

Library Landscape Assessment of Bangladesh





Library Landscape Assessment of Bangladesh

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Strategic Partners



Research by





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MORE
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BOOKS

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Acronyms

2G	Second generation	IPS	Instant Power Supply
3D	Three-dimensional	IT	Information Technology
3G	Third generation (e.g. cellular internet)	KII	Key Informant Interview
A2i	Access to Information	LAB	Library Association of Bangladesh
ADB	Asian Development Bank	LAN	Local Area Network
ADP	Annual Development Programme	LIS	Library Information Services
BALID	Bangladesh Association of Librarians, Information Scientists & Documentalists	MCLC	Multi-purpose Community Learning Centre
BANBEIS	Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information & Statistics	MoF	Ministry of Finance
BASIS	Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics	NHLDC	National Health Library & Documentation Centre
BC	Before Christ	OCLC	Online Computer Library Centre
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka	PC	Personal Computer
BRAC	(formerly) Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee	PMO	Prime Minister's Office
BRACU	BRAC University	POPIN	Population Information Network
BSA	Bangladesh Shishu Academy	PPPP	Public-Private-People-Partnership
BSK	Bishwo Shahitto Kendro (World Literary Centre)	RFID	Radio Frequency Identification
BUET	Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology	RTI	Right to Information
CD	Compact Disc	SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
CDL	Community Development Library	SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test or Scholastic Assessment Test
CD-ROM	Compact Disc Read-Only Memory	SFYP	Sixth Five Year Plan
DBBL	Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited	SMS	Short Message Service
DLNetSA	Digital Library Network of South Asia	SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc	SSC	Secondary School Certificate
EMK	Edward M. Kennedy	TV	Television
EWU	East West University	UDL	UGC Digital Library
EWULIBMIS	East West University Library Management Information System	UGC	University Grants Commission
FY	Fiscal Year	UISC	Union Information Service Centre
GO	Governmental Organisation	UK	United Kingdom
GoB	Government of Bangladesh	UN L-Net BD	UN Library Network in Bangladesh
GPS	Global Positioning System	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
GRE	Graduate Record Examination	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
HRD	Human Resource Development	UP	Union Parishad
IBM	International Business Machines	US	United States
ICT	Information & Communication Technology	Wi-Fi	Wireless Fidelity
ICT4D	Information and Communication Technology for Development	WMU	Western Michigan University
ICT4E	Information and Communication Technologies for Education	YPSA	Young Power in Social Action
IELTS	International English Language Testing System		
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions		
IID	Institute of Informatics and Development		
ILS	Integrated Library System		

1 US Dollar = 78 Bangladeshi Taka (as of June 2015)

Executive summary

Innovative library initiatives and their positive impact around the world have reemphasised the need for more investment in public libraries. The Government of Bangladesh has also shown renewed interest in reviving public libraries because of their importance in developing social capital, establishing knowledge communities and reviving creative learning.

In light of this, the British Council, in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh, BRAC and the Bengal Foundation, commissioned a comprehensive study – *Library Landscape Assessment of Bangladesh*. The Institute of Informatics and Development (IID) carried out the research and the study explored the information needs of the people of Bangladesh and the current Library and Information Services (LIS) provision within the country, with the ultimate aim of identifying stakeholders and the opportunities and challenges that exist in making radical improvements to the situation.

While the number of library users is increasing, only certain groups are contributing to this change

Among the librarians surveyed, 84 per cent observed a rising trend in library use. Students represent 72 per cent of the library users and 65 per cent of the users have graduated from high school. However, only 6 per cent of household respondents said that they use libraries while 26 per cent use various e-centres that target users with diverse levels of education and occupation.

People seek information, but not from the libraries

The study revealed that people seek information regarding health, government services, education, disaster preparedness, financial services, employment, skills development and government

safety net programmes. However, only 1 to 2 per cent of respondents find such information in libraries.

Libraries are highly valued

Almost everyone who goes to a library thinks that libraries are highly valuable for society. Most of the women users believe libraries have empowered them by improving decision making capacity (71 per cent), developing skills (74 per cent) and helping in finding better jobs (69 per cent).

The state of building and infrastructure need improvement

About 48 per cent of the libraries have dedicated reading rooms, 63 per cent have separate spaces for computer and ICT services and one-third have separate meeting rooms and halls. Toilets are missing in 44 per cent of the surveyed libraries. Among the libraries which have toilets, 41 per cent are unusable and only 37 per cent have separate toilets for female users.

Library resources are inadequate

According to 52 per cent of librarians, printed reading materials are insufficient. About 78 per cent of library users are dissatisfied with the lack of digital resources. Inter-library resource sharing is mostly absent in Bangladesh.

The study also showed that 78 per cent of libraries have computers, although only 44 per cent of them have computers for public use. About 51 per cent of libraries and 98 per cent of e-centres have internet connections.

Services

The study found that libraries usually do not meet the cultural needs of people. Only 9 per cent of

government libraries show movies and documentary films, and merely 1 per cent use their space for organising seminars or meetings.

Children-specific facilities are present in about 59 per cent of libraries. Most libraries do not provide facilities for people with special needs or special facilities for women.

Demand for multipurpose use of library is high

Users mostly demand reading materials that include literature, newspapers, religious books, historical or politics related books, etc. Users also see computers (93 per cent), internet (84 per cent), photocopy machines (83 per cent), printers (79 per cent) and scanners (73 per cent) as the most important resources for a library.

Library users think that libraries can be used for various competitions (45 per cent), training, workshop or classes (43 per cent) and art exhibitions (40 per cent). Librarians also opined that to best serve as a multipurpose library, they need computer facilities (86 per cent), internet connectivity (85 per cent), community services (64 per cent) and food services (60 per cent) within library premises.

Key challenges

Bangladesh lacks a legal framework for governing the library sector. Public libraries in Bangladesh do however, exhibit some characteristics in common with libraries across the world— i.e. a tendency to concentrate on traditional book lending services, a lack of public investment and a failure to adapt to the changing world of information services.

Along with insufficient space, resources and backup power supply, the dearth of ICT facilities is also a serious challenge for libraries.

Over 59 per cent of librarians expressed dissatisfaction with annual budgets for libraries. On the other hand, about 25 per cent of librarians said a lack of trained staff is a constraint. The majority of librarians think that a lack of public awareness is a hindrance to the wider outreach of library services.

Vision for libraries in Bangladesh

The future libraries of Bangladesh need to be—

For the people: targeting beyond the educated middle-class with diversified services

ICT integrated: to make library services and management efficient

Managed by motivated librarians: with better training, salaries and community engagement

Gender sensitive: with safe, separate toilets and other gender-specific facilities

Demand driven: services designed according to public demand

Modern infrastructure: with innovative use of space as multipurpose centres

Mainstreamed: integrated and mainstreamed into the government's education and ICT campaigns.

These research findings were presented with all key stakeholders in a high profile symposium, *A New Vision for Libraries in Bangladesh: Transforming Access to Digital Information*, held on 12-13 May 2015. Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs, Mr. Asaduzzaman Noor, MP attended as Chief Guest and Mark Clayton, Deputy British High Commissioner, attended as Special Guest. The event was hosted by Barbara Wickham, Director, British Council, Bangladesh. A brief report of the symposium is attached with this report in Annex 1.

Introduction



“ Bangladesh is working hard to improve access across the country to the reliable information its citizens want and need. The public library network has the potential to play an important role in meeting these diverse information needs. The traditional role of libraries is changing from quiet, sometimes dusty, often quite empty, reading rooms to community centres that provide a focus for community activities, centres that offer opportunities for personal and professional development as well as timely information to local businesses. Bangladesh is no different in having to reimagine how its library network can better meet the needs of its people. The key is the right investment, not only investment in bringing the digital world into the libraries but also investment in helping librarians understand their changing role and important investment in community awareness of the tremendous potential their library has in providing knowledge and opportunities. What public libraries of the future will be like is something we should be imagining and planning for now. How do we marry the traditional library offer with the ever growing demand for the up to date information and knowledge that digital resources provide? That's the library of the future.

Barbara Wickham
Director
British Council Bangladesh



Globally and regionally, the British Council have extensive experience of managing substantial LIS services and programmes. Today, there are British Council libraries in Dhaka and Chittagong, with more library services planned to open in Sylhet in 2016 with a collection of 85,000 e-books and 14,000 e-journals.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and rationale of the study

The global response towards the future of libraries in the changing landscape of the digital world has been a mixed one, with both apprehension and optimism, apparent in equal measure. On one hand, public interest has shifted from the *real* world to the *virtual* world in terms of knowledge, entertainment and community. On the other, resource constraints in a less developed country like Bangladesh have long kept libraries outside public investment priorities. Public libraries, a long-established source of knowledge, have been left behind in government and even non-government initiatives undertaken to promote access and right to information through legal and technological reforms.

However, innovative library initiatives and their positive impact around the world have reemphasised the need for more investment in public libraries. The Government of Bangladesh has also shown renewed interest in reviving public libraries, given their importance in developing social capital, establishing knowledge communities and restoring creative learning. The British Council has formed a consortium with the Government of Bangladesh, BRAC and Bengal Foundation to work together for the advancement of Bangladesh's public libraries. This study was commissioned by the Consortium to assess the existing status of Library and Information Services (LIS) as well as to understand public demands and expectations from libraries. The Institute of Informatics and Development (IID) carried out the research and the analysis of the study.



1.2 Objectives of the study

The study assesses the current LIS landscape to identify the opportunities and challenges for improving public libraries in Bangladesh. The aims are: to evaluate the current status of LIS; to understand the goal for future libraries; to identify the challenges; and finally to set actions needed to reach that goal. To achieve these aims, the specific objectives of the study are:

a. To conduct research into the information needs of the people of Bangladesh:

to understand how people are accessing the information they need; to assess the current effectiveness of public libraries and information centres in providing public access to meet those needs; to assess current perceptions of public libraries; and to identify what is needed to improve the libraries.

b. To assess the current state and capacity of LIS in Bangladesh:

specifically, to assess the effectiveness of library staff, infrastructure and review the capacity of LIS in facilitating public access; understand government and national policy and prioritisation for effecting improvements; and to identify the opportunities for (and barriers to) building a national programme to improve LIS provision in Bangladesh.

c. To assess the current availability of ICTs to support access to information in LIS:

to survey government and non-government initiatives for ICT development, connectivity and access to information through LIS; and to indicate prospects for further expansion of public access to information services.



Methodology



“We want to change the concept of the library. A library should be a living thing where people should come for many things, many services. It will be a centre of education, culture, and digital information.”

Mr. Asaduzzaman Noor MP
Honourable Minister for
Cultural Affairs
Government of Bangladesh



The British Council multipurpose library space was turned into a space for discussion on 'The Importance of the Arts in Developing Countries, including Bangladesh' with key stakeholders.

2 Methodology

2.1 Scope of LIS

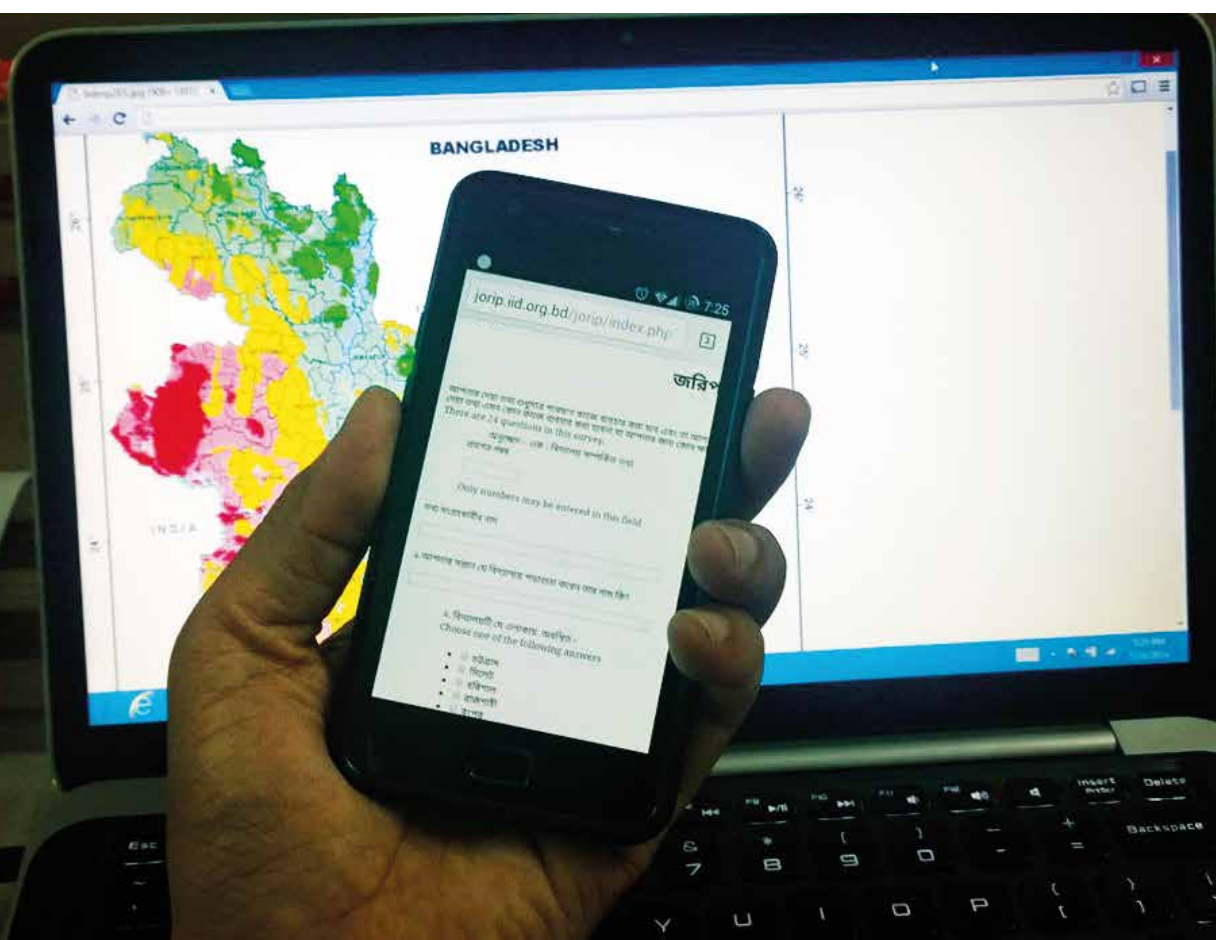
The study focuses on public libraries. However, to take lessons from a wide range of public information sources, the definition of LIS for this study goes beyond the 68 government public libraries that exist in Bangladesh. This study uses a definition of LIS that includes public venues for accessing books and other print and digital content, whether physically or virtually. Thus, venues explored in this study include government as well as community, private and non-government organisation (NGO) run public libraries, and e-centres including information centres, cybercafés and rural telecentres.

2.2 Research design and methodology

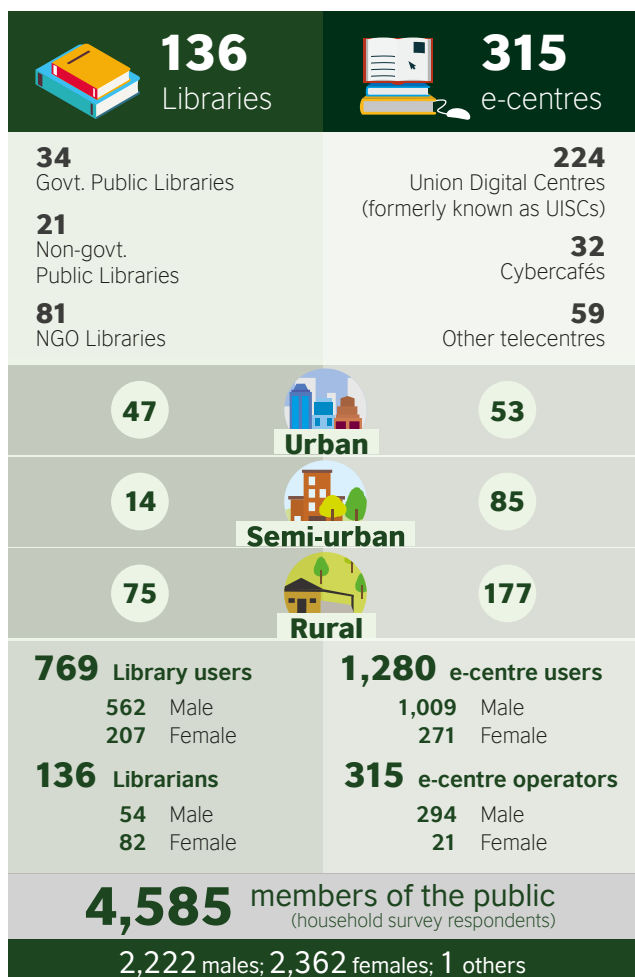
This study has undertaken a multifaceted yet inter-connected research approach using various complementary methods including desk research, key informant interviews, exploratory research, field surveys, online surveys and in-depth case-studies.

Desk research was used to explore government policy documents and scholarly literature on LIS with a view to identifying existing knowledge gaps and setting up the context of the study. Consultation through **key informant interviews (KIIs)** with policymakers, academics, experts, librarians, and library activists provided professional and critical insights into the policies and practices within the LIS landscape of Bangladesh. People's information needs and information seeking behaviour were explored through the **exploratory research** method. A **field survey** was administered among the library and e-centre officials, users and general citizens. These were conducted face-to-face. In addition, an **online survey** was initiated at www.obhimat.com/lis to create public awareness about the study. **Case studies** were also prepared on selected libraries.

A detailed methodology is presented in Annex 2.



Key facts about the field survey



A Geospatial Survey

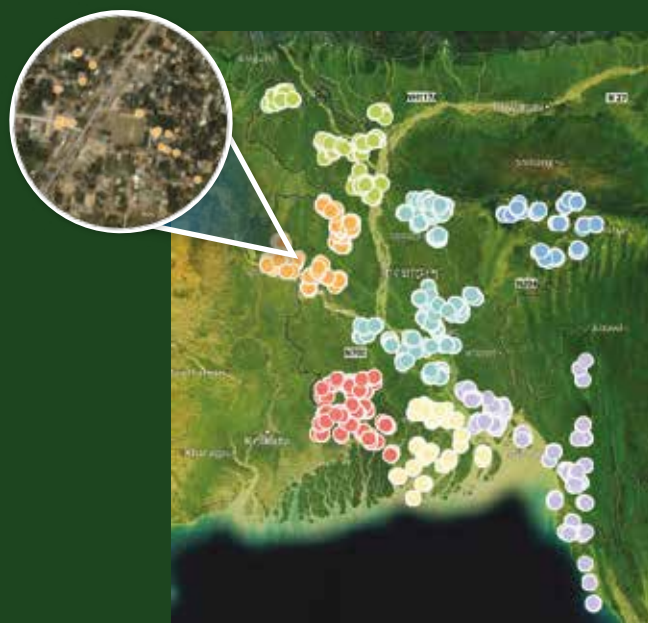
The survey was conducted with GPS-enabled tablet computers with real-time online data update. Some of the benefits to this method were:

Authenticity: Geo-location monitoring GPS-enabled tablets ensured enumerators' actual presence in the venues and households.

Error free data: Survey software omitted common and logical errors that happen during data-input, compilation and editing of paper-based survey.

Geospatial analysis: Mapping geo-tagged data opened vast potentials of geospatial analysis.

Enabling micro-level analysis: Geo-tagged data makes it easier to produce region-specific reports, and can provide venue-specific findings for development programmes.



Mapped data can be zoomed to view information and responses of individual respondents

Library Landscape of Bangladesh



“

The library is a kind of educational institution where your thinking, your perspective, and your sensibilities are broadened through exposure to a larger world of thought.

There is a need to ensure the opportunity for access to all kinds of knowledge is sourced in a library.

Sir Fazle Hasan Abed KCMG
Founder and Chairperson
BRAC

”



The British Council multipurpose library space was transformed into a theatre space for the performance of experimental musical theatre production Mohajoner Nao (The Boat of Infinity).

3 Library Landscape of Bangladesh

3.1 History and background

Bangladesh has a rich history of information archiving dating back to the third century BC where religious places called Bihars played a key role in preserving knowledge in the form of palm leaf scrolls and documents, bark of trees, parchment vellum and burnt clay plates. The first royal library was established by the Hossain Shahi dynasty during the medieval age. One of the first public libraries in this region was established in Calcutta. It was a private initiative, although nowadays the commonly-held idea of a public library entails those which are established and funded by the government (Islam 2011). Pre independence Bangladesh started off with four public libraries in 1854 - Woodburn Public Library in Bogra, Jessore Public Library, Barisal Public Library and Rangpur Public Library (Khan 1984; Shuva & Akter 2012), which were followed by a number of libraries established between 1882 and 1901.¹ Three public libraries were established during the Pakistan era (1947-1971) including the Central Public Library of Dhaka in 1954, which became operational from 1958.

The *Educational Reform Commission* of 1957 emphasised that libraries should be promoted as *people's universities*, though during that time actual library development in this respect moved at a very slow pace. During the post-liberation period (after 1971), Bangladesh put high importance on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) manifesto and reforms were initiated as part of the *First Five Year Plan 1973-78*, which included a library system reorganisation plan. Since then, libraries of Bangladesh have advanced significantly, mostly through NGO and private initiatives with policy support from the government.

Public libraries in Bangladesh do however, exhibit some characteristics in common with libraries across the world— i.e. a tendency to concentrate on traditional book lending services, a lack of public investment and a failure to adapt to the changing world of information services. A lack of knowledge of technological developments has posed a threat to the installation or development of ICT facilities in public libraries (Islam & Islam 2007). Digitisation has been mostly confined to the cataloguing of library content. Very little progress was observed in the application of ICT in libraries (Ahmed, Munshi & Ahmed 1997). In spite of this, many library and information centres are now taking initiatives towards maintaining digital contents and becoming part of the global library resource pool through affiliations with library consortia. In the case of university libraries, the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh has taken initiatives for providing digital resources to the universities through forming a consortium (University Grants Commission 2015).

The Bangladesh Government has taken the initiative of providing information services throughout the country as part of its *Vision 2021* and the campaign for a *Digital Bangladesh*. Union Digital Centres, formerly known as Union Information and Service Centre (UISCs), have been established, through the Access to Information (A2i) programme of the Prime Minister's Office, in 4,547 unions, enabling public access to information and government services. E-service centres have also been established at all district headquarters. Currently, the post office network is also under development to serve as information and e-service centres.

Public libraries, in line with the modern global concept of a library, play a central role in this

¹ These include the public libraries of Sirajgonj (1882), Rajshahi (1884), Comilla (1885), Pabna (1890), Noakhali (1901), Khulna (1897), Natore (1901) and a few more in Dhaka (Ahmed, 1998, p. 39). Later, public libraries were established in Chittagong (1904), Cox's Bazaar (1906), Munshiganj (1908), Rangpur (1909), Kishoreganj (1909), Kushtia (1954), Faridpur (1914), Khulna (1914), Dinajpur (1930) and Mymensingh (1930) and all of these libraries are in operation to date reflecting their consistently important role in the changing society.

Box 1: A typology of public libraries in Bangladesh

Three main types of public libraries are currently operating in Bangladesh:

- **Government public libraries** are initiated, operated and maintained by the government;
- **Non-government public libraries** are established, owned and operated under private ownership, which may or may not receive support from the government. These libraries include a diverse range of initiatives such as public libraries, established and operated by individuals and community libraries that are mostly funded through community donations.
- **NGO operated public libraries** are established by NGOs and development partners. Unlike non-government public libraries, mentioned earlier in this typology, NGO operated public libraries are established, and maintained by a registered non-government entity such as NGO or other

national or international development partner organisations. While non-government public libraries are highly prone to closing down due to lack of support and interest of the owner(s), NGO operated libraries are more sustainable as they are operated under a business plan (whether for profit or non-profit) of the organisation. Examples of such NGO operated libraries are BRAC Gonokendra Pathagar, Ganokendra by Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Rural Information Resource Centres (established by Community Development Library, CDL).

There are also academic libraries, institutional libraries or special libraries that are accessible only to certain types of users i.e. not open for all members of the community, and not considered as public libraries and therefore are excluded from this typology. Table 1 presents the number of different types of public libraries in Bangladesh.

Table 1: Different types of libraries in Bangladesh²

Government Public Libraries	68
Central Public Library	1
Divisional Government Public Libraries	5
District Government Public Libraries	58
Branch Libraries	4
Non-Government Public Libraries	1,603
NGO operated Libraries	3,596
BRAC Gonokendra Pathagar	2,725
Rural Information Resource Centres (established by Community Development Library, CDL)	26
Ganokendro (established by Dhaka Ahsania Mission)	845

Source: *Library Directory, 2014, Bangladesh National Book Centre.*

campaign for information services. However, inadequate allocation of financial resources (Chowdhury, et al, 2011), weak ICT Infrastructure, and lack of trained librarians and information service providers (Alam 2012), lack of collection, management, preservation and archiving facilities, and interoperability (Rahman 2012) have been identified as major barriers to library

modernisation in Bangladesh.

3.2 Governance and budgetary framework for public libraries in Bangladesh

3.2.1 Policy and legal framework

The need for policy and legal support to realise the mission, strategic plan and betterment of the

² The hierarchy of administrative division of Bangladesh encompasses eight divisions. Each division consists of several districts. Each of the districts is subdivided into upazilas (sub-districts) or thanas which are further subdivided into unions.

Box 2: A typology of e-centres in Bangladesh

E-centres are government or privately owned information centres that provide information services along with various ICT facilities that people require in their daily life. In most cases, e-centres are business ventures and income from those services is key to their sustainability. For the purpose of this study, three types of e-centre have been considered:

a. **Telecentres** are any public access venue, either under public or private entrepreneurship, where people can have access to ICT services. Most telecentres are in rural areas and provide assisted services to users.

b. **Cybercafés** are usually privately owned for-profit ventures that provide public access to computer, internet and other ICT services. Cybercafés in Bangladesh are usually urban. A key difference

between a telecentre and a cybercafé is that unlike a telecentre, a cybercafé usually does not provide assisted services.

c. **Union Information and Service Centres**

(UISC) or Union Digital Centres are government initiated one-stop centres that provide information and services related to government, livelihood and other services like job search support, photocopying, printing, scanning, etc. One UISC is located in each of the 4,547 Union Parishads, the lowest tier of local government. They operate under 'Public-Private-People' Partnership (PPPP). UISCs are run by local entrepreneurs, hosted by the Union Parishad and supported by central administration.

services of public libraries is a need felt globally. The employment of legislative frameworks by state or local governments to ensure that people are able to benefit from libraries is an established practice.³ Global development partners like UNESCO, in line with its declaration of "*public libraries as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare...*", also call for designing national and international level policies to place public libraries in a better position to serve the knowledge and cultural needs of all sections of the community.⁴

The governance of public libraries in Bangladesh is very weakly linked with the policy framework of the country. Despite the government's willingness to modernise the information services of the country, the role of the public library as a hub for information services is yet to be recognised. For a complete appraisal of the status of public

libraries and exploration of a roadmap to modernise the library landscape of Bangladesh, it is essential to scrutinise the government's plans, pledges and the policy framework that regulates public libraries.

The *National Library Policy 2001*⁵ is the first, and till now, the only policy for governing the libraries in Bangladesh. Recognising the role of public libraries in spreading education, developing human resources, and meeting the information needs of people from all segments of the society, the Policy provides guidelines for better operation and management of libraries as well as the modernisation of library services. The noteworthy features of the policy are briefly presented in Box 3. However, no legal framework has yet been enacted to enforce implementation of the Policy and govern the libraries.

³ Legal provisions recognising and prioritising the role of public libraries as collectors, preservers and distributors of recorded knowledge and information date back centuries. A set of laws passed by the Maryland Assembly in 1696 were among the first legislative instruments to establish, operate and maintain libraries. However, the British Public Library Act of 1850 is considered to be the forefather of all of the legislative documents that came out later across the world (Nair 1993, Campbell 1999).

⁴ The Public Library Manifesto was first published by UNESCO in 1949. It was further revised by IFLA in 1972 and the last revised version was adopted by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Council for the General Information Program in 1994.

⁵ Following the formation of a committee on 4th September 1997 (proclamation sha4/gogro-154/97/299), a draft National Library Policy was presented and passed in the cabinet meeting on 28th May of 2001.

Until 2001, there was no national policy guideline for the governance of public libraries; however, the *National Book Centre Act, 1995* (Act no. XXVII of Bangladesh Extraordinary Gazette) and the *National Archives Ordinance, 1983* are probably the two most important policy documents providing guidelines regarding the publication and distribution of resources and reading materials among public libraries. The *Nazrul Institute Ordinance, 1984* and the *Bangla Academy Ordinance, 1978* provided guidelines for the establishment and operation of specialised libraries for those institutions.

Box 3: Salient features of the National Library Policy 2001

- Modernise and enrich the resources, services and security of the libraries involving both public and private sectors in this effort
- Expand the library network to equip every citizen with a library within 1 mile of his/her residence
- Establish libraries in academic and religious institutions to promote reading habits
- Preserve rare documents
- Employ trained professionals in library operation and management
- Enact separate laws for national libraries and public libraries
- Develop a regulatory system to coordinate and monitor private libraries

Despite the insufficient legal or policy framework for the libraries, the government's willingness to develop public libraries can be visible through its various planning documents. The *National Education Policy 2010* recognises the importance of libraries for ensuring quality education, and emphasises on establishing modern libraries in academic institutions. Guidelines are also provided for the establishment of public libraries

at districts, cities, municipalities, upazilas and at union headquarters. The formation of a statutory and effective library council, involving the line ministries, i.e. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Local Government Division, is highly emphasised in the policy for holding the government responsible for policy making and coordinating and undertaking development programmes.

Vision 2021 - the base of the incumbent government's election manifesto, and *Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2010-2021* - the long-term planning document of the government - emphasised the need for improving library services to ensure quality of education. The *Sixth Five Year Plan (SFYP)* also stretches over development of the education sector through establishment of a modern library network system at national level. The SFYP also calls for enacting legal instruments for governing national and public libraries to ensure that they are able to meet the educational, cultural, recreational, and information needs of people from all walks of life.

Meanwhile, through the flagship campaign of Digital Bangladesh, the government has attempted to make public services available on people's doorsteps through e-services and has introduced e-governance to ensure transparency. Under the Access to Information (A2i) programme, e-service centres were established in all of the 64 district centres and 4,526 union centres. Moreover, 178 post offices are undergoing transformation to serve as e-centres.

Tele-density and internet penetration have increased while internet connection technology has been improved.⁶ The internet network has been expanded up to upazila level and a regional network among SAARC countries is under development. The regulatory authorities for telecommunications and electronic mass media

⁶ About 76 per cent of the mass population own mobile phones. About 11 per cent of the population have smartphones and the same percentage of people are now using internet (PEW Research Center 2015).

⁷ For more details on development in ICT sector and related services, consult Digital Bangladesh Concept note (A2i), and Progress towards Digital Bangladesh (MoF).

have been strengthened.⁷ The government has formulated the *ICT Policy 2009* to focus on the effective use of ICT for social development and to ensure access to information for all. The policy also provides guidelines for developing infrastructural facilities to assist the goals of Digital Bangladesh.

Unfortunately, the developments in ICT and information services have bypassed the potential of public libraries as one-stop hubs for knowledge and information services. A supportive policy environment is essential to make effective use of public libraries for this purpose. Towards this goal, the governance framework of public libraries and scope for inter-ministry as well as public-private collaboration need to be explored.

