A comparative study of public libraries status in the counties of Guilan province compared to the standard per capita

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Abstract. The state of public libraries is of the most important indicators of a country. The present research has been conducted with the aim of a comparative study of public libraries status in the counties of Guilan province compared to the standard per capita. The research method is descriptive and the information has been collected through offices inquiry, observation and interviews with the relevant officials, the results of data analysis compared to the standard per capita indicate lower levels of public libraries standards in the counties of Guilan province than the country's standards and require serious consideration and review. In this regard, some recommendations were provides to improve the libraries status. As a result, the construction and building of public libraries in the province has been estimated in the next 25 years to be able bringing it to the standard level with the establishment public libraries.

Keywords: Public libraries, Guilan, standard per capita

1. INTODUCTION

Library as one of the basic pillars of a knowledge-based society in the formulation of its policy is fully aware of the needs of society and tries to gather resources and provide services in accordance with it. Library is a good where place, a palace that integrates prominent mentalities of all nations and generations (Thomas Carlyle), in the meantime, the role of public libraries cannot be ignored.

Public libraries are centers where provide information sources, regardless of political, social and religious orientation, a place where there are different opinions and ideas, the public library as a public institution is required to deal with gathering different sources as much as possible that include various views, and it should not exclude the society of the right to free access to information, due to localism and disagreement with the others' ideas (Soltani, 2001).

UNESCO Manifesto knows public libraries as a local gateway for knowledge, a basic condition for continuous learning, independent decision making and cultural development of individuals and social groups. The Manifesto introduces UNESCO belief to the public library as a live force for education, culture and information as well as an essential factor for promoting peace and spiritual welfare through the thoughts of men and women. UNESCO therefore encourages national and local governments which support from public libraries and are actively responsible for the development of them.

Public library is the local information center to make the types of information and knowledge information available for users.

Public library services are on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language, or social position. Special services and library materials have to be provided for users who cannot, for any reason, use the regular services and library materials, for example linguistic minorities, persons with disabilities or people in hospital or prison.

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All age groups must find the contents they need. Library collections and services should include all types of appropriate media and new technologies as well as traditional materials and contents. High quality and relation to needs and local conditions are essential. Library materials have to reflect current trends and the evolution of society as efforts to maintain the monuments and human imagination. Collections and services shall not be subject to any religious, political and ideological censorship, as well as commercial pressures (Mirhosseini, 1996).

The accuracy of the developed countries' library data and comparing it with the developing countries suggests a serious difference. Statistics does not show an optimal situation of the countries' public libraries. Unfortunately, public libraries in Iran, particularly in Guilan province, represent their poor and inappropriate quantitative and qualitative status.

In the present study it is attempted to investigate the state of libraries covered by Guilan province's department of library affairs examined, it also examines the per capita status of Guilan province's public libraries and comparing them with the standard per capita.

Given the number of public libraries, building infrastructure and land area and other factors affecting the improvement of libraries status are analyzed through which the shortcomings would be identified to provide strategies in order to increase the efficiency of public libraries for better and more favorable services to the public, because having public libraries according to and even nearly to the per capita standards can be a factor to attract visitors and promote studying and reading culture.

In this study, due to the number of public libraries in Guilan province, a case study was selected in Rasht County and it was studied in terms of physical space, equipment, personnel and visitors' situation, as well as its information resources based on the per capita standard.

In this study, we tried to present answers to the following questions.

1. How is the state of public libraries in the counties of Guilan province in terms of building and space in comparison with per capita standard?
2. How is the state of public libraries in the counties of Guilan province in terms of ownership and their relation to Guilan province's department of library affairs?
3. How are the public libraries of the counties of Guilan province different, with respect to the status in comparison with the country's future expansion plans?
4. How many public libraries shall we need due to population growth in the next 25 years?

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research mainly aims to determine the differences in the criteria and items used in public libraries in the counties of Guilan province compared to the per capita standards.

And its partial objectives are mentioned as the following:

- Determine the status of public libraries in the counties of Guilan province in terms of building and space compared to the per capita standard.
- Determine the status and number of institutional, collaborative and independent public libraries.
- Determine population growth in the next 25 years and the space required for libraries in the future.
- Determine shortcomings and provide recommendations for improving and increasing qualitative and quantitative level of these important urban elements.

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2.1. Research hypothesis

Public libraries in the counties of Guilan province slightly follow the per capita standard.

