



Reading Habits of Post Graduate Students in ICT Environment with Special Reference to Universities of Bihar: a study

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Abstract

The basic aim of the study is to investigate the reading habit of P.G. students particularly based on reading materials, time spent for reading, and the impact of the internet (ICT) media on their reading habits. The study is based on the survey method. The result reveals that there was a significant change in reading habits in the time spent for reading, use of different reading materials, the impact of the internet/ICT on reading habits, and search of study material on mobile/internet by P.G. students. This study adds values to reveal reading habits of post graduate students in Bihar.

Keywords: Digital resources, E-resources, Information technology, Online resources, Reading behaviour, Reading habit, User survey

1. Introduction

Reading habits refer to a person's regular patterns or behaviours when it comes to reading. These habits can include the frequency, duration, and types of reading materials that a person reads. It is a well-known fact in the present age that reading develops intellectual capacity and develops the ability to advance academically. Reading is one of the most prominent human activities that allow individuals to communicate with each other and share day-to-day thoughts. And in a knowledge-based society, it is important for every individual to develop reading basics and reading culture. In the age of technology (ICT age), users are attracted to daily and never-ending upgrades in the way they access information but are turned away

from reading. Mobile phones, laptops and e-book readers have made a tremendous impact on the reading habits of people. However, printed books still appeal to a particular crowd of children and are still the best choice today because of several features.

Today's readers are tomorrow's leaders, according to a popular saying. To gain knowledge, it is necessary to read books and other materials. It is difficult to know what is going on around us unless one reads and stays connected to the media. Not only that, but a student must read books other than his textbooks to broaden his or her scope of thinking and acting (Guha, 2013). The Internet's convergence of information and communication technologies has transformed



today's society into a knowledge society. Previously, information and knowledge were passed down through word of mouth or manuscripts, and communication was a slow process (Biswas, Chakrabarti, & Das Biswas, 2013; Kleinberg, 2008). It is now passed from one person to an infinite number of other users via a variety of media and formats, allowing for rapid and widespread dissemination of information. New technologies provide us with an unprecedented flood of information. The Internet, along with word processing, is regarded as the most valuable of the many computer technologies available to society today (Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010).

Due to the increasing influence of ICT technologies, there has been a lot of change in the reading habits of library users. Users are shifting away from reading habits in the modern ICT era. Library users now demand adequate e-resources in addition to printed text material. The needs of users change as well, such as the need for quick and up-to-date information. They can't read a lot of information or entire books or other reading material because they want selective information at the right time which prompts them to research this topic. Without understanding the reading habits of users, it is difficult to understand their needs. This study has been selected to understand the reading habits of the users.

2. Review of literature

The result of the study indicated that libraries have provided more digital information services and shifted toward offering digital content and services to their respective user. All categories have positive approaches and views toward the benefits of using DRD (Digital Reading Devices) during the Covid-19 pandemic period (Paul, Aldarhi, & Sinha, 2022). According to the study, nearly half of the students read

occasionally during the holidays. Although students agree that reading for pleasure has many benefits, quantitative data show that students have a low interest in reading (Maharsi et al., 2019). Aharony and Bar-Ilan's (2018) study revealed the preferences of students for printed materials. Furthermore, it highlights the significance of two personal variables that may influence students' willingness to read electronic materials: relative advantage and comprehension. Another similar study found that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that SNSs (Social Networking Sites) help their educational field and foster good relationships among their friends, family, educators, and so on (Munshi et al., 2018). Most users prefer Facebook and Research Gate for academic and research purposes (Wu & Peng, 2017).