3.2.2 Governance framework

The Department of Public Libraries under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs is the governing and regulatory authority of libraries in Bangladesh. The National Book Centre and the Department of Archives and Libraries under the same ministry are also involved in terms of publication and distribution of library resources.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education have obvious interest given the role of libraries in ensuring quality education. The Ministry of Religious Affairs also holds the responsibility of libraries based in religious institutions.

Digitisation and automation of public libraries will need the active involvement of the ICT Division

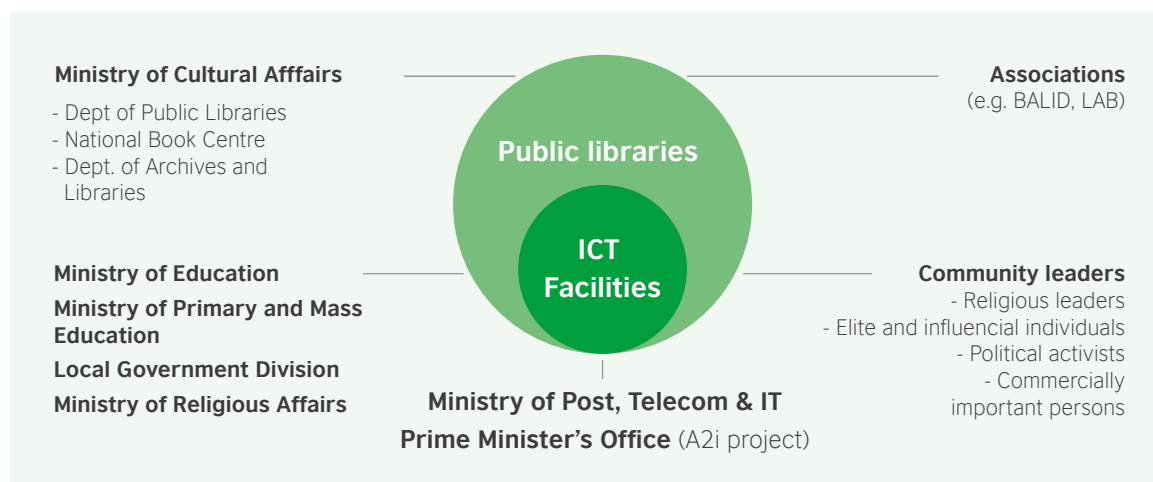
Case Study 1: Union Digital Centre

Ramchandrapur Union Digital Centre (former Union Information Service Centre), situated in Gaibandha sadar upazila, was established in 2010. This centre is funded by both individual assistance and government donations. The centre is located by the main road with good visibility of its signboard and entrance. It has a total seating capacity of 10 with about 20 visitors on daily basis. The Centre has 2 computers with 2G internet connection. The top three most popular and highest earning services provided by the centre are e-mail, photocopying and birth registrations. The centre

offers other services including printing, scanning, capturing photos, passport/visa assistance, career information, examination results checking, computer training, providing government forms, etc. Among the three staff in the centre, one is female. The operator and staff are trained in hardware skills, operating systems, internet operations, graphic design and photo services. The centre has a ramp for easy maneuvering of people with special needs. The centre has a general electricity connection, and maintains alternate support from IPS to deal with power outages.



Two typical Digital Centres at Sylhet and Cox's Bazar. Photo taken by enumerators during the survey.

Figure 1: Governance framework for public libraries

under the Minister of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology. The Access to Information (A2i) programme under the Prime Minister's Office is the focal point for implementing information service access points (e.g. UISCs and other public e-centres) and other ICT driven e-service and e-governance solutions. Local government is also playing a collaborative role in this initiative. UISCs are hosted by Union Parishads (UPs) and supported by central administration. Many of the UISCs are operating in a shared space with UP offices. Diversifying the role of future public libraries would need close collaboration among all these government institutions.

The associations of library professionals such as Bangladesh Association of Librarians, Information Scientists and Documentalists (BALID) and Library Association of Bangladesh (LAB) also play a vital role in the LIS landscape.

Finally, community leaders, religious leaders, elite and influential individuals, political activists and commercially important persons of the community can play a significant role in mobilising funds or operating public library services.

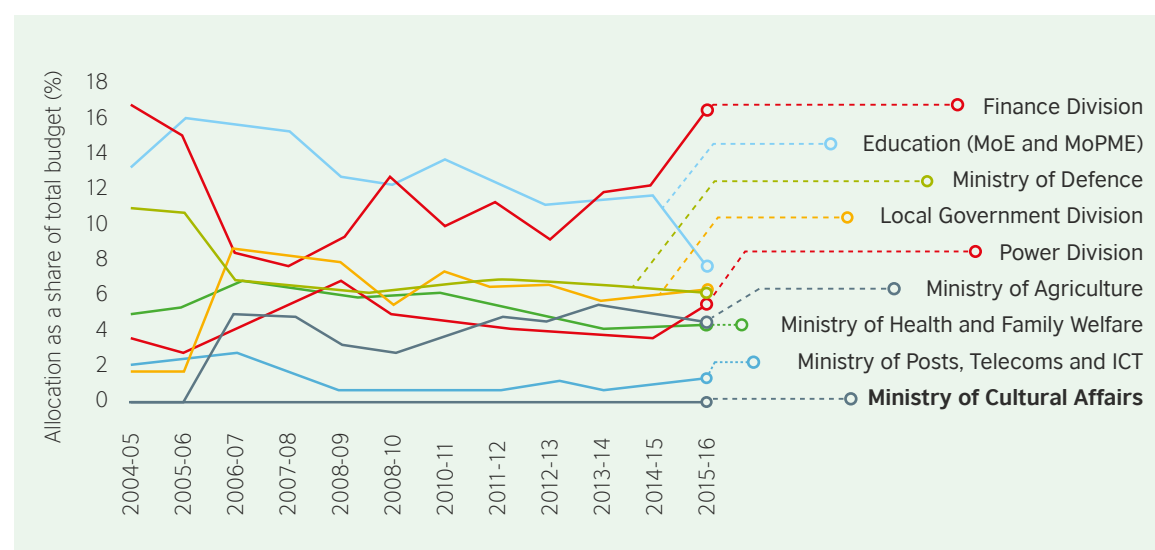
3.2.3 National budgetary framework for libraries

Information services have been gaining in importance and resource flow globally.

Unfortunately, in poorer countries like Bangladesh, resource constraints have compelled successive governments to prioritise investment in physical infrastructure, industry, energy or key social issues such as education and health, which are ostensibly more directly linked to mainstream socio-economic development. The key role of libraries and information services is not strongly perceived. Despite the growing recognition of the information services as the key driver of a modern society, investment in information infrastructure remains at low level in these countries (Heitzman 1990).

The national budget is one of the key channels through which the government allocates resources to realise its development priorities and pledges. A trend analysis of budgetary allocations for different ministries as a share of total budget reveals that sectors such as defence, local government, agriculture, education, health and power have traditionally received the highest shares of resources over the last decade (Figure 2), whereas ministries that deal with information services (e.g. Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Information and Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology) have remained at the lowest levels, in terms of share of total allocated resources.

Nevertheless, the government has the unequivocal intention of building a modern and equal society facilitated by ICT services at all

Figure 2: Allocation trend of selected ministries as a share of total budget

Source: Based on data from Ministry of Finance (MoF).

stages of life. The flagship campaign of *Digital Bangladesh* has certainly brought information services to centre stage. With the versatile use of ICT and information services, the government aims to bring public services to people's doorsteps. Along with reinforcing those commitments through the necessary policy, legal and regulatory supports,⁸ the government has made efforts to realise them through investment in programmes to develop information infrastructure and service facilities.⁹ Public investment in developing the ICT sector has increased from BDT 2.35 billion in 2009-10 to BDT 3.94 billion in 2014-15.^{10, 11}

By comparison, the allocation scenario for the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and its associated agencies such as Directorate of Archives and

Libraries, Department of Public Libraries and National Book Centre, which are designated for library governance, is unimpressive (Figure 2). The budget allocation for the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in FY2015-16 was merely 0.1 per cent of the total national budget.

Non-development budgets (earmarking regular expenditure such as salary and allowances, and other maintenances) for these government bodies have increased minimally over the years. Allocations for development projects are also frustratingly low (Table 2).

Heitzman (1990) stated that during the late 1980s, resource-constrained South Asian countries, including Bangladesh, tended to shift their mode of development from large-scale

⁸ Bangladesh has put a mark on legal and policy instruments such as *Right to Information Act 2009*, *Information and Communication Act 2006*, *ICT Policy 2015*; *Digital Bangladesh Strategy (2011-2015)*, etc.

⁹ Such initiatives include the establishment of UISC, introduction of various e-services and mobile based m-services, optical fibre, expansion of human resource development (HRD) in ICT, e-certification exams, trainings, smart classrooms, promotion of innovation through digital innovation fairs, digital world fair, digitisation/automation of government services, etc.

¹⁰ USD 1 = BDT 78 (approximately), 1 Crore=100,00,000, 1 Lac=100,000

¹¹ Allocation in ICT sector includes revolving fund for ICT, revolving fund for ICT related institutions, revenue and development budget for related ministries. A list of development projects in ICT sector can be found in MoF (2014).

Table 2: Allocation for Ministry of Cultural Affairs and its agencies

Institution	2014-15 (Taka in Crore)*	2015-16 (Taka in Crore)*
Total Ministry of Cultural Affairs	258 (0.1% of national budget)	365 (0.1% of national budget)
<i>Non-development</i>	160	238
<i>Development</i>	98	127
Directorate of Archives and Libraries	3	3.5
<i>Non-development</i>	3	3.5
<i>Development</i>	0	0
Department of Public Libraries	14	15
<i>Non-development</i>	14	15
<i>Development</i>	0	0

Note: 1 Crore=100,00,000

Source: Based on data from Ministry of Finance (MoF).

centralised interventions towards decentralised smaller projects when it came to subtle development sectors such as information services. Compared with other sectors, there is a very low investment in library and information services, including the ICT sector, which complies with that model. The *Annual Development Programme (ADP)* for 2014-15 includes only one project titled *Mosque Library Expansion and Strengthening Project*, which was initiated in 2012.¹² *Modernisation of Bangladesh National Library*, undertaken in the ADP of 2012-13, is one recent success story in library modernisation and the digitisation effort of the government.¹³

ICT and libraries play a complementary role in the information services ecology. Attaining the government's pledge for developing a modern, information-rich society will not be fulfilled if libraries – one of the most important information service providers - are not developed.

The successful implementation of ICT projects through various initiatives can be considered as an example case where the government has realised its commitments bringing in resources from various government as well as donor-driven funds.

The model of the Access to Information (A2i) project under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) can be a good example to follow in this regard and is worth some further illustration. A2i established a number of partnerships across ministries and government agencies, development agencies, NGOs and the private sector to leverage resources and their mobilisation. For example:

- In order to ensure sustainability of the UISC business model, an agreement was made with Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited (DBBL), a local bank, to provide its money transfer system at UISCs.
- Another partnership was formed with Banglalink, a telecom company of Bangladesh, to use UISC entrepreneurs as their mobile recharge agents as well as for supporting Multimedia Classrooms through distribution of computers and accessories.
- Similar strategic partnerships were formed with Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) and the Intel World Ahead programme.

¹² For the period of 2012-2015, allocated fund for this project is BDT 1,248 crore.

¹³ Total fund allocated for the project was BDT 9,310 crore.

- A2i also forged partnerships with several NGOs, strategically chosen to serve the purpose of the UISCs. For example, the British Council provided a computer-based English language training module for UISCs, Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) worked to sensitise the UISCs to the content requirements of people with special needs and the International Rice Research Institute (IFPRI) provided rice related content aimed at farmers.
- Seizing opportunities where synergies for specific activities existed, A2i developed partnerships with several development agencies including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank, UNESCO and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The project also ensured in-kind and cash contribution by different ministries and agencies of the government to create a complete circle of partnerships in reaching the project goals. Its establishment within the PMO played a very important role, making the project everyone's priority. A similar strategy of collaborative resource mobilisation could be employed to revitalise the library sector.

3.3 Users and uses of LIS

Among the 4,585 respondents surveyed during the household public survey, only 6 per cent were found to be library users, while 26 per cent were e-centre users. Accounting for the overlapped users (users of both libraries and e-centres), 30 per cent of household respondents were found to be LIS users (libraries and e-centres).

3.3.1 Education of users

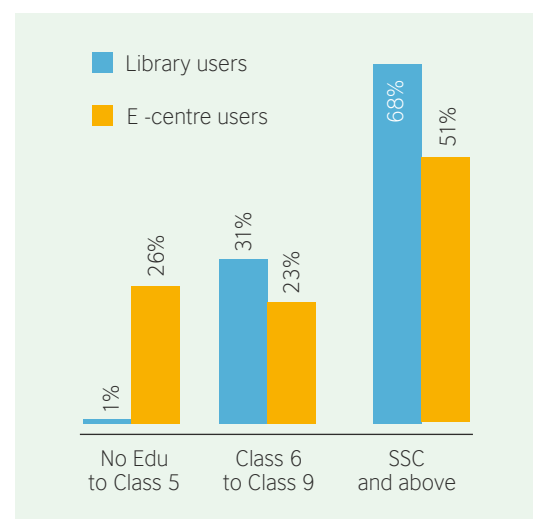
From the library user survey conducted under this study it is found that, around 99 per cent of

library users have completed at least primary level education (Class VI and over). More than half (68 per cent) of their educational qualifications are equivalent to or above Secondary School Certificate (SSC) level.¹⁴

Considering also the high illiteracy rate of the country,¹⁵ lack of education can be assumed to have posed a hindrance to access to libraries.

On the other hand, the education level of e-centre users does not seem to be correlated with use. About 51 per cent of the e-centre users' educational qualifications are equal to or above SSC level, 23 per cent have class VI to IX level education and the remaining 26 per cent either have no education or have education up to class V. That is, the user mix is made up of all education backgrounds and even uneducated users. This may be a result of the assisted services provided through e-centre operators, which has diminished the requirement of literacy and digital skills to use the services.

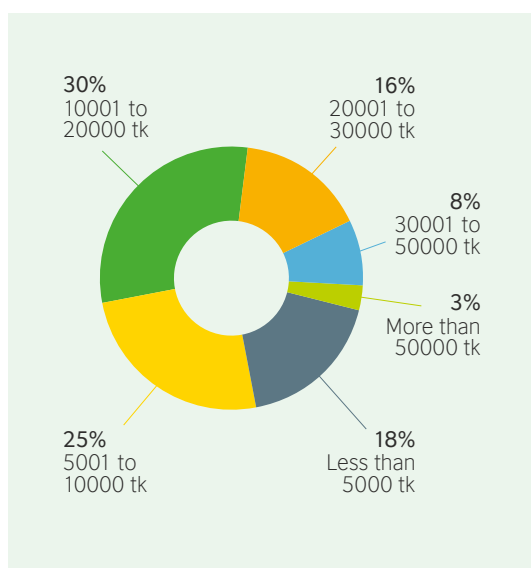
Figure 3: Educational qualification of library and e-centre users



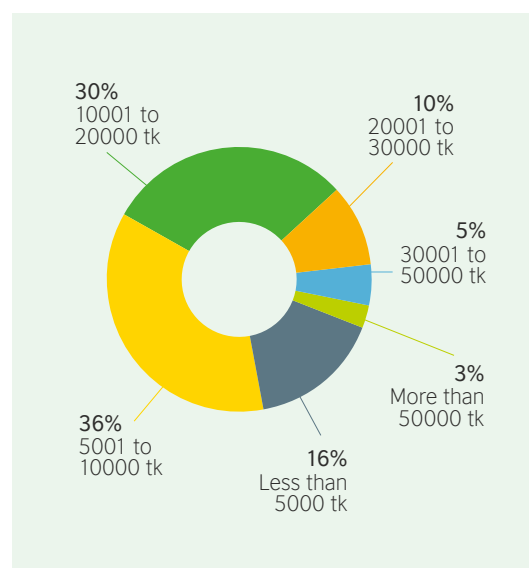
Note: n=769 library users; n=1,280 e-centre users.
Source: User survey data.

¹⁶ Islam and Ahmed (2012) also reported similar results where almost 95 per cent library users were educated, half (47.5 per cent) of them had high school degrees, 28.6 per cent had college degrees and 19.5 per cent were university graduates.

¹⁷ According to BBS (2010), national literacy rate is 60 per cent.

Figure 4: Monthly income of library users

Note: n=769 library users.
Source: User Survey data.

Figure 5: Monthly income of e-centre users

Note: n=1,280 e-centre users.
Source: User Survey data.

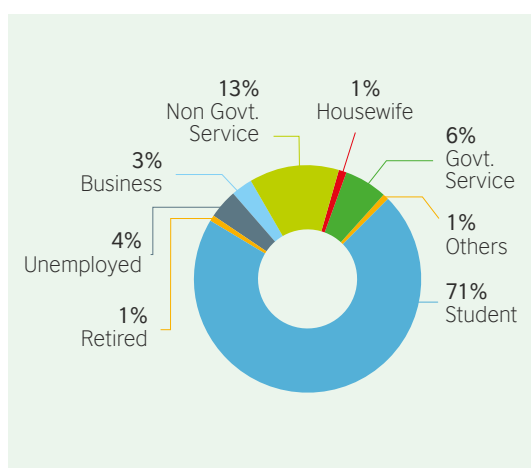
3.3.2 Income of users

Among both library and e-centre users, middle and lower-middle income groups (with family income between BDT 5,000 and BDT 20,000) make up the majority, consisting of 55 per cent and 66 per cent respectively.

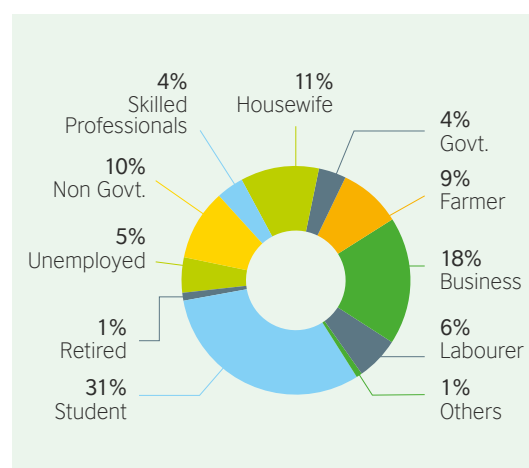
3.3.3 Occupation of users

In regard to the profession of library and e-centre users, *students are the majority* (71 per cent in

libraries and 31 per cent in e-centres) in both cases. The survey has revealed that for students, the predominant use of libraries is as “study spaces.” This implies that libraries are providing them with a space for studying besides being a source of reading materials. It follows that library materials and resources should cater for the needs of students who are the majority of users. During library visits, practices have been observed where libraries have altered their resource pool to serve the demand for those who

Figure 6: Occupation of library users

Note: n=769 library users.
Source: User Survey data.

Figure 7: Occupation of e-centre users

Note: n=1,280 e-centre users.
Source: User Survey data.

want to prepare for various public examinations including Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) exam and have especially included examination relevant resources in their libraries. Such examples also include the EMK Center and British Council Library in Dhaka which promote higher studies abroad and mostly provide resources relevant to pre-requisite examinations (SAT, GRE, IELTS, etc.) in their libraries.

The user survey of libraries and e-centres found that non-government or private service holders are the second largest group (13 per cent) among the library users. Businessmen are the second largest user group (18 per cent) of e-centre users. This data again implies the requirement of higher educational background of library users.¹⁶

On the other hand, the retired or aged populations (senior citizens) are a significantly low use category. About 0.8 per cent of library users and 1.2 per cent of e-centre users are from this demographic.

The survey data shows that on average, 24 children visit a library in a normal day. This number varies across library types, but not so

much according to geographic location.

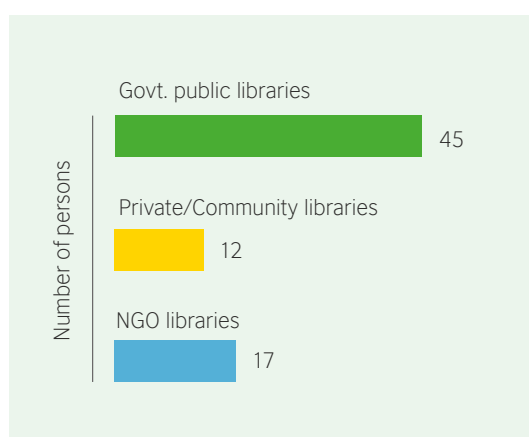
Government public libraries attract more child visitors (45 children a day) than private or community libraries (12 children a day) or NGO libraries (17 children a day). The daily number of child visitors on average is 24 a day for urban libraries, 23 for rural libraries and 18 for semi-urban libraries. In spite of affiliations between some NGO libraries (e.g. BRAC Gonokendra and school), NGO libraries have the lowest number of child users on daily basis. This raises the issue of whether school curriculum or teaching practices should be revised to divert children more towards libraries in addition to simply placing libraries within school premises.

3.3.4 Trends in use

According to the majority of librarians (84 per cent) and e-centre operators (90 per cent), more people are visiting all kinds of LIS than before. Variations in geographic locality (i.e. urban, semi-urban or rural) are insignificant in this respect.

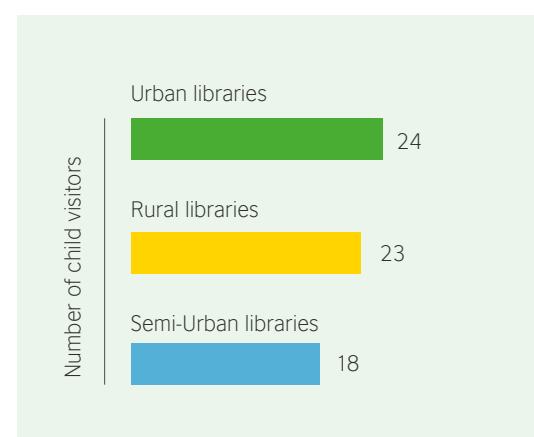
From the library and e-centre user survey, the average number of library users in a normal day was found to be 120. In the case of e-centres, the

Figure 8: Daily number of child visitors by library types



Note: n=136 libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

Figure 9: Daily number of child visitors by geographic location



Note: n=136 libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

¹⁶ In a study on rural libraries of Bangladesh, Islam and Ahmed (2012) found that 63 per cent of library users were students, 10 per cent were teachers, 7 per cent were businessmen, 6 per cent were housewives and 6 per cent were farmers.

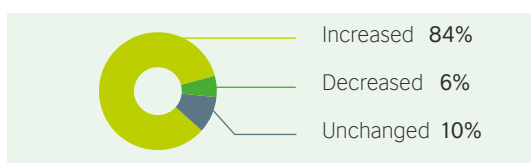
Case Study 2: BRAC Gonokendra: Multi-purpose Community Learning centres (MCLCs)

Multi-purpose Community Learning Centres (MCLCs), locally named as BRAC Gonokendra, are opened on the initiative of BRAC and initial financing by both BRAC and the community. Gonokendras are placed in secondary school premises or at the centre of a union near other important rural institutions (e.g. bank, rural market, post office, etc.). The space is donated by the community. Gonokendra remain open 5-6 hours per day, 6 days a week and are operated by a part-time librarian, who is usually female. People become members of these libraries paying a nominal amount of money (students pay minimum Tk. 15 for a year, general members fee is minimum Tk. 50 while female members pay minimum Tk. 20 annually). Paid services also include internet use costing Tk. 10 an hour for adults and free of cost to children. Within two years of establishment, each Gonokendra is transformed into a fully-fledged trust and becomes self-financed. For administering the Gonokendra, one field staff of BRAC is made directly responsible for 8-10 Gonokendra. At the district level, one area manager of BRAC is made responsible for all Gonokendra of the district (usually 50-60 Gonokendra).

Local people, school teachers, students and community members are included as members. Initially, 400-450 members are required to start a MCLC or Gonokendra. It is ensured that at least 50 per cent of the members are female from the inception of Gonokendra.

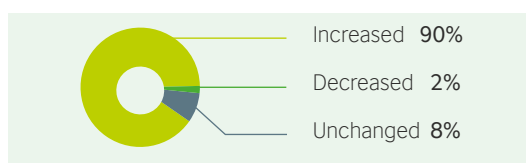
Most Gonokendra libraries have a collection of 1,000 books of various kinds (including fiction, nonfiction, literature, biography, drama, etc.). In addition, the libraries usually have one national daily newspaper and one or two magazines. To encourage a habit of reading and to increase the number of books issued, a good number of libraries have formed readers' forums of two types - one is for the students and the other is for general readers. The regular activities of a Gonokendra include - community library services, mobile library services, special corner for children, readers' forum, organising different socio-cultural activities, skill development training, micro museum, popular theatre for awareness building, etc.

Figure 10: Trend in number of library users (opinion of librarians)



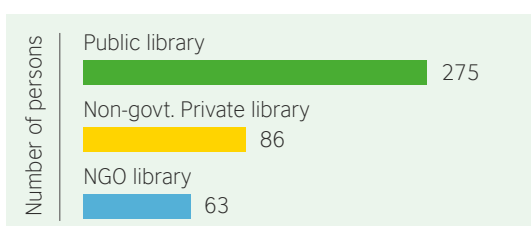
Note: n=136 for libraries. Source: Venue Survey data.

Figure 11: Trend in number of e-centre users (opinion of e-centre operators)



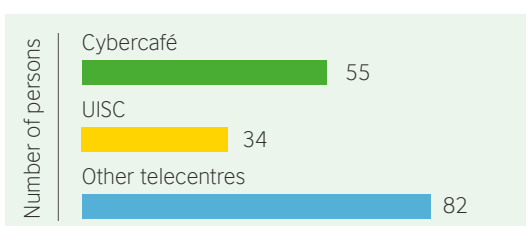
Note: n=315 for e-centres. Source: Venue Survey data.

Figure 12: Average number of daily visitors in libraries



Note: n=136 for public, 21 for non-gov./private and 81 for NGO libraries. Source: Venue Survey data.

Figure 13: Average number of daily visitors in e-centres



Note: n=32 for cybercafé, 224 for UISC and 59 for other telecentres. Source: Venue Survey data.

number is 45. These numbers vary across geographic locations. For libraries in rural areas, the average number of visitors in a day was found to be 93, which was higher in semi urban areas (120) and urban areas (162).

The average number of visitors also varies between types of libraries. Public libraries receive the highest number, followed by non-government or privately-owned ones. NGO libraries get the lowest number of visitors. On the other hand, cybercafés and other telecentres get a higher number of visitors compared to UISCs.

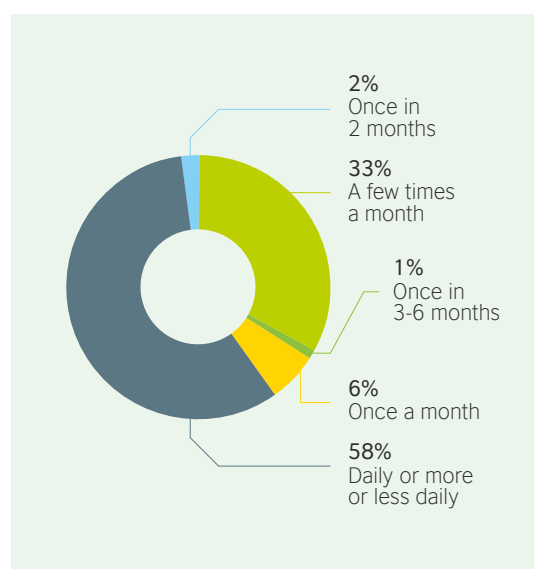
The library user survey also shows that most library users are frequent visitors. About 58 per cent of the users reported they are more or less daily visitors of libraries. About 33 per cent of users said they visit libraries a few times a month and another 6 per cent said they visit libraries at least once a month.

An overwhelming majority of the users (99 per cent) of libraries put high value on libraries in terms of their social impact. Women in general think libraries have influenced their lives positively. Seventy two per cent women users perceived that libraries play an essential role in enhancing their capacity to make decisions. Most

of them also think that libraries play an important role in their lives in terms of skill development (74 per cent) and finding better jobs (69 per cent).

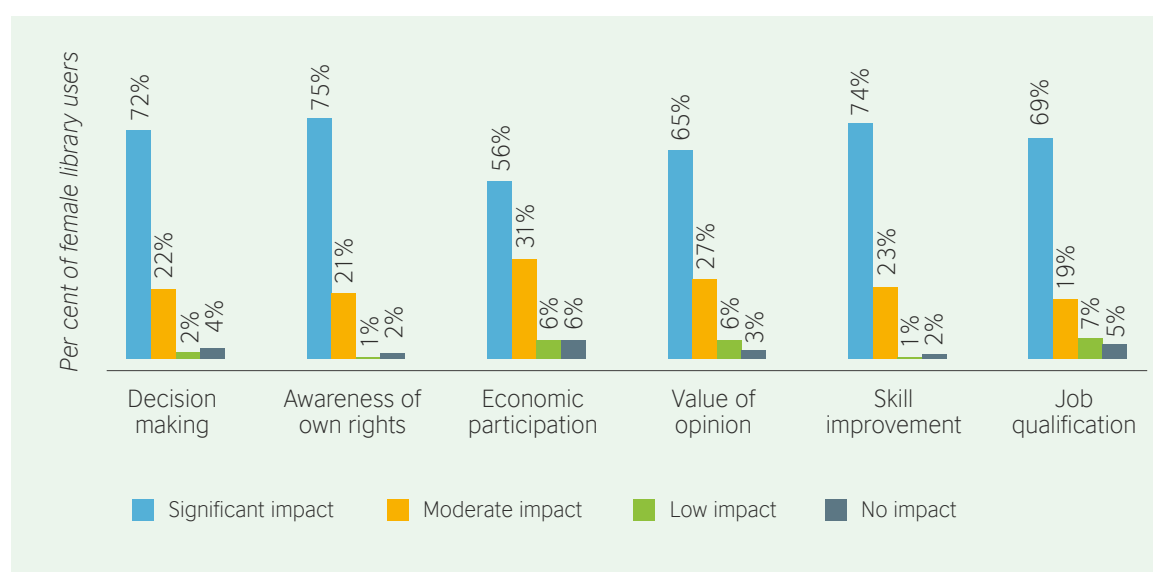
However, general impressions of the users tend to vary in terms of existing library environments and facilities. For example, 86 per cent of users think that libraries of Bangladesh offer a friendly environment and 78 per cent of them think

Figure 14: Frequency of visiting libraries

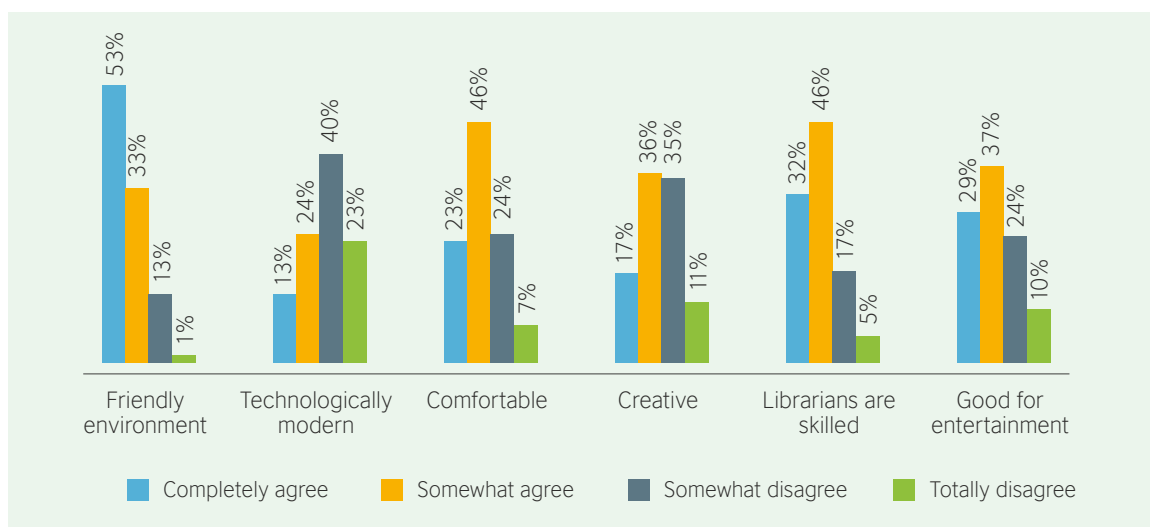


Note: n=769 for library users.
Source: User Survey data.

