PUBLIC LIBRARIES AS TOOLS FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN KOTA REGION, RAJASTHAN

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the use of Public Libraries as tools for Socio-economic and Political Development with reference to selected public libraries in Kota region, Rajasthan. It examines the views of users toward the services rendered by public libraries, how these services are being offered and also the impact of these services on their socio-economic and political development. Survey design was adopted for the study and methods used for collecting data included questionnaire, observation and interview. The data collected were analyzed and interpreted using simple frequency and percentages. From the total of 70 copies of questionnaire distributed, 58 copies, representing 83% were filled and returned. Finally the paper highlights the various major findings of the study and offers some vital suggestions on how the overall system and services of selected Public Libraries in Kota region can be improved in line with technological advancement of 21st century for the betterment of socio-economic and political condition of the users.

Keyword: Socio-economic, Development, Political, Public, Libraries, Information, Resources, Government.

1. INTRODUCTION

Growth in education is usually accompanied with Socio-economic and political development of a society worldwide. Most developed and fast developing economies have a very high level of education. Education is an instrument par excellence for national development. Education solely depends on the availability of the right information at the right time. It involves the development of the whole person intellectually, psychologically, socially, vocationally, religiously or morally. This is the reason why information is seen as an integral part of national development. Public libraries being hub of information have a very vital role to play as public libraries are established to provide timely information resources, which communicate experience and ideas from one person to another and make them easily and freely available to all people, regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, employment status and educational attainment. According to Iwhiwhu and Patience (2012) “People in all works of life use the public library resources, facilities and services. These users include pupils, students, teachers, scholars, scientists, business executives, government officials, physically challenged and even dropouts”

The term 'social economics' may refer broadly to the "use of economics in the study of society." More narrowly, contemporary practice considers behavioral interactions of individuals and groups through social capital and social "markets" (not excluding for example, sorting by marriage) and the formation of social norms. In the latter, it studies the relation of economics to social values Rontos (2013). Socio-economic status (SES) is the indicator of socio-economic development this is supported by the saying of Boyce (2008) that Socio-economic status (SES) refers to an individual’s level of income, wealth, education, and prestige.

Development practitioners are increasingly aware of the role of social and political factors in shaping development outcomes as contained in World Bank (2005), which asserts that political power relations tend to reflect and shape social and economic distribution patterns in so-called “inequality traps” that constrain economic growth and poverty reduction and increase social tensions. Similarly, a report by the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) on the World Bank’s development effectiveness has indicated that successful programs require a sound understanding of the country’s political economy (Singh 2005). It must be stressed from the outset that overall development is a multidimensional phenomenon associated with a variety of social, economic and political factors variables, such as high per capita income, high human development, large

government effectiveness, significant reduction of income and wealth inequalities, large social transformations, reduced corruption and democratic political system. For this to be achieved successfully the society must be well informed and knowledgeable about their basic rights and responsibilities. According to Rontos (2013) he argued that overall development is also associated with the degree of human development that is by the level of health, the degree of access to knowledge and the level of well-being prevailing in a given country, as a wider notion than economic development. Human development refers to the expansion of people's freedoms and capabilities to live their lives as they choose UNDP (2009). Human development is both a process and an outcome. It is not only concerned with the process through which human choices are enlarged, but it also focuses on the outcomes of the enlarged choices UNDP (2002).

2. GOVERNEMENT DIVISIONAL PUBLIC LIBRARY KOTA: BRIEF OVERVIEW

- Established in 1956
- Started offering the library services to the readers of Kota Region from the Dan Mal ji ki Haweli (Baphana Haweli), The Owner of The Building was Nagar Seth Kota
- Later, in 1968 the library was moved to Chatra Vilas Garden (Also Known as CV Garden) from Rampur (Dan mal Haweli)
- By order of the DM again in 1984, the Library was moved again into the 2nd floor of UIT Building because of establishing Doordarshan Office.
- Again in 2001 the library was also moved to the Ground Floor of UIT Building because they have the need of wing.
- In 2013, with the Financial Assistance of Raja Ram Mohun Roy Library Foundation Kolkata (RRRLF), library moved to its New Building, which is situated in CAD Colony Campus, In front of Income Tax Residential Colony, Dadabari Kota (Rajasthan)
- Now the New Library Building is serving the Citizen of Kota Region
- But its long journey of movement from one place to another really caused the damage of many Books.

