Facilities and Services of Gram Panchayat Libraries in Dharwad District: A Study

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Abstract

The present study examines the facilities and services of Gram Panchayat libraries through a survey distributed to 125 participants, with 115 responses received. Statistical analysis using the chi-square p-value revealed key insights: most users read daily, 62.61% are unmarried, and 59.13% are male. Library visits primarily serve to stay updated, with high satisfaction reported regarding the availability and organisation of competitive resources, newspapers and Employment News. The findings highlight that students are the primary users, viewing libraries as valuable spaces for learning and productive use of time through access to reference materials. The Gram Panchayat library is the best place for users to learn new things and spend worthwhile time, according to their positive opinions of the facilities, services, and sources.

Keywords
Gram Panchayat Libraries; Information Sources; Services Facilities; Infrastructure and Public Libraries

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1. Introduction

Gram Panchayat libraries, often regarded as grassroots hubs of knowledge, play a pivotal role in fostering education and awareness at the village level. These libraries serve as community centers where individuals from diverse backgrounds access resources to enhance literacy, acquire skills, and stay informed about various aspects of governance and development. Established under the local self-governance framework, these institutions aim to empower rural populations by making educational and informational resources easily accessible.The evolution of Gram Panchayat libraries reflects their growing importance in addressing the educational needs of rural India. Over time, these libraries have transitioned from traditional reading spaces to dynamic centers offering multifaceted extension activities such as literacy programs, digital literacy training, workshops on health and hygiene, and awareness drives about government schemes and citizen rights. By leveraging these activities, Gram Panchayat libraries have become instrumental in bridging the knowledge divide between urban and rural areas.

The Karnataka Public Libraries Act of 1965 established a network of public libraries at the state, district, taluk, and Gram Panchayat levels. In 2019, the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) took over management of 5,623 of these rural libraries. Dharwad district panchayat is a rural local body of Karnataka state. There are a total of 7 Panchayat Samitis, 144 Gram Panchayat libraries and 356 Villages under the Dharwad district panchayat jurisdiction.

2. Objective of the Study

1. To find out the existing information sources and services in the Gram Panchayat Libraries in Dharwad district.
2. To study the existing infrastructure facilities in Gram Panchayat Libraries in Dharwad district
3. To study the competitive exam resources.
4. To understand the user satisfaction and community engagement with the library

3. Scope of the Study

The study of the Facilities and Services of Gram Panchayat Libraries in Dharwad district, Karnataka. It focuses on evaluating the physical infrastructure, collections, services, human resources, and user satisfaction. The study does not cover all the gram panchayat libraries. The research is a pilot study with a small sample size, aiming to generate preliminary insights that can be used for more extensive future research and policymaking. The Facilities and Services of Gram Panchayat Libraries in Dharwad District.The utilisation of library resources, facilities, and services, and satisfaction with library collections and physical facilities in their respective gram panchayat libraries, and to discover ways and means to develop library resources in the gram panchayat in Dharwad district. Two taluka libraries in Dharwad are the focus of the proposed study. The research includes public libraries located in Kalghatgi and Kundgol.

4. Methodology

The study accepted the survey method of research the data collection tool is a questionnaire. Out of 125 questionnaires randomly distributed to users, 115 were duly completed and returned. The collected data were organised and analysed using Microsoft Excel, applying basic statistical methods to interpret the findings. The results of the questionnaire were statistically analyzed using the chi-square p-value.The results are intended to provide meaningful insights and practical conclusions that can benefit library services across the Gram Panchayat libraries of Kalghatgi and Kundgol.

5. Review of Literature

Devaraju (2017) mentioned in his study that through the advancement of digital technology, girls gather confidence in decision-making, apply it in science and technology, make plan for the advancement of research and become advanced through acquiring knowledge and its proper uses. Mary and Dhanavandan (2014) reveal what kind of services Public Libraries provide and how public Libraries improve. The Government provides a lot of funds for the improvement of rural Public Libraries. In this context, rural Libraries have brought rural women to the forefront of the world through the practice of reading. And through this the standard of living of rural women is changed and the society is improved. Mokbul R. Sabuj D. & Dibyendu P. (2015)This research examines and tracks the pathways through which information flows in the governance operations of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs),The study highlights how information contributes to capacity building among stakeholders and outlines a roadmap and guidelines needed to strengthen this capacity. Furthermore, it examines the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Management Information Systems (MIS), and Common Service Centers (CSCs) linked to PRIs in facilitating information-related functions. A core focus of the study is to evaluate how these informational activities contribute to achieving the socio-economic development goals for rural India, as envisioned in the relevant Constitutional amendments.

