

Reading Habits of Library Users : A Study of University of Jammu (J&K)

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Abstract

Reading habit is a lifelong, continuous and regular performance of the act of reading. However, habit of using libraries means continuous and regular use of a library by the individual with the purpose of meeting his/her intellectual requirements. The present study is an attempt to analyze the reading habits of library users including postgraduates, research scholars and faculty members of the University of Jammu, Jammu. The data were collected with the help of a standard questionnaire distributed to 500 users. The result of the study revealed that library users of the University of Jammu have good reading habits. It is noted that post-graduates mainly visit library for studying course material (69.2%) followed by newspaper and magazine, reading both 59.5%. Research scholars and faculty members mostly visit library for consulting research materials (70.9%) and (52.2%) respectively. Post-graduate users mostly read books (91.1%) and newspapers (76.5%) while the research scholars and faculty members read doctoral dissertations which form (87.4%) and (91.9%) respectively.

Keywords: Reading habit; Library users; Post-graduates; Research scholars; Faculty members.

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Introduction

Reading is an art of interpreting printed and written words which is a basic instrument of education. It makes way for a better understanding of one's own experiences and it can be an exciting voyage to self-discovery. Reading is the most effective process of conscious learning which influences the extent and accuracy of information, as well as the attitudes, morals, beliefs, judgment and the action of readers (Panigrahi and Panda, 1996; Eyre, 2005)^{5,8}. A good reading habit is necessary for a healthy intellectual growth which plays a very crucial role in enabling a person to achieve practical

efficiency. Furthermore, an individual's interests are determined to a considerable extent by the amount he will read and the intensity with which he will pursue through his reading activity.

However, the human need for information is unlimited. People seek information from different sources and in different formats for undertaking a variety of jobs and tasks. It is seen that prior to intervention of computer and communication technology, libraries were the major source of getting relevant information and documents for the students as well as the scientists (Curley, 1990; Kachel 1997)^{2,6}. But the use of information and communication technology has completely

changed the scenario of library use among them (Dhiman 2003; Dhiman and Rani, 2012)^{3,4}. Now, the reading habits, accessing resources and material preferences change rapidly in a digital world. Today, scientists and the students access countless resources from lecture notes to research papers electronically.

This change of reading habits on a large scale has led to the differentiation on the accessibility of resources, archiving them and usage of related technologies. Therefore, it has become necessary to study the reading habits of the students and the faculty members both in new environment. Hence, the present study is undertaken to explore the reading habits of the library users of the University of Jammu, Jammu.

Objectives of Study

The main objectives of the present study are:

1. Age-wise distribution of library users.
2. Gender-wise distribution of library users.
3. To determine the time spent by library users.
4. To determine the purpose of visiting the library by library users.
5. To know the frequency of visit of the library users.
6. To determine the types of materials read by the library users.
7. To know whether the library users seek the assistance of the library staff or not in using the library of University of Jammu, Jammu.

Study Area

University of Jammu came into existence in 1969 vide Kashmir and Jammu Universities Act 1969 following the bifurcation of the erstwhile University of Jammu and Kashmir. It is cradled in the lap of mountains at the foothills of the auspicious Trikuta, besides the river Tawi at an altitude of 1030 ft. in Jammu. The university provides education in various branches of learning for research, advancement and the dissemination of knowledge. Central library of the university is the hub of academic activities where students sit from morning to evening everyday throughout the year. Its four storey building has spacious reading halls and compact stack areas. The library has a collection of nearly 3.5 lakh volumes which are rare as well as latest, and 250 current periodicals. The library possesses facilities like photocopiers, LCD projectors and access of resources of INFLIBNET,

CD-ROM databases, RFID and inter-connected computer terminals at selected sites.

Besides, there are various departmental libraries which are housed either in a separate room of the main library or in some building outside the main library. These are administered either as a part of a centralized library system or as a part of the academic department to which it serves.

Earlier Studies

Ahmad and Goswami (2013) have made a comparative study to find out the reading habit of the students at higher secondary level in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh using questionnaire method.¹ The study concludes that the reading habit at home for textbooks and magazines was similar in students of two streams at higher secondary level whereas, students of science stream had better fiction and non-fiction materials, newspapers and an internet reading habit at home at this level.

