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Reading Habits of Research Scholars in Changing Environment with special reference to B. R. A. Bihar University, Muzaffarpur

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Abstract:

Recent development in information and communication technology especially the internet has brought out significant change in the reading habits of reader in accordance with the way which generate storage repackage and make use of information. The purpose of the study was to focus on reading habits of research scholars in digital/internet environment. A survey of 130 research scholars of BRA Bihar University, Muzaffarpur (Bihar) was done to find reading habits, impact of internet on reading, average time spent on reading, types of reading materials preferred, etc.

Keywords: Reading habits, Digital resources, online resources, Digital Divide.

1. Introduction:

Reading habits unlike any other habits are rather difficult to study. In order to know about the development and rate of reading habits among the present generation of readers, we have to know more about 'reading habits' and changing reading habits. Reading and learning are the two sides of the same knowledge acquiring coin. Both these activities have to perform by any human being simultaneously. We may learn certain things without reading and then in order to develop our knowledge on that area, we read first and then only we learn that area much more in detail and for that we need further readings.

How can we define reading as such? Reading cannot be simple phenomena, but comprise countless different form. Reading could be defined as the act of deciphering a piece of writing. We know that knowledge as well as power both are gained by reading. Reading makes us more alive. A book is

undoubtedly a good tool, if it is sincerely read by a doctor, a manager, a teacher, a businessman, a physician, an engineer or by men of any other callings. It is aptly has been said that 'some books are to be swallowed, some are to be tested and some others to be chewed and digested'. Reading process required practices, development and refinement regularly.

The internet is offering an environment for the reading of various kind of literature in the digital format. Now we are living in the midst blooming digital revolution age. People are thronging towards the internet and digital library for finding desired information. For finding any information now-a-days people are approaching the digital material or internet immediately rather than printed reading materials.

2. Objective of the study:

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- To identify information need and reading habits of the users;
- To find out the amount of time spent in reading and acquiring information;
- To find out the reason of reading books;
- To find out the form and types of reading material they are interested;
- To find out the impact of internet on their reading habits;
- To explore the currency and use of internet by the research scholars;
- To investigate the types of literature being read by research scholars; and
- To explore the tools used to find information on the internet.

3. Methodology:

In order to know the reading habits of the research scholars of BRA Bihar University, Muzaffarpur, survey method has been followed. A questionnaire was designed keeping in view the objectives of the study for collection of data. The questionnaire was distributed randomly to 130 research scholars of the BRA Bihar University, Muzaffarpur, Bihar.

4. Data analysis & Interpretation:

A survey of 130 research scholars of BRA Bihar University, Muzaffarpur (Bihar) was done to find out reading habits, impact of internet on reading, average time spent on reading, types of reading materials preferred, etc. The questionnaire was distributed randomly to 130 research scholars of the BRA Bihar University, Muzaffarpur. Out of those 97 questionnaires were received back with a response rate of 74.6 percent.

Table 1. Amount of time spent on Printed Vs. Digital/Internet Materials

Amount of time spent by the Research Scholars of :	Printed (Document)	Digital	Internet Use
Social Science	4-5 hours	1-2 hours	1-2 hours
Science	3-4 hours	2-3 hours	1-2 hours
Humanities	5-6 hours	1-2 hours	1-2 hours
Others	4-6 hours	1-2 hours	1-2 hours

It has been found out that even today research scholars/students prefer to study printed (Documentary) materials as compared to digital materials. Although research scholars of science faculty use digital materials more than research scholars of other faculty.

Table 2. Use of Internet for Research Purpose

Frequency	No. of Research Scholar	Percent
2 - 5 hours in a week	40	41.23
6 - 15 hours in a week	32	32.98
More than 15 hours	17	17.52
Less than 2 hours	8	8.24

It has been found out that 41.23 % research scholars use internet 2-5 hours in a week, 32.98 research scholars use internet 6-15 hours in a week, 17.52 research scholars use internet more than 15 hours in a week and 8.24 research scholars use internet less than 2 hours in a week.