Singh and Kumar (2019) conducted a survey to explore the information needs and seeking behavior of users of the Gram Panchayat libraries in Kiwana, Panipat. Their findings revealed that the majority of respondents visited these libraries primarily to fulfil various information needs. Users accessed both print resources—such as books, newspapers, and magazines—and electronic media, including the internet, television, and radio. The main areas of interest for the users were entertainment, education, current affairs (both local and national), sports updates, and job-related information, particularly recruitment opportunities. Kumbar (2004) examined the evolution of the public library system in India, with a particular focus on Karnataka, by categorising it into three phases: ancient, medieval, and modern libraries.

The growth and development of the public library system in Karnataka prevailed on the minds of great visionaries like educationists, administrators, and planners of Karnataka to think and plan for the enactment of the Public Libraries Act in the state. He asserted that it was only after India's independence that Dr. Ranganathan's dream of the enactment of the Public Library Act was fulfilled. Through the good offices of the then Minister for Education, Avinaslingam Chettiar, a modified bill was introduced in the state legislature, which was passed as the Madras Public Libraries Act in 1948, but it is disheartening to note that the major states in terms of population and other natural resources, like UP, MP, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Punjab, have no library legislation.

6. Data Analysis

Table 1: Demographics of Respondents

Gender	**No. of respondents**	**%**
Male	68	59.13
Female	47	40.87
Marital status	**No. of respondents**	**%**
Married	43	37.39
Unmarried	72	62.61
Age	**No. of respondents**	**%**
8-14 years	25	21.73
15 – 21 years	42	36.52
22 - 35 years	31	26.95
Above 35 years	17	14.78

Table 1 shows the number of characteristics of respondents. It shows that 59.13% of respondents are male and only 40.87% of respondents are female. The table clearly shows that the majority of users are unmarried, 62.61%, and the remaining 37.39% of users are married. Surprisingly, 21.73% of respondents below under the age group of 8 to 14 years, and 36.52% of respondents come under the age group of 15 to 21 years, and 26.95% of respondent's average the age of 22 to 35 years, and 14.78% of respondents come under the age group of above 35 years.

Table 2: Frequency of Visits to the Library

Frequency of Visiting the library	**Frequency**	**%**
Daily	54	46.95%
Weekly	35	30.43%
Twice a week	12	10.43%
Monthly	8	06.95%
Rarely	6	05.21%
Total	**115**	**100**

Table 2 shows the frequency of visits to the library. The table reveals that a larger number of respondents, 54 (46.95%), visit the library daily, while about 35 (30.34%) of respondents visit the library weekly. Twelve (10.43%) respondents visit the library twice a week, eight (6.95%) visit monthly, and four (5.21%) are rare users.

Table 3: Average Time Spent in Library

Time Duration	**Number of respondents**	**%**
Below 1 hour	8	06.95%
1-2 hours	42	36.52%
2-3 hours	37	32.17%
Above 3 hours	28	24.34%
Total	**115**	**100**

The above table reveals the average time spent in the library on every visit. It is identified that the majority of respondents spend a maximum of 3 hours, which contributes. 42 (36.52%), and up to 1-2 hours were spent by 37(32.17%), followed by above hours spent by 3 (24.34%). At least below 1 hour, 8 (06.95%) respondents spent more than 1-2 hours in the library.