Poornima and Adithya Kumari (2015) have conducted a study to assess the time spent on reading and extent of reading various resources by students of distance education for different purposes⁹. The results of the study reveal that majority of the sample respondents spent less than one hour per day on reading. More than 70% of the respondents read books for education purpose from a moderate to great extent. Further, male respondents read more books for education purpose than females, and unemployed ones read more than employed ones. Besides, 60% of the respondents read the books for gaining information. A large majority of 85% of the respondents were noted to read the books for recreation purpose from moderate to a great extent.

Vaishali and Shashi (2015) have conducted a study for the reading habits of B.Ed. training teachers belonging to different faculties in Vidharbha region¹². A total of 1200 sample, which includes 400 each of arts, commerce and science trainee teachers were selected randomly by using stratified sampling from the population for study. The results show that the reading habit of the science trainee teachers is better than the arts and commerce trainee teachers but a need to work on improving the reading habit of commerce faculty trainee teachers is felt necessary.

Rajeshwar Kumar (2015) has conducted a study for the reading habits and library use among the students of Pharmacy Colleges in Warangal district, Telangana¹⁰. The results of the study show that majority of the respondents (43%) visit the library

daily for reading. However, for all of the pharmacy students (95%), the main purpose of reading in library is to pass the examinations. Further, a majority of the students read at their home and their second choice is library; and 66% of students opined that library is a proper place for reading. 75.5% students prefer to read in the morning only. Further, 84.5% of the students prefer newspapers, 71% text books and 70% e-resources are the better reading items in the library as compared to periodicals, novels and other materials.

Kumara and Sampath Kumar (2018) have carried out a survey for the impact of ICT on the reading habits of the students of Tumkur University, Karnataka using questionnaire method⁷. The result of this study shows that most of the students are female (61.6%) and most of them (72.3%) are from rural areas. The study found that students read books daily at home (69.5%) followed by classroom (51.1%) reading. However, the students strongly agreed that the print books are costlier than internet sources (32.3%). Besides, the students are found to access internet every day and the students used ICT in support of their academic work.

Methodology

The present study was carried out using survey method through questionnaire as a tool for the study. The investigator personally distributed the questionnaires and collected the responses on the spot. This facilitated in having hundred percent responses. Some questions were open-ended and some were choice questions. The study was conducted on a sample of 500 library users to examine their reading habits from different angles.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected on questionnaires are tabulated and interpreted for various objectives as stated in the starting of the study.

Age Wise Distribution of Library Users

Table 1 indicates that majority of the library users are in the age group of 20-30 years, representing 69.7% of the total users while the age group of 41-50 years represented the least number of library users contributing only 6.7% of the total users. In postgraduate (PG) category, all of the users fall in the age group of 20-30 years contributing 100% of the total users. In research scholar (RS) category, again the maximum numbers of users are reported in age group of 20-30 years, representing 55.3% followed by 31-40 years, contributing 43.7% while the minimum of 1% users are in the age group of 41-50 years. In faculty member (FM) category, age group 51-60 years showed maximum number of users representing 54.7%, followed by the age group 41-50 years with 32.5% and the minimum number in the age group 31-40 with only 12.8% contribution.

Gender Wise Distribution of Library Users

Table 2 demonstrates the gender wise distribution of library users. In total, majority of the library users are male contributing 55.5% while females are represented by only 44.3%. In case of postgraduate (PG), research scholars (RS) and faculty members (FM) category, again male users dominates with 54.3%, 60.2% and 54.7% respectively while in the same categories females have 45.7%, 39.8% and 45.3% contribution respectively.

Table 1: Age Wise Distribution of Library Users

S. No.	Age (in years)	Library Users	%	PG	%	RS	%	FM	%
1.	20-30	304	69.7	247	100	57	55.3	-	-
2.	31-40	56	12.8	-	-	45	43.7	11	12.8
3.	41-50	29	6.7	-	-	01	1.0	28	32.5
4.	51-60	47	10.8	-	-	-	-	47	54.7
5.	61 above	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	436	100	247	100	103	100	86	100

Table 2: Gender Wise Distribution of Library Users

S. No.	Gender	Library Users	%	PG	%	RS	%	FM	%
1.	Male	243	55.7	134	54.3	62	60.2	47	54.7
2.	Female	193	44.3	113	45.7	41	39.8	39	45.3
	Total	436	100	247	100	103	100	86	100

Time Spent by the Library Users

Table 3 indicates the time spent by the library users in library. It is seen that in total 44.3% users use library for more than one hour per day while 15.6% users use library only for 5–20 minutes per day. Besides 24.2% and 16% library users use it for 30-60 minutes and 20–30 minutes per day respectively. Again in all the categories i.e. PG, RS and FM, maximum users (38.1%, 51.5% and 53.5% respectively) use library for more than one hour per day while the minimum usage of library 5–20 minutes per day is shown by minimum number of users in PG category (16.2%) and FM category (8.1%). In research scholar (RS) category, minimum number of users (12.6%) use library for 20–30 minutes per day.