According to the study of Hussain and Lavany (2014), the majority of respondents are experienced users who frequently use ICT applications. Respondents' most common ICT activities include internet surfing, email, chat, and presentation preparation, among others. The current study demonstrates and elaborates on the primary method of learning about ICTs, the purpose of using ICT-enabled library services, the extent to which users use ICT - based library services and facilities, various aspects of Internet usage, favorite search engines, and problems encountered by users when using ICT in libraries (Hussain et al., 2013). The research determined that readers view the website as a reading source that is becoming more significant. Academic programmes, types of reading materials, and reading resources, particularly those found on websites, differ significantly from one another. Male and female participants showed some differences in reading behaviour and attitudes (Karim & Hasan, 2007). The same, Leyva (2003) described a study conducted at



Mexico's National Autonomous University to investigate the impact of the Internet on students' reading habits. The study found that people are becoming more familiar with information technologies and the Internet, and that their reading habits are changing as a result. Libraries must take the lead in promoting broader reading experiences.

3. Objective of the study

The following are the main objectives of the study:

- i. To identify PG students' information needs and reading habits
- ii. To find out time spent reading and acquiring information
- iii. To explore the various types of reading material they are interested in
- iv. To examine the currency and use of ICTs and
- v. To find out the tools used to find information on the latest state of the arts, and e-resources by the PG students.

4. Need of the study

Users are shifting away from reading

habits in the modern ICT era (interest). They are drawn to new tools and technologies. Users' demands shifted as new technology evolved. Library users now demand adequate e-resources in addition to printed text material. The needs of users change as well, such as the need for quick and up-to-date information. They can not read a lot of information or entire books or other reading material because they want selective information at the right time which prompts us to research on this topic.

5. Scope and limitation of the study

The proposed research study comprises the reading habits of PG students of eight general Government Universities in Bihar and the scope of the study is restricted to eight general universities which are at least ten years old. Majority of the Post-Graduate (P.G.) students require quick access to the most recent information. Thus, it is important to understand the impact of ICT on the reading habits of PG students as currently university libraries spend a significant amount of money each year on this purpose. As a result, the researcher decided to study the impact of ICT on reading habits and usage of services related to e-resources by university PG students.

**Table 1: List of government state universities in Bihar**

S. No.	University	Location	Established	Specialization
1.	Aryabhatta Knowledge University	Patna	2008	Technology
2.	Bhupendra Narayan Mandal University	Madhepura	1992	General
3.	Bihar Agricultural University	Bhagalpur	2009	Agriculture
4.	Bihar Animal Sciences University	Patna	2016	Veterinary
5.	B. R. Ambedkar Bihar University	Muzaffarpur	1952	General
6.	Chanakya National Law University	Patna	2006	Legal
7.	Jai Prakash University	Chhapra	1990	General
8.	Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga Sanskrit University	Darbhanga	1961	Sanskrit
9.	Lalit Narayan Mithila University	Darbhanga	1972	General
10.	Magadh University	Bodhgaya	1962	General
11.	Maulana Mazharul Haque Arabic and Persian University	Patna	2004	Arabic&Persian
12.	Nalanda Open University	Patna	1987	Distance Education
13.	Patna University	Patna	1917	General
14.	Tilka Manjhi Bhagalpur University	Bhagalpur	1960	General
15.	Veer Kunwar Singh University	Arrah	1992	General
16.	Patliputra University	Patna	2018	General
17.	Purnea University	Purnea	2018	General
18.	Munger University	Munger	2018	General

There are a total of 18 government universities in Bihar, out of which 11 are general universities, as well as a technical university, an agricultural university, a veterinary university, a law university, an Arabic and Persian university, a Sanskrit university and a distance education university. Out of 11 general universities, 3 universities have been established in the year 2018.

In this research study, 8 general government universities that were established

at least 10 years ago were included, three newly created established were not included in the study and private universities located in the state were also not included in the study. Thus a total of eight universities have been included in the study. The departments, faculty, level of studies and students of these 8 universities, etc. are almost same.

The research study covers these 8 general government universities established at least 10 years ago.