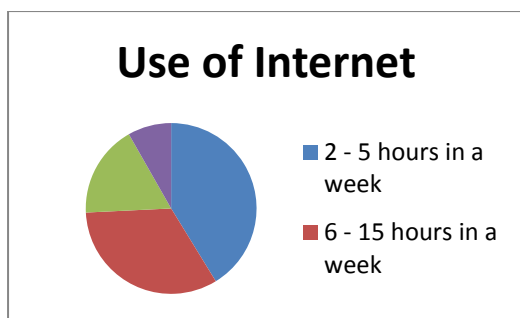


Fig. 1

Table 3. Use of Digital/Internet resources

Types	No. of Research Scholar	Percent
E-Books	65	67.01
E-Journals	67	69.07
Govt. Publications	34	35.05
Standards and Patents	04	4.12
Technical Reports	07	7.21
E-Thesis/ Dissertation	58	59.79

Table no. 3 indicates that while ranking the use of internet resources used by the research scholars in-general, e-journals come to the top rank with 69.07 % while e-books occupy second position with 67.01 % and e-thesis/ dissertation occupy third position with 59.79% . The use of government Publications are 35.05 % and, that of standards/patents and technical reports is less than 10 %.

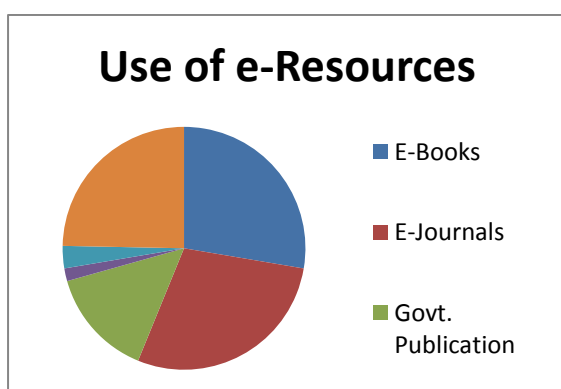


Fig. 2

Table 4. Benefits/defects of Internet/Digital material over Conventional document

	Digital material	Conventional document	Both
Time saving	74%	26%	--
Easy to use	18%	77%	5%
More Informative	51%	39%	10%
Current and updated Information	45%	43%	12%
Less Expensive	70%	29%	1%
Reliability	40%	45%	15%
Satisfaction Level	43%	47%	10%
Digital Divide	73%	--	--

It is clear from Table 4 that most of the people consider the use of digital material as important for saving time (74%), while in terms of ease of use, the documentary source is considered useful (77%). There is almost equal trust in both from the point of view of updated information and reliability. Readers consider digital content to be less expensive (70%) but satisfaction levels are almost the same.

The digital divide has generally been defined as the gap in access to technology by socioeconomic status, race, and/or gender. Technology is important for reading/ learning and research. The impact of the world wide web (Internet) on education and in every aspect of our community is profound. Access to the information available from cyber-space is crucial because information can be used in routine everyday life for research, education, business transactions, personal communication, information gathering, job

searches and career development. The digital divide prevents people from getting an online resource because they don't have access to the required technology. Bridging this divide will accelerate everyone's ability to learn, share, interact, and solve problems together "The digital divide looks at the role which computers are playing in widening socioeconomic and educational gaps throughout our society". It is clear from Table 4 that most of the scholars (73%) feel unable to access the correct information due to the problem of digital divide.

Table 5. Influence of Internet on Reading Habits

Types	Yes	No
Dependency on digital materials has increased	74%	26%
Importance of documentary material has decreased	11%	88%
Both are important sources	99%	1%

It is clear from table 5 that dependency on digital sources has increased (74%), though some 88% believed that the importance of documentary sources is still intact. 99% believed that the documentary and digital sources both are important for research purpose.

Table 6. Frequency of visit to the Library

Almost Daily	9 %
Once in a week	58%
Twice in a week	22%
Occasionally	11%

The above table shows that around 9% of the research scholar visit the library daily, 58% once in a week, around 22% twice in a week and 11% visit occasionally. The quantum of the research scholar who visit the library once or twice in a week is high.

analysis expressed that many of the research scholars are regular user of the library.

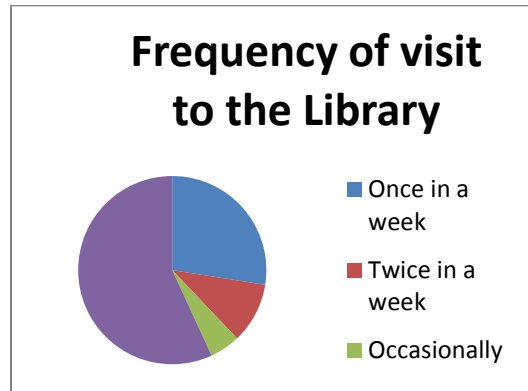


Fig. 3

Table 7. Time spent in Library in a week

1-5 hours	55 %
5-10 hours	17.5 %
10-15 hours	20 %
More than 15 hours	7.5 %

Table number 7 states that 55% of research scholar read for 1-5 hrs in a week, around 17.5 % for 5-10 hours, 20% for 10- 15 hours and around 7.5 % read more than 15 hours in a week. This figure highlights how much time is devoted by the research scholar in library.

