 %)	26 (20.47 %)
Total	89 (100.00)	38 (100.00)	127 (100.00)

Question no. – 29

Table 5.54 reflects various opinions of PL users regarding awareness of LHC through advertisements and publicity measures. It is observed that huge number of users i.e. a total of 82 (64.57 %) users, including 58 (65.17 %) male and 24 (63.16 %) female, affirmatively responded for the same. A total of 19 (14.96 %) users which include 10 (11.23 %) male and 9 (23.68 %) female users, responded negatively towards LH awareness through advertisements and publicity measures. 21 (23.6 %) male and 5 (13.16 %) female, i.e. total of 26 (20.47 %) users said that they are not sure about this particular issue.

Table 5.55 Useful publicity measures for LHCs among local communities: users’ perspectives; Question - MCQ

Useful Publicity Measures	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Library Brochure / Magazine	17 (19.1%)	0	17 (13.38%)
Leaflet Distribution	25 (28.08%)	12 (31.58%)	37 (29.13%)
LH-awareness Rally in Localities	21 (23.6%)	15 (39.47%)	36 (28.34%)
Public Address System	14 (15.73%)	2 (5.26%)	16 (12.6%)
Posters / Notices in Localities	52 (58.42%)	26 (68.42%)	78 (61.41%)
Advertisement in Local Newspapers	28 31.46%)	10 (26.31%)	38 (29.92%)
Social Media	63 (70.78%)	32 (84.21%)	95 (74.8%)
Total	89 (100.00)	38 (100.00)	127 (100.00)

Question No. – 30

Table 5.55 expresses the users’ standpoints regarding the most useful publicity measures to popularize LHC among local communities. It is seen that the maximum number of users, i.e. total of 95 (74.8 %) users, inclusive of 63 (70.78 %) male and 32 (84.21 %) female users reported that publicity in social media is the most helpful measure in this regard. A total of 78 (61.41 %) users, including 52 (58.42 %) male and 26 (68.42 %) female users reported that providing posters in local areas will be helpful. 38 (29.92 %) users said giving advertisements in local newspapers will be helpful, 37 (29.13 %) users said that distribution of leaflets in localities

will be helpful, and 36 (28.34 %) users expressed that LH awareness rally in local areas will be of immense help in this regard. Some users i.e. a total of 17 (13.38 %) users opined for library brochure or magazines and some of them i.e. 16 (12.6 %) users opined that the public address system will be most useful publicity measure for popularizing LHC in public libraries of the district.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presents the actual scenario of LHC in public libraries of the district of 24 Parganas (South). The findings come out of the responses gathered from two structured questionnaires designed for both library professionals and library users. Attempts have been made to tabulate the collected data in such ways so that every facet of the topic of investigation can be analyzed and interpreted clearly, thus thoughtful minute observations can be achieved.

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Chapter 6

Observations, Difficulties and Recommendations

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The present scenario of LH sections and the entire LHCs in the Government sponsored PLs in the district of 24 Parganas (South) has been discussed in the previous chapter. The chapter included a detailed analysis of the infrastructural and administrative details of sample libraries (DMEELS, 2015), LHCs and related services as obtained from Librarians and Library-in-Charges. Relevant information regarding LHCs in PLs was also collected from the users' responses and analyzed thereafter. This chapter provides detailed observations based on findings from the study of research, the problems or difficulties within the study of research, and some recommendations towards improving the present situation (Moitra & Dutta, 2019). The data obtained from the samples are organized and analyzed into two different sections, thus the findings based on the observations are of two folds:

- The findings obtained from a set of general queries which reflect the observations regarding administrative and infrastructural facets. This section also reflects the necessity and importance of LHCs and related services from library professionals' point of view.
- The findings from the second section reflect the relevance of LH in the local community life, LH literacy among user communities, users' expectations and demands for LHCs and related services in nearby PLs of respective localities.

6.2 OBSERVATIONS

6.2.1 OBSERVATIONS REGARDING GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE AND INFRASTRUCTURAL FACETS OF SAMPLE LIBRARIES

➤ **Outline of categorical distribution:**

The sample libraries consist of one District Library, ten Subdivisional Libraries which are upgraded from Town Library status, nine Town Libraries, and six Century-Old Rural Libraries. Among the sub-divisional libraries, four have crossed the century as per their respective years of establishments, and among town libraries, four such libraries have crossed the century (Moitra & Dutta, 2019).

➤ **Administrative location:**

While coming to the administrative location-wise distribution of libraries, it is found that sub-divisional libraries and town libraries are not equally distributed throughout the district. Alipore (Sadar) sub-division has the maximum number of sub-divisional libraries and town libraries within its boundary. The District Library is also situated under this sub-division. Baruipur sub-division also contains a considerable number of sub-divisional and town libraries within its administrative boundary. Moreover, maximum numbers of century-old rural libraries are situated within this sub-division. Diamond Harbour sub-division has only three libraries among which RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhaban is an ungraded subdivisional library, Stalin Einstein

Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar is a town library, and Karanjali Unnati Bidhayani Pathagar the only century-old rural library within its administrative margin. Kakdwip sub-division has a discouraging picture regarding the presence of sub-divisional or town libraries. Here the only upgraded sub-divisional library is the Sagar Town Library at Harinbari, Gangasagar Island. The major reason for this seemed to be the inaccessibility of the majority of the places of this sub-division due to poor transport and communication. The daily life of the community depends greatly on the waterway transport over the Muriganga. Another disgraceful situation is seen in the Canning sub-division where the Canning Public Library is the only upgraded sub-divisional library, which is situated in the Canning town. Though the Canning sub-division has remote rural community development blocks like Basanti and Gosaba which fall under the Sundarban Tiger Reserve, the Canning town is fairly connected to other regions of the district through road and railways.

➤ **Geographical location:**

The geographical location of a library greatly influences its course of development and appropriate use by the patrons. The PL is meant for peoples' use while the 'use' is governed by several factors including its geographical location. When the surveyed libraries were categorized according to their respective geographical locations, it is found that the majority of the libraries are located in Municipality areas which are said to be 'Urban' areas. Rests are situated at various Gram Panchayets which, in turn, are said to be 'Rural' areas. The maximum number of sub-divisional and town libraries are located in Municipality areas, whereas the majority of the century-old rural libraries are located in rural areas. Detailed surveys revealed that in urban

libraries, the rate of new user registration is slowly decreasing, though the number of existing users is quite high in comparison to rural libraries. The main reason is the fast-changing circumstances of a busy urban lifestyle which steals the quality time from a person's life. The presence of alternative entertainments and recreation is another valid reason for decreasing tendency of urban people to go to libraries to read books. Though many rural libraries are suffering from a dearth of collection and users, even today the rural people do have some quality time to go to PLs; the reason may either for recreation or for meeting the requirements of textbooks or reference books for professional developments.

➤ **Establishment Year:**

Regarding the establishment of PLs of the district, it is found that the majority of the libraries were established before independence. Among these Mudialy Library was established in 1876 which makes it the oldest PL in the district. It was followed by Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) (Joynagar Town Library) and Rajpur Sadharan Pathagar both the libraries was established in 1877. Before independence, Brati Sangha Pathagar was the last library established in 1946. Deshgourab Pathagar was established by some local educated people in 1947, immediately after independence. It is found that between 1901 and 1950, maximum numbers of libraries were established in the district whereas there is a sharp decline in the establishment of new PLs by the Government from 1951 onwards.

➤ **Government sponsorship:**

The first PL in the district which got sponsored by the State Government was Baruipur Public Library in 1954. It was followed by the District Library which was established in 1956 and got sponsorship in the same year. The third library was Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) (Joynagar Town Library) which got sponsorship in 1957. The West Bengal PLs Act was passed in 1979 which clearly stated that after the establishment of a PL, Government should take financial responsibility for the development of the library through sponsorship. As a result of the enactment of the Law, the majority of the sample libraries got sponsorship in the decade of 1980s. The process of getting sponsorship from the Government reached its peak within ten years of enactment of the Law. The first library of the district which got sponsorship after the enactment of this Law was Brati Sangha Pathagar right in 1979. It was followed by Vivek Sangha Pathagar and Joychandi Pathagar, both got sponsored in 1980. No sample library got sponsorship by the Government after the 1990s. Some of the sample libraries do not have proper documents related to sponsorship by the Government; this situation is particularly observed in century-old town libraries. In all such instances, the questionnaire filled up by the library professional(s), the oral interview, and the Government documents provided in the relevant official websites, all were relied upon to prepare the data.

➤ **Number of Working days:**

The observation regarding the number of days a library is open not so encouraging in the district. In general, Government sponsored PLs of the district remain closed on second and fourth Saturdays every month and open on first, third and fifth Saturdays. They remain closed on other

scheduled holidays (declared as ‘holiday’ by the State Government) (DMEELS, 2015-2016 & 2016-2017) also. It is also the Government rule that every library should be open for seven hours a day. It is observed that the majority of the sample libraries remain open at an average of four to five days a week, even if the week is a full six days’ week. It is also observed that many libraries do not adhere to the ‘seven hours a day’ structure. A considerable number of libraries which include half of the century-old rural libraries remain open on average two to three days a week. Some libraries are even open only once a week, viz., Mudialy Library, Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) (Joynagar Town Library) and Hemkali Library. All these libraries are single-staffed and are given the duties in other libraries also. The only staff of Mudialy Library, who is the Library Assistant, is also working in Prativa Library. The Duftary-cum-Book Binder of Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) is retired from his regular duties and he tries to keep open the library at least once a week. The Librarian of Purandar Smriti Mandir Pathagar has also been assigned the charge of Hemkali Library. For this reason, she opens the library only every Tuesday in a week; on other days, the latter remains closed. A very few libraries which include the DL of the district, Baruipur Public Library and Bakhrahat Public Library & Free Reading Room reported that they remain open to their users six days a week.

➤ **Library members:**

Members are the pillars of a PL. It is observed from the survey that PLs in the district of 24 Parganas (South) have a pitiable situation regarding the number of registered members. Six out of ten sub-divisional libraries, six out of nine town libraries, and four out of six century-old rural libraries reported that they have a total number of registered members below 500. Being an

upgraded SDL, Sagar Town Library has the lowest number of members which is only 212. RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhavan Sub Divisional Library is the only library that reported its total number of registered members as 1686, which is the highest among all the sample libraries. Libraries including District Library, Barisha Pathagar, Prativa Library, and Baharu Shyamsundar Public Library & Free Reading Room reported having more than 1000 registered members in the libraries. Despite having an excellent collection of LHMs in Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) (Joynagar Town Library), it has only 289 members, according to the membership register of the library. At present, this situation is getting worst day by day as there is no permanent library staff in this library to open it six days a week. A similar scenario is seen in Mudialy Library, the oldest PL in the district. The library has only 220 members according to the membership register record and rarely opens in a week. Madarat Bandhab Pathagar reported their total number of registered members as 883 which is the highest among century-old rural libraries of the district; others are suffering from a lack of regular users.

➤ **Collection of books:**

It is observed that many sample libraries have a considerable number of books as the collection. The majority of the century-old rural libraries do not have sufficient collection which satisfies user demands. Two century-old rural libraries viz., Vidyabhushan Library and Joychandi Pathagar reported to have less than 5000 books in their collection; Vidyabhushan Library has an invaluable and rare treasure in the library which is the complete set of *Somprakash*, the ancient Bengali newspaper, published by *Pandit Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan*, preserved in bound volumes. Most of the libraries reported having book collection in between 10,000 to 20,000. The

Behala Town Library and Mudialy Library have a considerably large collection of books, having 22,265 books and 22,734 books respectively. Both were established as town libraries, later upgraded to sub-divisional status. Despite having a large collection of books, especially rare books, Mudialy Library is in a lamentable condition from almost every aspect; whether it may be infrastructural facilities, regularity, or essential library services, Mudialy Library is standing on the verge of closure. The entire collection of books in this library is kept in an unorganized and untidy condition. The library does open once in a while when the only working staff (Library Assistant) comes to open it. Only one sub-divisional library, Barisha Pathagar reported having altogether 26, 203 books, which is the highest collection among the sub-divisional and upgraded town libraries in the district. Some of the librarians are not very keen on increasing the richness and diversity of the collections of respective libraries. One of the major reasons which come out from the investigation is that none of the librarians is involved in book selection processes. While selecting books, priorities should be given to the user demands which can be ascertained by librarians or library staff. This significant fact is neglected to some extent because a generalized and uniform book selection principle is followed for all the PLs.

➤ **Daily circulation:**

Daily circulation is an indicator of the working condition of a library. Most of the libraries under the survey do not have an encouraging picture of the book issue. Almost no library (except the District Library) maintains separate records for the issue and return, a gross circulation record is maintained on overall issue-return of books. The highest number of libraries reported their circulation rate even at lower than 10 books per day which is the most prevalent in century-old

rural libraries. A considerable number of libraries reported that their daily circulation rate ranges from 11 to 20 books. A very few libraries including the District Library have a circulation rate of 21 to 30 books per day. The circulation scenario is somewhat brighter than other libraries, in Barisha Pathagar and Vivek Sangha Town Library where the average circulation rates are reported as 40 books per day and 47 books per day, respectively. Two libraries reported a considerably satisfying rate of average daily circulation viz., Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar having a daily average circulation rate of 50 books per day and Vidyabhushan Library having 54 books per day in circulation. For the former one, this picture is quite surprising as the library is currently running by only one staff Mr. Sukumar Halder, who is a 'Darwan-cum-Night watchman'. The oldest town library in the district, Mudialy Library circulates on average only 12 books per day. The worst situation is revealed in RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhavan Sub Divisional Library where the librarian Sri Haraprasad Roy (retired from the year 2006, presently on the extension of service) reported that no user comes for issuing any book, and thus the circulation process gets stopped for about two and half years.

➤ **User attendance and reading room use:**

The reading room facility is not up to the mark in most of the libraries, except the District Library; it has spacious reading rooms for users on the ground floor as well as on the first floor in various sections. The majority of the libraries reported having 10 to 20 readers coming to the library per day. Peaceful and effective reading requires a separate reading area which is absent in most of the libraries. Readers are not always registered members of the library; non-members of the localities also frequently come to use the free reading rooms in search of newspapers, general

magazines, etc. The Sagar Town Library has a separate spacious reading room on the first floor of the library building which is detached from the main stack room where the library staff generally sits; but the physical facilities like proper illumination, sitting arrangements for users, clean and tidy reading tables, etc. are not satisfactory. A very few libraries like Barisha Pathagar, Kodalia Haranath Binapani Library, Bakhrabat Public Library & Free Reading Room, etc. have separate reading rooms with basic infrastructural facilities. Several libraries like Mudialy Library, Rajpur Sadharan Pathagar, Baharu Shyamsundar Public Library & Free Reading Room, Sarangabad Bandhab Pathagar etc. have disorganized reading rooms with the absence of necessary physical facilities; these include untidy reading areas, insufficient illumination, absence of proper sitting arrangements, narrow passage for reading, etc. On the other hand, despite being a small library, Deshgourab Pathagar has a neat and clean comfortable reading space, and a considerable number of local people (both members and non-members) regularly come to the library. Somewhat a strange condition is observed in RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhavan Sub-divisional Library. No user comes to the library for issuing any book, a very few readers come for reading the daily newspapers. The library building is in poor condition, but sufficient physical facilities are present inside. The library is very neat and clean, illumination facility and sitting arrangements in the large reading areas are sufficient, the library has a good collection of over 16,000 books. Overall the library has spacious and airy reading areas as well as cosy reading corners beside the large windows. Despite these beautiful surroundings and sufficient infrastructural supports, the library remains deserted for having no reader. According to the librarian-in-charge, who has been continuing his service on a yearly extension basis since 2006 (the actual retirement year), the management is completely reluctant about the modernization of the library as well as updating the library reading resources. He also reported

that no new book has been purchased since 2006 which proved to be detrimental to the survival of the library.

➤ **Existing staff strength:**

Regarding this particular issue of the number of library staff, every librarian or library staff in sample libraries exhibited sensitive behaviour. The majority of the libraries reported to have only one staff in the library; it reflects the pathetic situation in which that concerned staff is running the library regularly. Some of the libraries have existing staff between two to four. This severe shortage of staff leads to the slow destruction of the PL system of the district. Sanctioned posts are lying vacant for many years and authority does not take the initiatives to fill up them. Karanjali Unnati Bidhayani Pathagar has been closed only for not having any staff, after the retirement of the former librarian. The single staffed libraries are running in mournful conditions. These libraries remain closed for most of the days in a week as the only existing staff may be burdened with additional duties to other libraries. Crucial administrative decisions cannot be implemented or getting deferred which are necessary to provide minimum quality services and basic infrastructural facilities to the users. In all the libraries, when the interview session was going on, the requirement of new staff has been given the utmost priority by every librarian or library-in-charge. Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar has only one working staff who is a Darwan-cum-Night Watchman in the designation. The librarian of Kodalia Haranath Binapani Library is also assigned the duty of librarian in Baharu Shyamsundar Public Library & Free Reading Room. The same condition is seen in Baruipur Town Library, Purandar Smriti Mandir Pathagar, and Behala Town Library. The librarians or library-in-charges are also engaged

in duties to other libraries simultaneously. This condition is common in the case of subordinate library staff also. Only the District Library has the requisite staff strength following the norms. To rejuvenate the entire PL system, immediate initiatives should be taken towards the recruitment of additional staff.

➤ **Existing staff positions:**

The survey revealed that PLs in the district do not have an appropriate balance of different categories of staff working in various designations. Ideally, the District Library should have ten staff viz., one Librarian, two Library Assistants, two Library Attendants, one Driver, one Peon or Duftary-cum-Book Binder, one Cleaner and two Darwan-cum-Night Watchman; upgraded sub-divisional libraries and town libraries should have four staff according to Government staff rules viz., one Librarian, one Library Assistant, one Peon or Duftary-cum-Book-Binder and one Darwan-cum-Night Watchman; Rural/Area/Primary Unit Libraries should have two staff according to Government staff rules viz., one Librarian and one Junior Library Attendant. Except for District Library, almost all the libraries do not have the proper balance of working staff in the library, this ultimately leads to improper maintenance of library collections and compromised services to the user community. A large number of libraries have one Library Assistant as the only working staff of the library. Not only that, that single staff may be given additional duties to another library. Even many libraries are running either with one Duftary-cum-Book Binder or one Darwan-cum-Night Watchman. Duftary-cum-Book Binder of Baruipur Town Library has an additional duty in Baharu Shyansundar Public Library & Free Reading Room; Library Assistant of Prativa Library has an additional duty in Mudialy Library where he is the only staff. A queer

situation is observed in Behala Town Library. This library is run by a single staff, designated as Library Assistant in this library. At the same time, she is designated as Librarian in the Purba Barisha Govt. Housing Estate Tenants' Welfare Association Library at Thakurpukur (Smt. Srila Dey has a retirement date due in April 2019). A similar situation is observed in Baruipur Town Library; the Librarian is working in the designation of Library Assistant in Canning Public Library. The overall situation regarding new staff recruitment and fixation of designations of library staff, calls for an urgent solution.

➤ **Presence/ Absence of librarians and additional duties of library staff:**

It is found from the study that a large portion of PLs in the district is running without librarians. This situation is detrimental to the entire PL system of the district. Half of the upgraded sub-divisional libraries and the maximum number of town libraries do not have librarians. Where there is a librarian, he/she is employed in more than one library. It results in partial closure of a large number of libraries as one librarian cannot open two libraries at a time, throughout a week. For example, the Librarian of Baruipur Town Library is also serving the Canning Public Library as Library Assistant; the Librarian of Purandar Smriti Mandir Pathagar has to attend additional duty in Hemkali Library as Library Assistant. For this reason, the Hemkali Library opens every Tuesday in a week and remains closed on other days. The same condition is prevalent in the case of the majority of the library staff also. Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar is running by a Darwan-cum Night Watchman who is the only staff. There is also an ambiguity regarding the designation of the librarian and other professional staff. Thus the single-staffed libraries become closed most of the days in a week as the only staff is employed in another library also.

➤ **Educational and Professional Qualifications of Librarians/Library-in-Charges:**

Requisite educational and professional qualifications of library staff, especially of Librarian or Library-in-Charge, provide provisions for better administration in a library. Through a survey of the sample libraries of the district reveals the qualifications that are possessed by Librarians/Library-in-Charges. The question is a multiple choice type question which is further divided into 'Educational' and 'Professional' sub-sections. It is found that the majority of the Librarians and Library-in-Charges possess Graduation as the basic educational qualification. Some of the Library-in-Charges have Higher Secondary as their highest educational qualification. Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar is the only library where Library-in-Charge passed the VIIIth standard which is his highest educational qualification. Among the sample libraries, librarians of RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhavan Sub Divisional Library and Barisha Pathagar, have postgraduation as their highest degree in educational qualifications. None of the Librarians or Library-in-charges has Ph.D. as their highest qualification. While coming to the professional qualifications of Librarians/Library-in-charges, it is found that the majority of them possess Bachelor degree in Library and Information Science. While it is quite uncommon among the Librarians to have the only Certificate in Library and Information Science, a considerable number of Library-in-charges have the same. It is quite obvious for them as most of the Library-in-charges are mainly appointed as Library Attendant or Duftary-cum-Book Binder or Darwan-cum-Night Watchman. This surely affects the efficiency of a PL in terms of services. For example, in the case of Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar, the Library-in-Charge is the Darwan-cum-Night Watchman, that's why he does not possess any kind of professional qualification to perform managerial functions in the library. There are only two libraries viz.,

Prativa Library and Deshgourab Pathagar where Librarians possess Master degree in Library and Information Science.

➤ **Use of computer and availability of Internet connections:**

The survey reveals a shocking picture regarding computer use in PLs of the district. The majority of the sample libraries do not use computers in their daily professional assignments, though all the libraries acquired computers from the grants given either from the State Government or from Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF), most of them are lying idle without being used. It is observed that none of the century-old rural libraries uses computers in their libraries, even if at least one computer is present in each library. The presence of Internet connections in computers is also very rarely seen among PLs. District Library reported having an Internet connection in one computer. Among the sub-divisional libraries only two viz., Baruipur Town Library and Behala Town Library reported they have Internet connections in computers though on an irregular basis. The same has been reported by Deshgourab Pathagar. Throughout the district, it is hardly found any library which uses computer in daily library activities.

➤ **Presence or absence of non-book materials**

The survey revealed that the majority of the PLs of the district has more or less some non-book materials in their collections. District Library has various non-book materials like maps and photographs. Except for RKM Vivek Bharati Patha Bhaban Sub-Divisional Library, all the sub-

divisional libraries reported having some non-book materials. Similarly, the majority of the town libraries and century-old rural libraries reported having non-book materials in their collections.

➤ **Presence or absence of LHC:**

It is found from the survey that the majority of the sample libraries have some LHCs in their libraries. District Library, South 24 Parganas has a well-developed and organized LHC on the first floor of the library building and adjacent reading spaces are also available. Almost all the sub-divisional libraries in the district have some LHCs related to their respective localities. Barisha Pathagar has a considerable amount of LHCs in the library which reflects the rich historical background of the Sabarna Roy Chaudhury family, the original zamindars of ancient Kolkata and adjacent areas. Being the oldest sub-divisional (upgraded town library) library of the district, Mudialy Library reflects a miserable condition regarding the LHC of the area. The entire library is fully disorganized and untidy though having a conservatory of rare documents. Mudialy Library becomes closed most of the days in a month because of staff shortage and negligence of the only existing staff. Despite being a big and organized sub-divisional library, RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhavan Sub Divisional Library does not have any LHC in the library (as responded by the existing contractual Librarian). Though remotely placed, Sagar Town Library has an organized collection of LH of Sagar and Sundarban areas. Among the town libraries, Kodalia Haranath Binapani Library beautifully organized its LHCs. As the library is situated just beside the ancestral home of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, it has created a beautiful museum narrating the life events of Netaji. The museum is properly maintained and visitors do often come to the library to visit the same. Another significant collection of LH is observed in

Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) (Joynagar Town Library). The library has considerably large and valuable LHCs, but the maintenance and preservation are in hopeless condition as the library is suffering from a severe staff shortage. Among the century-old rural libraries, Madarat Bandhab Pathagar has significant LHC, but the collection is completely disorganized and partly unknown to the library-in-charge also. Another noteworthy LHC is found in Vidyabhusan Library; the complete sets of ancient Bengali legendary newspaper ‘Somprakash’ (published by Pandit Dwarakanath Vidyabhusan) have been preserved in the library in bound volumes.

➤ **Presence or absence of separate LH section:**

The observation reveals that the majority of the libraries in the district does not have any separate section for LH inside the libraries. The District Library has a separate, well developed and organized LH section on the first floor of the library building. This floor also contains a large reading area adjacent to the LH section. Among the sub-divisional libraries of the district, only Baruipur Town library has somewhat same kind of similar arrangement. A separate LH section is present on the first floor with a small adjoining reading area. Among the town libraries, Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library has a separate LH section on the first floor of the library building where the museum on the life events of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is developed at the inner section; some almirahs are arranged on the outer section having books on Netaji. Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) (Joynagar Town Library) also has a small and separate LH section on the first floor of the library building. Though the library has the stack area on the same floor, a little space is separated for keeping some LH materials. Vidyabhusan Library is the only

century-old rural library of the district which has a separate LH section inside the library; the room is a small chamber adjacent to the main reading room, containing bound volumes of ‘Somprakash’ kept in separate almirahs.

➤ **Specialized services provided by libraries regarding LHC:**

The collection regarding LH of any region requires certain specialized services to become popular among local user communities. It is found from the study that a large number of libraries do not know the importance of specialized services that should carefully be rendered to the local users. Except for District Library, it is a common practice among the majority of the sub-divisional and town libraries in the district to lend books and other LHMs to the users at their homes. This, in turn, becomes the significant reason for the destruction of rare books and invaluable LHCs they have in their libraries. LHMs are rare and carry immense significance in portraying the local historical, geographical, economic, demographic, religious, social and cultural characteristics and diversifications. The loss of such remarkable and preservation-worthy books and non-book materials creates a tragic impact on the credentials of a PL; this in fact, slowly makes users disoriented from coming to the libraries. Some libraries provide reference service and very few provide referral service regarding LHC. Except for the District Library, none of the sub-divisional or town or century-old libraries is aware of the significant LHCs present in other libraries in the district, thus referral service is becoming extinct day by day. District Library is the only library providing the inter-library loan. District Library executes the inter-library loan system through mobile library service, which is not specifically meant for LH services, but general books also. Except for The Behala Town Library, no library provides

OPAC facilities regarding LHCs to their users. Except for Karanjali Unnati Bidhayani Pathagar (closed due to staff shortage), a total of three libraries, viz., RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhavan Sub Divisional Library, Rajpur Sadharan Pathagar, Purandar Smriti Mandir Pathagar, and Hemkali Library reported that there is no provision for specialized services in these libraries regarding LH.

