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A Review Study of Information Gathering Habits of Readers in Public Libraries in India

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ABSTRACT

This assessment examines evolving patterns of information access, utilisation, and reading routines in the modern information society, focusing on Indian public library readers' information-gathering habits. Libraries are vital social organisations that offer free and equal access to knowledge, education, cultural resources, and information services to individuals of all ages, educational levels, jobs, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Understanding readers' information-gathering patterns improves library services, collection development, user satisfaction, and information dissemination. The study reviewed books, journals, research articles, dissertations, government reports, and prior studies on library science, information behaviour, public library services, and reading habits in India. Readers use books, newspapers, magazines, journals, reference materials, audiovisual resources, internet services, e-books, digital databases, and social media platforms to gather information. Technology and digital communication affect library usage and readers' information behaviour. According to the review, public library readers increasingly use both traditional and digital sources of information for educational, professional, and personal requirements. Printed publications remain significant, especially in rural and semi-urban areas where public libraries serve as learning and community centres. Due to their convenience, accessibility, and access to updated information, internet-based resources and digital technology have greatly influenced younger readers and students' information-gathering habits. A lack of infrastructure, updated reading materials, digital facilities, funding, internet connectivity, trained library staff, and information literacy are also issues facing Indian public libraries and readers, according to the review. Public libraries are typically hampered by these constraints, especially in rural and impoverished areas. Modernising public libraries, integrating digital technology, improving library collections, expanding internet services, and organising user education programmes are needed to meet society's increasing information demands. Technological advancement and shifting educational and social demands are affecting this.

Keywords- *Accessibility, Socioeconomic, Digital Facilities, Audiovisual, Dissertations.*

INTRODUCTION

In modern civilisation, information is vital to education, research, communication, social awareness, and decision-making. In the age of knowledge and digital communication, people seek information for academic, professional, cultural, and personal needs. Public libraries have always been vital for providing free and equal access to information and knowledge. They promote education, lifelong learning, intellectual growth, cultural enrichment, and community service. Readers' information gathering habits



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include how they determine their information needs, search for sources, obtain relevant materials, and use information. Age, education, occupation, socioeconomic status, reading interest, technological savvy, and library availability affect these habits. Improving library services, collection growth, user education, and management requires understanding reader information collecting patterns.

Students, teachers, researchers, job seekers, and general readers benefit from public libraries in India in literacy, education, and social development. Public libraries are crucial in rural and semi-urban areas where educational resources and digital facilities are few. Users from various social and economic backgrounds can access books, newspapers, magazines, journals, reference services, and community-based educational support. Rapid advances in information and communication technologies have changed how individuals gather and use information. Internet, e-books, online databases, social media, and mobile apps are supplementing print materials including books, newspapers, and journals. Smartphones and internet access have transformed Indian library patrons' reading and information-seeking habits. Modern readers choose digital media for rapid and convenient information, yet conventional library resources are still necessary for accurate and extensive research.

Despite these advances, Indian public libraries still struggle with infrastructure, reading materials, funding, digital facilities, internet connectivity, and staffing. Many people lack the information literacy skills needed to use digital information resources effectively. These issues hinder public library services and readers' access to information. Readers' information-gathering habits are shifting due to technological innovation and changing educational and societal needs. Libraries must adapt by integrating traditional and digital information systems and offering user-friendly services. Librarians also help readers find information and promote information literacy.

The literature and research on Indian public library readers' information gathering behaviours will be reviewed in this study. Reader preferences, library usage trends, the impact of digital technology on information access, and public library user difficulties are examined in the study. It emphasises the role of libraries and librarians in satisfying society's changing information requirements. The study's goal is to analyse users' information behaviour and improve public library services in India. Strengthening public library infrastructure, digital resources, and user education programs can boost educational development, lifelong learning, social awareness, and knowledge-based society.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Avoodaiammal Pothigasalam et al. (2023). The purpose of the investigation is to examine the impact that reading habits have on the reading preferences and attitudes of women who read. Researchers will utilize it in the development of an algorithm for machine learning that is properly constructed to analyze reading patterns. Public Library is a study unit that focuses on the issue of public libraries encouraging reading habits among women during their leisure time, when they are sleeping, and when they are conversing for the goal of Taking a week and dedicating one to two hours to reading Women. In order to increase their knowledge and relax, it was thought that reading a book would be the best course of action. The book that was chosen to read was an amazing one, and the book was read for a period of three to four hours per week. The book was selected based on its contents and the fact that it was a horror story that



