

ROLE OF COLLEGE LIBRARIAN IN SOLVING THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN RURAL AREA OF SUNDARBAN, GOSABA, WEST BENGAL

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Abstract:

A society develops only when its social, educational, cultural and economic condition develops and it effects each and every citizen in the society. But some typical problems and situations create barriers in the way of social development, such as anti-social activity, poverty, racial discrimination, economic deprivation, corruption, unemployment, beggary, lack of infrastructure etc. It is more evident in rural and remote areas. In this paper, we attempt to make a model theory which will help every librarian directly or indirectly to participate in social developmental work. We also present here an evaluative study on the main topic.

Keywords: Barriers of social development, Modern Society, Role of academic librarian, Social development.

1. Introduction:

We, now, live in the information society. When we open newspapers or news channels in TV, we see different types of news and issues. Among them political corruption, social corruption, social discrimination, poor educational system, culture of economically backward person, poverty and their life struggle etc. are common news in our daily life. As librarian we have to contribute and organize a social movement towards development of our society. In this society, we as librarian have to provide the right information to the right user at the right time. The information requirements of users of a society depend on social, economic, political, scientific, technological and psychological changes appearing in the society from time to time. We know that academic librarian gives academic service. But in this paper we attempt to give an overview of the role of academic librarian in developing a good society.

2. Literature review

India is a diverse country consisting of many states and West Bengal is one of them. There are so many social problems, with which we all are more or less intimately involved. Anyway, we shall first see which issues are more discussed in India. **Rakshi Padhan** (2016) discussed in detail about seven major social issues of India. After two years **R. Ahuja** (2017) highlighted the top ten current major social issues in India. These were corruption, illiteracy, educational system, basic sanitation, healthcare system, poverty, pollution, women's safety, infrastructure and unemployment.

In the field of west Bengal, **Rhianu Howell** (2004) focused on the major problems of the society. He showed that some of the social problems are not merely the result of different levels of the society and social solution is not the only solution. Rather, political and economic problems also indirectly contribute to the creation of these social issues. Whatever may be the sources, as these issues effect the society, these should be considered as social issues. **The Indian statistical Institute (ISI), Kolkata** (2012) presented a report about economic problems of the society of west Bengal.

The manifesto proclaimed **UNESCO** (1994) belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture, inclusion and information, as an essential agent for sustainable development, and for individual fulfilment of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of all individuals. The services of the public library were provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, language, social status, and any other characteristic. Scientist **Jesse H. Shera** (1976) thought that the library was a wide part of a social system created by people, naming libraries as social institutions for the need of the society. **Ukessays** (2017) specifically mentioned seven areas where public libraries had an important role to play. These were education, literacy, non-formal education, lifelong learning, economic development, democratic governance and citizen's participation in decision-making. **Gorham and Bertot** (2017) pointed out that libraries serve as critical community access points to individual and community transformation in key areas of challenge such as health and wellness, economic development, civic engagement, and education. **Anu Nuut** (2004) described the various typed of library model and their new role in the modern information society. **K. Murugan & K. M. Krishna** (2017) showed that the development of information and communication technology had been followed in the society in many ways and had been used in the libraries. The use of internet played an import role for development of the society. **Frances Hendrix** (1998) with more researcher and writer justified the role of public library in a modern society. From the above discussion it is clear that public library plays an important role for development of the society.

According to **Sumangala Jha** (2012) college means teachers for lectures and guides to use reading materials, students to read and study, and library is the central point to coordinate teaching and learning for gathering knowledge that make objectives of a college fulfilled. But beyond this, academic librarians can provide some additional services for the betterment of society. In the language of library science, it is called extension service. **Asifa Jan** (2017) briefly discussed about various form of extension services. The library extension services may be of two types such as internal or external. The internal extension service includes orientation programmes and the external extension service includes the mobile library service, publicity programmes etc.

