

Information Literacy of State Central Library Users: A Study of Library Services Utilization

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyse users' awareness and utilization of the services offered by State Central Libraries in the Northeastern states of India. It also emphasizes the importance of information literacy or library orientation in improving users' ability to effectively navigate through, access and utilise the various resources and services available in these libraries. The study adopted a quantitative research approach. The data was collected from 122 users using structured questionnaires and observation tools. The collected data was analysed using IBM SPSS version 27. The study revealed that most of the users frequently visit the library primarily for competitive exam preparation. Although the prescribed libraries offer a wide range of services, only a very small proportion of users use them. The findings indicate that a lack of information literacy leads to poor awareness and utilization of available services. Therefore, it is important to impart knowledge in this regard through organising information literacy or users' education programmes, which help enhance users' awareness, improve information discovery efficiency, and encourage greater utilisation of library resources and services. Also, users are positive about the staff behaviour and the way their queries are answered, but it is necessary that the State Central Libraries in the northeastern states of India should focus on improving the resource availability, infrastructure, smooth functioning, and delivering effective services.

Keywords: Information Literacy; State Central Library; Northeast India Library; Public Library; Library Orientation; Northeast Public Library

Introduction

Without information, we cannot build a knowledgeable society. To build a knowledge society, Singh (2018) has described public libraries as 'people's university' and social institutions that fulfil social missions pertaining to community and social development. The

author has brought to light that only 19 states in India have passed the Public Libraries Act, and of these, the majority have failed to take proper measures to implement it. Chaurasia & Singh (2024) have explained the importance of shaping public libraries into vibrant community centres to sustain knowledge in India. The current condition of public libraries is poor maintenance and a pathetic state. The unequal development of society, underdevelopment, and inaccurate census data on public libraries are hurdles to the knowledge-seeking journey. The government should take various initiatives and allot proper funds, essential resources, and innovative strategies to develop public libraries. Other problems associated include linguistic diversity, limited resources, organizational inequalities, connectivity slits, political influence, and ICT difficulties, which are the barriers to intellectual progress, community advancement, and social development. Saini (2011) reviewed the development and implementation of public library legislation in the Northeastern Region of India, particularly Mizoram which is a geographically distinct area characterized as hilly. The geographical location of the state has added to the significance of rural libraries. The study highlights the importance of adequate funding, effective legislation, trained staff, technological modernization, networking, and government and community support in strengthening rural public library services. The study concludes that effective implementation of library legislation is essential for improving access to information and supporting rural development in the region.

Hazarika & Sudhier, (2024) point out that the libraries have a broader scope for digital transformation; the new age of progress has led to adaptation to digital technologies and resources for modernisation. The study puts the technology adaptation to wider acceptance of linguistic diversity for wider community engagement, emphasising the role of rural and cultural preservation of the northeast through appropriate funding by organisations such as RRRLF, etc. Gerner Nielsen, (2014) in his paper emphasised the role of public libraries serving as an institution of lifelong learning. The study supports informal learning, flexible learning opportunities, and self-directed learning, and enhances learning through collaboration and knowledge sharing. With common understanding between the librarian and the user will enable enrich transiting of communication of information literacy on empirical grounds. The study provides different dimensions of lifelong learning perceived in Danish public libraries, identifying three vital categories: a place of independent learning, a place of support and guidance, and an information resource centre.

Khanchandani, (2026) discussed about Delhi Public Library, as a democratic institution, relies on users fulfilling strong information needs related to education opportunities, employment, etc. The evolving roles of libraries as a facilitator of public service not only positioned them important democratic public institution but also engage and participate in different socio economic realm, the study identifies there has been growing need of information in urban youth, it reveals that hybrid information seeking of users like digital technologies as well as traditional resources, most of resources are unutilized as due staff capacity and user awareness of literacy level of finding the information. With access to digital infrastructure, public libraries can perform a better role in effective intermediation. The importance of information literacy has been elaborately discussed by Tewell (2025) in his research article. The critical perspective provides a framework for critical information literacy theory, in contrast to information literacy, which grabs attention for its role in the socio-

political sphere and is oppressed by authoritarianism, resulting in disinformation. Democratizing information literacy, which enables one to critically identify faultlines and the production of knowledge. Also, it leverages knowledge to shape, create, and disseminate information, making it fundamental for teaching and learning by applying post-structuralism and making information non-neutral and flexible.

