

Resource Constraints And Service Delivery Problems In Public Libraries: A Study Of Funding, Staffing, And Technology Gaps In The Telangana Context

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Abstract

Public libraries have a crucial role to play in the education, literacy and social inclusion through free and fair access to information. Public libraries in Telangana are still relevant to a variety of urban and rural communities, but it seems to be the inability to provide efficient services due to the challenge put by resources that affect the libraries. Based solely on secondary data sources, the present study can analyze funding, staffing, and technology gaps impacting the delivery of library services to the population in the region of Telangana to investigate the problem, which is based on the current literature on the subject using a descriptive and analytical research design. The analysis is aimed at the identification of recurrent trends associated with the financial provisions, accessibility of human resources and information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure in the varying ranks of public library system. Thematic and content analysis procedures are used to investigate tendencies and policy implications without maintaining that there is a direct cause and effect relationship. It has shown that libraries in Telangana are underfunded, and lack professionally trained library staff, and that there is a huge disparity in ICT infrastructure especially in mandal and rural levels. These issues are all deeply connected and add to the constraint of development in collection, the upkeep of the infrastructure, the capacity of the staff, and the delivery of digital services. Urban-rural differences also determine the availability and the quality of the library services within the state. The research highlights the fact that the policy needs to be developed as an integrated tool that will support financial resources, development of human resources, and technological advances at the same time. Through the synthesis of existing evidence, the research will add to the contextualization of the public library issues in Telangana as well as provide policy-informed insights into the sustainability of enhancing the public library services.

Keywords: Public Libraries, Resource Constraints, Library Funding and Staffing, Technology Gaps

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I. Introduction

Background of the Study

The role of the public libraries in the state of Telangana is significant as the libraries can be considered as the valuable community facilities which provide free information access and facilitate educational, cultural and social growth in the urban and rural regions. These libraries are built as a result of state-based programs and lead to the promotion of literacy, lifelong learning, and social inclusion, especially in the economically and socially disadvantaged groups (Sarkar, 2019; Reddy et al., 2025). Systemic to a state with high rates of urbanization and existing digital disparities, public libraries remain supportive in terms of knowledge access and maintaining local culture and promoting community participation.

At the national and worldwide levels, libraries of the public are now more likely to become aligned with greater development objectives like Digital India and the Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the United Nations which insists on inclusive and equitable quality education and the acquisition of digital skills. In this dynamic policy context, libraries must respond to the evolving information demands and respond to the structural and resource based problems.

Statement of the Problem

Although it is acknowledged that these institutions have a social and educational topicality, even public libraries in Telangana seem to have some resource-related limitations, which impact the extent and quality of service provision. National and regional studies on Indian public libraries offer evidence which

indicates that small financial allocations are usually linked with problems in the form of old collections, poor infrastructure and limited service growth.

Moreover, the problem of staffing, such as the lack of professionally trained staff and absence of the possibility of the on-going professional growth, is also reported to precondition the effectiveness of the library operations. Other technological constraints, including lack of equal access to internet connection, deficiency of digital infrastructure, and inadequate access to e-resources, also influence the capacity to address the needs of contemporary users in the public libraries. All these issues imply that there is a necessity of a dedicated analysis of the manifestation of the funding, staffing, and technology gaps issues in the particular administrative and socio-economic setting of Telangana.

Purpose of the Study

This research is meant to investigate the issue of funding, staffing and technological gaps that influence the operations and service delivery of the public libraries in Telangana. The study will rely solely on the secondary data sources by trying to establish leading resource based limitations, as well as describing policy relevant factors that should be improved in order to enhance the sustainability and efficacy of the libraries services provided to the people of the state.

Research Questions

The research questions that will guide the study are as follows:

What are the reported funding-related issues concerning the public libraries in Telangana?

What are the impacts of issues related to staffing on the operations and provision of services in the state public libraries?

What are the technological gaps in public libraries in Telangana?

Significance of the Study

This research is relevant to policy makers, administrators and planners of libraries in Telangana who have a desire to make the system of libraries stronger. The study provides information which can be used to reform policies, plan the strategy, and develop special interventions by synthesizing the available secondary evidence regarding funding, staffing, and technology-related hurdles. The response to these resource limitations can increase the role of the public libraries in helping the state to promote education, literacy development, and social inclusion.

II. Literature Review

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The provision of the service by the public libraries is usually studied and conceptualised using the models that focus on equal distribution of resources, user-focused service and balanced distribution of the digital resources with printed material. These models think of libraries both as information stores as well as as social institutions promoting education, inclusion and community building. The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto emphasizes the need to provide a strong legislative support, continuous public financing and institutional encouragement in an effort to provide knowledge and information services to people universally. It also highlights the necessity of libraries keeping up with technological change as they overcome structural inequalities in the availability of resources (Barman and Lahkar, 2024).