In this paper, we have attempted to inspect what activities academic librarians may undertake where public libraries may not reach for various reasons and which theory or system is followed by an academic librarian for participating directly or indirectly in the social development of rural area of Sundarban.

3. Statement of the problem:

After reviewing the literature, it is found that no study has been carried out to investigate the role of college librarians in solving the social problems in rural areas of Sundarban, West Bengal. Identifying this research gap the present study has been undertaken.

4. Objectives:

- 1) To find out the core elements of a society required for its development
- 2) To find out the main barriers to the development of a society
- 3) To find out the solution to these problems and barriers.
- 4) To see the role of academic librarians in building a good society
- 5) Strategies to overcome challenges faced by rural society
- 6) To find out the information need of the society.
- 7) To discuss about the need of modern society.

5. Methodology:

Document research has been applied for making related and relevant literature review in order to understand the research gap. Data materials are collected through library work and online resources. Descriptive or survey method is used for investigating current condition of rural area in Gosaba block of Sundarban. Survey method including observation, questionnaire, interview system, etc. is the important process for collecting data. Here questionnaire and interview methods have been applied for getting information about their social problems and solutions to those problems.

6. Limitation of the study:

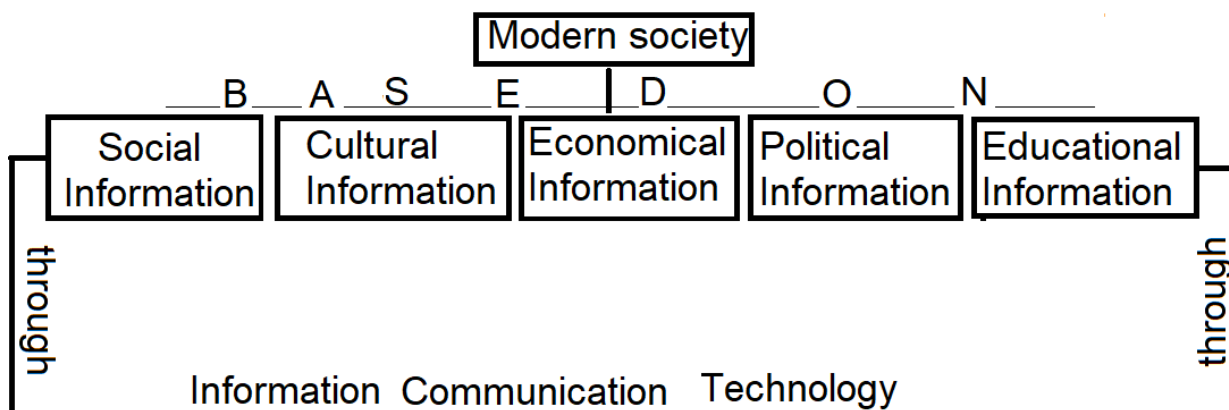
Geographical Limitation: The present study is limited to Gosaba, Sundarban.

Sample Population: 1000 Students have been taken for this study.

Time: Information has been collected in the month of May to July, 2017.

