

Transforming Departmental Libraries into Community Knowledge Center: A Case Study of the Madhya Pradesh Council of Science and Technology Library, Bhopal

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Abstract: *The use of library resources is one of the challenges being faced by a number of departmental and special libraries due to changes in user needs, advances in technology, and non-public access. This research evaluates the available resources, services, and use of the Madhya Pradesh Council of Science and Technology (MPCST) Library, Bhopal, in order to develop a practical community library model. The methodology used for this purpose is that of a descriptive case study involving both primary and secondary sources of information. Primary information is gathered from a well-structured questionnaire distributed among 60 users of the library as well as interviewing professionals at the library. It is clear from the results that, while users are happy with the basic services offered by the library, the suggestions include developing the collection, providing research assistance, establishing collaborative zones, enhancing the environment of the library, and opening up the library to a wider community. In light of the results obtained, the study proposes a community library model characterized by inclusivity, technologically-driven services, community involvement, outreach programs, and evaluation. The suggested model presents a viable means of optimizing resource usage and turning departmental libraries into dynamic knowledge centers.*

Keywords: community library, Departmental library, MPCST library, User satisfaction, Library resource utilisation

1. Introduction

The primary role of libraries is to serve as a source for the organization, storage, and dissemination of information, fulfilling the purpose of supporting education, research, lifelong learning, and making good decisions based on reliable information. The sphere of activity that libraries used to deal with was making information resources available to users in an organized way. In addition, in view of the innovations caused by the development of information systems (IT), digital information resources, and user demands, libraries have to reconsider their role.

Despite these changes, a lot of specialised and public libraries still want to solve the problem of underutilised services and collections. A huge amount of money is spent on purchasing books, scientific articles, online databases, reference materials, and other technologies. But just a small percentage of the resources is used by library users. The reasons for this situation are strict access limitations, unavailability of memberships, poor advertising, insufficient access to the community, and lack of implementation of technological resources. This situation shows that it is time to change our approach and come up with effective methods to make the library's resources more popular.

This approach involves the creation of a community library model that will change the perspective of considering libraries as being more collection-oriented into becoming more community-oriented. While conventional departmental or special libraries have been oriented to a specific

population of users such as students, researchers, staff, government, and other professionals, the community library model is aimed at benefiting the maximum number of users, including the locals, independent researchers, businessmen, school children, among others. Thus, by increasing participation and reducing the barriers to accessing the library services, the usage of the available resources will become efficient.

The Madhya Pradesh Council of Science and Technology (MPCST), based in Bhopal, is one of the most prominent autonomous bodies that is dedicated to the promotion of science, technology, and innovations. This library possesses a rich collection of books related to science and technology, research papers, reference books, journals, government documents, and digital information sources. In view of the adequate infrastructure and the support offered by the institute, it is appropriate to conduct an analysis of the possibilities of implementing a community library at the MPCST Library.

The model presented looks at five interrelated dimensions: accessibility, inclusion, technological integration, user participation, and ongoing evaluation of library services. To put the model into practice requires a full understanding of the information needs of diverse users, removal of institutional and practical barriers to access, and design of innovative programs meant to motivate communities into action. In times of the age of AI, digitalisation, and rapid shifts in access to information, achieving efficient and sustainable use of library resources has become a priority.

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Libraries, therefore, must use adaptive management strategies and user-centered service models in their operations.

As part of this research, the MPCST Library has implemented a series of pilot initiatives and innovations to improve resource utilisation and expand its user base. Observations of the preliminary activities indicate favourable results regarding library membership at the library, the use of available library resources, and involvement of users in library activities. All of the above-mentioned initiatives served as the basis for the model of a community library which provides the principles of improving library services aimed at the development of scientific literacy, lifelong education, research potential, and public engagement. Moreover, researchers have managed to come up with a model that can be replicated by other special and departmental libraries that are interested in improving the use of resources and their further role in serving the community.

The MPCST Library is located on the ground floor of the MPCST building. It has a collection of more than 7,000 books and 7,800 bound volumes of scientific journals. The library subscribes to 11 printed journals and has access to newspapers and employment news in both Hindi and English. The library is automated by e-Granthalaya software. As part of the suggested community library project, the library of MPCST extended its services to reach a larger user community, comprising students, academicians, researchers as well as the general public. In order to promote digital learning and facilitate information access, ten computers with free internet and Wi-Fi connection were installed. Moreover, the library improved its reading environment by adding more seats and extending the capacity of the reading room to host more readers in the library. Besides, the library worked on improving its collection by acquiring more books and other sources of information to provide people with various information needs for using more library services.