2.2. Research methods

This study has been conducted with a descriptive survey method and to collect information, the inquiry of Guilan province's department of library affairs and other relevant departments, as well as the observation, interviews and phone interviews have been used.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have been conducted on the public libraries, especially comparing them to the per capita standard within the country and abroad.

Babazadeh (2000) has examined the state of public libraries of Semnan province from different directions. He believes that the libraries are different from the standards in terms of space; building and expert human resource. He has provided solutions to improve the libraries state which include upgrading the existing libraries in terms of space, information resources and equipment. Also recruiting expert human resource and holding training courses can have a significant impact on the process of this important issue.

Amani (1996), evaluation the state of public libraries of Ardabil province and quantitatively and qualitatively comparing them with the standards has expressed they are at a much lower level. Age of visitors to the libraries is limited in the range of 15-24 years old including students, with problems such as lack of information resources, expert human resource and budget.

Miraki (2013) in "A comparative study of public libraries status in the counties of Kurdistan province" in comparison with the standards says these libraries have provided a small percentage of the standards in terms of space and building, and in terms of clients nearly of every 500 people, one person visits the library. In terms of equipment and tools, expert human resource, the amount of information collections and resources is lower than the international standards presented in this study.

Corfield (1978) has introduced a research on the per capita of public library in one of the provinces of Canada in which he's mentioned the importance of standards in public libraries that is known as an important factor in the allocation of their credits. This paper was presented at the conference of the Canadian Library Association and led to the standard scheme for public libraries.

4. FINDINGS

The results obtained from the department of library affairs in Guilan province suggest that the province has 4 main public libraries (institutional), 8 collaborative and independent libraries all around the counties and its departments. This study focuses on public libraries (main). According to the data in Table 1, the total area of public libraries in the counties of Guilan province is 42,992 square meters and the libraries' infrastructure area is 24,167 square meters.

We also used three assumptions to estimate population:

First assumption: linear growth model (1997-2012)

The basic assumption of linear model is that population growth process should be considered as a function of constant growth of population in the past and the current status. This means that population is relatively increasing or decreasing over time.

The model general formula is as the following:

$$PN = Po + na$$

In this formula N is the desired year, a is the constant value of an increase in population and n is the time of the study

$$a = (pn - po) / n$$

Second assumption: the exponential model (1997-2012)
In this model, first the growth rate of the study period is calculated using the formula

$$r = \left(\sqrt[n]{\frac{pn}{po}} - 1 \right) \times 100$$

and then population is estimated using the following formula.

$$pn = po \times (1 + r)^n$$

In this formula, pn is population in planning horizon of the year; po is population in the year of origin, r is annual population growth and time interval is between pn and po.

Third assumption: the exponential model (1987-2012)

In this assumption, as well as the previous assumption, an exponential model is used to predict population; the difference is on the period calculated under study.

According to the calculation of population through the formula above we got the following results:

Guilan province population is equal to 2,528,854 people in 2014 that calculating the growth rate (through the statistics of years of 1987- 1997 of 2012), the province population will reach to 2,928,691 people in the next 25 years.

Likewise, the counties' population in 2014 was separately calculated. The per capita standard for every 100 persons is 4 square meters.

Table 1. The per capita standard for every 100 persons is 4 square meters.

Row	County name	Population in 2015	Total area (square meter)	Infrastructure area (square meter)	The extent of compliance with the standard
1	Astara	90767	1720	1425	%39.25
2	Astaneh-ye Ashrafiyeh	106169	1676	1176	%27.69
3	Bandar-e Anzali	141115	1410	1359	%24.07
4	Talesh	318885	6250	3661	%28.70
5	Rasht	954682	4806	3376	%8.84
6	Rudbar	97964	3960	2226	%56.80
7	Rudsar	187005	5466	3140	%41.97
8	Sowme'eh Sara	127232	4560	1882	%39.97
9	Fuman	158254	6500	2056	%32.47
10	Lahijan	224812	3817	2036	%22.64
11	Langarud	140437	2827	1753	%31.20
Total		2547322	42992	24090	%353.6

According to the statistics of plan and budget organization of Guilan province and statistics center of Iran, Guilan province had 11 mentioned counties in 1987 and 1997 which has

increased to 16 counties in 2012. The counties of Rezvanshahr and Masal were separated and independent of Talesh County. Siahkal was also independent of Lihajian County and it was given the title of county, as well. This was similar to the counties of Fuman and Roodsar, the counties of Shaft and Amlash were added to the statistics respectively, and eventually Gila province has 16 counties at present.

According to the table, we can observe the lack of space required in public libraries.