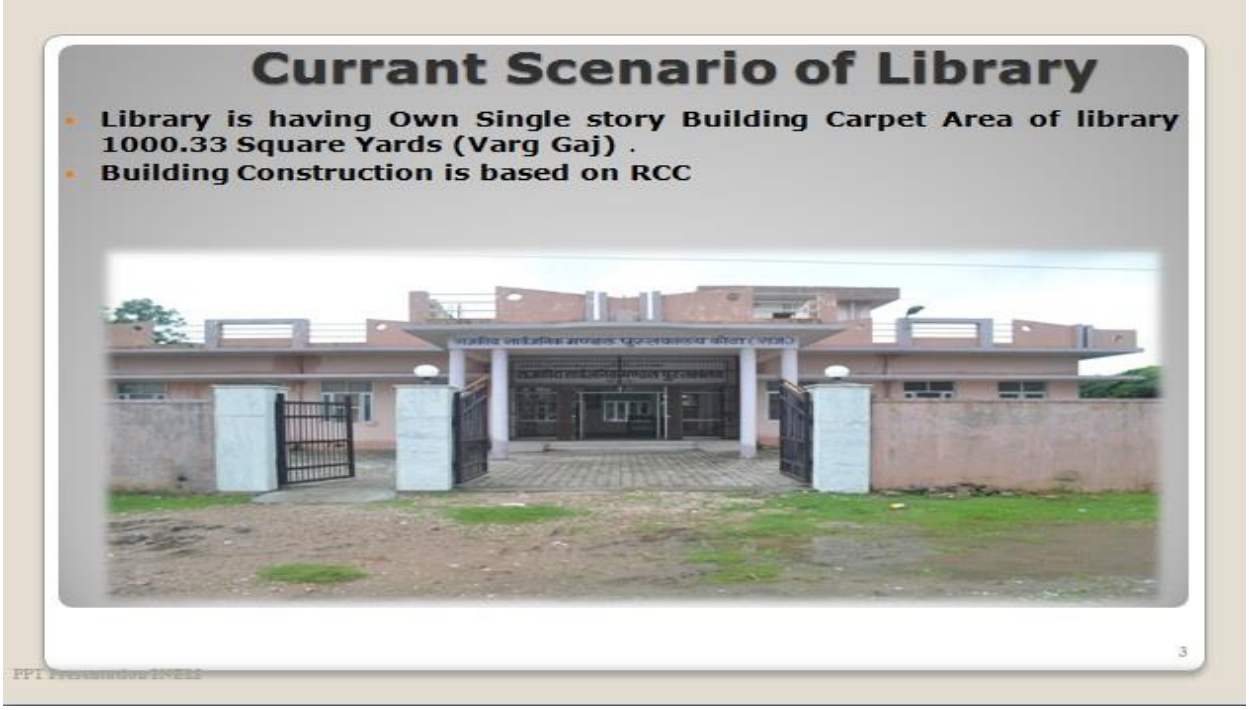


Photo 1: Front view of Govt. Divisional Public Library, Kota

3. GOVERNMENT DISTRICT PUBLIC LIBRARY BUNDI: BRIEF OVERVIEW

Government District Public Library Bundi is princely a library situated in Biggest Government School Campus with Huge Building and right now curetted by Mr. Joginder Singh. It is established in 1956 and having Collection of about 47067 Books.

4. GOVERNMENT PUNCHAYAT SAMITI PUBLIC LIBRARY KAITHOON: BRIEF OVERVIEW

Govt. Panchayat Samiti Public Library Kaithoon is in Kota District and established in year 2001 and now it is running in its own building made in year 2006 by the Co-operation of Raja Ram Mohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) Kolkata. The reputed library is running under the guidance of Smt. Anita Mathur and it is situated in School building so both School Students and Rural People can benefit from the public library.

5. DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND LIBRARY, GOVT. OF RAJASTHAN: OVERVIEW

In Rajasthan, there is a separate department or directorate namely: Department of Language and Library, Government of Rajasthan, Jaipur to govern the Public libraries of Rajasthan, established in year 2001 and it's headed by Director Public Library. It's an administrative post which is

always appointed by a Senior RAS and there are two Deputy Directors – Deputy Director (Translation) and Deputy Director (Administration) besides these post, there is also OSD (Officers on Special Duty), Account Officer, Assistant Academic Officer. The Responsibility of this department is to take care of Government Public Libraries. Right Now there is a total 278 Public Libraries in Rajasthan whereas 50 are fully under the control of Department and rests are run under school premises partially by School Librarian. The Status of Public Libraries in Rajasthan is like-