Ayinde et al. (2025) in their article, with changing needs of communities, the role of public libraries as providers of information services has also shifted, catering to the needs of diverse users worldwide. In the digital era, technologies like artificial intelligence, GenAI, and other emerging tools are revolutionising libraries' function through this technology. The study identified that user perceptions, based on Reddit comments, disclose that, apart from core services, it also provides services such as financial literacy, health support, social services, and even hands-on experience with 3D technology. Imani & Rahmi, (2025) highlighted that the sharing economy means collaborative utilisation of resources to maximum usage, as public libraries facilitate inclusive access to information for communities at free or at very low charge > the external factors, like technological intervention, enable users to better use software-driven services, and also it is reshaping the way users access information. The findings through the analytic hierarchy process indicate that diversified shared usage for electronic and digital resources, reading rooms for exam preparation, conducting seminars, and seeking assistance from the library are key findings that enable users to reduce the cost of accessing information.

Bouaamri, (2024) in the sphere of social contract, the importance of public libraries will enable active participation in the democratic process of individuals, groups and society through inclusion and integration in society. The participation in overcoming social obstacle inequality and problem-solving information gaps through knowledge and seeking the right information through information literacy will correspond to the development of the educational system in regions like Africa. The capability for reading and researching will become foundational pillars for developing social and cultural capital belonging to their communities for a safe social environment, for awareness, and facilitating the exchange of ideas through effective, impactful communication, and preserving their tradition.

Chatterjee et al. (2021) discuss that public libraries act is relevant and legitimate institution of social welfare. The progress of society depends on the intellectual environment, and information and communication play a vital role in the exchange and dissemination of knowledge, enabling users to access information through public libraries. The author provides an understanding of public libraries by analysing user education and information literacy driven by the institution-for-society model. The value posed by digital technology has made the public library qualitatively relevant. By applying SWOT analysis, they found that public libraries are excellent institutions that serve the need for information in human empowerment. The author has deliberately chosen public libraries in the northeast states to examine the knowledge-seeking journey of library users, as very few studies have been conducted there to date. exclusively those states where the state central library plays an important role in connecting their communities to libraries by offering various library services.

2. Objective of The Study

- To know the services utilized by the State Central Library users

- To know the importance of information literacy for the Users
- To know the users' satisfaction level with the library

3. Methodology

This is quantitative research that used a survey method to collect the data from the State Central Library. Purposive sampling has been used to select these six northeastern states. The questionnaire and observation tools are used to collect data. The observation tools were used to determine the services provided by the respective library, and structured questions were used to collect user feedback and experience. The questionnaire was valid and reliable, which was tested with the help of IBM SPSS. The questionnaire was distributed to State Central Library, Central State Library or State Library users of the six northeastern states of India. The researcher visited each state to collect data using a 'Google Form', which was then distributed personally, including via physical copies in 2026.

4. Data Analysis

The data were analysed using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. The structured questionnaire was distributed to 246 users. Of 246 users, 129 responded, and 122 completed the form and were eligible for data analysis. This study aimed to determine users' purposes for visiting the library and their awareness of the library and its services. The guidance is to get from the library and to analyse users' satisfaction with library functions, services, and the behaviour of library staff. The northeast India consists of seven states: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura. The study covers six northeastern states in India except Assam. The state of Assam doesn't have a state central library; hence, it is not covered in this study.

Table 1 shows the number of questionnaires distributed state-wise to users; the highest number of users responded from Tripura, and the lowest from Mizoram. Table 2 shows the number of males and females who responded; it was found that the number of males and females responding was approximately equal.