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was written for ladies. The algorithm that was used to read the book was the Support Linear Regression (SLR) method, which was proposed for the purpose of lip reading. The author claims that she depends on his collection of books, reads before she goes to bed, visits the library on a weekly basis, reads in order to patronize the public library, and reads in order to access the library newspaper during the hours that the library is open. This information was gathered from a diverse group of women who are patrons of public libraries. The data is gathered through the use of a closed questionnaire that utilizes a straightforward random method. Women who are members of the library will attend the main library in order to keep their knowledge up to date by reading a newspaper or magazine. The predominant source of information utilized by the general reading public is books and newspapers, while competitiveness is the primary concern of female library patrons.

John Gibson Ogonu and Comfort N. Owate (2023), stated that the purpose of this study is to investigate how libraries might support students' reading habits. According to the publication, the library is a social service-oriented organization that helps students develop a love of reading. It viewed libraries as educational spaces that offer instructors, students, and community learning opportunities by giving them access to resources, activities, and space. The concept of reading and how it gives us the knowledge we need to increase our understanding of things were also covered in the paper. The study characterised reading habits as a love and enthusiasm for reading and discussed how crucial they are to enhancing pupils' vocabulary, pronunciation, comprehension abilities, knowledge, speed, and capacity for lifetime learning. It's true that reading regularly encourages self-education, which aids in personality modification. The report also acknowledged the critical responsibilities that educators, parents, and librarians play in helping students start reading and establish a lifelong love of books. It also made the point that libraries had to plan events, exhibits, storytelling, and other activities and utilize them to encourage pupils to read regularly. This study found that, among other things, a dysfunctional library, a family history of abuse, corruption, a lack of enthusiasm, and the failings of educators are the causes of bad reading habits. The article also included some suggestions for enhancing students' reading habits, such as the establishment and upkeep of libraries in communities and schools, as well as the organisation of programmes aimed at fostering a love of reading in the students.

Armanul Haque et al. (2023), stated that this study looks at the variables that encourage and help readers at Bangladesh's Bishwo Sahitto Kendra and Vrammoman Library (mobile library) build good reading habits. Utilising the partial least squares structural equation modelling technique, data from a survey of 160 users of mobile libraries in Rajshahi, Bangladesh, are evaluated. Based on the independent variables included in the analysis, the suggested model effectively accounted for 59.3% of the diversity in reading habits, as indicated by the R² value of 59.3%. This shows that a sizable amount of the diversity in reading habits might be explained by the model, indicating its potential utility in forecasting this behaviour. The results show that users' reading habits are influenced by a number of factors, including mobile library collections, accessibility, library location, and time of access.

Sharanappa Suresh (2023). This research attributes some of the responsibility for this phenomenon to the expansion of social media and the introduction of new technological innovations. The reality that younger people dedicate such a significant amount of their time to interacting with others on social media



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platforms and utilizing their mobile devices. Reading is depressing as opposed to doing something else. This research examined the ways in which libraries could potentially motivate their customers in higher education to develop a reading habit. There are a number of different approaches that may be used in order to encourage young people to read, such as the use of clubs, mobile reading tents, surroundings that focus on the user, virtual helpdesks, social media, and other ways that are creative in nature. Libraries have a significant impact on the reading habits of patrons.

Basawaraj Malipatil (2021), explored that reading is a fundamental life skill that everyone has to have. In light of the value of reading and the dwindling reading culture, this study attempts to ascertain the reading preferences of newly enrolled students at SP College Shorapur Yadagir, Karnataka. According to the report, students spend more time on social media than they do reading. The study focuses on how technology may be used to make reading more enjoyable and how Karnataka's public libraries can help foster reading habits in kids at the school level.

Sambhu Nath Halder (2021), stated that the reading preferences of the public library user group are investigated in light of the exponential growth of electronic resources. Using a stratified selection technique, a representative sample was selected from a sizable and varied population. A number of criteria were used to determine the users' reading preferences in order to meet the study's goals. The study's conclusions showed that 41.82% of respondents visited the library between two and four times a month, while 22.05% visited it between two and three times a week. Only 16.82% of respondents visited the library quite regularly. Nonetheless, the research findings suggest that electronic documents have a significant role in improving individuals' reading habits. It is advised that the library place a strong emphasis on gathering digital and physical materials. Although patrons of public libraries tend to have consistent reading habits, they appeared to be at ease reading in a digital setting.

