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Critical Analysis of Users' Behaviour in Academic Libraries: With Reference to Degree College Libraries of Hooghly District, West Bengal

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ABSTRACT:
Academic libraries play a significant role in the teaching-learning process, research activities, and overall academic development of students and teachers. Degree college libraries are important centres of knowledge and information that provide access to textbooks, reference materials, journals, newspapers, e-resources, and other learning facilities. The effective utilisation of these resources largely depends on the behaviour, needs, interests, attitudes, and information-seeking patterns of library users. In the present era of digital transformation, users' behaviour in academic libraries is undergoing considerable changes due to the increasing availability of digital resources, internet facilities, and information and communication technologies.

KEYWORDS: *Communication Technologies, Degree College Libraries, Users' Behaviour, Library Resources, Library Users*

I. INTRODUCTION:

Users' Behaviour in academic libraries refers to the attitudes, perceptions, interests, habits and patterns of information-seeking activities of library users. It includes how users search for information, select reading materials, access library resources, utilise digital facilities and interact with library services. Understanding users' behaviour is essential for improving the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of library services. The study of users' behaviour also helps librarians identify the information needs, reading preferences, resource requirements and difficulties experienced by different categories of library users.

West Bengal has a well-established network of higher educational institutions, including degree colleges that contribute significantly to the expansion of higher education. Hooghly district is one of the important educational districts of West Bengal, with several degree colleges offering undergraduate education across various academic disciplines. The libraries of these colleges play an important role in supporting classroom teaching, independent learning and academic research. However, differences in library infrastructure, collection development, technological facilities, financial resources, and professional library services may influence users' behaviour and satisfaction.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Bandaru, M. & Naick, B.R.D. (2026). This work examines the correlation between digital literacy and students' information-seeking behaviour in academic libraries, emphasising the value of digital competence in education and research. The study included undergraduate and postgraduate students from North Coastal Andhra Pradesh. Data were collected via a Google Form distributed with assistance from librarians, and participation was entirely voluntary. A total of 176 valid responses were gathered and analysed using a convenience sampling method. The analysis indicates that respondents exhibit considerable confidence in fundamental digital abilities, such as internet use and online communication, yet also underscores deficiencies in more complex domains, such as coding, cybersecurity, and data analysis. While academic library training programmes were viewed favourably, the findings suggest a need for more customised, user-centric, and discipline-specific digital literacy training initiatives. The results indicate that most participants joined the programme to gain skills and enhance their employment prospects, emphasising the value of these skills for academic achievement and future job opportunities. Participants demonstrated a growing interest in areas such as AI literacy, online safety, and disinformation awareness, which highlights the emerging digital challenges faced in academia. While the National Education Policy 2020 and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) were not explicitly assessed, the research corresponds with their objective of establishing equal, technology-enhanced education. The findings underscore the transforming function of university libraries as collaborators in digital empowerment and informed information-seeking practices.

Radha, R. et al. (2026). As libraries strive to enhance user satisfaction and optimise resource management, data analytics in the digital era has become nearly omnipresent. This presentation will examine the use of digital footprints to predict behaviour in libraries. This article will develop models based on user behavioural patterns, including logins, resource utilisation, search activities, and borrowing history, to enhance user services and optimise resource allocation. This methodology utilises machine learning techniques, namely supervised models such as logistic regression and decision trees, to identify patterns and relationships in user data. Integrating digital footprint analysis in libraries improves personalised services and helps librarians make informed administrative decisions. Libraries are used to gather data, which will be anonymised to protect user identities and adhere to ethical standards. The proposed framework would allow digital libraries to anticipate user behaviour more effectively and proactively recommend appropriate content. This study illustrates the importance of behavioural analysis in developing adaptive, self-learning, and user-centric intelligent library systems. The findings enhance the justification for the expanding literature on digital libraries and underscore the advancement of library analytics in delivering services to academic and public libraries.

Russell-Rose, T., Liu, H. & Yang, L. (2026). Digital libraries are seeing a significant shift propelled by advancements in user experience (UX) design, artificial intelligence, and interactive technology. Users now view modern digital libraries as more than just information retrieval systems; they facilitate exploratory search, learning, collaboration, and sensemaking across diverse user groups. This special issue consolidates research that investigates next-generation user experiences in digital libraries, emphasising innovative interface paradigms, emerging interaction modalities, and inclusive, user-centred design techniques. The papers collectively emphasise how UX innovation can improve usability, accessibility, engagement, and learning, while also meeting the changing expectations of scholars, students, and the general public. The issue offers conceptual frameworks and empirical evidence to assist scholars and practitioners in developing digital library systems that are adaptable, reflective, and responsive to human needs.