Table 4: Competitive Exam Sources

Career Related Collection/ Competitive Exam Sources	**Very Poor**	**Poor**	**Fair**	**Good**	**Very Good**	**p-value**
UPSC examinations	20 (17.39%)	33 (28.69%)	28 (24.34%)	20 (17.39%)	14 (12.17%)	0.001
KPSC examinations	31 (26.95%)	30 (26.09%)	28 (24.35%)	13 (11.30%)	13 (11.30%)	0.001
Bank examinations	11 (9.56%)	24 (20.87%)	18 (15.66%)	30 (26.09%)	32 (27.82%)	0.001

Railway examinations	19 (16.52%)	13 (11.31%)	24 (20.86%)	39 (33.91%)	20 (17.39%)	0.001
SSC examinations	9 (07.82%)	22 (19.14%)	27 (23.47%)	36 (31.32%)	21 (18.26%)	0.001
Engineering Service examinations	12 (10.43%)	17 (14.79%)	26 (22.61%)	36 (31.30%)	24 (20.86%)	0.001
UGC-NET, K-SET examinations	28 (24.34%)	34 (29.56%)	24 (20.86%)	18 (15.65%)	11 (09.56%)	0.001
Specific job composite books (SDA / FDA / PDO)	12 (10.43%)	15 (13.04%)	30 (26.61%)	38 (33.05%)	20 (17.39%)	0.001
Job oriented books	11 (09.57%)	24 (20.86%)	34 (29.57%)	25 (21.73%)	21 (18.26%)	0.001
Newspapers and Employment News	14 (12.17%)	12 (10.44%)	32 (27.83%)	22 (19.13%)	35 (30.43%)	0.001

Chi-square p-value indicates a significant outcome, and thus it justifies the goodness of fit for the dataset.

Table 4 data indicate users' evaluations of the adequacy and usefulness of career-related and competitive exam resources in Gram Panchayat libraries for a variety of examination categories. The majority of respondents rated resources for UPSC (46.08%) and KPSC (53.04%) as very low, indicating major inadequacy in high-stakes civil services preparation. Conversely, resources for bank exams (53.91%), railways (51.3%), and SSC (49.58%) were relatively well received, suggesting better availability and satisfaction. Notably, Engineering Services (52.16%), specific job books like SDA/FDA/PDO (50.44%), and job-oriented books (39.99%) were favorably rated as well. However, UGC-NET/K-SET and UPSC materials were still considered insufficient by the majority, with 53.9% and 46.08% of respondents, respectively. Access to newspapers and employment news was viewed positively, with over 49.56% respectively.

The consistently low p-value (0.001) across categories indicates statistically significant variation in satisfaction levels across exam types, reinforcing the need for targeted improvements in specific collections, especially civil service and post-graduate competitive exam materials.

Table 5: Gram Panchayat Library Benefit Teenagers and Youths

The Gram Panchayat library benefits teenagers and youths	**Yes**	**%**	**No**	**%**
Teach teens about important life skills	47	(40.86%)	68	(59.13%)
Help in summer reading programs	87	(75.65%)	28	(24.34%)
Partners in child development	51	(44.34%)	64	(55.65%)
Are centres of socialisation?	79	(68.69%)	36	(31.30%)
Are centres of Transmission of culture?	42	(36.52%)	73	(63.47%)
Are centres social placement, social control and social networks	45	(39.13%)	70	(60.86%)
Assist for working in groups	44	(38.26%)	71	(61.73%)
Are centres of cultural innovation	33	(28.69%)	82	(71.30%)
Are centres for bridging up of generation gap	26	(22.60%)	89	(77.39%)
Are centres of Political and Social integration	57	(49.56%)	58	(50.43%)

Table 5 shows that users have conflicting feelings regarding Gram Panchayat libraries supporting teenagers and youngsters. A significant majority believe these libraries contribute positively to summer reading programs 87, 75.65%), socialisation 79 (68.69%), and political and social integration 57 (49.56%), indicating their value as educational and communal spaces. However, fewer respondents view them as centers for cultural innovation 33(28.69%) or as tools to bridge the generation gap. 26 (22.60%), overall, while Gram Panchayat libraries are appreciated for their immediate educational and social benefits, their broader cultural and developmental roles are less recognized by the community.