**Table 2 : General government universities**

S. N.	University	Location	Established
1.	Bhupendra Narayan Mandal University	Madhepura	1992
2.	B. R. Ambedkar Bihar University	Muzaffarpur	1952
3.	Jai Prakash University	Chhapra	1990
4.	Lalit Narayan Mithila University	Darbhanga	1972
5.	Magadh University	Bodhgaya	1962
6.	Patna University	Patna	1917
7.	Tilka Manjhi Bhagalpur University	Bhagalpur	1960
8.	Veer Kunwar Singh University	Arrah	1992

6. Research methodology

6.1 *Research method and data collection tool*

The present study was conducted by survey method of research in which structured self -designed questionnaire was used as data collection tool. Keeping the objectives in mind, a structured questionnaire was distributed among 160 post-graduate students of selected eight universities of Bihar and out of which filled up questionnaire were received from 135 students. The collected data is organised and tabulated using statistical methods, tables, and percentages.

6.2 *Universe and sample*

The Universe of the study is the post-graduate students of select university libraries of Bihar. Purposive sampling techniques was used to draw sample from the population selecting respondents from each university library. The study was conducted from November 2022 to January 2023 for a smaller period of study. It is based on the preliminary study/pilot study to finalise the questionnaire to go for bigger survey. The findings of the

study will help us to design further research. The paper focuses on the analysis and interpretation of data collected via the questionnaire method.

7. Data analysis and interpretation

All the data relating to the present study were categorised, coded, tabulated and data analysis was done and results were interpreted on the basis of collected data from the respondents and from previously conducted related study. The findings of the survey are represented through tables and graphs.

7.1 *Library visit pattern of post graduate students*

7.1.1 *Frequency of visit to the central library*

The survey results as shown in figure 1 demonstrates that about 23% of PG students visit the library on daily basis (except on holidays), 38% respondents used to visit library once a week, at about 31% Twice in a week, and 13% visit occasionally (Twice in a month). The number of PG Department students who visit the library once or twice a week is significant. According to the findings, many PG students are regular library users.

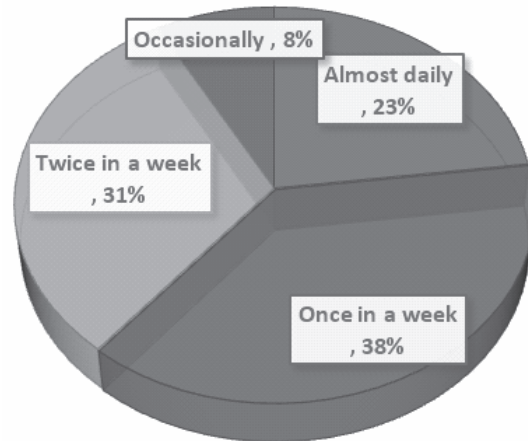


Figure 1: Frequency of visit to the library

7.1.2 Time spent in the library

The survey findings as depicted in figure 2 shows that out of 135 respondents 27% of PG students read 1-5 hours per week, 46% read 5-10 hours, 19% read 10-15 hours, and 8% read more than 15 hours per week. This figure highlights how much time PG Students spent in library to access different kind of

reading materials. Majority of respondents (46 %) spent 5 to 10 hours per week in the library which needs to be increased and provision should be available in class routine for library hours and also library should be made open for extended hours to facilitate reading room services for longer hours especially during examination hours.

