

## **Critical Analysis of Information Gathering Habits of Readers in Public Libraries of Paschim Bardhaman District, West Bengal.**

**Chaitali Biswas <sup>1</sup>, Dr. Shahina Sultana Khan <sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup> Department of Library & Information Science, Mansarovar Global University, Sehore, M.P., India.

### **ABSTRACT**

Public library patronage patterns in the Paschim Bardhaman district of West Bengal are the focus of this analytical study. In this age of rapid technological advancement and plentiful digital information sources, reading comprehension, critical thinking, and information utilisation have become increasingly important. The main aim of this research is to examine the role of public libraries in facilitating efficient access to information, along with the habits, preferences, and challenges faced by library patrons in their quest for knowledge. This study employs both primary and secondary sources to create a descriptive and analytical framework. Primary data were collected through surveys and interviews with students, professionals, and casual readers who use the library. Secondary data sources include books, articles, and records maintained by libraries. The study explores various topics such as library usage patterns, preferred information sources (print versus digital), motivations for seeking information, and the impact of socioeconomic status and educational level on information behaviour.

The results show that digital resources are becoming more popular, especially among younger users, yet many still rely on traditional print resources like books and newspapers. The effective use of electronic resources is hindered by barriers such as limited digital infrastructure, lack of knowledge, and insufficient training in information literacy. Additionally, the study highlights the crucial role of librarians in helping patrons and promoting the development of information literacy skills. Public libraries in Paschim Bardhaman district are vital for meeting community information needs, according to the study. However, to keep pace with users' changing habits, libraries need to adopt new technology, improve digital access, and implement user education programs. Researchers, policymakers, and library professionals may find this study's conclusions helpful for enhancing library services and fostering positive information use among readers.

Keywords: Socioeconomic, implement, insufficient, promoting, fostering, professionals.

***Keywords: Nanocomposite, Polymer, Graphene, Hybrid, Filler.***

## **INTRODUCTION**

Everyone needs to cope with information in various ways throughout their lives; it is a crucial commodity, but also an elusive idea that is difficult to define precisely. Information, according to Crawford (1978), is fifth on the list of human needs, behind only air, water, food, and shelter. Data collection, transfer, and utilization are ubiquitous and ubiquitously present in every aspect of human existence. Knowledge unites individuals and ideas. A society's identity is formed through the flow of information, news, and ideas. The growth and improvement of every company rely heavily on information. A library is one of the most important places to find information. Academic libraries focus primarily on education, while general libraries contain a wider variety of information resources. The public libraries provide wide range of services to its diverse user community to meet their informational, educational, recreational and cultural needs.

Humans gather information for a number of basic purposes related to intellectual development, social interaction, decision-making, and survival. From prehistoric times to the present, humans have used information gathering to better understand their surroundings, anticipate threats or opportunities, and make decisions that increase their chances of survival (safety, food, and shelter). People need information to make informed and effective decisions in daily life, such as choosing careers, managing finances, navigating social situations, and solving problems.

## **THE EDUCATION AND ROLE OF LIBRARIES**

Two sides of the same coin, education and libraries have been together since the time of Guru Kula. Libraries are essential to education, and without them, human progress would be severely limited. For a society that is always evolving, education, as a continuous, organic process in a casual setting, remains relevant. It now has a formal structure and serves numerous purposes.

Education is the magic bullet that can help any country, developed or developing, reach its goal of social, economic, cultural, and aesthetic growth, regardless of how far along the path to prosperity they may be. Education has been at the forefront of Total Quality Management's (TQM) "swift transition" recently. Private schools, colleges, and institutions that are considered to be universities are all engaging in fierce rivalry with one another as a result of the ever-increasing number of students enrolled in these institutions.

In addition, throughout history, libraries and the information they contain have evolved through several distinct epochs, including the Stone Age, the Preindustrial, the Industrial, the Mechanical, the Electrical, and finally, the Digital Paradigm. In the twenty-first century, library and information science literature is currently heading toward the application of artificial intelligence in libraries. Over the course of human history, libraries and information environments have undergone a series of extraordinarily expressive and vast stages of evolution. There have only ever been the stages as evidence of and responses to man's insatiable curiosity.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To study the respondents' frequency of library, visit and average span of time utilization in library in the public libraries in Paschim Bardhaman districts.