Pasipamire, E. (2026). This systematic analysis examines how academic libraries in higher education use social media to enhance communication, broaden outreach, and improve user engagement. Utilising the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework, peer-reviewed studies published from 2010 to 2025 were located through searches in Scopus, Web of Science, the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Academic Search Ultimate, and Google Scholar. Twenty qualifying papers were analysed using the PICO (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) framework to establish inclusion criteria and evaluate their outcomes. The analysis concludes that social media platforms serve to market resources, facilitate real-time contact, and cultivate collaborative learning environments. However, obstacles such as inconsistent adoption, inadequate staff training, and deficiencies in institutional policies hinder uniform implementation. The synthesis delineates effective strategies, encompassing precise platform selection, creation of interactive content, and interdepartmental collaboration. The study provides valuable insights for library professionals and policymakers aiming to maximise the benefits of social media integration while confronting challenges in higher education by aggregating global evidence.

Singh, J. & Sandhu, G.K. (2026). University libraries are experiencing a profound transition as digital services evolve to become more sophisticated, data-driven, and user-centric. This study offers a thorough, analytics-based synthesis of research on user satisfaction with enhanced digital library services in academic libraries. It delineates the evolution of digital libraries from conventional automated systems to intelligent service ecosystems and systematically examines empirical evidence on the impact of emerging technologies on user experiences. The study utilises known theoretical frameworks from information systems and library science to identify critical factors of user happiness, such as service quality, system usability, personalisation, trust, transparency, and ethical considerations. The paper presents an integrated analysis of survey-based studies, usage analytics, and mixed-methods research, emphasising methodological trends, regional and disciplinary variations, and ongoing challenges, including algorithmic bias, privacy concerns, digital literacy gaps, and infrastructural limitations. The results demonstrate the importance of analytics-driven assessment and accountable governance in aligning sophisticated digital library services with user expectations and academic requirements. The paper concludes by delineating future research avenues and providing theoretical, practical, and policy implications to facilitate evidence-based advancement of intelligent digital library services in higher education.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To investigate Information Seeking Behaviour of the users in degree college libraries of different colleges in Hooghly district.
- To determine how frequently the users make use of several information sources in degree college libraries of different colleges in Hooghly district.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research methodology refers to the organised strategy a researcher employs to conduct an investigation. It offers a systematic and coherent strategy for tackling a research issue. A methodology outlines the researcher's approach to data collection and analysis, ensuring that the results are precise, reliable, and aligned with the study's aims. It delineates the type of data to be collected, the sources from which it will be obtained, and the methodologies utilised for its acquisition and analysis.

Research Method: Quantitative Research

Study Area: Hooghly district of West Bengal

Primary Data:

This study employs primary data obtained from students of 20 degree colleges of Hooghly District.

Sampling and Sample Size:

Sampling: This research has utilised a simple random sampling technique.

Sample Size: 500

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

I. General Information:

1. **Gender:**

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Numbers of Respondents	Percentages of Respondents (%)
Male	300	60
Female	200	40
Other	0	0
Total	500	100

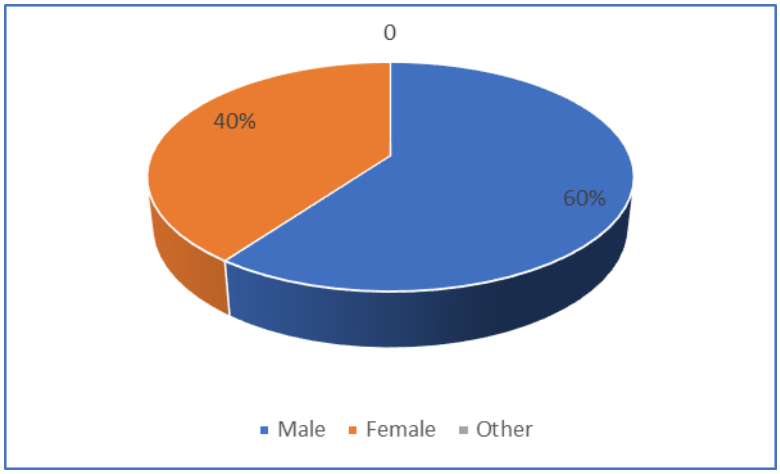

Fig. 1 : Gender of Respondents

From the above table and Graph, it is observed that the male respondents were 60 and the female respondents were 40%.

2. **Age Group :**

Table 2: Age Group of Respondents

Age Group (in years)	Numbers of Respondents	Percentages of Respondents (%)
18–20 years	250	50
21–23 years	250	50
Total	500	100

