

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PUBLIC LIBRARIES: A CASE STUDY OF GOVERNMENT PUBLIC LIBRARIES KOTA REGION, RAJASTHAN INDIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This paper describes Socio-Economic Development provided by selected Public Libraries in Kota Region, Rajasthan. It examines the views of users towards 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 instruments used for collecting data included questionnaire, observation and interview. The data collected were analyzed and interpreted using simple frequency and percentages. Seventy eight (78%) response rate was recorded, were respondents' highlights how the overall system and services of selected Public Libraries in Kota region can contribute and improve socio-economic development of Kota region.*

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

## INTRODUCTION

Growth in education is usually accompanied with Socio-economic development of a society worldwide. Education solely depends on the availability, access, use, retrieval and storage of the right information for the development of person intellectually, psychologically, socially, vocationally, religiously and 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 providing timely information resources, experience and ideas shared by others regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, employment status and educational attainment. According to Iwhiwhuand Okorodudu (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, it is conceptualize as 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 Rontos (2013). Socio-Economic Status (SES) is the indicator used to measure socio-economic development. He also opined that SES refers to an individual's level of income, wealth, education, and prestige (Boyce, 2008).

Prevention & Team (2005), 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. To avert aforementioned, the society must be well informed and knowledgeable about their basic rights and responsibilities. Stressing the point, Rontos (2013) argued that overall development is also associated with the degree of human development, the level of health, the degree of access to knowledge and the level of well-being prevailing in a given country. 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. As a process it is concerned with how human choices are enlarged and as outcome that enlarged choices (UNDP, 2002).

## **BRIEF HISTORY**

In Rajasthan, Department of Language and Library, Government of Rajasthan, Jaipur govern the Public Libraries of Rajasthan. The department was established in 2001 and it's headed by Director Public Library. The Responsibility of this department is to take care of Government Public Libraries. The region has a total of 278 Public Libraries in Rajasthan, 50 are fully under the control of the Department and the rests are run under school premises partially by School Librarian. Among the Public Libraries in Rajasthan are Government PDDU Divisional Public Library, Kota, Government District Public Library, Bundi and Government PS Public Library, Kaithoon

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

The role of Public Libraries cannot be overemphasized especially in developing countries. A close examination of the government Public Libraries in Kota Region, Rajasthan has revealed that Public Libraries are not adequately used as tools for socio-economic development by members of the community. Previous research has shown that Public Libraries, globally, have social and economic impact and play a role in community building (Aabø, 2005; Debono, 2002; Kerslake & Kinnel, 1998). This lead to the study Socio-economic Development through Public Libraries: A case study of Government Public Libraries Kota Region, Rajasthan

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Socio-economic 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 for socio-economic development of Kota Region, Rajasthan
- II. To appraise the services of the Public Libraries with direct bearing to socio-economic development of Kota Region, Rajasthan
- III. To examine the impact of Public Libraries on socio-economic development of the people of Kota Region, Rajasthan.

## **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The scope of the study covers the Users of Kota Region Public Libraries, Kota. This comprises Government PDDU Divisional Public Library Kota, Government District Public Library Bundi and Government PS Public Library Kaithoon all in Kota Region, Rajasthan.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Previous research has shown that Public Libraries have social and economic impact and play a role in community building (Aabø, 2005; Debono, 2002; Kerslake & Kinnel, 1998).

Burton, Greenhalgh & Worpole, (1996) states that Public Libraries developed the socio-economic of the community by being a buying power in publishing markets and by increasing local prosperity through regeneration of town centers.

Sawyer (1996) finds that Public Libraries have socio-economic impact by encouraging workforce participation, by providing employment information and ICT skills.

Glass, Clifford, Harris & Rose (2000) The Institute for Public Policy and Business Research undertook a study to determine how Kansas Public Libraries could play a more active role in supporting business and economic development in their communities. The major findings show that these Public Libraries play an important role in providing materials and services to the business community.

Debono (2002) and Matarasso (1998) opined that Public Libraries do have impact on the community in which they operate. They sustain local community and identity, support people whose main activities are out of the labour market, foster cultural enrichment and diversity, promote a sense of social cohesion, develop confidence in individuals and communities, stimulate imagination and creativity, health and well-being.