- To analyze the respondents’ distance of access to the public libraries in Paschim Bardhaman districts.
- To find out the respondents’ areas of utilization of ICTs library resources.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research study's methodology is the detailed plan outlining the steps to carry out the study. It details the strategy, techniques, and processes that were used to gather and evaluate data. To further guarantee the study's scientific rigor, reliability, and validity, methodology explains why particular methodologies were selected. The study was done by descriptive statistics using percentage analysis.

Sample Size- 400 samples were taken.

#### Data Collection and Preparation

Surveys, interviews, observations, and experiments are some of the ways data is gathered prior to analysis. We remove mistakes, missing answers, and inconsistent values from this raw data. For the research study, both primary and secondary data are used.

Primary data was collected through self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondent who entered the public libraries for information gathering.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

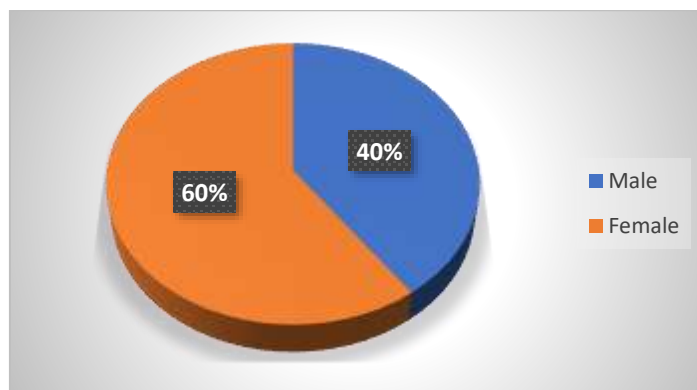
#### 1. GENDER

Data were collected on the gender of public library users. The data was collected and tabulated as follows: -

**Table 1: Gender of The Public Library Users**

Gender	No of users	Percentage
Male	160	40
Female	240	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

The data shows that 40 percent of the library users are male and 60 percent are females. The majority of the users were female.



**Fig 1: Pie Chart Showing Gender of The Public Library Users**

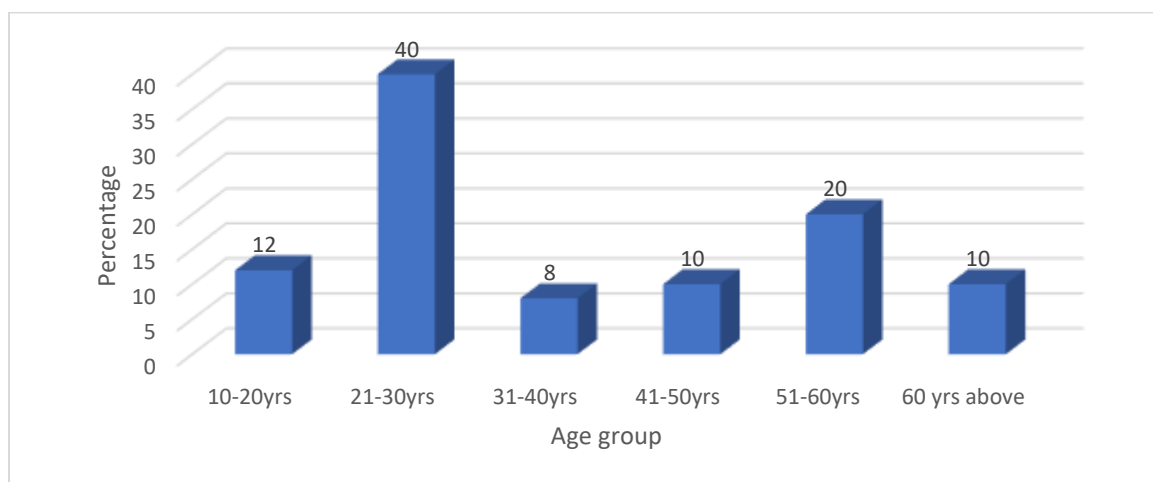
## 2. AGE

The data was collected regarding the age of the public library users. The data was collected and tabulated as follows: -

**Table 2: Age of The Public Library Users**

Gender	No of users	Percentage
10-20yrs	48	12
21-30yrs	160	40
31-40yrs	32	8
41-50yrs	40	10
51-60yrs	80	20
60 yrs above	40	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

The data shows that 12 percent of the users was 10-20 yrs of age, 40 percent of the users was 21-30 yrs, 8 percent of the users was 31-40 yrs of age, 10 percent of the users was 41-50 yrs of age, 20 percent of the users was 51-60 yrs of age and 10 percent of the users was 60 yrs and above.