Figure 15: Impact of libraries on women



Note: n=207 for female library users.
Source: User Survey data.

Figure 16: User perceptions about libraries of Bangladesh

Note: n=769 for library users.

Source: User Survey data.

librarians are skilled to meet user demands. On the other hand, only 37 per cent of library users totally agree with the statement that libraries are technologically modern and 53 per cent think libraries are creative enough in terms of the facilities and services offered.

3.4 People's information seeking behaviour

The need for information is unequivocal in human life. However, the type of information needed by an individual varies. A person's location, age, gender, daily activities, education, occupation, socio-economic and cultural condition and even environmental condition may influence the type and extent of information they need (Aina 2004; Agboola & Kumar 2008; Samuel et al. 2013; Ukachi, 2007; Hossain & Islam 2011).¹⁷

Studies on type of information in demand mostly focus on particular groups of people such as youth, women, urban or rural dwellers, students or teachers of a particular discipline, patients and doctors, shoppers, researchers of specific fields, users of certain services, etc.¹⁸ This reveals the fact that needs for information and information seeking behaviour can be so diverse that it would be too great and complex a task to catalogue and assess the information need of a whole community, let alone a society. In Bangladesh, farmers and labourers seek information related to their livelihood such as grants, subsidies, provision of credit, supply of fertilisers and agricultural implements (Munshi & Ahmed 2000). Khan (1997) found a similar trend in the rural areas of Bangladesh, where need for information was driven by socio-economic conditions, activities and needs. Iqbal (2003), in a study on

¹⁷ Scholars have long been studying people's information seeking and usage behaviour (McDiarmid 1940; Ayres & McKinnie 1916; Warner, et al, 1973; Palmer 1991; Wilson 2000) and have attempted to theorise possible patterns against with characteristics of individual and social groups. Hoq (2012) explained the role of information related to agriculture, health, human rights, education, employment, market and finance, and disaster management in the life of rural people of Bangladesh. Hoq (2012) also pointed out how information can empower rural people, upgrade their way of living and contribute to the development of the whole society.

¹⁸ Further reading: Reed and Tanner (2001); Weiner, et al, (2011); Riiskjær et al. (2004); Wimberley and McClean (2012); Zavalina and Vassilieva (2014); Lee, Han and Joo (2008); Chelton and Cool (2014); Clark and Unwin (1980); Wilde (1981); Hernon (1982); Bishop et al. (1999); Ahmed, Munshi and Ahmed (1997); Khan (1997); Iqbal (2003).

slum dwellers, identified their major areas of information need to be farming, family planning, financial or loan assistance, flood control or natural disaster management, health related issues and entertainment.

However, it needs to be considered that people often use information unconsciously, without realising the need for it, and, when asked, may not point to such information as a need. An alternative way of exploring people's information needs is to study their activities and decisions and then relate those to different information that is used to carry out the activities or taking decisions. A grounded theory approach¹⁹ was applied under this study to systematically record people's daily as well as irregular activities and future plans and then identify their information need. Findings from this approach reveal that:

- In carrying out their usual regular activities, 97 per cent of individuals needed information related to entertainment, followed by 96 per cent needed daily

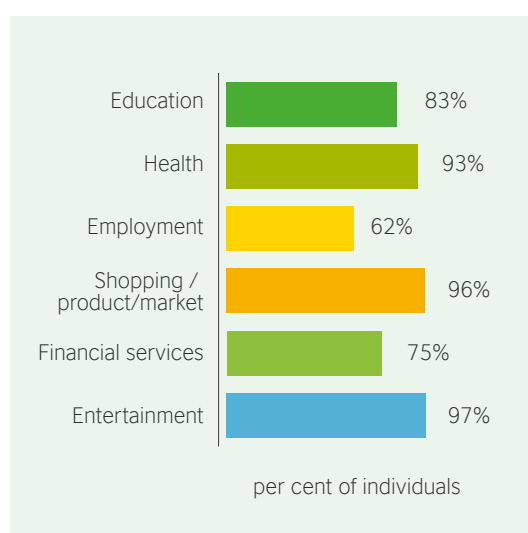
shopping/product or market related information and 93 per cent needed health related information. Employment related information turned out to be the least used information (62 per cent).

- As for future plans or decisions, shopping, product or market related information was the top need for information (76 per cent), followed by education (69 per cent) and health related information (67 per cent).

In summary, people's information demand can be categorised as:

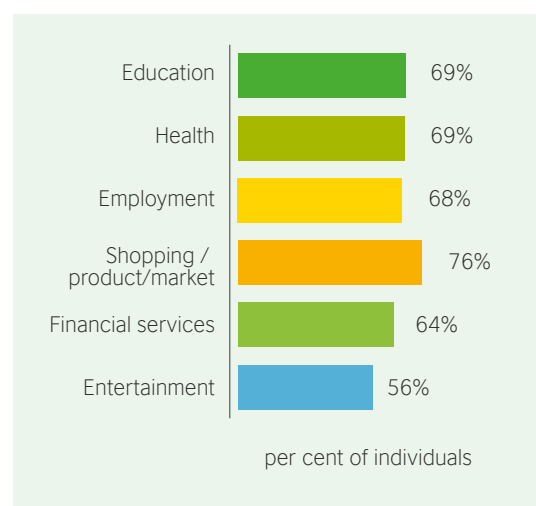
1. **Health service related information** such as finding doctors, hospitals, clinics, diagnostics, etc.
2. **Education opportunity** such as admission, higher studies, scholarships, etc., study materials related information such as reports, articles, instructions for homework, assignment or exams.

Figure 17: Information need for actions



Note: n=200 individuals, multiple responses
Source: Data collected through Grounded Theory Method.

Figure 18: Information need for future plans/decisions



Note: n=200 individuals, multiple responses
Source: Data collected through Grounded Theory Method.

¹⁹ The grounded theory approach is a qualitative research method that systematically gathers and analyses the information ecology of a community by observing information used to undertake activities or make decisions by the community members in their daily lives. For details, see Annex 3.

3. **Product price and market** related information
4. **Financial service** related information such as banking, loan, savings, insurance, etc.
5. **Entertainment** related information such as movies, fairs, exhibitions, cultural events, etc.
6. **Employment** related information such as agriculture and farming methods, income tax, land registration, etc.

Detailed findings from these qualitative data can be found in Annex 3.

Not all information is equally important to all people. In a study of public access venues for information services, Iqbal and Abed (2014) found that 68 per cent of users sought information related to communication and networking. Education, employment and health related information were ranked in the next positions. A study of rural library users identified information on education, health and religion as the topmost categories of information sought (Islam 2010).

Another study of rural women in Bangladesh revealed that their top five information needs fall in the domain of agriculture, animal husbandry, food and nutrition, health, and education (Hossain & Islam 2011). Studies conducted in different regions of America and Africa by Clark and Unwin (1980), Wilde (1981), Hernon (1982) and Bishop et al. (1999) also identified that some of the major fields of information needed by people are education, utility services, employment/livelihood, legal matters, health, entertainment, etc.

Information needs for rural women in Nigeria were found to be related to agriculture, education, economy, health, politics and other matters (Mooko 2005; Olorunda 2004; Saleh & Lasisi 2011).

The household survey conducted under the current study shows that:

- Ninety four per cent of the respondents think information relating to health services, such as searching for doctors, hospitals, health centres, etc., is extremely important.

Figure 19: Importance of information for all household respondents

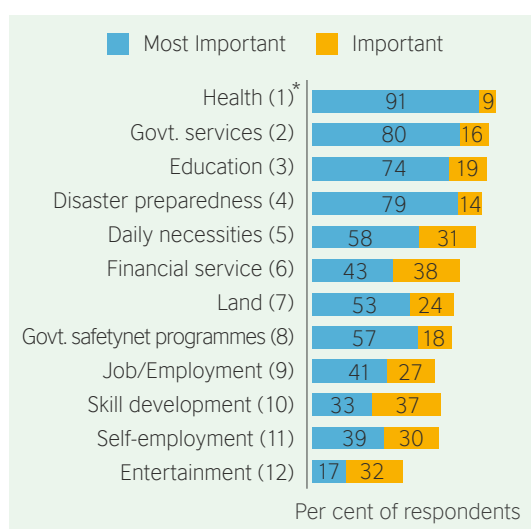
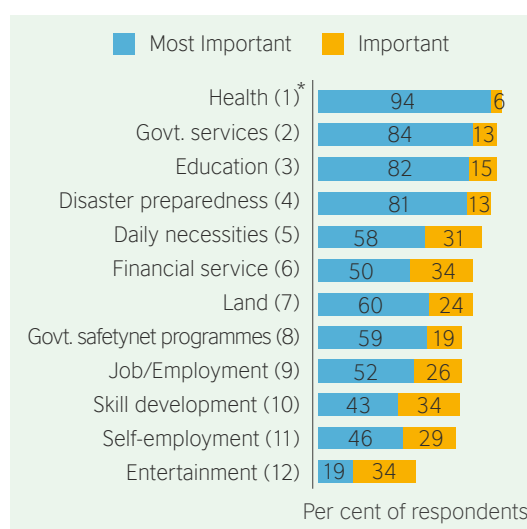


Figure 20: Importance of information for non-user household respondents



Notes: n=4585 for all household respondents (Figure 19) and n=1,690 for non-user household respondents (Figure 20).

* 1. Searching for doctor, hospital, health centre, clinic, etc.; 2. National ID card, passport, birth certificate, etc.; 3. Institutions, higher education opportunities, exam results, etc.; 4. Disaster warnings etc.; 5. Price, location of market, etc.; 6. Banking, loan, insurance, etc.; 7. Land registration, survey etc.; 8. Food for Work, VGD, etc.; 9. Job circular, application, etc.; 10. Training and courses; 11. Farming, business, etc.; 12. Film, fair, exhibition, cultural ceremony, events, etc.

Source: Pubic Survey data.

- Information related to various government services is highly important to 83 per cent of respondents.
- Information regarding educational access, opportunity and facilities is very important to 81 per cent of the respondents.
- More than half of the respondents reported that information related to disaster preparedness, financial services (such as banking, loans and insurance), employment and professional skills development and the government's safety net programme is very important.

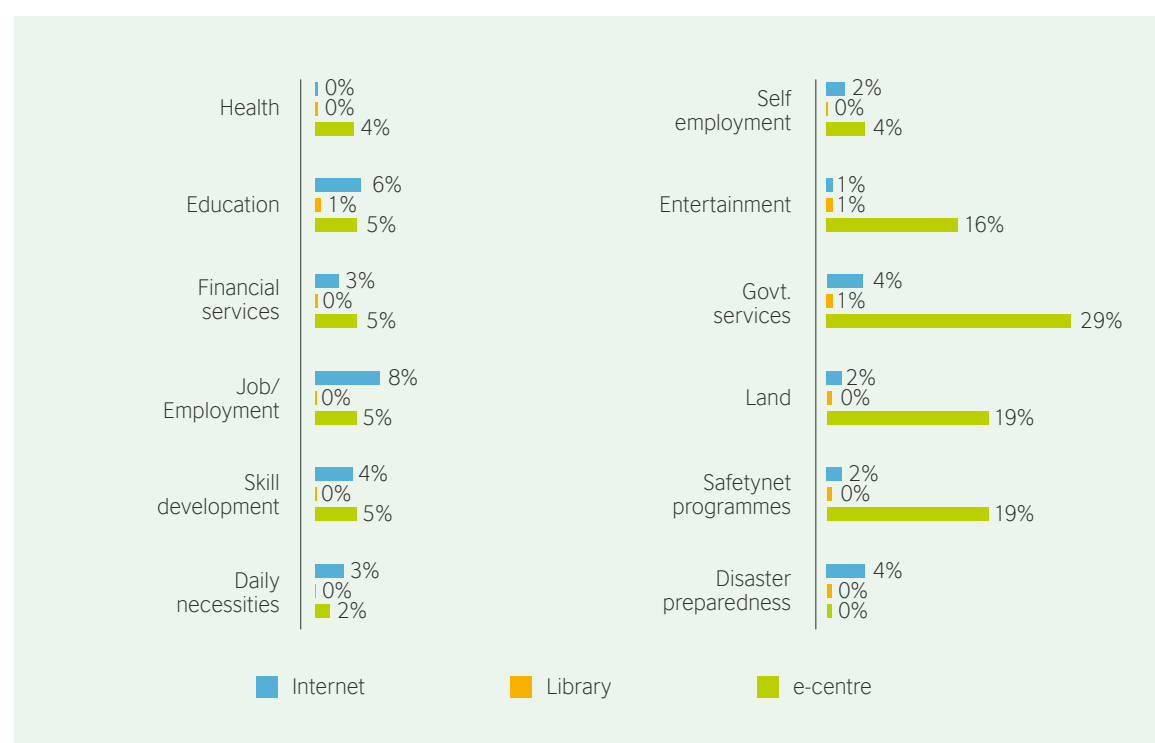
However, household respondents who do not use libraries or e-centres mentioned that they do not need library services (see section 5.8 for detail), although they have similar information needs. In fact, the use of libraries as a source of information was found to be extremely low. Figure 21 shows that, in any category of *information*, not more than 1 to 2 per cent of people go to a

library to obtain that information or any services related to it.

Using of the internet or visiting an e-centre to obtain information or services is not very popular in general (for details see Figure 21). Overall, people are more dependent on the use of traditional sources, such as families and friends, community, relevant institutions, etc. for meeting their information need, rather than on libraries or e-centres. However, a significant portion of the household respondents said that they go to e-centres to get information on three issues: government services, government safety-net programmes and land registration. This suggests that e-centres provide services that are oriented towards demand and, unlike the libraries, e-centres also cater to the service demands of the non-educated groups.

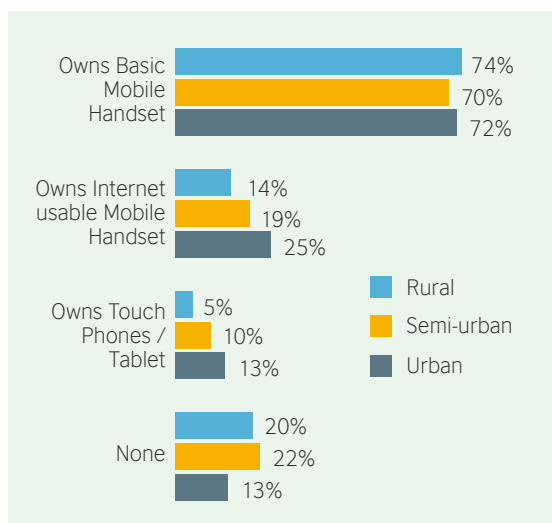
On average, 14 per cent of the household respondents use internet either on their mobile phones or tabs/iPads. However, internet usage through desktop/laptop is comparatively lower (5

Figure 21: Sources of information used by household respondents



Note. $n=4,585$ for all household respondents and $n=1,690$ for non-user household respondents. Numbers are rounded to full digit where some fractions were rounded to zero.

Source: Public Survey data.

Figure 22: Possession of mobile phones and other gadgets

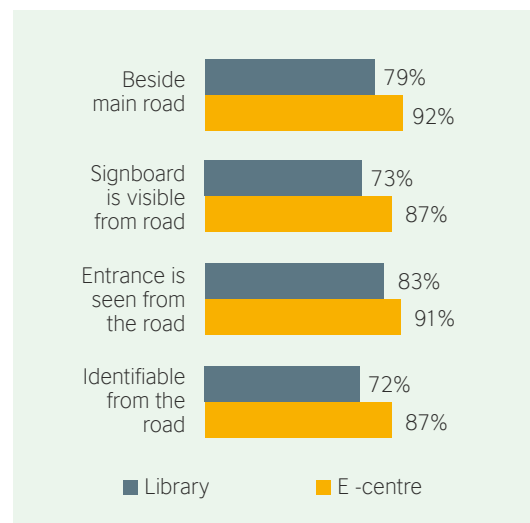
Note: n=2,844 for Rural, n=1,051 for Semi-urban and n=1,477 for Urban
Source: Public Survey data.

per cent). People also access internet at their friends' and relatives' houses that have internet connectivity: about 26 per cent people, both urban and rural, use internet in such places. Given the increasing trend in use of mobile phones and internet in Bangladesh, access to internet through personal devices should be considered for developing access points to library contents and resources in the future.²⁰ Libraries may also initiate sharing of digital resources through these popular devices.

3.5 The Building Infrastructure

3.5.1 Location and visibility

Despite the observed rising trend in library use, some of the libraries, particularly the rural NGO libraries, have a very low user base. This is often linked to inappropriate location of the library.²¹ From the household survey, it has been revealed that 7 per cent of those who use libraries mentioned the location of the library to be an

Figure 23: Visibility of libraries and e-centres

Note: n=136 for libraries
Source: Venue Survey data.

obstacle to their library use, while another 20 per cent mentioned distance to be an obstacle. About 7 per cent pointed out the cost of travel to the library as an obstacle. In the user survey, 7 per cent of library users said they are unhappy about the location of the library and 13 per cent of library users expressed dissatisfaction about the distance between their home and the library.

From the library venue survey, it was found that about 79 per cent of libraries are located beside roads and have an entrance that is visible to people from the street (83 per cent of libraries). Signboards are also in use by 73 per cent of libraries. However, over 28 per cent of the libraries are not identifiable from the adjacent streets. As Figure 23 shows, e-centres, which in comparison to libraries, are more often linked to commercial services, appear to follow these visibility criteria more strictly than the libraries. The visibility of the LIS venues was found to be more or less similar across urban, rural and semi-urban locations.

²⁰ Since 2009, the number of mobile users in Bangladesh has dramatically increased by almost 167 per cent with an average annual growth rate of about 22.4 per cent.

²¹ As Katz and Bon (2014) mentioned in their study, a visit to the children's library of Sylhet Shishu Academy branch, located on a major intersection in Sylhet city centre, found no users at all. The library was also difficult to locate.

Overall, it can be concluded that libraries in Bangladesh are suitably located for their user base. However, it may be mentioned here that Bangladesh being a disaster prone country, libraries also need to be suitably located to avoid disruption in services during such occasions. About 24 per cent of the library users reported disasters such as cyclones or floods have hindered their library use.

3.5.2 Building and space

Structure

The nature of LIS building structures varies depending on a number of factors. Urban libraries typically use concrete structures, whereas rural ones use mixed materials, often with concrete walls but also with roofs made of either corrugated iron sheets or from other materials such as leaves, straw, etc.

Building structures also vary with types of libraries. For example:

- The government public libraries, located in urban centres, are mostly large buildings, often multi-storied.
- NGO libraries mostly have one or two rooms.
- Most of the e-centres are housed in one-room premises.
- UISCs are typically housed within a room in the Union Parishad complexes which are the union level headquarters of the local government.
- Telecentres are usually isolated, and consist of one-room structures.

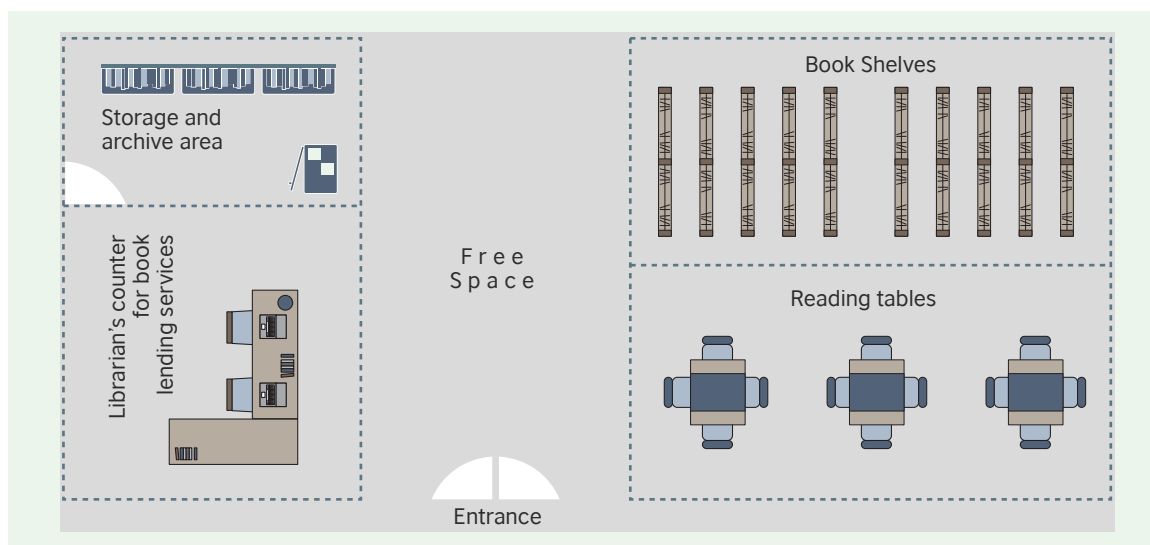
Layout

The traditional library spaces in Bangladesh can be categorised into four basic components based on their utilities: bookshelves, storage and archive spaces, reading space; and lending space (Figure 25). Dedicated spaces for computers and for holding meetings or events can also be found in some libraries.

Figure 24: Libraries with different types of building materials



Figure 25: Basic components of homogeneous spaces found in traditional libraries in Bangladesh



The government libraries usually have an additional rentable auditorium facility where social and cultural events are organised.

Unfortunately, the combined importance of air, light and interior design is not recognised well in our country, which minimises the scope for architects and other building and design professionals to create visually pleasing and socially inviting public library buildings.

Government libraries are mostly iconic buildings in a city or a district headquarters. They consist of large rectangular rooms with bookshelves, tables, chairs, in some cases, a computer section, and an auditorium. The community, privately owned libraries or NGO libraries in the rural areas are usually housed in small rooms in the premises of educational institutions or rented buildings.

Types of room

Facilitating multipurpose use of a modern library requires, in addition to reading rooms, spaces for community gatherings and socialisation, spaces appropriate for the use of ICT and digital content, etc. From the library and e-centre survey it was found that about half the libraries (48 per cent) have dedicated reading rooms and 63 per cent have a separate space for computer use. About one-third of libraries have separate meeting rooms as well as hall rooms where social or educational activities can take place. For e-centres, these facilities are absent as they are mostly housed in a single roomed space.

However, field observation revealed that in some cases, dedicated spaces for multipurpose uses (e.g. computer space) were inaccessible to the

Figure 26: Divisional and district branch libraries in Chittagong, Manikganj and Rajshahi (from left to right)



Table 3: Room types in libraries

Type of rooms	Per cent of libraries
Separate study room	48
Place for using computer	63
Separate meeting room	29
Hall room facility	30

Note: $n=136$ for libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

users. Such availability of separate spaces may not always be of much use.

Availability of different types of spaces in libraries varies across geographic locations. Apart from separate computer rooms, more urban libraries were found to have other types of separate spaces compared to the rural ones. For example, while overall 48 per cent of libraries have separate study rooms, only 36 per cent of rural libraries have them compared to 72 per cent of urban libraries.

3.5.3 Seating capacity

Sufficient seating, matched to the number, flow and behaviour of visitors to the library, is one of the basic infrastructure requirements of an LIS venue. The average number of library users in a normal day was found to be 120. From the survey of libraries and e-centres, the average accommodation facility (simultaneous seating) was found to be 57 for libraries. As for e-centres, the average number of daily visitors was 45 and seating capacity was found to be 11. The number of visitors and seating capacity was found to have variations across geographic locations. Lack of seating capacity has resulted in some

dissatisfaction among the users of both libraries and e-centres. About 27 per cent of library users responding to the user survey expressed medium to serious dissatisfaction in this regard.

3.5.4 Convenience

To attract and support users, libraries need to be made comfortable. Comfortable furniture, convenient lighting, temperature, proper ventilation and noise level are important factors in this regard (Withers 1974). In general, given the resource constraints, air conditioning facilities in libraries are mostly absent. About 60 per cent of respondents to the library user survey think that libraries have adequate lighting and ventilation facilities, while about one-third of them are satisfied only to some extent, reflecting the scope for improvement. About one-fifth of the users find the noise level in libraries to be distracting.

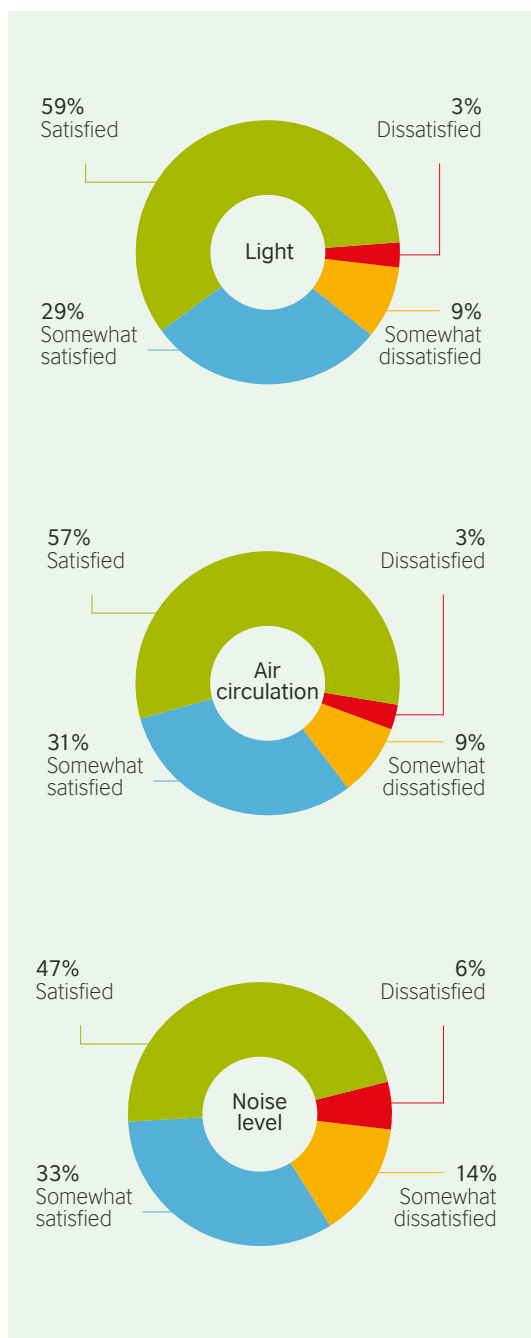
The library survey found that toilets exist in 56 per cent of libraries in Bangladesh. However, 41 per cent of the toilets were found in unusable conditions. At the same time, of those libraries having toilets, only 37 per cent have separate toilets for female users.

Table 4: Types of spaces by geographic location of libraries

	Per cent of rural libraries	Per cent of semi-urban libraries	Per cent of urban libraries
Separate study room	36	29	72
Separate meeting room	17	43	45
Hall room facility	25	36	36
Place for using computer	64	50	64

Note: $n=75$ for rural libraries, $n=14$ for semi-urban libraries, and $n=47$ for urban libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

Figure 27: User satisfaction in terms of library lighting, air circulation and noise level



Note: n=769 for library users.
Source: User Survey data.

About 37 per cent of the library users reported that either there is no food service available in the library or they are unaware of such facilities.

Improving on these facilities will require alteration, and, in some cases, better management of the available infrastructure.

Figure 28: Seating arrangements



3.6 Library resources

3.6.1 Reading materials

Print materials generally dominate in the libraries of Bangladesh. Considering government public libraries only, on average, a library has 31,516 books and subscribes to 10 newspapers (9 Bangla and 1 English) and 13 periodicals (12 Bangla and 1 English).

Table 5: Average number of reading materials available at government public libraries

Type of reading materials	Average availability
No. of Books	31,516
No. of Bangla Newspapers	9
No. of English Newspapers	1
No. of Bangla Periodicals	12
No. of English Periodicals	1

Source: Public Library Portal, GoB, 2015.

Sources of books

The library survey found that in privately run or community libraries, books are primarily purchased through a library fund (for 52 per cent

Table 6: Sources of books for different types of libraries

Sources of books	Government public libraries (in per cent)	Private libraries (in per cent)	NGO libraries (in per cent)
Purchased through government fund	97	62	2
Private institutions/associations	15	38	22
NGO	6	19	80
Library fund	6	52	6
Community	3	14	2
Political parties	0	0	2
Foreign donors	6	5	1
Others	15	14	14

Note: n=136 for libraries.

Source: Venue Survey data.

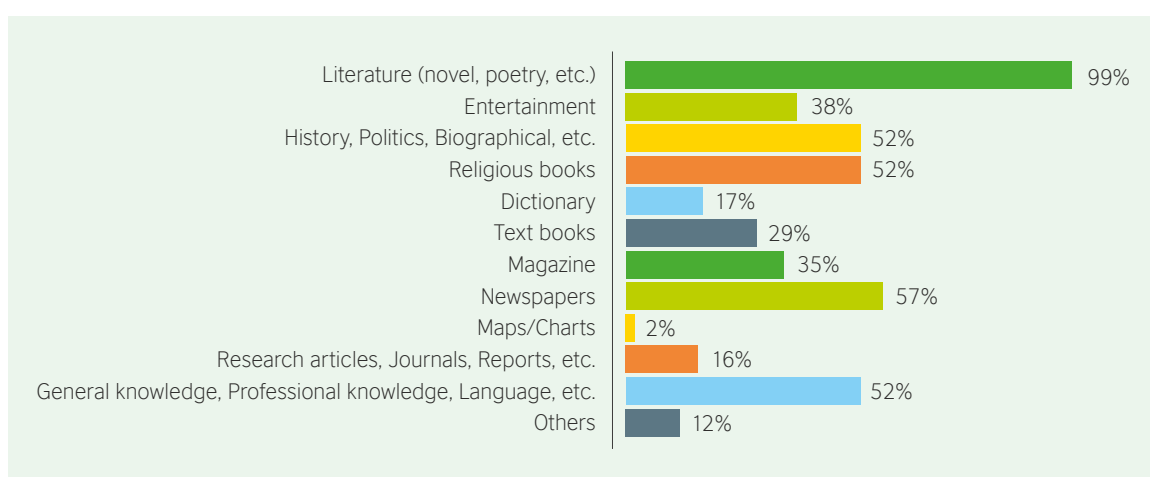
of their purchases). About 97 per cent of new purchases in government libraries depend on the government budget,²² and NGO libraries depend on their respective NGOs to provide 80 per cent of their new purchases as the library funds are inadequate.

The government also supports privately owned or community libraries by providing books: about 62 per cent of these libraries are found to have received books from the government. Private institutions or associations also play a significant role in providing books to their local libraries; 15

per cent of government libraries, 38 per cent of privately owned or community libraries and 22 per cent of NGO libraries receive books from such donations.