Table1: Govt. Public Libraries in Rajasthan

S.No.	Types of Libraries available in Rajasthan	No. of Libraries
1.	State Central Library	01
2.	Divisional Libraries	07
3.	District Libraries	33
4.	PS Libraries (In School)	276
5.	PS Libraries (Fully Governed By Department of Language and Library)	06
Total		323

http://bhashapustakalaya.rajasthan.gov.in/

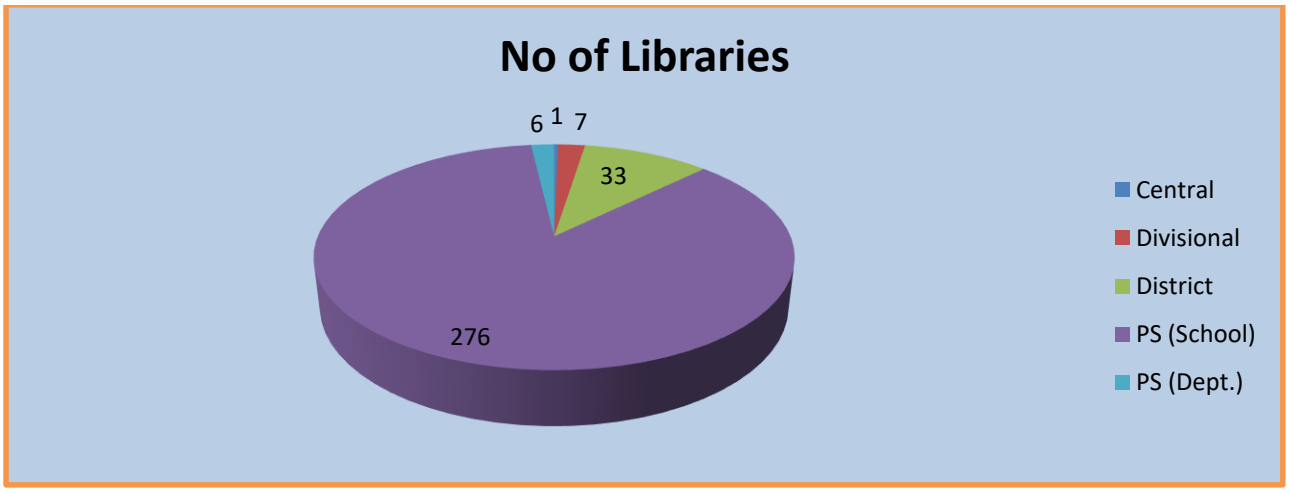


Chart: 1 Govt. Public Libraries in Rajasthan

Recently Three PS Fully Funded Public libraries are merged in Concern District libraries so total of public libraries at present are 275

6. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The role of public libraries cannot be overemphasized especially in developing countries. Public libraries are seen as agencies for continuing education both for the young, old and physically challenged members of the community. The improved socio-economic and political status of an individual or the community obviously depends largely upon knowledge and information, hence reading is one of the most important means for the acquisition of knowledge and information. To this end, therefore, public libraries are the only 'free' agencies that provide a variety of reading services for every individual no matter his status, educational background and age. A close examination of the public libraries in Kota region, Rajasthan has revealed that public libraries are not adequately used as tools for socio-economic and political development by members of the community. Therefore, one tends to ponder if these inadequacies are due to lack of proper awareness by its vast users, or is it because of the habit of the users etc. This lead to study Public Libraries as Tools for Socio-economic and Political Development: A case study of selected Public Libraries in Kota region, Rajasthan

7. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Socio-economic and political development especially in developing countries is becoming knowledge and information based; therefore, knowledge will inevitably serve as the driving force to enhance productivity, economic growth and performance. Thus, this paper has the following objectives:

I. To ascertain the use of the public libraries in socio-economic and political development of Kota region Rajasthan
II. To appraise the services in the public libraries of Kota region, Rajasthan
III. To examine the impact of public libraries on the socio-economic and political development of the people of Kota region Rajasthan.

8. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The scope of the study covers the Users of Government Divisional Public Library, Kota, Government District Public Library, Bundi, and Government PS Public Library Kaithoon Kota. This comprises both registered and non registered users of the public libraries. The study is limited to public libraries in Kota region of Rajasthan.

9. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method adopted for the study is survey design, Aina and Ajiferuke (2002), argued that, survey design could be conveniently used in large and small population without sacrificing efficiency in addition to time and money saving and currency. The main instrument for data collection for this research is a structured questionnaire that was distributed among various users of public libraries while interview and observation are also used. Data analysis and interpretation is based on a sample population of 70 users of public libraries in Kota region of Rajasthan which were randomly picked.