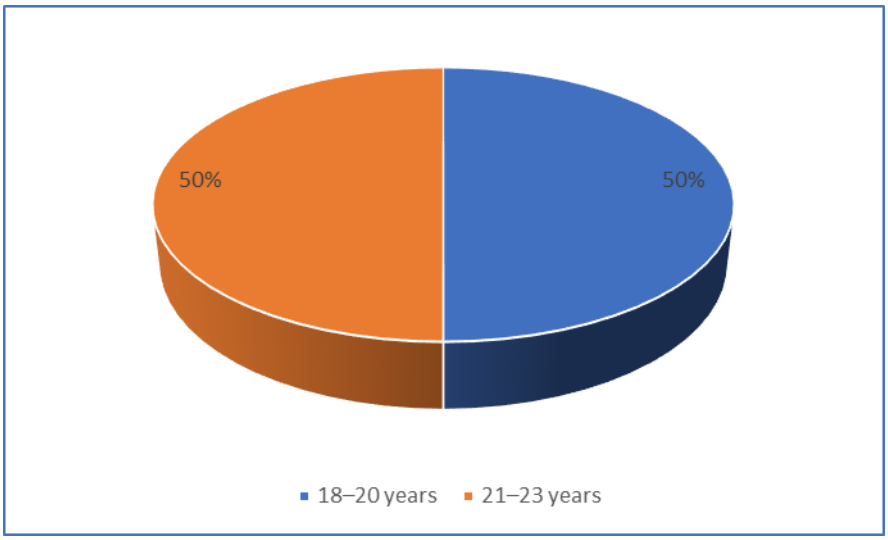

Fig. 2 : Age Group of the Respondents

From the above table and Graph, it is observed that 50% of the total respondents belong to the age group 18–20 years and the remaining belong to the age group 21-23 years.

II. RESEARCH SPECIFIC INFORMATION:

3. Faculty-wise distribution of Respondents

Table 3: Faculty-wise distribution of Respondents

Faculty-wise distribution of Respondents	Numbers of Respondents	Percentages of Respondents (%)
Arts	200	40
Science	200	40
Commerce	100	20
Total	500	100

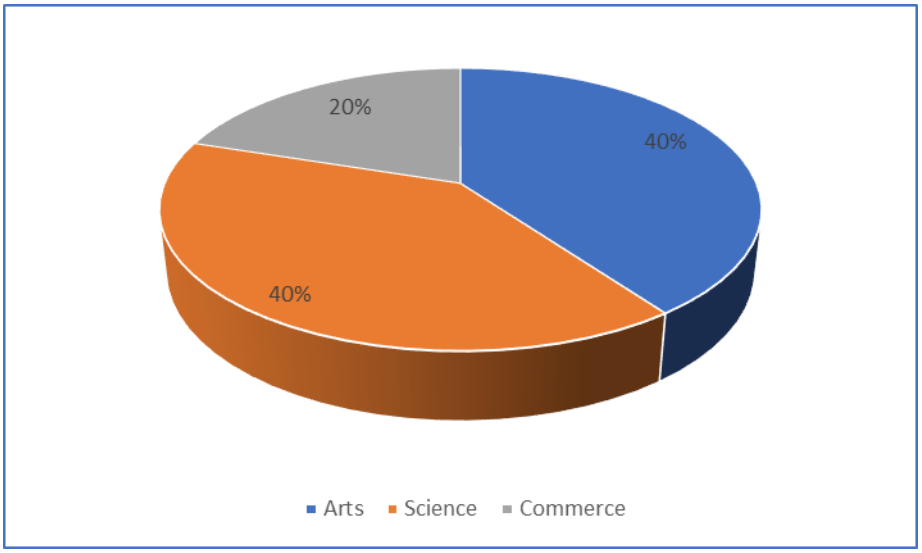

Fig. 3 : Faculty-wise distribution of the Respondents

From the table and graph above, it is observed that 40% of the total respondents belong to the Arts Faculty, 40% to the Science Faculty, and the remaining 20% to the Commerce Faculty.

4. Library Membership

Table 4: Registered Members of College Library

Registered Members of College Library	Numbers of Respondents	Percentages of Respondents (%)
Yes	500	100
No	0	0
Total	500	100

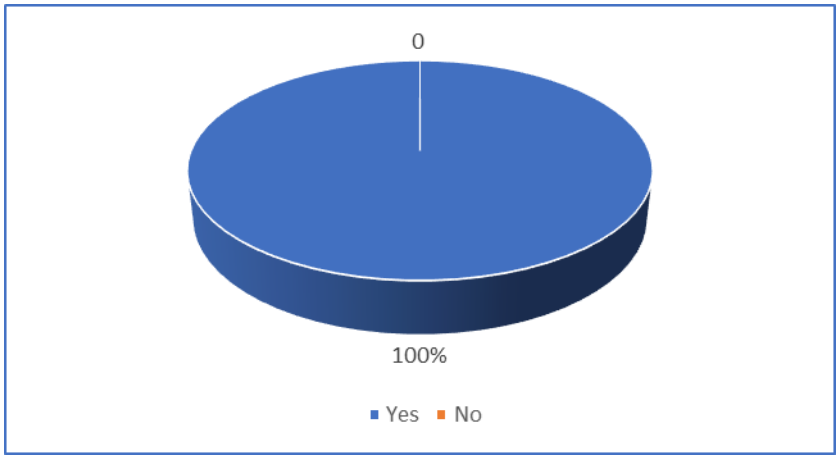

Fig. 4: Registered Members of College Library

From the above data, it is clear that all respondents are Registered Members of the College Library