Purpose of Visiting the Library by Library Users

Table 4 indicates the purpose of visiting the library by the library users. It is seen that in total maximum library users visit library for studying course material (57.8%) followed by newspaper and magazine reading (42.9%). The minimum number of library users (10.8%) visit library for borrowing documents and for recreation. In postgraduate (PG) category, again maximum users visit library for studying course material (69.2%) followed by newspaper and magazine reading (59.9%). However, the minimum number of library users visit library for consulting research material (8.5%) and to use reference materials (8.5%). Further, about 36% of post graduate library users visit library for preparing competitive exams.

In research scholar (RS) category, maximum users visit library for consulting research materials (70.9%) followed by studying course material (57.3%) and for consulting reference materials (56.3%). A very few research scholars (4.9%) and (7.8%) use library for recreation and for competitive exams respectively. Faculty members mostly visit the library for consulting research material (52.2%) followed by their visit for collecting reference materials (39.5%). Only 2.3% faculty members visit the library for preparation of competitive exams.

Frequency of Visiting the Library by Library Users

Table 5 indicates the frequency of visiting the library by the library users. It may be seen that most of the library users visit library at the time of need, representing 34.9% followed by 25.4% who visit library daily. Only 2.5% of users visit library rarely. In case of all the categories i.e. postgraduate(PG), research scholars (RS) and faculty members (FM) category, again majority of the users visit the library at the time of need 36%, 28.2% and 39.5% respectively followed by 27.5%, 15.5% and 31.4% respectively who visit library daily. Only 2% of post- graduates and 5.8% of research scholars visit library rarely while only 2.3% of faculty visit library once in a month but none of them visit rarely.

Types of Materials Used by Library Users

Table 6 demonstrates the types of materials read

Table 3: Time Spent by the Library Users

S. No.	Time Spent in the Library per day	University of Jammu (JU)							
		Total	%	PG	%	RS	%	FM	%
1.	5–20 min	68	15.6	40	16.2	21	20.4	07	8.1
2.	20–30 min	70	16.0	48	19.4	13	12.6	09	10.5
3.	30–60 min	105	24.1	65	26.3	16	15.5	24	27.9
4.	More than one hour	193	44.3	94	38.1	53	51.5	46	53.5
	Total	436	100	247	100	103	100	86	100

Table 4: Purpose of Visit of the Library by Library Users

S. No.	Purpose of Visiting the Library	University of Jammu (JU)							
		Total	%	PG	%	RS	%	FM	%
1.	For studying course material	252	57.8	171	69.2	59	57.3	23	26.7
2.	For borrowing documents	47	10.8	26	10.5	16	15.5	5	5.8
3.	For consulting research material	139	31.9	21	8.5	73	70.9	45	52.3
4.	For competitive exams	99	22.7	89	36.0	08	7.8	02	2.3
5.	To use reference materials	143	32.8	21	8.5	58	56.3	34	39.5
6.	To read newspaper/magazines	187	42.9	148	59.9	36	35.0	03	3.5
7.	For recreation	47	10.8	42	17.0	05	4.9	Nil	-

by the library users of University of Jammu. It is seen that majority of the users (74.8%) read newspapers followed by reading of books (71.8%). Besides, doctoral dissertations and maps are other materials read by 42.9% and 39.9% library users respectively. No library users are reported to visit library for microforms and audio-visuals. In post-graduate (PG) category, again majority of the users read books (91.1%) and newspapers (76.5%) while the majority of research scholars (RS) read doctoral dissertations (87.4%) followed by maps (65%), newspaper (62.1%) and books (55.3%). No research scholar visit for microforms and audio-visuals.

However, in faculty member (FM) category, again majority of users read doctoral dissertations, (91.9%) followed by newspaper (84.9) and maps (67.4%). Further, minimum number of faculty members visits the library for consulting CD-ROMs (27.9%) and reports (32.6%).