According to librarians, the highest user demand is for literature (novels, poetry, etc.), followed by newspapers, religious books, historical or politics related books and general knowledge or technical/professional books.

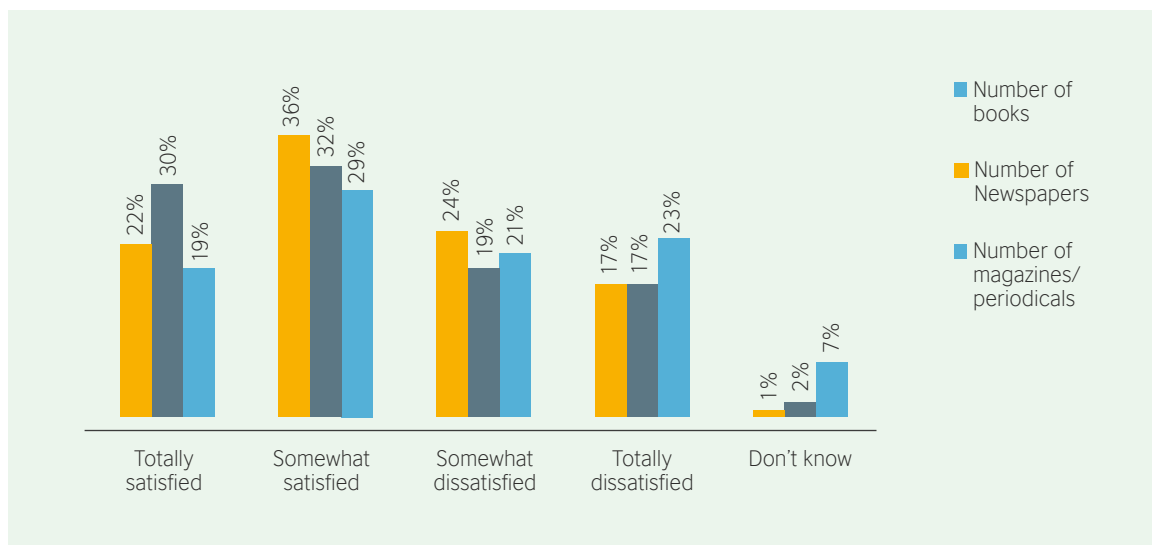
However, 52 per cent of librarians (from all types of libraries) felt that, given the demand by users,

Figure 29: Librarian opinions on the most demanded reading materials

Note: n=136 for libraries.

Source: Venue Survey data.

²² Resource procurement process of the government public libraries is centralised which means these libraries do not procure their own resources, particularly books. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs and its departments that govern these public libraries purchase resources based on allocated budget and send them to designated libraries.

Figure 30: User satisfaction on availability of reading materials in libraries

Note: n=769 for library users.

Source: User Survey data.

reading materials in libraries are insufficient. Likewise, a significant proportion of users expressed their dissatisfaction to varying degrees regarding the availability of reading materials in libraries.

It needs to be kept in mind that the global use of digital content is increasing in libraries along with print resources. Even in 1974, Withers wrote that “a library should provide books and other printed

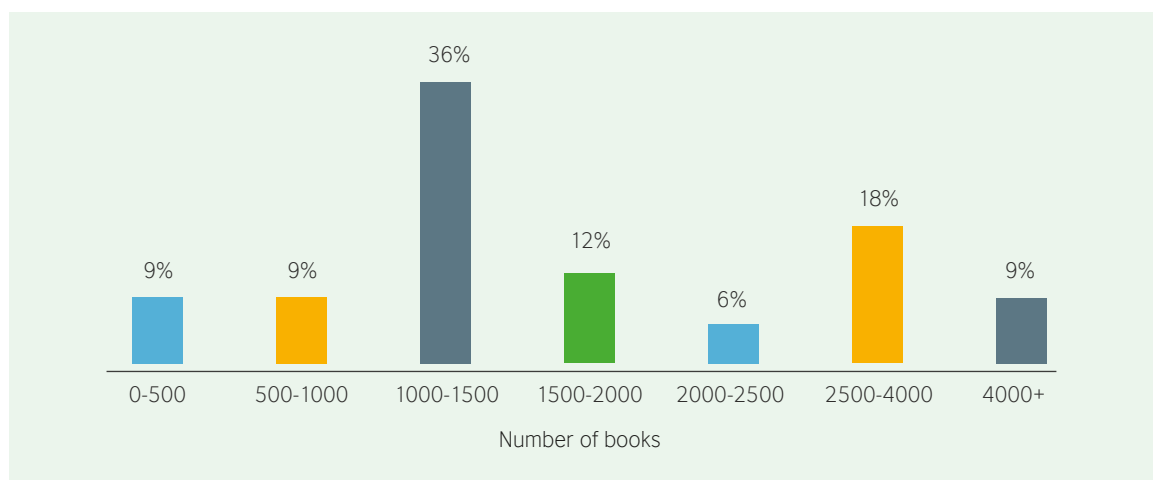
materials and also other forms of material such as films, records, tapes, slides, illustrations, through which information can be given and knowledge and understanding acquired.” In Bangladesh, however, apart from a very few libraries, digital content is yet to be popularised. However, there seems to be a growing demand for such content as 78 per cent of users (from the library user survey) expressed their dissatisfaction arising from unavailability of digital content.

Case Study 3: A government public library of Bangladesh

The Divisional Public Library of Sylhet, with its 62,544 books and many newspapers, periodicals, journals and magazines, provides multiple services to its user base. This includes reader services, reference services, international affairs and news services, photocopying, printing, scanning, projector and internet facilities, book lending, and seminar arrangement services.

Different events are regularly held in the library including essay writing, handwriting and reading competitions, documentary screenings and poem recitation competitions to increase the reading habit and engage the general public with the

library. The building infrastructure, with its child friendly furnishings and resources, successfully caters to a range of services for children. The library also has prayer rooms and separate reading rooms for group and silent reading. In consideration of the local context and in order to increase female library users, the library has appointed a female librarian along with other 16 librarians catering to their huge user base. There is a dedicated corner on the third floor where books published by local writers are kept for exhibition. In this way, the library is promoting local writing talent besides developing the reading habit among the local people.

Figure 31: Average number of books acquired by government public libraries during 2012-2014

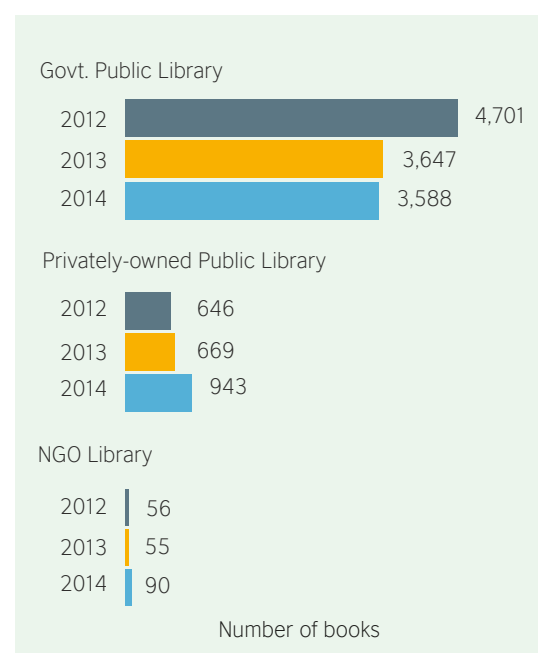
Note: n=34 public libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

It also needs to be considered that digital and print content may not be mutually exclusive in their merits. On one hand, digital content can be shared between libraries, conveniently reach wider audiences, and could be more authentic in nature. Also, there are those contents that cannot exist in print form (simulations, animated models, video or sound recordings, etc.). On the other hand, in terms of reading convenience and device free accessibility, print contents have their advantages over digital ones. As such, efforts to improve on digital content availability should not jeopardise the availability and updating of print contents.

Update of reading materials

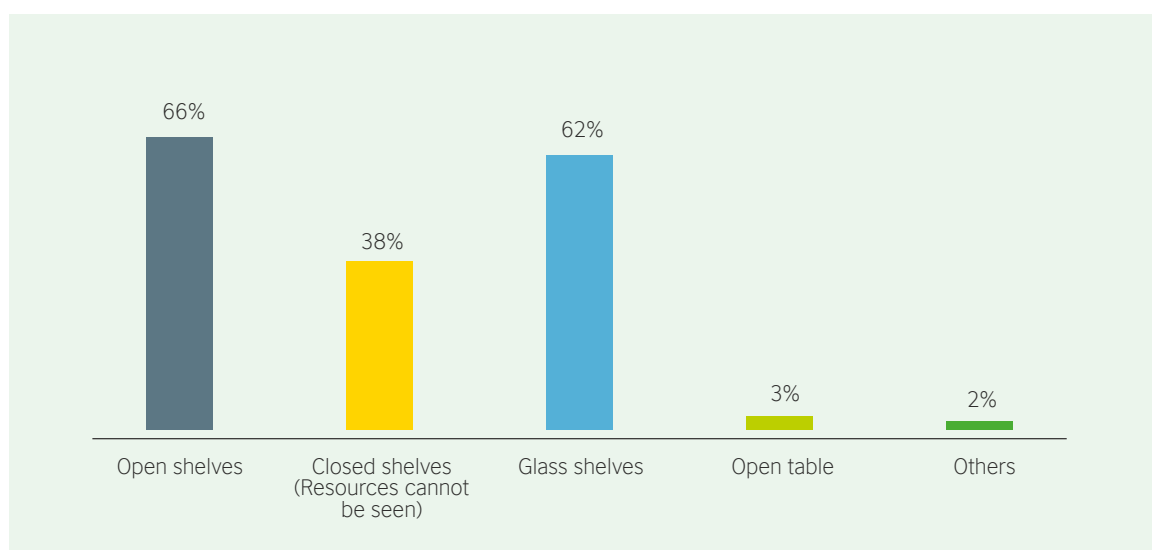
One important aspect of reading materials in the library is the frequency and adequacy of updating. According to librarians, based on the figures for 2012-2014, on average, a library collects 1,585 books a year. In doing so, a primary consideration is user demand. Libraries also consider new publications and new areas of knowledge when updating reading materials. It is to be noted that the amount of books acquired in a year significantly varies between libraries. While the highest number of books acquired in a year by a library was found to be 38,758, there were also libraries that did not collect any books in a particular year.

The majority (36 per cent) of the public libraries have acquired between 1,000 and 1,500 books annually. Government public libraries have collected a significantly higher number of books compared to privately-owned public libraries and NGO libraries.

Figure 32: Average number of books acquired by different types of libraries between 2012 and 2014

Note: n=34 for Govt. public libraries, n=21 for private libraries and n=81 for NGO libraries.

Source: Venue Survey data.

Figure 33: User preference regarding arrangement of books

Note: n=769 for library users.

Source: User Survey data.

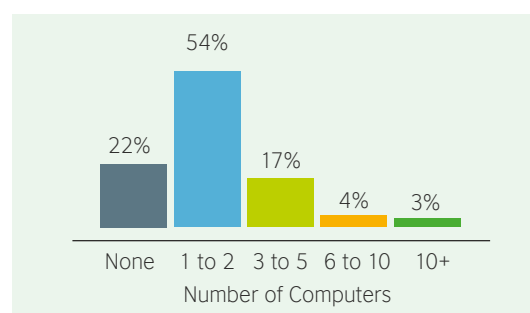
Arrangement of resources

When asked about user preferences on how the books should be arranged in a library, the majority (66 per cent) of the users said books should be kept on open shelves where users can see and browse through the books themselves. A similar proportion of users (62 per cent) said books can be arranged in glass shelves as well. However, 38 per cent users also felt that books should also be stored in closed shelves, so that they cannot be reached or seen by the users, possibly from a security point of view.

3.6.2 Availability of computers and internet

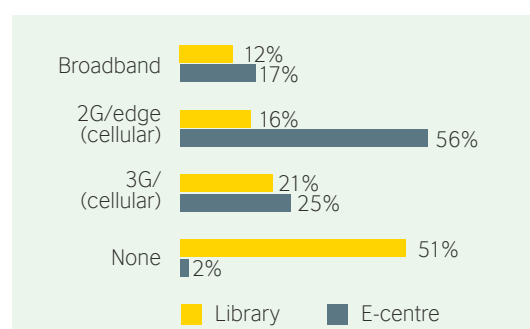
Computers and the internet have brought information search and retrieval to the fingertips of the users (Miller 2006). User convenience, particularly text-search capabilities, is the major reason behind the popularity of ICT use in the modern day library services (Carol 2003; Kaur & Sharda 2010). Montgomery and King (2002), on the other hand, emphasised the money saving effects of ICT on library services in explaining the ICT hype. Unfortunately, it is yet to significantly affect the library users of the developing world, including Bangladesh. Although 78 per cent of all libraries have computers, about 54 per cent of the libraries have only 1 or 2 of them. Moreover,

56 per cent of libraries do not have any computers for public use; they are available for use by library staff only.

Figure 34: Availability of computers in libraries

Note: n=136 for libraries.

Source: Venue Survey data.

Figure 35: Type of internet connectivity of libraries and e-centres

Note: n=136 for libraries, n=315 for e-centres.

Source: Venue Survey data.

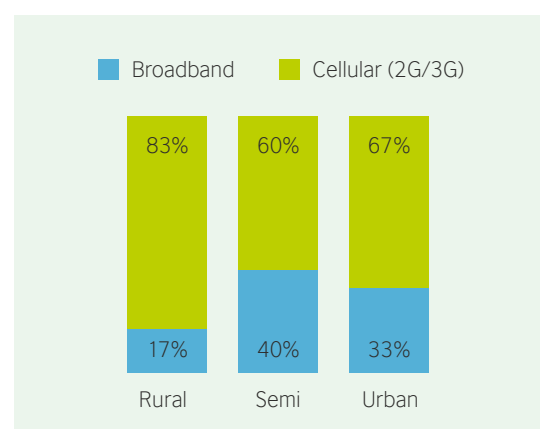
Almost a decade ago, Munshi (2003) identified that most libraries and information centres used computers as standalone devices. LIS seem to have made good progress since then, particularly the e-centres. Currently, while about 51 per cent of libraries and 98 per cent of e-centres have internet connections, only 12 per cent of libraries and 17 per cent of e-centres have broadband connectivity. Both for libraries and e-centres, mobile internet dominates the types of net-connectivity. Unavailability of broadband internet and the penetration of mobile internet throughout the country are reflected in the type of internet available in the libraries of different geographic locations. Of those with internet connections, about 83 per cent of rural libraries have internet through cellular networks compared to 60 per cent of semi-urban libraries and 67 per cent of urban libraries.

Findings revealed e-centres, emerging from the very concept of using the internet for information services, maintained good ICT integration. But the study findings also reconfirmed Islam's (2011) findings - libraries of Bangladesh are far from ICT integration. However, this is not to say that the libraries are rejecting the change. Although the level of automation of libraries is inadequate, a slow but promising change is indeed taking place.

3.6.3 Logistics

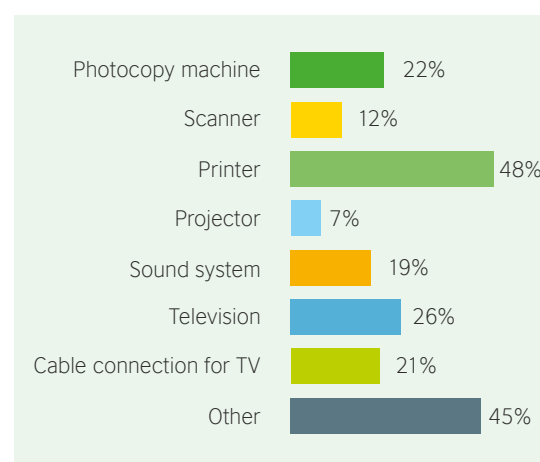
Apart from reading materials, libraries need supporting equipment for knowledge transfer, public events and entertainment purposes. Only

Figure 36: Type of internet connectivity of libraries by geographic location



Note: n=29 for rural libraries, n=5 for semi-urban libraries and n=18 for urban libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

Figure 37: Availability of supporting equipment in libraries



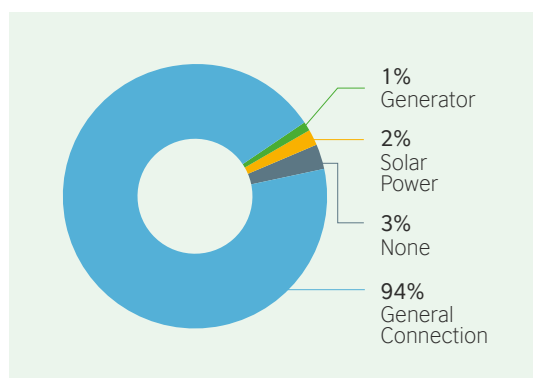
Note: n=136 for libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

Table 7: User satisfaction on the availability of equipment in libraries

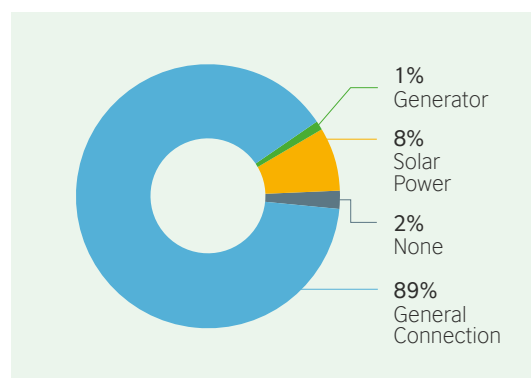
(figures in per cent)

Equipment	Totally satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Totally dissatisfied	Don't know
Photocopier	79	15	3	2	1
Scanner	65	25	5	4	2
Printer	69	22	5	3	1
Projector	55	25	9	9	4
Sound system	38	26	12	18	7
Television	33	21	12	25	10
Cable connection for TV	30	22	13	24	11

Note: n=769 for library users.
Source: User Survey data.

Figure 38: Main power source of libraries

Note: n=136 for libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

Figure 39: Main power source of e-centres

Note: n=315 for e-centres.
Source: Venue Survey data.

22 per cent of libraries have photocopiers and about 48 per cent have printers.

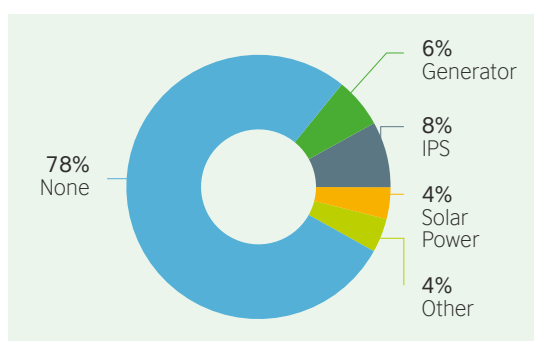
3.6.4 Power supply

Given the importance of ICT services of the libraries in the modern era and the nature of e-centre services, the uninterrupted supply of power for the LIS venues has become a fundamental infrastructural requirement. Library and e-centre survey data showed that while almost all the venues have electricity connections, 3 per cent of the libraries and 2 per cent of the e-centres did not have electricity. About 2 per cent of libraries and 8 per cent of e-centres were having solar power as their main source of electricity.

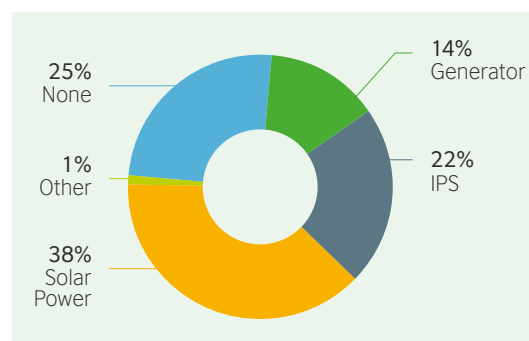
Notwithstanding the recent improvements in power situation of the country, power outages are

common in Bangladesh, particularly in the rural areas. In order to cope with such situations, it is a common practice for both commercial units and households to have backup power supplies, either through generator connections or through instant power supply (IPS). LIS venues, to an extent, have adopted such backup technologies as well, particularly the e-centres for which power supply is vital for almost all services. While only 25 per cent of libraries were found to have backup power supplies, 74 per cent of e-centres have them. More impressively, 38 per cent of the e-centres were using solar power backup, as against only 4 per cent of the libraries.

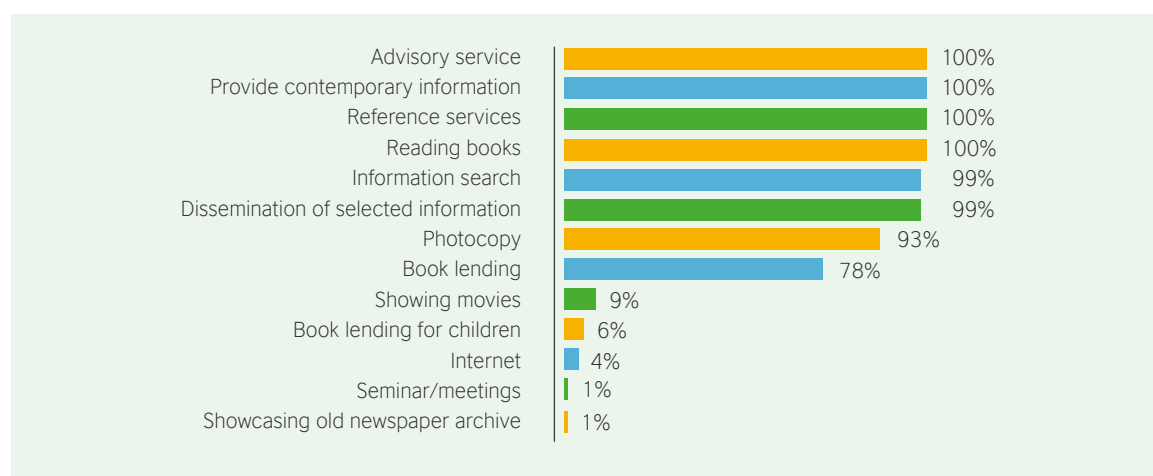
A lower proportion of rural libraries (15 per cent) have used power backup compared to urban libraries (23 per cent). On the other hand, 57 per cent of semi-urban libraries maintain them.

Figure 40: Power backup of libraries

Note: n=136 for libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

Figure 41: Power backup of e-centres

Note: n=315 for e-centres.
Source: Venue Survey data.

Figure 42: Services available in government public libraries in Bangladesh

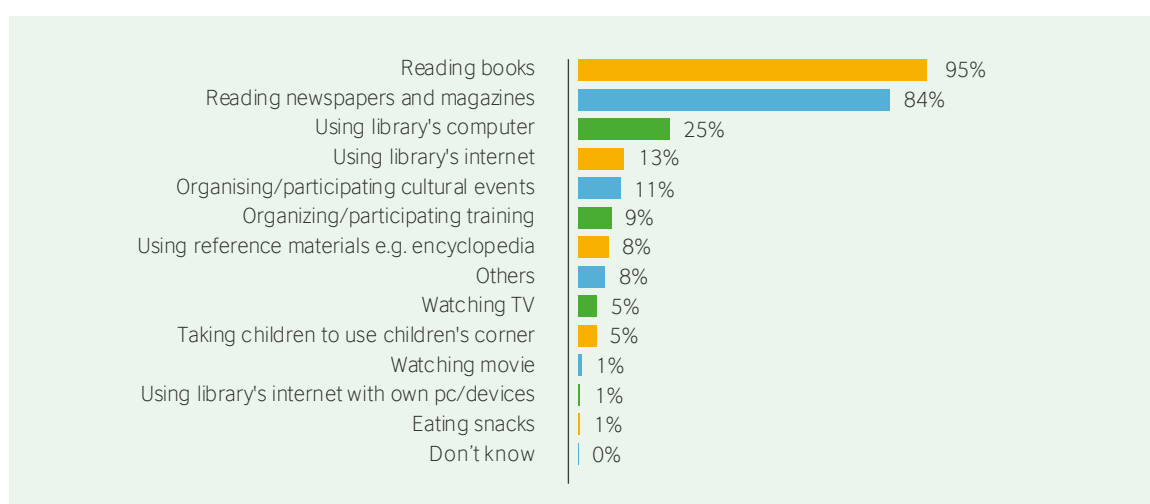
Source: Public Library Portal, GoB.²³

3.7 Information services

Libraries, no matter what their origin, purpose and target user group, have some common services. The public libraries in Bangladesh also have these services, such as providing reading materials (books, newspapers and magazines), archiving of reading resources, providing reference services, etc.

Figure 42 shows a list of services provided by the government public libraries in Bangladesh.

Field research suggests that the “traditional” library services, such as book lending and reading, predominate in all libraries in Bangladesh. However, globally, the usage of libraries has diversified over time. Public libraries all over the world are transforming themselves and becoming

Figure 43: Services accessed by library users

Note: n=769 for library users.

Source: User Survey data.

Box 4: Common services of public libraries around the world**Traditional Information services in public libraries**

- Book lending
- Newspapers and journals available for reading
- Training
- Formal and informal learning support
 - o Bibliographic services
 - o Inter-library loan
 - o Reprographic services
 - o Photocopy services
 - o Help desk
- Reference librarians
- Literacy programmes and reading support
- Business and career information services
- Community referral services
- Consumer information
- Cultural awareness and events

- Reading rooms and study space
- Meeting rooms and cultural events for community groups
- Voter registration centres and polling booths
- Children special services (for details, see Box 5)

Modern public library services

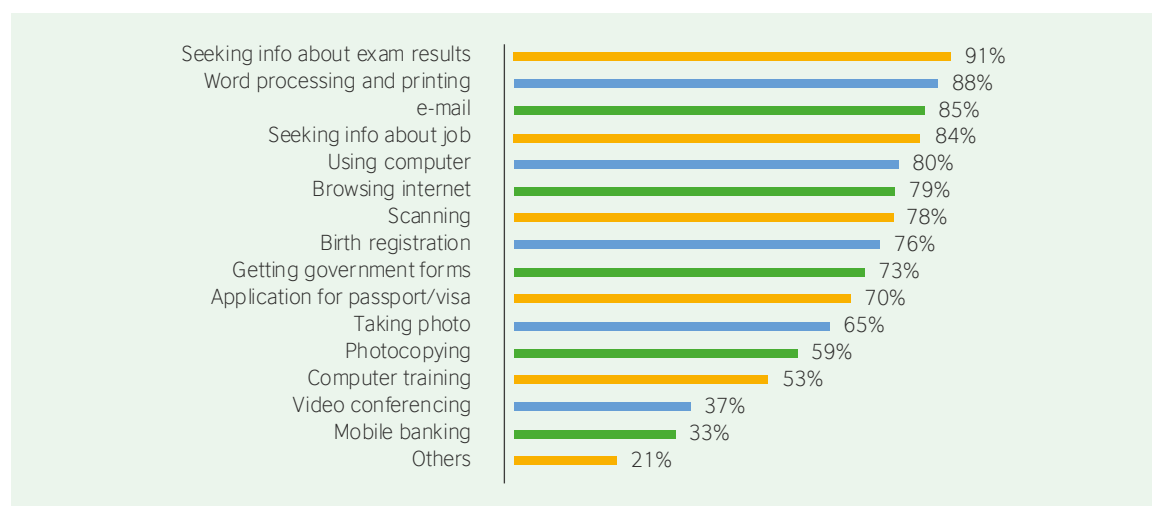
- Free access to computers and the internet
- Access to other online library websites
- Access to e-government services
- Online class or online certification programme
- Creative makerspace/activity space
- Media labs
- Intranet (data sharing, file transfer)
- Access to e-resources such as e-books
- Abstracting and indexing
- Bibliographic services
- Printing and scanning facilities

Source: Authors' compilation based on Zickuhr, Rainie and Purcell (2013), Islam (2011), Siddike et. al. (2014).

more multifunctional, which means they are changing the content and nature of their services.

The library survey data shows that only 9 per cent of government libraries show movies and merely 1 per cent use their space for organising seminars or meetings. ICT facilities are at the core of a modern library. Only 4 per cent of these government libraries are reported to have internet services available for the public.

Current provision of such cultural or modern information services does not match the existing demand. The library user survey data shows that about 25 per cent and 13 per cent of library users (regardless of type of library they visit) come to the library to use computers and internet services. Meanwhile, on average, 10 per cent of library users visit a library to participate in cultural functions, attend exhibitions or participate in competitions and training.

Figure 44: Types of services availed by e-centre users

Note: n=1280 for e-centre users.

Source: User Survey data.

People are more inclined to visit e-centres such as telecentres, UISCs or cybercafés for information and ICT related services such as searching for exam results, services related to word processing and printing, searching for job or employment

related information, communication through e-mail and using computers and the internet. Figure 44 presents the services accessed by e-centre users.

Case Study 4: A modern multipurpose library

The libraries of the British Council serve as the main platform for its English language teaching, education and society, and the arts. The British Council has recently reopened its Dhaka library as a new multipurpose centre after a period of renovation. It has resources of approximately 17,000 printed books and 3,000 CDs, DVDs and journals, along with e-resources of 85,000 e-books and 14,000 e-journals.

The multipurpose concept offers regular library services along with automated book lending facilities, silent and group reading areas, computer and internet usage facilities, a piano which members can use for their entertainment, children specific services and resources, multipurpose rooms for events and workshops, English language classes, book reading competitions, a young learners club, a library cafeteria and a prayer room.

The children's corner within the library is a child-friendly furnished space with a clear view to the entrance, enabling parents to observe their children's activities while they pursue their own activities. Along with the children's zone, the library interior design has considered light, comfort, safety and colours creating a positive environment for all of the library's activities.

The reception and customer service counters are placed centrally and the service providers are specially trained to deal with users in a polite and friendly way, especially with children. The book shelves of the library are movable which gives the opportunity for the librarians to use the space in a variety of ways, including for holding public events. The photographs used in the section-separators of this report show the diverse use of space by this library.

Case Study 5: A library beyond books

The Edward M. Kennedy (EMK) Center was established in 2012 through a partnership between the Liberation War Museum and the American Center of U.S. Embassy in Dhaka. The EMK Center was established with the aim of promoting a non-partisan platform for people committed to open dialogue, informed action, individual and artistic expression, and personal and professional development. Its services range from some limited traditional library services to access to an online-library of global depositories.

The EMK Center also has a discussion space that is open for all, a library cafeteria, an exhibition zone and a silent room for study. Besides, it offers services like student counselling for study abroad, training on education related topics, and hosting of

cultural events on a regular basis. The interior design of the space embodies the modern concept of a multipurpose library and learning centre.



3.7.1 Inclusiveness in services and resources

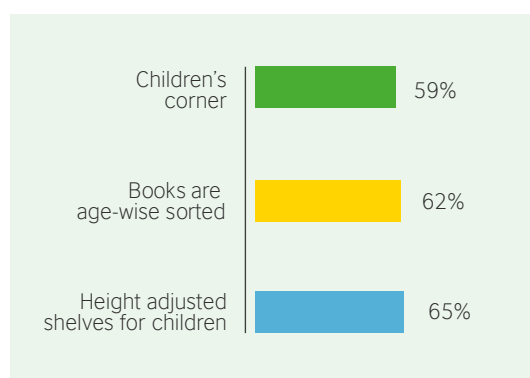
Child friendliness

A library intends to meet the diversified needs of the people, individual or groups, in a society. This requires spaces and facilities that are dedicated to the use of specific groups, including children (Koontz & Gubbin, 2010). Children are an important user base and target group for libraries and special attention is required to ensure a child-friendly environment. About 59 per cent of libraries surveyed have separate spaces for children. In a majority of the libraries (65 per cent), bookshelves for children are present, the height of which is kept within their reach. In addition, 62 per cent of libraries arrange books according to the suitability of the different age groups.