➤ **Different categories of LHMs present in the collection:**

The study shows, except District Library, almost all the libraries understand ‘local history material’ means books only. This is one of the major reasons for the poor development of LHCs in PLs. After minute queries, some other kinds of LHMs viz., souvenirs of local educational institutions containing their establishment history, local clubs, non-government organizations, voluntary welfare organizations etc. have been found, though in pitiable conditions. A considerable number of libraries have local magazines in their collections which are published and distributed strictly within the immediate localities. Some of the most commonly found local magazines are Bodhan (quarterly literary magazine), Samakaler Jiyonkathi (edited by Najibul Islam Mondal, published from Baruipur), Gangeya Sundarban Barta (published from Baruipur), Sagarbela (quarterly literary magazine, published from Kakdwip), Children’s Rasagolla (published from Joynagar-Majilpur), monthly magazine of Gangaridae Gabeshana Kendra (published from Kakdwip), etc. which are abundant in sub-divisions Baruipur and Kakdwip. Similarly, Brihattara Behalar Sanbad (published from Barisha), Anandabazar (published from Garia), Krishanu (published by Pashchimbanga Bangla Akademi, Budge Budge Regional Centre), Nishit Sahityapatra (published from Pashchimbanga Ganatantrik Lekhak Shilpi Sangha)

etc. are commonly found popular local magazines of Alipore sub-division. Some of the commonly found magazines and local newspapers in the Diamond Harbour sub-division are Lok Parichay (quarterly magazine on LH) and Badwip Barta (bi-monthly news bulletin published from Diamond Harbour). Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) (Joynagar Town Library) is the only library having a genealogy of the famous Matilal family of the locality; the family lineage is drawn neatly on a paper and displayed on the wall of the library reading room. This library also has a special collection of books written by eminent local historian Sri Kalidas Dutta (the collection was donated by his family). This library has a large collection of photographs of local events, locally published magazines and newspapers, souvenirs of local organizations, institutions and educational establishments. There is a small collection of ancient relics collected from excavations in nearby localities; all these invaluable LHMs are very much unorganized and kept messily. The most painful fact is that this rich library does not have any permanent staff at present. The retired Duftary-cum-Book Binder looks after it only for two or three days in a week. Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library is situated just adjacent to the ancestral house of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. This library has a nice and well-organized museum of sculptures depicting the life events of Netaji. Besides, there are some laminated large rare photographs of Netaji and his family members (including his parents). All these are kept separately on the first floor of the library where there are two almirahs containing books on Netaji as well as books written by him. People coming to see Netaji's ancestral house also visits the library at least once. Local people are very much aware of the historical significance of the locality and thus interested in the LHC of the said library. Baruipur Town Library is the only sub-divisional library that has a manuscript on Sri Sri Kalikapurana, written by Sri Gangadhar Bhattacharya, the renowned priest of the locality, around 150 years ago. Similarly, Prativa Library is the only library having a

‘Visitor’ Diary’, which is continued from 1906 and many prominent personalities wrote their experiences while visiting the library and adjacent localities, eminent poet of Bengal Kavi Kaji Nazrul Islam was one of them who wrote his memory in his handwriting. This library established as the cultural and educational wing of Prativa Sangha, during the Swadeshi movement of Bengal. At present, the library keeps all the souvenirs of the mother organization from the very beginning which is an invaluable record of the history of its immediate and nearby localities viz., Sarsuna, Bakultala, Parui, Shakuntala, Oxytown, Moynagarh, and Dakghar. RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhaban Sub Divisional Library has no LHM in its collection; Sarangabad Bandhab Pathagar has no LHC; the century-old rural library Joychandi Pathagar does not have LHMs in its collection (as reported by the librarians); being closed the Karanjali Unnati Bidhayani Pathagar also does not have any person to report having any LHM in its collection.

➤ **Various types of LH related extension services rendered to users:**

LHC of a PL requires specialized extension services to popularize the collection and to let local people know about their local cultural tradition. The research reveals that District Library arranges many extension activities in the library in this regard. Majority of the libraries arrange cultural programmes which promote local ethnicity; such kind of initiatives by PLs generally get a good response as local people get chance to participate. A considerable number of libraries claimed that they provide reference service to researchers who come to libraries to satisfy their intensive research queries. Many libraries arrange lectures and talks delivered by eminent personalities in LH research; many libraries arrange LH awareness rally by involving local people; thus initiatives are taken to make the local community aware of their cultural inheritance.

Other than District Library, Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library is the only library that claimed to provide personal assistance to users or visitors coming in search of the LH of the region. None of the sample libraries arranges reading circles related to LH or any other related theme in a quest for enhancing the reading habit and inquisitiveness for LH knowledge among local common people. It is observed during the survey that most of the librarians/ library-in-charges themselves are not aware of the significance of LH conservation in PLs; that's why no library organizes user orientation programme towards LHCs of a library.

➤ **Physical facilities at LH section:**

Appropriate infrastructural facilities are necessary for the comfortable and mindful study of LH resources. As the study reveals, District Library is the best place to get all the necessary physical facilities for LH study. The first floor of the library has a completely separate section containing LHMs of the district; also there are many reading resources on the LH of other districts of West Bengal. This LH section has two large rooms containing a huge number of books on LH, separate spacious sitting arrangements with sufficient illumination for reading. Other than District Library, Baruipur Town Library is the only sub-divisional library where a separate LH section has been found on the first floor of the library building. This section has some books and manuscripts on LH of the district as well as on nearby localities of Baruipur. This segment of the library has a somewhat separate sitting arrangement which is not satisfactory, the illumination facility is not up to the mark, overall space is not maintained regularly, thus it is unorganized and disorderly. Two town libraries of the district are found with separate LH sections, these are Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library and Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) (Joynagar

Town Library). The former one also has a large section as LH section which is again divided into two rooms. There is a beautiful museum depicting the life events of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, constructed in the inner room. This room also contains some rare photographs of Netaji and his family members, mounted on walls. The outer room has the almirahs which contain many books on Netaji and also the books which are written by Netaji. This outer section also has a separate sitting arrangement, but it is unfit for studying LH resources; there is only one illuminating source to lighten up the entire outer section which is not at all enough for study. The latter one, i.e. the Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) has a treasure of LHMs. The two-storied library building contains a large seminar room and a small room on the ground floor. The total library section, including its stack area, librarian's room and reading room is on the first floor. This library has a significant collection of invaluable LHMs in different formats. But the library doesn't have a spacious reading area. There is a separate LH section, but no separate reading space is allotted to this particular section. Otherwise, the library has no issue regarding illumination as it has large windows which provide sufficient daylight and natural air. This is the only library in the whole district which has a dedicated computer in the LH section, but it is rarely used and doesn't have an Internet connection. At present the library is suffering from a severe dearth of regular staff, that's why the entire library becomes disorganized and ill-maintained. Among the century-old rural libraries, the Vidyabhushan library is the only one that has a separate LH section. This single-storied library building has a large reading room containing the librarian's table and book racks. There is a small room just adjacent to this main library where the bound volumes of 'Somprakash' are kept in some almirahs and organized serially. This small section has a separate sitting arrangement for consultation of this precious treasure along with sufficient natural daylight. The artificial illumination facility is also enough

to study LHMs. All the libraries which reported to have separate LH section in the library have their display areas for LHMs which is separate from the general collection. But the pitiable situation is that none of these libraries has an Internet connection although each of them has at least one computer in the library.

➤ **Participation of Librarian/Library-in-charge in LHM selection:**

The selection of reading resources as well as LHMs in PLs is a crucial factor in the viability of the libraries. With the changing needs of users, PLs need to review their collection development policies. The survey reveals that most of the librarians/library-in-charges in the district do not get the opportunity to express their opinions and needs during the selection of reading resources as well as selecting LHMs for libraries. All the sample libraries reported that LHMs if get a chance to be included in the selection list, are selected by the Library Committee at the State Central Library; District Library Officer (DLO) and Librarian of the District Library are members of the Committee. Only three sub-divisional libraries reported that Librarians/Library-in-charges do give opinions in the selection process, these are Brati Sangha Pathagar, Behala Town Library, Barisha Pathagar. Deshgourab Pathagar is the only town library and Madarat Bandhab Pathagar is the only century-old town library that reported the same. Very few libraries viz., Behala Town Library, Canning Public Library, and Madarat Bandhab Pathagar reported that they collect users' demands regarding reading resources throughout the year and report the demands to the appropriate authorities at the times of selection of reading resources. RKM. Vivek Bharati Path Bhaban Sub Divisional Library and Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar are the two libraries that responded with 'no idea' or 'no interest'. Regarding the absence of librarians/

library-in-charges in the selection procedure, almost all of them express their feelings of resentment. Most of them strongly believe that librarians/library-in-charges should be included in the selection procedure as users' demands can be fulfilled only through them. Selection of reading resources and LHMs through the central process makes these libraries somewhat handicapped, as librarians/library-in-charges cannot convey the sentiments of user communities who come to the PLs from their respective localities. As a result, some kind of hesitancy is commonly found among the librarians/library-in-charges during the survey whenever the issues come regarding LHC development policies in PLs.

➤ **Requirements for LHC development:**

The majority of the PLs in the district do not have up to the mark physical facilities to develop and maintain a proper LHC there. Librarians/Library-in-charges were asked to inform their respective specific requirements which they think of important to develop the same. The answers to this multiple choice question reveal that space is not a big issue in this regard as most of the PLs of the district have sufficient space for that. But the situation is worst in the case of staff strength which is the need of the hour. Except for the District library, almost all the sub-divisional, town and century-old rural libraries expressed their grievance regarding scarcity in the number of working staff in each library. Annoyance related to additional duties in more than one library also exists strongly. Moreover, untrained staff do not show any interest in LHC development in libraries. A large number of sample libraries, including the District Library, stressed staff training at regular intervals on specialized issues like the development of LHC in PLs. Restoration and preservation of LHMs are other significant issues that are the major

concerns of librarians/library-in-charges. Most of the PLs do not have proper infrastructural provisions for the maintenance of such invaluable LHMs. As an instance, Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) (Joynagar Town Library) has a beautiful collection of LHMs in the library. There are several relics of local Gods and Goddesses which were once collected from various sites of excavation near to Joynagar-Majilpur area. At present all these relics are kept pitifully on a wooden rack and no dusting is done for a long time. In the absence of proper maintenance, restoration and preservation, developing a beneficial and significant LHC in PLs will be of no value. A somewhat similar kind of situation is seen in Kodalia Haranath Binapani Library where the museum on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's life events is not maintained properly; moreover, the collection of reading resources on and by Netaji is not kept in the same way as it should be.

Some other important issues also come up from the sample survey, viz., increased financial grants for the development and maintenance of the LH section from the higher authorities. Some of the libraries demanded the provisions for consultation with LH experts at certain intervals to develop an LHC in libraries. It was also necessary to keep the quality of existing LHCs (in some libraries) at an upgraded standard. Librarians/ Library-in-Charges also stress upon digitization of precious LHMs for their long time use and viability since PLs have limited infrastructural facilities to support such special collection and services. There are a few libraries viz., RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhaban Sub Divisional library and Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar show somewhat an expression of apathy towards answering this particular question as both of the libraries are suffering from various infrastructural and administrative difficulties for a long time.

➤ **Demands of user communities for LH related information:**

All the sample libraries generally record the user demands for LH in written format. It is observed from the minute study of these records that user demands for LH vary according to the category of libraries. The majority of the subdivisional libraries reported that queries regarding the history of a locality where a library is situated come on average once a month. Two subdivisional libraries, viz., RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhavan Sub Divisional Library and Vivek Sangha Pathagar reported that they do not face any kind of LH related queries ever from any user. Though the former one has a large collection of books and other reading materials, it doesn't have any LH related reading resources in the library. Being situated in an urban belt comprising of a comparatively educated user community, it is quite surprising that the latter one also reported not having LH related queries in the recent past. A considerable number of town libraries reported to have LH related queries on average once in a month; according to the responses of the rest of the town libraries, some reported to face such queries once in two weeks, viz., Kodalia Haranath Binapani Library and Deshgourab Pathagar; some of the town libraries like Baruipur Public Library and Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) (Joynagar Town Library) reported that on average LH related queries come once every six months. Bakhrabat Public Library & Free Reading Room is the only town library where the Library Assistant stated that researchers or local people come to the library with LH related queries once or twice every week which is quite an encouraging picture in comparison to other PLs in the district. In the century-old town libraries of the district, this picture is very much disappointing. The majority of them said that users generally do not come with such specialized reference queries like LH. Thus the average frequency of demand they recorded was once a year. Only one century-old town library i.e. Madarat Bandhab Pathagar recorded the frequency at an average rate of once in three

months as researchers do come to the library with some queries regarding the locality, and local people are interested in developing LHCs in the library.

➤ **Methods adapted to record LH-related information demand of users:**

Every library must ascertain its users' demands for collections and services. This activity strengthens the credentials of a library to its user communities. The present investigation revealed that the majority of the sample libraries in the district have adopted at least one of the simple methods of determining the users' demands for LH, but these methods are not at all fully efficient in this regard. Suggestion box and demand registers are the most common methods of recording users' demands in the majority of the libraries including the District Library. Besides the District Library, the majority of the SDLs reported having a suggestion box for the purpose, whereas the majority of the town libraries reported having their demand registers for the same. Though in the case of COLs, the picture is not encouraging. Madarat Bandhab Pathagar is the only library that adopted suggestion box and demand registers; on the other hand, Vidyabhusan Library is the only library where users can register their demands directly to the Librarian/Library-in-Charge. Joychandi Pathagar, Hemkali Library, and Purandar Smriti Mandir Pathagar reported that there is no specific method adopted in their libraries for recording users' demands for LH. It is a severe problem that almost no library, except The District Library and Bakhrahat Public Library & Free Reading Room, adopted the method of receiving users' demands through e-mails. Above all, the severe problem with recording users demands that none of the libraries, except the District Library and Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) (Joynagar Town Library), make separate records for registering LH-related users' demands.

When asked for LH-related separate demand records, almost none of the Librarians/Library-in-Charges identified those specific demands in easy and convenient ways.

➤ **Frequency of reviewing LH-related demands of user communities:**

User demands in PLs must be reviewed at regular intervals. The present study revealed that some of the libraries review their users' demands for LH at various frequencies as ascertained by themselves. District Library fortnightly reviews the LH related demands of its users. Other than DL, Bakhrahat Public Library & Free Reading Room is the only library reviewing its users' demands fortnightly. But a significant number of libraries do not review the demands as well not have any plan to do the same in near future. This condition is prevalent, particularly in COLs. As per responses of the librarians/library-in-charges of these libraries, shortage of requisite staff is the only crisis to introduce and carry on this job. Out of six COLs under sample, Vidyabhushan Library and Madarat Bandhab Pathagar are the two libraries reported to have the system of recording users' demands for LH every month. Besides these COLs, three TLs viz., Baruipur Public Library, Baharu Shyamsundar Public Library & Free Reading Room, and Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar also reported that they did not review their users' LH related demands ever; the same has been reported by one SDL i.e. RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhavan Sub Divisional Library. The single reason as pointed by all these libraries is the scarcity of requisite staff at libraries. It was also understood from the interviews of Librarians and Library-in-Charges that reviewing users' LH related requirements occupy the least position in the library's priority job list. This mentality of the library staff silently kills the interests of those users who are intended to know about the local cultures and their historical pasts.

➤ **Need for publicity to popularize LHCs among local communities:**

Regarding the issues of popularizing LHCs in PLs, proper and effective publicity measures must be adopted by libraries. The present investigation attempted to make a deep insight into the approaches of Librarians and Library-in-Charges towards adopting effective publicity measures for LHCs of their libraries. It was observed that a large number of libraries do not have any concrete idea about the publicity of LHCs among the user communities and local people. That is why they cannot be sure whether publicity may play a crucial role in reaching local people, and thus do not have any opinion about this specific issue. Though it was also observed that neither of the Librarians/Library-in-Charges has expressed a negative opinion regarding publicity of LHCs in the PL; but the Librarians/Library-in-Charges at a few libraries viz., RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhavan Sub Divisional Library, Baruipur Public Library, Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar, Hemkali Library, and Purandar Smriti Mandir Pathagar clearly stated their unwillingness to express any opinion on this issue. Some of the Librarians/Library-in-Charges expressed affirmative views in the publicity issue and opined that at least some publicity measures should be adopted by PLs to make their LHCs popular among the local people; this, in turn, will increase the LH-related awareness and grow interests among the local communities, specifically among youths.

➤ **Publicity measures taken to popularize LHCs among local communities:**

The PL is not only a centre for recreation but also the enlightenment of common people. To introduce the local people to their historical past is a major responsibility of a PL towards society. Collection, maintenance and preservation of LHMs of a locality are significant tasks of a

PL. In most instances, local people do not get aware of the LHC which his/her nearby PL has. The present investigation discloses that the District Library adopts several publicity measures to let people know about its LHC. Most of the sample libraries use library brochures or library magazines, leaflets, and public address systems for this publicity purposes. It was also noticed from the interviews of Librarians and Library-in-Charges that public address system and LH awareness rally, both are effective means of publicity particularly in rural areas; on the other hand library brochures or library magazines, distribution of leaflets, and campaign through posters and notices are the best publicity means in urban areas. The reason is probably in urban areas, users' literacy rate is higher than the rural users. But the most hopeless condition is that only one library under sample uses social media to publicize its library collections including LHCs. Some of the SDLs viz., Behala Town Library, Barisha Pathagar; some of the TLs viz., Kodalia Haranath Binapani Library, Bakhrahat Public Library & Free Reading Room, Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) (Joynagar Town Library), and only one COL viz., Madarat Bandhab Pathagar reported that they adopt some publicity measure to make local people aware of the libraries' LHCs. It was found that the DL has a separate website maintained by the Department of Mass Education Extension & Library Services of the Government of West Bengal. Madarat Bandhab Pathagar is the only library that uses social media as publicity means. The library has a Facebook account as well as a working e-mail address. It was also revealed that a considerable number of libraries stated that they do not adopt any of the publicity measures at all to popularize their LHCs. Such SDLs as RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhavan Sub Divisional Library and Vivek Sanghat Pathagar; TLs as Baruipur Public Library and Baharu Shyamsundar Public Library, Rajpur Sadharan Pathagar, Sarangabad Bandhab Pathagar and Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar; COLs as Joychandi Pathagar, Hemkali Library, and Purandar

Smriti Mandir Pathagar reported the same condition i.e. adoption of none of the publicity measures in favour of LHCs of the libraries.

➤ **Major difficulties faced by Librarians towards developing LHCs:**

Librarians and library-in-charges of the sample libraries were asked about the difficulties or troubles which they generally encounter while taking initiatives to develop a well-organized LHC as well as to improvise the existing LHC in their libraries. The question was a multiple choice type question and respondents give more than one response. It is found from the responses that setting up a collection containing LHMs in a PL or improving the condition of such an existing collection encounter several difficulties or barriers that are face by librarians or library-in-charges from time to time. Almost all the libraries, except the District library, reported that staff shortage is the most crucial issue that needs to be solved immediately. Due to the absence of any working staff, Karanjali Unnati Bidhayani Pathagar has been closed though Karanjali village has an interesting local historical background. The majority of the existing staff in different PLs of the district, including librarians, are engaged in additional duties to more than one library. The not only shortage of staff, existing staff require extensive training on how LHMs can be kept and preserved for future use. Lack of proper staff training, many librarians and library-in-charges cannot proceed to develop LHCs in their libraries. This kind of difficulty is facing by Mudialy Library and Sagar Town Library. De-centralization of training venues is another significant considering factor as reported by the library assistant of Sagar Town Library since smooth communication facilities are absent in these southernmost parts of the district.

Reluctance from the end of appropriate authorities is another prominent barrier towards LHC development, as reported by the majority of the PLs. In most of the libraries, well-structured LHC is absent; this deficit needs to get more attention while framing collection development policy for PLs situated in different localities of the district. PLs cover extensive diversification in terms of local cultural inheritance as they are situated at different localities, so uniform collection development policy sometimes proved as ‘inappropriate’ in some localities, as reported by Sagar Town Library, Mudialy Library, Bakhrahat Public Library & Free Reading Room and Brati Sangha Pathagar. Negligence or indifference at various authoritative tiers indirectly affects the sanction of required funding and permission for necessary infrastructural facilities in PLs to develop well-organized LHCs. If there is reluctance at the authoritative and administrative levels, some of the librarians or library professionals are also reluctant about doing something new and run the library with minimum effort. This situation affects greatly the interests of the local communities of users who come to the library for serious reading and reference. Lack of initiatives from library professionals’ ends proved to be detrimental for developing LHC in any PL.

6.2.2 OBSERVATION REGARDING USERS’ RESPONSES TOWARDS COLLECTION AND SERVICES OF LOCAL HISTORY IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

➤ Age and sex of user populations:

Users are the actual assets of a PL system. Collections and services all are meant for users as they are an indispensable part of the library. All the techniques, designs, and developmental

procedures of library administration focus on the uninterrupted information flow between the source of information and the receiving point. Thus users are given the utmost importance in a PL system since users satisfaction is the only motto. The entire user population which is used as the sample is primarily analyzed according to sex and age. The survey revealed that female representation in the sample is much lower than their male counterparts. It is seen that almost 69.8 % of the total respondents are male whereas approximately 30.2 % of respondents are female. As the user population is prepared through random sampling, no female user is found ranging between 38 to 47 years of age, using the library. It is also observed that the majority of the users tend to come to PLs either at a young age, or the latter stage of life. The young users, including females, use the library resources primarily for their study as well as in search of reading materials for various competitive examinations. On the other hand, users at the later stage come to the library basically to use the free reading rooms to read newspapers and magazines. Here also female elderly users are noticeably lesser than male elderly users.

➤ **Library use by rural and urban users:**

It is revealed from the survey that almost half of the user sample population come from urban areas and the other half come from rural areas. This is a quite comfortable distribution as rural and urban users are getting the same opportunities regarding PL services. But the detailed scenario regarding the sex-wise distribution of urban and rural users reveals an inequality between these two categories. It is observed that rural male users are quite high in number than their urban counterparts. The study also reveals that in rural areas, particularly young users are dependent on nearby PLs to fulfill their requirements for text and reference books. Another

reason found for this high number of rural male user in PLs is the orientation of rural youths to various State-level competitive examinations. Since PLs receive grants for collecting competitive examination related resources, these users get benefitted from these. In urban areas, the majority of the users of PL are elderly persons. In rural areas, aged people are also a significant part, but the urban aged people have a little more library awareness than their rural counterparts. Urban youths also depend on textbooks, reference books and competitive-examination related books available in nearby PLs, but the number is quite low; as responded by the users the reason behind this is the better affordability of urban community in comparison to the rural community. In both urban and rural sectors, female users are significantly low than their male counterparts, especially in rural areas. In urban regions, a considerable number of young female users are found coming to PLs for the same reason as the male users, i.e. using text and reference books, and books for various competitive examinations. But in rural areas, it is hard to find female users having library awareness. One of the major reasons for that is the absence of enough family support so that they can continue higher studies or pursue prestigious jobs, and be a support system of the family. That is why rural PLs have a long tradition of a dearth of female members.

➤ **Occupational status of users:**

It is found from the study that the majority of the users, whether it may be male or female, are students by occupation; the reason seemed that they form some kind of dependence on the library resources for their mainstream studies as well as job related studies. Particularly in rural areas, as stated in the previous section, students of high schools and colleges are members of their nearby PLs. Retired persons are also quite high in number as found from the study. In both

rural and urban areas, retired person come to the library to spend quality time with fellow users. It is also noticed that a considerable number of retired aged persons primarily use the free reading rooms of libraries, while some of them come to issue or return books. A considerable number of unemployed users were found in most of the sample libraries. They have almost the same issues as retired persons as they mainly use the free reading rooms to read newspapers and various magazines subscribed by the libraries. A small number of users are found who are currently employed in various services; as reported by them, they have little time to come to libraries and thus inclined to use the free reading rooms mostly. There are only two such sample libraries in rural areas as Sagar Town Library at *Gangasagar* Island and Baharu Shyam Sundar Public Library and Free Reading Room at *Baharu*, where a little number of users found who are engaged in agriculture-related occupations viz., farming since these rural regions have vast areas of cultivated agricultural lands. Small numbers of female users are found in Behala town Library, Deshgourab Pathagar at *Garia*, Barisha Pathagar, and District Library at *Amtala*, who are not engaged in any job but preferred to be home-makers. This is found surprising that they find some quality time to read novels besides managing their household chores and enjoy coming to libraries for issuing books and reading latest issues of magazines. Such users are found in Behala Town Library, Barisha Pathagar, Deshgourab Pathagar at *Garia* and District Library at *Amtala*. In the first three libraries, ladies regularly come to libraries and feel comfortable interacting with respective librarians. It is observed that librarians of these libraries are all ladies and they maintain a good rapport with female users in particular. This is a strong reason why female home-makers of neighbouring areas prefer to come to libraries and use the resources. However, in all occupational categories, female users lie far behind male users, and it is also observed that still, students constitute the major user base in any of the PLs.

➤ **Formal educational qualifications of users:**

While examining the educational qualifications of users coming to the PLs across the district, it is found that the largest section of them have only graduation degree as their highest qualifications. A considerable number of users have found who passed the higher secondary examination and yet to get admission to degree colleges. This population is mainly the student community. A large portion of this community have passed college and preparing themselves for different competitive examinations. One of the significant observations is that though the student community visits PLs very often to get access to career oriented resources, the majority of them are dissatisfied to some extent; they also admitted that once they get engaged in any kind of job, they will not find any time to come to the library. A Small numbers of users are also found to have post-graduation degrees and engaged in job-oriented courses. The majority of rural PLs possess such user populations. Graduation is the most common highest degree among retired persons also. Only two male users in the District Library at *Amtala* reported that they are pursuing vocational courses in ‘Industrial Aquaculture and Fisheries’ in the Asutosh College (second campus) which is situated at *Bhasa* near *Bishnupur* Police Station. In overall observation regarding educational qualifications, users having graduation degree are the maximum in number found in all the sample libraries across the district, the majority of which are composed of students and retired persons.