Barron, Williams, Bajjaly, Arns & Wilson (2005) Trying to determine economic benefit of Public Libraries for South Carolinians and to what extent they feel the Public Library contributes to their overall economic wellbeing. Results showed that the total direct economic impact of SC Public Libraries is estimated at \$222 million, while the actual cost of these services to the state and local governments is only \$77.5 million. This means that for every \$1 spent by state and local governments on SC Public Libraries the return on investment is \$2.86.

Kamer (2005) a research conducted on Northport-East Northport Public Library, which estimates the economic impact of the operating and capital expenditures made by the library. And one of the key findings was that the library's operating and capital expenditures resulted in increased output, earnings and employment throughout Long Island but particularly in its local community.

Indiana Business Research Center (2007) the study was conducted to measure the economic benefits of Indiana's Public Libraries, which found that Libraries are a good value. The direct

economic benefits that communities receive from libraries are significantly greater than the cost to operate the libraries.

Southern Ontario Library Service (2007) in a study *The Library's Contribution to Your Community* finds that Public Libraries contribute to economic development by supporting early literacy and school readiness.

Santos (2009) the study discussed the Public Library's role in society as a focal point for local economic development, which promotes the idea of setting up an information service in Public Libraries to provide added value information; which will be of great importance in justifying the existence of the Public Library within its surroundings.

Aabø (2011) the study aimed to measure the value of Norwegian Public Library benefits to the population in monetary terms, which conclude that the Norwegian Public Libraries are worth four times more than they cost.

Martin Prosperity Institute (2013) the results showed that Toronto Public Library delivers a strong return on investment, through the delivery of library services, as it showed that for every dollar invested in Toronto Public Library (TPL), Torontonians receive \$5.63.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research method adopted for the study is quantitative and the research design 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. Nwanna and Odoh (2014), cited in Agbonmiewalen, stated that when a population runs into few hundred use forty 40% or more, when several hundred use 20%, when thousands use 10%, and when several thousand use 5% or less. Therefore, 20% of the total population was used as sample size. 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 80 users of the selected Public Libraries in Kota Region, Rajasthan which were randomly picked.

**Table 1:** Population Distribution (2017)

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Users</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
1.	Normal Users	200	50
2.	Differentially Able Users	48	12
3.	Non Registered Users	152	38
Total		400	100

**NB:** Normal and Differentially Abled are Registered Users of the Public Libraries.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

A total number of 80 questionnaires were distributed to various users of the three selected Public Libraries in KotaRegion, Rajasthan but 62 were fully filled and returned which means 78% response rate. The remaining 16 questionnaires were not returned, all efforts by the researcher to retrieve them proved abortive due to lack of cooperation by the said respondents. The analysis is based on simple frequency count and percentages.

### **Age distribution of respondents**

**Table 2:** Age of respondents

<b>Age</b>	<b>No of Users</b>	<b>%</b>
10-15	9	15
16-20	21	34
21-29	17	27
30 and above	15	24
Total	62	100

Table 2 shows that 34% of the respondents are between the ages of 16 and 20, 27% are between the ages of 21 to 29 and 24% are in the range of 30 and above while 15% are between the ranges of 10 to 15. This implies that majority of the users are youth, leaders of the future. The can be supported by Iwhiwhuand (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

**To ascertain the use of the Public Libraries for socio-economic development of Kota  
Region, Rajasthan**

**Table 3:** Information Sources for socio-economic development

Sources of information	Normal Users		Differentially Able Users		Non regd Users	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
Public Libraries	20	62	5	71	13	57
Outside	5	17	2	29	4	17
Internet use	7	21	0	0	6	26
Total	32	100	7	100	23	100

The normal way to study the importance of various sources of information for socio-economic development is to look at the citation pattern of a particular field which indirectly assists in setting up Public Libraries collections and acquisition. From table 3, the study shows that 71% of differentially able users of the Public Libraries use the libraries for getting information for socio-economic development and 62% of the normal users as well as 57% none registered users while 29% of differentially able users, 17% of normal users and 17% of none registered users get information from outside the library. Furthermore, 26% of non registered users and 21% of normal users use the internet to get information. This implies that Public Libraries in Kota region provide information for socio-economic development to the users. This can be supported with Santos (2009) which discussed the Public Library's role in society as a focal point for local economic development, which promotes the idea of setting up an information service in Public Libraries to provide added value information; which will be of great importance in justifying the existence of the Public Library within its surroundings.