Assistance taken by Library Users from Staff

Table 7 indicates whether the library users seek assistance from the library staff of University of Jammu to locate the books and other reading materials. Majority of library users (67.9%) seek assistance from the library staff to locate books. The results of the study indicates that 65.6% post graduates, 73.8% research scholars and 67.4% faculty seek assistance from the library users to locate books and other reading materials.

Major Findings of the Study

The major findings of the study are as under:

Both the postgraduates and research scholars have maximum users in the age group of 20–30 years contributing 100% and 55.3% respectively while the library users among faculty members category fall in the age group of 51–60 years representing 54.7% of total users.

Table 5: Frequency of Visiting the Library by Library Users

S. No.	Visit to Library	University of Jammu (JU)							
		Total	%	PG	%	RS	%	F	%
1.	Daily	111	25.4	68	27.5	16	15.5	27	31.4
2.	Once in a week	57	13.1	42	17.0	11	10.7	4	4.7
3.	More than once in a week	54	12.4	24	9.7	14	13.6	16	18.6
4.	Fortnightly	22	05.0	08	3.2	11	10.7	03	3.5
5.	Once in a month	29	06.7	11	4.6	16	15.5	02	2.3
6.	When there is need	152	34.9	89	36.0	29	28.2	34	39.5
7.	Rarely	11	02.5	05	2.0	06	5.8	nil	-
	Total	436	100	247	100	103	100	86	100

Table 6: Types of Materials Used by Library Users

S. No.	Types of Materials Used	University of Jammu (JU)							
		Total	%	PG	%	RS	%	FM	%
1.	Books	313	71.8	225	91.1	57	55.3	31	36.0
2.	Periodicals	103	23.6	10	4.0	49	47.6	44	51.2
3.	Newspapers	326	74.8	189	76.5	64	62.1	73	84.9
4.	Press cuttings	69	15.8	18	7.3	12	11.7	39	45.3
5.	Doctoral dissertations	187	42.9	18	7.3	90	87.4	79	91.9
6.	Reports	52	12.0	9	3.6	15	14.6	28	32.6
7.	Microforms	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8.	Audio-visuals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.	Maps	174	39.9	49	19.8	67	65.0	58	67.4
10.	CD-ROMs	62	14.2	25	10.1	13	12.6	24	27.9

Table 7: Assistance taken by Library Users from Staff

S. No.	Take assistance from Staff to locate Books and Other Reading Materials	University of Jammu (JU)							
		Total	%	PG	%	RS	%	F	%
1.	Yes	296	67.9	162	65.6	76	73.8	58	67.4
2.	No	140	32.1	85	34.4	27	26.2	28	32.6
		436	100	247	100	103	100	86	100

1. In all the categories, postgraduates, research scholars and faculty members, library users are mostly males representing 54.3%, 62.2% and 54.7% respectively.
2. In all the categories, postgraduates, research scholars as well as faculty members, maximum library users (31.8%, 51.5% and 53.5% respectively) use library for more than one hour per day.
3. Post-graduates mainly visit library for studying course material (69.2%) followed by newspaper and magazine reading both 59.5%.
4. Research scholars and faculty members mostly visit library for consulting research materials (70.9%) and (52.2%) respectively.
5. Postgraduate library users use the library mostly for reading books (91.1%) and newspapers (76.5) while the research scholars and faculty members read doctoral dissertations (87.4%) and (91.9%) respectively.
6. All the library users including post-graduates, research scholars and faculty members visit library at the time of need (36%, 28.2% and 39.5%) respectively.
7. Majority of the postgraduates (65.6%), research scholars (73.8%), and faculty members (67.4%) seek assistance from the library users to locate the books and other reading materials.

Discussion

It is seen that reading provides experience through which the individual may expand his horizons of knowledge, identify, extend and intensify his interest and gains deeper understanding of himself, of other human beings and of the world (Panigrahi and Panda, 1996)⁸. The present study indicates that library users of the University of Jammu including postgraduates, research scholars and faculty members have very good reading habits. They consulted library for reading books, newspapers, dissertations and research materials. Though the male users comparably were found to use the library more but the number of female users was also not too less.

Since the reading is possible only when people are literate, so, for inculcating reading habits, the prime requirement is literacy (Ramesh, 2012)¹¹. The literacy rate can be increased by the development of more and more educational institutions. Also the libraries can be effective

agencies of promoting reading habits among the literates. Therefore, in order to improve the reading skills and the education performance of library users in general, it is important that the teachers, librarians and students should be fully involved.

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