Table 6: Extension Service / Community Information Services, your library

Services/Information	HS	S	N	DS	HDS	p-value
Book Exhibition	40 (34.78%)	30 (26.08%)	20 (17.39%)	15 (13.04%)	10 (08.69%)	0.001
Quiz Competition	35 (30.43%)	43 (37.39%)	17 (14.78%)	12 (10.43%)	8 (06.95%)	0.001
7 Debates	33 (28.69%)	34 (29.56%)	26 (22.61%)	17 (14.78%)	5 (04.34%)	0.001
Essay Competitions	45 (39.13%)	26 (22.61%)	23 (29.13%)	12 (10.43%)	10 (08.69%)	0.001
Sports Competitions	44 (38.26%)	35 (30.43%)	22 (19.13%)	8 (06.95%)	6 (05.21)	0.001
Film Shows	22 (19.13%)	12 (10.43%)	38 (33.04%)	30 (26.08%)	13 (11.30%)	0.001
National Library week	34 (29.36%)	36 (31.30%)	22 (19.13%)	11 (09.56%)	12 (10.43%)	0.001
Student Support Services	35 (30.43%)	32 (27.82%)	18 (15.65%)	20 (17.39%)	10 (08.69%)	0.001
Adult Education Programs	32 (27.82%)	29 (25.21%)	28 (24.34%)	15 (13.04%)	11 (09.56%)	0.001
Orientation Programs	32 (27.82%)	36 (31.30%)	22 (19.13%)	16 (13.91%)	9 (07.82%)	0.001
Community Awareness Programs	26 (22.60%)	29 (25.21%)	25 (21.73%)	14 (12.17%)	21 (18.26%)	0.001
Festivals	34 (29.36%)	30 (26.08%)	19 (16.52%)	18 (15.65%)	14 (12.17%)	0.001
Dramas	30 (26.08%)	34 (29.36%)	20 (17.39%)	12 (10.43%)	19 (16.52%)	0.001

HS-Highly Satisfied, S-Satisfied, N-Neutral, DS-Dissatisfied, HDS-Highly Dissatisfied

Chi-square p-value indicates a significant outcome, and thus it justifies the goodness of fit for the dataset.

Table 6 shows respondents' levels of satisfaction with various academic and extracurricular services. A significant p-value of 0.001 across all categories indicates statistically significant differences in satisfaction levels. Notably, activities like Essay Competitions 33(39.13%), Sports Competitions (38.26%), and Book Exhibitions 40(34.78%) garnered high satisfaction, suggesting strong student engagement and approval. On the other hand, events such as Film Shows 22(19.13%) and Community Awareness Programs 32(27.82%) show more neutral or negative responses, indicating areas needing enhancement. Services like Quiz Competitions and National Library Week were also well-received, with 30(30.43%) and 34(29.36%)respectively. The overall skew toward positive satisfaction suggests that students respect these co-curricular activities; however, specific events may benefit from quality or relevance enhancements based on neutrality or dissatisfaction ratings.

Table 6. 7: Infrastructure in Gram Panchayat Libraries

Attributes	HS	S	N	DS	HDS	p-value
Sitting chairs	25 (21.17%)	45 (39.13%)	20 (17.39%)	18 (14.78%)	7 (17.39%)	0.001
Reading tables	28 (24.34%)	42 (36.52%)	18 (15.65%)	17 (14.78%)	10 (08.69%)	0.001
Book shelves facilities	22	38	28	22	5	0.001

/Display	(19.13%)	(33.04%)	(24.34%)	(19.13%)	(04.34%)	
Notice board facilities	20 (17.39%)	35 (30.43%)	30 (26.09%)	21 (18.26%)	9 (07.82%)	0.001
Photocopying service	14 (12.17%)	26 (22.61%)	30 (26.09%)	30 (26.09%)	15 13.04	0.001
Fans and air conditions	18 (15.65%)	30 (26.09%)	28 (24.34%)	22 (19.13%)	17 (14.78%)	0.001
Lightings	30 (26.09%)	38 (33.05%)	22 (19.13%)	15 (13.04%)	10 (08.69%)	0.001
Ventilations	30 (26.09%)	35 (30.43%)	20 (17.39%)	22 (19.13%)	8 (06.95%)	0.001
Toilet facilities	10 (08.69%)	20 (17.39%)	29 (25.21%)	37 (32.17%)	19 (16.52%)	0.001
Library space	25 (21.73%)	38 (33.05%)	22 (19.13%)	25 (21.73%)	5 (04.34%)	0.001
Flooring	10 (08.69%)	50 (43.47%)	25 (21.73%)	22 (19.13%)	8 (06.95%)	0.001
Entrance and exist	22 (19.13%)	35 (30.43%)	28 (24.34%)	24 (20.86%)	9 (07.82%)	0.001