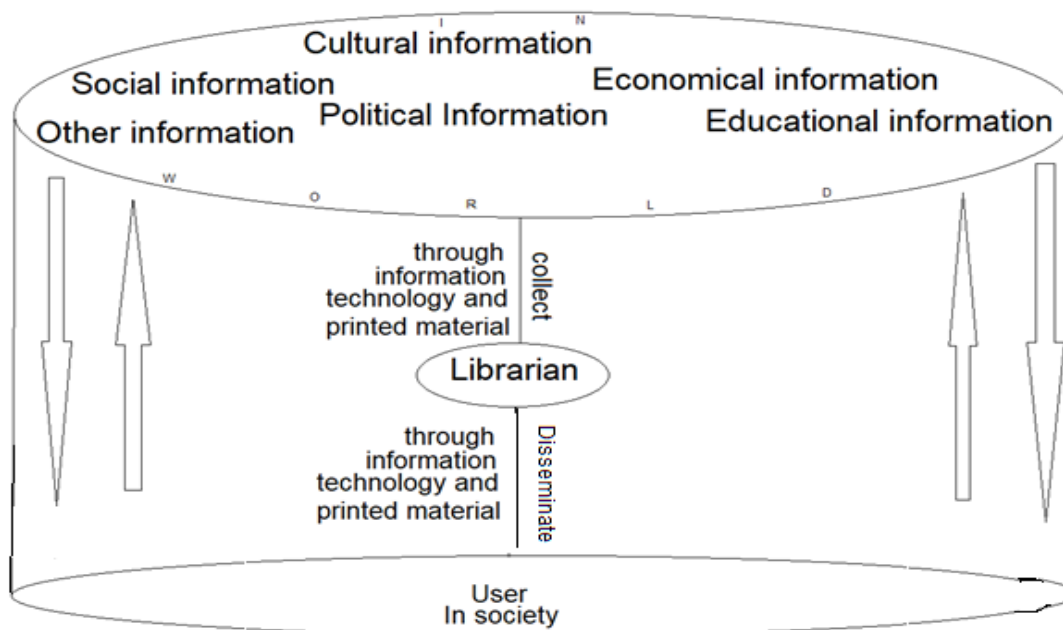
7. Modern society

We know that every information user comes to the library with many questions (who, which, whom, what, whose, where, when and how etc) in their mind and earlier librarians met their needs only through books or by consulting an expert. But with the change of time comes a great change in the society. Libraries also have to adopt new approaches to meet daily needs. New services are discovered in libraries. Modern society is based on information. A man wants to get the information which will fulfill the need of his daily life. And all the services in modern society depend on information and communication technology (ICT).



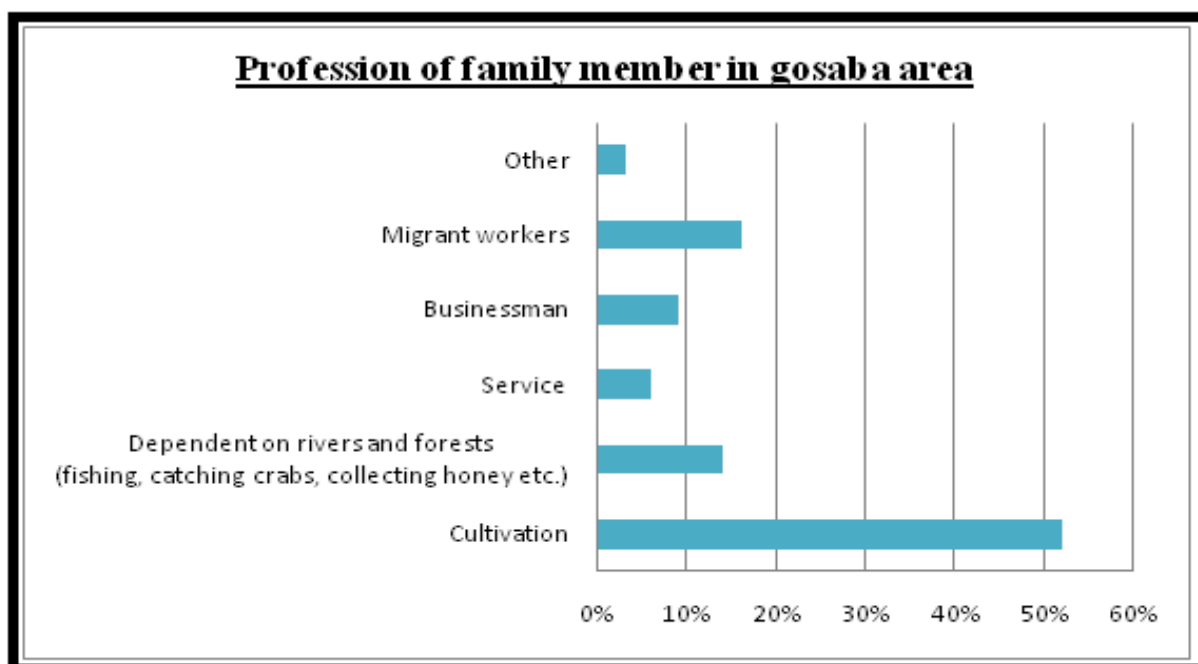
8. Role of a librarian in a modern society

We know that the main functions of library or librarian or library staff include collection of information, organization of information, storing of information and dissemination of information. In a modern society a librarian completes the whole process through the information technology.