The provision of a children's corner was found to vary across geographic locations. About 66 per cent of urban libraries have a children's corner compared with 57 per cent of rural libraries and 43 per cent of semi-urban libraries.

The *Guidelines for Children's Libraries Services* by International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) suggest that among other facilities for children in a library, there should be storytelling facilities. According to the librarians surveyed under the current study, in about 21 per cent of libraries of Bangladesh there are volunteers for storytelling to children.

Figure 45: Infrastructure for children



Note: n=136 for libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

Box 5: Common services for children available in public libraries around the world

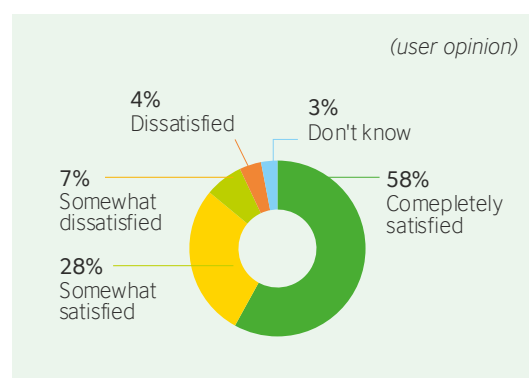
Services for children in public libraries

- Parent-child story hours
- Information and communication for education (ICT4E) and computer games
- Trained librarians and resources for rhymes, songs, etc.
- Training programmes for childcare workers
- Recordings of children's stories and songs
- Helping children with school assignments, such as homework *hotlines* and *term paper clinics*
- Organising puppet and crafts shows
- Offering dedicated spaces for kids to explore, express, and create using digital media
- A safe space within the library premises
- Child friendly furnishing and interior allowing children's easy access to resources
- Teenage advisory boards to ensure that programmes and materials for youth actually meet their needs
- Enlisting teenagers to assist in children's programmes in the library

Child Safety

Over 86 per cent of users opined that they are either completely or somewhat satisfied with children's safety concerns inside the libraries. About 11 per cent said that they are not entirely satisfied.

Figure 46: Children's safety inside library



Note: n=769 for library users.
Source: User Survey data.

Case Study 6: Libraries for children

“Boi pora kormoshuchi” or “Developing the reading habit” is a programme of Bishwo Shahitto Kendro (BSK) intended for the school children from class six to class ten only. The goal of this programme is to help children become successful readers and writers, encourage the development of higher-level thinking skills and hone their literary talents. Some BSK volunteers go to the schools each week and provide a selected list of books to the students. Each student gets one book per week. This programme is for approximately 8,000 schools and madrasas of Bangladesh. BSK also arranges a test for those students to ensure effective reading skills. Some analytical questions based on the books are provided to the students. Participants in the test are offered an attractive gift hamper. In this innovative way, BSK is creating an environment where the country's young children develop a strong foundation for becoming successful readers and writers when they have daily opportunities to play with the sounds and sights of literacy.

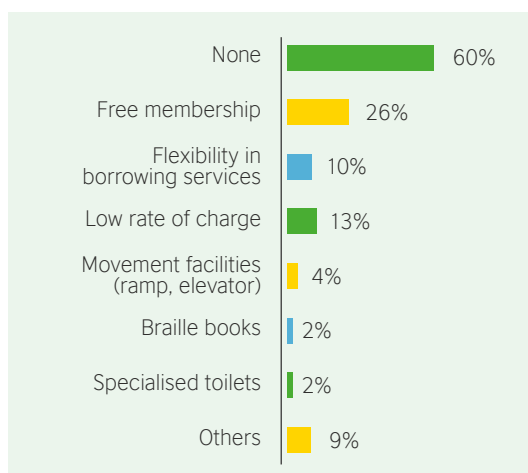
Bangladesh Shishu Academy is another children focused library service provider, which is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Women & Children Affairs. It has branches in all 64 districts of Bangladesh; among which the Shishu Academy Jessore branch is a prominent one. Students, aged

mostly below 16, are the major users of this library. On average, 12 students/children come to the library daily to read books and magazines.

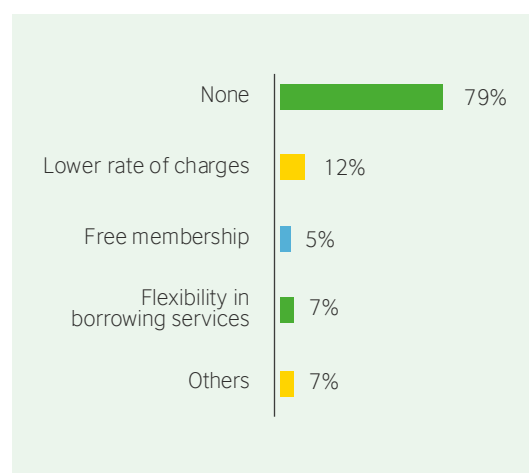
Along with reading facilities within the library, the library also allows borrowing of books. Students may take membership of the library. There are two hundred books in the library on different branches of knowledge. The library is open 6 days a week except for Friday and opens at 10 am in the morning. The library service is free of cost for all.

The central office of Bangladesh Shishu Academy provides all kinds of books, magazines and other library resources to the subsidiaries, financed centrally by the government. Thus the Jessore branch does not have any scope of purchasing resources by themselves unless special allocations are received from the authority. Additionally, the library receives an amount of BDT10,000 annually for organising book fairs. They also arrange library based educational programmes like poem recitation, quizzes, storytelling, reading competitions, etc. There is only one staff member looking after the library, with the designation of Librarian/Museum Keeper, who has a certificate course in library science along with a bachelor's degree.



Figure 47: Facilities for people with special needs

Note: n=136 for libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

Figure 48: Special facilities for female users

Note: n=136 for libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

Infrastructure and resources for people with special needs

Public libraries by definition should serve all sections of a community. Hence, in addition to infrastructural design, meeting the needs of people with special needs or disabilities, library services should also be inclusive. Unfortunately, the library survey data shows that about 60 per cent of the surveyed libraries do not have any facilities for people with special needs. Only a limited number of libraries provide suitable reading materials such as Braille books (2 per cent of libraries), ramps or elevators for mobility (4 per cent of libraries) and specialised toilets (2 per cent of libraries). About 20 per cent of libraries have waived membership fees and some have borrowing flexibilities (10 per cent) for users with special needs.

Facilities for women

A diverse range of innovations in library services have been identified such as mobile libraries and book parcel services for remote users, though more than 38 per cent of libraries in Bangladesh do not have such facilities. Only 10 per cent of libraries have mobile library services. A large portion of the surveyed libraries have a postal book lending service for members.

3.8 Library operation and management

3.8.1 Library staff

Trained and motivated library staff are vital in the technical upgrading of libraries to ensure quality services. The importance of staff and their training needs have been highlighted in a study as the solution for implementing automation in libraries (Islam & Mohd, 2012).

Continuous efforts in training are needed to help staff cope with rapid development in information technology and the changing nature of library services (Koontz & Gubbin 2010). Library staff with specialist IT knowledge are critical to the success of public libraries (Wales 2012). Librarians should not feel threatened by computers and technical developments but should be able to move forward with the new technology and take a pivotal role within organisations (Mokhtar 2012). Islam (2011) suggests that a practical digital librarianship course should be introduced and integrated into the LIS curriculum at university level in order to facilitate the management of digital content by future librarians and encourage them in making digitisation efforts.

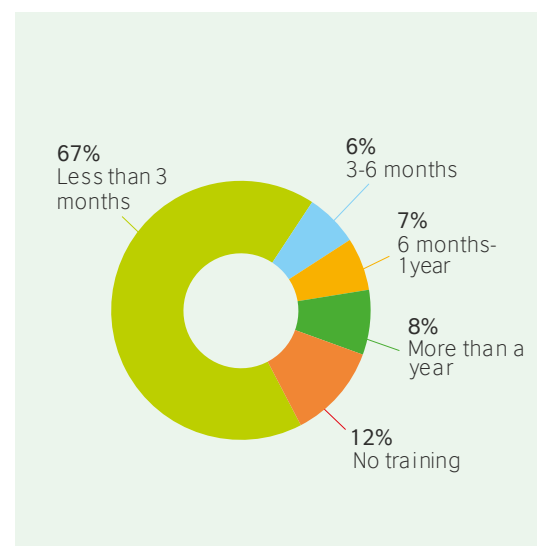
In addition to ICT competencies, librarians need to be capable of engaging with the users. They need to develop and record good relations with the target audience of libraries. In other words, they also need to be trained in soft skills (Bandyopadhyay & Majumder 2012) along with possessing some personal innate qualities (Hastings & Tennant 1996). This may also include special training on dealing with children and other users with individual area of interests or needs.

It was found from the library survey that 88 per cent of librarians have training of varied duration and types. However, 67 per cent have training of less than 3 months. Only about 12 per cent of the librarians do not have any training.

The availability of trained librarians varies between urban (94 per cent), semi-urban (100 per cent) and rural libraries (83 per cent).

About 77 per cent of librarians were found to have training in basic library management.

Figure 49: Training duration of librarians



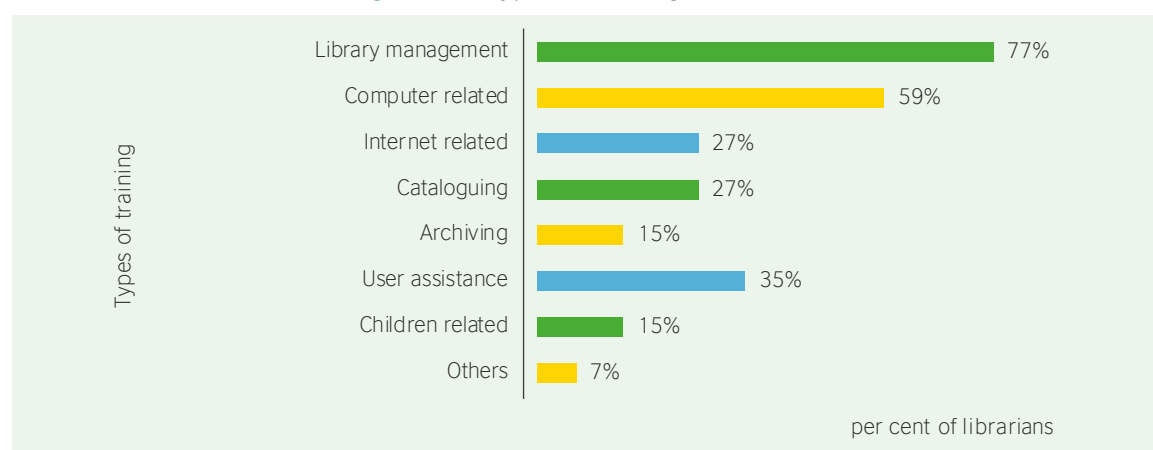
Note: n=136 for libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

Table 8: Training of librarians by geographic location of libraries

	No training (in per cent)	Less than 3 months (in per cent)	3 - 6 months (in per cent)	6 months to 1 year (in per cent)	More than a year (in per cent)
Rural	17	68	5	4	5
Semi-urban	0	57	7	21	14
Urban	6	68	9	6	11

Note: n=75 for rural libraries, n=14 for semi-urban libraries, and n=47 for urban libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

Figure 50: Types of training for librarians



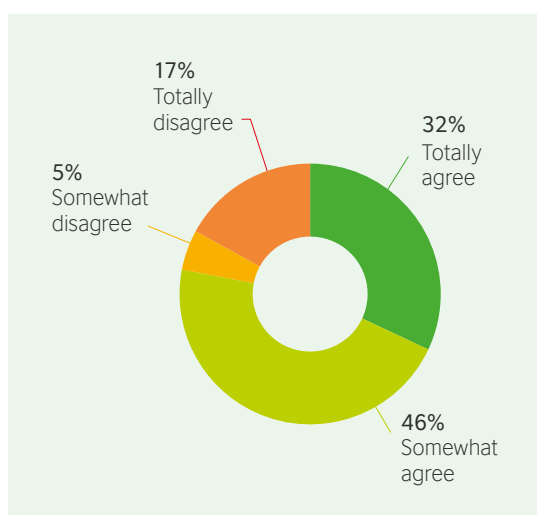
Note: n=120 for libraries (librarians with training).
Source: Venue Survey data.

Besides, 27 per cent have also received training in cataloguing. About 59 per cent of librarians were trained in computer use and 27 per cent in using internet. About 35 per cent of librarians were also trained in user assistance.

Despite the management training, very traditional and outdated management practices were observed in some libraries during the field visits. Some librarians were found to exercise old management autonomy and practicing their control over library possessions. A culture of keeping new resources locked away in anticipation of damage, theft or loss was observed. Libraries were seen to have computers for public but kept them turned off during most of the operational hours mostly in fear of technical malfunction. Librarian training on change of perception regarding resource handling in line with modern library practices could be helpful in this regard.

Overall, users of libraries in Bangladesh appear to be satisfied with the skills of the librarians. Almost 78 per cent of the users expressed satisfaction to varying degrees. While this may reflect the impact of the current level of training the librarians have, the opinions may have also stemmed from the fact that users have set their service expectations from the status quo and have not been introduced to modern day library concepts.

Figure 51: User opinion - library staff are skilled



Note: n=769 for library users.
Source: User Survey data.

Library volunteerism and volunteer management

The survey indicated that the use of volunteers exists to a limited degree in some of the libraries of Bangladesh. In about one-fifth of the libraries, volunteers were engaged for the purpose of storytelling to children. However, for wider use to be made of volunteers, a number of issues would first have to be addressed: existing librarians and other library staff will need to be trained in volunteer management; a written policy should be introduced to specify the tasks of these volunteers and their relationship to the library operation and staff (Koontz & Gubbin 2010); recruitment, orienting and training of volunteers, supervision of volunteers (delegating, evaluating, addressing issues, rewarding, etc.) and defining volunteer and staff (McNamara 1997). Given the fact that the issues are new for many libraries in Bangladesh, library associations may consider preparing localised guidelines to help libraries in establishing their own Volunteer Management Systems.

3.8.2 Inter-library resource sharing

The libraries of Bangladesh, to a large extent, lack resource sufficiency. An effective response to this issue could be made through the resource sharing between libraries. Library associations can play an important role in this regard. In the late 1990s, the phenomenon of consortia was gaining importance in the country, facilitating cooperation or resource sharing between libraries. Although in those years the sharing was confined to book sharing, many constraints including physical distance between the libraries restricted the practice.

The growing availability of digital content provides an answer to this problem globally, although it has yet to be popularised in Bangladesh. A huge level of digitisation by libraries, museums and archival institutions in other countries has led to an explosion of digital content. Many of these institutions have now developed common digitisation projects and web portals (Yarrow et al. 2008). In Bangladesh, a similar drive towards digitisation is needed, utilising and developing on the existing associations through measures such as consortia formation and

Box 6: Training opportunities for the library professionals

There are no significant institutionalised training programmes for library professionals in Bangladesh; neither foundation/pre-job training nor in-service training. However, the government occasionally nominates some selected government library professionals for training on the basis of specific criteria such as skill, experience and the need of a particular library. In most cases, these training programmes are conducted for 5-10 days, with some exceptions 1-2 months training is provided. Topics for the government training programmes include library administration, catalogue management, library user services, archiving, computer operation, children user services and gender awareness.

There are, however, some individualised training initiatives. For example, the Department of Public

Libraries carries out two training programmes with very limited participation. The department keeps an allocation of TK. 800,000 (about US\$1,500) in its recurring budget for this purpose.

The National Book Centre also organises a 10-day training on the management of non-government libraries, readers' service and application of ICTs. From different locations, 55 library professionals took part in this programme in 2013.

Some of the NGO libraries have training programmes for their librarians. For example, BRAC Gonokendra librarians receive a 11-day training on library management.

Table 9: Training programmes of the Department of Public Libraries

Name of training programme	Duration	No. of participants (2013)
Application of ICT in public Libraries	5 Days	20
Library administration and readers service activities	7 Days	70

awareness training (Islam 2013), along with building an effective network of printed resource sharing. With the advent of ICTs in libraries, resource sharing between libraries has gained in potential and practices. To improve on the current resource limitations of the libraries, emphasis needs to be put on maintaining an active resource sharing system among the libraries (Mannan & Bose 1998).

Resource sharing among libraries in the traditional sense would mean exchanging printed library materials or inter-library loans among libraries in different geographic locations. In a modern ICT context, this idea has been transformed into sharing electronic content, databases, catalogues and other online networked information (Rahman,

et al. 2006). Considering the ICT advancement, library resource sharing and networking now refers to the collaborative activities of both library and information centres (Mannan & Bose 1998).

In Bangladesh, the majority of the libraries still do not have access to full text digital information resources (Islam, 2013). Access to electronic information resources by the academic community in Bangladesh has been limited mostly due to poor ICT infrastructure and the cost associated with accessing such resources (Rahman et. al. 2006).

Notable existing resource sharing and networking initiatives in Bangladesh include the National Health Library and Documentation Center (NHLDOC),

Population Information Network (POPIN), UN Library Network in Bangladesh (UN L-Net BD)²⁴ and UGC Digital Library (UDL).²⁵

The library survey data for the current study showed that in the absence of ICT integration and digitisation of resources in the country, the resource sharing scenario is far from impressive. Only about 12 per cent of libraries reported to have inter-library exchange services.

For improving the situation, ICT infrastructure with high-speed links and a stable network should also be ensured by the government (Rahman et al. 2006). For this purpose, Government district libraries could be developed as Digital hubs with enhanced facilities and access to nationally developed digital contents. These district libraries could then share those contents with union level libraries and UISCs under that district through a stable network among them. This process would help in maximum utilisation of the existing infrastructure, avoiding duplication of digitisation efforts and lowering the associated cost through sharing in a network. However, while digitisation is suggested, it also should be taken into account that global industrial giants in the sales of digital content and e-books (Amazon, Apple, Google and others) often enforce compatibility of the content with certain devices and applications, which, in the long-term, has the potential to intensify the digital divide. Any steps towards the digitisation of library resources should consider the challenges of coordination between government and NGO library resource sharing, copyright issues of publication, lack of e-reading devices in the libraries and the absence of mobile-friendly versions of all content in Bangladesh.

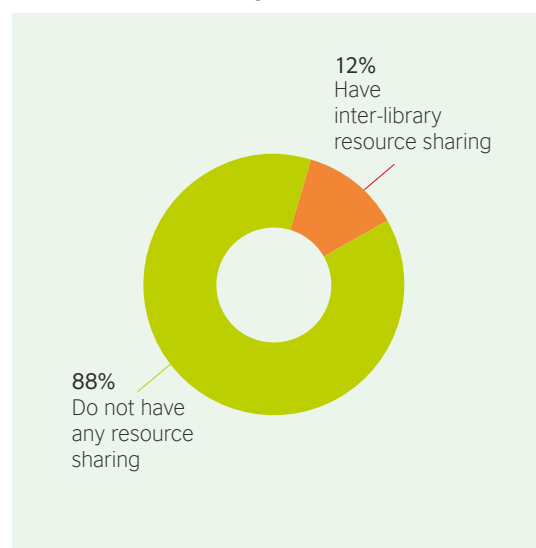
3.8.3 Managing automation

Uses of ICTs in automating libraries through process automation and virtual customer

services are dramatically improving library concepts and designs globally (Wales 2012). The introduction of automated self-service, now often using radio frequency identification (RFID) technology, for searching, borrowing and returning resources in libraries can have significant impact on the efficient use of staff space (Public Libraries News 2015) and provide valuable data to the support management of libraries.

Apart from information search by the users with computers and internet connectivity, browsing or searching resources have become the other major use of computers and networks in the libraries of the modern era. The benefits of ICT integration are only beginning to take place in the libraries in Bangladesh, which suffer from space and staff shortages and could thus harness the benefits of the introduction of self-service through automation. On the other hand, automation requires the expensive installation of equipment where funding from the government may prove to be inadequate in Bangladesh.

Figure 52: Inter-library resource sharing scenario



*Note: n=136 for libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.*

²⁴ For details, visit: <http://unicdhaka.org/referencelibrary/un-library-network/>

²⁵ UGC Digital Library (UDL) was formed in June 2012 and hosted by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh. For details, visit: <http://www.ugc.gov.bd/activities>

Equipment to facilitate self-borrowing and return of resources is only being introduced to a handful of libraries very recently. Even digital catalogues are not available in most libraries. About 72 per cent of the libraries in Bangladesh still use manual catalogues, while only 4 per cent have digital indexing of resources. A significant number of libraries (24 per cent) have no indexing of resources at all, indicating their management weaknesses.

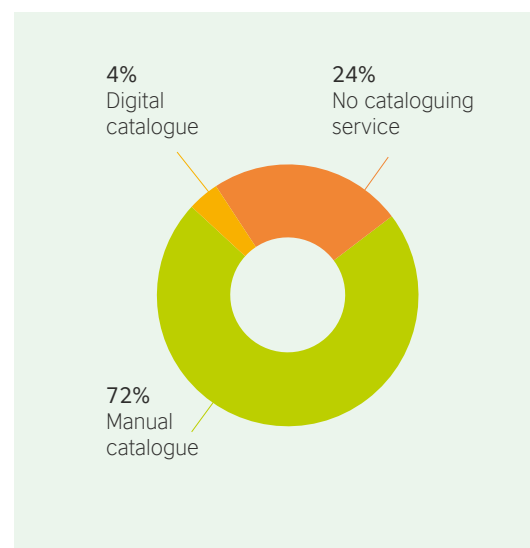
Digital indexing is another recent development in modern libraries, which requires computers and networked internet connectivity in the libraries. The process has gradually made the task of finding library resources more efficient and convenient for the users (Sciacchitano et al. 2006). Integrated library systems (ILS), which automates cataloguing, circulation, acquisitions and other library management functions using a common database, have rarely been implemented in public libraries in Bangladesh.

The cost-benefits of open source software availability in recent times may be utilised in this context. Given the resource constraints, public libraries in Bangladesh are yet to venture into automation. In a study of library automation in Bangladesh in 2012, respondents identified lack of trained professionals as the most significant limitation in implementing automation in libraries (Islam & Mohd 2012). So far, some academic libraries like BUET (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology) academic library, East-West University library and others have introduced a level of automation services, targeting mostly online search and the use of resources. Given the limitations of available public resources, Bangladesh may need to seek assistance and support from library development partners in this regard.

3.8.4 Marketing, promotion and outreach

Like any other community venture, libraries need promotional activities and efforts to increase their outreach. Apart from traditional forms of advertising like posters and leaflets, there are

Figure 53: Resource indexing in libraries



Note: n=136 for libraries.

Source: Venue Survey data.

many innovative approaches in practice globally in the promotion of libraries. Hosting cultural programmes or events helps to introduce the library environment and facilities to potential new members. Traditionally, activities to support early reading are used to attract both the children and their parents and thus the community. There are other targeted programmes that can be used such as band nights for youths, sessions for new mothers on home works, cooking classes, etc. (Wales 2012).

Social media marketing is a growing phenomenon among libraries (Fernandez 2009) and many academic libraries have created their Facebook profiles to reach more users typically focusing on library events, resource updates, etc. (Wan 2011). In a survey at Western Michigan University (WMU) a majority of respondents found Facebook to be a useful and engaging medium to learn about library resources and services (Sachs, et al. 2011).

Several traditional forms of promotion were identified by this study, which was carried out by the libraries in Bangladesh. About one-fifth of the libraries advertise their services through the notice boards of local schools and other educational institutions. A similar proportion of libraries publish posters and leaflets for public distribution. About 4 per cent of libraries use

Facebook or other social media pages/posts. A few libraries use e-mail and SMS to promote their services.

The library user survey revealed that most of the users (about 56 per cent) wished to learn about the news and services of the library from the

library authority. Advertising through SMS, email, posters, leaflet, and promotion in local newspapers or social media such as Facebook and Twitter were also chosen by users as their preferred way of learning about the library and its services.

Case Study 7: Automation in university libraries

Library Automation is a notable feature of *BRAC University (BRACU) library* named '*Ayesha Abed Library*'. Using modern technologies, BRACU library provides services and a large collection of books and resources. This library implemented a number of projects including DSpace, Koha, VuFind and Drupal using open source software. The DSpace project is for developing an institutional repository. BRACU library uses this to manage, preserve and disseminate research outputs generated by BRACU faculty, students and researchers (www.dspace.org). BRACU library implemented an integrated library system (ILS) using Koha (www.koha.org). This system helps to create and record bibliographic information in electronic form and makes the information services of the BRACU library stronger. VuFind is a discovery tool which helps users to find catalogue records, digital library items, databases, etc. BRACU library implemented this tool (<http://vufind.org>) for the users and also built a Koha-VuFind Driver. BRACU library also uses a website based on the Drupal content management system (<https://drupal.org>). This system is very flexible, stable and secure. To increase the capacity of library professionals, BRACU library also conducted some workshops and training programmes on Koha, DSpace, VuFind, Drupal, etc.



Among the academic libraries of Bangladesh, *East West University (EWU) library* is one of the pioneers in digitisation. Established in 1996, EWU library provides access to a wide range of information resources both in electronic and print resources and has successfully installed automation systems in all aspects of its services.

EWU uses library East-West University Library Management Information System (EWULIBMIS) to support and manage various library activities including barcode based circulation, catalogue searching, membership information, borrowing limit warning, fine/due determination, etc. The library website (<http://lib.ewubd.edu>) is designed to allow the user to reserve resources online, search library collections, and access the user guide and the rules and regulations of using the library service. Along with traditional print books, references, periodicals, CDs, DVDs and audio cassettes, the library provides access to several full text e-resources. Over 10,000 titled journals can be directly accessed from EWU campus and the system-generated new arrival lists are provided to members on a regular basis. EWU library is modern in its use of computers, its access to digitised resources and in the design of its moveable shelves for increased accommodation.

EWU library is the Secretariat for the Digital Library Network of South Asia (DLNetSA) which is a regional consortium of South Asia.²⁸ EWU library has led the library automation process of several government and non-government libraries in Bangladesh including Rajshahi University library, the National Library, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, BANBIES, and Eastern University library.

The Future Library Landscape of Bangladesh



Libraries have always been and always will be an essential part of a person's make-up. People are enriched in various ways through books and reading. Although there is a strong move towards the digital, and we are also a part of that movement; nevertheless, I strongly believe that we should have libraries containing hard copies of books, that a person can feel and touch, in the 85,000 villages of Bangladesh, and this need not be a government initiative. I feel that education, and particularly reading, is such a pivotal factor in a person's life that the private sector should come forward and help set up (with government support) a library in each and every village. A person engaged in reading and enlightening oneself will stay away from any dishonest and unlawful activities and thus leading to a more progressive Bangladesh.

Abul Khair
Chairman
Bengal Foundation



The British Council multipurpose library space turned into a stage for a musical choir at the launch of a comic character.

4 The Future Library Landscape of Bangladesh

4.1 Following Global Innovations

Public library systems across the world are at a turning point. The way we access and consume information has changed dramatically in the twenty-first century. Increase in alternatives in services provided by public libraries is considered to be a crucial factor. While traditional libraries serve as the source of knowledge and information (Freeman 2005), availability of internet and popularity of electronic versions of reading resources are believed by some to indicate the extinction of public libraries.

Despite this ongoing debate, such concern is often exaggerated (Kent 1996). A number of studies have shown that traditional printed books are still preferred over e-books (Silverman 2014; Publishing Technology 2015; Baron 2015). Nevertheless, it has become imperative for the public libraries to be upgraded to adapt with people's changing knowledge and information seeking behaviour (Cabe & Resource 2003).²⁶

In Bangladesh, the context for library services and their upgrading may be different from more economically developed countries, but some of the same challenges remain. There is great potential to adapt and localise some of the innovative measures, which libraries in other countries are using, as a way to prepare the roadmap for the future of libraries in Bangladesh.

Efforts to prepare the libraries in Bangladesh for the future need to consider the major features and roles of the modern day library services. Libraries play a role in building a Knowledge Society, an inclusive service delivery that

endeavours to serve the community and a communal "space" for all sorts of purposes. Libraries keep knowledge products that are not limited in print materials.

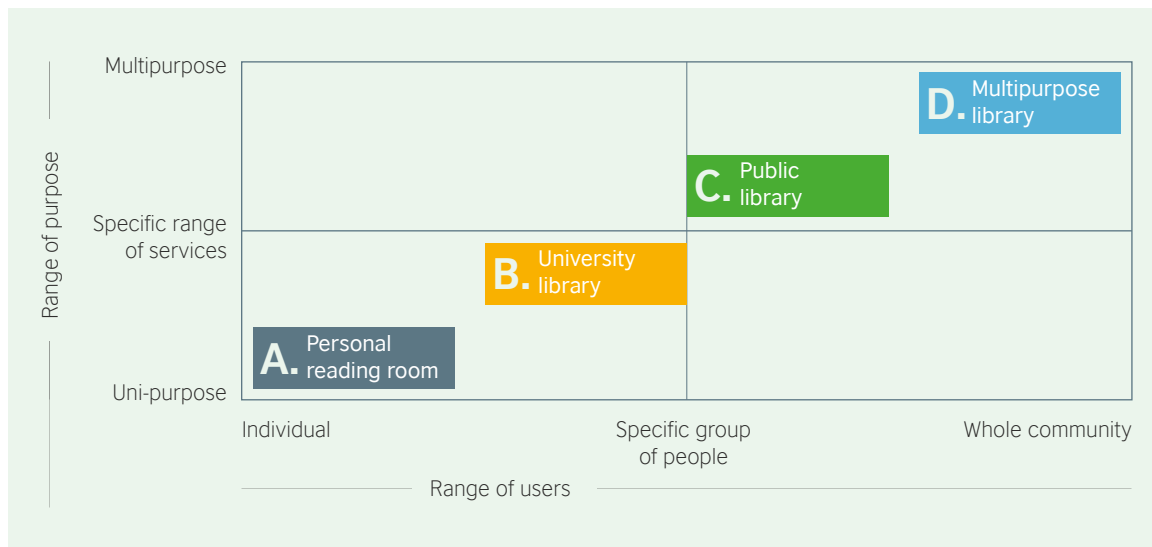
Building a Knowledge Society is the most essential purpose of a public library (Mannan and Bose, 1998; Choy, 2007; Freeman 2005; Iwhiwhu and Eyekpeggha, 2009; Latimer, 2011; Savenije, 2011; Gruszczynski and Maciej, 2014), and to do so, the resources and services of libraries need to target all citizens. Even in today's internet age, libraries can play an essential role in developing knowledge and providing information (Uhegbu, 2001; Zickuhr et al., 2013).

As Figure 54 depicts, library users can be viewed as ranging from an individual up to the community as a whole. Likewise, library services can range from the very basic and individual activities of reading books to the wider spectrum of cultural and community offerings.

Academic or specialised libraries only target a specific group of people with selected services, while traditional public libraries mostly cater to educated groups who come to read and/or lend books. Multipurpose public libraries aim to cater to all segments of a community, educated or not, with a large collection of knowledge products and services. In effect, public libraries developed in this way are becoming a new kind of social institution which can assist more people in the community and meet a wider range of their needs.