And unfortunately, according to the statistics provided by Guilan province's department of library affairs, the per capita of Rasht metropolis for public libraries is 0.5 square meters per 100 persons, which is considerably different from the per capita standard of 4 square meters; similarly, the statistics for Guilan province is 1.13 square meters per 100 people.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

According to population census in 2012, population of five separated counties is as the following:

Table 2. Population of five separated counties.

County name	Amlash	Rezvanshahr	Siahkal	Shaft	Masal
Population in 2012	44261	66909	55752	58543	52496

Using the statistics, numbers and the ratio of population of the separated county with total population of the county which it was a part of, the county's population in 2014 was estimated population and it was predicted for the next 25 years. For example, population of Amlash County is 44,261 people, which has allocated about 23.46% of the total population of Roodsar County to itself; accordingly, the proportion in 2014 and 2040 was calculated and predicted for Amlash County.

Table 3. The proportion in 2014 and 2040 was calculated and predicted for Amlash County.

County name	Amlash	Rezvanshahr	Siahkal	Shaft	Masal
Population in 2015	43871	68942	55798	60832	54115

Therefore, the existing public libraries' amount of compliance with the standard was investigated for 16 counties:

Table 3: The existing public libraries' amount of compliance with the standard was investigated for 16 counties.

Row	County name	Population in 2015	Total area (square meter)	Infrastructure area (square meter)	The extent of compliance with the standard
1	Astara	90767	1425	1720	%39.25
2	Astaneh-ye Ashrafiyeh	106169	1676	1176	%27.69
3	Amlash	40700	616	655	%34.64
4	Bandar-e Anzali	141115	1410	1359	%24.07
5	Talesh	195828	2500	1610	%21.37
6	Rasht	954682	4806	3376	%8.84
7	Rezvanshahr	68942	1145	1100	%39.89
8	Rudbar	97964	3960	2226	%56.80
9	Rudsar	132787	4850	2532	%44.34
10	Siahkal	55798	2554	694	%31.10
0	Shaft	60832	2800	674	%27.70
12	Sowme'eh Sara	127232	4560	1882	%39.97

13	Fuman	97422	3700	1382	%35.46
14	Lihajian	169014	1263	1342	%19.66
15	Langarud	140437	2827	1753	%31.20
16	Masal	54115	2605	951	%43.92
	Total	2533804	52652	24432	%525.9

Accordingly, the prediction in the next 25 years will be as the following:

Table 4. The prediction in the next 25 years will be as the following.

Row	County name	Population in 2040	Standard infrastructure area (square meter)	Predicted infrastructure area (square meter)	The amount of deficiency
1	Astara	94777	3791	1720	2071
2	Astaneh-ye Ashrafiyeh	111519	4460	1235	3225
3	Amlash	43871	1755	608	1147
4	Bandar-e Anzali	167042	6682	1609	5073
5	Talesh	244677	9787	2011	7776
6	Rasht	1256657	50266	4444	45822
7	Rezvanshahr	86142	3446	1374	2072
8	Rudbar	73139	2925	1662	1263
9	Rudsar	142744	5710	2701	3009
10	Siahkal	56275	2251	700	1551
11	Shaft	79970	3199	886	2313
12	Sowme'eh Sara	122854	4914	1817	3097
13	Fuman	128069	5123	1817	3306
14	Lihajian	170459	6818	1353	5465
15	Langarud	166810	6672	2082	4590
16	Masal	67614	2704	1188	1516
	Total	3012619	120503	27270	93296

The results of statistical tables and relevant data on the research questions show that:

Public libraries in the counties of Guilan province have provided 22.63% of the standard in terms of building and space and they are so in a low level.

According to the results, as well as authorities' ideas for improving the state of public libraries under study, recommendations are offered as the following:

1. Physical capacity, space and building of libraries should be increased as needed.
2. The number of public libraries versus collaborative and independent libraries has to be increased for a wide range of audiences of the libraries which are belonged to the public.
3. With the similar development as it was seen in the results, the lack of space has increased with the growth of population in the province's counties, so the allocation of credits to the important urban elements must be taken into account more than ever.