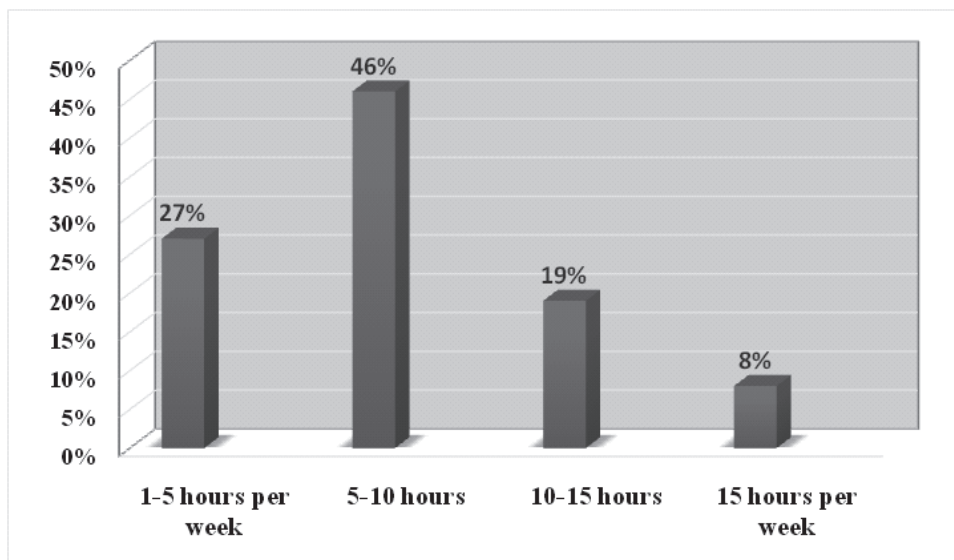


Figure2: Time spent in the library



7.2 Use of different types of reading materials, time spent, preference of reading devices

7.2.1 Use of different types of reading materials

The survey results as shown in figure 3 shows that out of 135 respondents, majority of respondents (33%) visit library to get issued / consult textbooks which is followed by around 25% of respondents prefer to use theses and dissertations, 23% of online

searches, whereas about 19% of respondents prefer to use journal, newspaper, and magazine in libraries. The table's objective is to ascertain reader preferences, and it is discovered that PG students highly value conventional sources. Now-a-days students are also shifting towards use of e-resources / online resources. Library should make library ICT infrastructure in such a way that library users may visit library more frequently and use both print and online resources effectively.

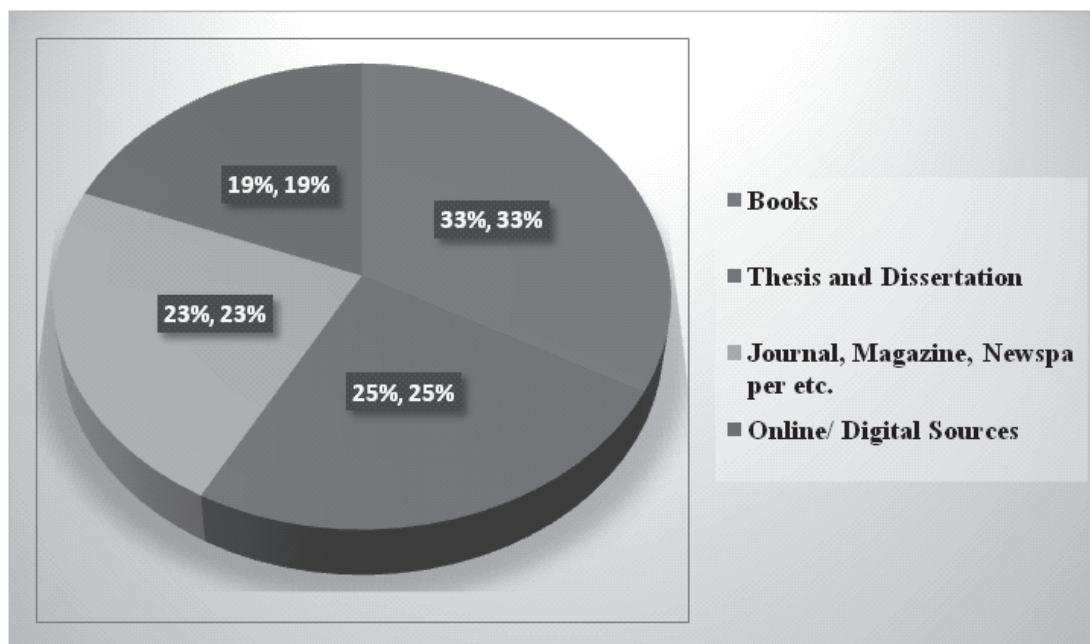


Figure 3 :Use of different types of reading materials

7.2.2 Amount of time spent on printed vs. digital/internet materials per day

The survey findings as depicted in table 3 shows that even today PG students

prefer to study printed (documentary) materials as compared to digital materials. Although, PG students of Science faculty use digital content more than research scholars of other faculties