**To appraise the services of the Public Libraries with direct bearing to socio-economic development of Kota Region, Rajasthan**

**Table 4:** Objectives of reading in Public Libraries

Reading objective	Normal Users		Differentially Able Users		Non regd Users	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
Increase socio-economic knowledge	14	44	4	57	13	57
Academic	11	34	3	43	7	30
Recreation	7	22	0	0	3	13
Total	32	100	7	100	23	100

In table 4, 57% of both none registered and differentially able users and 44% of normal users go to Public Libraries with the main objective of increasing their knowledge while 43% of differentially able users, 34% of normal users and 30% of none registered users have the objective of academic purpose. Also 22% of normal users and 13% of none registered users go for recreation purpose. This implies that majority of the users increase their knowledge in terms of socio-economic and political awareness by visiting Public Libraries. Debono (2002) and Matarasso (1998) opined that Public Libraries do have impact on the community in which they operate. They sustain local community and identity, support people whose main activities are out of the labour market, foster cultural enrichment and diversity, promote a sense of social cohesion, develop confidence in individuals and communities, stimulate imagination and creativity, health and well-being.

**To examine the impact of Public Libraries on socio-economic development of the people of Kota Region, Rajasthan**

**Table 5:** Socio-economic impact awareness by the community

Increase in level of awareness	Normal Users		Differentially Able Users		Non regd Users	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
Yes	25	78	5	71	20	87
No	7	22	2	29	3	13
Total	32	100	7	100	23	100

In table 5, about 86% of non registered users, 78% of normal users and 67% of differentially able users are of the view that their level of awareness has increase by visiting Public Libraries while only 33% of differentially able users, 22% of normal users and 14% of non registered users are of the view that there was no increase in the level of their awareness. The implication of this is that majority of the users of Public Libraries in Kota Region increased their level of understanding and awareness by visiting Public Libraries. Sawyer (1996) finds that Public Libraries have socio-economic impact by encouraging workforce participation by providing employment information and ICT skills

**Opinions about the impact of Public Libraries services with regard to Socio-economic development**

*Table 6:*Opinion about the impact of Public Libraries services

Opinion	Normal Users		Differentially Able Users		Non regd Users	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
Satisfied	20	63	5	67	14	61
Average	9	28	2	33	6	26
Not satisfied	3	9	0	0	3	13
Total	32	100	7	100	23	100

In table 6, 67% of differentially able users, 63% of normal users and 61% of none registered users are very much satisfy with information resources of Public Libraries while 33% of both none registered users and differentially able users and 28% of normal users are of the view that the resources are within average. Furthermore, 13% of none registered users and 9% of normal users are not satisfy with the information resources. This implies that majority of the users are very much satisfied with level of services being provided by Public Libraries in Kota Region towards socio-economic development. Glass, Clifford, Harris and Rose (2000) The Institute for Public Policy and Business Research undertook a study to determine how Kansas Public Libraries could play a more active role in supporting business and economic development in their communities. The major findings show that these Public Libraries play an important role in providing materials and services to the business community.

## **CONCLUSION**

Public Library undoubtedly enhances the socio-economic development of both users in Kota Region, Rajasthan. The study shows that majority of users go to Public Libraries as source of information for socio-economic development. Furthermore, majority of the users increase their socio-economic knowledge and awareness by going to Public Libraries. Also, the study shows that majority of the users are fully satisfied with the services available in Public Libraries of Kota Region, Rajasthan with regards to socio-economic development. Finally from the interview most users agreed that their level of socio-economic awareness has improved since visiting the Public Libraries and some are of the view that their socio-economic standing is on the increase from the information they get by visiting Public Libraries in Kota Region.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The study recommended among others that general public should be encouraged to use the Public Libraries in the Region for socio-economic development by improving information resources. Furthermore, the current state of government Public Libraries should be looked at to improve the services they provide to the general public in respect of socio-economic development as they are seen as institution of knowledge, especially the adolescent users because they are the future leaders.

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