➤ **Sources of information regarding public library:**

Every person needs some motivational supports to start a new beginning. Regarding coming to nearby PLs and using the reading resources for educational or recreational purposes, almost all

the users reported that they have got informed by various information sources like print source, human source, public address system and social media. It is observed that more than half of the users get aware by human sources about the benefits of using PLs. Human sources include parents, teachers and private tutors, friends at the same localities, classmates, and neighbours. Among these persons, students generally get motivated by their parents and teachers in schools; this scenario is mostly observed in urban areas. They generally look for reference books and resources for competitive examinations. In rural areas, similar kinds of users get aware from their classmates and nearby friends. Some libraries use public address systems which include announcements in nearby localities and conducting library awareness rallies. Some libraries of the district take on such initiatives to make local people aware of the benefits of PLs. A considerable number of users get the information from printed sources viz., leaflets, posters in local areas, event notifications in local newspapers and bulletins, library magazines or brochures available in schools or local clubs, etc. In such ways, these categories of users grow some inquisitiveness and became regular members. It is observed that very small numbers of users get information regarding nearby PL on social media. Since the young generation users are very much pro about using different social media platforms, they expect more information regarding PLs on social media, but unfortunately do not get the same. Some users who reported not being informed by any such kind of sources of information. They decided to become a member of PLs out of their interest and requirements.

➤ **Members and non-members:**

PL is referred to as ‘People’s university’ where people can use the resources without any barrier of religion, sex, language, age, caste and creed. It is a place of breathing not only for members but for non-members also. The reading room in a PL is completely free to the world. The reading room of a PL provides a peaceful scholarly learning place to its user community without any discrimination. It is always found that free reading rooms are used by local people regularly. The same picture has been found in the PLs of the district of 24 Parganas (South) also. A considerable number of library users are found, non-members. They generally use the free reading rooms in their nearby PLs where they browse through several numbers of daily newspapers. The majority of them also look for the latest issues of popular magazines that the library subscribes. These non-members are mostly retired persons, some working persons, and a very few female users who are home-makers. None of the student respondents found as non-member. These non-members prefer to come to libraries for recreation where they spend some quality time with various reading resources and fellow users. The survey reveals that they enjoy coming to their nearby PLs which they feel, provides a fresh breeze of relaxation in their monotonous lives.

➤ **Duration of library use:**

Regarding the duration (in a year) of library use by members and non-members, it is observed that a large section of the users are using their nearby PLs for more than twenty five years. Some users who are coming to libraries for more than thirty years; both instances are quite surprising. Though students are the largest constituent of PL user communities across the district, it is

observed that once they get involved in some job or get similar opportunities, they get detached from the libraries. This has been reported by many of the librarians and library-in-charges. It is also observed from the interviews of users, most of them, whether member or non-member, come to libraries out of habituation and not for finding any new stuff. The majority of such users come to libraries years after years for using the free reading rooms and feel happy spending cosy times with themselves or fellow users. But the most shocking observation is those female users are not able to continue their library use with time in comparison to male users. Not a single female user has been found during the entire survey who is a member or non-member user of a PL for more than twenty years. In urban areas, female users who are using libraries for long years, are higher in number than in rural areas. This is probably because rural females are more early engaged in household chores than their urban counterparts.

➤ **Frequency of library visit:**

The survey reveals that no user comes to library every day, not even retired persons who use the free reading rooms the most. The majority users told that they do not have any fixed schedule for coming to libraries. Most of the students who are regular users of PLs across the district reported come to libraries and use reading resources at the frequency of one to three days a week. It is also observed that a considerable number of high school students in rural areas particularly, use nearby PLs for reference studies; Similarly students after qualifying their graduation levels, also visit PLs while preparing themselves for various competitive examinations. For this, such PLs develop a good collection of reference books and competitive examination reading resources. It is found from the survey that Bakhrahat Public Library & Free Reading Room, Stalin Einstein

Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar, Vidyabhushan Library, and Madarat Bandhab Pathagar able to meet such kind of demands of their users to a great extent. That is why these libraries have large number of users who generally used to come to libraries very often. Retired persons are also regular users of PLs in rural as well as urban areas. They also come to their nearby libraries twice or thrice a week. Persons engaged in any kind of job, homemaker female users, unemployed persons, etc. use libraries either rarely or they do not have any predetermined plan. The survey also revealed that the majority of the users, whether member or non member, prefer to come to libraries in the evening and without having any fixed schedule.

➤ **The General purpose of library visit:**

Throughout the survey, it is observed that the student community is the largest user of PLs across the district. That is why it is found that the highest number of users stated that they come to libraries for preparing themselves for various state and central level competitive examinations. A large number of users, both male and female reported the general reason for coming to PLs is the consultation of reference books as well as some textbooks; this is mainly found in rural areas where students of schools and colleges are dependent, to some extent, on the resources of PLs. A similar number of users stated that they generally come to libraries for reading various daily newspapers and the latest issues of popular magazines at free reading rooms. PLs subscribe many daily newspapers in Bengali, as well as local news bulletins published by local organizations or published simply by collective initiatives; these are largely used by reading room users. Besides, the latest issues of popular Bengali magazines are also the major attractions of the user communities. A very few users are found in some of the sample libraries, who stated

that they come to respective PLs for their ongoing project work or research work. Such users are found in four libraries viz., the District Library, Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) (Joynagar Town Library), Barisha Pathagar, and Baruipur Town Library. 'Recreation' is another reason as responded by some of the users in the survey. Most of such users said that they generally come to libraries once or twice a week or whenever they find a suitable time. In rural areas, PLs are used for recreational purposes and some users not only come for reading or circulation but also to meet fellow users to spend some quality time with friends and to gorge over several newspapers and magazines.

➤ **Broad purposes of LH study:**

The survey revealed that very few users come to their respective nearby PLs with the purpose to study their local cultural histories. Among them, majority of the users responded that they feel interested in the lives of the famous personalities who are the sons of those soils. A large number of users also reported that they want to explore the history of their rich local cultural backgrounds. In Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library), a group of young vibrant users responded to the research questionnaires who are very much interested in exploring and rejuvenating their local cultural traditions. Some of them are also the members of Baharu Shyamsundar Public Library & Free Reading Room. OH and genealogy or family history are other significant and wealthy sources of LH which are neglected for a long time in the formal course of research in history. It is quite interesting that many of the users are inquisitive about the sources of oral historical traditions as well as family histories of local personalities who became famous worldwide. Such intrusive users are found in Kotalia Haranath Binapani

Library, Barisha Pathagar, and Behala Town Library. This is probably all these libraries are situated in historically rich places where people grow up with such traditional touch-ups. In Sagar Town Library, a very few elderly users responded that they come to the PL mainly to spend quality time with their fellow users. It was also responded that they enjoy discussion about the religious culture of the Island community people and various popular oral historical traditions.

➤ **Frequency of LH study:**

The survey and concerned interviews revealed that users, who are involved in basic LH study, generally do not use any specific or pre-fixed schedule to go to the library. The majority of the LH users stated that they love to study local cultural traditions and have various frequencies to study the same. Some of the users are found in Kodalia Haranath Binapani Library, Barisha Pathagar, and Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) (Joynagar Town Library) who reported that despite a general attraction towards LH study, they rarely use the collections at PLs. A major reason is that PLs do not have an adequate collection of LH related resources as well as such collections are not at all refreshed with time. None of the users is found in any of the sample libraries uses LH related resources every day or once in two days. An overall observation regarding the frequency of using LH resources in PLs is not so encouraging from the users' end, though they have much interest in the subject.

➤ **Preferable LHMs of users:**

The investigation indicates that book is the most preferable source of information regarding LH. All the users who were interviewed expressed this opinion. The strong reason is that books are most easily available in all the PLs throughout the district. Other popular sources are local magazines and local newspapers. It is observed that almost all the subdivisional and town libraries subscribe to newspapers that are published in local areas. The local magazines are generally either subscribed or supplied by the publishers free of cost to reach a higher number of users. A considerable number of interested users are found in some of the sample libraries viz., Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library, Barisha Pathagar, and Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) (Joynagar Town Library) where photographs, relics, paintings and sculptures, genealogy, etc. are found as LHMs. Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library has a large museum of sculptures and paintings reflecting the life events of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Barisha Pathagar has many paintings and photographs of the descendants of *Sabarna Ray Choudhury*'s family who were the *zamindars* of Kolkata. Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) has a very rich collection of LHMs viz., relics collected from local excavations, souvenirs of local schools, government and non-government organizations, clubs, etc. This library also has a special collection of books which are donated by eminent local historian *Sri Kalidas Dutta*. There are some regular users and researchers who come to these libraries for consulting these collections. Some of the users were found who expressed their interests in OH related to local lives and cultural wealth. Genealogy of local famous personalities is another point of attraction to a group of users. But unfortunately, none of the libraries meets their demands for LH study due to unsatisfactory collections or services.

➤ **Users' satisfaction regarding LHCs:**

Users are the pillars of a library. Satisfaction of the users' demands is the ultimate aim of building a library collection. The investigation reveals that LH is one of the popular topics of study in PLs and a considerable number of users felt interested in the same. But in the majority of the libraries, users do not get satisfied with the collection. Very few of the sample libraries become able to meet their users' LH-related demands to some extent. It is observed that a negligible number of users are 'highly satisfied' with the existing LHC of their nearby PLs. Such users are found in Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library, Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library), and Bakhrabat Public Library & Free Reading Room. The majority of the users are found expressing their satisfaction level as 'moderate' as they need some more information regarding their own locality's historical past. Even majority of the District Library users reported the same; users of the Behala Town Library, Prativa Library, Sagar Town Library, Baruipur Town Library, Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smark Pathagar etc. reported that these libraries have some LHCs, but these are so disorganized that even librarians and other staff failed to retrieve that. The maximum users expressed their dissatisfaction regarding LHCs in PLs. Particularly in some of the very old libraries viz., Mudialy Library, Brati Sangha Pathagar, Rajpur Sadharan Pathagar, Hemkali Library, RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhavan Sub Divisional Library, Baruipur Public Library, and Baharu Shyamsundar Public Library & Free Reading Room, users are inquisitive towards locality's historical past but libraries either do not have such resources at all or have very negligible resources which are 'dissatisfying' to user community from every aspect. Some of the users reported that they have much interest in LH, but they do not have a clear idea about such resources or services. This is the reason they like to study and consult the available little resources of LH at their nearby PLs without having much expectation in this regard.

➤ **Need for separate LH section in the library:**

Intensive study always calls for a separate space in the library with a composed and conducive reading atmosphere. It is observed from the study that except for a very few sample libraries, all others are unable to provide their users such a favourable reading atmosphere for studying LH within the library. That is why the largest portion of respondent users expressed that this is highly needed in each of the libraries. In particular, users of Bakhrahat Public Library & Free Reading Room, Barisha Pathagar, and Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar strongly demanded the same. Some of the users found who are the users of such libraries that have some significant LHCs viz., Vidyabhusan Library, Vivek Sangha Town Library, Prativa Library, and Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) have opined that separate section for LH study may be needed as they sometimes feel the necessity. On the other hand, some users also said that LH study can be carried out in common spaces of free reading rooms and no separate space is required. They also shared their views that the nature of LH study should be extensive rather than intensive, and as people study such resources out of interest only, separate reading space is not necessary all the time. During sampling some users were found to refuse to opine; they told that they do not have a clear opinion in this regard, so they cannot express it so clearly.

➤ **Users' satisfaction regarding physical facilities at LH section:**

Users are the most valuable components of the library. All the necessary activities of a library viz., acquisition, processing, organization of various reading resources on proper places, comfortable and composed reading environment, etc. are aimed to satisfy the demands of user communities. While asking about the physical facilities that users get from their nearby PLs, the

maximum users responded as ‘not at all satisfying’. A very few responded positively and a considerable portion of users responded that they are moderately satisfied with the existing physical facilities. In most of the sample libraries, users complain about the absence of separate reading spaces for LH study, improper sitting arrangements and gloomy environment of reading rooms, particularly in most of the century-old PLs. Most of the users also expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the modernization of physical facilities and about being stuck to an old pattern of collection, service and reading areas in libraries.

➤ **Users’ requirements for infrastructural facilities:**

Improved infrastructure is indispensable in a library, particularly when a specialized study like LH is concerned. Throughout the investigation, respondent users expressed their dissatisfaction or moderate satisfaction regarding infrastructural facilities that they usually get from their nearby PLs while coming for consulting LH resources. It is observed that users mostly require a separate reading area for such intensive study. They told that separate reading space should be provided with comfortable sitting arrangements and proper illumination since many of the LHMs require minute observation to readout. Having no separate computers for users as well as having no internet connection, users often get disappointed when they feel interested in LH study. They also grumbled regarding display and separate arrangements of LH resources in the library as these are often very much tough to find out precise LHM at a particular moment. Since these are not separately kept inside the library stack area, staff can’t find out most of the times.

➤ **LH related services received by users:**

Service is one of the significant factors in the overall collection, organization and dissemination of LH in PLs through the most appropriate and useful techniques. Unlike all other reading resources, LH resources require some restrictions in use. LH resources include both documentary and non-documentary sources of information related to community history, and most of the resources are precious and delicate materials. That is why all kinds of services that are provided for all other reading materials, may not be suitable for LHMs also. The investigation revealed that almost none of the PLs follow such restrictions while providing LH related services to their users. All the respondent LH users reported that they can read books and other materials inside the library reading rooms, while a huge number of them also reported that they borrow LHMs from libraries to their homes on regular basis. Users also get reference service in libraries where there is at least some LHMs are maintained, viz., District Library at Amtala, Vidyabhusan Library, Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library, Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library), Behala Town Library, Barisha Pathagar, etc. Referral service is another vital service regarding LH, and some of the users responded positively towards this question. Having a computer with an internet connection is an integral part of LH service in PLs. Due to the absence of separate computers and linked internet connections OPAC searching becomes impossible in the majority of the sample libraries except for the District Library. That is the reason very few respondents reported affirmatively regarding the same.

➤ **LH extension services found useful by users:**

Extension services are always found helpful for attracting local people towards PLs. LH related extension services serve the same purpose. These services have extremely positive effects among community people, both members and non-members, towards building interest in their historical past. Through this study, it is observed that local people who are users of PLs, also feel interested in LH through various extension services provided by their nearby libraries. The majority of the respondents said that they don't know the actual collection of LHMs possessed by libraries. So they feel the collection should make open to community people to make them aware of the library's LHCs. Referral service is another valued extension service since users often could not find appropriate LH resource in a single library. At that very moment, they need proper guidance from the end of serving PL about which organization or person will be most helpful where or from whom the users can get targeted LH information. Since LH is a prospective subject of research in contemporary society, researchers always stressed reference service on this particular subject. Large numbers of users feel some regular activities like the orientation of local people about the LH of the region, organizing reading circles and talks or lectures on such themes, conducting LH awareness rally in the localities, etc. might be helpful towards popularizing LH among local people. Every region or locality has its cultural richness; it is the duty of the PLs to organize local culture promoting programmes so that local people get chances to participate. Large numbers of respondent users feel that organizing cultural programmes on local traditions and aesthetics will be helpful for this purpose.

➤ **LH awareness of library staff:**

LH service to users depends greatly on the awareness of library staff managing the circulation front. The investigation discloses the fact that PL staff in the district are not very much aware of the importance of LH on community life. Most of the respondent users reported that LH awareness of the library staff is ‘moderate’, except ‘enough aware’ in some of the libraries where there is already a constructive and good collection of LH resources, and those libraries are placed in historically rich localities. For example, Kodalia Haranath Binapani Library is situated just beside the ancestral house of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, and the library has two staff viz., the Librarian and a Duftary-cum-Book Binder. It is observed that both of them are enough aware of the family history of Netaji, and maintain the LHC with much effort. Not only the library staff, but even local people also are very much aware of the fact and feel proud about that. An almost similar situation is observed in Barisha Pathagar where library staff as well as residents, all are very much aware of the contributions of the Sabarna Ray Chowdhury family in the development of the then city of ‘Calcutta’. Unlike these conditions, some of the libraries set completely different pictures. For example, Baharu Shyamsundar Public Library & Free Reading Room is situated at the village of *Baharu* which is famous for its indigenous sweet ‘Moya’, just as famous as that of neighbouring locality Joynagar-Majilpur. But the only staff in the library is not only unaware of this but also completely ignorant. No single information is available on ‘Moya’ in this library. The investigation also reveals the pathetic situation of some PLs in the district viz., Mudialy Library at Garden Reach, Rajpur Sadharan Pathagar, RKM Vivek Bharati Path Bhaban Sub Divisional Library, etc. which are situated at places with rich LH but no collection has been formed or existing collection has put under dark due to unawareness of library staff. This is the reason still LH awareness has to go miles in the PLs of the district.

➤ **Users' waiting time in the library for getting LH related services:**

The timely delivery of service to users makes a PL acceptable to user communities. When the issue of the delivery time of LH comes, it is observed that the majority of the respondent users are dissatisfied since library staff take too much time in this regard. They reported the waiting time is sometimes unbearable to them, and as a result, they often get disinterested in the same. A considerable number of respondent users also reported that most of the time they get disheartened as library staff finally could not locate the requisite LH resources. It seems that less interest in particular LH study may get originated from such reasons, even though local people are moderately aware of their own localities' pasts.

➤ **Cooperative attitude of library staff:**

The attitude of library staff towards user community is a crucial factor to increase to popularize PL collections and services among local people. During the investigation, it is observed that a maximum number of respondent users feel that PL staff are somewhat moderate to non-cooperative when they face LH-related queries. Interviews of a significant number of users revealed that most of the PL staff, including librarians, show cold shoulders in response to LH related services. Either they are little aware or unaware of this matter or take too much time to retrieve the required information. That is why some of the staff completely reject to respond positively to such queries. Similar kinds of behaviours are reported by many of the respondents of Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar, Brati Sangha Pathagar, Hemkali Library, Purandar Smriti Mandir Pathagar, and Baruipur Public Library. On contrary, respondents of Bakhrahat Public Library & Free Reading Room, Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library),

Barisha Pathagar, Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library, Vidyabhusan Library, Sagar Town Library, and District Library, reported that they always receive enough cooperation from the end of librarians and other library staff of these PLs whenever they come with LH-related queries.

➤ **Shortfalls of LHCs and services from user's point of view:**

There are various kinds of deficits in a PL when it is developing a LHC and renders related services, as perceived by user communities. They mainly complained regarding the absence of personal assistance in libraries when they try to find out some LHMs on their own. Besides, users mainly highlighted some other issues like a non-conducive atmosphere at reading rooms, unrecognizable condition of LHMs, unorganized and overlapping arrangement of these valuable resources, long waiting time for information retrieval, non-cooperation of library personnel, etc. Though this scenario is not the same for all PLs, it is also observed that even a library with a good collection of LHMs found faulty from some other aspect. For example, Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library has a good LHC which is kept separately in the library and organized to some extent, but users reported that the library authority does not take initiatives to make this collection up-to-date. Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library) houses a treasure of LHMs, but users are disheartened in the true sense as collections are unorganized and overlapping, there is no separate LH section to recognize them easily, and the reading area is too small for intensive study of LH. Though the only staff of the library is indeed very much cooperative in all aspect. Stalin-Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar at Diamond Harbour has a large and good collection of LHMs, but all are unorganized and unrecognizable. The only staff, who is running the library, is completely unaware and non-cooperative in this matter. Similar conditions of

unorganized, overlapping, unrecognizable LHCs are also found in Rajpur Sadharan Pathagar, Baharu Shyamsundar Public Library & Free Reading Room, The Behala Town Library, and Madarat Bandhab Pathagar. All these libraries have considerably good LHCs, but these shortfalls often make people disinterested in the relevant study. District Library has enough collection of LHMs kept separately on the first floor of the library building. Even some respondent users of this library reported that being the largest PL in the whole district, it should have much more varieties of LHMs in its collections, as expected from the inquisitive user community of LH.

➤ **Need for advertisement and publicity for LH awareness:**

Advertisement and necessary publicity measures are essential for bringing users nearer to the collections and services of PLs. This is very much true for LHCs also. In almost all the libraries, it is reported by the users that they do not get opportunities to know about the LHCs and services of his/her nearby PLs. That is why the largest section of the respondent users said that advertisements and publicity measures must be adopted by every PL to make local people interested in its special collections and services viz., LH. Though it is observed that some of the sample libraries viz., Bakhrahat Public Library & Free Reading Room, Bandhab Library (Joynagar Town Library), Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library, and Madarat Bandhab Pathagar try hard to make local people aware of their LHCs and associated services and take necessary steps whenever required. These libraries arrange LH awareness rallies, local culture promoting programmes, apply posters in the localities regularly for the same. Some users do not feel the necessity of advertisements and publicity for popularizing LHCs of libraries. They always believe in traditional approaches of service delivery for the entire collection. Some users do not

aware of the need for advertisement and other publicity measures, particularly for LHCs. These users are found mostly in those libraries which never adopt any publicity measures to make LHCs popular among local communities. However, it becomes evident from the investigation that PL users as a whole do feel the necessity for LH promoting advertisements and publicity measures. They believe that libraries will gain much more cooperation from users in this way, and local people will also feel attracted more to come again to libraries.

➤ **Publicity measures found useful by users:**

During the investigation, users were asked to find out appropriate publicity measures which can be adopted by PLs to make LHCs popular among the local people. It is observed that a maximum number of respondent users suggest going for advertising on social media platforms as this is the need of the hour. But in reality, none of the PLs, except Madarat Bandhab Pathagar uses social media in this regard. Large numbers of users suggest distributing posters or giving notices in the local areas which can easily be seen. Use of a public address system and LH awareness rally in the surrounding areas will also be fruitful as suggested by many users as these measures can easily be recognized and absorbed by common people. Advertisements related to PL's notable LHCs in local newspapers, particularly are published by local people or organizations, are very much helpful for rural areas since large sections of users use free reading rooms of libraries. Brochures and magazine published by libraries describing their establishment histories with an emphasis on local cultural histories, their general as well as special collections and associated services, etc. are also fruitful for popularizing LH, as suggested by respondent users of the urban localities.

6.3 DIFFICULTIES IN BUILDING UP PROPER LOCAL HISTORY SECTION IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF 24 PARGANAS (SOUTH)

After careful observation of the LHCs and services in the PLs of the district of 24 Parganas (South), a considerable number of factors have been identified which seemed to create difficulties in the process of building up a proper LHC and rendering relevant services to the PL users. The major points of hindrances, came out during the survey, are described below:

➤ **Administrative reluctance:**

The investigation revealed that higher authorities for PL development in the district are almost in dark about the significance of LHCs in PLs in every locality. That is why the administration becomes reluctant about developing the same in PLs. It is also found that subdivisional and town libraries, which are supposed to have some LHCs, are not appropriately distributed throughout the district. For this reason, several areas get access to LHCs and some even do not get access to the same. The administration, consisting of government officials at the higher levels, does not have awareness about the condition.

➤ **Absence of planning:**

None of the PLs in the district leaves the mark of proper planning in developing LHCs for its user communities. Mostly it is observed that some books on the LH of the entire district have been kept reluctantly and library staff do not have an idea about the resources. This condition repels users to come to libraries in search of their desired information queries.

➤ **Failure of libraries' own internal administration:**

Maximum numbers of libraries do not maintain their own internal administrative rules. In general, PLs should be open all six days a week, except the second and fourth Saturdays in a month. In reality, it is observed that most of the libraries do not follow the rules. Some of them remain open twice or thrice a month. It is also observed that users are mostly unaware of the information about on which day a library shall open to get access. Maximum libraries are running with a single staff; assignment of duties in two libraries is a common matter. That is the reason library staff are very much irregular in timely arrival as well as discharging their scheduled duties.

➤ **Decreasing library members and/or users:**

It is also found during the survey that library members are decreasing in number day by day. Considerable numbers of existing members do come to libraries occasionally. People are also disinterested in taking membership in PLs. It is observed that some non-members use the reading rooms regularly mainly for reading daily newspapers and the latest issues of popular magazines. This scenario is quite common in PLs in urban areas mainly. Many of the libraries are operated by single staff which, in turn, degrades the quality of services to users. Due to assignment of duties in more than one library, often users found the staff is absent and the library remains closed for the day. When this condition prevails repeatedly users automatically lose interest to go to the library. Though a thin ray of hope is that students use PLs to a large extent, particularly in rural areas. It is observed that they depend on the textbook and reference book collections of

libraries for their regular studies. It is also observed that many of the PLs in the district possess a good collection of these books.

➤ **The severe shortage of staff:**

This is probably the most severe crisis in PLs in this district. Except District Library maximum numbers of PLs are running with an acute shortage of staff. It is found that several libraries are running with a single staff. Large numbers of staff are assigned duties of more than one library. As a result, these libraries remain closed for more days than scheduled closing days. There are so many posts in PLs lying vacant for years after years and no recruitment drive is taken from the end of appropriate authorities. Due to this problem, PLs are losing their glory and people are becoming disinterested gradually to be members of.

➤ **Lack of financial support:**

The costs of books and other reading materials are increasing with time; particularly LHC development requires some separate financial allotments. It is observed that PLs are getting financial grants which are not sufficient for developing a satisfactory LHC for users. Libraries mainly utilize the money to collect regular books, magazines, newspapers, etc. to satisfy the regular demands of users. But specialized demands like LH study remained neglected as no financial provision has been left to develop such a specialized collection. Despite this common scenario, very few libraries take initiatives on their own to build LHCs in their libraries. Some arranged for donations and gifts, whereas some developed such collections solely out of personal interests.

➤ **Incongruity in staff positions and assigned responsibilities:**

During the investigation, it is found that large numbers of library staff are assigned duties which they are not supposed to be assigned as they belong to lower administrative tiers. Duftary-cum-Book Binders (DCBBs), Darwan-cum-Night Watchman (DCNWs), or Junior Library Attendants (JLAs) are regularly performing the duties of Librarians. This condition arises due to a severe shortage of staff in libraries. It is also observed that the staff feel dissatisfied and displeased all the time as they perform more duties than permitted by their salaries, and they also feel disappointed as they do not have opportunities to get promoted at regular intervals throughout their service lives. It is experienced by the investigator that, in most of such libraries staff don't even ready to talk to investigator and non-cooperation is the most common behaviour to receive from them.

➤ **Lack of infrastructure:**

It is found during the survey that the majority of the libraries do not have adequate infrastructural supports to house LHCs. Intensive LH study requires some specialized infrastructural facilities like comfortable sitting arrangements, separate reading space, large and appropriate display area, sufficient illumination, well organized LHMs, computers with an Internet connection, etc. None of the libraries possesses all such infrastructures to serve users properly. Subdivisional and town libraries have adequate space, but separate reading areas, sufficient illumination, large display areas are absent in maximum libraries. On the other hand, century-old rural libraries suffer from a shortage of space in addition to other infrastructural lacunae. District Library has somewhat improved infrastructure for intensive LH study and it can meet users' demands to a large extent,

in this regard. Again, except District Library, a well-organized collection of LHMs is not found in any of the libraries in the district.