5. Use of College Libraries:

Table 5 : Use of College Library

Use of College Library	Numbers of Respondents	Percentages of Respondents (%)
Less than 1 Year	100	20
1-2 Years	200	40
2-3 Years	200	40
Total	500	100

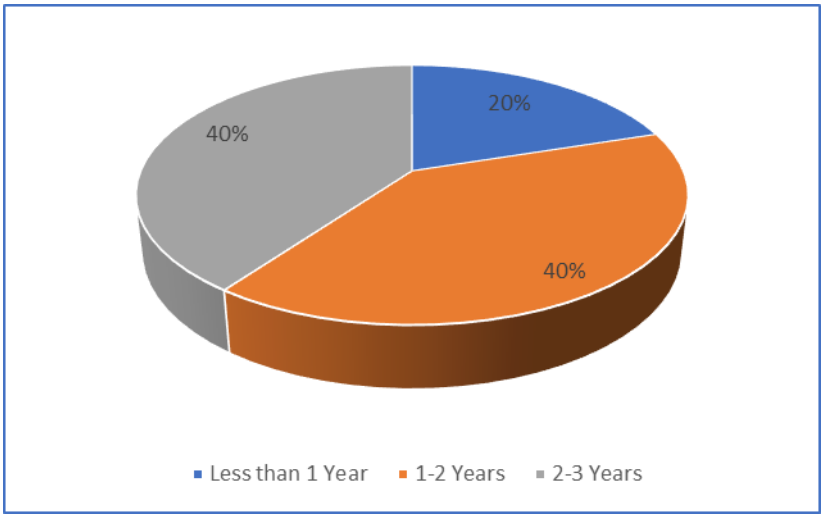

Table 5 : Use of College Library

From the above data, it is clear that 20% of respondents have been using the college library for less than 1 Year, 40% for 1-2 years, and the remaining 40% for 2-3 Years.

6. Frequency of Visiting College Library

Table 6 : Frequency of Visiting College Library

Frequency of Visiting College Library	Numbers of Respondents	Percentages of Respondents (%)
Daily	50	10
2–3 times a week	170	34
Once a week	200	40
2–3 times a month	50	10
Once a month	20	4
Rarely	10	2
Total	500	100

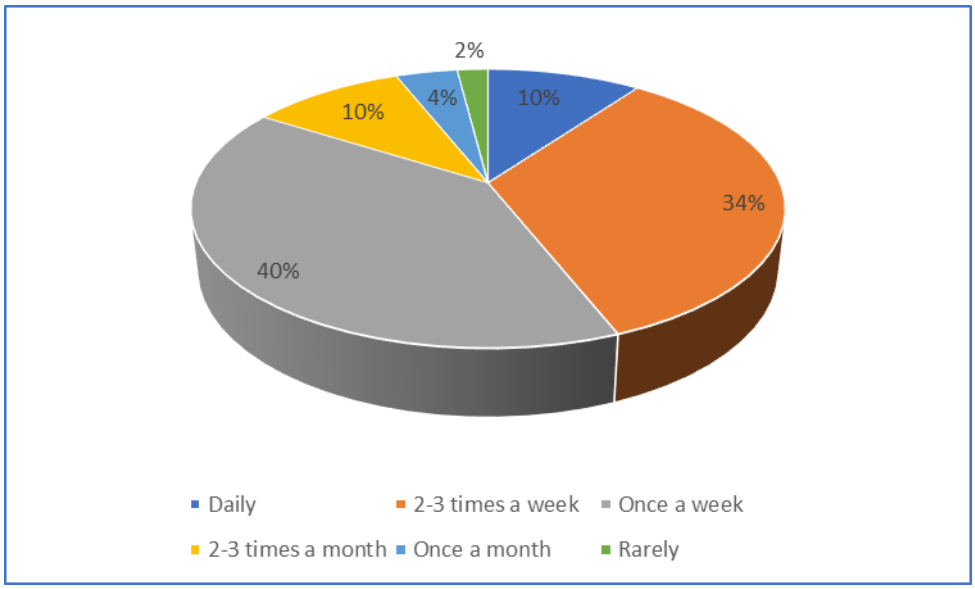

Table 6 : Frequency of Visiting College Library

From the above data, it is clear that 10% of total respondents are visiting the college library daily, 34% are visiting 2–3 times a week, 40% are visiting once a week, 10% are visiting 2-3 times a week, 4% are visiting once a week, and 2% are visiting rarely.