Table 2: Population sample distribution

S.No	Name of Library	Regd Users	NonRegd Users	Abled Users	Total	%
1.	Government Divisional Public Library Kota Rajasthan India	17	11	3	31	44
2.	Government District Public Library Bundi, Rajasthan India	13	9	Nil	22	32
3.	Government PS Public Library Kaithoon, District – Kota, Rajasthan India	11	6	Nil	17	24
Total		41	26	3	70	100

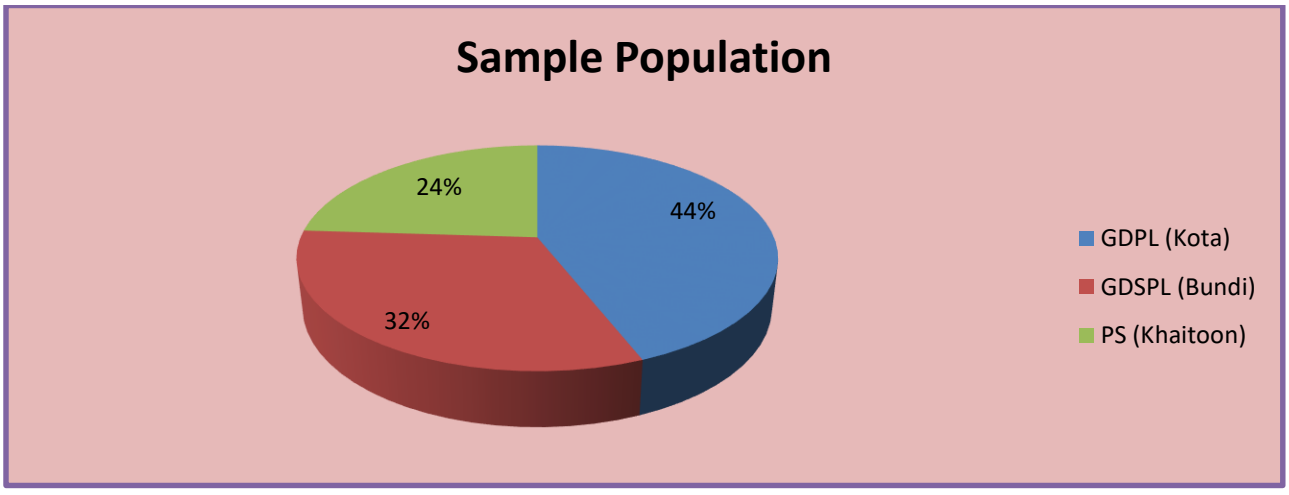


Chart 2: Sample population

10. DATA ANALYSIS

A total number of 70 questionnaires were distributed to various users of public libraries in Kota region of Rajasthan but 58 were fully filled and returned which means 83% responded. The analysis is based on simple frequency count and percentages.

10.1 Information supplied by Librarians

Information and its effective, proper dissemination and utilization are an integral and very powerful force to reckon with in socio-economic and political development. Public libraries are therefore the main arena through which the overall information resources in various areas of knowledge are made freely available to all members of the community irrespective of age, sex, religion, cultural background, educational standard as well as political and social inclination. Both public libraries have a sizable collection of books, magazines, journals and newspaper and they are also connected to internet.

10.2 Age distribution of respondents

Table 3: Age of respondents

Age	No of Readers	%
10-15	8	14
16-20	13	22
21-29	20	35
30 and above	17	29
Total	58	100