To add to this point of view, the current management models emphasize the significance of focusing on technical, economic, and institutional aspects at the same time to keep library functioning effective. These types of structures believe shortcomings in a single logistical domain, e.g. funding or staffing, tend to interact with technological constraints, and influence the overall service capacity and responsiveness (Mammadov and Mahammadli, 2025). These theoretical methods offer an effective perspective through which the constraints on resources and the impact on the services of local libraries in certain regional settings can be checked.

Global and National Perspectives on Library Resource Challenges

The research allows inferring that on the world scale, the experience of public libraries tends to be better in developed areas because of the ongoing state funding, the increased effectiveness of legislative frameworks and enhanced digital provision. Comparatively, the study on the development countries show recurrent issues of sufficient funding, infrastructural development, and technological upgrading (Barman and Lahkar, 2024). Instead of making specific comparisons of numbers, the literature on this topic occurs in broad gestures that indicate that inequality in the level of expenditure and policy backing is a factor that contributes to unequal service delivery across nations.

In the Indian case, a number of studies reflect long-lasting problems like the lack of governmental investment in it, social isolation, and the fact that the state still uses the silver-gray legislative system to manage

libraries (Balaji, Vinay and S, 2018). These conditions are also influenced by the increased pace of technological change and the growing demands that emphasize the digital access. Although national policies and guidelines focus on digital inclusion and education, the gaps on infrastructure and digital literacy remain in rural and semi-urban regions, which affect the access and usability of the services of a publicly available library.

Studies on Funding Problems in Libraries

Only a small amount of literature can identify inadequate and inconsistent funding as the main problem of the public libraries. It has been observed that financial limitations tend to be linked to scanty collection growth, slow infrastructure renovation, technological retrofit constraints, and diminished staff development and growth (Mammadov and Mahammadli, 2025). The extreme dependence on state or municipal budgets may additionally restrict long-term planning and digitization and modern library systems investment (Pogula and Khandal, 2025).

Researchers in the Indian environment have noted that insecure and inconsistent patterns of funding are connected to the decreasing utilization of libraries and lack of innovation in providing services, despite continued free access to the provision of basic services (Barman and Lahkar, 2024). Consistent and stronger predictable funding mechanisms with rational policy frameworks are thus being noted in the literature.

Staffing-Related Problems

Another common theme that is used in literature on public libraries is the issue of staffing. The studies indicate a lack of professionally trained and technologically competent library staff, especially in the institutions in the public sector (Mammadov and Mahammadli, 2025; Pogula and Khandal, 2025). Little exposure to digital products, software to manage libraries and model the service to its users is reported to impact on operational efficiency and responsiveness of services.

Besides, other researches identify staff motivation issues, user interaction, and a lack of opportunities to continually develop professionally (Sarkar, 2019). The literature continually recommends that professional curricula should be updated, in service training intensified as well as the working conditions should be improved to create capacity in the staff and support the quality public library services.

Technology Gaps in Public Libraries

Another important issue in the research in the field of the public library is the technological constraints. The existing literature indicates disparity in the use of information and communication technologies, where numerous libraries are confronted by issues in the form of obsolete equipment, unavailability of internet connectivity, and poor digital access (Sarkar, 2019; Mammadov and Mahammadli, 2025; Pogula and Khandal, 2025). These limitation addresses the access, usability of e-resources, online services and the digital literacy programmes.

It has also been researched that the differences in the ICT infrastructure and familiarity staff help to expand the digital gap between urban and rural libraries systems (Rao and V, 2022). These gaps have implications on the ability of libraries to serve as a centre of community information, as well as the position long libraries play in sustaining the wider activities of digital inclusion (Reddy et al., 2025).

Gaps in Existing Research

Although the available literature can offer useful information on funding, staffing, and technology-related issues in Indian public libraries, a large part of it is dedicated to the nationwide trends or particular states, e.g., West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh (Sarkar, 2019; Rao and V, 2022). Few systematic efforts have been done so far in examining these concerns in terms of an administrative, socio-economic, and policy environment in Telangana. Specifically, the analysis of urban-rural inequalities at a local level, policy patterns at the state level, and the particular resource-constrained situations at the region level is limited. Such a gap filled by secondary-data analysis will help to achieve a more refined picture of the challenges in the libraries in the state of Telangana.