The public library as a social, educational and recreational space is becoming increasingly

26 Libraries in twenty-first century have been a hot topic for many researchers (Webb 2004; Allen 2005; Wenxiang 2005; Goulding 2012; Macdonald 2012; Mehra & Davis 2015). Many different aspects and approaches have been mentioned for modern and future libraries; *participatory and collaborative approaches* to library service (Delaney & Bates 2015), *new role of information professionals* and academic library staff (Delaney & Bates 2014), *changes in access to information provision* and *changed design of library spaces* (Latimer, 2011), *transition to digital and web based educational resources* (Beetham & Sharpe 2013), *user ease and meeting opportunity along with core information services* (Wales 2012), *management of noise level* in line with users natural use of library (Franks & Asher 2014).

Figure 54: Types of libraries based on target user group and service provisions

overshadowed by commercial alternatives that offer quick and efficient gratification for citizens (Rooney-Browne & McMenemy 2010). However, in modern libraries, the public library as a place for socialisation becomes popular (Coravu 2010; Yates 2014) when the library provides a comfortable and secure space for information services as well as for social entertainment (Wales 2012).

To ensure the multipurpose use of a public library, innovative space management for delivering its services has become essential. The newly defined libraries are a network of richly described entities—works, people, places, concepts, events, etc., with easy-to-follow links between them (OCLC, 2014). In modern terms, public libraries are not only a depository of knowledge, but are also a space to create social capital (Audunson et al., 2007; Johnson, 2010; Edwards et al., 2014). The public library as a service provider is also facing increasing demands to become a multi-purpose service provider. Public libraries are now housing social spaces, cultural activities and collaborative initiatives ranging from voluntary storytelling for children, to innovation labs such as Makerspaces.²⁷

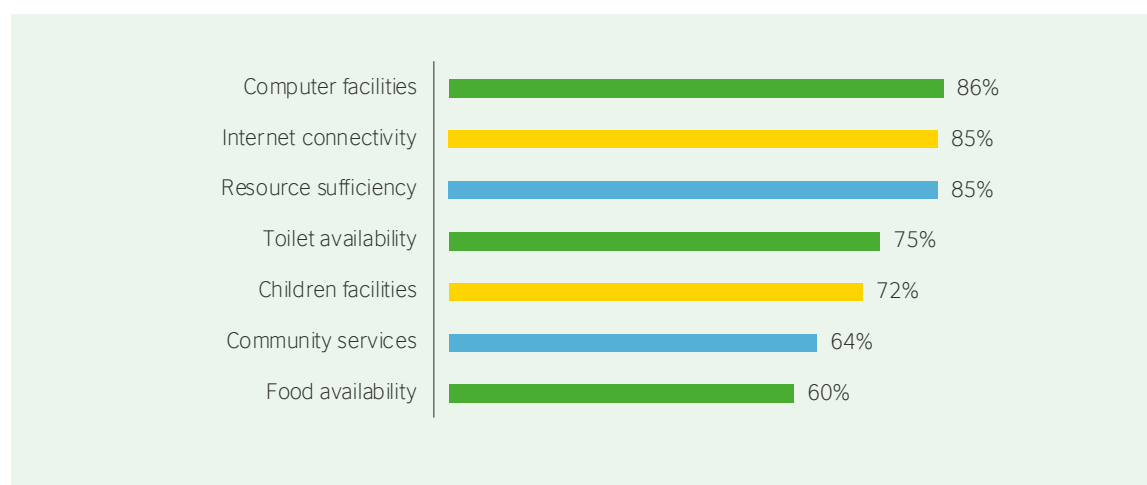
Many libraries of modern times have gone beyond the “silent reading spaces” that traditional libraries used to provide. There are even examples of “bookless libraries” like the Bexar County Digital Library Texas, USA, where all their resources are in e-readers with no physical books at all. There are libraries, for example Cambridgeshire Library (United Kingdom), that provide a range of civic services including registry of births, marriages and deaths (Worpole & Futures 2004). The “multipurpose use of space” concept is being practiced by the Royal Library in Copenhagen which includes a concert hall, exhibition galleries, bookshop, café and restaurant on top of a traditional library (Hellen 2009).

4.2 Features of Bangladesh’s future libraries

4.2.1 Multipurpose libraries

Globally, the ICT revolution and cultural transformation have changed the library services and resources from mere books on shelves to CDs, videos, DVDs, talking books, computer software and internet access (Worpole & Futures 2004). Game tables, more comfortable seating,

²⁷ Makerspaces, also known as hackerspaces or fablabs, are creative, ‘do-it-yourself’ spaces where people collaboratively innovate, make and learn. Makerspaces have hardware tools and supplies, software, electronics, craft or even 3D printers to craft and invent. A number of public libraries around the world are housing Makerspaces.

Figure 55: Top development priorities perceived by librarians

Note: $n=136$ for libraries.

Source: Venue Survey data.

additional group study space, coffee kiosks and even full-service cafés have been added to libraries (Yates 2014).

Interestingly, users and librarians of Bangladesh also share the same dream of a multipurpose library. The household level public survey revealed that the public demand for information services is diverse. A similar opinion was reflected by the librarians. When asked about the top development priorities for their respective libraries, 86 per cent of librarians emphasised improving computer facilities. Internet connectivity and resource sufficiency are the next most important development priorities for them (85 per cent of opinions in both cases). In this multiple response question, 64 per cent of librarians wanted to introduce community services, while 60 per cent wanted food availability for the users.

The concept of using the library space for such multiple uses has begun in Bangladesh to a very limited extent but mostly in urban areas. EMK Center, Bengal Art Gallery, Bishwo Shahitto Kendro, and the British Council library are seen to offer multiple public services other than only book reading and lending services. They provide (often on a paid-for basis) space for art exhibitions, entertainment programmes for children and coffee and community socialisation events. Book shops such as Batighor and Pathhok

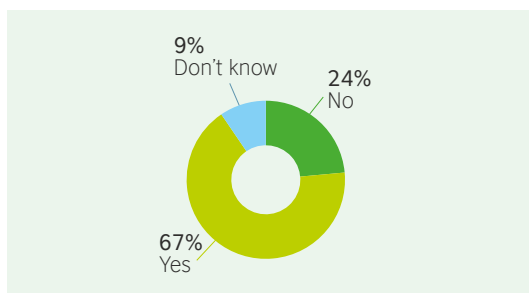
Shomabesh have initiated the idea of reading facilities along with buying options in Chittagong and Dhaka city, respectively.

4.2.2 Space to connect people

Using the public library can be a positive social experience for many (Koontz & Gubbin 2010). The modern library is all about making connections—connections between different groups of library users, connections between library users and library staff, connections between library users and resources (Carol 2003). From this perspective, in addition to reading rooms, the space of a modern library should facilitate individual or group work and study, use of new media and support, teaching process, socialisation, etc.

Libraries are increasingly being designed to enable people to do things together. Individual work spaces are an alternative for users preferring a quiet space to study. On the other hand, group work spaces allow students to solve certain seminar assignments which require teamwork and help them develop communication skills and a collaborative spirit. Moreover, the library building is now seen as a facility supporting an improved role in higher education with classrooms, meeting rooms and computer labs (Coravu 2010).

Figure 56: Potential of mobile libraries – user opinion



Note: n=769 library users.

Source: Public Survey data.

A modern library should try to reach people who cannot normally access the library, and this can be done through mobile library services.

According to the survey findings, a significant number of library users (67 per cent) think that mobile library services can be an effective way of serving their locality.

Bishwa Shahitya Kendra's mobile libraries and Shidhulai Swanirbhar Sangstha's Boat library initiative are currently serving this demand for mobile libraries. To know more about these initiatives, see Case Study 8.

Case Study 8: Taking libraries home and reaching the hard to reach

Bishwo Shahitto Kendro (BSK) is the pioneer in Bangladesh for the concept of the mobile library in vans and buses. Currently, the mobile library programme covers about 120,000 readers in 1,800 localities of 56 districts of Bangladesh. There are a total of 44 mobile libraries of BSK. Anyone can be a member paying a minimum membership fee. The Mobile Library units visit selected localities as per a weekly schedule and stay for 30-60 minutes, depending on the number of members/readers of the particular spot. Additionally, they offer classes, a nationwide reading programme, and they provide books for the students.

Utilising the river based eco-system of Bangladesh as a communication channel rather than considering it as hindrance to information services, Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha - a non-profit organisation - started its journey with mobile information services on floating vessels for people in hard to reach waterside communities. Currently, operating through 54 floating schools, libraries, health clinics and floating training centres equipped with wireless internet access, they are serving close to 97,000 people in flood-prone areas of Bangladesh. These boats have fitted solar panels for power supply to computers, lights and medical equipment. The central library of Shidhulai has internet enabled computers and 50,000 books and periodicals. The Centre for Library and Technology of Shidhulai in Chalanbeel region is equipped with more than 100

computers. Other than library and information services, they provide training on computer, technology, sustainable agriculture and human rights. These *mobile information fleets* are self-sustained through their technological innovation products such as Surya (sun) Hurricane (lantern), Floating Rainwater Harvesting Centre, etc. Shidhulai has been awarded with The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Access to Learning Award 2005 and has been considered as a replicable model, both locally and globally.



4.2.3 Demand-based access to information

Rather than a supply driven access to information, library services must be designed according to the information demand of the people. And with the rapidly changing demand of the people, libraries need to diversify their services in a dynamic way (Worpole & Futures 2004; Agboola et al. 2013). Information stored and supplied by the library must also be in local language, along with resources of other languages.

Every individual needs information in every step of life and naturally people's information needs can be extremely diversified. As described in section 3.4, the information needs of the people generally fall in six broad categories: (i) health, (ii) education, (iii) daily necessities, (iv) financial and other services, (v) entertainment, and (vi) employment. The majority of needs are related to people's basic survival, forming the base of the information-need hierarchy, while governance and accountability related information form the top of the need-pyramid (Ahamed 2015). Future libraries in Bangladesh and layout of library services will need to be designed keeping this hierarchy as the central consideration.

Figure 57: Hierarchy of information needs



Source: Ahamed (2015).

4.3 Infrastructure and Services

4.3.1 Design considerations

Library buildings have gained a much higher profile than before and therefore increased their marketing value, for both their exterior and interior designs. New library buildings often look like sculptures that seem to attract broad attention and admiration from the general public.

Figure 58: Battery Park City Library, New York



Image source: www.nypl.org/locations/battery-park-city

Figure 59: External view of Seattle Central Library



Image source: www.spl.org/locations/central-library

At the same time, the design of libraries and library services has to balance between four key factors—people, programme, partners and place (Worpole & Futures 2004). Today's libraries are characterised by varying types of spaces that are flexible in nature. Library buildings also give tangibility to the library as an organisation and act as a face for the library as a civic institution

(Wagner 1992). Thus, architects have to keep in mind several factors of usability while designing libraries. Those factors may include, but are not limited to:

- the user profile
- local environmental issues
- the site location
- the library programme or services
- special community needs
- choice of building material
- space use culture i.e. user perceptions of a library building
- sustainability issues; funding, maintenance and disaster management

When thinking of designing a *Rural Community Library*, it is important to identify and focus on the user perceptions of a library building in its socio-economic context. A prescribed facility

Case Study 9: A community library

Mushfika Memorial Library was established in 1996 with the aim of serving the rural society. It was a small initiative by 10-12 students of class 10 in the village, with only 35 books in its collection. Eventually, they all moved to Dhaka, and built affiliations with different groups interested in library development.

The library is open to all, however the main targeted audience is youth. Students have a special student collection among the library books but are free to read all sort of books. Users are allowed to borrow books and take them home for a maximum of 15 days. Elderly people visit the library mainly to read newspapers and religious books. Their collection is about 3,000 books currently with highest seating capacity of 15 people at a time. On average, 5-10 users visit the library daily, some even travel 10 km. Students usually travel by cycle to the library. Girls come with their guardians. The operation hours of the library are 3pm to 8pm at night and the library is kept open 7 days a week. Given the timings and the distance of the users, library management is considering changing the opening hours, especially targeting women users who find it more convenient to visit in the mornings. For the last 16 years, library membership at Mushfika was free but currently there is an annual charge of Tk. 100 per membership.

Other than reading and borrowing services, there is a regular publication from the library named 'Methhopoth' which intends to nurture writing skills among rural students. They also provide the library space on rental service for meetings and seminars.

Mushfika library arranges small book fairs comprising of 8-10 stalls. Nearby schools, library and publishing houses are invited to attend the fair and Mushfika library ensures the provision of security, electricity and stalls to promote book reading and enhance reading habits among people. During the book fair, it also arranges art competitions, debates, poem recitations, and spelling competitions in the same premises, which remain open for all. These fairs usually are for 7 days from 10 a.m. in the morning up to 10 p.m. at night. Prior to the competitions, school head teachers meet to set the standards for these competitions.



without the socio-cultural connection and conformity hinders the actual purpose and success of the project. That is to say, the design features, architectural elements and spaces of the building which the *users*, in this case rural people, both educated and non-educated knowledge and information seekers, would expect and enjoy to see in a new or re-furbished library and information facility.

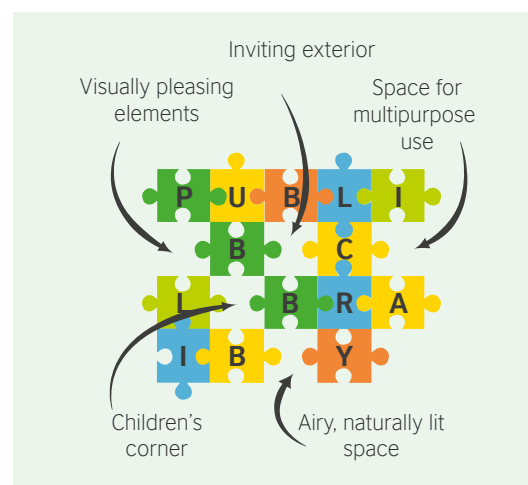
Architecturally, the building should embody features that conform to the aesthetic and social values of the local culture so that it is inviting rather than overwhelming to the local people.

The architecture of a rural community library should take into consideration the following:

- Strategic site location to ensure access to all parts of the community
- A vernacular approach to form and structure to ensure a positive emotional response to the building
- Environmental challenges such as floods
- Local building materials for affordable and easy maintenance
- Achieving multi-use spaces, i.e. to accommodate community awareness programmes and specialised training sessions
- Connectivity with the outdoors to enhance its social role as a place
- Ability to be flexible in responding to the community's needs, such as convertibility to a *voting* centre during election time
- Reflection of community identities, such as cultural reflections of small ethnic communities.

Design, creative imagination, and the use of light and materials combined with new technology create new architectural attractions, often of international quality and standing. With its focus on culture and knowledge, the library building

Figure 60 Missing parts of public libraries which need to be addressed in Bangladesh



4.3.2 Location and visibility

It is crucially important for a library to be suitably located for the convenience of users to encourage them in using the facilities (Withers 1974). In this regard, Koontz (1992) concluded that the location of libraries has a long-term effect on library use. Obokoh and Arokoyu (1991) applied the central-place theory in studying public libraries of Nigeria and found that time and cost of travel to libraries are the main determinants of people's frequency of library usage. Japzon and Gong (2005) also found that social connections and integration affect people's use of the library. Koontz (1992) recommended that location decisions of libraries should take into consideration the geographic coverage of the library in terms of its intended user base and the characteristics of the people living within the area. Bangladesh should also follow these criteria while deciding the location of future libraries: it appears from the survey responses to have a good track record to date in this respect.

4.3.3 Convenience

To attract and support users, libraries need to be made comfortable, and to encourage people to stay longer they require provisions for toilets, refreshment and relaxation (Worpole & Futures 2004). At the same time, a content interior with

adequate light and air circulation, comfortable temperature control and minimal noise level need to be ensured (Withers 1974). The status of libraries in Bangladesh from this perspective tends to vary, often between geographic areas. In the villages a typical library structure is often not a particularly welcoming space, and likely to become uncomfortable in hot or wet weather (Katz & Bon 2014).

4.3.4 Access to global knowledge and resource hubs

To improve on the current resource limitations of libraries, emphasis needs to be put on maintaining an active resource sharing system among libraries (Mannan & Bose 1998). A number of such initiatives have already been started in Bangladesh (for detail see section 3.8.2); however, considering the importance and benefits of resource sharing, similar initiatives need to be prioritised for the development of future libraries.

4.3.5 Innovation in ICT use

Global library automation, use of ICT and digitisation have put access to libraries in distant countries at users' fingertips. Automation and digitisation of libraries is now underway in Bangladesh but is still at a low level. About a quarter of the surveyed libraries do not have any

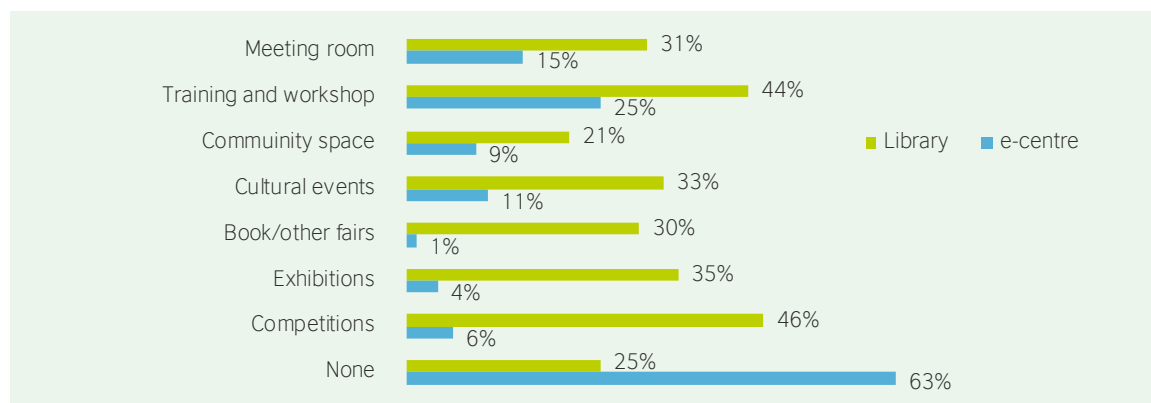
type of cataloguing service. Among the rest, only 4 per cent of the libraries have digital catalogues.

Web-based library services are also provided by only a few libraries. Only 14 per cent of libraries provide information such as a list of basic services, business hours and contact information on their own website/portal. About 13 per cent of libraries provide an online list of resources and reading materials and 11 per cent of the libraries have e-book download facilities.

4.3.6 Events and Activities

The use of libraries as a place for painting, essay and cultural competitions is practiced in 46 per cent of the surveyed libraries. An almost similar number of libraries report being used as training or workshop venues. More than one-third of the surveyed libraries are used as meeting rooms and hold cultural functions, book fairs and painting/art exhibitions. However, the multiple usages of e-centre venues appear to be quite limited. About 63 per cent of the e-centres that participated in the survey reported to have no other use than regular business.³¹ Only one quarter of the respondent e-centres hold trainings, workshops or classes and only 15 per cent of the e-centres are being used as meeting rooms. About 21 per cent of the libraries organise book fairs in academic institutions of the surrounding area to promote the reading habit and the library's

Figure 61: Status of multiple use of library and e-centre venues



Note: $n=136$ for libraries and $n=315$ for e-centres.
Source: Ahamed (2015).

³¹ Common services of e-centres include photocopying, printing, providing government's e-services, assisting in job search, etc. More on regular services of e-centre can be found in section 3.7.

Key Challenges



“

When books were carved in stones, or written on leaves and barks they were still books. Whatever the format is, a book is a book and the reader still reads it. E-books may be convenient for references or information, but for a reader and more so for a leisurely reader, the paper books still remains unmatched.

Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed
Founder
Bishwo Shahitto Kendro

”



The British Council multipurpose library space provided the perfect spot for the shooting of SA TV's Youth Voice for its episode: Social Enterprise.

5 Key Challenges

Public libraries in Bangladesh are lagging behind the global process of transformation into a new kind of social institution which serves communities as a place for knowledge, learning, information, innovation and culture. Low policy prioritisation and lack of public investment are two of the major challenges faced by the public libraries of Bangladesh, which ultimately fuel micro level challenges related to infrastructure, resources, management practices and ICT integration.

5.1 Weak linkage with national policy framework

The governance of public libraries in Bangladesh is very weakly linked with the policy framework of the country. Until the *National Public Library Policy* was formulated in 2001, there were no national policy guidelines for governing public libraries. Still no legal framework has been enacted to enforce implementation of the policy to govern the libraries.

Action plans to develop public libraries are one of the lower prioritised issues in national planning documents such as the *Five Year Plan* or the long *Term Perspective Plan*. Despite the government's willingness to modernise the information services of the country, the role of the public library as a hub for community services is yet to be recognised.

5.2 Lack of public investment

In resource-constrained countries like Bangladesh, sectors aligned with mainstream economic development are highly prioritised, while public investment for ministries that deal with information services has remained at a very low level (for details, see section 3.2.3).

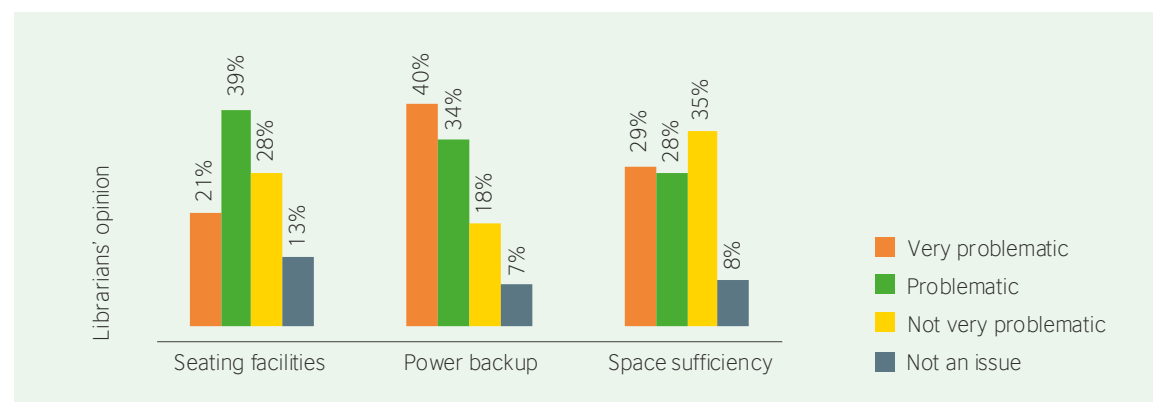
Although public libraries are run by government funds, the need for a sustainable business plan should not be understated. This is even more so for non-government private libraries. Only about 14 per cent of the libraries are reported to have sustainable finances in the sense that income generated exceeds costs, and 34 per cent are incurring losses in running the library's services.

5.3 Challenges related to infrastructure

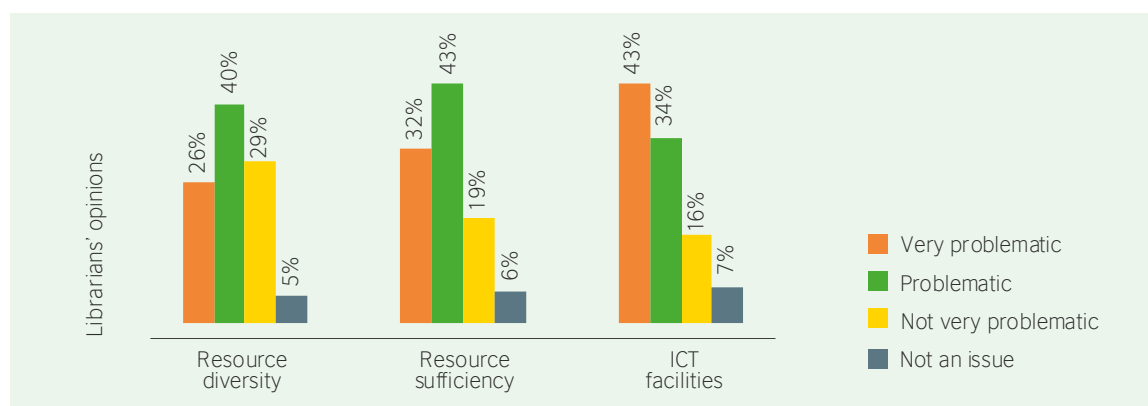
Space insufficiency is a serious issue according to 29 per cent of librarians. About 21 per cent of librarians view the lack of sufficient seating for users to be a serious problem.

For the smooth operation and service delivery of a library, an uninterrupted power supply is equally important. According to 40 per cent of librarians who participated in the survey, unavailability of power backup systems is a serious concern for

Figure 62: Infrastructure challenges perceived by librarians



Note: n=136 for libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

Figure 63: Resource related challenges perceived by librarians

Note: $n=136$ for libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

libraries. Another 34 per cent think of it as a moderate concern, while 25 per cent of librarians identify this issue to be of low or no significance for the libraries.

5.4 Challenges related to library resources

About 32 per cent of the librarians think that resource insufficiency (lack of reading materials and audio/video contents) is a serious challenge for their libraries. It is a moderately problematic issue for 43 per cent of librarians. On a different note, 26 per cent of librarians identify resource diversity to be a very problematic issue, while another 40 per cent identify it as a moderate problem.

About 43 per cent of librarians identify insufficiency of ICT facilities as a serious resource challenge that libraries are faced with at present; 34 per cent of them view it as a moderate concern. For about 23 per cent of librarians, ICT resources are not a significant challenge facing the libraries.

5.5 Challenges regarding ICT integration in public libraries

Lack of technical know-how and ICT trained library professionals is a major constraint in ICT integration of public libraries (Islam & Islam 2007; Islam & Mohd 2012). On the other hand, administrators, policy makers and government executives are not

fully aware of the importance of ICT, which may be attributed as the failure of library administrators in communicating the need for ICT (Islam & Islam 2007). Financial constraint is a major barrier to ICT integration of libraries in Bangladesh: very few libraries have a separate budget for library digitisation (Islam 2011).

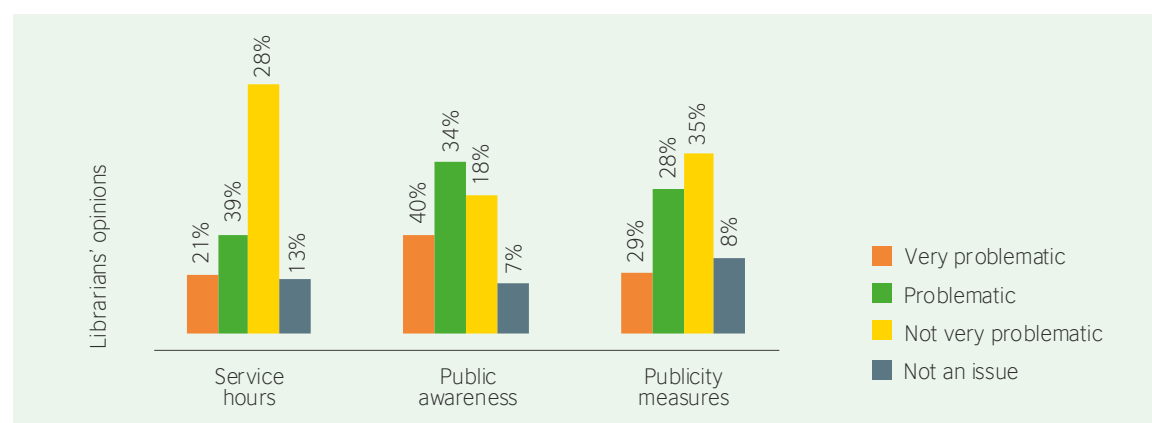
Munshi et al. (1997) summarised the constraints in ICT integration of libraries in Bangladesh as follows:

- Financial constraints
- Lack of knowledge of library personnel in ICT and its potentials
- Resistance from library personnel as they tend to lack ICT competencies
- Individualised efforts at ICT integration (lack of knowledge sharing networks)
- Lack of planning in meeting future needs.

In addition, inadequate physical facilities, telecommunications infrastructure and power shortages are other constraints that hinder libraries' ICT integration.

5.6 Service delivery and outreach challenges

For 21 per cent of librarians surveyed, the level of public awareness is a serious barrier. Another 38 per cent think of it as a moderate problem. The

Figure 64: Service delivery and outreach related challenges perceived by librarians

Note: n=136 for libraries.

Source: Venue Survey data.

remaining 41 per cent of librarians identify this issue to be of low or no significance at all for libraries. The current service hours of libraries are problematic according to 13 per cent of librarians. A similar percentage of librarians view lack of publicity measures to be a serious concern.

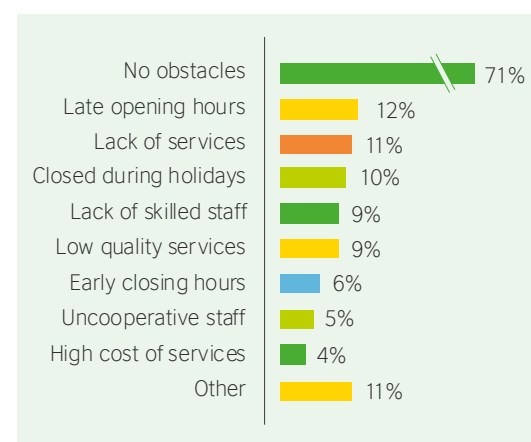
When asked about what types of difficulties they face in accessing library services, the majority of the library users (71 per cent) said they do not face any obstacles. However, 12 per cent of them mentioned late opening hours of libraries as problematic. Another 11 per cent of users said libraries lack the services they need. Libraries remaining closed over the weekend was found to be problematic for 10 per cent of users. A number of them also pointed towards a lack of skilled staff (9 per cent), low quality services (9 per cent), early closing hours (6 per cent) and other obstacles to their library use.

The average opening time for libraries is from around 10:00 am in the morning with closing time at around 4:50 pm. Average daily operational hours of libraries are 7, whereas for e-centres it is 9. This might be one of the factors in drawing more users to e-centres. Only a small proportion of respondents to the household survey (3 per cent) who have stopped using a library or e-centres identified inconvenient operating times as the reason.

About 91 per cent of libraries and 58 per cent of e-centres remain closed on Fridays. This may

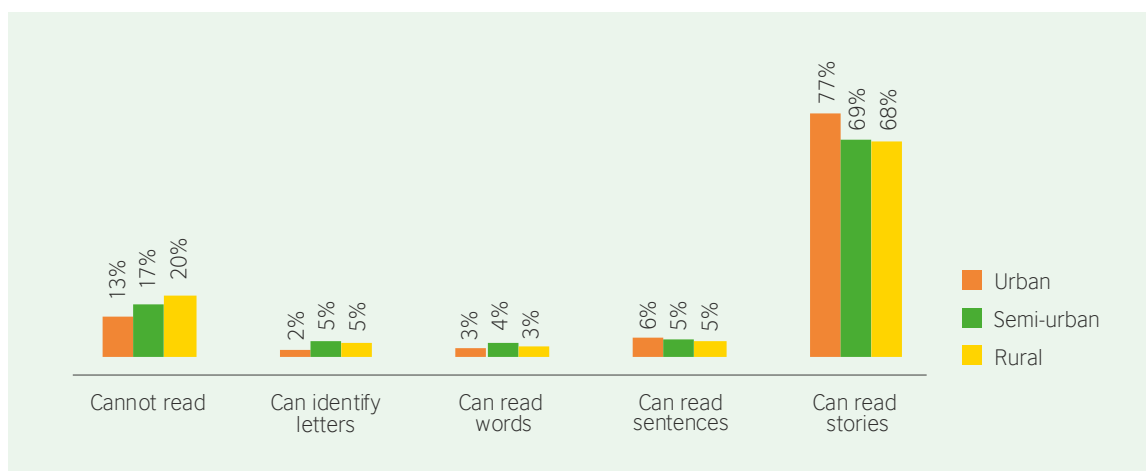
need reconsideration in order to allow library promotion as a multipurpose space- providing entertainment on weekends, which is the most suitable time for entertainment and socialising.