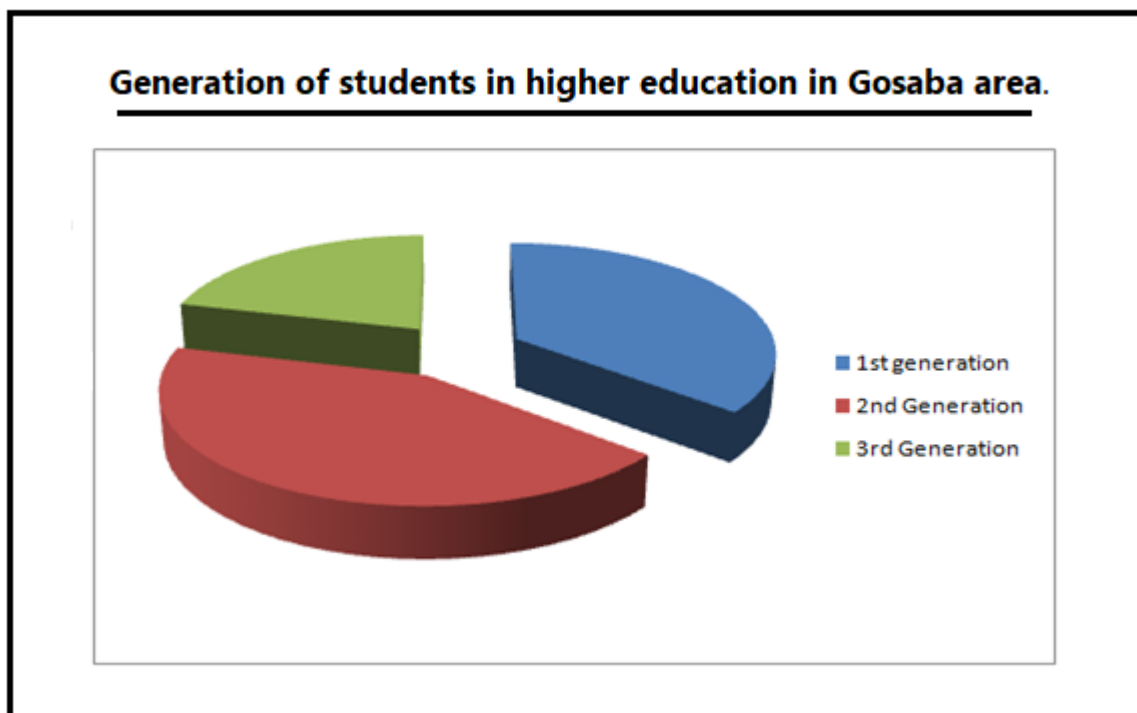
9. Data analysis and findings

Sundarban is a wonderful biosphere reserve which covers an area in West Bengal (another part covers Bangladesh) around 10,000km in the delta of Ganges. It lies on the south-east of Kolkata and borders the Bay of Bengal. Gosaba is one of the main deltaic islands in the Sundarban region in West Bengal. It has 14 Village panchayats, 9 islands, 1 police station, 1 college, more than 30 high schools etc. We have collected data from 1000 college students. According to them, their family members belong to the following professions:



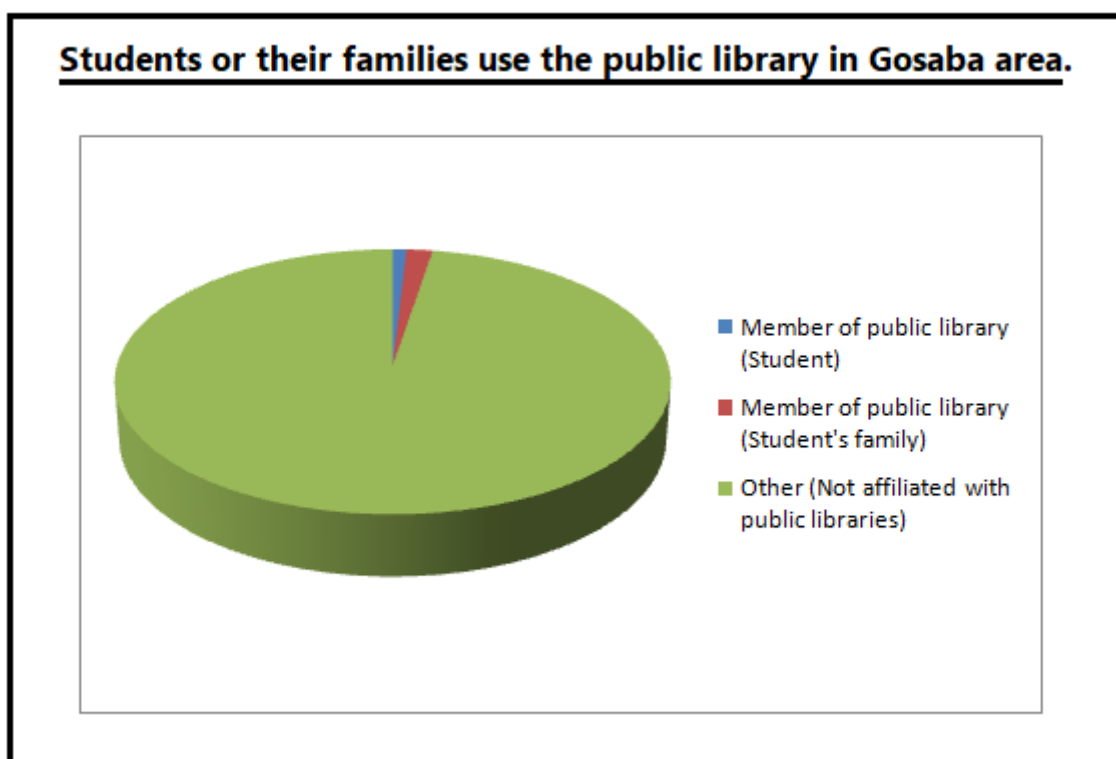
Here we see that more than 50 percent of people are dependent on agriculture. Apart from this, most of the people either go to work in foreign countries or other states or depend on the river and forest for their livelihood. Very few people are involved in government jobs or business.

In terms of education, the people of Gosaba region are far behind. In this case, we have divided the generation into three parts as criteria. 1st generation students who are the first in the family to be educated in higher education. 2nd generation students who have come to be educated in higher education after their fathers and uncles, and 3rd generation students who have come to be educated in higher education after their grandfather or grandmother. Now we see the following figure:

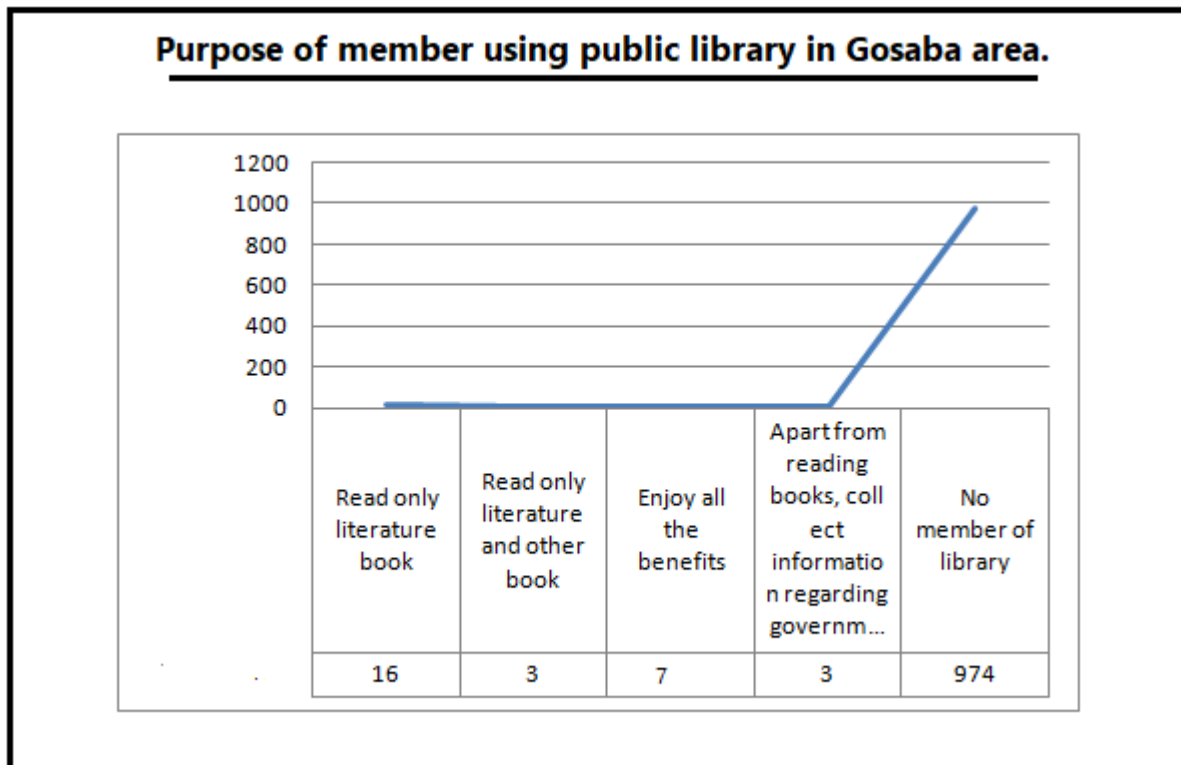


We see that more than 36% student's are 1st generation learners, 43% students' include 2nd generation learners and only 21% students who have been in higher education for generations.