III. Methodology

Research Design

The research design that is to be adopted in this research is a descriptive and analytical research design using all the secondary data to understand the gaps in funding, staffing and technology in the libraries of Telangana that is related to the public libraries. The descriptive element defines the current situation of the public library resource, organizational formations and issues of services as indicated by the available literature. Instead of establishing specific causal links, the analytical component is concerned with determining such recurring patterns, relationships, and policy implications that manifest themselves in the analyzed data.

Through the synthesis of information used by various secondary sources into a complete overview of the resources constraints facing public libraries, the study avoids the use of primary data collected in the course of carrying on the study. The given methodology is suitable when the research is focused on policy, which aims at synthesizing current findings, evaluating systemic concerns, and making context-specific conclusions based on the socio-economic and administrative context of Telangana.

Sources of Secondary Data

The range of sources where secondary data were received was with respectable and publically available sources. To have an idea about administration of libraries, funding patterns, state of infrastructure and coverage of services received, government documents such as reports published by the Telangana state library Directorate were referred to. The Census of India publications had been modified to provide demographic and contextual data (specifically, in regards to the level of literacy, urban to rural distribution, and access to digital facilities).

Moreover, peer-reviewed scholarly research papers, policy reports, and publications published by national and international agencies were also accessed in order to place the Telangana experience in the context of the wider debate on the development of the public library. Non-governmental organization reports gave information concerning the engagement and inclusion related to the work in the community, and the received media reports were chosen to embody the current trends and the issues reported in the sphere of the work of the public library.

Data Collection Methods

A systematic review of appropriate documents and datasets was used to collect data. Sources were determined by systematized keyword search, and such terms were used: public libraries in Telangana, library funding, staffing issues, and digital infrastructure in libraries. The criteria on inclusion focused on the relevance to Indian public libraries, most recent publications dated significantly after 2010, relevance to the Telangana or similar region setting.

The screened documents would be based on credibility, relevancy and accessibility. Funding, staffing, and technology information that are important were downloaded and organized thematically to enable similar sources to be easily compared and synthesized.

Data Analysis

Content and thematic analysis were applied to the statics of data collected. Thematic analysis helped to highlight the themes that included resource limits, including the lack of funds, human resources problems, and technological infrastructure gaps. These themes were then discussed through various sources in order to find out some common patterns and point of intersection.

This process was facilitated through content analysis, which looked at the frequency that a particular issue was addressed in all documents and also a qualitative analysis of policy orientations and lapses in implementation. A cross-checking of the result of the various data streams contributed to the authority of the analysis. Interpreted results were then applied to answer the research questions and came up with policy-relevant recommendations.

IV. Context: Public Libraries In Telangana

Overview of the Public Library System

Public library system in Telangana is hierarchically set in accordance with the administrative set up of the state, consisting of the state-level, district-level and mandal level libraries. The highest is the Telangana State Central Library at Hyderabad that serves as the node in terms of coordination and policy execution, professional advice and training. District Central Libraries- they are the centers created on the district level and help to provide reference services, collection development, and limited cooperation between libraries. On the grassroots level, the basic reading materials and simple outreach services are availed at mandatory and branch libraries which serve the local communities and especially in the rural and semi-urban realms (Mammadov and Mahammadli, 2025).

The presence of this tiered structure has been as a result of historic trends that have been shaped by colonial forms of administration and later reforms after independence. Although this system is meant to ensure equitable usage of information among the regions, research on the topic involves that there are distinctions at various levels of the library network regarding implementation, resource, and service capacity differences (Barman and Lahkar, 2024).

The policy framework of the operation of the public libraries in Telangana is mostly based on the Andhra Pradesh Public Libraries Act, 1960, according to which the libraries are run to date, as the state was divided in 2014. This is further complemented by the state level rules and guidelines, and national support

funding sources including the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation. The persistence of earlier legislations on the delivery of books and newspapers, such as the Delivery of Books and Newspapers Act of 1954, has been reported to impair the current resource development and modernisation activities despite the focus on universal service through the use of international policy instruments, including the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (Balaji, Vinay and S, 2018; Barman and Lahkar, 2024).

Demographic and Socioeconomic Context

Telangana is a state with a mixed demographic and socio-economic structure that determines the level of demand of the services provided by the libraries that are publicly operated. Changes in literacy rates and access to educational resources depending on the urban and rural data are depicted by census-based data, which are overall expressions of inequality in the state. The fast process of urbanization and the one-sided socio-economic development have resulted in the greater demand of the inclusive system of the educational support, especially in the rural region, the female population, young generations, and the marginalized groups of people.

