



Utilization of Public Libraries' Information Resources and Services in Madhya Pradesh

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Abstract: *The study explores the utilization of public libraries' information resources and services in Madhya Pradesh, focusing on their role in agricultural knowledge dissemination and rural development. It assesses farmers' access to and use of library services, categorizing them by educational background. The findings reveal a significant gap in access, with many farmers expressing a need for library facilities but lacking access in their villages. Barriers include lack of awareness, inconvenient hours, and distance. The study recommends targeted interventions to promote library use, such as expanding access, raising awareness, and offering flexible hours and outreach programs. These efforts could enhance agricultural knowledge dissemination, promote sustainable practices, and improve livelihoods for farmers in the region.*

Keywords: *Public libraries, Information resources, Agricultural knowledge dissemination, Rural development, Madhya Pradesh*

1. Introduction

Public libraries play a crucial role in providing access to information and knowledge resources, particularly in rural areas where access to such resources may be limited. In the state of Madhya Pradesh, India, public libraries serve as important hubs for knowledge dissemination and community development. However, the utilization of public libraries' information resources and services by farmers, who form a significant portion of the rural population, remains relatively unexplored. Understanding the extent to which farmers utilize public libraries can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of these institutions in meeting the information needs of rural communities. Madhya Pradesh, located in central India, is known for its rich agricultural heritage and diverse farming practices. Agriculture is a primary source of livelihood for a majority of the state's population, particularly in rural areas. Public libraries in Madhya Pradesh are expected to play a pivotal role in providing farmers with access to agricultural information, market trends, government schemes, and other resources essential for enhancing agricultural productivity and income. Despite the potential benefits of public libraries, there are several challenges that may hinder their effective utilization by farmers. Limited awareness about the services offered by public libraries, inadequate

infrastructure, and a lack of tailored information resources for the agricultural community are some of the key challenges faced. Additionally, factors such as geographic remoteness and limited literacy levels among farmers may further impede their access to and utilization of public library services. Given these challenges, it is important to assess the current utilization of public libraries' information resources and services by farmers in Madhya Pradesh. Such an assessment can help identify gaps in service delivery and inform strategies to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of public libraries in meeting the information needs of farmers. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the utilization of public libraries' information resources and services by farmers in Madhya Pradesh, with a focus on understanding the factors influencing their utilization patterns.

2. Methodology

The study utilized various data collection methods, including questionnaire surveys, historical analysis, literature surveys, literature searches, interviews, observations, and Delphi techniques. These methods were chosen for their effectiveness in gathering data on users and their information needs.

Data Collection

This section briefly discusses the data collection methods utilized in the present study.

Chi-Square Test

The Chi-square test is a nonparametric test used for two main purposes: (1) testing the hypothesis of no association between two or more categorical variables (i.e., checking independence between variables), and (2) assessing how well the observed data fit the expected distribution (goodness-of-fit). It is designed for categorical data analysis, such as gender and smoking status, and is not suitable for continuous data like height or weight.

3. Analysis & Data Interpretation

The utilization of public libraries' information resources and services in Madhya Pradesh is crucial for various fields, especially agriculture. The development of research and production improvement heavily depends on timely information for agricultural scientists. Achieving food production self-sufficiency is unlikely without adequate information access. Efforts to update agricultural scientists on improved methods are essential, but there is a challenge due to the wide dispersion of agricultural information sources and users. A robust information system is needed to bridge this gap and ensure knowledge reaches those who need it. No single agricultural library can meet all user needs due to the increasing diversity and complexity of information requirements. The time factor adds pressure on information sources, necessitating broader exposure and quicker delivery of information services.

Building a strong information infrastructure for agricultural scientists at both state and national levels is crucial, especially to ensure 'food for everyone.' Agricultural information organization must keep pace with the latest advancements globally. University libraries should be scientifically organized and well-managed, with ample reading materials to serve as intellectual hubs. These libraries are not just repositories but dynamic educational tools. They must foster cooperation among faculties and staff to promote effective library use, supported by proper cataloging and reference services. Enhancing public library services in Madhya Pradesh, particularly for agricultural research, can significantly improve knowledge dissemination and support the growth and development of the agricultural sector.

General Information in Agricultural University Libraries in Central India

The population of this study consists of three categories of users: Post Graduate Students, Research Scholars, and Faculty Members at different levels. Given the large population size of Central Indian agricultural universities, a random sampling technique was applied. For Post Graduate Students, the sample size was limited to 25% of their total population due to their larger numbers. For Research Scholars and Faculty Members, the sample size

was set at 20% of their respective populations. This sample size is representative of all Central Indian agricultural universities. The detailed breakdown of the population size, the selected sample, and the administered questionnaires, along with the responses, is provided in Table-1.