Even though public libraries in Bangladesh have diversified their services only to a very limited extent, the use of libraries has diversified over time. Only 9 per cent of government libraries show movies and documentaries, and merely 1 per cent use their space for organising seminars or meetings. ICT facilities are at the core of a modern library. Only 4 per cent of these government libraries are reported to have internet services available for the public.

Figure 65: Obstacles to use library services

Note: n=169 library users.

Source: Public Survey data.

Figure 66: Reading skills of users

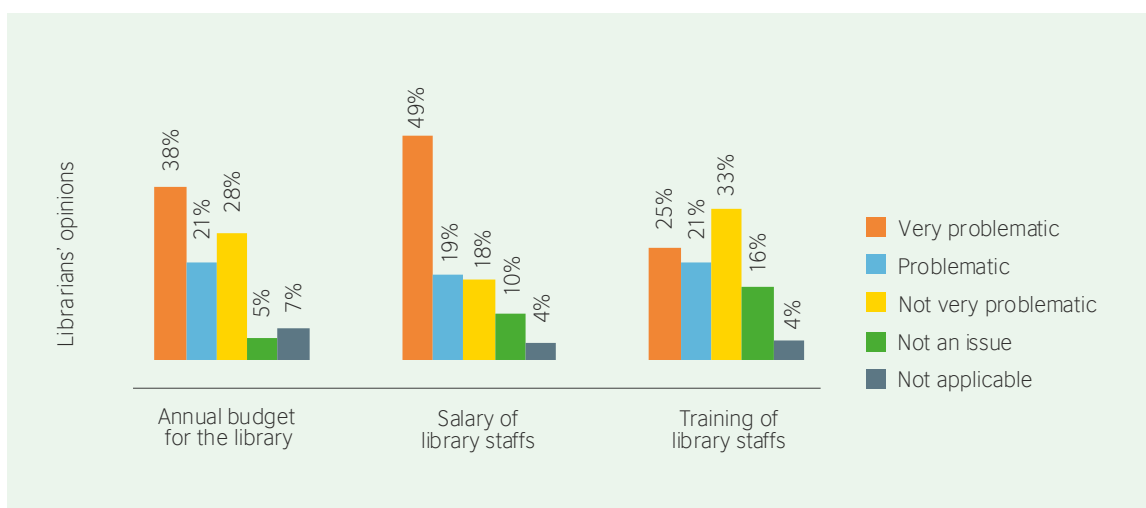
Note: n=2,518 for Rural, n=872 for Semi-urban and n=1,195 for Urban household respondents.
Source: Public Survey data.

Users' reading skills are one of the hindrances to widespread outreach of libraries. The study shows that about 20 per cent rural people in the public survey were unable to read their mother language. Such phenomenon is slightly better in semi urban (17 per cent) and urban areas (13 per cent).

However, this calls for a more inclusive approach on the part of library services to including audio-visual digital content in their resources. Considering the reading ability of people as well as the literacy rate of the country, multipurpose services should be designed in the future for enhanced outreach of the libraries.

5.7 Management challenges

When librarians were asked about management challenges they are faced with, their major concerns were found to be linked with library financing. About 68 per cent of librarians expressed dissatisfaction of varying degrees on staff salaries and 59 per cent of them expressed moderate to high dissatisfaction over the annual budget of the library. Meanwhile, about 25 per cent of librarians felt that lack of trained staff is very problematic for their libraries.

Figure 67: Management challenges of libraries perceived by librarians

Note: n=136 for libraries.
Source: Venue Survey data.

5.8 Why have they never been to a library? Reasons for not using libraries

The majority of household respondents who never used libraries mentioned that they do not need library services. This reluctance may have originated from a number of issues. As has been mentioned earlier, reading books for information or entertainment purposes has been replaced by television, satellite channels and internet. When these alternatives can easily be accessed at home, visiting a library may not appear to be a good option. People who have never been to a library often have a lack of knowledge about library services. This lack of knowledge could be another reason for many of those non-users to not feel the need of a library.

Another 31 per cent of respondents said they are too busy and cannot find time to visit libraries. A few of the respondents (1 per cent) have also mentioned problematic service hours as a reason for not visiting a library. These issues are particularly important as they are directly related to library management. It is important to note that if these non-users are to be attracted to the libraries, the timing needs to be made sufficiently

inclusive for people from all demographic groups. In addition, alternative and innovative services such as mobile library services or access through internet can be useful in bringing library services to them.

About 7 per cent of respondents pointed out inconvenient location of libraries as the reason for their non-use. Lack of ICT services and updated resources, non-cooperative library staff, cost of services, library environment, etc. are reasons that respondents identified for not using library services.

5.9 Why do they not visit the library anymore?

Household survey respondents, who have stopped using libraries for more than a year, were asked to mention the reasons behind not using libraries anymore. The majority of the respondents (51 per cent) mentioned that they do not need library services. Another 42 per cent of respondents said they were too busy and could not find time to visit libraries anymore. About 13 per cent of these respondents, however, said that they have stopped using libraries because of the inconvenient location of the libraries.

Figure 68: Reasons for not using libraries - opinion of non-users



Note: n=2,520 non-user household respondents.
Source: Household Survey data.

Figure 69: Reasons for not using libraries - opinion of ex-users

Note: n=688 ex-user household respondents.

Source: Household Survey data.



Conclusion: Action Needed



ICT-based library services can play a major role in Bangladesh. It is important that the government and non-government organisations utilise ICT-based library services as a channel for providing lifelong learning support. They should also extend their support and encourage local initiatives that seek to improve information provision in the country.

Professor S. M. Zabed Ahmed
Chairman
Dept of Information Science and
Library Management
University of Dhaka



The British Council multipurpose library rearranged its moveable bookshelves to accommodate over 100 people for the launch of Connecting Classrooms 3.

6 Conclusion: Action Needed

A realistic action plan needs to be worked out, keeping in mind people's information demand and seeking pattern, and the current status of existing libraries and other information services in meeting that demand. This action plan needs to incorporate a vision for the future libraries of the country. Based on the discussions in the previous sections of the report, a vision for the future libraries in Bangladesh can be portrayed as follows.

6.1 Vision for a modern library

For the people

In order to make libraries truly public, libraries need to target beyond the educated middle-class. Service and resource planning need to address the information needs of all groups of people, irrespective of gender, age, education, or other socially constructed classes.

Diversified services which may include early literacy programmes for children, multicultural festivals, youth cultural events, learning workshops, book fairs, writing or art competitions, art exhibitions, etc., should be organised.

ICT integrated

ICT and libraries play a complementary role in the information services ecology. Proper ICT-integration can make all aspects of library services and management - from resource sharing to service delivery and from marketing to internal management - more efficient and popular. Public libraries need to take into account the ICT induced changes in people's information seeking behaviour. ICT facilities need to be improved through increasing the number of computers for public use, better internet connectivity, automation of services, digitisation and digital content management, inter and intra-library networking and resource sharing with other libraries.

Motivated librarians

The challenges facing libraries to comply with modern day demand for multifaceted community

services and technical upgrading are critically linked with library staff. Therefore, addressing these challenges will require training them in ICTs as well as in serving the need of diverse user groups, including women and children and those with special needs. Motivating the staff also requires decent financial incentives which is currently a significant barrier to quality service delivery and that needs urgent attention.

Gender sensitive

Libraries must keep separate toilet facilities for female users. To encourage female users, reduced membership fees and other service fees, and flexibilities in borrowing and returning resources may be introduced. More importantly, women's safety in public places needs to be ensured.

Demand driven

Rather than a supply driven access to information, library services must be designed according to the information demand of the people.

Information needs at the bottom of the information hierarchy (information for basic survival, skills development, livelihood opportunities) as well as those at the top (community living, governance and accountability) need to be addressed by information services of libraries.

To facilitate a two-way knowledge transfer between libraries and communities, libraries need to organise community events.

Modern infrastructure

The most significant milestone in the changing library landscape is the innovative use of the library as a multipurpose centre facilitating various community needs. A modern library infrastructure thus needs to house various kinds of spaces, beyond just space for reading, for storing books and for staff. A modern and multipurpose library needs to have spaces for exhibitions, spaces for cultural events, facilities

that support activities such as conferences and concerts, lively lounges with cafés, etc. The modern day library infrastructure, in order to support all these community activities, needs to encourage people to stay longer by making them feel more comfortable through proper lighting and ventilation, refreshment facilities, etc.

Mainstreamed

Resource constraints in a less developed country like Bangladesh have long kept libraries outside public investment priorities. Nevertheless, the government has the unequivocal intention to build a modern society facilitated by ICT services. From this strategic position, ICT, access to information and education are the current priority investment areas, which are strongly linked with libraries.

Given the links between these sectors, libraries need to be integrated and mainstreamed into the government's flagship campaign *Digital Bangladesh* and should be a part of a comprehensive budgetary framework comprising all these sectors.

The rest of this section of the report puts forward some suggestions for the development of an action plan, endorsing the vision portrayed above.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Approaches for developing a modern public library

While designing a strategy and formulating an actionable plan to transform public libraries from their traditional form into modern and multipurpose spaces, a number of crosscutting issues need to be considered.

Renovation through innovation

- Renovating a public library would need to employ innovative approaches in the redesign of its infrastructure, services and other facilities.
- Global experiences of innovative approaches to renovate libraries, such as the concept of multipurpose use, design and outreach

methods, can be replicated and adapted to the Bangladeshi context.

Learning from existing practices

- Drawing lessons from best global practices in library management, operation and service delivery would be advantageous, saving a lot of time and effort.
- Besides global experiences, examples can be found in Bangladesh regarding library modernisation and automation, and development of non-library based information service facilities (e.g. e-centres like Union Digital Centres or UISCs).

Making a library for all

- Rather than treating the users as a homogeneous group, while planning to develop public libraries, the needs of adults and children, men and women, capable young and people with special needs, literate and illiterate, rich and poor, and other divergent groups should also be kept in mind.

Right and access to information

- Rather than a supply driven access to information, library services must be designed according to information demand of the people.
- Information stored and supplied by the library must also be in the local language, along with resources of other languages.

Multipurpose approach to library

- The modern concept of a library is not limited to books but entails redesign to act as a knowledge source, a provider of information services and a hub for cultural activities.
- A modern library should be connected to global knowledge networks, information and learning centres and idea stores (e.g. creative 'Makerspaces') where people can individually or collaboratively materialise their ideas and innovations.

6.2.2 Improving library infrastructure

Ensuring better ICT integration

Improving ICT readiness of the libraries

- A significant drive is needed for library staff to be trained to overcome their fear of ICTs so that they are motivated to introduce ICT based services.
- ICT development programmes for library staff through visits of ICT and LIS professionals can be introduced. Library associations can also play a big role.
- In order to optimise their use, computers that are currently available for staff-use need to be made available to the users, possibly through time-based allocation.
- Local area networks or LAN connectivity of the computers are needed for storage and internet sharing. Wi-Fi connectivity facilities need to be introduced to overcome infrastructure shortage through the use of user PCs/smartphones. This may require technical and financial support.

Improving ICT readiness of the users

- Workshop sessions for the library members and general users may be introduced on using computers and mobile devices and navigating the web and other ICTs for receiving library services.

Introducing web based services

Introducing digital catalogues

- Library resource catalogues need to be digitised and made available for online and offline use. User orientation programmes need to be introduced to familiarise them with using digital catalogues.

Promoting resource sharing

- Digitisation of resources will be required to facilitate resource sharing.

- An effective network of libraries needs to be established through library consortia on a priority basis. Involved ministries need to engage with existing library associations in framing the network and connecting all public, private and NGO library initiatives.

Ensuring remote access to resources

- Digital resources and digital library catalogues are prerequisites for remote access through the internet. Online access to services will require software support and the training of library staff. Open source free software needs to be utilised to minimise cost implications.

National infrastructure requirement

Given the potential and the increasing penetration of ICT infrastructure, libraries are still hovering in-between the past (print collections) and the present (digital contents). Therefore, this transition requires an all-inclusive national infrastructure to embrace ICTs in the library sector (Freeman 2005) and to advance from print-based traditional libraries to modern ICT integrated future libraries.

Electricity/Power

- Individual power backup systems are expensive solutions to power outages and many of the libraries are not able to afford such solutions. Uninterrupted power supply for library services that depend on them will require the development of the power base at the national level.

Mobile network

- The government should begin incentivising the expansion of 3G services in rural areas by the mobile network operators. Terms and cost of expanding mobile internet network by the operators may be reviewed.

Buildings and Spaces

- National infrastructure requirement for library buildings should be viewed from three perspectives: new building establishment,

renovation of the existing library buildings and use any of the existing government buildings for library purposes.

- Using existing government buildings should be considered as the last option since significant variables like visibility, preferable location and other factors favourable to libraries may not be available in the existing buildings.
- Some model libraries can be established, which can then be used as national library hubs that should be regarded as replicas for modern libraries in the digital era.
- For the existing libraries, renovation according to modern and digital library concepts should be the priority.

Broadband connectivity

- The government of Bangladesh is expanding broadband connectivity through the optical fibre network. The potentials of connecting the libraries with this network need to be persuaded actively.

Digitisation of resources

While digitisation and e-connectivity has become the answer to several existing problems faced by libraries in sharing and disseminating their contents, the following factors should be considered in pursuing this goal:

Diversity of digital resources

Digital content should be made available in audio and video format. Braille system along with its original text should also be included to address inclusiveness and right to information for all.

Inter-operability/Standardisation

A standardised format should be used for digitising contents to ensure access through different operating systems and different types of devices. Mobile friendly view, standard internet speed requirement for accessing any content, limitations of different operating systems and such

other technical issues hindering universal access to library contents should be taken into account.

Metadata interoperability

Common metadata standards should be investigated and adopted for the description of digital resources to ensure their interoperability

Central depository of local e-resources

Resource digitisation processes have been initiated by different government and non-government offices. All these resources may be used to create an online repository for public access by establishing an e-library through government initiative. Public libraries could play important roles in facilitating public access to this e-library.

Innovative design for a modern library

Facilitating multi usage

Support should be provided to libraries for modification of the existing furniture into those facilitating easy movement, so that rooms can be quickly and easily rearranged for different uses.

Introducing diverse facilities and services

- Diverse facilities within the public library should be introduced to facilitate the currently popular multipurpose concept in the library sector with additional facilities such as Makerspaces, media labs or hacker spaces, which are currently popular in libraries globally. Makerspaces include materials, tools, and technologies that allow for hands on exploration, video and audio capture, large format printing, art-related workshops, music recording spaces and such other facilities.
- Beyond making available library materials, libraries should provide meeting and learning facilities. Additional meeting space along with learning facilities like 'homework sessions' or 'do-it-yourself' for children and topic wise discussion on current issues should be added to existing library services.

- Information and awareness building services in the areas of demand such as health and employment should be introduced and tailored to the needs of people locally, building on examples of good practices available in other countries.

Improving on human perspectives

Improving library visibility

- Like e-centres, all libraries need to make use of signboards/marks to reveal the infrastructure to the users.

Enhancing comfort

- Emphasis needs to be placed on innovative use of furniture. Traditional steel or wooden shelves and other furniture that obstruct light and air circulation need to be modified or replaced.
- In many urban libraries design modifications are required to control noise levels in order to mitigate the congested and noisy urban settings of the country.

6.2.3 Modernising resources

In establishing future-ready libraries, it can be reasonably assumed that demand for modern equipment will rise alongside growing user demand for digital content and greater awareness of what a modern library can provide. Strategic planning for the future will thus need to address the issue of equipment availability in the libraries seriously.

Knowledge resources

- For resources, diversity of subjects needs to be maintained based on community demand.
- Besides printed materials, knowledge resources in modern libraries should be made available and must come in all forms usable by a significant section of the user population e.g. e-books, audio books, CDs and DVDs, etc. Suitable hardware to access current forms of resources (e.g. tablet

computers and e-book readers) should also be made available.

- Specialised resources for children and people with special needs should be included to provide an inclusive service.
- Through use of internet and remote collaboration with other libraries across the world, public libraries should allow users to access any resources available from other libraries.

Cultural resources

- Public libraries should include collections of music, movies and other cultural resources.
- Along with local culture, resources on global culture should also be included.

Resources for information services

- Libraries need to have computers, internet connections and other accessories for public use to provide information services to the community. These resources need to be upgraded and regularly maintained.
- To cater for demand from a wide variety of community members, libraries must provide infomediary services. Skilled and helpful staff have a major role to play.

Modern accessibility to resources

- As the use of smart phones and other portable communication devices is becoming widespread, library resources and services can be made available in formats that are compatible with such devices.

Resource availability and upgrading

- Each public library should be able to make resources readily available to the users. Requested material, if not available in collections, should be acquired immediately.
- Resources must be regularly updated. While updating resources, global trends, popularity

and community demand must be taken into account. Demand for existing resources must be evaluated regularly to prioritise resources with substantial demand and weed out little-used and out-of-date materials.

Resources for mood boosting

- To boost people's reading habits and interest in using other resources, libraries should encourage activities such as reading silently or aloud, formation of reading groups, and offer collaborative sessions for storytelling activities.

6.2.4 Capacity building

Training of librarians

- ICT competencies of the librarians must be improved through training. Along with pre-service training, continuous in-service training programmes need to be conducted.
- Short-term staff exchange for non-government libraries may be introduced to facilitate knowledge transfer.
- Events need to be organised where experts and professionals may visit, deliver speeches and share experiences. Library associations need to engage actively in capacity building efforts.
- Traditionally, libraries in Bangladesh have not provided services to children. Hence, there is a need for training library staff with regard to assisting children in library use (BMGF, 2013; Bradley, 2013). Sufficient attention and resources need to be made available.

Capacity building of students for appropriate use of libraries

- As suggested by the National Symposium participants, advocacy and training is required for students on using libraries and appropriate use of digital resources at the primary and secondary levels of education.

Engaging and knowledge sharing with local community

- To facilitate two-way knowledge transfer between libraries and communities, libraries need to organise community events. Participation by the members of library associations in these events will be helpful.
- Initiatives to strengthen the relationship between libraries and local people, with a special focus on children and young people, was a much emphasised suggestion from the library experts at the symposium.

Capacity building of volunteers

- Community volunteerism to support the operation of library services needs to be promoted in the absence of a sufficient number of paid staff. Capacity building of volunteers should be ensured.

6.2.5 Promoting libraries

Popularising public libraries and reaching out to all segments of the population with services requires promotion and publicity of all kind of library services and positive positioning.

Position as safe space

- Proper steps should be taken to develop a children and women's safety policy to be followed by public libraries for strengthening their position as a safe space, drawing more people into the library.

Conducting promotional services

- Public libraries should include promotional activities like early literacy programmes for children (children's story time, children's rhyme time, etc.), multicultural festivals, youth cultural events, different types of workshops, classes or training sessions, book fairs, writing or art competitions, art exhibitions, etc. Availability of such services should be promoted by the library through email, SMS, advertising in library or community notice boards or through library staff.

Enhancing library outreach

- To ensure public libraries are accessible to transport- deprived people or those in hard to reach areas without a library, mobile libraries (bookmobiles, book boats, book boxes, and vans/bicycles services) or door to door libraries should be introduced where they are an appropriate solution. Book fairs should be arranged at different schools to mobilise library content. Volunteers or librarians should be sent door to door with children's books to provide a story reading service on the spot.

6.2.6 Revising the governance and budget framework

Developing clear government legislation

- It was recommended by the participants at the national symposium that clear legislation has to be developed for ensuring sustainable funding of libraries.

Alternatives for managing the budget shortage

- A way of resolving the serious shortfall in library financing could be formation of consortia involving relevant government ministries, Ministry of ICT, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and private organisations along with foreign donors and local and foreign NGOs working in this field to leverage budget contributions either in cash or any other relevant form.
- The partnership model of government's A2i project could be considered as a replicable model for resource mobilisation in this respect.

Establishing inter-ministry liaison within the government

- Other than resource sharing, government ministries should also maintain liaison from implementation perspectives. Proper coordination should be ensured from the government among the library relevant

ministries - Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Ministry of ICT - to avoid duplication of effort and ensure smooth implementation of planned development of public libraries.

Library leadership and advocacy

- Library associations of the country should take an active position in providing advocacy, leadership and all kinds of support to the government, the NGOs, donors and other stakeholders for overall development of the library sector.

Redesigning library management

Formation of a task force and an advisory committee

It was recommended in the national symposium that a Task Force should be formed by the Prime Minister's Office to decentralise the tasks for the improvement of library and information services. An Advisory Committee was also advised to be formed with the inclusion of library professionals to assist the Task Force.

Establishing partnerships in multiple dimensions

Public libraries should include a strategic direction focusing on collaboration and partnerships. Partnership can take place between the public library and other types of institutions, particularly school libraries, to provide special services such as production of Braille books for the visually impaired students and training school librarians on information literacy. Within this framework, the library community may pursue mutually beneficial partnerships in the following categories:

- ***Urban-Rural Intra-library partnership***
Libraries of both urban and rural areas and other remote areas should form collaborative partnerships to extend the updated facilities that many urban libraries enjoy.
- ***Partnership with museums/archives***
Library-museum-archives partnership should

be formed to support a wide variety of information needs and also to organise combined programming for a richer experience of library customers.

- **A Public-Private-People-Partnership model** for libraries was a suggested solution in the symposium to develop sustainable library and information services for the country. Government may own the existing libraries for an interim period and develop them as digital centres.
- **GO-NGO-Commercial partnership**
 - Partnerships between local governments and public libraries should be formed to ensure the building of strong, sustainable communities.
 - Coordination at local level will help to reach out to potential new users or unreachable communities through an organisation that they already trust.
 - Sponsorship and commercial partnerships should be undertaken to generate income, explore innovative revenue streams and create new opportunities.
- **Complementary Infrastructure**
 - Public libraries and e-centres can be coordinated and rationalised into a single network, which will provide the opportunity for enriching resources and services and ensuring a greater geographic coverage. This will also remove the apparent differences in service access and perceptions of use which exist between e-centres and libraries.
 - Libraries should undertake partnership with entities that offer complementary infrastructure unavailable in the existing library. For example, a local public library can partner with an arts or photography school, music school, etc.

Establishing a central technical support system

- ICT integration in libraries all over the country will frequently require the technical support of hardware experts and government should form a roaming technical alliance of hardware/technical experts to travel throughout the country to assist libraries reporting hardware problems.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The government should ensure increased and more regular monitoring and evaluation of library services, encouraging better performance and improved services.

Service automation

- As part of ICT integration, some of the regular library services should be automated by introducing self-service options. Self-checkout, self-checking returns, online interlibrary loan requests, online renewal, virtual reference services, virtual library tours, online membership and such other self-services can be introduced in Bangladesh replicating such automated services existing abroad.

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“The world has changed dynamically over the years. The role of a library is no longer limited to reading books. Today, the library works as a social hub for young people and adults to gather and share knowledge in a learning atmosphere. My dream is to see technologies being incorporated to serve this purpose better.

Razina Akhtar
Head of Library
Bangladesh Shishu Academi



The British Council provides a children's corner, Young Learners, with the general support of Standard Chartered Bank, where the British Council offers children the opportunity to use a high quality and unique centre of learning and entertainment.

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The British Council multipurpose library space provided the perfect stage for British author, Lucy Hawking, to meet her young fans in an interactive 'Meet the Author' session.



ANNEX 1

Symposium Report

1. Introduction and goals of the symposium

This high-level symposium titled “A New Vision for Libraries in Bangladesh: Transforming Access to Digital Information” was organised by the British Council with the support of the Government of Bangladesh, BRAC and the Bengal Foundation.

The basis for the symposium was a major piece of nationwide research initiated by the British Council called A Library Landscape Assessment of Bangladesh. The findings of the research were the starting point for the symposium’s presentation and discussions.

The symposium was held at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka, Bangladesh during 12 -13 May 2015 and consisted of:

- an opening session
- presentation and discussion of the research findings
- two sets of focused breakout sessions covering six key topics in all and feedback from those sessions
- presentation of inspiring case studies from Bangladesh and beyond
- formulation of the symposium’s recommendations and discussion of next steps

Background

In the internet age, access to knowledge is essential to all aspects of life and lack of information can lead to social, cultural and economic failings. Nowadays, opportunity is increasingly dependent upon internet access.

In Bangladesh, equality of opportunity in the digital age requires that all individuals, especially those living in remote and impoverished areas, have access

to online information along with the skills to navigate the internet. Public libraries, with their existing infrastructure, staff and mission to connect people to information, are uniquely positioned to provide this opportunity.

The landscape of Bangladesh's Library and Information Services (LIS) has undergone very rapid, yet somewhat disproportionate development. The Government of Bangladesh is trying to extend access points in rural areas through other service centres, government offices and post offices. Some community centres, such as the Gonokendros run by BRAC, and non-governmental community libraries also offer internet access.

However, public libraries—which were the forerunners and champions of ensuring access to information for centuries—have remained largely neglected during the ICT-driven campaign for information services and now need critical support to move forward into the digital age. If libraries in Bangladesh can reinvent themselves and embrace an expanded role as online information and cultural centres, the impact on individuals and communities will be huge.

For that reinvention to happen, there is a need to better understand the current landscape of LIS in Bangladesh, and how this can match the actual information needs of the people.

A Library Landscape Assessment of Bangladesh

A Library Landscape Assessment of Bangladesh is a series of interconnected pieces of research that was commissioned by the British Council in late 2014. It aims to assess the current provision of LIS in urban, semi-urban and rural areas, and to help determine what can be done to radically improve the situation. This research and analysis is helping to provide a comprehensive understanding of current LIS provision in Bangladesh, mapped against needs, and identify opportunities and challenges for implementing major changes.

Participation

The symposium brought together around 75 high-level participants representing ministries and other governmental organisations, international development organisations, professional library organisations, cultural organisations, universities, the private sector, and civil society organisations.

Given the timeliness of this issue and the topic's centrality to the Government of Bangladesh's ambition of a "Digital Bangladesh" by 2021, the symposium was able to attract participants keen to actively share their views and opinions with a broad range of stakeholders engaged in the LIS sector.

Participants were provided with an Executive Summary and visual Brief report of the Library Landscape Assessment of Bangladesh. The full report, together with the Symposium presentations, will be made available online for participants to access digitally at <http://www.britishcouncil.org.bd/en/library-landscape-assessment-bangladesh>





Aims

The symposium aimed to:

- Examine and discuss the interim findings of the Library Landscape Assessment of Bangladesh
- Improve and strengthen the Final Recommendations of the research, based on the expert feedback and opinions of stakeholders from the LIS sector
- Start the process of aligning and mobilising the sector towards addressing the issues the research has identified

Expected outcomes

The following outcomes were expected at the end of the event:

- Stakeholders would share a common understanding of the LIS landscape in Bangladesh
- Stakeholders would share a common vision of opportunities for major LIS improvements in Bangladesh, and the obstacles that must be overcome to seize those opportunities
- Stakeholders would have an understanding of their roles in actualising this vision and be mobilised to collaborate together

2. Opening speeches



Mr. Asaduzzaman Noor, MP
Honourable Minister for Cultural Affairs

Mr. Asaduzzaman Noor, MP welcomed the Symposium and extended his support for the initiative on public libraries. He expressed concern that at present the government public libraries at District level were either little used or used only by students needing study space but making very limited use of the library's content or services. The nature of the current education system in Bangladesh militated against productive use of libraries. He endorsed the need to change the face of these libraries, giving them a new and strengthened role as a living organism in turning information into knowledge. The Minister further referred to his Ministry's plan to open branches of District libraries at Upazilla (sub-district) level.



Mr. Mark Clayton
The Deputy British High Commissioner
to Bangladesh

Mr. Mark Clayton spoke of the “Library Landscape Assessment of Bangladesh” as an important moment in this country’s journey towards “Vision 2021” and becoming a truly “Digital Bangladesh.” It showed the huge potential that libraries have in the digital age and how they can help meet the information needs of Bangladesh people. He highlighted a major recent Arts Council study of future of libraries in the United Kingdom, which had emphasised the need for the physical and the digital to sit side by side to create a twenty-first century public library service in which local people are more active and involved in its design and delivery, creating a sense of community. A close parallel could be drawn with the aims of this Symposium in envisioning the future of library services in Bangladesh that have the needs of the community at their heart.

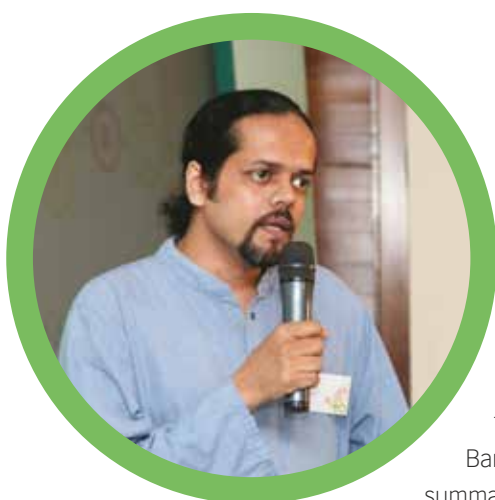


Ms. Barbara Wickham
Country Director, British Council

Ms. Barbara Wickham likewise saw the culmination of this extensive research as marking the beginning of an important new chapter in the development of public library and information services in Bangladesh. She thanked the British Council’s partners in commissioning the work - the Government of Bangladesh, BRAC and the Bengal Foundation. The Symposium has been designed for stakeholders to discuss these findings, with the aim of making a set of firm recommendations for action. The research showed clearly that Bangladesh urgently needs greater access to reliable information for all its citizens: not only vital information about health, safety, nutrition and public services, but also opportunities to develop literacy, learn skills for employability, and take part in collective educational and cultural activities. With the right investment, libraries could be well-placed to provide some of that knowledge and those opportunities to communities all over Bangladesh, going beyond the “traditional” and rethinking how

libraries can better meet the needs of its people. She drew attention to the historic role of the British Council's international network of libraries, first offering library services in Bangladesh in 1954 and still providing them in Dhaka and Chittagong, with a plan to extend in Sylhet. The British Council is now modernising its library services in response to lifestyle changes as an inspiration for other libraries in the digital age.

3. Research presentation and discussion



Mr. Syeed Ahamed
CEO, Institute of Informatics and Development (IID)

Mr. Syeed Ahamed of IID, the organisation which conducted the research leading to the “Library Landscape Assessment of Bangladesh,” gave a presentation of its main findings. These are summarised visually in the inner cover of this report.

He confirmed that the data from the research would be made available online for further use.

At present, public libraries reach a small group of committed literate and educated users, representing about 6 per cent of the population. The creation and understanding of demand for actual and potential library services is an important requirement. The future of libraries lies in meeting the needs of all the people.

In general, the research and its findings were well-received and seen as an important prerequisite for an action agenda. The initiation of the work by the British Council was welcomed.

Among the issues raised in questions and comments from the participants, on the Symposium floor, were the needs for:

- libraries to take the opportunity to re-vision, re-purpose and re-skill;
- library stakeholders to work with the government to support the vision of a Digital Bangladesh and to consider how libraries can contribute to this;
- libraries to become more hospitable and attractive places with multiple services and facilities, opening hours appropriate to the needs of

potential users, a range of events and facilities such as cafes;

- improved training and conditions for library managers and staff enabling them to understand and meet the demands of the public;
- assessment of the impact of library services in changing circumstances;
- libraries to meet the needs of people in rural areas by digital means and to provide support for agriculture as a dominant sector for employment and the economy;
- greater transparency in the governance of selecting publications for libraries;
- more material in libraries for Arabic, Pashtun and Urdu- language communities;

Several questions were also raised in relation to:

- clarification of the scope of the study in terms of types of libraries and information access institutions addressed. The study included both government and non-government public libraries (such as Gonokendros) and village level e-centres such as UISCs. It did not cover other types of library such as school, higher education or research libraries;
- the link of this study with previous studies carried out in the 1950s and 1970s.