Table 1: shows the state-wise number of respondents

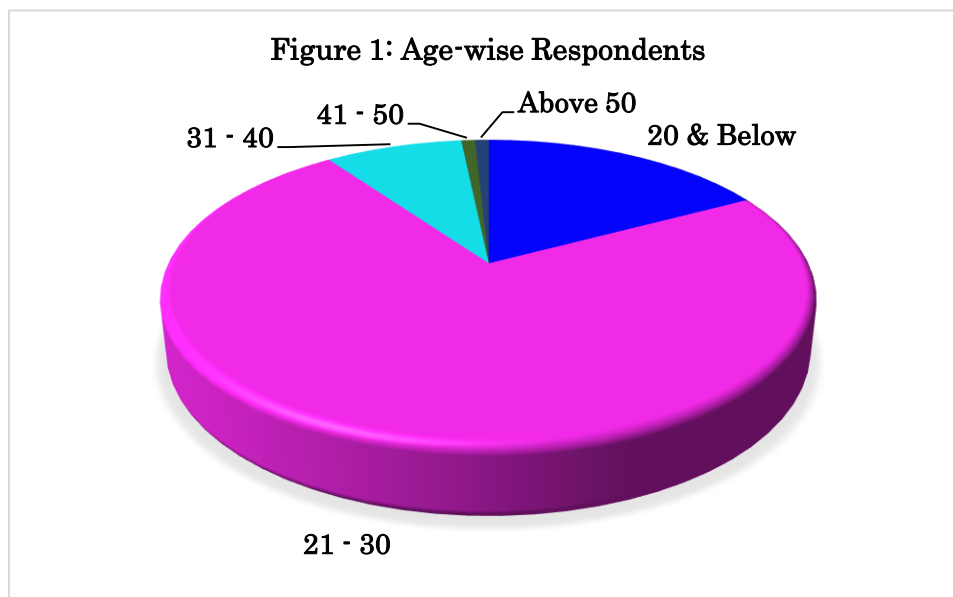
S. No.	Northeast Zone	Total questionnaire distributed	Total questionnaire respondents
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	35	21
2.	Manipur	36	19
3.	Meghalaya	49	21
4.	Mizoram	34	13
5.	Nagaland	37	18
6.	Tripura	55	30
	Total	246	122

Table 2: shows the gender-wise distribution

Population	Total Users Respondent (<i>n</i> =122)	%
Female	60	49.2
Male	62	50.8
Total	122	100

Table 3: shows the occupation of respondents

Occupation	%
Student	88.5
Working Professionals	7.4
Retired Professionals / Self-employed	4.1
Housewives	0



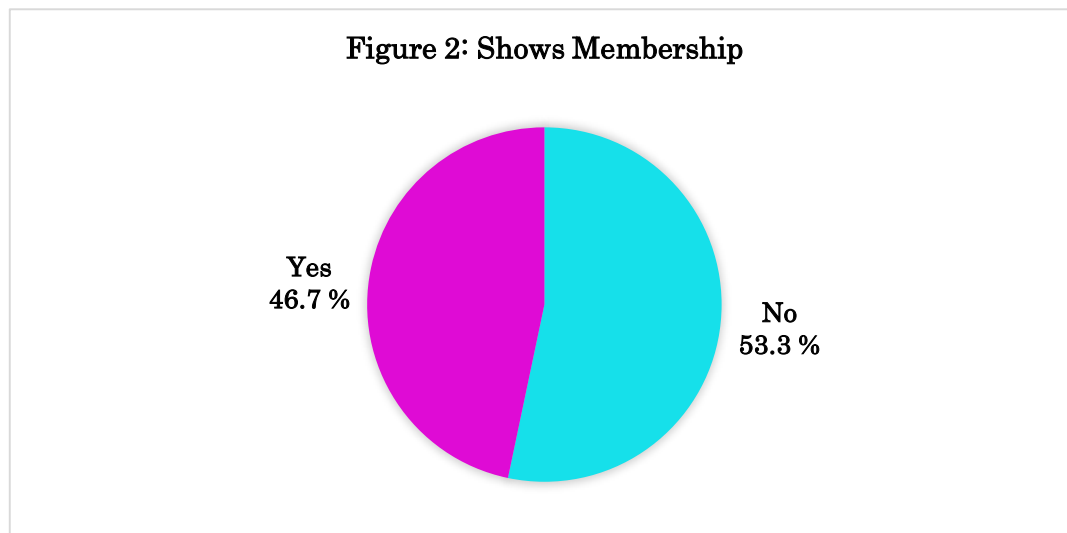
The age-wise respondents are shown in Figure 1, displayed below. The highest number of respondents is among 21- to 30-year-olds, at 73%, followed by 20 and below at 17.2%, 21-40 at 8.2%, 41-50 at 0.8%, and above 50 at 0.8%. It was found that most respondents are students (88.5%), followed by working professionals (7.4%) and Retired professionals/self-