➤ **Lack of automation and modernization:**

It is found that the majority of libraries fail to automate their regular activities and also very much reluctant about this. Not only regular collections but also LHCs require automation as these materials call for compulsory preservation. It is found that all the libraries have at least one computer which is donated by RRRLF, but it is found packed in the box or remains shut in maximum numbers of libraries. Particularly in century-old rural libraries, the most pitiable scenario is found as computers are of no use in these libraries. All libraries carry on their regular activities without automation. Although it is found from the interviews of Librarians or Library-in-charges that sometimes the Government has taken initiatives to train PL personnel in automation, the majority of them failed to apply at their workplaces. Though it is found during investigation that Brati Sangha Pathagar is the only Town library that successfully implemented automation and carries out all regular library activities with the help of computers. District Library is another example in this regard. In all the cases of failure, library personnel make higher authorities responsible, as PLs suffer from an acute shortage of staff. In overall reality, it is observed that PLs in the district lie far behind in the way of modernization due to failure in automation of libraries. In this changing context of user demands, PLs have to adopt new computer technologies, otherwise, their existence will stand before questions in near future.

➤ **Absence of training/workshops:**

It is found from the interviews of library staff during the survey that there is no provision for them to get regular in-service training to get equipped with newer technologies and methods. It is found that they seriously want to join workshops on various aspects of library operations as well as on specialized facets like LHC management and services. No training or workshop has been arranged so far to look after LHCs in PLs. Though little training for Librarians and Library-in-charges have been arranged from the end of higher authorities. But the library personnel are also dissatisfied in this regard. It is observed in particularly in Sagar Town Library that none of the library staff can attend such training due to long-distance and timely unavailability of transport. But no initiative for arranging regional/zonal training programmes has been taken from the higher authorities. Such complaints have also been received from Joychandi Pathagar and Canning Public Library. Preservation and conservation are significant aspects of LHCs as these collections include rare and delicate reading materials as well as non-printed information sources. Every staff of libraries under survey responded that they need training on this particular issue of LHC management otherwise they will fail to satisfy users' LH-related queries.

➤ **Absence of appropriate collection development policy:**

The study reveals that PLs in the district do not have a proper collection development policy regarding LH. This surely affects the relevant services whenever LH related queries come from the end of users. As a result, it is observed that many libraries possess the same book on LH which may not be fit for all the libraries as LH is strictly limited by geographical boundaries. Duplication and overlapping information sources create confusion in users' minds. Collection

development is a continuous and dynamic process that needs to be planned through written policies. In absence of well-defined collection development policies, no library can fully satisfy its users' demands. It is observed from the interviews that the majority of the library staff are demanding LHC development policies by themselves because they are the faces of PLs. The absence of such an appropriate policy gives rise to either unavailability or unnecessary duplication of LH information sources in libraries.

➤ **Non-involvement of librarians in collection development:**

During the interviews Librarians or Library-in-charges (in absence of Librarian) responded that they are not involved in collection development policy formulation. According to them, they are the sole reflectors of users' demands in libraries and can better identify appropriate LHCs to be kept in respective libraries to meet the information demands of local communities. They are also not at all involved in framing management policies and administrative decisions. Many of the Librarians expressed their disgust towards their duties due to obstacles they face out of unreal administrative rules and regulations. Investigator experienced such expressions from the Library Assistant of Bakhrahat Public Library & Free Reading Room, Canning Public Library, Vidyabhushan Library, Sagar Town Library, and Purandar Smriti Mandir Pathagar. Overall observation revealed that Librarians and Library-in-charges expect some respect and importance so that they can discharge their regular duties with comfort and satisfaction.

➤ **Absence of LH preservation policy:**

One of the fundamental functions of PLs is to preserve their documentary and non-documentary collections. The only purpose of preservation is to keep information sources protected from being soiled so that these can survive and fulfill their intended purposes. LHC consists of both print and non-print sources, so these collections call for specialized preservation policies. Digital preservation is the most suitable modern method of preserving special collections like LH. Sometimes it is also referred to as e-preservation which gives protection of print and non-print materials from physical loss. It is found that PLs in the district of 24 Parganas (South) have no preservation policies for LHMs at all. It is even true for their general collections also. Library personnel are completely reluctant about the necessity of preservation. They understand the preservation means placing some naphthalene bricks on the shelves only. Almost no awareness is found regarding modern methods including digital preservation methods of LHMs.

➤ **Lack of proper study environment inside the reading room:**

Specialized study like LH requires an appropriate reading environment that is suitable for extensive and intensive study. Since LHC includes various non-printed sources of information, proper shelving and reading/usage is a must for every material. It is found during the survey that a maximum number of libraries fail to provide a conducive study environment to LH users. The majority of the libraries do not have a separate LH study area or disorderly and unorganized study area to offer to their users. Exceptions are District Library, Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library, and Vidyabhushan Library. All these libraries have separate spaces dedicated to keeping

LHMs and related study. It is also observed that these spaces are uncluttered and organized to some extent so that interested users can at least sit and study.

➤ **Lack of LH awareness:**

The investigation revealed that LH awareness is deficient among library personnel as well as among user communities. It is a primary need for library personnel that they should have at least some knowledge about the LHCs in PLs. This, in turn, generates awareness for the same. But library personnel's present condition in the PLs of the district is not so encouraging. Large numbers of users also do not have LH awareness. While conducting interviews with users, it is observed that they are more or less aware of their community's history, obtained mainly through oral testimonies of elderly family members. But keeping and preserving invaluable LHMs in PLs in their localities do not get much importance to them. Thus lack of awareness about the significance of LH creates hindrances in the preservation and propagation of the same for future generations.

➤ **Unawareness of library staff:**

Lack of awareness for LH gives birth to ignorance of library staff towards meeting related demands coming from users. During the investigation, many of the library staff, including some Librarians showed cold shoulder to the investigator while asking for the LHCs and services in their libraries. The same situation is reported by the majority of the users. They face obliviousness from the end of library staff whenever placed queries about the same. This

condition creates disinterest among users who feel interested to study LH and look for relevant materials in PLs.

➤ **Poor knowledge regarding LHMs:**

This is a real disappointment that except for a few library staff and Librarians, clear knowledge about LHMs is almost absent. It is found that all of such library personnel believe that books are the only source of information from where users can get any information of any aspect of LH. This condition makes users believe in the same fact that books are the only source of information for the same. Those libraries which have some organized LHCs expressed some knowledge about other materials, viz., photographs, relics, sculptures, paintings, maps, news bulletins, newspaper clippings, diaries, souvenirs, leaflets, handbills, manuscripts, etc. These libraries possess many of such LHMs to meet users' demands.

➤ **Absence of OH and genealogy collections:**

During the interview with users, it is found that the majority of them have at least some knowledge about their historical past, including cultural, social and economic evolvement with time. It is also found that they get to know these facts from elderly persons of their respective families. This 'oral testimony', popularly known as 'oral history', is of immense importance in LH study. But none of the libraries in the district has OH in its collection. Like other districts in the West Bengal, 24 Parganas (South) also has rich collections of oral traditions which are not all recorded and preserved to propagate to future generations. Observation also revealed that not

only middle-aged and old-aged users, even young users are also aware of their own LH, particularly in the region of Joynagar-Majilpur, Barisha, Behala, and Baruipur. It is also surprising to the investigator that they grew up with oral traditions. Users are also interested in genealogy study, popularly known as ‘family history’. Particularly in the aforesaid areas, many of the families created permanent positions in the history of Bengal. Local people are aware of these facts and are much more interested to know more as well as to spread their own localities’ glorified history to other people also. It is also interesting that such users strongly opined that oral traditions should be recorded in digital audio formats and to be preserved in PLs for posterities. Similarly, genealogical information should be collected on behalf of PLs of the same localities/regions with the help of local people and to be kept in libraries in the forms of charts or bound copies.

➤ **Lack of relevant specialized and extension services:**

Though many of the libraries indeed arrange for various extension services to increase general awareness for using PLs as well as to popularize local indigenous cultural traditions. It is found that most of the libraries provide similar kinds of extension services which seem somewhat monotonous to user communities. Users who are interviewed told that they need some more specialized extension services to get to know more about their LH. Large numbers of users demanded user orientation which is found seriously lacking. Exhibition of LHMs of a library to its users is of immense help as opined by users. They also stressed arranging lectures and talks on the importance of LH by subject experts so that local people can get the opportunity to know

the locality's history of evolution. Referral service is another important extension service that is demanded by users but found neglected in almost all the PLs of the district.

➤ **Absence of regular demand records:**

The study reveals that PLs in the district are very much reluctant about recording users' demands in a properly organized manner. Almost every library told that it has a demand register; but in reality, users were found extremely dissatisfied as library personnel did not pay much attention to their LH related demands. It is found that only District Library adopted some measures, including answering users' demands through E-mails, to meet the growing need of users for general as well as specialized queries which often contain LH-related queries. Users also expressed their views about suggestion box or Librarian's meet; they think these are some easily applicable demand registration methods which help to reach users more cordially. It is also observed parallel that libraries are very much reluctant about reviewing these demands at regular intervals. A considerable number of libraries even reported that they do not check the user demand registers or suggestion boxes at all. This is a shocking fact; that is why a majority of users ultimately go back without being satisfied regarding their information queries.

➤ **Lack of publicity:**

Adoption of appropriate publicity measures to aware people of the importance of LH is extremely needed in this scenario of changing needs of users. It is one of the major duties of PLs that local people or masses must be aware of the history of their localities. From the study, it is

observed that users also feel the importance of being aware of their local historical facts, whether it may be the historical facts of the locality, lives of eminent sons of the soil, local culture, religions, social customs, events of glory, etc. But the real condition reveals that PLs are not much interested in popularizing LH to the community people. Some of the publicity measures are taken which are, in most cases, monotonous and overlapping. From the users' end, it is observed they feel the need for some other kinds of publicity measure which are found not largely used by PLs. These include distribution of posters and leaflets in localities, using public address systems, and giving advertisements in local newspapers which reach maximum numbers to community people. Publicity through social media is the most desired measure as reported by almost all the users. But in reality, it is found that other than Madarat Bandhab Pathagar, none of the PLs in the district uses social media to publicize its general and specials collections as well as related services.

➤ **Lack of cooperation from library staff:**

It is observed that library staff are not so cooperative while users come with some special queries like LH. As observed from the staff's points of view that inappropriate and insufficient LHC, infrastructural deficiencies, acute shortage of staff in libraries, duty allotment in more than one library, and above all lack of interest, etc. are the most detrimental factors for staff to become cooperative towards users. It is also found that other than staff, many of the Librarians are also reluctant about LHCs and services. This is the reason, majority of the users reported that either they face non-cooperation from the end of library personnel, or their LH-related queries got rejected outright by them. Other users experienced somewhat moderate cooperation from the library personnel in this regard. It is also observed that some libraries show full cooperation

towards users coming with LH information need and also to the researchers, viz., District Library, Bakhrahat Public Library & Free Reading Room, Behala Town Library, Sagar Town Library, Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library, and Barisha Pathagar.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The findings of the study lead to some recommendations for improving the collections of LHMs and related services throughout the district of 24 Parganas (South). These are just some suggestions which investigator finds out after careful observation of all aspects of the study. These recommendations or suggestions are listed below.

- **Active administration** – Administration and higher authorities should play a much more active role so that every PL in the district shall be able to build up some LHCs to cater to its users' needs.
- **Planning** – There should be prior and proper planning for libraries keen to create such specialized collections as LH.
- **Financial support** – Financial grants should be adequate from the end of appropriate authorities. Keeping in view the delicacy of LHMs, their collection, and preservation, sufficient financial support should be provided regularly to PLs. The increasing cost of every material with time should be kept in consideration in this regard.
- **Collection development policy** – There should be definite and well-designed collection development policies for LHCs. The newly framed policies should be documented for use in

all PLs. Every relevant material should be collected following policies keeping in view the uniqueness and peculiarities of every locality/ area/ regions.

- **Librarians' involvement** – Librarians regularly face users' various information demands which include special queries like LH-related queries. So it is expected that they can best explain the nature of LH demand in their libraries. That is why it is essential to get Librarians involved in framing collection development policy for LHCs.
- **User involvement** – Representatives from user communities should also be involved in collection development policy framing. Those users should be selected by Librarians who have somewhat basic knowledge about their own localities' historical significance. Users of respective localities can understand specific materials to be collected from a particular locality, and can also define users' LH related demands.
- **Separate section** – Since LH study calls for an intensive involvement with study materials, a separate section for such specialized reading is essential. It is true for every library, particularly for those who have some valuable LHCs.
- **Internal administration** – Library authorities should be more careful in maintaining some essential aspects of internal administration. Maintenance of specific opening and closing time, the regular presence of library personnel, opening a library in case of double duty of any of the library staff, proper circulation of closure notice to the users, well documentation of users' information demands, proper organization of information sources, neat and clean library premises, etc. should be carefully operated.

- **Infrastructural facilities** – Neat reading space and LHC is needed by users. The reading section should also be provided with adequate appropriate furniture. Since LHMs often include non-printed as well as non-documentary sources of information, sufficient illumination is an essential aspect of LH-compatible infrastructure. LH information sources should be properly organized so that users, as well as library staff, can get one easily.
- **Wide display area** –Some LHMs can be displayed on a large and wide display area so that user communities feel interested to consult. Such display areas will be helpful to researchers; they should be given access to the main collection with due permission of the Librarian.
- **Automation and modernization**–Each library should be oriented to automate its regular activities. The use of computers and modern Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) should be employed to keep pace with the changing scenario of library services.
- **Preservation and conservation** – Appropriate and modern preservation methods must be used to preserve the rare materials of local historical importance. Every LHM may not be in suitable condition to handle; these materials should be conserved by applying apposite methods and should be kept under confinements.
- **Inter-library cooperation** – PLs of the same localities should ascertain inter-library cooperation among themselves to minimize duplication of LHCs. They should take active initiatives towards establishing inter-library loan of LH information sources. Rural libraries should maintain active working relation with subdivisional and town libraries.

- **Referral service** – Increase in inter-library cooperation in the same localities and beyond ultimately triggers the establishment of referral service which is one of the most valued services in LH related services.
- **Staff recruitment** – Qualified, active, and enthusiastic staff should be recruited on an urgent basis. This is of utmost importance to revive library services, to increase the numbers of library users, ultimately to save PLs from being abolished.
- **Staff training**–Regular training programmes and workshops should be arranged from the end of higher authorities to motivate and guide library personnel towards collection, organization, preservation and dissemination of delicate LH information sources.
- **Awareness building** – Both library staff and users should be made aware of the importance of LH. Staff should be given awareness training for collection, maintenance and services related to. Users should be made aware of their own cultural, social, religious history which is retained in such special information sources.
- **Extension activities** – Exhibition of LHCs at least once a year, arrangement of LH lectures and talks, LH promoting cultural programmes, arranging quiz contest, debate, and extempore delivery on this subject, etc. must be organized by libraries so that community people can participate and get involved with the concept of LH. The PL should take initiatives to organize lectures and orientations programmes by eminent local historians or researchers of that particular locality which can grow interested among common people for the same.

- **New user attraction** – PLs should take dynamic initiatives for making local people attracted towards their local historical information which they used to get from their community people. Libraries of various localities should have inventiveness regarding this and they can start short awareness projects on the same.
- **User orientation**–It is necessary to orient common users about LHC in their nearby PLs; they should be given proper orientation towards the significance of each material, their proper handling, and the invaluable information contained in each of the LHMs possessed by the library.
- **Knowledge about LHMs** – Library professionals must have at least some basic knowledge about various categories of LHMs. They should be aware of suitable preservation and conservation processes as well as proper services related to each of such precious information sources.
- **Publicity** – One of the most important activities of PLs is to publicize their LHC among local community people. Library personnel should be alert of the fact that proper advertisements and publicity measures are major ways to reach community people and also to make them aware of their local historical facts.
- **Enhancement of cooperation** – Cooperation from all administrative levels is very much necessary for PLs to take initiatives for planning and development of something new for the community people. Cooperation from local people will encourage library personnel to introduce new services regarding LHC of the library.

- **Drive for new LH sources-** PLs of an area should come forward to sensitize its users as well as academicians nearby to participate/cooperate in the drive to generate new LH documents particularly from areas which are to date unexplored and underrepresented in terms of LH. Regular workshops on LH studies, modern-day tools for generating LHMs, the occasional scholarship may prove instrumental in generating more local historians.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter is the extension of the previous chapter in the form of observation and analysis and discussion. In this chapter, attempts have been made to minutely observe the present condition of LHCs and services in PLs of the district of 24 Parganas (South). In addition, attempts have also been made to point out difficulties that became major hindrances in the proper planning and development of LHCs in PLs. Based on minute observations on the problem, several recommendations have also been made which may be helpful to overcome the present situation.

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Chapter 7

Restructuring and Rejuvenating Local History Collection in Public Library: A proposed Model

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The PL is the social institution where common people can get satisfied in terms of their information demands, and also the place where one can find out the past identity of one's community. This is a place for recreation as well as an in depth study. The PL in a locality should have such qualitative factors that attract common people of the locality to go to the place and spend some quality time with knowledge and information. It should be a hub for cultural promotion and involvement of the community people so that none of the common people get disconnected from his/her root of identity. The PLs in each region carry the specific geographical, social, and economic factors in their administration, collection, arrangement, and services so that every user can get maximum benefit from them. Keeping local communities connected with their past identity and uniqueness, PLs should work hard with effective planning and necessary motivation. Planning for an effective and attractive local history archive for the local people requires some challenging yet enthralling drives at the end of library personnel which result in a fascinating local history section having outstanding collections and efficient services to users.

7.2 LOCAL HISTORY ARCHIVE: DEFINITION AND CONCEPT

A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology defines 'archive' as "to transfer records from the individual or office of creation to a repository authorized to appraise, preserve, and provide access to those records", and "local records" as "public records created or received by a country, city, town, district, or other governmental entity smaller than a state" (Pearce-Moses, 2005). The items of information in an archive are chiefly primary sources, and each item is referred to as a

‘record’. The records of an archive are generally unique in characteristics and have immense historical values. So, these records are carefully stored, preserved and conserved for use by the present and future generations. Sometimes an archive may be defined as the specialized collections of an institution or organization, for example, national and regional record offices are often referred to as archives (Schmidt, 2011). Archives can also be created by educational institutions, religious institutions, museums and libraries. A local history archive generally collects and store first-hand information on the historical events or figures of a locality. It has the utmost importance being a specialized collection of historical evidence of a region, it’s inhabiting communities and dwelling organizations. It documents the identity of people, tells stories, relives past events, records memory, and nurture local cultural diversities. So, an archive is an ideal place for having relevant information for research on a particular topic under the broad discipline of local history.

7.2.1 Is Library an Archive?

While planning a local history section within a PL, it is an obvious confusion in the mind of librarian about basic differences between a library and an archive. Since collection, management, and preservation of LHMs in a library bring some essence of an archive, such kinds of questions may arise. There are some basic differences between these two setups, viz., a library is the repository of usable portions of knowledge and information which include both recent and past documents, may be printed or non-printed. Library documents may be primary or secondary or tertiary sources of information. These documents are organized and maintained properly for use by the library members; in addition, these documents can be issued by the members to their

home as well as they can read onsite as reference. On the other hand, an archive is the repository of primary or first-hand information, chiefly of precious or invaluable documents bearing the evidence of the historical past (Smallwood & Williams, 2012). The documents are kept as ‘historical records’, ‘archival records’ or simply ‘records’ and preserved with unique preservation techniques. Historical records cannot be borrowed by users and they can use them only for onsite reading or can view records, with proper permissions. These must be handled with care and their circulation is rarely found. Another demarcation is that library materials are prone to lower risks of damage and can easily be replaced if lost or damaged. On contrary, archival records are generally one of a kind, thus always open to high risks of getting damaged, and there is no way of replacing the same, i.e. records are completely irreplaceable. At the time of planning for a local history section in a PL, the fact should be kept in mind of the librarians or other staff that the collection is going to be a ‘mixed’ type. Such collection shall contain published items such as books, as well as historical records such as genealogical or family history records, original photographs, letters, diaries, government records, etc. Though it is true that no distinction between an archival record and a library material is absolute, because a library material can become an archival or historical record depending on time and scarcity one day; but careful considerations in terms of subtle distinctions between library and archive should be kept in mind while planning for a separate local history section within the PL.

7.3 CREATING AND DEVELOPING LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION IN PUBLIC LIBRARY

The PL is the storehouse of knowledge since time immemorial. It is unique as its doors are open to all, i.e. open to ‘public’, unlike institutional setups. Not a mere storehouse, a PL always satisfies its users in terms of variety and organization of library materials. From the very beginning, a PL must strive for creating such a collection of materials that shall be able to motivate user communities for coming to the library. Besides regular library materials which users can use at a regular basis, the library should move on towards creating a special collection having materials distinct from other library materials. For the PLs, it is their challenge to create and develop such a distinctive collection, especially which establishes a unique connection between the library and its users. Creating a LHC inside the PL can meet goals to have more users oriented towards PL system and to recover the lost glory of PLs with time.

7.3.1 MINIMAL BEST PRACTICES FOR TODAY

The cultural and social identity of an individual largely depends on the collective memory of the community to which the individual belongs. Local historical records are the only evidence that can represent collective memories of a community. Collection and preservation of these local historical information resources or records of historical evidence are immensely important. Since collection, overall management, and preservation of these materials call for a considerably fair portion of budgetary allocation, some minimal considerations should be made at the initial stage, before striving towards larger practices in future.

➤ **What to Collect**

From the very beginning, the library personnel should have enough awareness about the local historical facts about that particular area or locality where the library is situated. Careful selection of the evidence of the historical past of a locality is the most significant part of the pre-planning phases of setting up a local history section. This, in turn, will help to make decisions regarding what materials to be collected to prepare a LHC in a PL. The materials to be collected should be relevant to the history of that area including contributions of local famous personalities and prominent individuals and their family history. Not only this, local clubs, educational institutions, government and non-government organizations, religious places, etc. and their history should be collected (Marquis & Waggener, 2015). All the collected historical information should have uniqueness in terms of historical values relevant to the community history of the locality.

➤ **What Not to Collect**

Careful considerations should be made regarding which should not be collected in the library as LHMs. Failing this may fill the library with non-essential collectibles and the local history section will turn into a mere storeroom of the historical materials. Anything that does not have relevance and connection with the history of that particular locality or area, and the inhabiting community; any material that has restrictions in use or obsolete digital formats or fragile condition should not be accepted by the PLs (Suhler, 1970).

➤ **Defining Scope**

It is crucial to define the scope of the collections, otherwise, the objectives generally get scattered. Every LHM should cover the historical evidences related strictly to the locality or area where the library is situated. In detailed coverage the collection should include the local historical resources pertaining to the geographical, social, economic, religious, occupational, educational, and cultural aspects of the locality and its immediate surroundings, obviously including the heritage of the local community. The collection must include genealogical records that are particularly related to the famous local personalities or pioneer families of the area or locality that the PL covers. Oral historical records are invaluable sources of local historical evidence that generally do not have written formats and pass on to generations after generations by elderly persons of the community, through oral traditions. The Library should collect OH resources which are chiefly relevant to the socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of the locality. It is also important to clearly define the scope regarding the depth of the collection, i.e. how far the LHC of a library provides local information to its users (Philips, 1995). This consideration, in turn, is largely dependent upon the geographical demarcation of the locality or area, formats in which local history information are present, and the available space in the PL.

➤ **Examining Existing Collections of Neighbors**

Before starting a collection for LHMs, the PL should be careful about the collections that are already present in any other place of the locality or area. Sometimes it is found that local history enthusiast people of the community may develop a fairly good collection of LHMs as his/her private collection; sometimes local educational institutions develop a small LHC inside the

institution about the historical past of its own; the similar condition may be found in local clubs also. A PL should have enough information about all these possibilities. Ignorance of this may lead to unnecessary and unwanted duplication of LHMs.

7.3.2 IDEAL BEST PRACTICES FOR TOMORROW

While planning for creating and developing a separate local history section in a PL at the initial stage gets materialized, further enhancements in both quantitative and qualitative aspects may be considered. When a PL will go forward with developing a substantial LHC, there exist some crucial factors that must be looked upon.

➤ Written Collection Development Policy

A collection development policy contains certain major principles that define and describe the holding strategy of the library, to the managerial body as well as library users (Carvalho III, 1988). For developing an appropriate LHC in the library, the collection development policy should be written since it provides a clear idea about the relevance and representation of the local historical information resources. The written collection development policy will describe the objectives of LHC, including short-term and long-term goals, assigned priorities to different components of the collection, budgetary provisions, cooperation and resource sharing, and overall activities to manage the entire collection. Personal bias is a major crisis in LHC development (Local History Committee of the History Section, Reference and Adult Services Division [LHCHSRASD, ALA], 1993). The written policy reduces the personal bias of the

library personnel to a large extent in terms of the depth and breadth of the LHCs. Since it is in ‘written’ form, no individual decision or personal choice is entertained in place of collective assessment. It provides a strong foundation for future planning of a library in the context of LHCs which is extremely helpful for setting the priority areas of collection building within the limited resources of a PL. It also offers wider opportunities for improved resource sharing or cooperation among neighbouring libraries or local history organizations. The LHC development policy should be flexible and should be regularly updated.

➤ **Planning**

Once the collection development policy for local history has been designed formally, the library has to go for proper planning for developing a separate section for local history in the library. Some major factors that need to be considered before designing an effective plan. Assessment of community need is the first and foremost step of planning. The library should focus on the local history of its immediate locality or area. A careful consideration of present and potential service areas of LHCs, provided by the PL, should be done first. Review of existing physical and infrastructural condition is very important as the local history room or section (in case of space shortage) should be a separate one having sufficient air circulation and illumination (both natural and artificial); space should be a dry one inside the library building since humidity may prove detrimental for invaluable LHMs. The separate room or section allotted for local history should have a spacious reading space with comfortable furniture appropriate for long time study. An attractive display zone that can be seen by all the users coming to the library is necessary for LHC; there should be a separate area on the display where new additions to the LHC can be

highlighted to draw the attention of users. The local history section is an exclusive one and with utmost security and alertness for precious LHMs. If possible, LHC can be open access in nature so that users can have their required materials readily available without wasting much time, though this arrangement calls for continuous monitoring over the collection. The library should have at least one library staff having enough knowledge and inclination towards the history of the locality or area, and should be prepared to render relevant services to users within the stipulated activity hours of the library. Publicity for the local history of a PL is another significant factor. Apt publicity measures should be taken into consideration to make community people more aware of the history of the locality and the efforts of nearby PLs to preserve them.