2. Literature Review

From previous research conducted, it is quite evident that public libraries have a great impact in helping to develop societies in terms of education, information, and lifelong learning. In relation to observations obtained from public libraries in Imo State, it was noted that both the librarians and members of the community recognised the importance of the above services in developing the society (Madu, C. C., & Azubogu, N., 2018). It is very important to efficiently and effectively market the library in order to provide proper service marketing and involve the customers and make the value of the library known in the digital age. Some of the techniques which can be employed include the use of digital technology, customer-centric services, a data-driven approach, and advocacy (Acharya, S. K., & Tippanna, V., 2023). The research aimed at analyzing the perception of users about Big Rapids Community Library through a quantitative survey conducted using a structured questionnaire. This survey utilized descriptive statistics in the analysis of respondents' awareness, satisfaction, and expectations from library services. It was observed that

some demographic variables like income and gender affect the use of library services and their perception (Ho, H. W., 2019). Libraries have to always change themselves in order to respond to the community's needs and technological changes. This research evaluates the expectations of library users and non-users in the Yongsan-gu area, South Korea. In the course of the research, interviews, questionnaires, and data obtained from social media were used. The results show the significance of user-oriented space, digital service and culture building (Shin, G. D., Jeon, K., & Lee, H. E., 2022).

3. Needs of the study

Libraries are an essential component that supports education and research and provides information of good quality. However, many special libraries, like MPCST Library, are facing problems related to low use of library materials and services, because of low accessibility, demands of new users, lack of outreach activities, and a growing number of digital information sources. Although those libraries have large amounts of scientific and technical information, their capacity goes unused due to a lack of user interaction and the absence of community-based service models in those libraries. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate existing sources, services, and usage of libraries and determine information demands and expectations of the current and future users.

The relevance of the current research is to identify and analyse the factors that affect how library resources are being used and develop a viable concept of a community library that could benefit the MPCST Library. Provided that the model has been implemented, it would help to enhance access and inclusiveness of the library, user involvement, and efficient use of resources through information technology and innovative library services. The study can result in obtaining practical measures that can be taken to make library services more effective and stimulate community involvement.

4. Objectives of the Study

The study has the following Objectives:

- 1) To find out the level of satisfaction of users about the resources, buildings, services, and equipment that exist in the library MPCST.
- 2) To evaluate the extent to which the resources and services of the library are being utilised by the patrons of MPCST.
- 3) To examine what impacts the use of library materials.
- 4) To develop the MPCST library model for a sustainable community library.

5. Research Methodology

The study employed the case study approach in order to investigate the research problem. The collection of data was carried out through structured questionnaires and interviews administered to 60 respondents of the MPCST Library, thereby making it possible to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.

6. Results

User satisfaction with library building and infrastructure (N= 60)

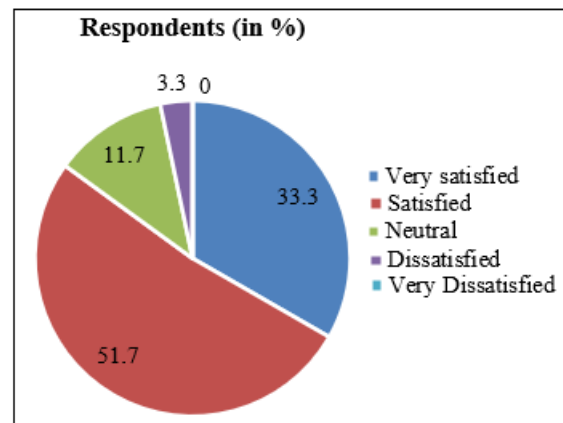
Table 1: User satisfaction with library building and infrastructure (N= 60)

Level of Satisfaction	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Very Satisfied	12	20
Satisfied	30	50
Neutral	14	23.3
Dissatisfied	4	6.7
Very Dissatisfied	0	0.0
Total	60	100

70% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the library buildings and infrastructure of the MPCST, Bhopal Library. Nonetheless, 23.3% of the respondents were still neutral, which implies that there is room for improvement in terms of infrastructure facilities.

Level of satisfaction with library services and equipment

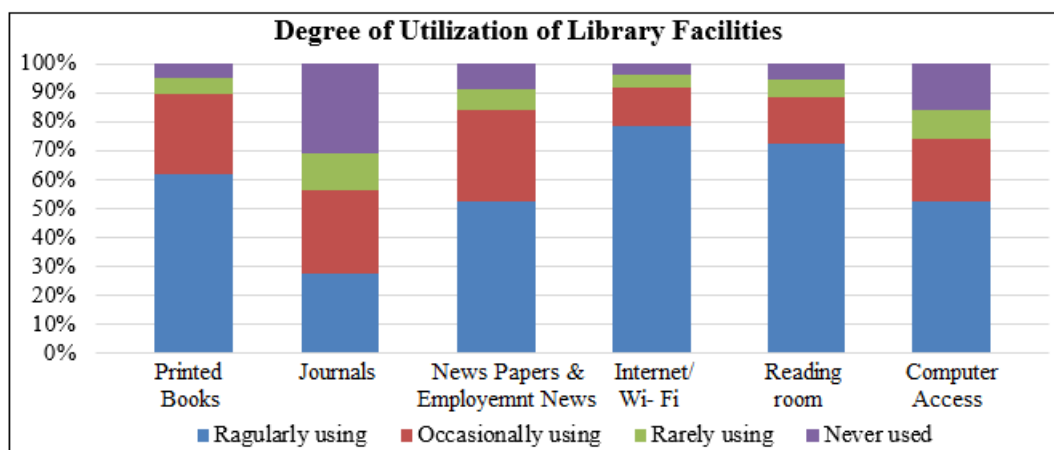
Level of satisfaction	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Very satisfied	20	33.3
Satisfied	31	51.7
Neutral	7	11.7
Dissatisfied	2	3.3
Very Dissatisfied	0	0
Total	60	100



