

Strengthening Non-Government Public Libraries towards Building Sustainable Lifelong Learning Centers: A Bangladesh Scenario

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Public libraries being the local gateway to knowledge are responsible for meeting the educational, information and recreational needs of a community. So it has been under great concern of a govt. to build a country wide public library network for rendering library and information services to each of the community people. Bangladesh (BD) govt. has also been taking initiatives to this end. There are two kinds of public libraries in BD: govt. and non-govt. The number of govt. public libraries is 70 against more than 140 million people in 64 districts of the country. This number is very insignificant to serve a huge population having varied education level, mostly illiterate or having the knowledge of recognizing or ability to writing letters. However, a good number of non-govt. public libraries (NPL) are there that can serve the community. But these libraries' life span is under threat due to lack of support continuation by the constituent body or the government. This research compares two of the directories of non-govt. public libraries of BD published in 2003 and 2014 by the National Book Center of BD to check the ups and downs of these NPLs. The result shows a sharp decline by 35% (approx.) in eleven years. The main objective of the study is to find out the reasons behind the vulnerability of NPLs in BD and thereby making rational recommendations for building a sustainable NPL base in the country as lifelong learning center for the community people. The research is based on secondary sources of information and data analysis is limited to aforementioned two directories published by the National Book Center of BD and the latest census (2011) conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

Keywords: *Bangladesh, Community information need, Public library development, Lifelong learning, Non-Government public libraries*