➤ **Staffing**

LHC development and overall management call for the necessary staffing of the PL. With time, the local history section of a library expands its scope and influence in the community; at that very moment, the library has to take crucial staffing decisions. Proper planning for staffing should involve administration at the initial level to figure out the community involvement in LHC development (a suitable plan has been proposed in section no. 7.6).

Since the majority of the PLs are running in under-staffed conditions, at least one staff may be given the responsibility of the local history section, and his/her efficiency must comply with the missions of library regarding LHC. For overall management and supervision of LHCs various groups of staff may be considered to be appointed for LHCs, viz., professional, semi-professional, volunteer, and project-funded or grant-funded staff. Professional staff should be the permanent staff of the PL and other staff may be appointed or hired on temporarily. A clear

hierarchy according to the level of positions of every staff appointed for LHC should be present in written form in the mission and objectives of the PL. Professional staff should supervise semi-professional staff, and anyone semi-professional should be assigned the duty of supervising volunteers and other semi-professionals. There should be precise and up-to-date description of duty of every group of staff and planning has to be done accordingly. The job description is a vital managerial activity. All the temporary and hired staff should be given some remuneration depending upon available sanctioned funds. Permanent library staff should also be included in the local history active group so that they feel encouraged to perform better out of their monotonous daily routine job.

➤ **Fiscal Management**

Preparing a suitable budget is closely attached to the planning. Regular funding is essential for the development and overall management of LHCs. The budgetary allocation is extremely necessary for the acquisition, processing and maintenance of local historical information resources which are delicate, fragile and precious, and call for special care. While thinking of establishing a separate local history section in the library, library personnel should be aware of some pros and cons of fiscal management.

A sustainable budget is crucial for every step in establishing a separate local history section in the library. A distinct and separate budget should be allocated for PLs to develop LHCs. Budget planning for the development and maintenance of LHCs should take into consideration the community needs for local history, local people's general interests for the same, developing trends and emerging various formats of LHMs. The staffing pattern for LHC consists of various

categories of staff and volunteers who needed to be given some remuneration depending upon their full-time or part-time contributions. An annual budget plan should be prepared by the librarian; each function at the section should be defined clearly, like staffing, collection costs, travelling, and photocopy, stationery items for technical processing, specialized services, and reproduction costs of rare LHMs. Since fragile LHMs are needed to be protected from mishandling, thus replica generation is a must for every rare material. The librarian should separate some money for publicity and advertisements in local areas. For the conservation of rare and delicate LHM for the future, costs must be included in the budget regarding digitization of these materials, since digitization is the only way for long term conservation. The budget for the overall management of special collections should be reviewed annually and necessary alterations should be done at regular intervals.

➤ **Skill Development**

LHCs in PLs cannot be managed properly without necessary training to library staff. Their existing skills should be enhanced with additional training programmes so that they become fully competent to look after such special collections. The administration must take positive steps towards skill development of PL personnel and various special training programmes should be arranged at regular intervals. Workshops on various aspects of LHC development may prove to be beneficial since participants get the opportunity of hands on experiences. Seminars on the local history involving experts on the same subject should be arranged at least once a year. Administrative decisions should be taken regarding the arrangement of skill development

programmes locally in various subdivisions of a district. In this way, interested personnel of PLs situated in remote villages of the district get the opportunity to attend the programmes.

Preservation and conservation are inseparable aspects of every LHC that require specialized knowledge. Librarians of PLs should have at least some idea about how to preserve and conserve such special collections within allotted budgetary provisions. Training programmes on the same issue should be organized from time to time. Appraisal or assessment of historical materials should be given proper weight in skill development programmes. The productivity of each skill development programme should be measured at regular frequencies by collecting feedback from every participating staff. The administration and appropriate authorities should take into consideration these significant facets of skill development so that PLs of the district can be able to preserve and promote their respective areas' local heritage.

7.3.3 ACQUISITION OF LOCAL HISTORY MATERIALS

After a well-written collection development policy has been formulated and other planning related activities have done, the PL should go for the acquisition of LHMs. Acquisition simply means 'what to keep' in library collections. The foremost consideration for acquisition should be concentrating on the collecting area. Those LHMs are to be collected which strictly pertain to the locality or area where the PL is situated. Due to financial constraints, acquisition of LHMs by non-purchase means should always be encouraged. The collection team for acquisition should have a clear idea about the names and nature of materials that are desired to be collected by the library as well as which materials are not to be collected. Every time present collections in the library should be kept in mind. LHMs are to be collected only through resource sharing, their

acquisition should be cooperative. A clear understanding of cooperation with local government semi-government, and non-government organizations is very essential so that they send their publications regularly to the library, or the library staff can collect their publications on regular basis. Acceptance of gifts and donations from organizations, institutions and/or persons is another method of acquisition. Historical uniqueness of materials, their physical condition, and obviously, availability of space in the library are the important factors to be considered before acquisition of any historical material in the library.

➤ **Appraisal or Assessment**

Appraisal of a LHM includes a detailed analysis of the historical value of the materials. It refers to the process through which a collected historical material or a group of materials become the part of LHC of a library. During appraisal of historical material, the place, time, event, etc. are taken into consideration. Since most of the PLs suffer from space and financial crunches, an appraisal helps libraries to keep the size of the collection to a manageable limit. Professional staff having considerable knowledge about local historical information sources should be given the responsibility of appraisal. Smallwood and Williams (2012) identified six key steps through which appraisal of historical materials can be performed:

- Scoping the potential donation
- Obtaining a list of the material;
- Finding out about the material;
- Receiving the material;
- Determining the value of the material; and
- Documenting decisions.

➤ Legal Transfer of Ownership

Every item of LHC has to be either purchased or can be obtained either through gift or donation. Due to the crunch in financial resources, libraries should always encourage gifts and donations. In case of purchase, the ownership has been transferred automatically to the library authority. In case of gift and donation, there should be proper documentation in writing, regarding the transfer of item(s) through suitable legal procedures. The legal transfer of any LHM can be completed through either of the following methods:

- Exchange of letters or any other written correspondences
- Wills in written format only
- Deeds of Gift

Though all these methods are well practiced for legal transfers, a duly signed Deed of Gift is the most recommended method by major historical societies, archives, local history sections of PLs, and repositories across the world. The Association of American Archivists defines a deed of gift as “....a formal, legal, agreement that transfers ownership of, and legal rights in, the materials to be donated” (Schmidt, 2011). It establishes a formal and legal relationship between the donor and the new owner, i.e. the PL.

7.3.4 PROCESSING OF LOCAL HISTORY MATERIALS

After the acquisition of LHMs by completing the process of legal transfer, these materials should be processed to make them available to the user community. Regular basic methods of technical processing may not be fruitful for LHCs, as these materials deserve special treatment.

➤ Accessioning

Accessioning of a LHM refers to its physical and intellectual acceptance into the custody of the library collection. All the necessary and accurate information regarding the material is noted in the formal accession register, which should be a separate one from the general collections' accession register. However, the accession record should comply with the master accession register for easy identification.

➤ Technical Processing and Organization

In general, the LHMs in a PL are described through the local history index, which is separate from an ordinary catalogue of the library. The sole purpose of such an index is the quick response to reference queries. The card index is the greatest supplement to the dictionary catalogue for local history items. Against each card index, a reference index file should be created under the broad heading of the collections, for example, 'Genealogy', 'Newspapers', 'Photographs', 'Paintings', 'Letters', etc. In the case of monographs, any standard cataloguing code can be used, viz., AACR. Photographs should be catalogued with self-indexing having 'see also' references. Renowned local history librarian Samuel Suhler of the American Library Association advised creating a "Master Local History Index" for the reference purpose, i.e. to maintain a system for quick reference to the entire LHC in the library (Suhler, 1970).

In the case of subject heading lists, collections should be organized following a single list. Since collection scope clearly states the geographical boundary within which the extent of the collection will be restricted, it is necessary to adhere to only subject heading list. The subject heading should reflect the local geographical and social aspects as far as possible (Pantle, 1956).

LHCs should have such arrangement and organization so that library staff can easily understand where a particular item is located, thus reference services can be rendered without much loss of time.

➤ **De-accessioning**

The terms 'weeding out' and 'de-accessioning' have similar meanings, but are used differently. 'Weeding out' is used for permanent and formal removal of general reading collections of the library, whereas 'De-accessioning' is used for the same purpose of historical materials in particular. It is the process by which a library formally and permanently removes item(s) from its custody, due to unsuitability and irrelevance of that item(s) caused by re-appraisal or periodic evaluation of the holdings of the library (Pantle, 1956). For LHMs, the de-accessioned materials are either requested to be taken by another repository, or in case of gift and donation, returned to the donor. The library may sell the materials or destroy them, depending upon the written policy. If a LHM gets damaged beyond repair, or its maintenance cost exceeds the present budget for maintenance, that material can be de-accessioned. This is an administrative process and requires prior approval of the Managing Committee. The entire process involves proper documentation in writing to avoid confusion in future.

7.3.5 MAKING LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS ACCESSIBLE

The responsibility of the librarian lies not only establishing a collection with unusual items having local historical values, he/she should also take prompt initiatives to coordinate them with

the general collections of the library as well as make the collection accessible to the user communities. The success of any collection completely depends upon the use and appreciation from the end users.

➤ **Collection Location**

LHCs should be located in an identifiable position of the PL which can prominently be seen by the users of the library. The LHC should be established in such a way that it gets separated from the general collections of the library. Even the monographs as LHM should be separated from the book stack area. It would be best if a separate room can be allotted for such collections. Small PLs cannot arrange for a separate room for such collections, a separate section can be arranged for the purpose. This section should have a prominent position for being visible to the users coming to the library. Placing LHC in a prominent position with a large display area certainly attracts users to the collection. Since LHCs are prone to easy damage, as well as many of them are rare and precious, these must be kept in a secure place with constant monitoring. The local history room or section should be established keeping in mind their preservation measures. The arrangement and internal organization should be easily understandable by the library staff so that they can retrieve information promptly.

➤ **Usage Policy**

The entire LHC should be categorized as the 'Reference Collection' of the library. There must be a clear demarcation of such a special collection with the general collections in the library. Since

these materials are rare they always attract serious readers to see and use them. In normal practice, general collections are generally meant for the home issue, but LHCs should strictly be limited to reading only (Brown & Rickerson, 1983). Since these special collections may include brittle documents, rare photographs, vulnerable relics, OH in audio formats, etc. these must not be allowed to take home at all. LHCs should be used in proper supervision of the library staff and must be viewed within the limits of the LHC room or premises. The OH information resources should be viewed or listened to by the interested persons with a prior request to the librarian. The unused LHMs should also be kept under constant supervision as there is a constant threat of damage or theft by whoever coming to the library.

➤ Outreach

Outreach is the activity through which library collections can be accessed by common people who normally may not have regular access to the library. The PL should plan for effective outreach programmes. Outreach means, the glimpses of library collections reach as many people as possible so that they feel motivated towards PL collections and services. Since the scope of the LHCs strictly adheres to the geographical boundary of a locality or area, the library's outreach programmes should be aimed at the population of that particular geographical area (Philips, 1995). Outreach programmes can often be clubbed together with various extension services of the library related to LHCs. Outreach is also a useful tool for publicity and marketing of special collections. In this age of digital outbreak, outreach can be done through the internet, and special collections of the PL must occupy a space in its webpage (Fenlon & Varvel Jr., 2013); this is perhaps the most convenient and speedy way to reach the community people.

Successful outreach programmes can make the community aware of its local history as well as related collections and services offered by nearby PLs.

7.4 USER SERVICES FOR LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS

LHCs in PLs fall under the special collections category. It is the responsibility on the part of the PL that it should take sufficient initiatives to attract the common people of the local areas towards knowing their roots and to adhere to their community identity. Whenever users come to libraries for viewing or consulting local history resources, their queries must be addressed appropriately and their information demands should be satisfied by rendering prompt reference services. Utmost care should be taken by staff as well as users when they use LHMs for any reference purpose. In general, the PLs of the district of 24 Parganas (South) may provide the following local history services to the community people:

1. LHC cannot be taken to the home and must be used for viewing or reading within the library reading room or local history section. The entire collection is a reference collection, thus no request for a loan outside the library should be entertained.
2. There should be enough provisions for reference services against each type of LHMs viz., books or monographs, letters and diaries, paintings and photographs, maps, government documents, relics, and so on.
3. The library should take initiative to collect or purchase duplicate copies of selected items wherever possible and whenever budget allocation permits, in order to facilitate the lending of those materials.

4. Fragile and unique items must be handled properly. Library staff should pay much attention to the monitoring of LHC when in use or not in use.
5. If the need arises, there should be provisions for copying necessary items, in compliance with the copyright issues and photocopy policy of the library.
6. The librarian should prepare a bibliography of high interest LHMs which can be used as a ready reference source.
7. The staff present in the local history section should be friendly and helpful, showing good gestures while rendering reference services to the users coming in search of local history information.
8. In case the library has a single staff, local history related services can be restricted to a fixed number of days in a week, and that must be properly notified to the users.
9. The reference interview is an indispensable part of local history services. An effective and efficient reference interview must be conducted by the librarian or staff-in-charge of the local history section.
10. The libraries, particularly small PLs should provide referral service to the local history users. A referral file should be maintained in every library listing individuals, non-government organizations, government departments including officials, educational institutions, etc. whoever can provide further local historical informational assistance to users.
11. If a PL has OH resources, provisions should be made for interested users who can view the transcriptions or listen to interviews stored in suitable audio formats, obviously with prior permission from the librarian.

12. Putting information related to the entire LHC of a library on the website of the PL administrative body, or webpage of the District Library is a crucial service to the users. As society is running fast in this digital age, using social networking platforms for popularizing LHCs are indispensable services of the PLs.
13. The librarian should take initiatives for general public awareness of the local areas so that common people feel interested to use LHCs and get benefitted from these.

Since PLs are meant for community services, they should realize that their existence is greatly dependent upon the quality of services they render to their users. Priority should be given to address users' information requirements in a friendly way and satisfying their informational needs in the best ways within the least possible times. Use of the Internet, advantages of digitization of rare resources, ample use of social networking platforms, etc. are need of the hour, and the PL system of the district should have sufficient alertness in this regard.

7.5 CARES FOR LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION

Proper care including appropriate storage and handling of local historical items has utmost significance in the maintenance and preservation of such special collections. Every historical item requires different storage, preservation and handling measures.

7.5.1 DISASTER ALERTNESS

LHMs are needed to be protected in anticipation of potential damage caused due to disasters. A disaster may be natural or man-made and unexpected; whatever the reason may be, it is essential for a library needs to plan for managing disasters for the sake of its collections, especially historical collection which is fragile, precious and irrecoverable. A considerable portion of the budget should be allotted as a contingency to manage disasters. Tropical and sub-tropical climates and associated humidity often cause big troubles to historical collections. The district of 24 Parganas (South) falls under this climatic zone and faces flood, cyclones and similar natural calamities very often. Every librarian or librarian-in-charge of PLs across the district should have at least some basic level knowledge, training and preparedness for disaster management, particularly if a library has some LHCs. Man-made disasters are another threat to LHCs. These are often get damaged by mishandling caused by users during study or may get lost due to theft. The major risk factors like natural calamities, human-caused damage, biological damage, extreme weather conditions, etc. should be apprehended in advance and necessary planning measures should be kept ready for any unseen disastrous situation in the library.

7.5.2 PREVENTION

A major step in caring for LHCs is their prevention measures taken for minimizing risk factors. Prevention of local historical collections has two major steps, i.e. identification or assessment of possible threats which, in turn, leads to mitigation; the second step is the reduction of threats. But whatever step is being taken, no threat can be mitigated completely. In the district of 24 Parganas

(South), widely varied geographical conditions have major impact on daily life security and sustainability. There are PLs in the low Gangetic plains which are extremely flood prone areas. Besides, the district is also vulnerable to extreme natural disasters like cyclones very often. Prevention from man-made damage or loss is another crucial activity for local historical materials. So, prevention always provides safeguards to the special collections in PLs since proper planning against possible threats can be done in advance.

7.5.3 PROTECTION

After assessment and evaluation of possible risk factors, appropriate measures for the protection of local historical collections must be taken into PLs. Depending upon the nature of historical items, separate protective measures and storage techniques should be taken keeping in view the financial allocation. Acid-free large containers instead of paper boxes should be used for newspaper clippings, monographs and photographic materials (LHCHSRASD, 1993). Loose or unbound materials should be stored in acid-free file folders or envelopes so that these may get protected longer time from acid attacks. Some basic protective guidelines should always be followed for handling such special collections, viz., use of cotton gloves in hands during processing, use of pencils for marking local history storage containers, use of non-corrosive stainless steel paper clips for temporary binding of loose papers, a regular dusting of the collection area with cotton clothes etc. The collection room or space should be enough airy, have sufficient illumination, and devoid of excessive heat and humidity; this, in turn, help in combating infestation by bacteriological agents. Protections from mishandling by users during use, misuse, or theft of rare LHMs are crucial. Provisions should be made so that prior

permission of the librarian is necessary before using any item of the collection. It is also essential to monitor the LHC continuously during usage so that no physical harm or theft can be made possible.

7.5.4 RECOVERY

Once possible threats have been assessed, recovery measures should be planned cautiously. There are different recovery measures meant for damages caused due to natural disasters and man-made damages. In most cases, recoveries from natural disasters remains irreplaceable since PLs do not have sufficient financial strengths for recovery. At least fire safety equipment should be present in every PL. Materials that get partially damaged due to flood, waterlogging or heavy rain, should be dried up to a maximum extent by air drying using absorbent materials like blotting papers, paper towels, or cloth towels with fans on. Moulds and the bacterial infestation can be restricted by removing materials from moisture or humidity, and warmth. These precautionary measures should be pre-planned in anticipation of natural disasters. Measures to recover from man-made damages should also be planned properly. Photo-reproduction of brittle and fragile documents can be beneficial. Rare documents can be photocopies and conserved in acid-free folders or envelopes as replacements. No doubt digital preservation is the best way to recover and conserve these rare, delicate, and precious collections.

7.5.5 PRESERVATION

Preservation of historic collections in PLs, archives, and other institutions is a long-term and tedious programme that involves both traditional methods and new technologies. Although in PLs the term 'preservation' is interchangeably used with 'conservation', however, they are not necessarily identical in all sense. According to the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) 'preservation' is an umbrella term for activities that minimize or prevent damage to extend the life expectancy of a collection, whereas 'conservation' specifically means the physical treatment of individual damaged items. While the term 'restoration' is applicable in the case of museum objects or old motion pictures, i.e. film negatives, and refers to the method of returning an object or film negative to its original state (LHCHSRASD, 1993). Preservation also involves controlling weathering of collected items by conditioning the environment of the housing i.e. the shelves and the room where the collections are kept. Back up the planning of disaster management and regular maintenance are the essential components of the preservation programme.

Rare LHMs, viz., genealogy, maps, manuscripts etc. are usually available in a limited number of copies, and they are the prime candidates for a preservation project. Photographs and negatives require special attention as they can get damaged by their chemical reactions with air, mountings material, exposure to light, and storage. Heavily used, fragile, and rare LHMs should be highly prioritized for preservation. It will be helpful for PLs to preserve common LHMs on a cooperative basis.

7.5.5.1 BEING TRADITIONAL

Worldwide, PLs relied on traditional preservation techniques to sustain their LHCs. Different genre of LHMs requires different preservation strategies and those are challenging tasks for the library personnel in general.

➤ **Preservation of documents**

Books are the predominant collected material in the LHC of every PL of the district of 24 Parganas (South) and their health deterioration is a serious concern for every librarian. In general, most of the libraries contain some rare and out-of-print books, along with comparatively new books. All these books get brittle, yellowed on exposure to a humid environment, higher temperature, and by attacks of insects and other pests. Long stacking or overuse, both cause harm to books. The layers of dirt deposited over the book cover leave stains.

The most easily available way of saving books and all other documentary resources is using aromatic polycyclic hydrocarbon like naphthalene. It is available in balls or blocks. PLs mostly use this material as the most basic preservation technique. Regular cleaning of dirt of the entire LHCs with cotton clothes is very much necessary; stains over the books can be removed with a soft brush or with a soft block eraser.

De-acidification is a regular conservation procedure for acidified papers. Materials viz., newspaper clippings, leaflets, pamphlets, souvenirs of local organizations and institutions, etc. are made of acidic papers. Such type of materials should be kept within acid-free containers and archival files. These plastic containers are easily available in markets and comfortably fit within specified budgetary allocations. Papers with high-quality fibres, viz., good quality hardbound books, paperback bound institutional publications, etc. may not require de-acidification.

➤ **Preservation of Photographs**

Photographs are visual evidence of the past that continuously stimulate human memory. Their permanence and stability are dependent on the ambient environment of the room, rack or stack where the photographs are kept.

Proper temperature and relative humidity (RH) are important for the preservation of photographic materials. Extreme heat accelerates the deterioration process and it increases with temperature increase. In addition, high RH leads to discolouration and whitening. In combination, high RH and high temperature create the opportunity for mould growth and pest infestation. So photographic materials must require a cool and dry place within the library where they should be kept. Styrofoam boxes with silica gel are apt for preserving rare photographs in libraries. Boxes should be sealed and placed in cold storage for a longer period and before use overnight acclimatization at room temperature is necessary (Smallwood & Williams, 2012). These boxes and silica gel, both are readily available in local markets at easily affordable prices. Stacks and/or almirahs should be placed at the inner sides of the buildings rather than adjacent to walls. Further, collections can be ideally kept with silica gel and naphthalene blocks to avoid environmental fluctuation.

In the weather of the district of 24 Parganas (South), installation of air conditioners, de-humidifier, etc. may significantly solve these weathering issues; however, their availability is a big question under the present funding scenario. PLs in the district can follow bare essential steps for photograph preservation such as the use of styrofoam containers, brown paper envelopes, with naphthalene and silica gel.

➤ **Preservation of Manuscripts**

Manuscripts are a rich source of knowledge and wisdom accumulated through ages on various subjects. The basic factors of deterioration of the manuscripts are light, dust, heat and humidity.

Present day preservation and conservation depend on the nature of the manuscript pages (tree leaves to ancient locally originated papers), the chemical origin of the ink or pigment, binding techniques used at the time of its preparation. There are various traditional methods for the preservation of manuscripts that can easily be adopted by PLs at all levels. The manuscripts leaves can be seasoned by burying them under the mud or boiling them in water (Smallwood & Williams, 2012); it provides some disinfecting effect against the damage caused by the insects. To prevent curling and breakage at the edges, the leaves are placed in between two stiff flat wooden boards having parallel perforation, or simply between heavyweight books. Manuscripts should always be wrapped in clothes to protect them from dust, worms and also to a great extent from variation in humidity, acidification and temperature. Manuscripts are usually wrapped in red or yellow colour clothes with a notion that red colour will repel insects and yellow colour (containing turmeric) possesses some germicidal impact. Manuscripts can also be wrapped in silk clothes which help to keep bookworms away. Bundles of manuscripts can always be kept in heavy wooden boxes so that rigorous climate change cannot affect them.

➤ **Preservation of Paper Artifacts**

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defined the term 'artifact' as "... simple object (such as a tool or ornament) showing human workmanship or modification as distinguished from a natural

object" (Artifact, 2020). Paper artifacts are generally thick papers that may include designs, engineering drawings, artwork on paper, posters, etc. These materials should be stored in a cool and dry place, away from intense light. The storage should not be done on ground floors having moisture. These papers should be kept away from acidic papers. Small paper artifacts can be stored in flattened condition, otherwise brittle papers will break instantly. Oversized paper artifacts should be stored in rolled condition and can be kept in almirahs.

7.5.5.2 GOING DIGITAL

Preservation protects the traditional resources having enduring information value from various weathering factors so that present and future generations can have easy access to them. It is a regular programme for every library having information resources with significant local values in traditional formats like paper, photograph, drawings, paintings, etc. Preserving local history information resources present in traditional formats through digital initiatives is a challenge to PLs. Digital preservation is "the planning, resource allocation, and application of preservation methods and technologies necessary to ensure that digital information of continuing value remains accessible and usable" (Hedstrom, 1998). There are so many avenues that can be made possible to digitally preserve LHMs in PLs of the district.

An effective adaptive strategy would be creating common holding in higher categories of libraries, viz., district library or sub-divisional libraries. Digital conversion is the most fruitful solution for the long term preservation of photographs. Initiatives should be taken by appropriate authorities at the district level so that digital conversions of photographs can be possible readily

as and when these are received in the collection. Others, viz., town and rural libraries will then be allowed to make copies from the digital version and use them for display in their libraries without distorting the originals.

For PLs in the district, the best strategy for any library is to convert original manuscripts into digital formats. Initiatives should be taken so that the original manuscripts should be preserved in central arrangements where they are kept in weather controlled room after affordable conservation, and not allowing regular users to access them. Local libraries, to which they belong respectively according to their local values, should get a replica of the preserved manuscript for display and use at their premises. Original manuscripts obtained from various categorically lower libraries can be preserved at the district library for the best care. There must be a written record of this transfer and a replica has to be handed over to the source library for their local history section. In PLs with limited budgetary allocation, digitization does not stand for a costly affair since basic digitization of paper materials requires only a computer, a scanner, and a storage device. The problems with digital preservation are the absence of any standard protocol and standard proven methods for digitizing library materials (Fenlon & Varvel Jr., 2013). Despite that, in the modern era, digital preservation is, no doubt, the best way to protect rare LHMs from long term physical decay.

➤ **Limited Space is No Longer a Limitation**

Perhaps, the widest consideration for going digital for LHMs is the saving of physical space in libraries. Almost all the PLs are established within very limited space which gets already occupied by regular print resources as well as immovable properties of libraries. As a result,

establishing a separate local history section seemed difficult for almost all the librarians in PLs. Some of the libraries which have two-storied buildings, their space management are not at all satisfactory to prepare an attractive and effective local history section to meet the escalating demands of user communities. It is also a common picture for PLs that researchers often inquire about local history information. Even in many cases, local youths show great enthusiasm in knowing the local history information as well as in making it popular among the local inhabitants. Moreover, making local history information digital is a well-accepted fact to attract youths to the PLs. In addition, digitization promotes increased use of local history information, makes the best possible avenues for local history research, and attracts potential users towards local history (Hirtle, 2002). In the next few decades, with the improvements in technologies, digital preservation of LHMs in PLs will increase up to a considerable height that surely eliminates the restrictions of physical spaces.

