

A Review Study of Information Gathering Habits of Readers in Public Libraries of Paschim Bardhaman District, West Bengal

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Abstract

Understanding how readers use library resources to meet their educational, professional, and recreational needs largely depends on their information-gathering habits. This review study investigates the information-gathering behaviours of readers in public libraries in the Paschim Bardhaman district of West Bengal. The study aims to discern patterns in readers' preferences, library usage frequency, types of resources accessed, and the factors influencing their information behaviour through analysis of existing literature, reports, and prior research.

The review shows that people who use the public library in the district get their information from both old and new sources. People still really like printed things like newspapers, magazines, and books. This is especially true for people who come to the library often and older readers. At the same time, more and more people are using digital resources, like internet content and electronic media. This is especially true for younger people and students. The fact that some libraries have internet connection and digital services has helped this change happen, but not all libraries have these services. The study also shows that things including a person's degree, job, age, and level of knowledge about library services might affect how they obtain information. In the area, public libraries are still not being used to their full potential because of problems like poor infrastructure, a lack of digital resources, a lack of educated staff, and a lack of knowledge about new information services.

The study also talks about how public libraries are becoming into places where people may get information and learn new things for the rest of their lives. It stresses the need to update library services, add digital technology, and teach users how to utilise them to make information easier to find and use. The study shows that public libraries in Paschim Bardhaman district are still important sources of information, but they need to change to meet the needs of readers by improving their infrastructure, adding more digital services, and encouraging good information-gathering habits.

Keywords: Paschim Bardhaman , Public library , Information , Readers

I. INTRODUCTION

In this age of information, public libraries are important places for people from all walks of life to study, share knowledge, and continue learning throughout their lives. They are not simply places to store books and other written materials, but they are also active community hubs that give people access to a wide range of information resources. To see how well public libraries meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs of its customers, it's important to know how people who use them obtain information. People's information-gathering habits are the methods they look for, find, choose, and use information from different places. These behaviours are shaped by various circumstances, including age, education, occupation, socio-economic status, and access to information technologies. Recent quick progress in digital technology has greatly changed the information environment, which has changed how users use library resources. Digital resources like e-books, online databases, and information on the internet have become more significant, even though people still read books, newspapers, and periodicals.

In Paschim Bardhaman district of West Bengal, public libraries are very important for meeting the information needs of students, professionals, and the general public. The district has a mix of urban and semi-urban populations, which means that the people who read there have different levels of access to information and digital literacy. Some libraries have started to add new technologies and services, but others still have problems with their infrastructure, the availability of resources, and the knowledge of their users. The purpose of this review research is to look at what has already been written about how people in Paschim Bardhaman district's public libraries get information. It aims to investigate the preferred forms of information sources among readers, their frequency and purpose of library usage, and the obstacles they face in obtaining information. The study also looks

at how library services, staff support, and technology affect how people use information. By combining the results of earlier studies, the project aims to give a full picture of how people in the area gather information. Library professionals, lawmakers, and teachers can use the information from this evaluation to make library services better, make users happier, and encourage people to use public library information resources more effectively.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Muslim Sarah Abdulelah (2025) . This research looks on the reading habits of people who use the Malda District Library in West Bengal. It focuses on how often people use the library, what kinds of books they like, and what kinds of resources they consume. This study investigates the function of the local library in fostering a love of reading among the local population and attempts to deduce the factors—such as age, level of education, and socioeconomic status—that impact reading preferences. Students, working adults, and casual readers were among the many library patrons surveyed and interviewed for this study. The results show that people read different things, but mostly fiction and instructive books, and they emphasize how the library's services and resources help promote literacy. To further promote reading among the local community, the study also reveals obstacles encountered by the library in fulfilling patron demands and offers suggestions for enhancing library services.

Dey, B., & Chatterjee, S. (2025). Early exposure to secular and liberal Western education propelled Bengal to become a thriving hub for social, cultural, and religious reform in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A new wave of thinking among Bengal's educated elite began with the creation of contemporary universities by colonial rulers, European missionaries, and progressive social reformers. The literary and linguistic development of Bengali was significantly impacted by this period, which is frequently called the Bengal Renaissance. Community libraries were founded by prominent social reformers of the time as a means of providing accessible places for learning and intellectual development. Teens, kids, adults, and anybody else interested in learning can still benefit from the wealth of information held by many of these old libraries. The purpose of this article is to examine the impact of the Bengal Renaissance and the gradual socioeconomic changes brought about by British colonial rule on public libraries in India, with a focus on West Bengal.

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 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 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.

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.

Armah, N., & Cobblah, M. (2021). Researchers conducted a study to address the challenges faced by the users in accessing digital information resources in the library. The study has observed six challenges, i.e.: slow process of downloading, unstable internet connectivity, limited accessibility of the University Portal. Insufficient number of systems and limited lighting inside the facility. This is not the problem confronted only in Ghana but has been a normal feature in the other underdeveloped countries of Sub-Saharan Regions. The two broad challenges, as highlighted by the researchers, viz: compositional and contextual for which a time bound strategies supported by required mobilized resources on the part of developed countries are unavoidable.

III. CONCLUSION

The review study on how people in the Paschim Bardhaman area of West Bengal use public libraries to get information shows that public libraries are still significant places for sharing knowledge and learning as a group. The results show that readers use a mix of old and new information sources to suit their many demands. Printed materials like books, newspapers, and periodicals are still quite popular, especially with frequent and older library users. However, younger readers are increasingly choosing digital and online resources.

The assessment also stresses that not knowing about library services, not being able to use technology well, and not having enough training opportunities make it harder to use information resources effectively. Library workers play an important role in helping users and raising awareness of current information services. However, it is also clear that library staff need to improve their skills and knowledge.

In conclusion, public libraries in the Paschim Bardhaman area are still very important places to get knowledge, but they need to be updated and their services need to be better. Improving readers' information-gathering habits can be done by making infrastructure stronger, adding more digital resources, improving user education programs, and getting more people involved in the community. By working on these areas, public libraries may do a better job of helping communities become more informed, competent, and empowered.

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