employed (4.1%). No housewives are participating in this survey. The highest educational qualification among respondents is completed graduation (51.6%), followed by postgraduate qualifications (35.2%), as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 shows the occupation of respondents

Educational Qualification	Percentage (%)
10+2 & Diploma	9.8
Graduation	51.6
Post Graduation	35.2
Above Postgraduate	3.3

The users who have the library membership shown in Figure 2, More than half of the population do not have the membership in the respective library. 53.3% of users do not have a library membership, and the remaining 46.7% have a membership.



5. User Experience in the Library

Table 5: Users' Usage of the Library

Variables	Mean (n=122) <i>Min.= 1; Max.=5</i>	Standard Deviation <i>(n=122)</i>	% of never used
Frequency of visiting libraries	3.86	0.965	0.8
Information literacy or library orientation program	2.48	1.173	24.59

Table 6: Purpose of visiting the Library

Variables	Mean (n=122) <i>Min.= 1; Max.=5</i>	Standard Deviation <i>(n=122)</i>	Variance
Competitive exam preparation	3.98	1.289	1.661
Reading (library books and newspapers etc.)	3.20	1.204	1.449
Gaining knowledge & spending quality time utilising other library resources (E-resources, etc)	3.66	1.203	1.448

The mean and standard deviation values for library utilisation and the purposes of utilisation by users are presented in Tables 5 and 6, respectively. Users are visiting the public library frequently but are rarely receiving information literacy or library orientation, as shown in Table 5. The standard deviation of respondents who frequently visit public libraries is 0.965, with a mean of 3.86. Also, the mean and standard deviation are shown for purposes of visiting the library, such as primarily very often visiting for the library competitive exam preparation, the mean is 3.98, followed by gaining knowledge and spending quality time utilising various electronic resources, the mean is 3.66, and finally reading library books and newspapers, the mean is 3.20. The standard deviation of the three variables is somewhat close to the mean, and their variances are symmetric, indicating they are not highly skewed for the purpose of visiting the library. The researcher observed the various services provided by the State Central Library of the north-eastern states. Most services are provided in the library on a demand-and-supply basis.

Table 7: Users' Utilisation of Services

Variables	Mean (n=122) <i>Min.= 1; Max.=5</i>	Standard Deviation <i>(n=122)</i>	Variance <i>(n=122)</i>
Books - issue and return	3.35	1.537	2.362
Reference services	2.99	1.469	2.157
Current Awareness Services	3.02	1.375	1.892
Selective Dissemination of Information	2.92	1.376	1.894
Inter Library Loan	1.68	1.070	1.145
E-resources	1.98	1.314	1.727
Internet Accessibility (Wi-Fi, LAN)	2.31	1.570	2.464
Children-related services	2.52	1.511	2.285

The value of the standard deviation of Books - issue and return is 1.537, Reference services is 1.469 (variance 2.362), Selective Dissemination of Information is 1.376 (variance 2.157), Current Awareness Services is 1.375 (variance 1.892), E-resources is 1.314 (variance 1.727), shown that most respondents are farthest away and scattered from the mean, it shows that, the respondents answered diversely for those services even sometimes and rarely getting the services. The results for the mean, standard deviation, and variance of various library services for public library users are shown in Table 7. The respondents sometimes get services such as borrowing books from the library, followed by current awareness services, reference services and selective dissemination of information. The least utilised service at the library is inter-library loan.