➤ **Connecting LHCs with Social Media**

The present society is interactive, and such condition lets people share their personal information as parts of the cultural memory. From the past decade, social media influences have grown up to a significantly higher level. Day by day, people get more familiar with newer technologies which increase the use of various social media platforms among them. Various communities become comfortable in telling their personal stories through social media, thus a subtle shift is happening from traditional storytelling to digital storytelling (Hood & Reid, 2018). Describing personal experiences and photographs on a social media platform, in turn, become the collective memory (or, social memory) of any community. For example, people around the globe are now engaged

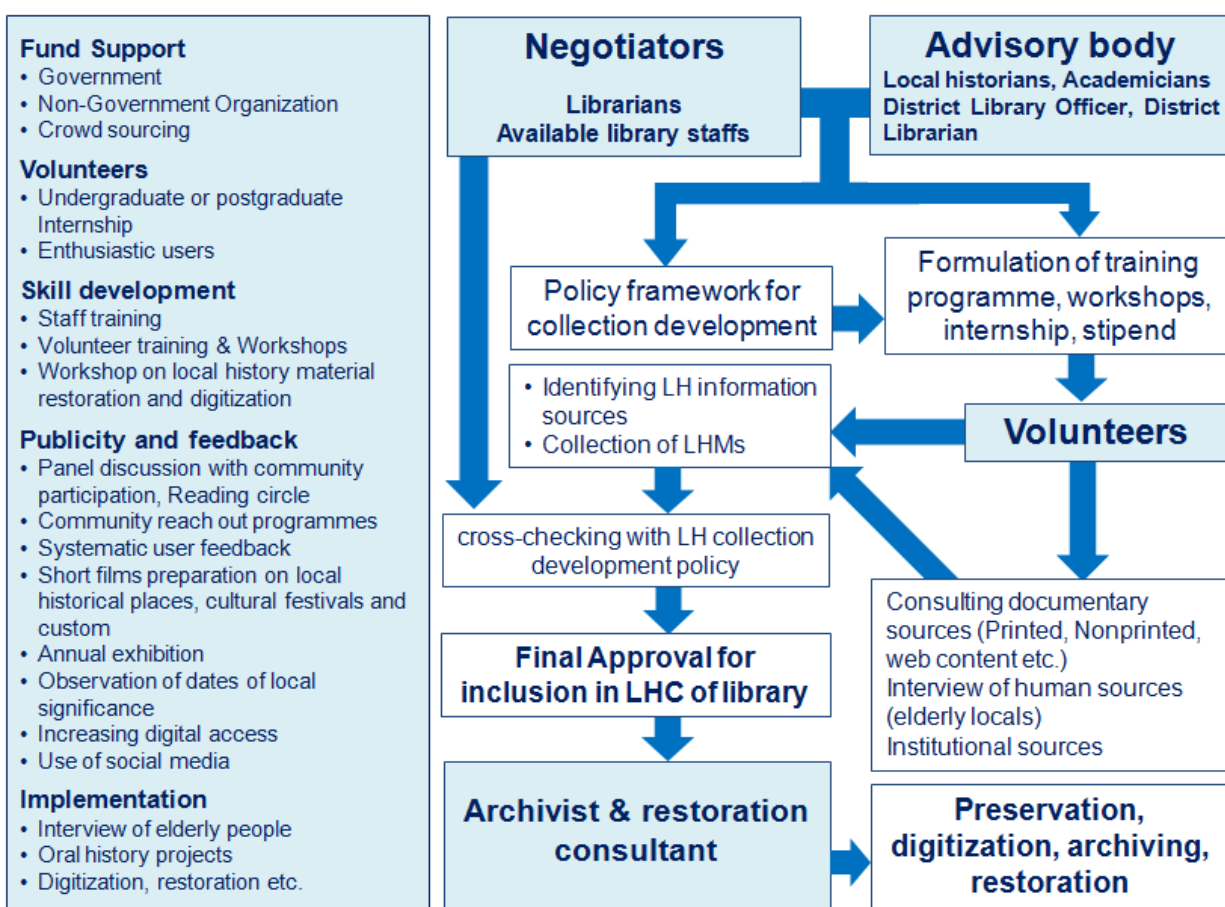
with the social media platform 'Facebook' where every personal moment of people gets posted which in turn becomes a 'repository for moments from people's lives' (Sinn & Syn, 2014). The PLs in the district should strategically use diverse social media platforms so that people get attracted to their historical past. A LHC may have dual usage values; sometimes a resource may have intense local value, whereas depending upon the content, the same material sometimes may have un-localized broader interest on global perspective (Fenlon & Varvel Jr., 2013). Thus one library's local collection gets global acceptance by using appropriate social media to reach a global audience. Social media are now unavoidable platforms to popularize the local history of any community and the local area. One of the effective means of attracting youths towards their local memory is the connection of social media with the local history information resources of any PL. This is a very useful way to grow historical consciousness among the young generation users (Birkner & Donk, 2018). Given availability and ease of accessibility, publicity of LHCs of PLs through social media is the need of the hour.

7.6 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION AND DEVELOPMENT: A PROPOSED MODEL

Local history is such an interesting field of interest where people have many dimensions to explore their root. Local history makes the community aware of its social, political, and cultural tradition that is inherited for a long time. Not only has a community's heritage, but local history also let the community aware of the legacy of its neighbourhood. Community people should know their literary, oral, and genealogical heritages which are unique to them; they should also have awareness about preservation and restoration of the same (Carvalho III, 1988). Knowledge

and awareness about local culture and history increase self-perception leading to the general well-being of any community.

Based on the findings of the present study, a generalized model has been proposed keeping in mind the community involvement in LHC development in PLs of the district of 24 Parganas (South). The model stresses a significant component of community involvement, i.e. partial outsourcing of LHC development. The workflow of the proposed model has been represented here in the form of a flow diagram.



Abbreviation used: LH - Local History; LHMs – Local History Materials

Figure 7A. Community involvement in Local History Collection and Development: A Proposed Model

7.6.1 MAJOR COMPONENTS

The model has some chief components who will be working together to achieve the desired goals for the sake of collection and preservation of local cultural heritage.

7.6.1.1 ADVISORY BODY

The advisory body will consist primarily of local historians and academicians who are subject experts in local history. In addition to them, the District Library Officer (DLO) and librarian of the District Library will be an integral part of this component. Local history experts will define the area of a region or locality and will provide necessary significant local historical information regarding the defined area; they will also be able to identify relevant materials that have deep connections with the local history of that particular locality or region or area. After getting their recommendations, DLO and the librarian of the District Library along with other administrative officials will formulate a collection development policy for LHMs in PLs in each locality. Uniform collection development policy will be followed throughout the district.

7.6.1.2 NEGOTIATORS

Negotiators will be such persons as the librarians or the library-in-charges or any other staff(s) available in the PLs. They will be playing the role of 'middle man' between the advisory body and the working personnel, i.e. they will coordinate between volunteers and advisors. A negotiator will prepare the blueprint of the workflow which will be followed by the collection development team in every locality or region. The collection development process will be

restricted within the defined area of the locality. The negotiators will also design the outline of training programmes, organize workshops, etc. necessary for volunteers, and will also apply for fund support for organizing the same. Negotiators will also fix the remuneration for every work involved in the collection development process as well as arrange for necessary infrastructural provisions for archiving invaluable LHMs.

After local history information resource collection by volunteers, negotiators will have to play another crucial role; they have to evaluate the collected resources in compliance with the collection development policy of the PL. When the collected materials will comply with the policy, negotiators will finally approve these information resources to be included in the collection of the library.

7.6.1.3 VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers in the LHC development team for PLs should be local youth, having or pursuing undergraduate or postgraduate educational degrees. Local history enthusiasts in any locality can also be regarded as a volunteer. According to the blueprint of the entire workflow, volunteers will be required to be given basic awareness and training about local history and they should participate in various workshops related to the same subject where they can learn something about LHC development processes. After that, they will consult different types of documentary sources viz., print and non-print sources, and web contents on local history; human and institutional sources are also required to be consulted; in this way, they will identify various local history information resources in their immediate locality. They will visit places to meet concerned resource persons and record interviews; they will consult local elderly persons to

identify interesting local history information, viz., OH, as well as they will collect the same. Local institutional sources are also required to be consulted for the identification and collection of unconventional local history information resources. Volunteers will get remuneration which will be fixed by the negotiators.

7.6.1.4 ARCHIVIST AND RESTORATION CONSULTANT

After getting the final approval of the negotiators, collected LHMs are included in the actual collection of the PL. Since these materials are rare in nature, they call for serious maintenance including appropriate preservation and conservation processes. Negotiators will formulate apt preservation policies in consultation with archivist and restoration experts. Such experts may come from the immediate locality or maybe library professionals who are properly trained in the preservation, conservation and archiving practices for various LHMs. They are required to be well trained in the digitization of fragile and invaluable local history resources since digital preservation is the need of the day. They will work downstream to the volunteers in association with negotiators.

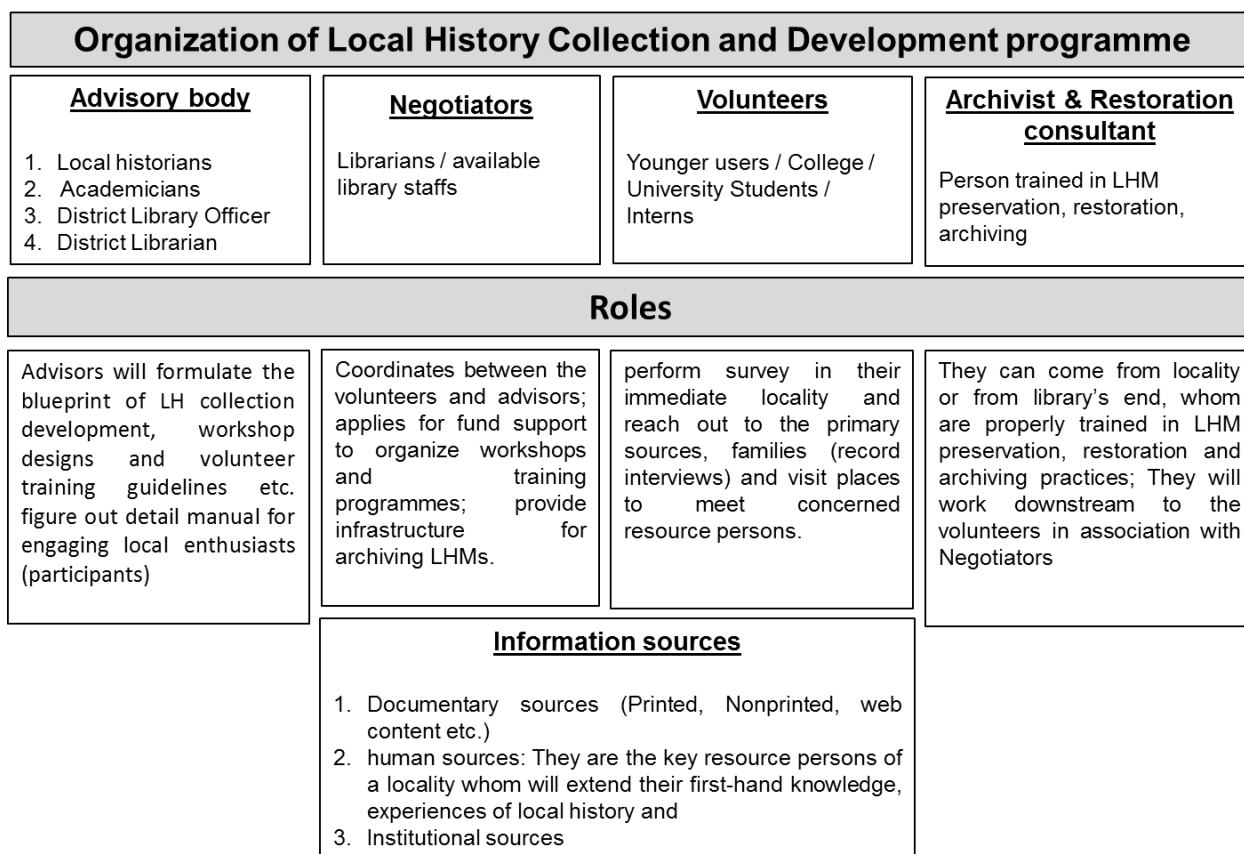


Figure 7B. Major components and their roles at a glance

7.6.2 FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED

Certain essential factors are to be considered while planning for LHC development in PLs of the district of 24 Parganas (South).

- Sufficient financial supports from appropriate administrative authorities are crucial for establishing LHCs in PLs. Libraries having or establishing such collections can apply for funds from non-government organizations also. In the age of the Internet, the fund can also be raised through crowdsourcing on social media platforms. The collection development

process involves remuneration to volunteers who will be relentlessly working in search of local history collectibles in immediate localities of a PL. Since LHMs are precious and fragile, they call for at least some basic necessary preservation and conservation procedures so that these may be preserved for a long time and users can get access at ease. Digital preservation, publicity of such rare collections, etc. which are indispensable nowadays, also need fund support.

- Skill developments of librarians, library staffs, volunteers, etc. through training, workshops, internship, etc. are also very important factor. It is essential to have appropriate knowledge about local history information sources, various types of such materials, collection procedures, their inclusion in the main collection of the library in compliance with existing policy, necessary preservation techniques and restoration policies, etc. Without having at least some basic knowledge in this field, effective and useful LHCs cannot be established in PLs.
- LHC development project should be implemented with utmost care. Local elderly people and family members of the eminent personalities of the local area must be interviewed for interesting local historical facts. OH transcripts should be made with such interviews using digital techniques. Invaluable local history treasures should preferably be restored through digital means so that these materials can overcome the issues related to time and space.
- Apposite measures must be taken for publicity of LHCs in PLs. In most cases, local people are not at all aware of the importance of local history in their immediate localities. PLs should carefully arrange extension services in this regard, viz., arranging panel discussion with local history experts and reading circles involving community people, arranging film show on local history and preparing short films on local cultural festivals and customs, an

annual exhibition of LHMs, community outreach programmes through observation of dates of local importance (if any). Proper initiatives should be taken towards digital preservation of LHCs and PLs also have responsibilities to make people aware of the digital access to the collections. Social media platforms can also be used to make publicity of LHCs in PLs.

7.7 SCOPES AND ADVANTAGES OF THE PROPOSED MODEL

1. To date there is no programme on LH collection development in PLs has been undertaken in the district of 24 Parganas (South); similarly, no model has been proposed to improve and popularize LH collection among the local people.
2. The proposed model introduces the idea of involving the local community in LH collection development; i.e., turning users into LH collectors and encourages volunteer involvement from the immediate society.
3. The strength of the above model lies on its formulation based on ground reality, i.e., being deciphered through an in depth study on the PLs of the district. The model is formulated, keeping the infrastructural capacity of the libraries and skill limits of the library staff in mind.
4. The growing reach and accessibility of digital technologies and social media are kept in mind during the development of the model.
5. LH collection development demands specialized treatment. Though this specific responsibility is performed only by the library staff, who have very little skill in dealing with LHMs. The model senses the importance of creating an advisory body consisting of local historians, librarian of the district library and other administrative heads from the district.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter describes the preservation methods of various kinds of LHMs which can be adopted by the PLs of the district of 24 Parganas (South) within limited fund support. How a PL can develop and maintain a small LHC has also been described with a minimalistic approach. An attempt has been made to propose and describe a futuristic plan which was developed keeping in view the ground reality of the present conditions of government-sponsored PLs of the district.

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Chapter - 8

Conclusion and Further Scope of Research

8.1 CONCLUSION

Since time immemorial, PLs nurture the culture and history of human civilization and represent the growth and development of a society. The PL plays the most crucial role in the collection, preservation, and delivery of national heritage and the history of human civilization. Scientific, intellectual, and cultural achievements of mankind, as well as human involvements in the growth and developments of society, are recorded and preserved by PLs. There lies the importance of PLs as the 'social institution'. As the curator of the history of mankind, libraries have the responsibility to present them to future generations in distinct forms. Preservation and maintenance of the history of geographical, cultural, demographic, and socio-economic growth of any place, time, and/or the people concerned are vital PL services. This role of the library can efficiently and effectively be played through the active participation of library staff and local communities.

The district of 24 Parganas (South) has a rich cultural history of local communities, scattered into various spatial and social facets, depending upon its significant geo-historical backgrounds. The district is largely a component of the Gangetic delta. Such peculiar geographical characteristics influenced its social, cultural, and economic history. Being a part of Sundarban mangrove forest and riverine delta, its livelihood has always been threatened; inhabitants used to earn their daily livelihood through struggle only. Early inhabitants were always deprived of the light of education. It took several years to spread formal education to the inner parts of the district, particularly the deltaic regions. On the other hand, having proximity to the city of Kolkata brought prosperity and illuminated the light of education to the city adjacent areas of the district. Thus, the district of 24 Parganas (South) always nurtured the two separated livelihoods.

From ancient times, this district was ruled by several dynasties and also by indigenous local powers like Gangaridae. This historical trail made the inhabitants lives into diversified life patterns. That is the reason this district has rich local historical treasures. Collection, storage, preservation, and dissemination of these invaluable information resources are the responsibilities of PLs of the district since they are supposed to play the role of 'social institution' in a society.

The present study, discussed in the foregoing chapters throws light on the present situation of LH information resources in PLs of the district of 24 Parganas (South) in terms of collection, processing, organization, storage, dissemination, preservation, and publicity. Detailed discussions have also been made regarding overall management and administration, human resource present, LH services to users, staff behaviour towards users, expectations of both library staff and users regarding LHC and services, lacunae in providing satisfactory LH services to users, etc. of the government-sponsored PLs of the district.

In the conclusions, some factors must be pointed out which are born out of significant observations of the entire study. The government-sponsored PLs are not evenly distributed throughout the district. The subdivisions adjacent to Kolkata have a good number of libraries. The districts 24 Parganas (South) and Kolkata have many overlapping localities. Being the capital city of the state of West Bengal, Kolkata always received much more attention from local historians than any other district. On the other hand, adjacent district 24 Parganas (South) did not gain equal importance from local historians, though it is a fact that this district possesses a treasure of unidentified LH. Rural and primary unit libraries established at the interiors of the district, but the majority of them are in dreadful condition. That is why users in the interior rural parts of the district do not have much opportunity to explore LH through PLs instead of the fact that rural people are interested to preserve their respective LH for their descendants.

Moreover, many libraries have been built without any definite plan which makes libraries non-spacious. Large numbers of rural and primary unit libraries have only one room; all the regular activities and user services are to be carried out in a single room. Except for few ones, these libraries do not have opportunities to develop a separate section for LH, though many of the library users prefer such a separate LH section. Libraries do not pay much attention to make reading rooms and stack area tidy and attractive. Physical facilities appropriate for the LH section are absent in the majority of the PLs of the district. Many libraries have computers received from RRRLF, but mostly they are not in use. In addition, large numbers of libraries do not have internet connections and even a continuous supply of electricity.

It is also found during investigation that large numbers of libraries remain open a maximum of two or three days per week due to a shortage of adequate staff. Though almost all the libraries have sufficient collection of reading materials and a good number of registered users, the unimpressive physical appearance, lack of sufficient space, irregular working days and opening time, etc. generally produce apathy among users to come to libraries.

The study has been conducted through interviews, with the help of structured questionnaires, of both library personnel and library users. The investigator went through many experiences in dealing with the human resources of PLs of the district. With very few exceptions, the majority of the government-sponsored PL personnel are not at all aware of the importance of LH resources in PLs. They do not clearly understand the role of libraries in preserving local historical information resources for the sake of posterity. As a result, they do not feel much interest to take on new responsibilities to develop effective and relevant area-based LHCs.

It is also found during the investigation that all the libraries, except the District Library, are suffering from an acute shortage of staff. It poses critical trouble in almost all the libraries and this crisis influenced the staff behaviour to a large extent. This is the reason, many library staff show an indisposed attitude in response to the questionnaires and showed non-cooperation. Karanjali Unnati Bidhayani Pathagar at Karanjali has been closed for a long time since the last staff Mr Shankar Gharami retired in the year 2018. Many rural and primary unit libraries are in deplorable conditions since they are running with single soon-to-be-retired staff. The oldest PL of the district Mudialy Library at Garden Reach is almost on the verge of closure due to staff shortage. It hardly opens for two or three days in a month and remains close for long periods without prior notice. Many subdivisional libraries are also running with a single staff. Stalin-Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar at Diamond Harbour is running with only one non-professional staff from the year 2010. It is found that large numbers of staff are doing duties in more than one library. Anomalies regarding staff positions are also found in some libraries. The study also reveals that library staff are not trained regularly, that is why their professional skills are not up to the mark to develop LHCs in PLs. Large numbers of posts of Librarians, Assistant Librarians, Library Assistants, Junior Library Attendant, Duftary-cum Book Binders, etc. are lying vacant for many years. In the last few years, the Government took initiatives to re-appoint retired Librarians in PLs on an ad-hoc basis, but it does solve the problem up to the mark. Shortage of adequate and trained professional staff is the most detrimental factor in lowering the quality of LHC and services in the district.

Being a vast area of research, LH information resources can be of various types which include not only books but also manuscripts, local newspapers and their clippings, souvenirs, brochures, leaflets, government documents, maps, diaries and memoirs, photographs, drawings and

paintings, sculptures, music, OH records, genealogical documents, etc. including various human and institutional sources. But the most unfortunate fact is that PLs of the district mostly believe that books are the only LHMs that are to be kept in libraries. Appropriate knowledge about diversified LHMs, their identification, collection, organization, dissemination, and preservation are absent in the majority of the library personnel. None of the libraries has been found which takes innovative steps to attract local people towards the LHCs. Libraries also do not have proper records to ascertain user demands for LH. This in turn affects the specialized services that are to be rendered to local communities when they come to libraries in search of LH.

The investigation reveals that appropriate publicity measures are not adopted by a majority of the libraries. LH is an immensely interesting discipline that can be popularized by PLs among the local communities. Use of apposite technologies, viz., use of social media can be used for this purpose. Except for Madarat Bandhab Pathagar, none of the libraries reported taking such initiatives to make LHCs attractive and useful.

The study also includes local user communities who are both members and non-members of PLs in different localities. A considerable number of users expressed their interests in LH study which include good numbers of young users. It is a hopeful situation where many young users expressed their keen interest in OH and genealogical studies. Besides, it is also found that the majority of the users are moderately satisfied with the LHCs and services provided by PLs, even many of the non-members also showed their interests in LH and asked for an attractive LH section in their nearby PLs. The libraries should take much initiative to arrange extension services viz., seminars, reading circles, lectures by eminent local historians, local culture promoting programmes which should reflect folk cultures, etc.; such extension services can attract users towards LH study. It is also important to involve local clubs and voluntary

organizations in such extension services; these bodies can also play a vital role in the publicity of LHCs in local PLs. Local elderly people should also be involved in such initiatives as they have an immense treasure of oral historical resources.

Another significant point to be mentioned that the absence of sufficient awareness among the appropriate authorities also plays a regressive role in the development of LHCs in PLs of the district. Various crucial requirements viz., adequate fund, sufficient numbers of staff, appropriate staff training, satisfactory infrastructure, definite collection development policy, enough technological supports, etc. are essential for LHC development in PLs. But none of the libraries got these essential supports from the appropriate authorities to develop an up to the mark LHC.

8.2 FURTHER SCOPE OF RESEARCH

The significant role of PLs in protecting communities own history and traditional culture is acknowledged since long back. Every PL should carry an exhaustive representation of the local historical and cultural inheritance of the locality or area or region in where it is situated. As a 'social institution' PL should extend their hands towards community people to adhere to their cultural roots.

The present study opens up the following avenues for future research which may attract researchers from multiple disciplines such as Library and Information Science, History, Information Technology, etc.

The present study opens up the following avenues for future research which may attract researchers from multiple disciplines such as Library and Information Science, History, Information Technology, etc.

- i. How to expand the community of local historians and popularize LH studies among the present day netizens?
- ii. How local elderly people can be involved in rejuvenating oral historical resources of an area or a community?
- iii. How PLs can function as LH / OH resource centres of remotely placed areas which have incredible ethnic values like Sundarbans?
- iv. Emerging roles of PLs as crossing the barrier of physical limits using social media in developing a digital collection of LH.

Appendices

Appendix I

QUESTIONNAIRE PART – I

(To be filled by Librarian / Staff-in-Charge)

Note: It is a general questionnaire for Librarian / Staff-in-Charge to survey the present status of local history collections and services in Govt. sponsored public libraries of 24 Parganas (South) district.

I GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- 1. Name of the library:**
- 2. Year of establishment:**
- 3. Full postal address (with pin code):**
- 4. Contact details (Land line no., Mobile no., Email):**
- 5. Nearest landmark:**
- 6. Administrative sub-division:**
(Mark only one)

- ☐ Alipore Sadar
- ☐ Baruipur
- ☐ Canning
- ☐ Diamond Harbour
- ☐ Kakdwip

7. Location:

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Municipality (Urban)
- ☐ Gram Panchayat (Rural)

8. Name of Ward / Block:

9. Year of getting Govt. sponsorship:

10. Status / Category of the library:

(Mark only one)

- ☐ District Library
- ☐ Sub-divisional Library
- ☐ Town Library
- ☐ Town Library upgraded to Sub-divisional Library
- ☐ Century-old Town Library upgraded to Sub-divisional Library
- ☐ Century-old Town Library
- ☐ Century-old Rural Library

11. Librarian present / absent:

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Present
- ☐ Absent

12. Name of Librarian / Staff-in-Charge:

13. Educational qualification(s) of Librarian / Staff-in-Charge:

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Class VIII passed
- ☐ Secondary/ Madhyamik
- ☐ Higher Secondary
- ☐ Graduation
- ☐ Postgraduation
- ☐ Ph.D.