In these respects, the role of supporting not only the needs in reading and references but also the digital literacy, in addition to the vocational learning as well as the access to the information technologies is becoming increasingly required of the public libraries. Nevertheless, available studies indicate that infrastructural and IT disparities still affect the ability of the library to meet these expectations, especially in non-metropolitan areas (Rao and V, 2022).

Existing Initiatives and Plans

There are many national and state-level programs that offer a favourable policy environment to the development of the public libraries in Telangana. Programmes linked to Digital India include the development of digital infrastructure and the availability of information online, whereas others, including the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan is aimed at increasing the field of basic digital literacy in the countryside. The state has also been doing modernization in the state library of Telangana state library directorate under grants and support offered by Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation such as digitization, automation and training of staff.

Secondly, the programs of organizing community informational centres and providing more access to electronic materials are also implemented to enhance the interaction between users. However, research shows that the use of information and communication technologies varies among the spatial locations of libraries, with inconsistencies in the infrastructure preparedness and human capacity (Pogula and Khandal, 2025; Reddy et al., 2025). The latest policy debates and planning reports stress the necessity to make e-resource delivery and capability building efforts more effective to resuscitate the usage of the public libraries and make the services more relevant (Sarkar, 2019).

V. Findings And Discussion

Funding Constraints

Patterns in budget allocations

Secondary sources reveal that the Telangana government has had a poor increase in the financing of public libraries in the past years. There are available reports that report that allocations are usually biased towards libraries in large urban centres, whereas branches in rural and mandal levels tend to have relatively small financial support. These trends can be seen as part of the general trends in the public sector funding priorities in various Indian states.

Comparative perspectives

Comparable in the context of the national discourse on how society usually fund the public library, the amount of funding assigned to the public libraries in Telangana is also relatively limited. Investigations carried out nationally, observe that the public library allocations are still very low compared to other sectors that involve education, including school education that has much better and consistent budget support. This underinvestment of a relative kind imposes limits of structure on library building and on growth of service offerings.

Implications for collections and infrastructure

Restricted financial capacity is normally linked with difficulties of preserving current collections, developing the physical infrastructure, and refurbishing routine maintenance requirements. The secondary literature indicates that a number of public libraries still depend on older collections and facilities that can impact on their appeal and usefulness especially to younger generation and digitally oriented learners.

Discussion

The challenges with funding that are identified in Telangana are consistent with the trends seen in literature on the topic of Indian public libraries, in general, in which inadequate and irregular funding is often associated with lagging behind in modernization and limited access to new technologies and digital resources (Mammadov and Mahammadli, 2025; Pogula and Khandal, 2025). The literature also states that to enhance the idea of sustainability of the services provided by the libraries at a community level, the implementation of the means of funding that would be both stable and predictable at the policy level is necessary (Barman and Lahkar, 2024).

Staffing Challenges

Availability of qualified personnel

According to secondary evidence, there are high levels of shortages of professionally qualified library staff in many public libraries in Telangana and the levels of staffing shortage are worse at the mandal and rural levels. In some instances, the regular operations of libraries are operated by individuals who do not have much formal education on library and information science.

Recruitment, training, and retention issues

Available literature suggests that the recruitment exercise is not always standardized, and the chances of in-service training and growth are scarce. Poor compensation and the limited career advancement opportunities have also been pointed out to have an impact on the retention of staff in the public library system.

Implications for service delivery

The shortage of personnel is often related to a decrease in service duration, a lack of user service, and a lag in the process of cataloging and categorisation of materials. The previous studies on user feedback indicate that there are issues of poor responsiveness of the service to the user and the lack of guidance especially when dealing with digital services and information services.

Discussion

The results are indicative of greater trends in the country, where a lack of skilled and technologically qualified staffing remains a problem in the effectiveness of the work done by the public libraries (Mammadov and Mahammadli, 2025; Pogula and Khandal, 2025). The literature presents the necessity of the organized recruitment, increased training programmes, and better professional incentives to empower the quality of service and motivation of the staff (Sarkar, 2019).

Technology Gaps

Availability of ICT facilities

According to secondary sources, there is a great degree of disparity in the access of the information and communication technology among the Telangana state-owned libraries. Basic computing facilities and intermittent access to the internet are more common in urban libraries than in most rural and branch libraries, which are reportedly lacking in sufficient ICT.

Digital literacy services and use of e-resources

Even though national digital platforms and electronic resources exist, their use in the public libraries seems disproportionate. Such obstacles as the low connectivity rates, the lack of equipment, low staff training are contributing to the accessibility and promotion of the digital services.

Adoption of library management systems

Using of the library integrated library management system and automation tools is still a small aspect in most public libraries. Challenges that are often reported as barriers to implementation are infrastructure preparedness, power supply and technical expertise.