7. **Time spent in the library during each visit**

Table 7 : Time spent in the library during each visit

Time spent in the library during each visit	Numbers of Respondents	Percentages of Respondents (%)
Less than 30 minutes	50	10
30 minutes-1 hours	200	40

1-2 hours	100	20
2-3 hours	100	20
More than 3 hours	50	10
Total	500	100

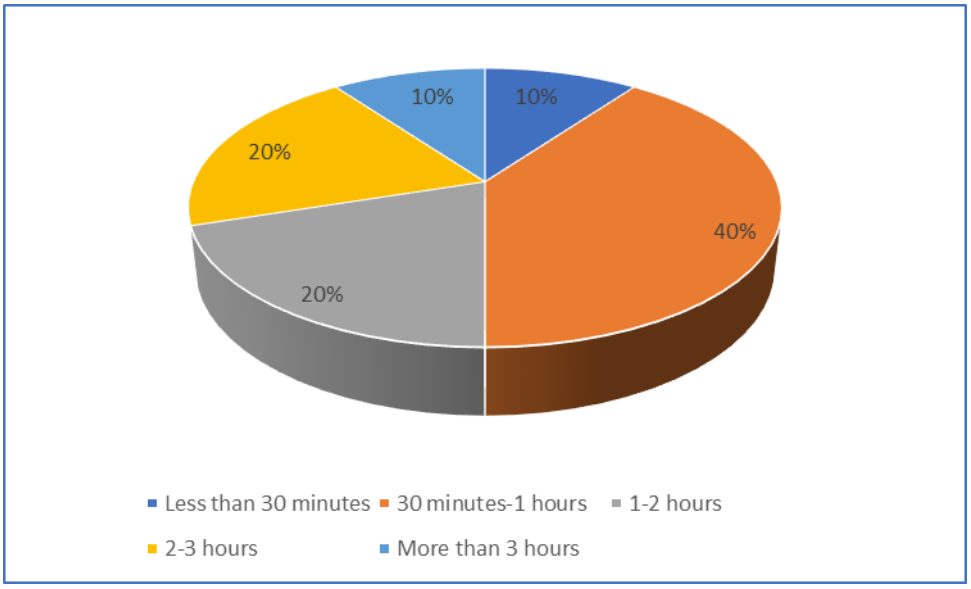

Table 7 : College Library

From the above data, it is clear that 10% of the total respondents spent less than 30 minutes in the college library, 40% spent 30 minutes to 1 hour, 20% spent 1-2 hours, 20% spent 2-3 hours and 10% spent more than 3 hours.

8. Usually visiting Time in the library

Table 8 : Usually visiting Time in the library

Usually visiting Time in the library	**Numbers of Respondents**	**Percentages of Respondents (%)**
Before classes	50	10
During free periods	200	40
After classes	100	20
During examination periods	50	10
Whenever required	100	20
Total	500	100

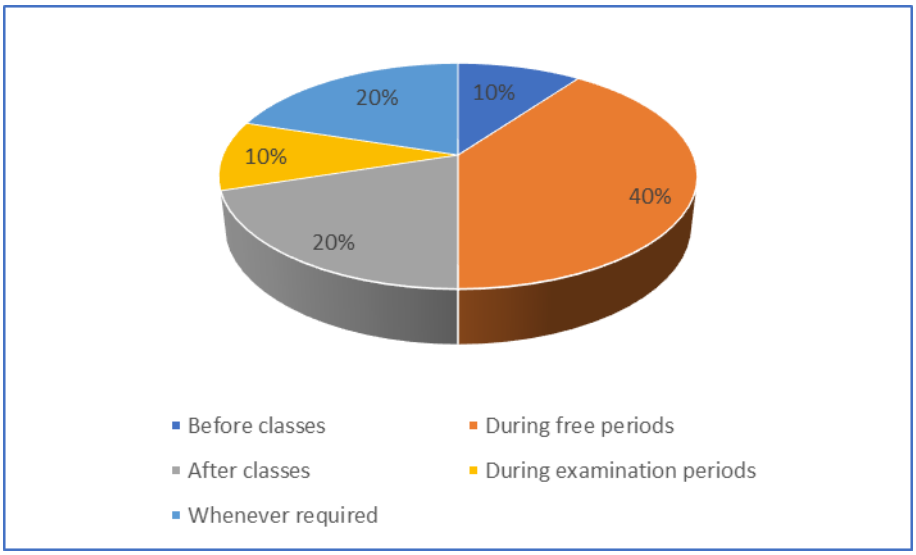

Fig. 8 : Usually visiting Time in the library

From the above data, it is clear that 10% of the total respondents visit the college library before classes, 40% during free periods, 20% after classes, 10% during the examination period, and 20% whenever required.