14. Professional qualification(s) of Librarian / Staff-in-Charge:

(Mark only one)

- ☐ C.Lib.Sc./ CLIS
- ☐ B.Lib.Sc./ BLIS
- ☐ M.Lib.Sc./ MLIS
- ☐ No professional qualification

15. Total no. of working staff(s):

16. What is the existing staff position in your library?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Librarian
- ☐ Library Assistant
- ☐ Library Attendant
- ☐ Driver
- ☐ Peon /Duftary /Book Binder
- ☐ Cleaner
- ☐ Darwan /Night Watchman
- ☐ Junior Library Attendant

17. What is the total number of registered members in your library?

18. Your library is open for how many days per week?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Less than 2 days
- ☐ 2 to 3 days
- ☐ 4 to 5 days
- ☐ 6 days

19. What is the average no. of daily circulation of books (Issue & Return):

20. Average no. of daily reading room attendance:

21. Total no. of books:

22. Does your library possess non-book materials?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

23. Do you use computer in daily activities of the library?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

24. Is Internet connection available?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

25. Is local history collection present in your library?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**II IF LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION IS PRESENT,
ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS**

26. Is LHC separate from other sections in the library?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

27. What are the specialized services provided on LHC in your library?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Lending
- ☐ Reading only
- ☐ Reference service

- ☐ Inter library loan
- ☐ Referral service
- ☐ OPAC
- ☐ No specific service

28. What are the extension services provided on LHC in your library?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ LHM Exhibition
- ☐ Local cultural programmes
- ☐ User orientation
- ☐ Lectures and talks
- ☐ Reading circles
- ☐ Awareness rally
- ☐ Reference service
- ☐ Referral service
- ☐ Personal assistance
- ☐ No extension service

29. Which kind of LHMs are present in your library?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Books
- ☐ Manuscripts
- ☐ Letters and Correspondence
- ☐ Diaries and Memoirs
- ☐ Souvenir
- ☐ Local magazine

- ☐ Local newspapers
- ☐ Leaflet and Pamphlet
- ☐ Govt. plans and Deeds
- ☐ Map and Toposheet
- ☐ Photograph
- ☐ Painting and Sculpture
- ☐ Artifact
- ☐ Relic
- ☐ Genealogy
- ☐ Oral history
- ☐ Special collections

30. What are the physical facilities at the LH section provided by your library?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Dedicated LH section in reading room
- ☐ Sufficient illumination
- ☐ Separate sitting arrangement
- ☐ Dedicated computer with Internet connection
- ☐ No separate physical facility

31. Do you participate in LHM selection for your library?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

32. LHM selection committee includes:

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Library committee at State Central Library
- ☐ DLO
- ☐ Librarian
- ☐ Library users
- ☐ No idea

33. According to you what are the specific requirements to develop and maintain LHC in your library?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ More space
- ☐ More financial assistance
- ☐ Adequate number of staff
- ☐ Regular staff training
- ☐ Digitization facility for rare materials
- ☐ Restoration and preservation facilities
- ☐ Consultation with LH experts
- ☐ No opinion

34. Do you record users' LH information demand in your library?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

35. If ‘Yes’, which method do you follow to record user demand for LH?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Suggestion box
- ☐ Demand register
- ☐ Librarians’ meet
- ☐ Demand placement through e-mail

36. What are the frequencies of users’ demands for LH related information in your library?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Twice a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Once in two weeks
- ☐ Once in a month
- ☐ Once in three months
- ☐ Twice a year
- ☐ Once a year
- ☐ Never

37. How frequently do you review users’ LH related demands?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Fortnightly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Half-yearly
- ☐ Yearly
- ☐ Never

38. What is your opinion regarding publicity of LHCs in public libraries?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Strongly needed
- ☐ May be needed
- ☐ Not needed
- ☐ No opinion

39. Do you adopt any publicity measure for LHC in your library (please tick)?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

40. If 'yes' what are the publicity measures?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Library brochure or library magazine
- ☐ Leaflet distribution
- ☐ Awareness rally
- ☐ Public address system
- ☐ Poster/ Notice
- ☐ Advertisement in local newspapers
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ No measures taken

41. In your opinion, what are the major difficulties towards building LHCs in public libraries?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Absence of appropriate collection development policies
- ☐ Reluctance of appropriate authority
- ☐ Funding is insufficient
- ☐ Acute staff shortage
- ☐ Lack of regular staff training
- ☐ Infrastructural facilities are inadequate
- ☐ Lack of enthusiasm among Librarians/Library-in-Charges
- ☐ Lack of interest among local community
- ☐ No idea

Signature of the Surveyor

Date & Place

Appendix II

QUESTIONNAIRE – II

To be filled by Library User

Note: It is a general questionnaire for Librarian / Staff-in-Charge to survey the present status of local history collections and services in Govt. sponsored public libraries of 24 Parganas (South) district.

I PERSONAL INFORMATION

- 1. Name**
- 2. Full Postal Address**
- 3. Gender**
- 4. Age**
- 5. Occupation**
- 6. Educational Qualifications**

II GENERAL AWARENESS ABOUT PUBLIC LIBRARY

- 7. From whom you came to know about public libraries?**
 - ☐ Parents
 - ☐ Teachers
 - ☐ Classmates
 - ☐ Friends
 - ☐ Neighbors
 - ☐ Any other source (please specify)

8. Please specify your library membership status:

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Member
- ☐ Non-member

9. Since how long you are a member of the library, in years (For Members)?

10. Since how long you are using the resources of the library, in years (For Non-members)?

11. Please specify your frequency of visit to the library:

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Everyday
- ☐ Once in two days
- ☐ Once/twice a week
- ☐ Once /twice a month
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ No fixed schedule

12. What are your general purposes to visit library?

- ☐ Study
- ☐ Research
- ☐ Preparation for competitive examinations
- ☐ Newspaper and magazine reading
- ☐ Recreation and spending leisure time

III AWARENESS ABOUT LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION OF THE LIBRARY

13. Are you familiar with the term ‘Local History’?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If ‘Yes’, please answer the following questions:

14. Do you know that public libraries should have local history collections?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

15. Do you ever consult local history collections of your library?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

16. Specify the frequency of using local history materials:

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Everyday
- ☐ Once in two days
- ☐ Once/twice a week
- ☐ Once/twice a month
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ No fixed schedule

17. Please state your broad purposes for local history study:

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ To explore local culture
- ☐ To explore community history
- ☐ To know about local famous personalities
- ☐ Interest in family history / genealogy
- ☐ Any other definite research interest (please specify)

18. Are you satisfied with the physical facilities at local history section of the library?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Highly satisfying
- ☐ Moderately satisfying
- ☐ Not at all satisfying
- ☐ Not sure

19. Are you satisfied with the local history collection of the library?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Highly satisfying
- ☐ Moderately satisfying
- ☐ Not at all satisfying
- ☐ Not sure

20. Express your opinion regarding separate local history section (other than reading room) in the library:

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Highly needed
- ☐ Not needed
- ☐ May be needed
- ☐ No opinion

21. Express your opinion regarding necessary infrastructural requirements for local history study in the library:

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Dedicated/separate study area
- ☐ Sufficient illumination
- ☐ Comfortable sitting arrangements
- ☐ Large display area
- ☐ Dedicated computers
- ☐ Internet connection

22. Which type of local history materials do you find interesting to consult?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Books
- ☐ Manuscripts
- ☐ Letters and Correspondence
- ☐ Diaries and Memoirs
- ☐ Souvenir
- ☐ Local magazine
- ☐ Local newspaper
- ☐ Leaflet and Pamphlet
- ☐ Govt. plans and Deeds
- ☐ Map and Toposheet
- ☐ Photograph
- ☐ Painting and Sculpture
- ☐ Artifact
- ☐ Relic
- ☐ Genealogy
- ☐ Oral history
- ☐ Special collections

23. What are the shortfalls of the local history collection of the library?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Local history collection is not up to the mark of my expectation
- ☐ Local history materials are not organized properly
- ☐ Local history materials are overlapping
- ☐ The collection is not up-to-date
- ☐ Reading room atmosphere is not conducive for intensive study
- ☐ There is no personal assistance to find out proper resources
- ☐ Any other reason (Please specify)

24. Express your opinion regarding awareness of Librarian/ other library staff associated to local history collection of the library:

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Enough aware
- ☐ Moderately aware
- ☐ Not aware
- ☐ Completely ignorant

25. Which of the local history related services do you get from the library?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Lending of local history books
- ☐ Reading room use
- ☐ Reference service
- ☐ Inter Library Loan
- ☐ Referral service
- ☐ OPAC searching

26. Which of the local history related extension services do you find most helpful?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Local history materials' exhibition in the library
- ☐ Local culture promoting programmes
- ☐ User orientation
- ☐ Lectures and talks by local history experts
- ☐ Reading circles of library members and non-members for local history
- ☐ Local history awareness rally
- ☐ Reference service for local history research
- ☐ Personal assistance to find proper local history resources

27. What time is taken by library staffs in response to your local history related queries?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Less than 5 minutes
- ☐ 5 to less than 10 minutes
- ☐ 10 to less than 20 minutes
- ☐ Unable to locate

28. Express your opinion regarding cooperativeness of library staffs in response to local history related queries:

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Highly cooperative
- ☐ Moderately cooperative
- ☐ Non cooperative
- ☐ Reject outright

29. Do you think there is need for necessary advertisements and publicity measures for local history to aware local people?

(Mark only one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

30. Which of the publicity measures do you think of most help to know about local history collection of library?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Library brochure/ magazine
- ☐ Leaflet
- ☐ Awareness rally
- ☐ Public address system
- ☐ Posters/Notices in localities
- ☐ Advertisement in local newspapers
- ☐ Social media

Signature of the surveyor:

Date and Place:

Appendix III

Overview of Local History and corresponding collections in Government-sponsored Public Libraries of 24 Parganas (South)

A. Sub division: Alipore (Sadar)

1. LHC present in Mudialy Library, Garden Reach – Metiabruz

- i. Some books on specific LH of *Garden Reach*, greater Kolkata, and 24 Parganas (South); viz.,
 - *Chabbish Pargana: Uttar, Dakshin, Sundarban* by Kamal Chaudhuri (Dey's Publishing),
 - *Kolkatar Adda* by Samarendra Das (ed.)
 - *Baruipur o Roy Chowdhury Paribar* by Shakti Roy Chowdhury
 - *Kolkattaiya Neshakaracha* by Lyadly Mukhopadhyay
 - *Sachitra Kolikata-Rahasya* by Jawaharlal Dhar (Parashpathar Prakashan)
 - *Madhab Lener Bangal Bari* by Dipak Sengupta (Dey Publications)
 - *Banglar Itihas* by Golam Hussain Salim (Sopan Publisher)
- ii. Local news bulletins viz., *Alipore Barta*, and *Banglar Sammriddha Angan* (edited by Hrishikesh Paul).
- iii. Some irregular leaflets of *Garden Reach Sahitya Sanskriti Parishad*.
- iv. Souvenir of Mudialy Library (edited by *Indra Chandra Gupta*) on the occasion of inauguration of reading room of the library on first floor.
- v. Newspaper cutting from popular magazine *Saptahik Bartaman* (dated 8th July, 2000, pp. 8-9) regarding history of the Mudialy Library.

2. LHC present in Behala Town Library, Behala

- i. Few books on specific LH of *Behala*, greater Kolkata, and 24 Parganas (South); viz.,
 - *Chabbish Pargana: Uttar, Dakshin, Sundarban* by Kamal Chaudhuri (Dey's Publishing)
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Pargana Samagra* by Mahadev Guriya
 - *Bangiya Saborno Katha: Kalikshetra Kolikata* by Bhabani Ray Choudhury (Saborno Ray Choudhury Paribar Parishad and Saborno Sangrahalay).
 - Some irregular souvenirs of local non-govt. organization *Arya Samity*.
 - Some leaflets of local club *Behala Natun Dal*.

3. LHC present in Barisha Pathagar, Barisha

- i. Some books on specific LH of Behala, Barisha, greater Kolkata, and 24 Parganas (South) viz.,
 - *Behala Janapader Itihas* by Sudhindra Bandyopadhyay (Progressive Writers Guild)
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Pargana Samagra* by Mahadev Guriya
- ii. books are written by famous personalities of the area viz.,
 - *India from 6000 B.C.* by Biren Roy
 - *Lakshmikanta: a Chapter in the Social History of Bengal* by Atul Krishna Ray, edited by Gorachand Ray Choudhury (The Saborno Sangrahalay)
 - *Bangiya Saborno Katha: Kalikshetra Kolikata* by Bhabani Ray Choudhury (Saborno Ray Choudhury Paribar Parishad and Saborno Sangrahalay)
- iii. Large photographs of many members of the Saborno Ray Choudhury family.
- iv. Brochures of Barisha Shree Shree Chandimata Puja Committee.

4. LHC present in Prativa Library, Sarsuna

- i. Very few books on specific LH of Behala and greater Kolkata, and Bengal viz.,
 - *Bangiya Saborno Katha: Kalikshetra Kolikata* by Bhabani Ray Choudhury (Saborno Ray Choudhury Paribar Parishad and Saborno Sangrahalay)
 - *Bangadhip-Parajay* by Pratap Chandra Ghosh
- ii. House Journal (no. 1-4) of the Department of History, Sarsuna College.
- iii. Inauguration Day souvenir of Sarsuna Law College (17th July 2009).
- iv. Centenary year celebration souvenir of Sarsuna Girls' School (1915-2015).
- v. Centenary year celebration souvenir of Sarsuna Association and Prativa Library (1905-2005).
- vi. Inauguration Day souvenir of Sarsuna College (22nd February 2003).
- vii. Few newspaper clippings regarding news of the library.
- viii. The library visit report, given by Rai Sahib P.K. Roy, President of South Suburban Library Association, dated 9th May 1954.
- ix. A short memoir of Kavi Kazi Nazrul Islam in his handwriting dated 14 *Jaistha*, 1340 B.S.

5. LHC present in Brati Sangha Pathagar, Budge Budge

- i. No specific LHC related to *Budge Budge*, *Batanagar*, and adjacent area.
- ii. Very few books on local history of 24 Parganas (South) viz.
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Pargana Samagra* by Mahadev Guriya
 - *Chabbish Pargana: Uttar, Dakshin, Sundarban* by Kamal Chaudhuri (Dey's Publishing)
- iii. Few leaflets of nearby local clubs.

6. LHC present in Sarangaad Bandhab Pathagar, Sarangabad

The Library-in-charge couldn't display any LHM in the library.

7. LHC present in Joychandi Pathagar, Srikrishnapur

- i. No specific LHM related to *Srikrishnapur*.
- ii. Only one book on local history of *Sundarban* and 24 Parganas (South) viz., *Sundarbaner Itihas* (Part – 1) edited by Rajib Ahmed (Gatidhara Prakashani).
- iii. Golden Jubilee celebration souvenir of District Library, 24 Parganas (South).
- iv. Some leaflets on cultural and social activities of local *Joychandi* Sporting Club.

8. LHC present in District Library, Vidyanagar

- i. Huge collection of books on local history of every district of West Bengal.
- ii. Large number of books on local history of Sundarban and 24 Parganas (South) viz.,
 - *Srikhanda Sundarban* edited by Debprasad Jana
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Itibritta* by Kamal Choudhury
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Pargana Samagra* by Mahadev Guriya
 - *Banbibir Pala* edited by Sujit Kumar Mandal (Gangchil)
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Shaibotirtha* by Dhurjati Naskar
 - *Sundarban: Daridra o banchanar Samiksha* edited by Sukumar Singh and Ashis Kanti Bhattacharya
 - *Bhasa Dakshin Chabbish Pargana o bibidha Nibandha* by Balaichand Halder
 - *Kemon Ache Sundarbaner Manush* (Sundarban basir Sathe)

- *Baruipurer Itihas, Sundarbaner Anchalik Jiban*
- *Biswas o Loksanskriti* by Pranab Sarkar
- *Mrichjhanpi: Naishabder Antarale* by Jagadish Chandra Mandal
- *Chak-Alampurur Itibritta* by M. Dilwar Hossain
- *Pranta Sundarbaner Kathyabhasa* by Dr. Dilip Kumar Naha
- *Sundarbaner Satti Galpo* by Manik Mondal
- *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Gajon o Gajon mela* by Dhurjati Naskar
- *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Anchalik Itihaser Upokaran* by Krishnakali Mondal
- *Kakdwipe Tebhagar Lorai* by Gouranga Chakraborty
- *Budge Budge o Brihattara Budge Budge Anchaler Loksanskritir Parichay* by Bimal Pandit and Mohan Naskar
- *Dakshin Banglar Natun Pratnasthal* by Krishnakali Mondal
- *Adi Sundarbaner Narisamaj o Tebhaga Andolan* by Santosh Kumar Barman,
- *Sondorboner Podyo* by Dhurjati Naskar
- *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Lokshilpa* by Satyananda Mondal
- *Jashohor-Bongaon Kolkata saho 24 Parganas Itibritta (Part -2)* by Shshadhar Chakraborty
- *Chabbish Pargana Jelar Purakirti* by Sagar Chattopadhyay
- *Rabindranagarer Itikatha* by Anil Tapadar
- *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Loukik Debdebi o Murtibhabna* by Krishnakali Mondal,
- *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Kathya Bhasha o Loksanskritir Upokoron (Part-1)* by Bimalendu Halder
- *Dakshin Chabbish Pargana Jelar Itihas: Jiban o Jibika Kahini* by Sukumar Singh

- *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Bismrita Adhyay* by Krishnakali Mondal
- *Chabbish Parganar Anchalik Itihas o Sanskriti* edited by Gokul Chandra Das
- *Diamond Harbour Roder Itikatha o S.S.T.A.* by Lakshman Samaddar
- *Diamond Harboured Anchalik Itihas* by Nilratan Mondal
- *Bansundari* by Biresh Ghatak
- *Marichjhanpi* edited by Madhumay Paul
- *Sagardwip* by Jagannath Maity
- *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Shramik Krishak Andolon o Prabhas Roy* by Avijatrik
- *Dakshinbanga Sahityer Chalchitra* by Bipadbaran Sarkar and Subarna Das
- *Bharater Sundarban o Mangrove Udvid* by Kumud Ranjan Naskar
- *Ora Kaj Kore Ghore o Baire* by Amritlal Parui
- *Ashanigrase Baichitramoy Sundarban* by Sheikh Samsuddin
- *Gangaridi: Alochonao Porjalochona* by Narottom Halder
- *Chabbish Parganar Mandir* by Asim Mukhopadhyay
- *Behala Janapader Agrapathik* edited by Sudip Goswami
- *Chabbish Parganar Loukik Debdebi: Palagan o Loksanskriti Jiggasa* by Dr. Debabrata Naskar
- *Behala Janapader Itihas* by Sudhindra Bandyopadhyay, *Sonarpurer Itihas* by Gokul Chandra Das
- *Diamond Harbour Anchaler Bangla Upobhasa* by Balaichand Halder
- *Chabbish Pargana: Uttar, Dakshin Sundarban* by Kamal Choudhury
- *Gangaridi o Anyanya Prabandha* by Narottom Halder
- *Brihattara Gariar Itibritta* by Sudhanshu Mukhopadhyay

➤ *Sundarbaner Sundar Katha.*

- iii. Souvenir of eminent local history research associations of the district viz., *Anchalik Itihas o Loksanskriti Charcha Parishad (Kalyanpur)* and *Gangaridi Gabeshana Kendra (Kakdwip).*
- iv. A map of old 24 Parganas (South)

9. LHC present in Deshgourab Pathagar, Garia

- i. There is only one book on the specific local history of *Garia* and nearby localities viz.,
 - *Brihattara Gariyar Itibritta* by Sudhangsu Mukhopadhyay
- ii. There are very few books on the local history of 24 Parganas (South) viz.
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Pargana Samagra* by Mahadev Guriya
 - *Baruipur o Roy Chowdhury Paribar* by Shakti Roy Chowdhury
 - *Chabbish Pargana: Uttar, Dakshin Sundarban* by Kamal Choudhury
- iii. Few irregular issues of local magazine *Anandabazar*, published from *Boral*.

10. LHC present in Vivek Sangha Town Library, Jadavpur

The Library-in-charge couldn't display any LHM in the library.

B. Sub division: Baruipur

1. LHC present in Bandhab Library, Joynagar-Majilpur

- i. There are considerable number of books on local history of *Joynagar-Majilpur*, 24 Parganas (South) and Sundarban viz.,

- *Joynagar-Majilpurer Itihas* by Dr. Bhairab Chandra Mitra
- *Pundradeshe Bouddha Sabhyata* by Dhurjati Lashkar
- *Badabaner Bangshadhar* by Dhurjati Laskar
- *Banglar Loksanskriti: Manastatwik Anweshha o Prayog* (Search and Application of psychoanalysis in Bengal Folklore) by Dr. Falguni Bhuinya
- *Sundarbaner Prantik Jiban o Aitijhya* by Sheikh Rejwanul Islam
- *Baruipur o Roy Chowdhury Paribar* by Shakti Roy Chowdhury
- *Jol, Jangal o Janjibane Sundarban* by Sachin Das (Deep Prakashan)
- *Juddu Beroti* by Pradip Kumar Barman, *Baruipurer Itihas* (2nd ed.)
- *Dakshin Chabbish Pargana Samagra* by Mahadeb Guriya
- *Sundarban Dakche* by Avijit Sengupta
- *Brihattara Gariyar Itibritta* by Sudhangsu Mukhopadhyay
- *Bonbibibi* by Sashanka Sekhar Das
- *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Upokatha o Loksanskriti* by Dr. Amalendu Hazra (distributed by Das Book Stall)
- *Gangaridi: Desh o Jati (Desh Khanda)* by Vivekananda Das (Nairanjana Prakashani)
- *Dakshin Banglar Natun Pratnasthal* by Krishnakali Mondal

- *Adi Sundarbaner Itihas o Loksanskriti: Lonamatir Mithekatha* by Santosh Kumar Barman
 - *Bhasa Dakshin Chabbish Pargana o Bibidha Nibandha* by Balaichand Halder
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Shoibatirtha* by Dhurjati Naskar (distributed by Mahesh Library)
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Kathyabhasa o Loksanskritir Upokaran* (Part -1) by Narottam Halder (Bimalendu Halder)
 - *Sundarbane Arjan Sardar* by Shibshankar Mitra (Navana)
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Pargana Jelar Itihas: Jiban o Jibika Kahini* (Part – 1 and 2) by Sukumar Singh (Multi Book Agency)
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Pargan Anchalik Itihaser Upokaran* by Krishnakali Mondal, *Baichitramoy Sundarban* by Sheikh Samsuddin
 - *Pratnatatwe Baruipur* by Krishnakali Mondal
 - *Adiganga Pratna-parikrama* by Nirmalendu Mukhopadhyay
 - *Chabbish Parganar Anchalik Itihas o Sanskriti* edited by Gokul Chandra Das (Progressive Publishers)
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Pargana Jelar Nikashi Chalchitra*
- ii. *Paschimbanga*: special issue 24 Parganas (South) published by Department of Information and Culture, Govt. of West Bengal, etc.
- iii. *Aitihāsik Prabandha Sankalan (Historical Essays) of Narottam Halder*, compiled by Kalidas Dutta and Santosh Bhattacharya, published by Naba-Nimnabanga Prakashani of Joynagar-Majilpur.

- iv. Special issues (Sunderbans folk culture, Sunderbans folk literature, Sunderbans in Bangladesh) of local magazine *Samakaler Jiban Kathi*, edited by Najibul Islam Mondal, published from Joynagar-Majilpur.
- v. Irregular issues of local literary magazines viz.,
 - *Gangeya Sundarban Barta* edited by Ujjwal Bandyopadhyay and *Children's Rosogolla* edited by Sajal Bandyopadhyay (Sundarban Sishu Sahitya Parishad)
 - *Boi o Melar Dukotha* by Nilratan Mondal (Dakshin Chabbish Pargana Gramin Pathapatrika Samity and Falta Literature Association).
- i. Irregular issues of two monthly research magazines viz.,
 - *Gangaridae Gabeshana Kendra* published from Kakdwip
 - *Prithibir Pathshala* edited by Arunabha Chakraborty, published from Joynagar-Majilpur.
- ii. Some complementary issues of *Lokparichay*, a quarterly magazine on local history, folk culture and folk literature of 24 Parganas (South), published from *Joynagar-Majilpur*.
- iii. Souvenirs of local associations viz.
 - *Sundarban Anchal* Government Pensioners' Association (*Abasar Barta*)
 - Heritage Committee for Greater *Joynagar*
 - *Aikya Sammilani* of Joynagar-Majilpur
 - Block Recreation Club of *Joynagar* 1 no. Block
- iv. Some issues of souvenir *Avijatri*, published by local school *Joynagar* Institution.
- v. Irregular souvenirs of local bank the *Joynagar-Majilpur* Peoples' Co-operative Bank Limited.

- vi. Collection of local fortnightly newspapers viz., *Badwip Barta* and *Dakshin Chabbish Pargana*, published from Canning and Joynagar-Majilpur respectively.
- vii. There is a large collection of many photographs of events organized by the library.
- viii. There is a unique collection of idols of local deities who are worshipped mostly in various parts of the district of 24 Parganas (South) and Sundarban.
- ix. There is a special collection of books of the eminent local historian of the district *Sri Kalidas Dutta*, donated to the library by his family members after his demise.

2. **LHC present in Rajpur Sadharan Pathagar; Rajpur**

The Library-in-charge couldn't display any LHM in the library.

3. **LHC present in Hemkali Library, Dakshin Gobindapur**

The Librarian couldn't display any LHM in the library.

4. **LHC present in Vidyabhusan Library, Changripota/Subhasgram**

- i. Books on the local history of Baruipur, Rajpur-Sonarpur, and 24 Parganas (South) viz.,
 - *Baruipurer Itihas* (2nd ed.)
 - *Rajpur-Sonarpurer Atit o Aitijhyo* (Part 1 and 2) by Jiban Mukhopadhyay (Sonarpur Dakshin Bidhansabha Kendra)
 - *Chabbish Parganar Anchalik Itihas o Sanskriti* edited by Gokul Chandra Das (Progressive Publishers).
- ii. Souvenirs of local Rajpur-Sonarpur Municipality

- iii. Special collection: an impressive and rare collection of *Somprakash*, the weekly newspaper edited and published by Pandit Dwarakanath Vidyabhusan. Available volumes are 23 in number dated from 1269 B.S. to 1293 B.S. Copies in the Bengali years 1270-1272, 1273 (Baishakh to Kartik), 1274, 1276, 1277, 1279, 1282-1286, and 1290 are absent due to non-availability.
- iv. There is also a special collection of a considerable number of rare books written by nearly one hundred authors of ancient south Bengal.

5. **LHC present in Purandar Smriti Mandir Pathagar; Malancha-Mahinagar**

The Librarian couldn't display any LHM in the library.