The major portion of the respondents (51.7%) said that they are satisfied with the current library services and facilities. Whereas 20(33.3%) claimed to be very satisfied. Only 11.7% of participants had a neutral view, and 2(3.3%) were dissatisfied. The results show a greater percentage of users are either satisfied or very satisfied with current library facilities and services.

Degree of Utilization of Library Facilities

Degree of Utilization of Library Facilities				
Facility available in Library	Regularly	Occasionally	Rarely used	Never used
Printed	36(60%)	16(26.7%)	5(8.3%)	3(5%)
Journals	15(25%)	16(26%)	12(20%)	17(28.3%)
Newspapers and employment news	30(50%)	18(30%)	7(11.7%)	5(8.3%)
Internet and Wi-Fi	42(70%)	12(20%)	4(6.7%)	2(3.3)
Reading room facility	38(63.3%)	14(23.3%)	5(8.3%)	3(5%)
Computer lab access	26(43.3%)	18(30%)	8(13.3%)	8(13.3%)



The results show that the internet and Wi-Fi facility is the most used library facility, with 42(70%) users using it regularly. This is followed by the reading room facility, which was used by 38(63.3%), and printed books were used by 36(60%) respondents. The other widely used services include newspapers and employment news by 30(50%) users, and computer facilities used by 26(43.3%) respondents. On the contrary, journal usage is relatively low, with only 15(25%) respondents using it. The results have shown that the users have extensively utilised the library resources, including the internet, reading rooms, and printed books. However, the relatively low use of journals requires more awareness and promotional activities.

As a result of the feedback obtained from the 60 respondents of the survey, the following recommendations have been made for the improvement of the services and facilities provided by the MPCST Library. Most of the users have recommended an increase in the number of books available in the library for competitive examination purposes, reading purposes, and recent scientific and technological publications. Users have suggested that the library should be open longer, as this will enable students to use library facilities in a more convenient way and make it possible for them to conduct their academic work easily. Moreover, it has been recommended that specific discussion rooms for collaborative learning be established in the library to

facilitate group study and research activity. Respondents have stressed the necessity of creating a separate section called "Research Support" that should have the necessary technological resources and library staff who would help researchers in conducting literature searches, reference management, research data support, plagiarism detection, and scholarly communication.

7. Conclusion

In light of the results of the study, it can be recommended that the Community Library Model be adopted at the MPCST Library in order to ensure the effective utilisation of its resources and services. The proposed Community Library Model seeks to convert the existing departmental library into a community-oriented knowledge hub catering to students, researchers, academicians, professionals, and the local community. The key features of this community library include building library collections, improvement of library facilities, use of modern technology, research support services, and provision of access to information in various formats.

8. Discussion

This library model also focuses on promoting the participation of the local community through various outreach programs, user education, collaboration with academic and research institutions, and regular campaigns on creating awareness about the library. The following are suggestions for building a proper community library:

- Make QR code-based access possible for quick access to e-books, e-journals, the institutional repository, library guide, and other electronic information.
- Use RFID technology for the automated circulation of books and for the automation of the library process.
- Install digital library terminals to allow users to have special access to online databases and digital collections of the library.
- Use AR/VR technology for creating an immersive learning environment and for interactive teaching and research.
- Make multimedia viewing stations possible with an audio-visual facility to allow users to access educational videos, webinars, digital lectures, and other media.
- Allow mobile access to the OPAC of the library so that users may search, reserve, and renew library resources via mobile devices.
- Provide special discussion rooms for collaborative learning and academic discussions.
- Set up presentation rooms with the latest audio-visual devices to facilitate seminars, workshops, training sessions, and academic presentations.
- Ensure the availability of individual research cubicles for a comfortable working atmosphere for the researchers, lecturers, and postgraduate students.
- Strengthen the reprographic service by offering quality printing, photocopying, scanning, and digitization services.
- Establish the Research Support Center offering services for detecting plagiarism, assessing AI content, managing citations, conducting bibliometric analysis, and research assistance.

- Create a complete CCTV surveillance system for improved security and monitoring library activities.
- Use digital notice boards for sharing library information and notices on time.
- Introduce an AI-assisted virtual library assistant for round-the-clock user assistance, helping users with information searching and answering their frequently asked questions.

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