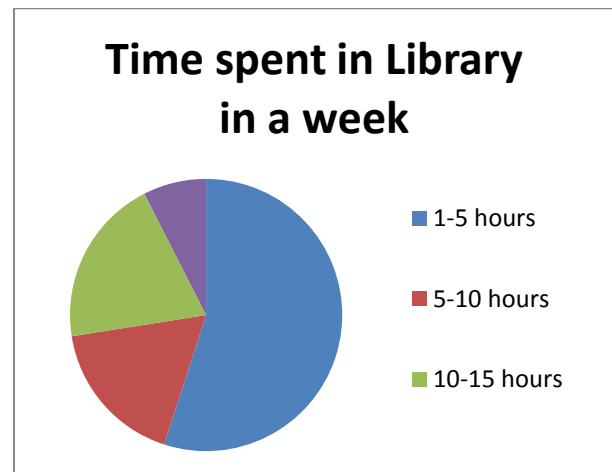


Fig. 4

Table 8. Use of Different types of Reading materials

Books	33%
Thesis and Dissertation	24%
Journal, Magazine, Newspaper etc.	28%
Online/ Digital Sources	5 %

This table explained that 43% of research scholars prefer the documentary sources while using library, 33% textbook, around 24% thesis and dissertation, only 5% online searching and around 28% prefer journal, newspaper and magazine. The purpose of the table is to know the opinion of the most preferred reading source, it was found out that conventional sources highly appreciated by research scholars.

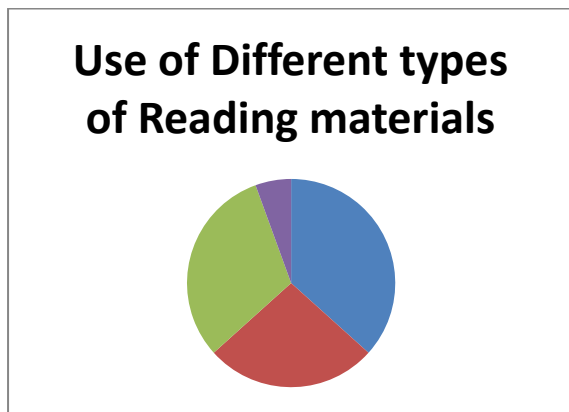


Fig. 5

5. Findings and Recommendations:

The major findings of the study are as follows:

- The use of digital source of information by research scholars is increasing rapidly.
- Research scholars have more belief on conventional (printed) sources like books, journal, and newspaper than any other digital source. The user thinks that print sources are more authentic than digital sources.
- Research Scholars use digital sources to search any information because these are time saving in searching information and having updated information.
- Research Scholars like to read conventional (printed) sources than

digital sources because they are familiar with the printed documents.

- The use of digital/e-resources used by the research scholars in-general, e-journals comes on the top rank while e-books occupies second position and e-thesis or dissertation occupies third position.
- Research scholars prefer the documentary sources while using library. The purpose of the study is to know the opinion of most preferred reading source; it was found out that conventional sources was highly appreciated by research scholars.
- It is also evident that the proper use of digital and e-sources need some prior knowledge and training for using them.

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

- The library should acquire books and newspapers mostly in printed form, because users prefer to read conventional document while using library.
- The library should develop electronic/digital resource collection of the library and the multimedia resource should be collected by library.
- The libraries should have a separate e-library section with internet facility for the users.
- The libraries should list out the important link of different information sources and it should be there with each of the computer in the e-library section.
- The library staff and users should have adequate capacity to handle digital resources, and the internet and its related services.
- The library should join the consortia, online database, OPAC etc. for the online journals and thesis/dissertation.
- The user education program is must for success in creating reading habit in digital environment.

6. Conclusion:

It is clear from this study that in the present scenario, the utility of digital and online materials has increased, but the students are more confident in traditional/documentary sources of information even today. Besides it, most of the students are not able to access

appropriate digital materials due to digital divide. The digital divide prevents people from getting an online resource because they don't have access to the required technology. Bridging this divide will accelerate everyone's ability to learn, share, interact, and solve problems together.

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