9. Purposes of Visiting Library:

Table 9 : Purposes of Visiting Library

Purposes of Visiting Library	Numbers of Respondents	Percentages of Respondents (%)
Borrowing Books	150	30
Reading Books/Newspapers/Magazines	100	20
Assignment/Project work	50	10
Using Digital/Electronic Resources	200	40
Total	500	100

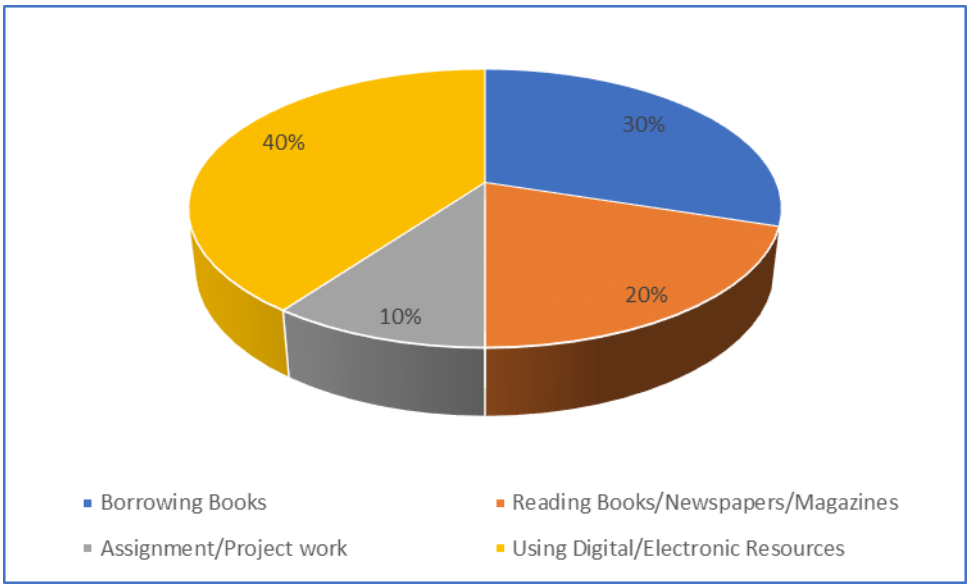

Fig. 9 : Purposes of Visiting Library

As per the data, the purposes of visiting library are Borrowing Books, Reading Books/Newspapers/Magazines, Assignment/Project work, and use of Digital/Electronic Resources.

10. Preferences for Studying in the Library Rather than at Home

Table 10 : Preferences for Studying in the Library Rather than at Home

Preference for studying in the library rather than at home	Numbers of Respondents	Percentages of Respondents (%)
Always	50	10
Often	150	30
Sometimes	100	20
Rarely	200	40
Never	0	0
Total	500	100

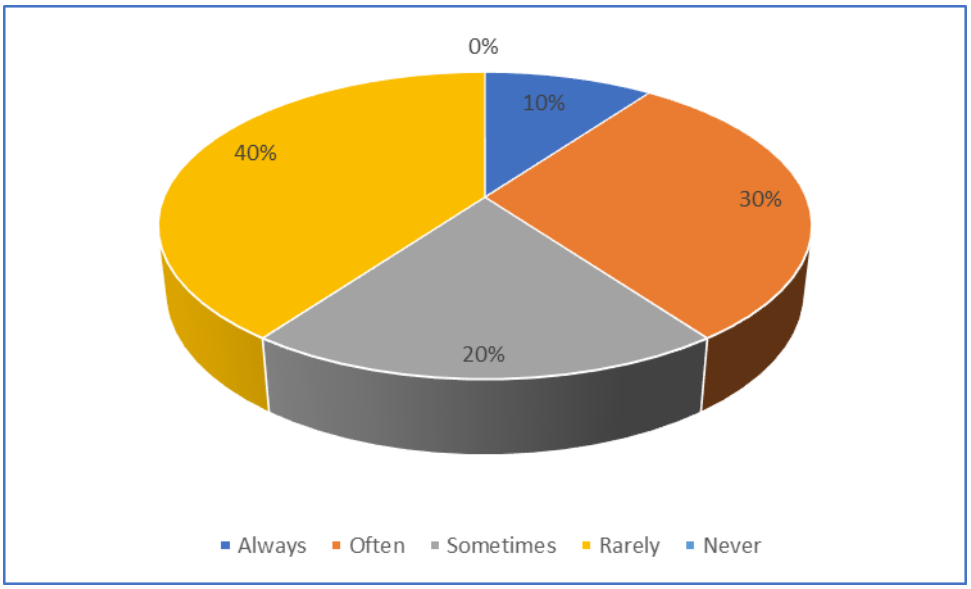

Fig. 10 : Preferences for Studying in the Library Rather than at Home

As per the data, 10%, 30%, 20%, and 40% of the total respondents prefer to study in the library rather than at home and are Always, Often, Sometimes, and Rarely, respectively.