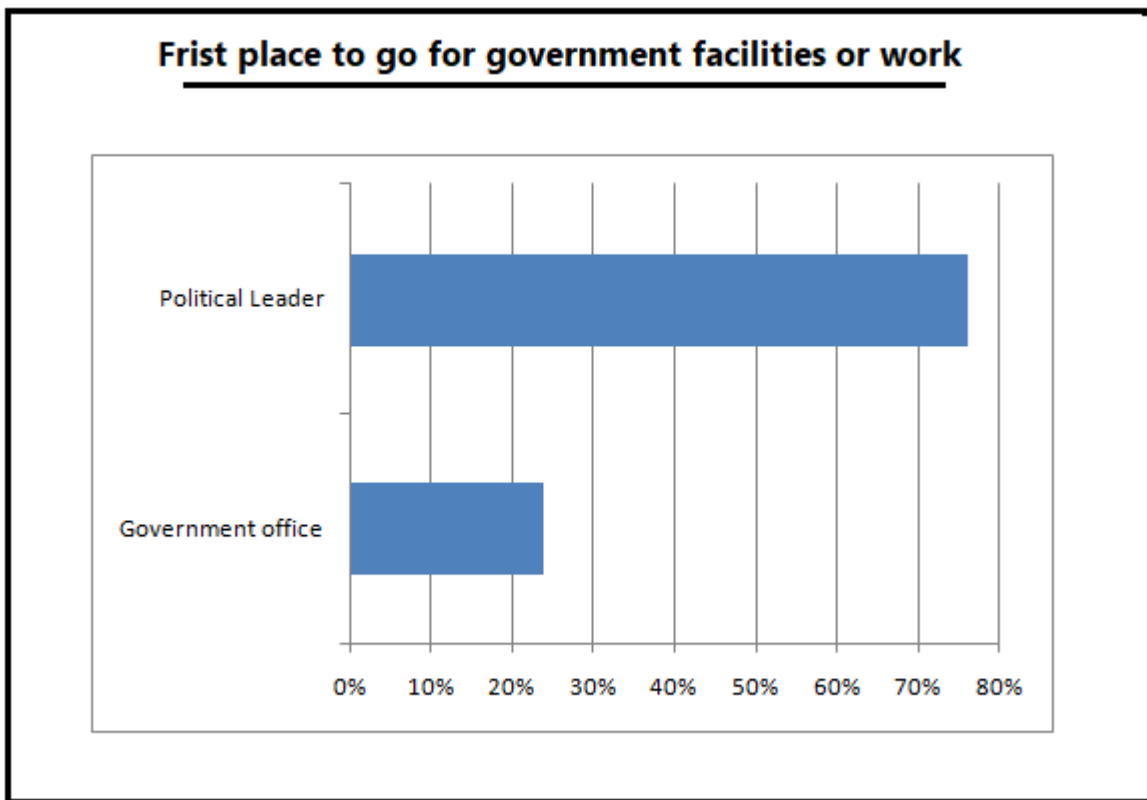
Significantly, while every panchayat is supposed to have one rural library, Gosaba region has only 6 rural libraries out of 14 panchayats. Now we will see what percentage of our sample students or their families use the library for what purpose.



In the above figure we see that 974 students or their families are not member of any public library while only 9 students and 17 student's family persons use public library. The figure below shows that among these 26 students or their family members, 16 users read only literary books (such as stories, novels and poems etc.), 3 users read books on other subjects along with the above, 7 members receive other services apart from books, and 3 out of these 7 collect information about government facilities from the library.



There is a famous dialogue in the famous movie named 'Heerak Rajar Deshe' directed by the legendary Satyajit Ray –“The more they read, the more they know, and the less they bow”. It is not clear if it is the result of political planning, but it can be said that due to the low education rate, the dominance of political leaders and socialists in Gosaba region is very high. Common people have to go to the political leaders for the privileges that a child is born with. His image is also reflected in the figure below.