**Table 3: Amount of time spent on printed vs. digital/internet materials per day**

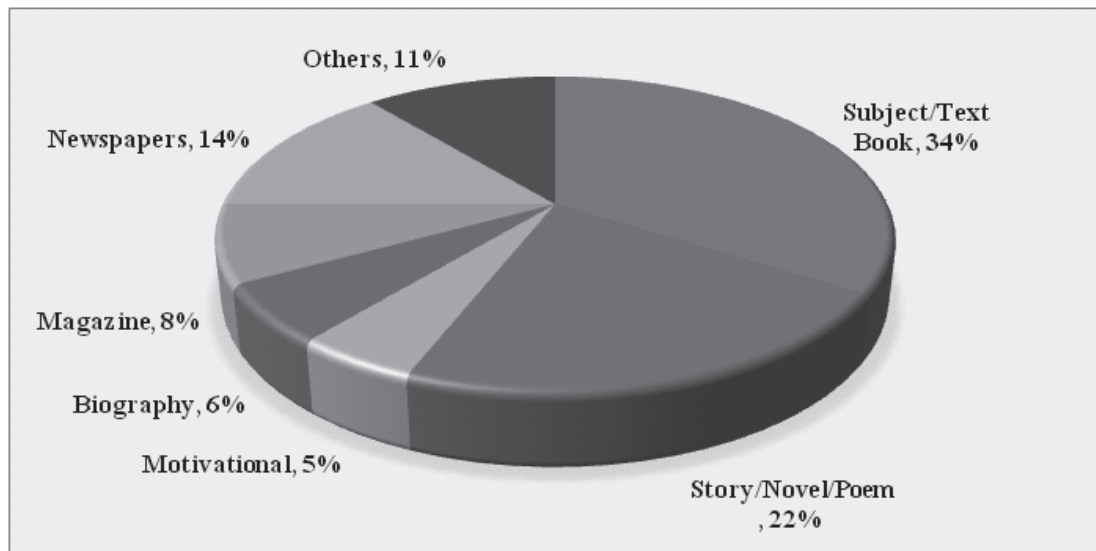
Amount of Time Spent by the PG Students of :	Printed (Documentary)	Digital/Internet Use
Social Science	3-4 hours	1-2 hours
Science	4-6 hours	2-3 hours
Humanities	4-5 hours	1-2 hours
Others	3-5 hours	1-3 hours

Therefore, there is need for making library users aware to use extensively the e-resources available under e-Sodh Sindhu consortium and other open access resources (OER). Regularly users' awareness programme needs to be organised.

7.2.3 Preference to use of various reading materials

The survey results as shown in figure 4

reveals that majority of respondents (34%) prefer to read subject/text-books in library, followed by 22% students prefer to read novel/story/poetry books, 14% prefer to read newspapers, 12% prefer to read magazines, 6% prefer to read biographies, 5% prefer to read motivational books while 7% prefer to use other library reading materials.

**Figure 4: Preference to use of various reading materials**

The library should time to time organise book exhibition and display in their library to make users exposed with various types of reading materials available in their libraries enabling users to do maximum use of library

learning resources.

7.2.4 Use of internet for study purpose

From the survey finding it has been found (Figure 5) that, out of 135 respondents,



maximum number of respondents (PG students) (34%) use the Internet for 5-10 hours in a week which is followed by 31% P. G. students who use the internet between 10-20 hours in a week, 13% PG students use the

Internet more than 20 hours in a week whereas a good number of respondents (22% PG students) use the internet facilities for less than 10 hours in a week.