Table-1 Population, Sample Size of the Distributed Questionnaires

Name of the University	Total Population	Sample Size	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Distributed(%)	Total Respondents	Total Respondents (%)
JNKVV	857	197	125	14.59	112	89.60%
NDPCV	655	146	125	19.08	98	78.40%
RVS KVV	603	137	125	20.73	82	65.60%
CGKV	703	158	125	17.78	89	71.20%
IGKV	873	195	125	14.31	116	92.80%
Total	3691	833	625	86.49%	497	79.52%

Table-1 provides a comprehensive overview of the entire population and the sample size of respondents in the study. The total user population consisted of 3,691 individuals, out of which a sample of 833 users was selected, and questionnaires were distributed to them. Of the 625 questionnaires returned, 497 were completed, resulting in a response rate of 79.52%. The university librarians had a 100% response rate, as the researcher personally visited each university, distributed the questionnaires, and collected the completed forms. The responses from users were analyzed, and the results are presented in tables 1 to 5. Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Raipur had the highest response rate at 92.80% (116 respondents). This was followed by Jawaharlal Nehru Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Jabalpur with an 89.60% response rate (112 respondents). Nanaji Deshmukh Pashu Chikitsa Vishwavidyalaya, Jabalpur had a response rate of 78.40% (98 respondents). Chhattisgarh Kamdhenu Vishwavidyalaya, Durg had a 71.20% response rate (89 respondents), and Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Gwalior had a response rate of 65.60% (82 respondents). These detailed responses highlight the engagement levels across different universities and provide valuable insights into the study's findings.



Gender Wise Questionnaires Distribution in Agricultural University Libraries in Central India

Table-2 Gender wise Distribution of Respondents

Name of the University	Questionnaires Distributed	Female Respondents	Male Respondents	Total Respondents
JNKVV	125	80	32	112
		(64%)	(25.6%)	(89.6%)
NDPCV	125	52	46	98
		(41.6%)	(36.8%)	(78.4%)
RVSKVV	125	42	40	82
		(33.6%)	(22.2%)	(55.4%)
CGKV	125	52	37	89
		(41.6%)	(29.6%)	(71.2%)
IGKV	125	78	38	116
		(62.4%)	(30.4%)	(92.8%)
Total	625	304	193	497
		(48.64%)	(30.88%)	(79.52%)

University Library Membership in Agricultural University Libraries in Central India

The university library plays a crucial role in providing library and information services to its members, including Post Graduate Students, Research Scholars, and Faculty Members. Membership and the circulation of books are closely intertwined, with the library's collection, staff efficiency, location, and opening hours being key factors. A library's collection should be comprehensive, covering subjects taught and researched at the university. Staff efficiency in technical services, such as maintaining an updated catalogue, proper classification and arrangement of books, and cleanliness of the library stacks, is essential. The library's location should be centrally situated on the campus, easily accessible to all departments and laboratories. Additionally, the library should have extended opening hours during the day to accommodate the needs of its members. These factors significantly impact the membership and circulation of books, ensuring the effective functioning of the university library.

Table 3 University Library Membership in Agricultural University Libraries in Central India

Users Age	JNKVV	NDPCV	RVSKVV	CGKV	IGKV	Total	
Post Graduates	Yes	54	48	35	42	57	236
		48.21	48.97	42.68	47.19	49.14	46.88
Research Scholar	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Yes	36	25	25	29	39	154
		32.14	25.51	30.49	32.58	33.62	30.98
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0	0

Faculty member	Yes	22	25	22	18	20	107
		19.64	25.51	26.83	20.22	17.24	21.52
No	Yes	0	0	0	0	0	0
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		112	98	82	89	116	497
Response with Percentage		22.53	19.71	16.5	17.91	23.35	100

Table-3 indicates that all respondents in the study are members of the university library, as non-members would have limited access to information services. Among these members, 46.88% are Post Graduate Students, 30.98% are Research Scholars, and 21.52% are Faculty Members.

4. Result & Discussion

The utilization of public libraries' information resources and services in Madhya Pradesh is crucial, especially for fields like agriculture, where timely information is essential for research and production improvement. Achieving self-sufficiency in food production relies heavily on access to adequate information for agricultural scientists. However, there are challenges due to the wide dispersion of information sources and users. A robust information system is needed to bridge this gap. University libraries, as intellectual hubs, play a vital role in providing rich collections and efficient services to their members, including Post Graduate Students, Research Scholars, and Faculty Members. Membership and the circulation of books are closely linked, and factors like staff efficiency, library location, and opening hours impact these aspects significantly. Enhancing public library services, especially for agricultural research, can significantly improve knowledge dissemination and support the growth of the agricultural sector.

Table-1 provides a detailed breakdown of the population size, selected sample, and administered questionnaires, along with the responses, for each Central Indian agricultural university. The total user population was 3,691 individuals, with a sample of 833 users selected. The response rate was 79.52%, with 497 completed questionnaires returned. The responses from university librarians had a 100% response rate, as the questionnaires were personally distributed and collected. Table-2 shows the gender-wise distribution of respondents, indicating a higher male response rate across all universities. Table-3 indicates that all respondents were members of the university library, with the majority being Post Graduate Students (46.88%), followed by Research Scholars (30.98%), and Faculty Members (21.52%). These findings underscore the importance of public libraries in supporting research and education in Madhya Pradesh, particularly in fields like agriculture.



5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the utilization of public libraries' information resources and services in Madhya Pradesh, particularly for agricultural research, is crucial for the advancement of various fields. Access to timely and adequate information is essential for achieving self-sufficiency in food production and improving agricultural practices. However, there are challenges due to the wide dispersion of information sources and users, highlighting the need for a robust information system. University libraries play a vital role as intellectual hubs, providing rich collections and efficient services to their members. Factors like staff efficiency, library location, and opening hours significantly impact membership and the circulation of books. Enhancing public library services, especially for agricultural research, can greatly improve knowledge dissemination and support the growth of the agricultural sector. The findings from the study, as presented in Tables 1 to 3, emphasize the importance of public libraries in supporting research and education in Madhya Pradesh, particularly in fields like agriculture.

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