6. **LHC present in Baharu Shyamsundar Public Library and Free Reading Room, Baharu**

The Library-in-charge couldn't display any LHM in the library.

7. **LHC present in Madarat Bandhab Pathagar, Madarat**

- i. Some books on the local history of Baruipur and 24 Parganas (South) viz.,
 - *Baruipur o Roy Choudhury Paribar* by Shakti Roy Choudhury
 - *Baruipurer Itihas* (2nd ed.), and *Chabbish Parganar Anchalik Itihas o Sanskriti* edited by Gokul Chandra Das (Progressive Publishers).
- ii. Souvenir of the library published on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee celebration.
- iii. Souvenirs of local educational institution Madarat Popular Academy.

- iv. Several photographs of cultural events organized by the library.

8. LHC present in Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library, Kotalia

- i. Some books on the local history of Kotalia, Sundarban, and 24 Parganas (South) viz.,
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Pargana Samagra* by Mahadeb Guriya
 - *Char Punya Dham: Harinavi-Rajpur-Changripota-Kotalia* by Jayanta Chakraborty
 - *Adi Sundarbaner Itihas o Loksanskriti: Lonamatir Mithekatha* by Santoshkumar Barman.
- ii. Local monthly newspaper *Gangeya Sundarban Barta*, published from Joynagar-Majilpur.
- iii. Some irregular issues of fortnightly literary magazine *Chatushkone* edited by Gita Maitra and published from Garia.
- iv. Souvenirs of Netaji Krishti Kendra (Netaji Cultural Centre) of the library.
- v. Some souvenirs of local club *Agradut*, published on the occasion of various local social works of the club.
- vi. Special collection – A museum on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose which was inaugurated in the year 2009. The museum describes the life events of Netaji along with many rare photographs of him and his family members.
- vii. There is a large collection of books which are written by various authors on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

9. LHC present in Baruipur Town Library, Baruipur

- i. Books on local history of 24 Parganas (South), Sunderbans, and Kolkata viz.,
 - *Dakshinbanga Janasanskriti: Bhasa o Itihas Bichitra* (Part-1) by Bimalendu Halder (Chaturtha Duniya)
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Itibritta* by Kamal Chowdhury (Model Publishing House)
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Atit* by Kalidas Dutta
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Anchalik Itihaser Upokaran* by Krishnakali Mondal
 - *Dakshin Banglar Natun Pratnasthal* by Krishnakali Mondal
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Jatragan: Itihas o Alochona* (Part -1) by Bimalendu Halder, *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Purakatha* by Krishnakali Mondal
 - *Sundarbaner Sanskriti o Pratnabhabna* by Krishnakali Mondal
 - *Gangaridi: Alochona o Porjalochona* by Narottam Halder
 - *Jal Jangal o Janjibane Sundarban* by Sachin Das
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Atit* by Kalidas Dutta
 - *Chabbish Parganar Anchalik Itihas o Sanskriti* edited by Gokul Chandra Das
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Bismrita Adhyay* by Krishnakali Mondal
 - *Dakshinbanga Sahityer Chalchitra* edited by Bipadbaran Sarkar and Subarna Das, *Bangiya Saborno Katha: Kalikshetra Kolikata* by Bhabani Ray Choudhury (Saborno Ray Choudhury Paribar Parishad and Saborno Sangrahalay).
- ii. Souvenirs of local Rajpur-Sonarpur Municipality.
- iii. One issue of local literary magazine *Samakaler Jiyankathi* (Sundarban special issue) edited by Najibul Islam Mondal, published from Joynagar-Majilpur.

- iv. Special collection – Manuscripts *Kalikapuranokto Durgapuja Paddhoti* and *Mayatantram*.

10. LHC present in Baruipur Public Library, Baruipur

The Library-in-charge couldn't display any LHM in the library.

C. Subdivision: Canning

1. LHC present in Canning Public Library, Canning

- i. Few books on 24 Parganas (South) and Sunderbans viz.
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Anchalik Itihaser Upokaran* by Krishnakali Mondal
 - *Dakshin Banglar Natun Pratnasthal* by Krishnakali Mondal
 - *Chabbish Parganar Anchalik Itihas o Sanskriti* edited by Gokul Chandra Das
 - *Sundarbaner Sanskriti o Pratnabhabna* by Krishnakali Mondal.
- ii. Some irregular issues of local literary magazine *Samakaler Jiyankathi*, edited by Najibul Islam Mondal, published from Joynagar-Majilpur.

D. Sub division: Diamond Harbour

1. LHC present in Bakhrahat Public Library and Free Reading Room, Bakhrahat

- i. Some books on local history of Sunderbans, Gangasagar island, and 24 Parganas (South) viz.,
 - *Adi Sundarbaner Itihas o Loksanskriti: Lonamatir Mithekatha* by Santosh Kumar Barman (Pandulipi)
 - *Sundarbaner Itihas* by A.F.M. Abdul Jalil, *Sagardwip* by Jagannath Maity
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Pargana Samagra* by Mahadeb Guriya (Pandulipi)
 - *Dakshin Banglar Natun Pratnasthal* by Krishnakali Mondal (Naba Chalandika)
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Pargana Anchalik Itihaser Upokaran* by Krishnakali Mondal (Naba Chalandika)
- ii. Some irregular leaflets of *Bakhrahat Anchalik Loksanskriti Parishad*.
- iii. Some photographs and paintings of patriots of Swadesi Movement of Bengal.

2. LHC present in R.K.M. Vivek Bharati Patha Bhaban Subdivisional Library, Sarisha

The Librarian couldn't display any LHM in the library.

3. LHC present in Stalin Einstein Satabarshiki Smarak Pathagar, Diamond Harbour

- i. Some books on the local history of Sunderbans and 24 Parganas (South) viz.,
 - *Adi Sundarbaner Itihas o Loksanskriti: Lonamatir Mithekatha* by Santosh Kumar Barman (Pandulipi)

- *Dakshinbanga Janasanskriti: Bhasa o Itihas Bichitra* (Part-1) by Bimalendu Halder (Chaturtha Duniya)
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Parganar Itibritta* by Kamal Chowdhury (Model Publishing House).
- ii. Several irregular souvenirs of Diamond Harbour Annual Book Fair Committee

4. LHC present in Karanjali Unnati Bidhayani Pathagar, Karanjali

- The library found closed.

E. Subdivision – Kakdwip

1. LHC present in Sagar Town Library, Sagar Island

- i. Some books on the local history of Sundarban, Gangasagar Island, and 24 Parganas (South) viz.
 - *Adi Sundarbaner Itihas o Loksanskriti: Lonamatir Mithekatha* by Santosh Kumar Barman (Pandulipi)
 - *Sagar Dwip* by Jagannath Maity
 - *Dakshin Chabbish Pargana Samagra* by Mahadeb Guriya (Pandulipi)
- ii. Some leaflets of local Harinbari Sporting Club.
- iii. Some irregular souvenirs of nearby Sagar Mahavidyalaya.

Appendix IV

GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF 24 PARGANAS (SOUTH)



Mudaly Library, Metiabruz



Bandhab Library; Joynagar-Majilpur



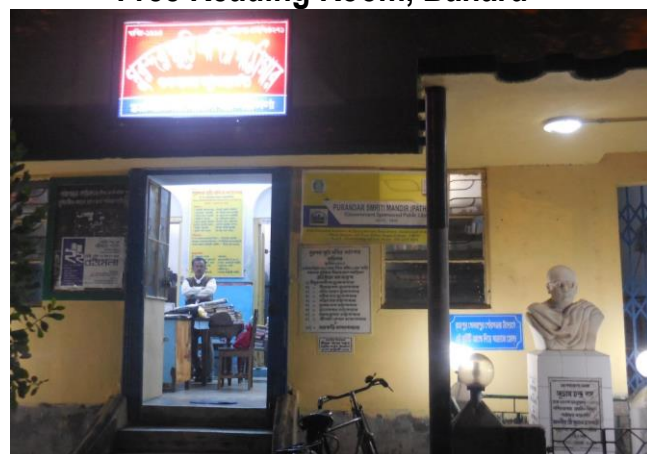
Barisha Pathagar, Barisha



**Baharu Shyamsundar Public Library and
Free Reading Room, Baharu**



**Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library,
Kotalia**



**Purandar Smriti Mandir Pathagar,
Malancha-Mahinagar**



Vivek Sangha Town Library, Jadavpur



Sagar Town Library, Sagar Island



Hemkali Library, Dakshin Gobindapur



Baruipur Town Library, Baruipur



**R.K.M. Vivek Bharati Patha Bhaban
Subdivisional Library, Sarisha**



Joychandi Pathagar, Srikrishnapur



Madarat Bandhab Pathagar, Madarat



Bakhrahat Public Library and Free Reading Room, Bakhrahat

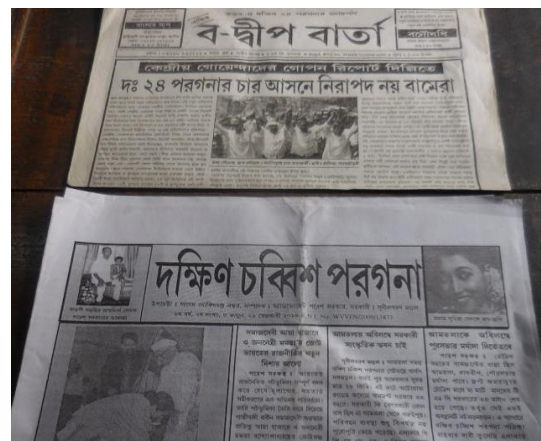
GLIMPES OF LOCAL HISTORY MATERIALS PRESENT



1.

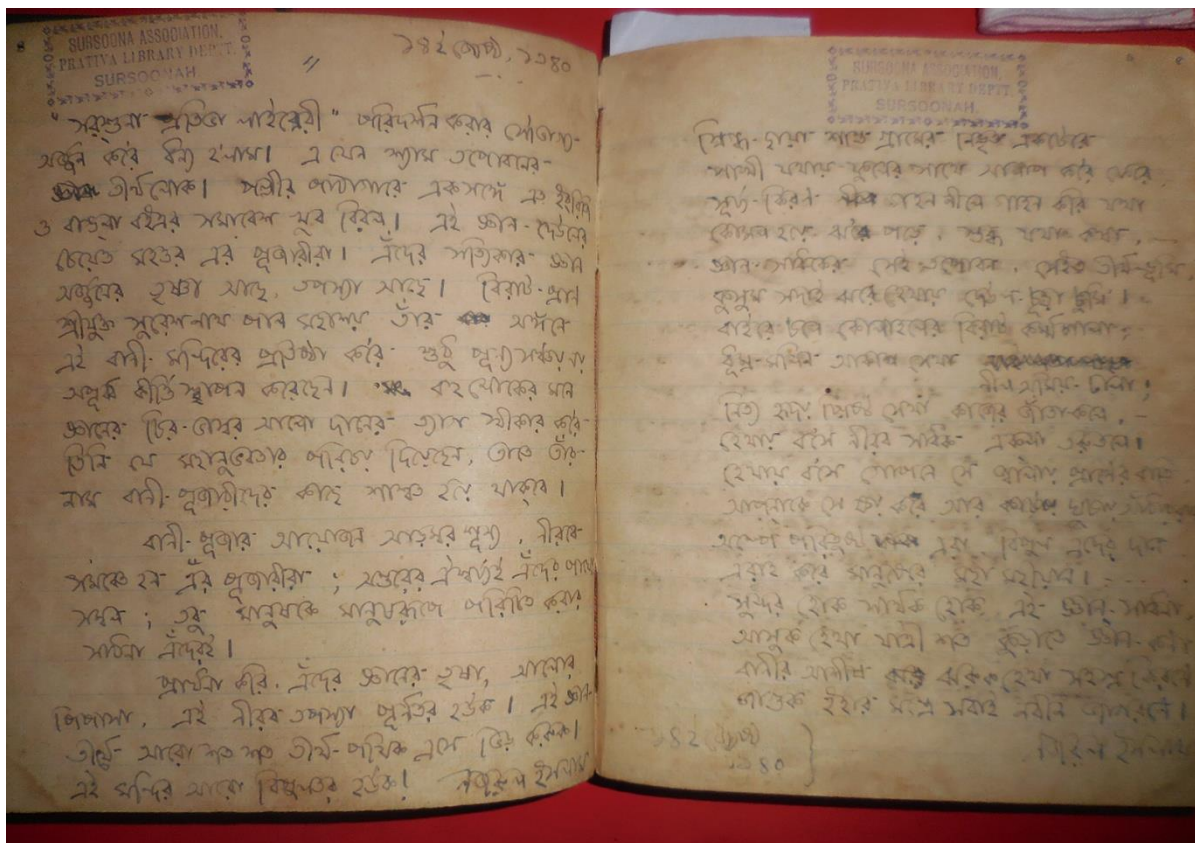


2.



3.

Local Newspaper collected in (1) Kotalia Haranath Binapani Library, (2) Mudialy Library and (3) Sagar Town Library



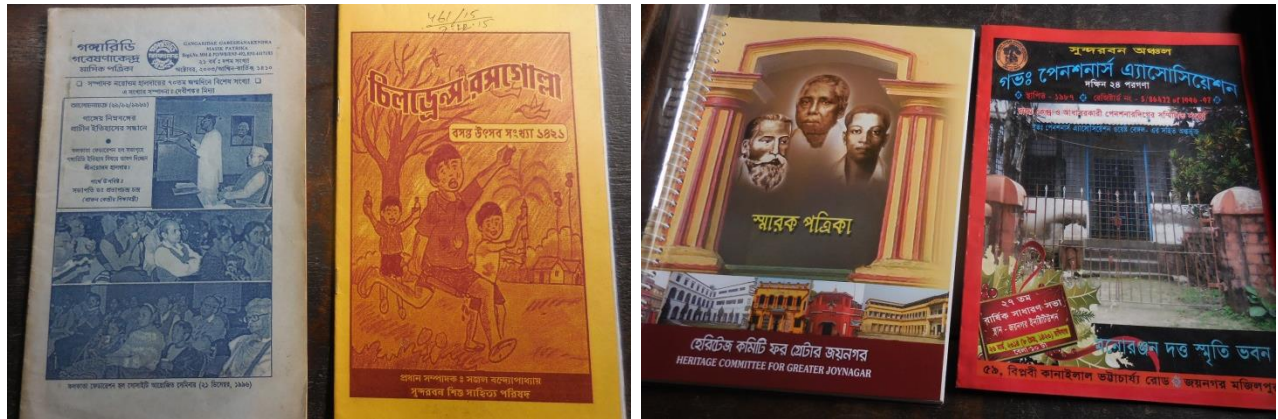
Handwriting of Kazi Najrul Islam collected at Prativa Library, Sarsuna



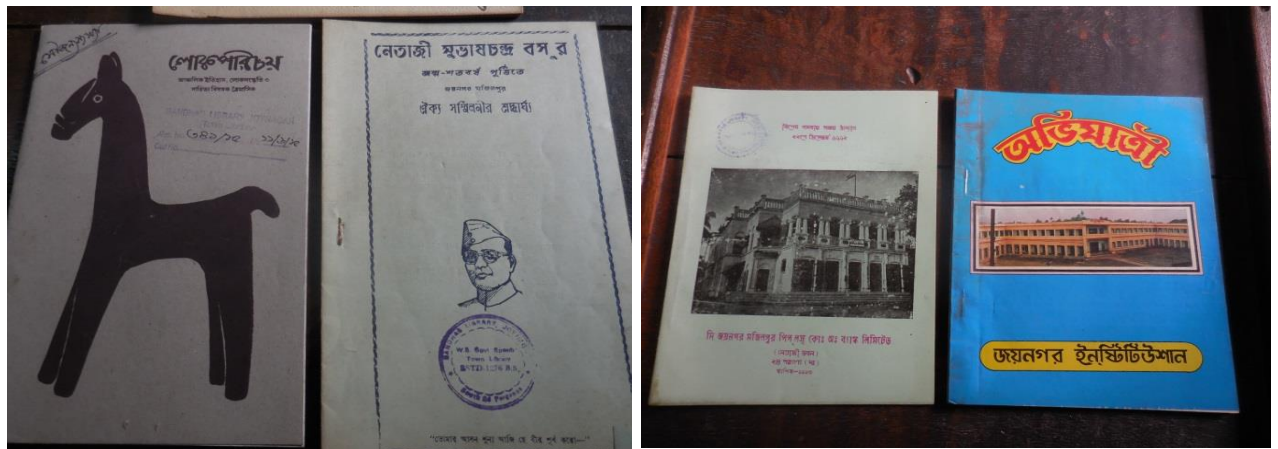
Photographs collected at Bandhab Library



Collection of "Somprakash" at Vidyabhusan Library



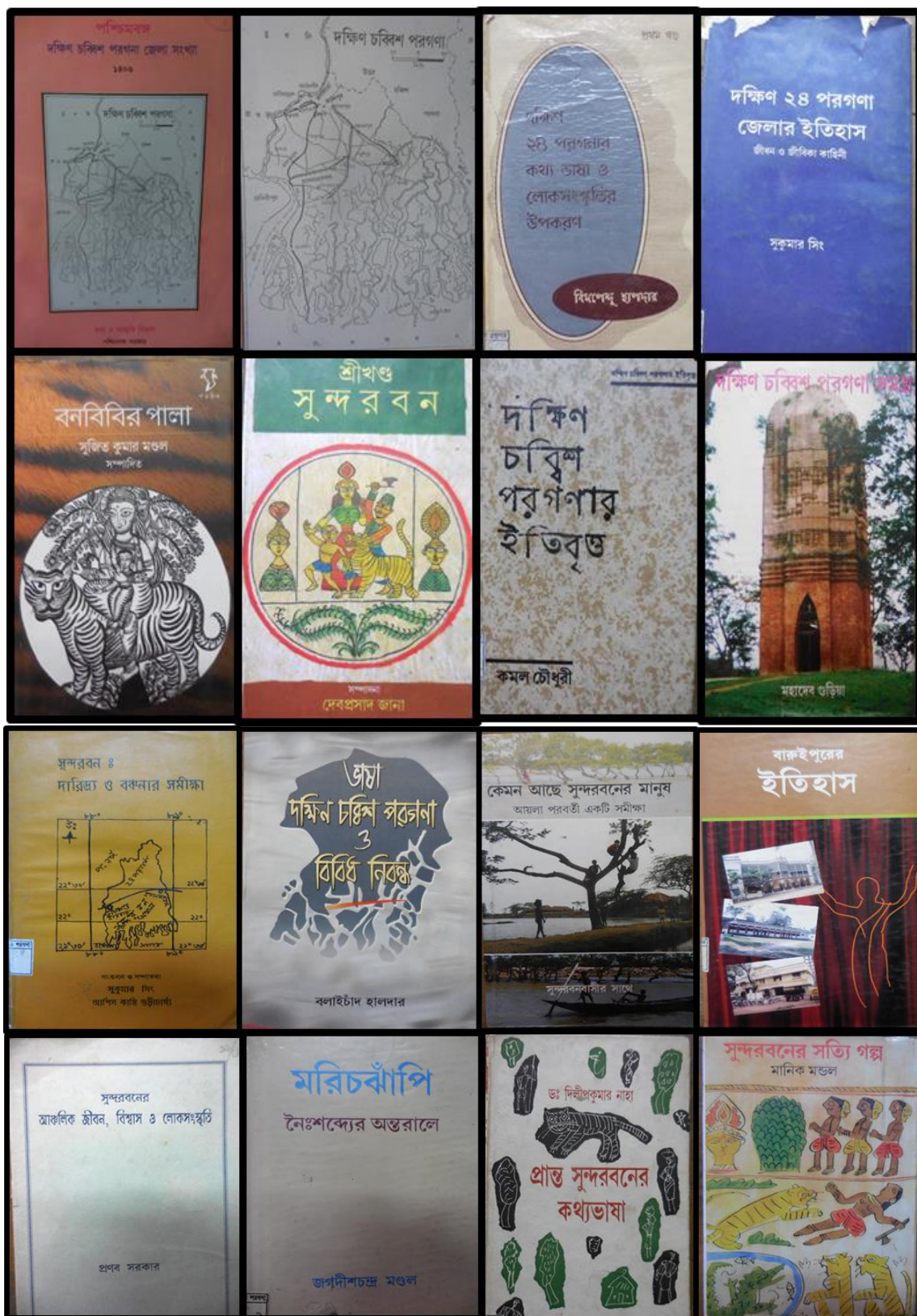
Magazines, Memoirs, Suovinirs present in the collection of Bhandhab Library, Joynagar-Majilpur



Local Buletins, Memoirs, Suovenirs present at Bandhab Library



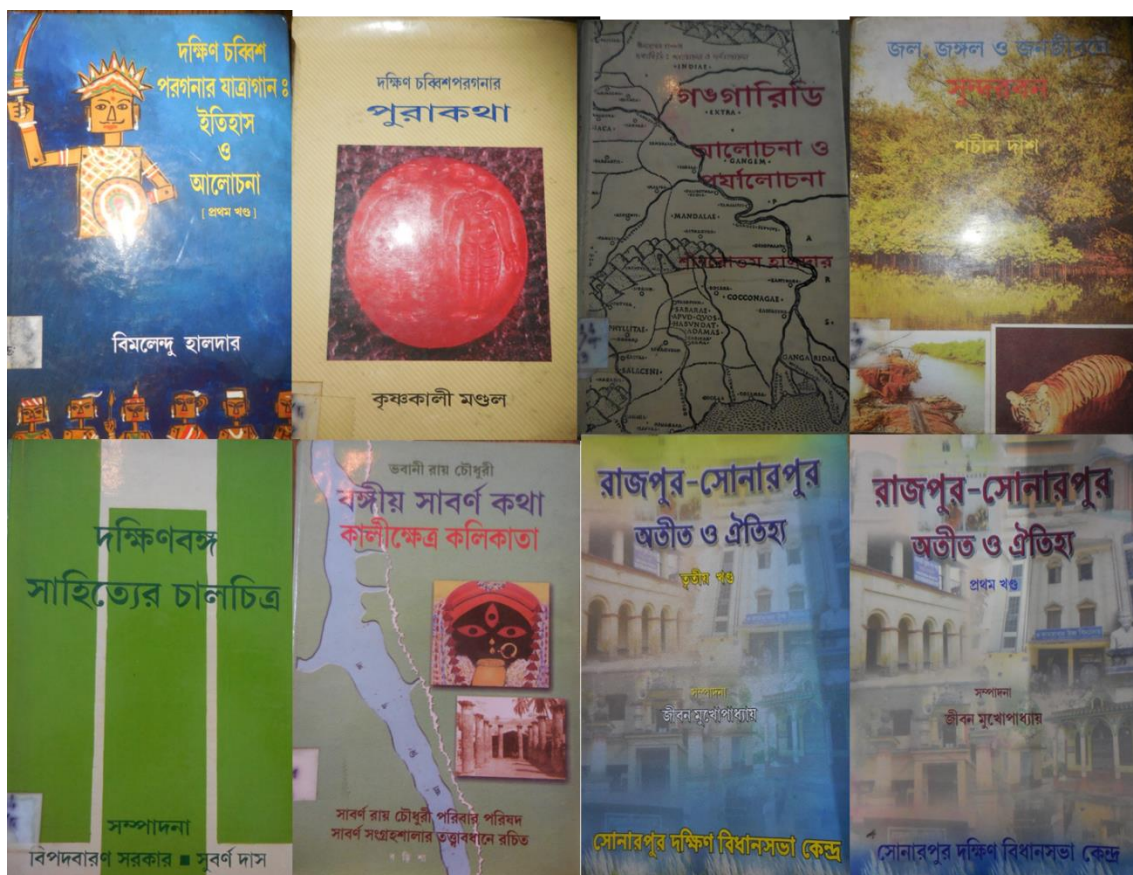
Manuscripts in the collection of Baruipur Town Library



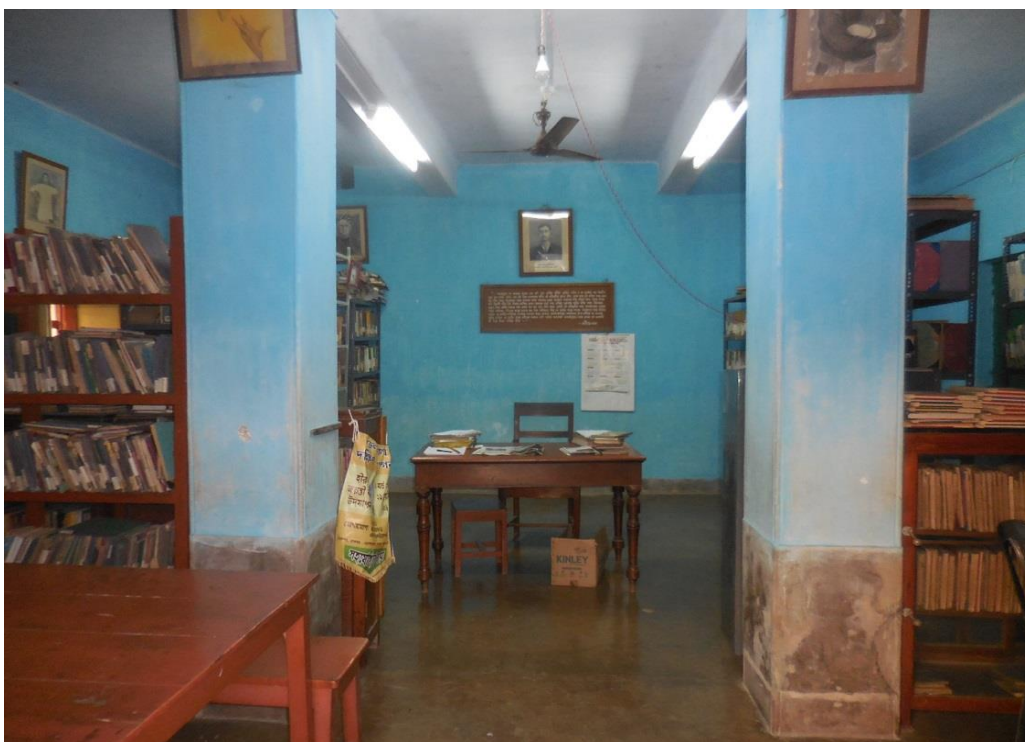
Few of the LH Books present in the collection of different PLs



Few of the LH Books present in the collection of different PLs



Few of the LH Books present in the collection of different PLs



Baharu Shyamsundar Public Library and Free Reading Room



Reading room layout, Barisha Pathagar, Barisha

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