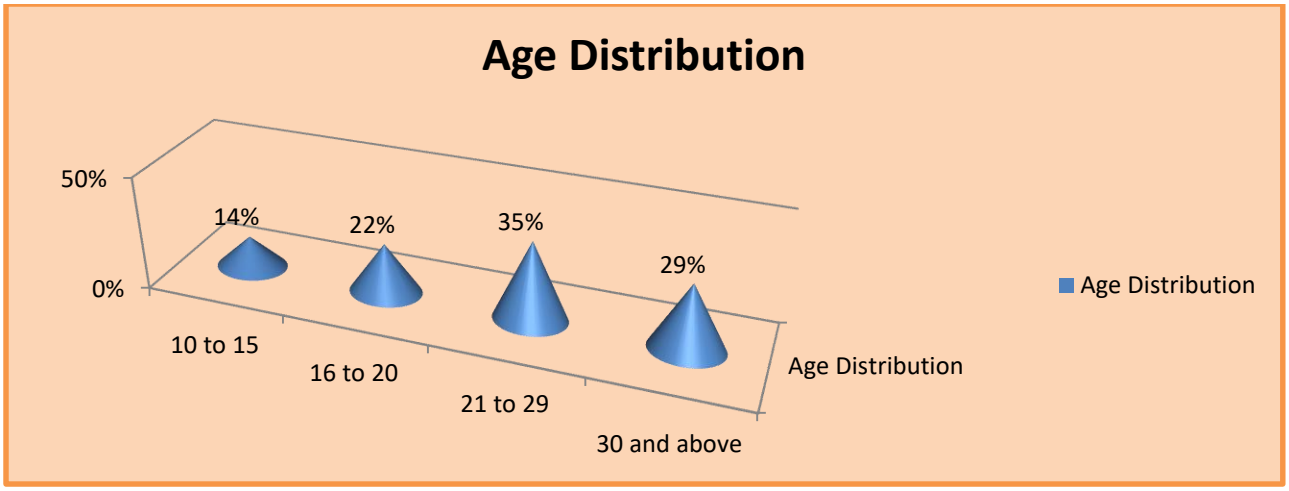


Chart 3: Demonstrating age distribution of readers.

Table 3 above shows that 52% of the respondents are between the ages of 30 and above, 32% are between the ages of 21 to 29 and 16% are in the range of 16 to 20 while none was between the ranges of 10 to 15.

10.3: sources of information of respondents

Table 4: Information Sources

Sources of information	Regd users	%	Non regd user	%	Freely Abled users	%
Public libraries	19	58	12	55	2	67
Outside	5	15	4	18	1	33
Internet use	9	27	6	27	0	0
Total	33	100	22	100	3	100

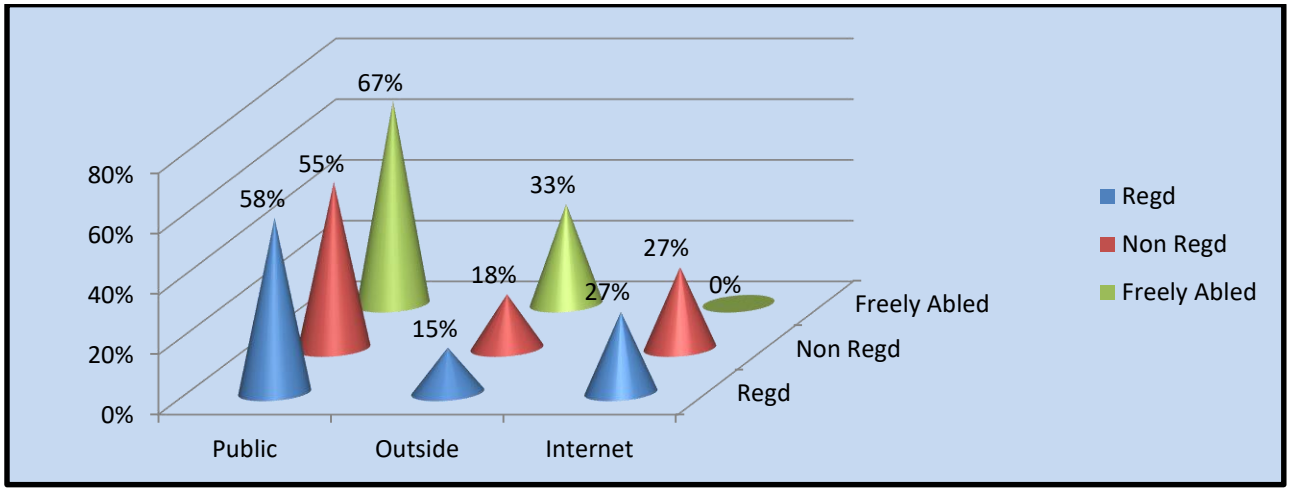


Chart 4: Information Sources

The normal way to study the importance of various sources of information is to look at the citation pattern of a particular field which indirectly assists in setting up public libraries collections and acquisition. From table 4 above, the study shows that 58% of the registered users, 55% none registered users and 67% of freely abled users of the public libraries use the libraries for getting information while15% of registered users, 18% of none registered users get information from outside the library. Further more, 27% of registered users as well as none registered users use the internet to get information.