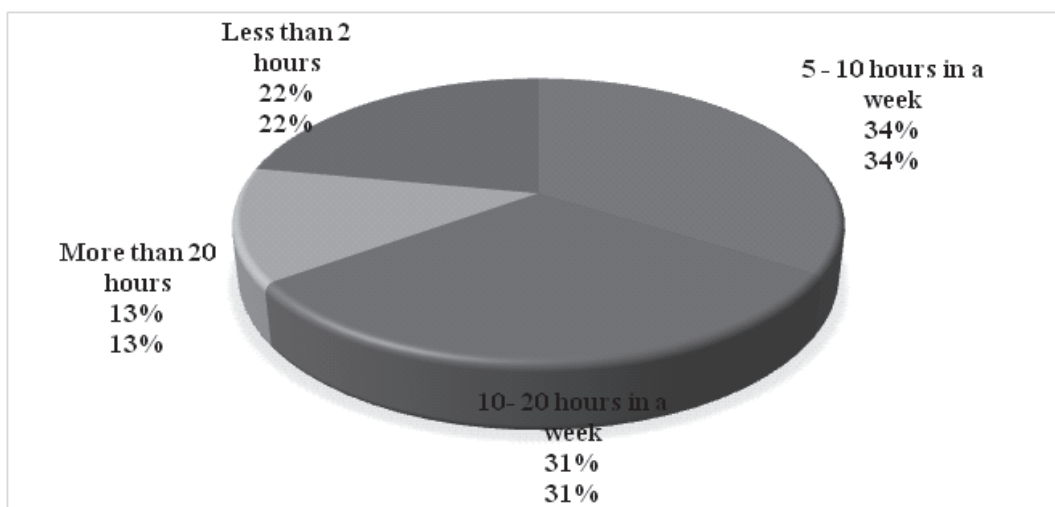


Figure 5: Use of internet for study purpose

It has been observed that only 13 percent respondents are using internet for more than 20 hours a week. It is a general trend now that students are always remain connected with Internet whether they use it or not but remain online. People are so addicted that they cannot live without Internet and smart phone at affordable cost make it possible.

7.2.5 Use of digital/internet resources

The research finding as depicted in

figure 6 indicates that while ranking the use of Internet resources used by the P. G. students in-general, e-books come to the top rank with 59% while e-journal occupy second position with 18% and government Publication occupy third position with 11%. The use of e-thesis/dissertation is 8% and, that standard/patent and technical reports is less than 5% respondents.

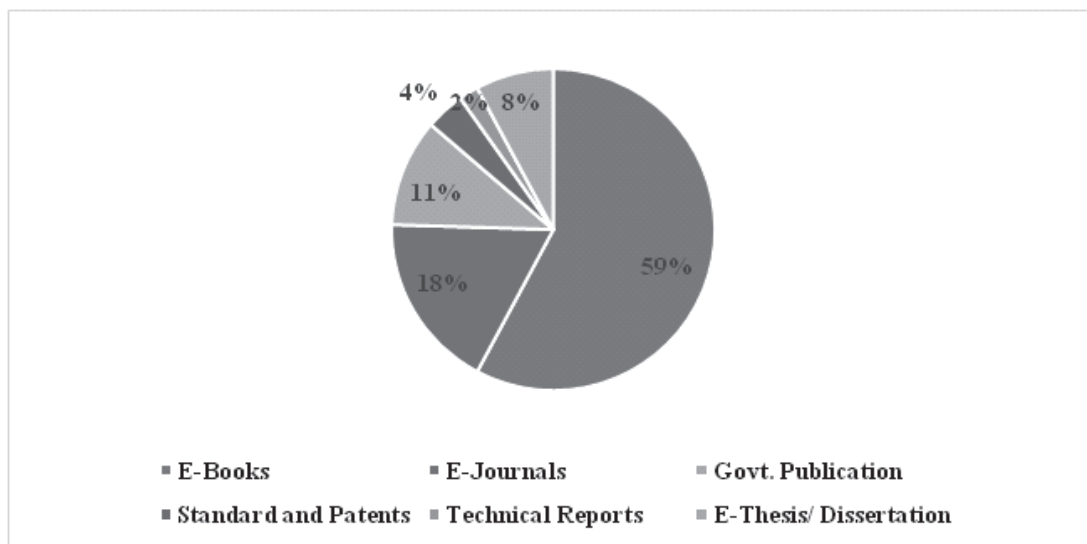


Figure 6: Use of digital/internet resources

As per the requirements, users access to the Internet may be for academic, research family and other entertainment purposes. Library should also ensure giving access to internet for maximum use of e-resources and user awareness workshop needs to be organised regularly to motivate users to develop reading habit of printed and online resources.