Muhammad Asif and Liu Yang (2021). The promotion of reading culture is the library's stated purpose. The library not only encourages reading as a culture, but it also makes books easier for readers to obtain. As a result, the library gives its patrons the opportunity to enjoy life as well as pass the time intellectually. The purpose of this programme is to introduce people to the joys of reading written communication. Making reading a pleasurable and fulfilling hobby for library users is the main objective of encouraging a love of reading among them. As a result, it's crucial to encourage students to develop a reading habit and to spread the word about the benefits of reading for enjoyment as opposed to only studying for exams. One way that libraries may support the promotion of reading and a healthy reading culture is through Library Week, which is conducted annually during the high school academic year. In light of the subject, the pertinent literature has been evaluated by looking through both published and unpublished pertinent research papers. Relevant databases mentioned are the Tylor and Francis Group, ERIC, Emerald, Elsevier, LISA, LISTA, ProQuest Research Papers, and Wiley Online Library. The results of this study may also help with the planning of school library services and the management of the ever-growing, complex, and mandatory needs for book integration, acquisition, and selection. The results can also be used to improve and modify educational policies.



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Gupta, A., Randhawa, S. K., & Po, I. I. (2021). An increasing number of South Asian users in British Columbia, Canada, are not currently using libraries. This study fills a significant knowledge gap by investigating their information needs, perceptions of libraries, reading habits, library usage, and the obstacles that hinder them from doing so. The findings provide light on the demographics of South Asian library patrons, including the ages of those who come most often, the reasons people give for wanting to visit libraries more often, and the challenges they encounter. Libraries can use the study's findings to better understand user needs, develop and execute outreach programs, and hire staff members who are fluent in several languages and cultural backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

Public libraries continue to be important institutions for promoting education, literacy, social awareness, cultural development, and lifelong learning among people from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, according to the findings of a review study that was conducted over the information gathering habits of readers in public libraries in India. Public libraries are utilised by readers for a wide range of objectives, including academic study, research, preparation for competitive examinations, professional development, recreational reading, and access to general information, as highlighted by the study. The provision of democratic and equal access to information and knowledge resources is consequently significantly facilitated by public libraries, which play a vital role in this regard. As a result of the rapid growth of information and communication technology, research reveals that the procedures readers use to obtain information are undergoing a significant transition today. Especially in rural and semi-urban areas, traditional print-based media including books, newspapers, magazines, and journals continue to be utilised by a significant number of people. While this is going on, digital resources such as the internet, electronic books, online databases, and mobile technologies are gaining popularity among younger readers, students, and researchers due to the fact that they are convenient, easily accessible, and provide information that is consistently updated.

The study also demonstrates that the information gathering habits of readers are influenced by a number of characteristics, including their educational background, occupation, level of technology awareness, socio-economic position, and the availability of library resources. While people living in urban regions typically have easier access to digital information services, readers living in rural and economically disadvantaged areas continue to rely significantly on the resources provided by traditional libraries due to the limited digital infrastructure and internet connectivity available in these places. As a result, the digital gap continues to be a significant obstacle that hinders equal access to information in India. The evaluation also notes a number of challenges that public libraries are confronted with, such as inadequate infrastructure, a lack of updated reading materials, a lack of financial assistance, insufficient digital capabilities, a paucity of educated library staff, and low levels of information literacy among library patrons. The effectiveness of public library services is diminished as a result of these limitations, and readers are prevented from making full use of the information resources that are available to them.



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When it comes to directing users toward efficient information retrieval and fostering information literacy skills, the findings highlight the significant role that librarians and library authorities play. In order to bring their services up to date, public libraries need to incorporate digital technology into their traditional library systems, enhance internet access, organise user orientation programs, and increase the size of their digital holdings. By enhancing library infrastructure and implementing user-centred services, it is possible to greatly improve the level of happiness experienced by readers and the accessibility of information. The study comes to the conclusion that the information gathering habits of readers in public libraries in India are continuously transforming as a result of the progression of technology as well as the shifting educational and societal expectations. In order for public libraries to continue to be effective and relevant in today's information society, they need to embrace these changes and adapt accordingly. Enhancing the services provided by public libraries in India through the implementation of digital modernisation, improved funding, professional administration, and community involvement has the potential to make a substantial contribution to the advancement of education, the development of society, and the formation of a society that is focused on knowledge and information.

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