10.4 Regular visits to Public Libraries

Table 5: Visit to Public Libraries

Library visit	Regd users	%	Non regd users	%	Freely abled users	%
Regularly	19	58	10	45	1	33
Once in a week	8	24	5	23	2	67
When required	6	18	7	32	0	0
Total	33	100	22	100	3	100

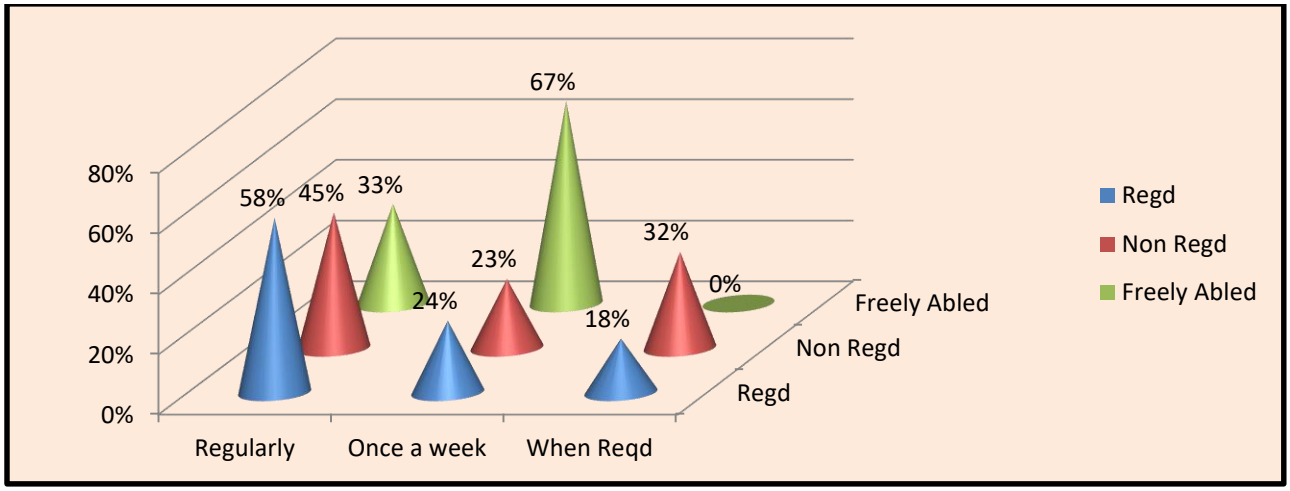


Chart 5: Visit to Public Libraries

Table 5 above shows that 58% of the registered users, 45% of none registered users and 33% of freely abled users regularly visit public libraries but 24% of registered users, 23% of none registered users and 67% of freely abled users visit public libraries once in a while. Further more, 18% of registered users and 32% of non registered users visit public libraries when required.

10.5 Objective of Reading

Table 6*:* Objectives of reading in Public Libraries

Reading objective	Regd users	%	Non-regd user	%	Freely abled users	%
Increase knowledge	14	43	12	55	2	67
Academic	12	36	6	27	1	33
Recreation	7	21	4	18	0	0
Total	33	100	22	100	3	100

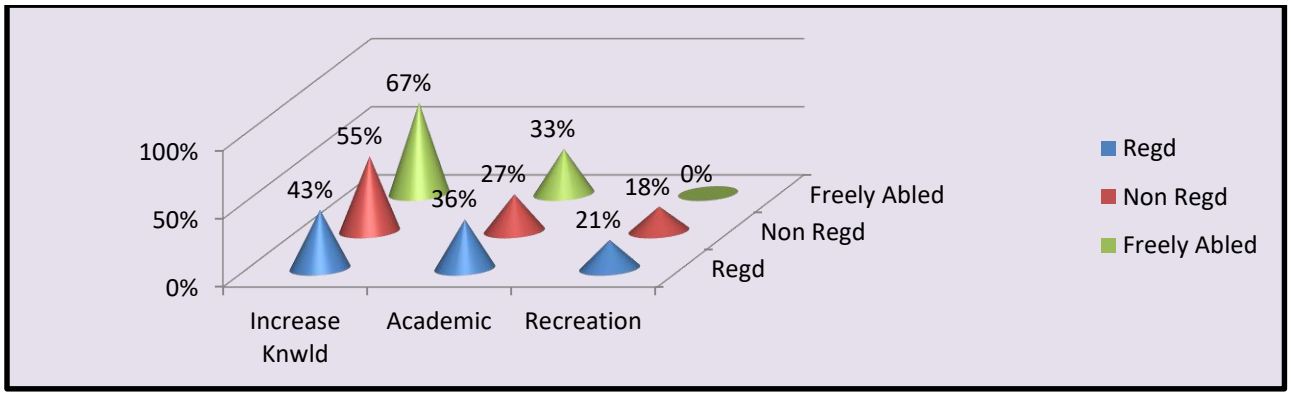


Chart 6: Objectives of reading in Public Libraries

In table 6 above, 43% of registered users, 55% of none registered users and 67% of freely abled users go to public libraries with the main objective of increasing their knowledge while 36% of registered users, 27% of none registered users and 33% of freely abled users have the objective of academic purpose. Also 24% of registered users and 28% of none registered users go for recreation purpose.