7.2.6 Benefits/defects of internet/digital material over conventional document

While comparing the benefits or defects of using internet / digital resources over the conventional documents, it is clear from figure 7, that most of the respondents consider

the use of digital material as cost-effective (52%) and time-saving (73%). Whereas majority of respondents preferred documentary sources as far as ease of use (66%), reliability (67%), more informative (59%), and satisfaction level (64%) were concerned.

It is deducing that both the format of learning resources is both advantages and limitations. Some of the respondents prefer digital/ internet resources and many still prefer printed resources over digital/ internet resources. Therefore, we need to make balance between both types of collections while acquiring reading materials for library users.

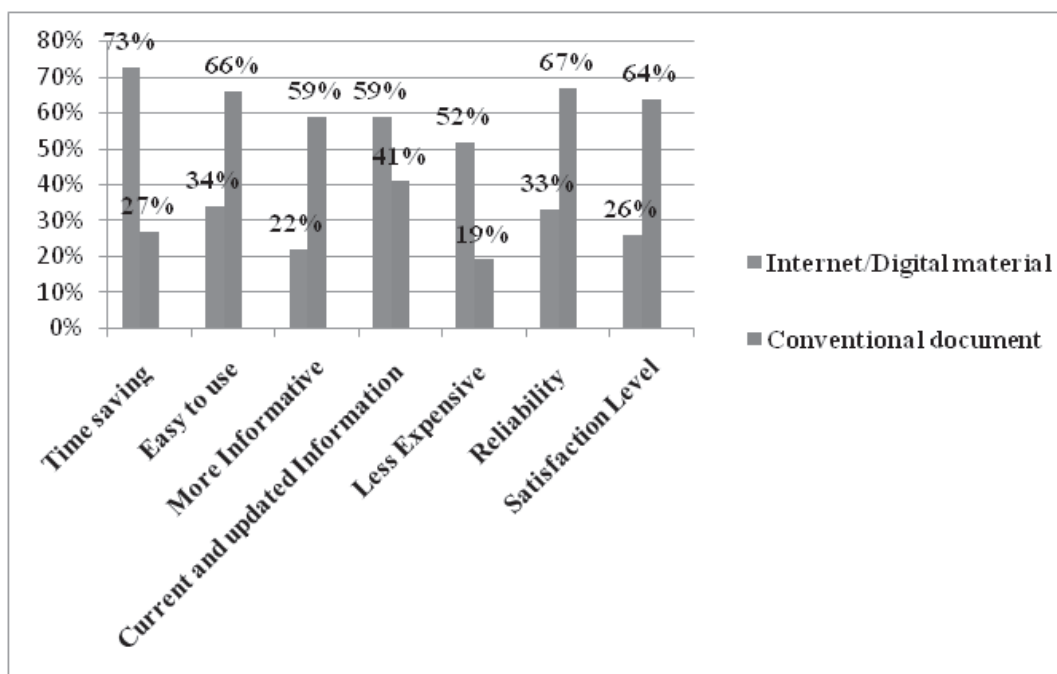


Figure 7: Benefits/defects of internet/digital material over conventional document

7.2.7 Influence of internet on reading habits

Internet has brought revolutionary changes the way we are accessing to the reading materials. It has been observed from the survey findings as shown in figure 8, that dependency on digital sources has increased (69%), though some of the respondents (88%) believed that the importance of documentary sources is still intact. The same 94% believed that the documentary and digital sources, both are important for study purpose.

From the study, it is revealed that in Indian scenario, although, the Internet has penetrated in a big way in our life, but still, many of us still prefer the printed documentary resources to consult which might be due to various reasons. We cannot rule out the tremendous impact of Internet on our reading habit, but still there is scope for developing collection of printed learning

resources to fulfill the demand of both categories of users. The reading habit starts from the beginning of our schooling life. Therefore, there is a need to inculcate reading habit among the children since their school days. Schools and colleges need to develop adequate collection of reading materials and encourage users to use extensively those resources.