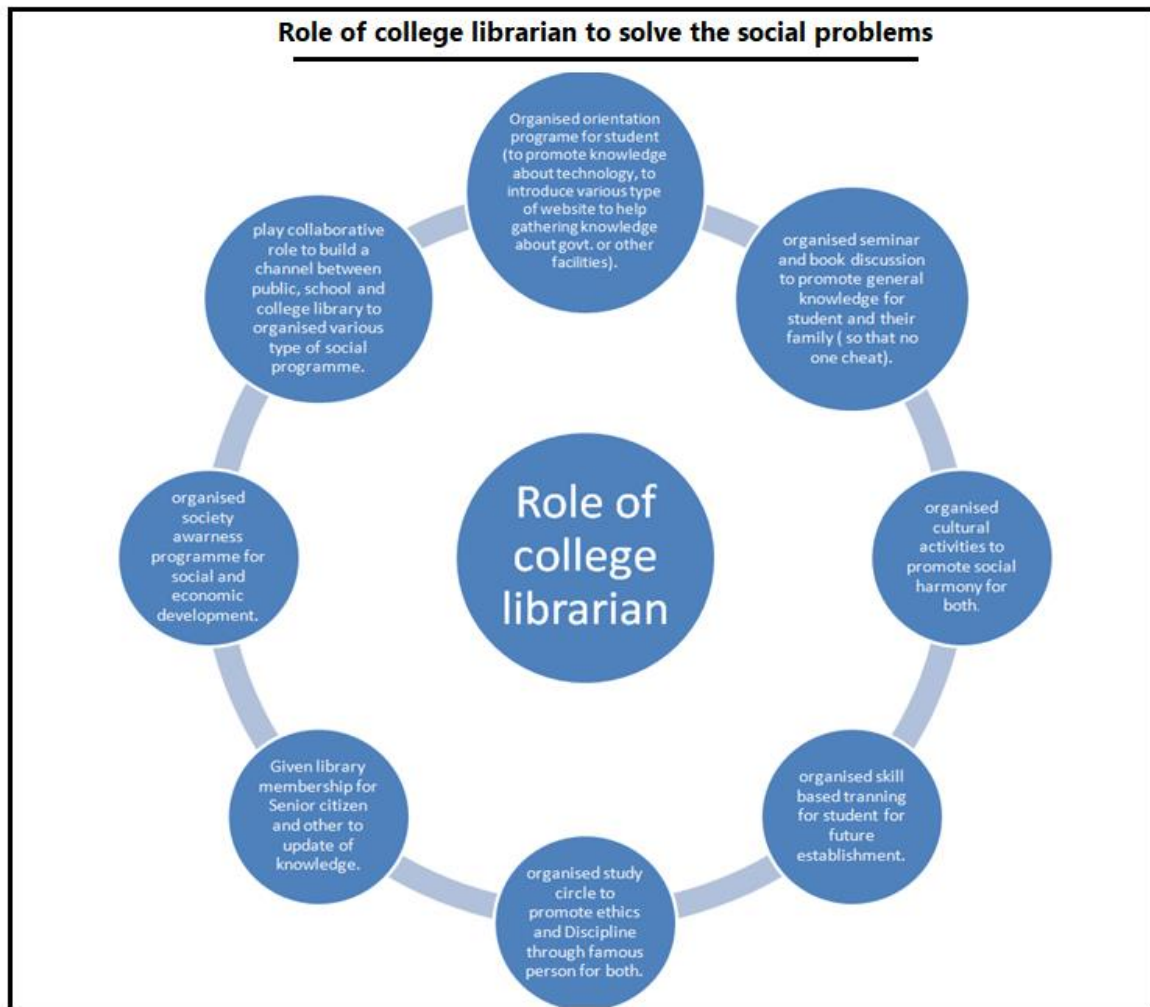
More than 70% people go to the political leaders at first to know about government facilities and only 24% people visit government office for the same. But it should be just the opposite.

10. Findings and solution

"Destroying any nation does not require the use of atomic bombs or the use of long range missiles. It only requires lowering the quality of education and allowing cheating in the examinations by the students." Nelson Mandela. Naturally education is the only factor behind strengthening a nation. Only education can make people free from superstition and depravity. Hence, education is identified as the backbone of the nation. Gosaba region is a vivid example of how helpless people are without education, just as spineless people are of no use to the society; they spend their lives as a pawn for others. Poverty, lack of cultural, social, economical, political education, lack of public library infrastructure, lack of technological knowledge, lack of awareness force the people to depend on local political leaders. By exploiting their weaknesses, they (Corrupt Political leaders) become more powerful.

In such a situation a college librarian can come forward by providing extension services. We know that the main purpose of academic librarian or library is to fulfill academic purpose. But a librarian must remember that library is a social organization and librarian is a social worker.

Moreover, compared to public libraries and school libraries, college libraries are much more developed in terms of infrastructure and facilities. However, in this field an academic librarian can play a collaborative roll with institution and others.



11. Conclusion

“Strength is Life, Weakness is Death. Expansion is Life, Contraction is Death. Love is Life, Hatred is Death.”

Swami Vivekananda

Society should love not hate. College librarians should not confine themselves to college libraries but should extend their services to the general public. Only then can common people identify their weaknesses and overcome them. The power they will gain from that formula will collapse all kinds of political interference. And only then will the all-round beautiful society be built.

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