10.6 Sources of General Reading

Table 7: Sources of general reading in Public Libraries

General reading	Regd Users	%	Non regd User	%	Freely abled Users	%
Newspapers	12	36	8	37	2	67
Magazines	10	30	4	18	1	33
Non Fiction	8	24	6	27	0	0
Fiction	3	10	4	18	0	0
Total	33	100	22	100	3	100

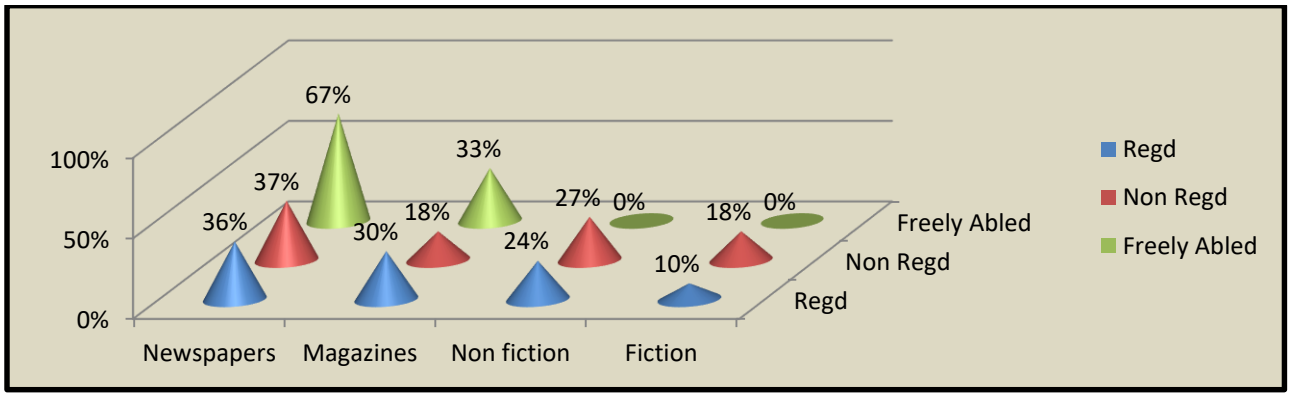


Chart 7: Sources of general reading in Public Libraries

Table 7 above shows that 36% of registered users, 37% of none registered users and 67% of freely abled users are of the view that newspapers is their major source of reading, while 30% of registered users, 18% of non registered users and 33% of freely abled users agreed that magazine is their main source of reading. More so, 24% of registered users and 27% of none registered users go with non fiction as their source of reading while 10% of registered users and 18% of non registered users are with the fiction as their sources of reading.

10.7 Socio-economic and political awareness

Table 8: Level of awareness

Increase in level of awareness	**Regd Users**	**%**	**Non regd User**	**%**	**Freely abled Users**	**%**
Yes	27	82	19	86	2	67
No	6	18	3	14	1	33
Total	33	100	22	100	3	100

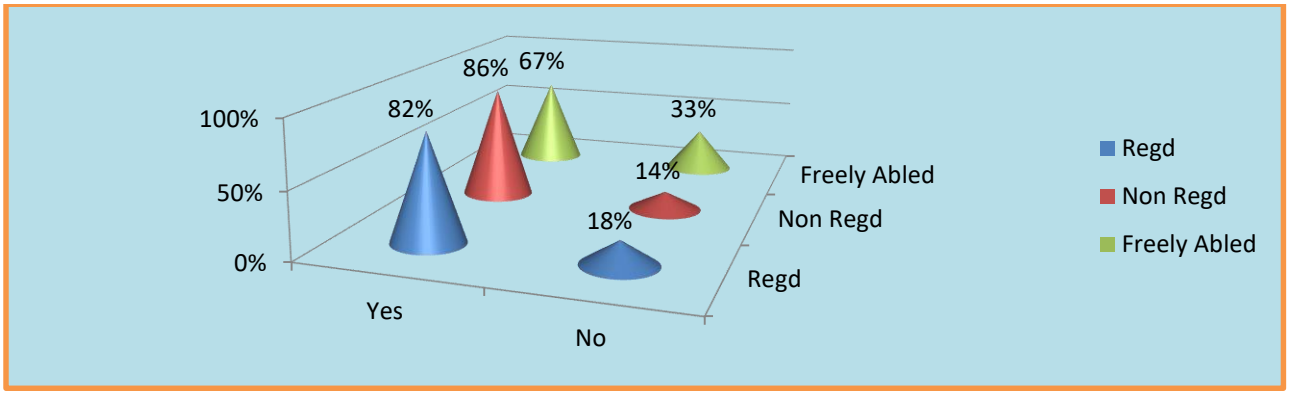


Figure 8: Demonstrating the level of confidence increase in readers.