11. Frequency of Borrowing/Reading Books or Materials from the Library

Table 11 : Frequency of Borrowing/Reading Books or Materials from the Library

Frequency of Borrowing/Reading Books or Materials from the Library	Numbers of Respondents	Percentages of Respondents (%)
Very frequently	120	24
Frequently	200	40
Occasionally	120	24
Rarely	60	12
Never	0	0
Total	500	100

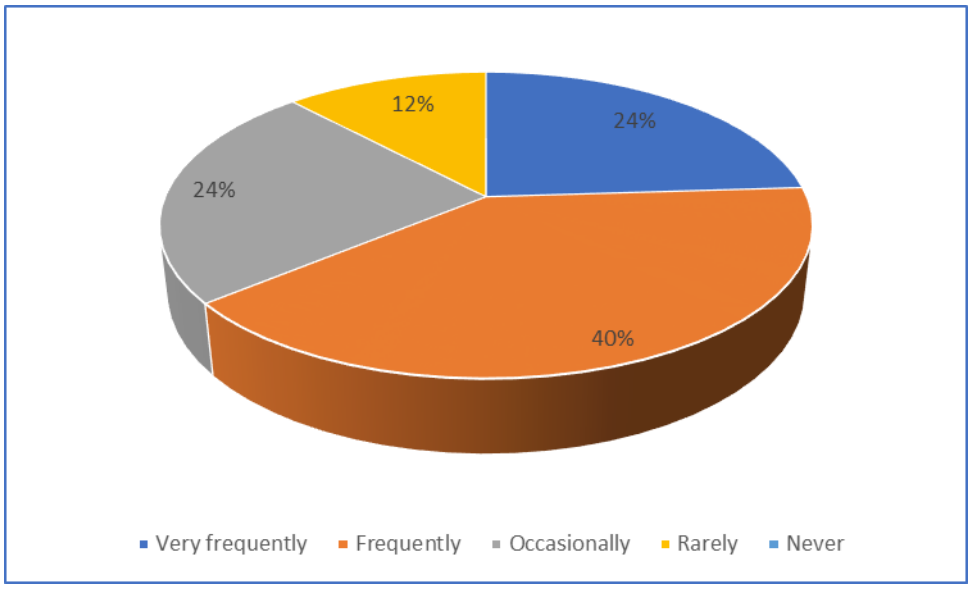

Fig. 11 : Frequency of Borrowing/Reading Books or Materials from the Library

As per the data, 24%, 40%, 24% and 12% of the total respondents Borrowing Books/Materials from the Library- Very frequently, Frequently, Occasionally and Rarely, respectively.

12. Numbers of Books borrowed at a time

Table 12 : Numbers of Books borrowed at a time

Numbers of Books borrowed at a time	Numbers of Respondents	Percentages of Respondents (%)
1	250	50
2	250	50
3	0	0
4	0	0
More than 4	0	0
Total	500	100

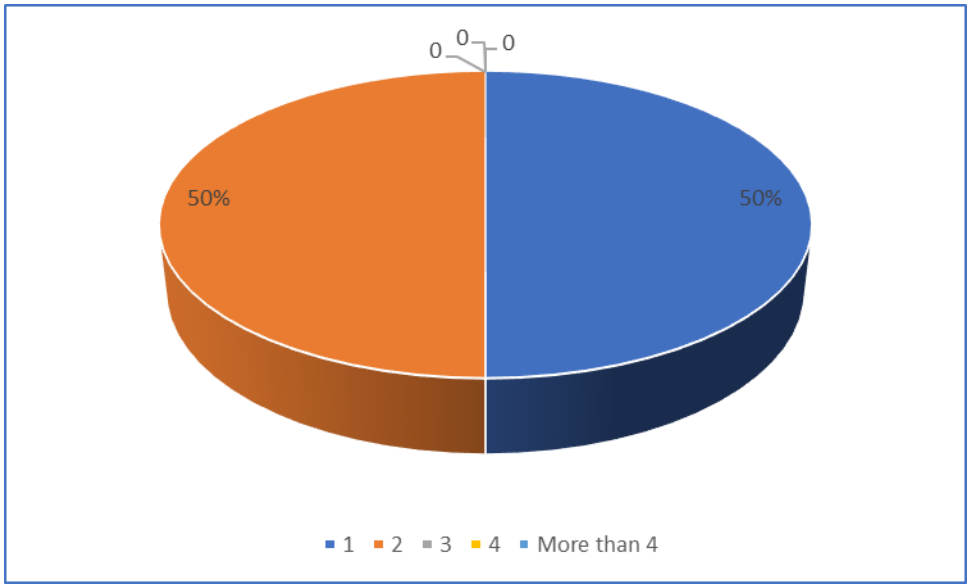

Fig. 12 : Numbers of Books borrowed at a time

As per the data, all respondents borrow at a time 1 or 2 books from library.

13. Information Requirement inside the Library

Table 13 : Information Requirement inside the Library

Information Requirement inside the Library	Numbers of Respondents	Percentages of Respondents (%)
Daily	50	10
Several times a week	150	30
Weekly	100	20
Occasionally	200	40
Never	0	0
Total	500	100