**Fig 2: Bar Graph Showing Age of The Public Library Users**

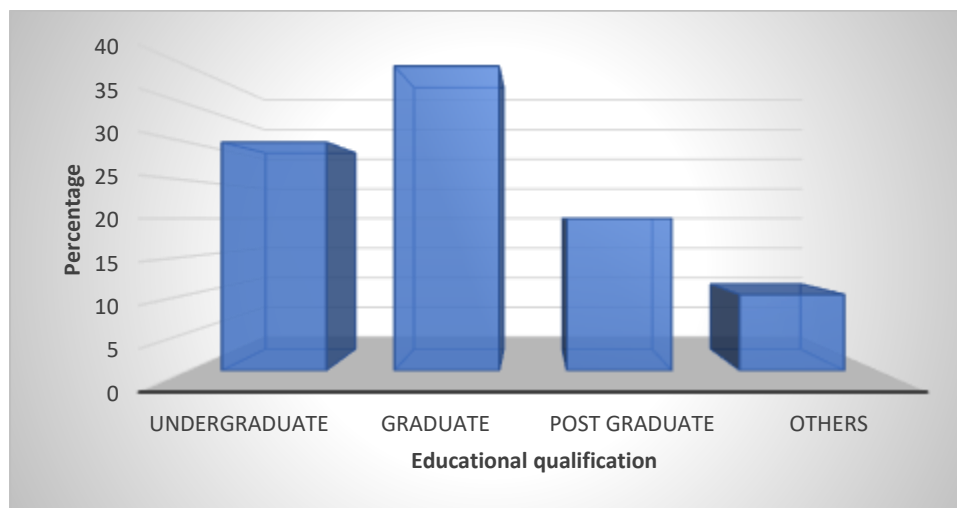
## 3. EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

The data was collected regarding the education qualification of the library users and the data was tabulated as follows: -

**Table 3: Qualification District of The Public Library Users**

Qualification	No of users	Percentage
Undergraduate	120	30
Graduate	160	40
Post graduate	80	20
Others	40	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

The data shows that 30 percent of the users are undergraduate, 40 percent of the users are graduate, 20 percent are post graduate and 10 percent are having other qualification. The majority of the users are graduate.



**Fig 3: Bar Graph Showing Qualification District of The Public Library Users**

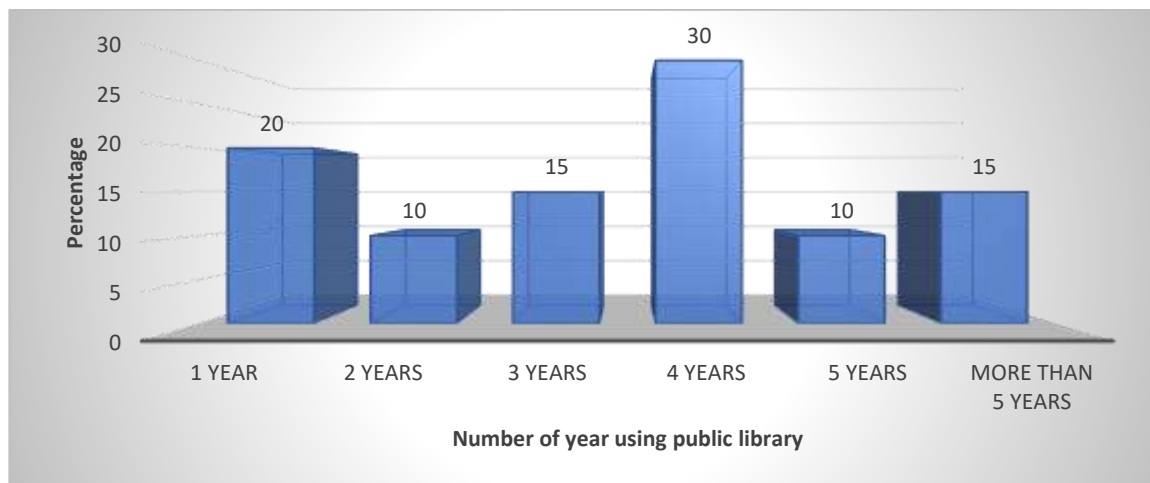
#### 4. NUMBER OF YEARS USING PUBLIC LIBRARY

The data was collected from the library users regarding the number of years using public libraries.