4. Breakout Sessions

Six breakout sessions were organised on Day 1 of the Symposium. Topics were derived from the Policy Brief headings arising from the research study. The purpose of the breakouts was to enable and elicit focused feedback from Symposium participants on important factors in the development of public libraries and information access points. The breakout sessions were organised in two sets of three seminars as follows:

Set 1

Session 1 - Libraries for all the People

Session 2 - Demand Driven Services

Session 3 - Gender Sensitivity

Set 2

Session 4 - Library Staff at the Core

Session 5 - A Modern ICT-Integrated Infrastructure

Session 6 - Public Investment

The sets ran consecutively so that each participant could join two sessions. Each session lasted for about one hour and addressed one main question.



Breakout Session 1 - Libraries for all the People

Question: How could libraries, information services and e-centres in Bangladesh be organised into a complementary system that reaches everyone and meets their needs?

Feedback:

- Public libraries and their services are limited in Bangladesh
- A common concept for libraries is needed, supported by needs analysis to assess demand
- Community libraries should be established
- e-centres can be connected with public libraries and community libraries
- Fully automated digital libraries with IT and information sharing facilities are required

- Strong policy is needed
- Only Government funding is available at present
- Bottom-Up approaches work better than Top-Down
- Public libraries should provide information about what they do and do not offer
- Opening hours for libraries should be flexible, not necessarily 24 hours a day
- Build awareness through print, broadcast and other media plus social and cultural programmes



Breakout Session 2 - Demand Driven Services

Question: Who needs public libraries today and in the future, and what facilities and services should they provide?

Feedback:

- The topic was divided into four categories:
- People: urban, semi-urban and rural including: young learners, children, adolescents, families, senior citizens, farmers, illiterate people or those with low literacy and people with special needs
- Product: reading material – availability of both digital and physical books; availability of professional resources such as journals; availability of survival information/government information
- Place: architecturally well-designed libraries, multipurpose community halls; auditoria and spaces for film shows, drama, and cultural events; play areas for children; creative centres for users; technology labs for easy access to ICT; counselling centres for legal questions and land rights
- End Usage: training for using digital resources; user motivation

Breakout Session 3 - Gender Sensitivity

Question: What can be done to make library services more attractive, useful and hospitable for women?

Feedback:

- Investments in gender-specific provision must be increased
- Locations of libraries should be safe and easy to reach
- 2-9 pm should be the service hours for libraries
- e-Libraries can help to provide 24-hours access
- Separate spaces for women
- Separate toilets for women
- Librarians and staff need to be trained to behave equally with children, men and women
- 50 per cent of staff should be female
- Awareness campaigns and advocacy programmes on reading guidance, better jobs, problems, encouraging women to be self-dependent
- ICT training and internet connections must be available in the libraries
- Women-friendly content should be available in the libraries e.g. recipe books, health care books
- Skill development training should be available e.g. beautification, tailoring, handicrafts
- Women's issues like health, hygiene, child care, etc. should be discussed
- Socio-cultural functions such as dramas can be staged
- Leaflets should be distributed to inform women about library facilities
- Women who bring children should be given access to special library services
- Child feeding spaces should be provided as required
- Children's areas should allow mothers to feel free
- Libraries should take books to mothers and elderly people



Breakout session 4 - Library Staff at the Core

Question: How can library staff capacity be developed to deliver good services?

Feedback:

- The key personnel of libraries should be professional and experts in the sector
- Providing in-service training is very important to develop the skills of staff
- At least three months' foundation training on the development of services should be organised for staff
- Staff can be trained both nationally and internationally
- Monitoring and evaluation after training is essential. Using customer services questionnaires to evaluate the performance of the staff and library services is an option to evaluate library services
- Create readers' forums to develop library services
- Private libraries should be supported by the government for the development of services and providing partial remuneration for staff
- There is scope for staff to earn revenue besides their pay by providing ICT training
- There should be separate legal rights and acts for libraries
- Provision should be made for volunteer staff, with some remuneration and certificates as motivation

Breakout session 5 - A Modern ICT-Integrated Infrastructure

Question: What infrastructure is needed for delivering modern library services and how ready is Bangladesh to implement them?

Feedback:

- Libraries and access points should be equipped with modern equipment to satisfy users
- Manpower with ICT skills must be ensured: librarians should have appropriate background



- 24 hour power supply should be made available. Solar power can be used to overcome the irregular supply of electricity in rural areas
- Proper financial support is a must
- Electronic devices like computers, tablets and mobiles should be available
- Modern high speed scanners, high capacity servers and good computers must be made available
- Cable-based connectivity in e-centres, established through government projects, should be extended to all libraries and education institutions.
- Wi-Fi connections should be installed
- Internet speeds should be adequate
- English language training must be provided in order to use technology appropriately
- Public libraries should enrich themselves with e-content. Existing and new materials must be digitised
- Public library automation must be done as soon as possible. Government should adopt modern software technologies to ensure technological support in public libraries

Breakout Session 6 - Public Investment

Question: Who are the stakeholders?

Feedback:

Everyone including government, NGOS, INGOs, donors, local community, political and business leaders, etc.

The four most important groups are:

- Government, local communities and information professionals, media, and NGOs

Question: How and what can they contribute?

Feedback:

- Government: approve funding, policy formation, legal, national priority.
- Vision is different from policy: Vision comes first. However, to construct a perfect vision, policy is required
- Community: support, contribution, involvement, cooperation, approval
- Information professionals: motivation - to develop professional ownership and sense of responsibility

NGOs: Donors will donate and NGOs will work

Donors provide:

- Financial and technical assistance
- Responsibility and knowledge
- Partnership among the stakeholders

Overall, the two biggest challenges are:

- Financial support and policy framework



5. Case study presentations

On the second day of the event, a number of local organisations gave presentations about the work that they are currently doing in the LIS sector. These inspiring case studies allowed all of the attendees to get a better idea of what is already happening in the country, and how these could be part of a new vision for libraries in Bangladesh.

Case study 1: East West University

The library of East West University is a model academic library in Bangladesh. The structure of the library is user-friendly and attractive. The library is spacious, and enriched with both physical and digital information services. It has a large efficient library team. Several workshops and trainings are arranged for the development of library services. The resources of this library include 30,000 physical books, 44,000 e-books, and 40,000 journals. There are 17 professional staff, and 10 support staff with IT degree and Diploma in Library Science. Some of the services of EWU library include:

- Membership and leadership service
- Virtual reference service
- Remote access to e-journals
- News clipping service
- Online requisition for purchasing zone
- Software for managing reference and citation style in the research works
- Google plus, Twitter, Facebook, etc. are available for library users.

Technology used:

- Drupal 2012; Koha Integrated Library System (since 2010); Greenstone digital library (since 2011); My Athens (library 2.0 standard); Dspace; Vufind: Discovery tool: search all the resources centrally; Zoho: Virtual referencing service; MoU with Wycliffe University-digital collection available from their library; Institutional resources hub

Case study 2: Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha

Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha has been serving around 20,000 people per year with library and ICT services. The organisation has taken commendable initiatives to serve local people in the North of Bangladesh. It has set up libraries on traditional boats that can reach people where they are. They provide the following services:

- ‘Floating schools’ with classroom space for children
- Computer room with laptops and internet access
- Libraries with solar modules for power supply

Impact of the project:

- Education at the door step for girls and women
- Integrated knowledge for vegetable production, usage of pesticides, etc. through the usage of physical libraries and online resources
- Technology integrated into the traditional boats of the country
- Conversion of traditional boats into solar powered boats
- Conversion of regular lanterns into solar lanterns

**Case Study 3: Amader Gram**

“Amader Gram” is an organisation working in the Southeast region of Bangladesh with the mission of building an information society at the grassroots level.

This organisation has established village information centres called “Gyan Kendra.” The focus is to use ICT in the Khulna region to increase access to digital information, such as:

- survival information during natural calamities and adaptation to climate change
- e-health care services, electronic medical care system
- online image sharing for consultation from international expertise
- on-site high resolution ultrasound examinations
- medical treatment through telecommunications
- online Bangla content available for all

- mobile software for treatment of the rural people (this organisation is making a software for paralysed patients' medical consultation through laptops)

"Amader Gram" has also conducted a case study on Breast Cancer victims. It also works for creating awareness among women for regular health check-ups.

Case Study 4: Gonokendro (BRAC)

"Gonokendro" is a multi-purpose community learning centre to connect rural people by providing information and encouraging them to participate. It trains the youth with library skills to ensure sustainable library services. BRAC Gonokendros are located and based at union levels in Bangladesh. At present there are 2,800 Gonokendros all over Bangladesh with the following facilities:

- Gonokendros provide rickshaw based libraries for senior citizens
- Almost all the Gonokendros have readers' forum
- Gonokendros have mobile libraries for women and elders who are unable to reach libraries
- There are specially designed corners for children in the Gonokendros



and they arrange story telling sessions once a week

- Gonokendros work for basic IT literacy in urban and rural areas
- They arrange socio-cultural activities to create public awareness for medical check-up
- Micro museum is a recent inclusion in Gonokendros, which is decorated with historical artefacts, traditional souvenirs and information

Results:

- Creates awareness in the community and among youth and encourages library users to read
- Works for the well-being of the children of rural areas

6. Recommendations for action

The final session of the symposium was designed to create a clear set of recommendations for a new vision for libraries in Bangladesh. The attendees were split into groups and were asked to provide a number of “next steps” that would help realise a new vision for libraries in the country. Below is a summary of those recommendations.

1. Clearer Government legislation: “No policy, no funding”

It was recommended by the participants that clearer policy is a must for the improvement of library services in Bangladesh. Without clearer policy, the sustainable funding of libraries will not be possible.



2. Create partnerships and improve on existing models

A Public-Private-Partnership model for libraries could work as a way to develop sustainable library and information services for the country. Government may own the existing library for interim period. The existing union information centres can be developed by the government and used as digital centres.

3. Inclusive, demand driven services

Libraries need to provide coordinated, inclusive, demand-driven services. This can be implemented by the Government of Bangladesh with the assistance of other organisations.

4. Decentralisation

It was recommended that the government reorganises the framework that governs libraries and decentralises some responsibilities to Local Union Parishad Committees. This will help justify and analyse



requirements wherein local communities can also be involved. IT facilities can be heightened to uplift the existing framework.

5. Forming a task force

It was recommended that a Task Force should be formed by the Prime Minister's Office to decentralise the tasks for the improvement of library and information services.

6. Forming an advisory committee

An Advisory Committee should be formed with the inclusion of library professionals to assist the Task Force.



7. Advocacy and training for primary and secondary level students

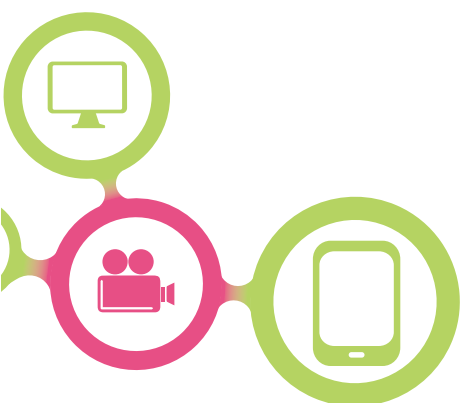
At the primary and secondary levels of education, advocacy and training is required for students on using libraries and appropriate use of digital resources.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The government should ensure increased and more regular monitoring and evaluation of library services, encouraging better performance and improved services.

9. Building relationship between libraries and local people

Initiatives should be taken to strengthen the relationship between libraries and local people, with a special focus on children and young people.





Symposium programme

Day 1	
Time	Session
9:30 – 10:00	Registration and networking
10:00 – 10:45	Opening session Chief Guest Asaduzzaman Noor, MP Honourable Minister for Cultural Affairs Special Guest Mark Clayton Deputy British High Commissioner to Bangladesh
10:45 – 11:15	Break
11:15 – 12:00	A Library Landscape Assessment of Bangladesh – methodology and findings
12:00 – 12:15	A Library Landscape Assessment of Bangladesh – conclusions: priority areas for action
12:15 – 13:00	Q&A – Responses to the research findings
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	Breakout sessions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Libraries for all the people 2. Demand driven services 3. Gender sensitivity

Time	Session
15:15 – 15:30	Break
15:30 – 16:45	Breakout sessions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Library staff at the core 5. A modern ICT-integrated infrastructure 6. Public investment
16:45 – 17:00	Summary of the day and closing remarks

Day 2

Time	Session
9:30 – 10:00	Registration and networking
9:30 – 10:00	Welcome/recap of Day 1
10:00 – 10:15	Presentation: Impact of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Libraries Programme
10:15 – 10:25	Case Study 1: Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha
10:25 – 10:35	Case Study 2: East West University
10:35 – 10:45	Case Study 3: Amader Gram
10:45 – 10:55	Case Study 4: BRAC Gonokendro
10:55 – 11:15	Break
11:15 – 13:00	Closing session – recommendations for action
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch

ANNEX 2

Methodology

Scope of LIS

The focus of the study is to improve public libraries. However, to take lessons from a wide range of public information sources, the definition of library and information services (LIS) for this study goes beyond the 68 government public libraries that exist in Bangladesh. This study uses a definition of LIS that includes public venues for accessing books and other print and digital content, whether physically or virtually. Venues explored in this study include government as well as community, private and NGO-run public libraries, information centres, cybercafés and rural telecentres.

Research design

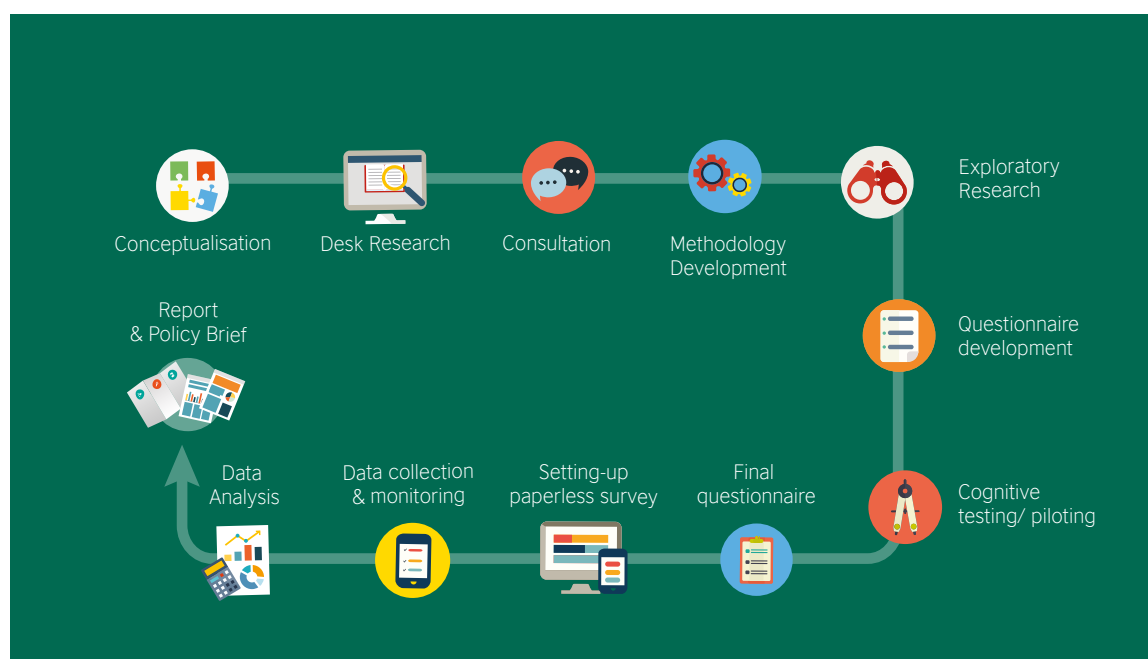
This study was undertaken through a multifaceted yet inter-connected research approach using various complementary methodologies to explore the information needs of the people, current capacity of the information services and potential of ICT integration to enhance the information services in Bangladesh. The approach entailed three main components:

In-depth study: An in-depth study was designed as part of the exploratory phase, to examine in detail salient or contested aspects of LIS. It was a combination of three other sub components: Grounded Theory Approach to explore information need and ways of information seeking, Key Informant Interview (KII) to review study design, share experts' experiences and fine tune recommendations, and Case Study to facilitate in-depth understandings of the LIS landscape.

Desk research: An extensive desk research was designed to explore national goals, policies and priorities of LIS, to compile an inventory of LIS and to seek a theoretical framework for assessing the LIS landscape in view of information needs, supply-side capacity, ICT integration and future potentiality.

Survey: To address the research questions three separate but complementary surveys with different respondent groups were designed: Public survey (targeting general people), LIS venue survey (targeting librarians, operators, management officials and authorities of LIS), and User survey (targeting people who use the LIS).

Annex figure 1: Research cycle: use of complementary methods in attaining research objectives



I. The purpose of venue survey was to explore the infrastructures, resources, services, facilities, IT capabilities, budgetary framework of LIS in Bangladesh and necessary information about librarians, staff and operators.

II. Public survey was designed to address public information need, their perceptions of public library facilities and services, current pattern of digital access, relationship between demographic profile and community needs, affordability of internet connectivity, etc.

III. To address current use of LIS in terms of access, resources and services, users' demographic information, their information need and their perceptions of LIS infrastructure, facilities and services, etc., a user survey was designed.

Methods and instruments of data collection

Desk research and literature review

Extensive desk research was conducted by exploring government policy documents and scholarly literature on LIS. The process gathered existing knowledge and helped to identify existing data gaps and the designing of subsequent data collection tools such as questionnaire surveys and interviews.

Key Informant Interview (KII)

Key informants were interviewed with a semi-structured interview checklist as part of the in-depth study. The key informants were policymakers and government officials, academics and experts, librarians, library activists, members of professional associations and officials from local and international NGOs. This process helped to identify the critical areas to explore and facilitate the development of the questionnaires for the field surveys.

Exploratory research

To explore information needs and information searching behaviour of the people, a total of 200 respondents from different regions of the country from 10 purposively selected different occupations were interviewed using a semi-structured interview checklist. Using the grounded theory approach,³² their regular actions and decisions were documented and their information searching behaviour in six common areas: health, education, employment, daily shopping/purchase, financial service, and entertainment, were identified.

Field Survey

Four distinct surveys were administered to address the research questions. Three of these surveys (venue survey i.e. library and e-centre; user survey; and public survey) were conducted face-to-face and the fourth was conducted online through a social media campaign. Data collection for face-to-face survey component was taken place from 28 February 2015 to 25 March 2015.

Estimation of sample size: Equation (1) gives the formula of the size of the sample in the case of infinite population (Cochran 2007). In the case of finite population, the formula is given by Equation (2) (Cochran 2007). As the study was complex in terms of its design and did not use simple random sampling, design effect was applied because it provides a measure of the precision gained or lost by use of the more complicated design instead of a simple random sampling.

In this study, there were three types of respondents for all three respective surveys: people living in Bangladesh for Public Survey; venue managers/operators for Venue Survey; and users of venues for User Survey.

³² The grounded theory approach is a qualitative research method that systematically gathers and analyses the information ecology of a community by observing information used to undertake activities or make decisions by the community members in their daily lives.

$$n = \frac{z^2 \times p \times (1-p)}{e^2} \times \text{Deff... (1),}$$

$$n = \frac{z^2 \times p \times (1-p) \times N}{e^2 \times (N-1) + z^2 \times p \times (1-p)} \times \text{Deff... (2),}$$

Where

n = Sample size

N = Population size

z = 1.96 for 95% confidence level

p = Percentage of picking a choice, 0.5

e = Margin of error, 0.06 for venue survey and 0.02 for public survey

Deff = Design effect, 1.8 for both venue survey and public survey

I. The sample for the venue survey was set at 450 (population size is 8,825). This sample size has produced estimates at 6 per cent margin of error and 5 per cent level of significance.

II. Within each venue, four users were selected (except public libraries) and 10 users were selected from each public library in the user survey. The total number of users was 1,998. This sample size has produced estimates at 3 per cent margin of error and 5 per cent level of significance.

III. The sample size of the public survey was set at 4,550, which has produced estimates at 2 per cent margin of error and 5 per cent level of significance.

Geographic approach: Selection of districts and upazilas/thanas: In the absence of a definitive frame to drive the random selection of venues, largely due to limitations associated with the inventories of ICT driven venues, a geographic approach was adopted. The representativeness of the sample was derived from maximising the random selection of individual venues, within randomly selected districts, upazilas, paurasavas and unions (urban and rural areas).

The country is divided into seven divisions, which are further divided into 64 districts, 455 upazila Parishads, 325 Paurasavas and 4,501 Union Parishads. The survey was designed in a way so

that it covered all divisions and as many districts as possible considering resources available. The RFP and expert consultations suggest that 50 per cent of the districts are sufficient for the distribution of estimated sample of surveys mentioned above. The survey was implemented in all seven divisions, in 35 districts and in 120 upazilas of Bangladesh. The main strategic consideration for the selection of districts and upazilas was that the public survey was conducted in places where the venue survey was taken place. And the user survey was conducted at the selected venues.

The selection of districts from divisions and Upazilas from selected districts involves the following stages:

Stage 1: Selection of districts and their proportionate distribution by divisions: The number of estimated districts was randomly selected from each division. The seven districts (Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong, Sylhet, Rajshahi and Rangpur) which are the divisional headquarters, were automatically included in the selected districts, given their administrative importance and their type of venues (e.g. divisional public libraries are situated in those districts).

Stage 2: Selection of upazilas/thanas from the selected districts: Upazilas/thanas were not selected proportionately. In the districts where

there is no scope for random selection (e.g. insufficient number in each category), upazilas/thanas were selected based on availability. Except the seven districts mentioned above (divisional headquarters), from the rest 28 districts, 3 upazilas were randomly selected. In the case of Dhaka, 6 upazilas/thanas were selected and from the rest six divisional headquarters 5 upazilas/thanas were selected. Thus, 120 upazilas/thanas were selected where the survey was administered.

LIS venue survey methodology: A total of 451 venues, covering libraries (government public libraries, privately owned public libraries, NGO driven libraries like Gonokendra Pathagar of BRAC, community libraries, etc.) and e-centres (UISCs, tele-centres, cybercafés, etc.), were randomly selected from 35 districts in Bangladesh. They were selected proportionately to their number and their sub-types. One venue operator or manager who is closely associated with the venue activities on a daily basis and knows different types of usage of the venue was surveyed as the respondent from the venue.

User survey methodology: A total of 2,049 library and e-centre users participated in the user survey from the selected venues. On average, 10 users from each public library and 4 users from each of the other types of venues were selected. Demographic profile, information need, information usage, and degree of accessibility were explored in this survey.

Public survey methodology: A total of 4,585 people participated in the household public survey from 35 districts in Bangladesh. They were distributed proportionately to the size of the population of the respective district. The purpose of this survey was to explore their information need, information usage, demographic profile, general perception about LIS and the reasons behind using (for users) and not using (for non-users) LIS venues.

Online survey

An online survey was initiated at www.obhimat.com/lis. This online survey was leveraged through a social media campaign to

Annex table 1: Survey responses

Type of survey	Respondents	Number of responses
Venue survey	Total number of libraries	136
	Government Public libraries	34
	Privately-owned public libraries	20
	NGO libraries	81
	Community libraries	1
	Total number of e-centres	315
	Telecentre	277
User survey	Cybercafé	38
	Library users	769
	e-centre users	1,280
	Total user	2,049
Public survey	Non-users and ex-users	3,208
	Library users	169
	e-centre users	1,099
	Both users	109
	Total public	4,585

promote the study as well as to create awareness about the study among the public.

Case studies: Nine (9) case studies were prepared on selected libraries. The libraries were chosen based on the types of libraries covered by the study along with a few other types of libraries that are not included in the study but are demonstrating best-practices in successful operation, innovative ideas and use of modern technologies.

Quality control mechanism

The purpose of a Quality Assurance study is to assure known quality. These studies are mechanisms to assure that the research institution functions optimally.

I. For ensuring quality of the data field enumerators were provided training before starting the data collection. Researchers/supervisors were conducting the piloting phase of the field survey along with the enumerators and provided assistance as and when necessary.

II. Field supervisors monitored the data quality of the enumerators, provided technical support and observed some interviews conducted by the field enumerators.

III. Field data was cross checked by the field supervisor. Then field data was filtered to the researchers.

IV. The qualitative portion of the collected data was monitored for quality data collection. Field enumerators also received training on quality interviewing techniques by experienced professionals.

Addressing research constraints

The study was conducted keeping in mind the following research constraints and limitations:

I. In Bangladesh public libraries provide only book services and for internet and information services there exist various types of e-centres, each of

which has unique procedure of giving services. To know about the services a multi-purpose library should provide, data was collected from different public libraries (community development library, district public library, Gonokendro pathagar, etc.) and e-centres (UISC, cybercafé, etc.) around the country and recommendations were placed on that basis.

II. Despite various levels of supervision, field surveys suffer from common data problems such as high survey attrition, enumerator bias and data input error. To address these, the survey was conducted with handheld tablet-computers using a survey application that enabled recording of GPS data for the survey location and eliminated the need for manual data input.

III. The general public's lack of awareness of information availability and applicability is a challenge when trying to explore their information demands. To overcome this challenge, complementary approaches of public survey and grounded theory were employed.

IV. Rural, urban and semi-urban areas lack homogeneous clustering and semi-urban is vaguely defined. For methodological clarity, Population Census 2011 of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) was taken as a sample framework.

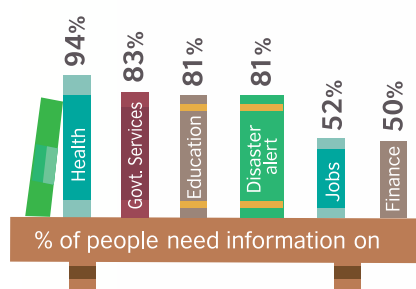
V. Political unrest was a big challenge during the study which may have affected the number of users of LIS. Thus, during the collection of some data, respondents were asked to provide information considering normal activities in the past six months.

Respondent rights were strictly maintained and their consent was taken into account for participating in the survey, based on awareness of the survey and its overall purpose. Confidentiality of their identity and responses was ensured.

LIBRARY

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT OF BANGLADESH
at a glance

Everyone needs information



However, only
1 to 2% of people find this
information in libraries



There is a demand for non-traditional services

43% of library users want
libraries to host workshops
and trainings

1% of libraries use their space
for organising seminars or
meetings

Library usage is increasing

84% of librarians said use of library
is increasing

Libraries have positive impact

99% of library users find libraries useful
for society, of which-
60% find libraries essential
39% find libraries very important

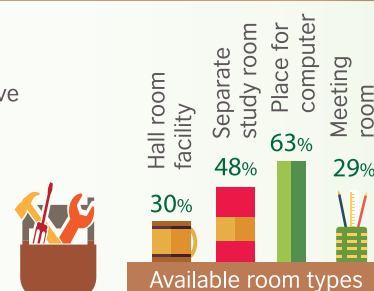
Libraries are useful for female users

71% of female users think libraries
help in decision making
74% think libraries improved their skills
69% think libraries helped them in
finding better jobs

Libraries are yet to serve everyone

6% of household respondents use libraries
72% of library users are students
65% of library users have completed
at least high school education
60% of the surveyed libraries do not provide
facilities for people with special needs

22% of libraries have photocopiers
48% of libraries
have printers



Available room types

(% of surveyed libraries)

Demand for ICT services are high

25% of library users use library computers
93% of library users want to use computers in a library
13% of library users use library internet
84% of library users want to browse internet in a library
83% of library users want photocopy machines in a library

Libraries lack ICT facilities for the public

78% of libraries have computers
44% of libraries have computers for the public
51% of libraries have internet connection
44% of govt. libraries have internet
for the public

Modernization needs to be ICT-based

63% of library users think libraries are not technologically modern
86% of librarians want improved computer facilities
85% of librarians want to get internet connectivity
43% of librarians think insufficient ICT facilities is a serious challenge

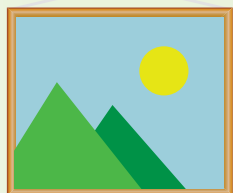
9%
of govt. libraries hold
movie screenings



25%
of libraries have backup
power supplies



40%
of librarians
think lack of
backup power
is a challenge

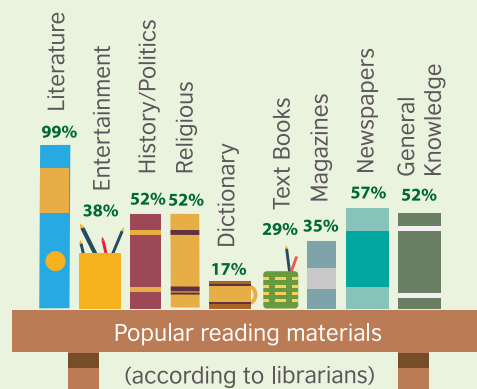


40% of library users want
libraries to host art
exhibitions

52%
of librarians said reading
resources are insufficient

62% of users
want some
books in glass
covered
shelves

66% of users
want other
books on
open
shelves



10% of users visit a library
to participate in
cultural functions,
attend exhibitions



Librarians prefer multipurpose library

64% of librarians want to introduce
community services

60% of librarians want to make
food available

Children's corner needs improvement

59% of libraries have separate space for children

65% of libraries keep the height of bookshelves within children's reach

79% of librarians said they do not have volunteers for storytelling

41% of users are dissatisfied with child safety in libraries



In general, libraries do not have wi-fi

75% of users think wi-fi is very important for libraries



Librarians demand training and higher investment



25% of librarians think lack of trained staff is a challenge



92%

of librarians are trained



Librarian

49% of librarians are dissatisfied with staff salaries

59% of librarians are dissatisfied over the annual budget of the libraries



Infographics by IID

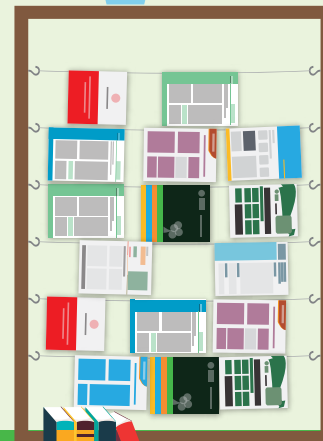


Availability of toilets is an issue

44% of libraries do not have toilets

41% of libraries have unusable toilets

59% of libraries do not have toilets for females



29% of librarians think lack of space is a serious problem

21% of librarians are seriously dissatisfied with seating capacity

Libraries are convenient

88% of library users think libraries have adequate lighting and ventilation

20% of users think libraries are noisy

Libraries are easily identifiable

70% of libraries are located beside major roads

83% of entrances are visible from the street

73% of libraries have signboards

Libraries need more public investment

0.1% of total national budget for 2015-2016 was allocated for Ministry of Cultural Affairs (MoCA), of which -

5.1% was earmarked for Dept. of Public Libraries and Directorate of Archives and Libraries, and

2.0% was allocated for National Book Centre and other libraries

All of which was allocated for revenue expenditures such as salaries and maintainance with no development expenditure

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