In table 8 above, about 82% of registered users, 86% of non registered users and 67% of freely abled users are of the view that their level of awareness has increase by visiting public libraries while only 18% of registered users, 14% of non registered users and 33% of freely abled users are of the view that there was no increase in the level of their awareness.

10.8 Opinions about Public Libraries Resources with regard to Socio-economic development

Table 9: Opinion about Public Libraries resources

Opinion	Regd Users	%	Non regd Users	%	Freely abled Users	%
Satisfied	20	61	13	59	2	67
Average	9	27	7	32	1	33
Not satisfied	4	12	2	9	0	0
Total	33	100	22	100	3	100

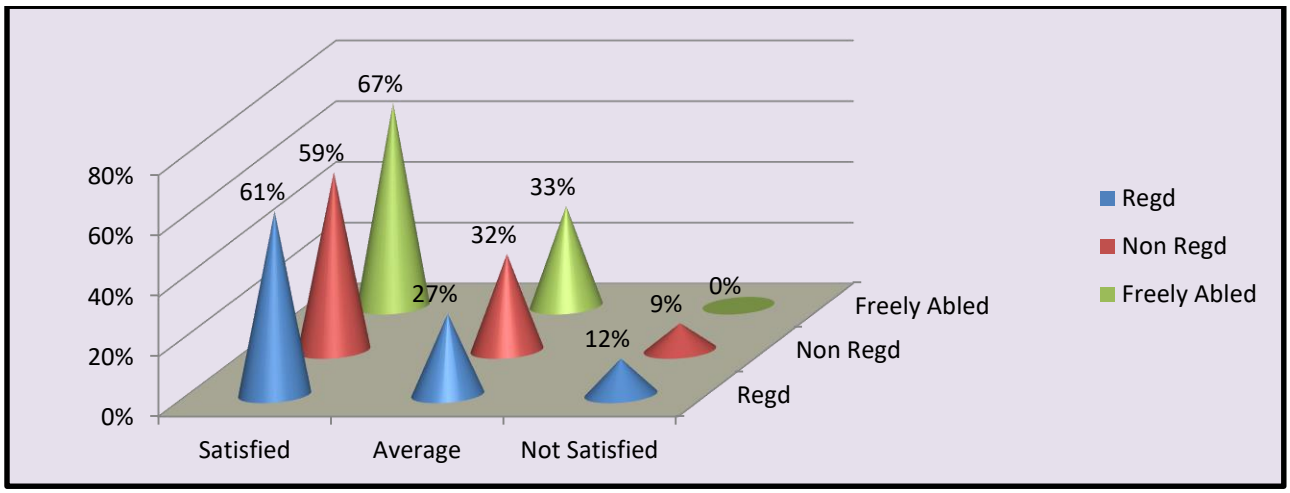


Chart 9: Opinion about Public Libraries resources

In table 9 above, 61% of registered users, 59% of none registered users and 67% of freely abled users are very much satisfy with information resources of public libraries while 27% of registered users, 32% of none registered users and 33% of freely abled users are of the view that the resources are within average. Furthermore, 12% of registered users and 9% of none registered users are not satisfy with the information resources.

11. CONCLUSION

Public Library undoubtedly enhances the socio-economic and political development of both users in Kota region of Rajasthan. The study shows that majority of users go to public libraries for their source of information and also visit public libraries on a regular basis. Furthermore, majority increase their knowledge and political awareness by going to public libraries while newspaper and magazine are their major reading sources. Finally, the study shows that majority of the users are fully satisfy with the information resources available in public libraries of Kota

region in Rajasthan. Also from the interview most users agreed that their level of political awareness has improved since visiting the library. Also some viewed that socio-economic standing is on the increase from the information they get by visiting public libraries.

12. RECOMMENDATION

The study recommended among others that general public should be encouraged to use the public libraries for reading and research by an improvement on information collections. Furthermore, the current state of government public libraries should be looked to improve the services they provide to the general public as they are seen as institution of knowledge, especially the adolescent users because they are future leaders.

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