HS-Highly Satisfied, S-Satisfied, N-Neutral, DS-Dissatisfied, HDS-Highly Dissatisfied

Chi-square p-value indicates a significant outcome, and thus it justifies the goodness of fit for the dataset.

Table 7 shows that infrastructure-related qualities of gram panchayat libraries usually result in high user satisfaction, particularly for basic and essential facilities. The most common responses were for sitting chairs 25(21.17%), reading tables 28(24.34%), fans and air conditioning 18 (15.65%), lighting 30(26.09%), library space 25(21.73%), and ventilation 30(21.73%), suggesting the highest responses, indicating that core physical facilities efficiently satisfy user expectations. Facilities like book shelving/display 22 (19.13%), notice boards 20(17.39%), photocopying 14(17.39%), and toilet facilities 10(08.69%) highlight areas requiring urgent upgrades or improved maintenance. Entrance/exit 22(19.13%) and flooring 10(08.69%) received moderate satisfaction, indicating basic adequacy with room for improvement.

The p-value of 0.001 across all attributes confirms statistically significant differences in satisfaction levels, emphasizing the importance of prioritising improvements in technological access and hygiene facilities while maintaining strong performance in fundamental infrastructure areas.

Table 8: The Satisfaction of Gram Panchayat Library Resources

Gram Panchayat Library	**Frequency**	**%**	**p-value**
Highly Satisfied	43	37.39%	0.001
Satisfied	36	31.30%	0.001
Neutral	22	19.13%	0.001
Dissatisfied	8	06.95%	0.001
Highly Dissatisfied	6	05.21%	0.001

\Chi-square p-value indicates a significant outcome, and thus it justifies the goodness of fit for the dataset.

The table below shows that more than 43(37.39%) of respondents say they are highly satisfied; it is followed by satisfied 31(3130%) and neutral 22(19.13%). Dissatisfied 06 (06.95%), and highly dissatisfied 6(05.21%). Chi-square p-value indicates a significant outcome, and thus it justifies the goodness of fit for the dataset.

7. Findings of the Study

i. It shows that the majority of 59.13% of respondents are male and only 40.87% of respondents are female.
ii. Mostly 15-21 age group responses to the public library are (32.56%).
iii. It is identified that the majority of respondents spend a maximum of 3 hours, which contributes. 42 (36.52%),
iv. The majority of respondents rated resources for UPSC (46.08%) and KPSC (53.04%) as very low, indicating major inadequacy in high-stakes civil services preparation. by a chi-square p-value of 0.001.

v. A significant majority believe these libraries contribute positively to summer reading programs, 87 (75.65%),
vi. A significant p-value of 0.001 across all categories indicates statistically significant differences in satisfaction levels.
vii. The satisfaction with public library resources of respondents is high (37.39%).

8. **Conclusion**

The condition of the majority of rural libraries, particularly in the heartland of India, is extremely miserable. Many of them do not have their own building; some are located in small thatched huts, and some share a room and time with their libraries. Lack of information resources is another serious bottleneck in developing library services. Very few libraries provide even reading-room facilities. Moreover, the service is highly irregular and uncertain. There is also a dearth of suitable reading materials in regional languages. The demand for books in rural libraries is mainly limited to light literature in the regional language. The quality of library service depends to a great extent on the quality of the person rendering the service. It is the librarian who can make or unmake the services. It is up to the imagination, initiative, resourcefulness and dedication of the librarian that can make the library an ideal Gram Panchayat Library. All it needs is a competent librarian for organising information services in a balanced manner to serve all sections of the community. This calls for the role of the Department of Public Libraries and necessary legislations for the development of a functional Gram Panchayat Library System rather than passive Gram Panchayat Libraries.

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