**Table 4: Number of Years Using the Public Library**

Years	No of Users	Percentage
1 year	80	20
2 years	40	10
3 years	60	15
4 years	120	30
5 years	40	10
More than 5 years	60	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

The data shows that 20 percent of the user are using library for 1 year, 10 percent of the user are using library for 2 years, 15 percent of the user are using library for 3 years, 30 percent of the user are using library for 4 years, 10 percent are using library for 5 years and 15 percent are using library for more than 5 years.



**Fig 4: Bar Graph Showing Number of Years Using Public Library**

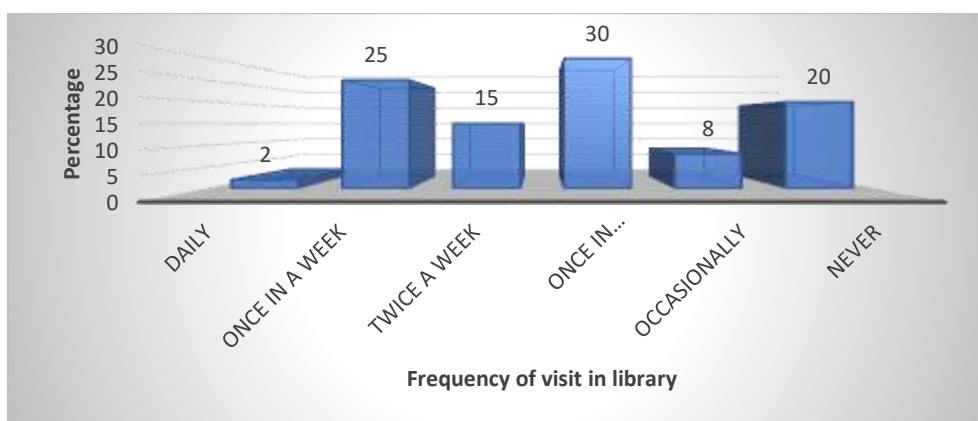
### 5. FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The data was collected regarding frequency of visit to the public library and the data was tabulated as follows:

**Table 5: Frequency of Visit to The Public Library**

Frequency	No of Users	Percentage
Daily	8	2
Once in a week	100	25
Twice a week	60	15
Once in fortnight	120	30
Occasionally	32	8
Never	80	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

The data shows that 2 percent of the users visit library daily, 25 percent of the users use library once in a week, 15 percent use library twice in a week, 30 percent of the users use once in fortnight, 8 percent of the users use occasionally and 20 percent of the users never use public library.



**Fig 5: Bar Graph Showing Frequency of Visit to The Public Library**

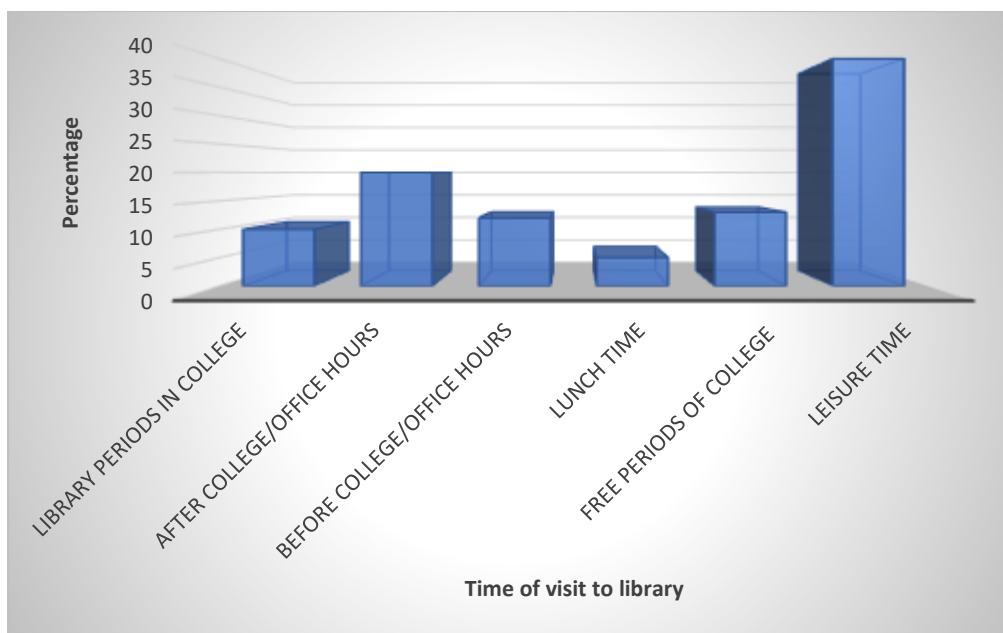
## 6. TIME OF VISIT TO LIBRARY

The data was collected from users regarding their visit time to public library and the data was tabulated as follows:

**Table 6: Time of Visit to Library**

Time	No of Users	Percentage
Library periods in college	40	10
After college/office hours	80	20
Before college/office hours	48	12
Lunch time	20	5
Free periods of college	52	13
Leisure time	160	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

The data shows that 10 percent of the user of library visits library in library periods of college, 20 percent of the user visits library after college or office hours, 12 percent of the user of library visits library before college or office hours, 5 percent of the user use library in lunch time, 13 percent use library in free periods of college and 40 percent of users use library during leisure time and when they are free. The majority of the user use during leisure time.



**Fig 6: Bar Graph Showing Time of Visit to Library**

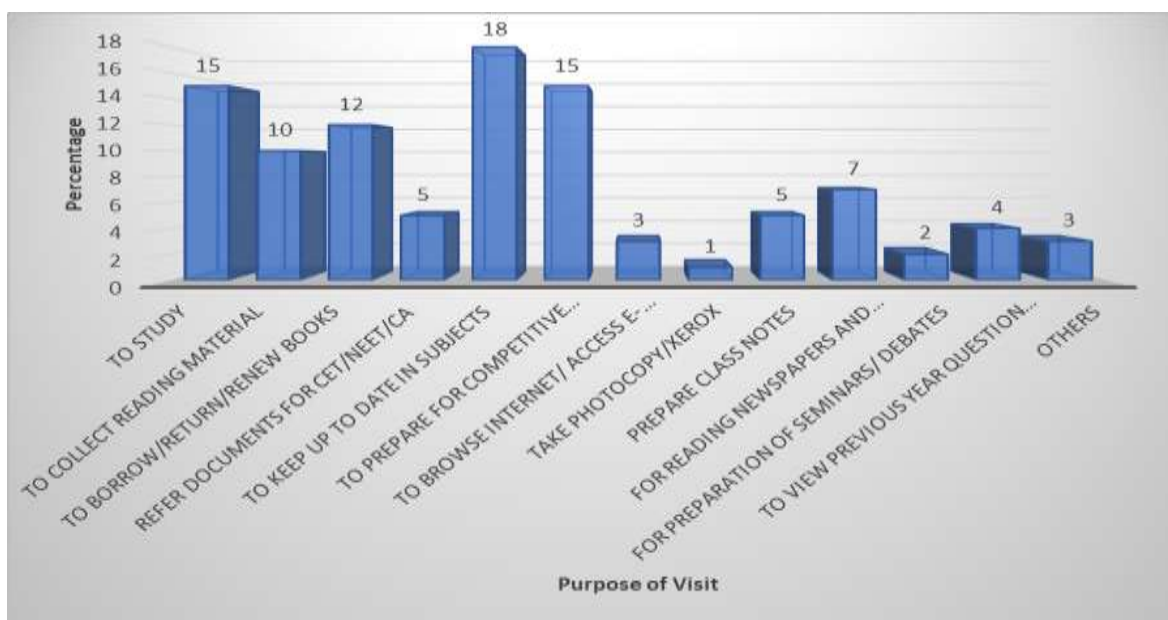
## 7. MAIN PURPOSE OF VISIT TO LIBRARY

The data was collected regarding main purpose of visit to public library and few purposes was noted and tabulated as follows: -

**Table 7: Main Purpose of Visit to Library**

Purpose of Visit	No of Users	Percentage
To study	60	15
To collect reading material	40	10
To borrow/return/renew books	48	12
Refer documents for CET/NEET/CA	20	5
To keep up to date in subjects	72	18
To prepare for competitive exams/class exam	60	15
To browse internet/ access e-resources	12	3
Take photocopy/Xerox	4	1
Prepare class notes	20	5
For reading newspapers and magazines	28	7
For preparation of seminars/ debates	8	2
To view previous year question papers	16	4
Others	12	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

The data shows that 15 percent of the user visit library for studying purpose, 10 percent of the user visits library to collect reading material, 12 percent of the user visit library for borrowing/returning/renewing books, 5 percent of the user visits library to refer documents for CET/NEET/CA, 18 percent user visits library to keep up to date in subjects, 15 percent of the user visits library to prepare for competitive exams/class exam, 3 percent of the user visits library to browse internet/ access e-resources, 1 percent user visits library for taking photocopy/xerox, 5 percent of the user visits library to prepare class notes, 7 percent of the user visits library for reading newspaper and magazines, 2 percent of the user visits library for preparation of seminars/debates, 4 percent of the user visits library for viewing previous year question papers and 3 percent of the user goes for any other reasons.