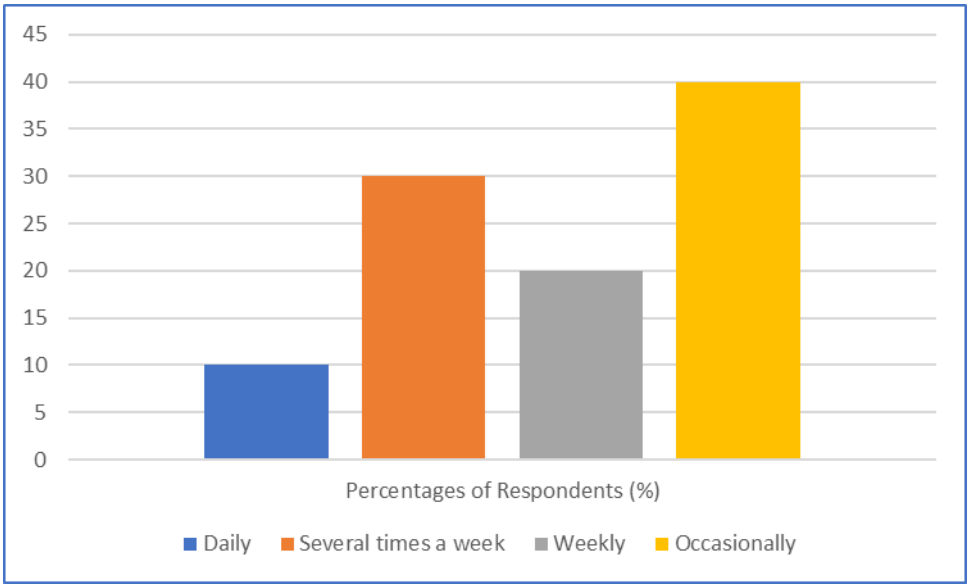

Fig. 13 : Information Requirement inside the Library

According to the data, 10% of respondents require information Daily, 30% require Several times a week, 20% require Weekly, and 40% require Occasionally from the library.

14. Device Primarily Used to Access Electronic Information

Table 14 : Device Primarily Used to Access Electronic Information

Device Primarily Used to Access Electronic Information	Numbers of Respondents	Percentages of Respondents (%)
Smartphone	120	24
Laptop	200	40
Desktop Computer	100	20
Tablet	50	10
Other	30	6
Total	500	100

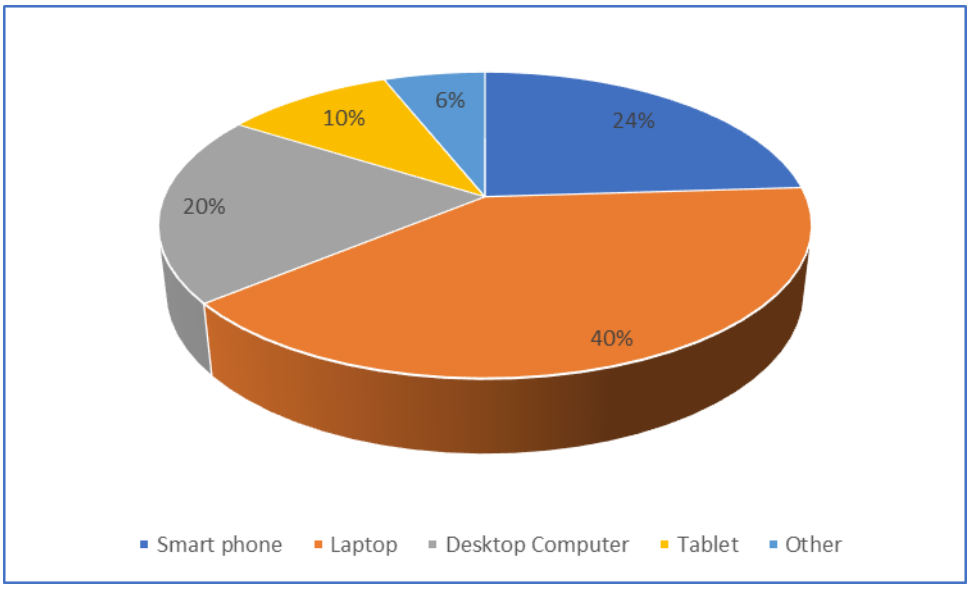

Fig.14: Device Primarily Used to Access Electronic Information

As per the data, 24%, 40%, 20%, 10%, and 6% of the total respondents use Smartphone, laptop, desktop computer, tablet, and other devices, respectively.

CONCLUSIONS:

The study demonstrates that users visit libraries for multiple purposes, including reading textbooks and reference materials, preparing for examinations, completing academic assignments, consulting newspapers and periodicals, accessing electronic resources, and acquiring information beyond the prescribed curriculum. The pattern of library use, however, varies according to users' academic requirements, awareness of available resources, frequency of library visits, accessibility of information sources, and familiarity with modern information and communication technologies.

One of the important observations emerging from the study is that books continue to remain a significant information source for users of degree college libraries. At the same time, the growing availability of digital information has influenced users' information-seeking habits. Students increasingly depend on the Internet, online databases, e-books, e-journals, institutional websites, and search engines for obtaining information. This changing behaviour suggests that academic libraries can no longer function solely as repositories of printed documents. They need to develop themselves as integrated information centres where print and electronic resources are made available in a coordinated and user-friendly manner.

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