6. Users' Satisfaction Level of Infrastructure and Services

Table 8: Users' Satisfaction Level of Library

Overall satisfaction in the library regarding	Mean (<i>n</i>=122) <i>Min.</i>= 1; <i>Max.</i>=5	Standard Deviation (<i>n</i>=122)	Variance (<i>n</i>=122)
Resources availability	3.41	1.162	1.351
Infrastructure facilities include drinking water, space, tables, chairs, lighting, hygienic washrooms, facilities for persons with disabilities, and security.	3.17	1.251	1.565
Function and services	3.22	1.203	1.446
Librarian and library staff answering the users' queries	3.67	1.153	1.330

The overall satisfaction levels of library respondents regarding resource availability, infrastructure facilities, functions, services, and the behaviour of library staff are shown in Table 8. Respondents are overall highly satisfied with the librarian and library staff in answering their queries, followed by the resources available in the library. Moderate level of satisfaction with infrastructure facilities such as drinking water, space, tables, chairs, lighting, hygienic washrooms, facilities for persons with disabilities, Security, etc., as well as library functions and services. Also, the standard deviation is somewhat close to the mean, and the variance is symmetric across all variables. So, every user is facing the same level of satisfaction with the library.

7. Findings and Discussion

The data analysis shows that most users are under 30 years old, visit the library primarily for exam preparation, utilise the library's e-resources, and later read books. Also, more than half of the respondents do not have a membership, and there is no compulsory membership at their library, which directly indicates that respondents mostly use the library for exam preparation. Respondents rarely receive information literacy or library orientation programs, yet they frequently visit the library. Also, they are giving less priority to the utilisation of library resources, such as books and e-resources, in their knowledge-seeking journey. It also comes to light that most of them have completed at least a graduation, which shows that respondents are mostly educated but are merely interested in using library services and resources other than competitive exam preparation. The respondents sometimes use only

book borrowing services and current awareness services and rarely use services such as reference services and selective dissemination of information. More or less not utilised service at the library is the inter-library loan. Information literacy or library orientation is the backbone for the utilization of library resources and identifying several beneficial services offered to users. It helps initiate the lifelong learning process and teaches respondents how to access, analyse, and use resources and services efficiently. Information literacy or library orientation program is one of the critical operations of libraries; when libraries fail to conduct it, it leads to underutilisation of library resources and services, which could further lead to users' disengagement. 24.59% of respondents (see Table 5) never received any orientation from their library. It may indicate that library professionals in their respective states lack interest in providing information literacy or library orientation to their library users. Table 7 shows users' feedback on the services they receive from their library. The result is that most libraries provide various services, but users may not be aware of or unable to access them. Also, satisfaction levels with the functions and services of the respective libraries are moderately high, and the standard deviation is not much from the mean, and the variances are symmetric. Overall satisfaction with the availability of resources, infrastructure, and functions and services is moderate, indicating the need for improvement. Users had very positive opinions and were satisfied with how their queries were answered.

8. Conclusion

Sufficient manpower (human resources), materials, and money (funds) are important factors for running a library smoothly. If it fails to meet any of these factors, the library may be unable to provide services effectively. Also, a lack of information literacy or library orientation leads to poor knowledge and skills in accessing, analysing and utilizing the various services provided by their library. This study is limited to understanding the information-seeking behaviour of users of the state central library. It aims to analyse the utilisation of existing services in the state central library of northeastern states by its users. There is a need for LIS professionals to actively participate in providing services. Users are happy with staff behaviour and the way their queries are answered, but it is necessary to focus on and improve the State Central Libraries in the northeastern states of India to address resource availability, infrastructure, smooth functioning, and the provision of effective services. Most younger generations adapt dynamically to ongoing changes in the world. Also, it is important that library professionals keep themselves up to date with the times.

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