Urban–rural digital divide

The analyzed literature sources all contribute to the expansion of digital divide between urban and rural library contexts. The disparity in ICT access and capacity to access digital services predetermines unequal access to information and opportunities to learn in different regions (Rao and V, 2022).

Discussion

The presence of technological disparities in Telangana reflects bigger issues in the Indian public libraries as a lack of infrastructure and skills limits the success of digital inclusion efforts (Pogula and Khandal,

2025; Reddy et al., 2025). The national digital programmes can have disproportionate effects on the ground without similar investment in infrastructure, training and maintenance.

Synthesis of Findings

Combining and juxtaposing, the results indicate that funding, staffing, and technology-related issues in the public libraries are significant issues that are closely related. Staffing capacity is affected by financial constraints, which inhibit investments in digital infrastructure; human resource shortages by the adoption and proper use of technology. The urban-rural gaps and gaps in the implementation of policies also influence these problems and lead to the unequal service provision in the entire state (Balaji, Vinay and S, 2018).

Literature suggests that one of the solutions to these challenges is to have a composite policy which, in tandem, enhances financial proceeds, human resource, and technological infrastructure. This comprehensive approach is necessary to raise the levels of fair access to information, as well as the effectiveness of the services offered by the public libraries in the entire organization (Abu, Rafie and Mansor, 2024; Pogula and Khandal, 2025; Utekar, 2025).

VI. Policy Implications And Recommendations

For Government and State Library Authorities

This implies that there is demand to establish the public funding mechanisms of libraries in Telangana with greater strength and consistency, especially on the district and mandal levels. Options may be in the form of investigating specific budgetary allocations to promote development of libraries and proper distribution of resources between urban and rural libraries. An improved flow of finances would be able to help in developing collection systemsatically, improving infrastructure, and gradually modernizing services. The role of the library in ensuring that information can be accessed equally can further be strengthened by prioritizing the library funding according to educational, and digital inclusion policies at large.

For Library Administrators

A strategic human resource planning is one of the approaches that library administrators can consider to deal with the challenges associated with staffing. By means of the recruitment of professionally qualified staff on the regular basis and the organized in-service training programs being aimed at the digital tools and user-oriented services, the effectiveness of operations can be enhanced. The inclusion of non-monetary reward, career advance, and reward that depends on performance can also aid in better staff motivation and quality of service.

For Technology Integration

The research mentions the essentiality of the gradual investment in information and communication technologies at all tiers of the public library system. Some of the priority areas can be addressed by enhancing the internet accessibility, spreading access to the computers and digital resources, and implementing the library automation system gradually where possible. Similarly, the initiatives of digital literacy among underserved communities, including rural communities, young people, and women, can improve the efficient utilization of technology-facilitated library services and contribute to the lifelong learning goals.

For Communities and Non-Governmental Organizations

Incidentally, community involvement and partnership with non-government organisations may be supportive in enhancing the public libraries. Advocacy-based partnerships, volunteer recruitment, and additional mobilization of the resources might be used to raise the library's presence and utilization. Community based programs also may serve to help library services become more responsive to the local needs and reach out to them more comprehensively.

VII. Conclusion

Summary of Key Insights from Secondary Data

The paper, through secondary analysis, indicates that some of the prevailing issues that influence the work of the public libraries in Telangana are present. The literature review has shown that there are limitations associated with poor and disparate funding, the lack of professionally trained staff, and information and communication technology infrastructures especially in rural and mandal libraries. They are usually linked to the challenges in the maintenance of up-to-date collections, enhancement of physical facilities, and increased digital services. The disparity between the cities and the rural regions also influence the range and quality of library services and resources in the state.

General Evaluation of resource limitation as well as service delivery issues.

Collectively, the results provide indications that the issues of funding, staffing, and technological nature are strongly interconnected in the system of the public library. It happens that limitations in one area have a tendency to intersect with limitations in other areas that affect the overall service capacity and consistency. Although there exist initiatives of digital inclusion and educational development at the national level, the evidence reviewed indicates unequal implementation and different results at the local level. These observations highlight actions of organizing and contextualized policy responses in order to enhance the public library services in Telangana.

Areas for Future Research

The current research study may be expanded in the future by conducting longitudinal evaluation of policy and reform strategies to determine their long-term impacts on the development of the public libraries. Cross-state comparisons in India can offer more in-depth information on differences in the models of funding, various forms of governance, and the results of services. Besides this, secondary-data analyses would be supplemented by user-focused research aiming at understanding the modes of library use and library experience regarding digital services. Additional assessment of alternative funds and governance systems might also be included in the evidence-based solutions to the sustainable enhancement of the public libraries.

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