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Row	Library name	County name	Year of foundation	Building infrastructure	Land area
1	Astara, no. 1	Astara	1303	350	170
2	Astara, no. 1	Astara	1376	600	700
3	Lavandevil	Astara	1372	225	225
4	Virmuni, Astara	Astara	1385	250	625
5	Ahl al-Bayt, Astane-ye Ashrafiyeh	Astaneh	1381	601	351
6	22 Bahman, Kiashahr Port	Astaneh	1358	325	700
7	Chahardeh, Astane-ye Ashrafiyeh	Astaneh	1386	250	625
8	Amlash, no. 1	Amlash	1347	72	72
9	Amlash, no. 2	Amlash	1377	326	280
10	Imam Ali (a), Rankuh	Amlash	1384	210	264
11	Imam Jafar Sadegh, Bandar-e Anzali	Anzali	1346	534	200
12	Shahid Namjoo, Abkenar	Anzali	1358	263	340
13	Hashtom Shahrivar, Ghazian	Anzali	1361	240	500
14	Lijariki-ye Hasan Rud	Anzali	1384	322	370
15	17 Shahrivar, Talesh	Talesh	1344	500	500
16	Lisar	Talesh	1372	320	500
17	Haviq	Talesh	1373	335	500
18	Asalem	Talesh	1386	455	1000
19	Khatam al-Anbia	Rasht	1375	473	443
20	Sardar-e Jangal	Rasht	1359	113	113
21	Imam Hasan Mojtaba	Rasht	1347	370	370
22	Imam Reza	Rasht	1374	320	320
23	Haft-e Tir, Lasht-e Nesha	Rasht	1358	340	400
24	Shahid Rajaee, Khoshk-e Bijar	Rasht	1360	500	500
25	Shahid Bahonar, Kuchesfahan	Rasht	1382	580	580
26	Shahid Beheshti, Khomam	Rasht	1347	560	1960
27	Sangar	Rasht	1345	80	80
28	Khatam Braille and talking library	Rasht	1385	40	40
29	Rezvanshahr	Rezvanshahr	1351	500	1000
30	Nabi Akram, Pareh Sar	Rezvanshahr	1378	350	247
31	Pounel	Rezvanshahr	1385	250	
32	Rudbar	Rudbar	1345	380	380
33	Imam Jafar Sadegh, Lowshan	Rudbar	1373	520	700
34	Manil	Rudbar	1371	100	500
35	Klishom	Rudbar	1372	220	480
36	Jirandeh	Rudbar	1373	300	500
37	Keleshtar	Rudbar	1375	250	400
39	Tutkabon	Rudbar	1385	346	500
40	Rostamabad	Rudbar	1382	110	500
41	Rudsar	Rudsar	1345	468	600
42	Rahimabad	Rudsar	1370	117	117

43	Rahimabad, no. 2	Rudsar		700	2600
44	Shuil	Rudsar	1373	200	510
45	Shahid Ansari, Chaboksar	Rudsar	1347	475	648
46	Shahid Noorani, Kelachay	Rudsar	1360	473	250
47	Vajargah	Rudsar	1345	99	125
48	Shahid Mofateh, Siahkal	Siahkal	1346	238	1748
49	Shahid Motahari, Pir Kuh	Siahkal	1372	206	500
50	Deylaman	Siahkal	1386	250	306
51	Shahid Chamran, Shaft	Shaft	1346	250	2000
52	Ahmadsargurab	Shaft	1381	200	500
53	Molla Sara	Shaft	1386	224	300
54	Bagherololoom, Sowme'eh Sara	Sowme'eh Sara	1385	530	530
55	Shahid Majidi, Lifshagerd	Sowme'eh Sara	1376	150	1000
56	Taher Gourab	Sowme'eh Sara	1375	170	1000
57	Abu Ali Sina, Tulem Shahr	Sowme'eh Sara	1387	502	1500
58	Gurab Zarmikh	Sowme'eh Sara	1371	530	530
59	Shahid Dastgheib, Fuman	Fuman	1345	582	2500
60	Masuleh	Fuman	1341	350	350
61	Zeydeh Sardar-e Jangal Zeydeh	Fuman	1380	200	600
62	Imam Ali, Gasht, Guilan	Fuman	1384	250	250
63	Shahid Bahonr, Lahijan	Lahijan	1336	460	543
64	Imam Ali, Rudboneh	Lahijan	1382	300	300
65	Shahid Shafiei Lialestan	Lahijan	1387	256	295
66	Feiz, Lahijan	Lahijan	1387	325	125
67	Langarud	Langarud	1348	796	862
68	Fatimah, Komalah	Langarud	1347	594	592
69	Allameh Tabatabaee, Shalman	Langarud	1368	113	373
70	Otaqvar	Langarud	1386	250	1000
71	Masal	Masal	1347	241	250
72	Taskuh	Masal	1372	110	355
73	Shanderman	Masal	1372	350	1000
74	Olam Shanderman	Masal	1387	250	1000