8. Important research findings and recommendations

8.1 Important findings

The major findings of the study are as below:

- All the P.G. students visit the library for various purposes and the majority of them are weekly visitors to the library.

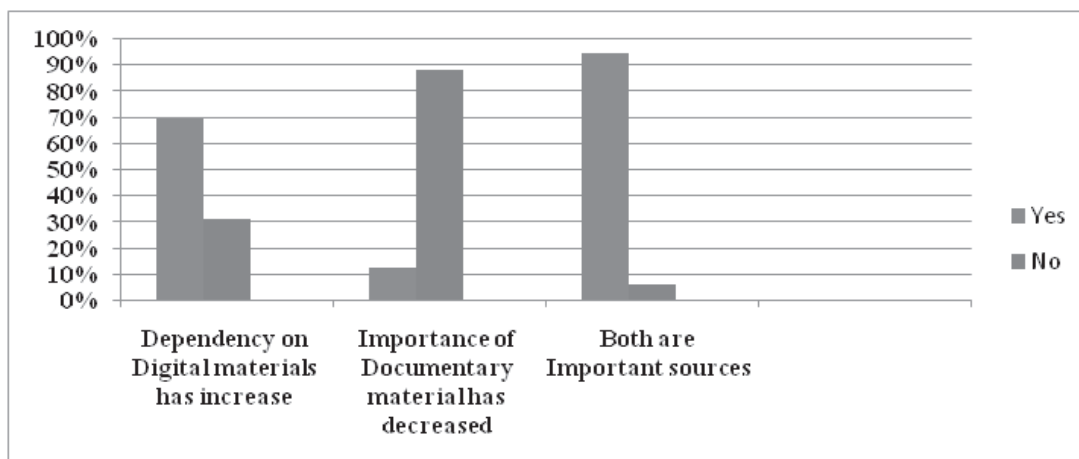


Figure 8: Influence of internet on reading habits

- In today's ICT/digital era, students are attracted to accessing e-resources, but they also regularly read printed material as well.
- Majority of P. G. students preferably used printed material and very few of them have read e-books/e-journals and digital information resources like.
- Preferences of reading material clearly show that the majority of P.G. students read subject books, followed by motivational books, newspapers, storybooks, novels, biographical books, magazines/journals, and poems as well as travel guidebooks.
- The use of digital materials by P. G. students are increasing rapidly.
- The P. G. students have a belief in conventional (printed) sources like books, journals, and newspapers than any other digital source. The user thinks that printed materials are more authentic than digital materials.

- P.G. students use digital sources to search any information because these are faster (time-saving) in searching information and more updated information.
- P.G. students like to read conventional (printed) sources than digital sources because they are familiar with the printed materials.

8.2 Suggestions and recommendations

The following suggestions for the libraries to acquire better collection and user services in the digital environment:

- Reading habits are very essential and very important disciplines to improve the knowledge and current awareness of the students; hence library professionals should act earnestly to encourage users to read traditional books for developing reading habits;
- The library should acquire books and newspapers mostly in printed form because the user prefers to read conventional documents



while using the library;

- The library should develop an electronic/digital resource collection of the library. And the multimedia resource should be collected by the library;
- The libraries should have a separate e-library section with internet facilities for the users;
- The library staff and users should have the minimum capacity to handle electronic/digital resources, and the internet and its related service;
- The library should join the consortia, online database, OPAC, etc. for the online journals and thesis/dissertation; and
- The user education program is a must for success in creating a reading habit in a digital (ICT) environment.

9. Conclusion

It is clear from this study that in the present scenario, the utility of digital and online materials has increased, but the students' confidence in traditional/documentary materials also remains. At the same time, most of the students are not able to access appropriate digital materials due to the digital divide. Reading habits are a very essential and very important discipline to improve the knowledge and current awareness of the student's/library users. Therefore, library professionals should work sincerely to encourage users to read traditional (Printed) materials/books to develop reading habits of users. Along with this, users should also be trained on how they can use digital materials better.

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