**Fig 7: Bar Graph Showing Main Purpose of Visit to Library**

## CONCLUSION

Information consumption is dynamic and adaptable in today's dynamic knowledge environment, as this analytical study on readers' information-gathering behaviours in Paschim Bardhaman district public libraries demonstrates. Public libraries are vital resources for readers' personal, professional, and academic growth, regardless of their socioeconomic status or level of education, according to the results. When it comes to encouraging literacy and providing equal access to knowledge, public libraries remain indispensable. Newspapers, magazines, and books are still very much in demand, according to the report, especially among older readers and frequent visitors. Meanwhile, there is a clear trend towards digital sources, particularly among younger users who like the convenience and speed of online platforms for information. Still, infrastructure availability and consumer familiarity with technology determine the extent to which digital usage differs.

The identified issues include a lack of understanding about accessible resources, inadequate collection development, limited digital facilities, and inadequate user training in information literacy. As a result, patrons are less likely to make good use of the library's offerings. Furthermore, some patrons' infrequent visits highlight the necessity for more interesting and accessible library spaces. Public libraries should update their systems, include digital resources, and launch user education initiatives, according to the report. Guide readers, promote information literacy, and raise awareness about different information sources and services; this is the proactive role that librarians should play. Finally, a well-rounded strategy that incorporates both conventional library services and cutting-edge technological developments is necessary to improve readers' information-gathering habits. Improving information access and cultivating a reading culture, lifelong learning, and informed citizenship are all goals of enhancing public libraries in Paschim Bardhaman district.

## REFERENCES

1. Ansari, M. S., & Tripathi, A. (2017). An investigation of effectiveness of mobile learning apps in higher education in India. *International Journal of Information studies and libraries*, 2(1),33-43.
2. Armah, N., & Cobblah, M. (2021). Assessment of the multiple challenges associated with student's access to electronic resources at a public University library in Ghana. *International Journal of Knowledge Content Development & Technology*, 11(1), 65 - 84.
3. Arunkumar, H.S., M.R.Vanithashree. Reading Habits of Jayanagar Public Library Users: A Survey (Special Reference to Bangalore South Zone). *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, vol. 8, no. 10, 2020, pp. 3289–3292.
4. Asif, Muhammad, Liu Yang. An Investigation of the Reading Culture: The Role of Libraries to Promote Reading Culture in Pakistan. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, vol. 9, no. 3, 1 Dec. 2021, pp. 40–62,
5. Avoodaiammal Pothigasalam, Kannan Kattari, Ganesa Murthy Arasakumar (2023). The research of public libraries in promoting reading habits among women's in using support linear regression algorithm. *AIP Conf. Proc.* 4 May 2023; 2655 (1): 020013.

6. Chamy, A.Vellai & Ramalingam, Jeysankar. (2014). Reading Habits of Central Library Users A Case Study of Alagappa University Tamilnadu India. 2. 6-10.
7. Deshmukh Sanjivani F. & Khobaragade Ashok S. (2020), A Study of Reading Habits of Library Professionals in aided Colleges affiliated to R.T.M. Nagpur University Nagpur, International Journal of Research in Social Sciences, Vol. 10 Issue 02, February 2020, pp-177-187
8. Dey, B., & Chatterjee, S. (2025). Development Of Public Libraries in Relation to the Socio-Cultural Progress of Society since the 19th Century: With Special Reference To Bengal. *International Journal of Research -GRANTHAALAYAH*, 13(1), 44–52.
9. Elizabeth, Matheus., & Ruth, Abankwah (2018). Organizational schemes of Information resources in top 50 academic business library websites. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*,37(2),137-144.
10. Elizabeth, Matheus., & Ruth, Abankwah (2019). Impact of ICT on libraries of NCR international conference from ownership to access leveraging the digital paradigm. New Delhi: Synergy Books India.
11. Gupta, A., Randhawa, S. K., & Po, I. I. (2021). Reading Habits, Library Perceptions and Library Usage of the South Asian Population in British Columbia, Canada. *Public Library Quarterly*, 41(5), 456–484.
12. Halder, Sambhu Nath. Assessment of Reading Habits of Public Library Users in the Digital Era: An Empirical Study. *SRELS Journal of Information Management*, vol. 58, no. 1, 25 Feb. 2021, pp. 59–66,