

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)

Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

2021

Reading habits of Lakhimpur District library of Assam: A Case Study of COVID-19 pre and post Lockdown

Hima Jyoti Deka
hjdeka@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>



Part of the [Information Literacy Commons](#)

Deka, Hima Jyoti, "Reading habits of Lakhimpur District library of Assam: A Case Study of COVID-19 pre and post Lockdown" (2021). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 6223.
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/6223>

***Reading habits of Lakhimpur District library of Assam:
A Case Study of COVID-19 pre and post Lockdown***

Author

Hima Jyoti Deka, Librarian

North Bank College, Ghilamara.

P.O. Ghilamara. Lakhimpur

Pin: 787053

Assam, India.

M-0 8638199236

hideka@gmail.com

Abstract:

This paper is based on the District library, Lakhimpur, Assam, India, which is an endeavor to highlight the reading habits of users in Pre & Post lockdown period (pre lockdown period refer as April 2019 to 24th March 2020 and post Lockdown as after 30th June 2020 to 20th March 2021) of Lakhimpur District Library (LDL). The aim of the present study is also to find out the time used by the users of the Lakhimpur district library in different age groups. The finding of the study also reveals that there is scope for development of LDL to bring more users. The study highlights the pre & post lockdown period scenario of the library where 150 Nos. of users were surveyed with structured questionnaire as a tool for data collection and collected data has been analyzed and presented in the tables and based on the available data on the Library suggestions have been given to improve the functions of the Library.

Keywords: Public library, users, reading habit, district library, Covid- 19, pre and post lockdown

Introduction:

A district library should serve as an apex library for each district with public libraries at city, town and village levels, constituting important components in the district library system. It will take leadership in establishing linkages between all other public libraries under the district and work towards sharing the resources. A district library should also provide for more facilities and recreation for the handicapped and inner-privileged classes e.g literature services within their area, wherever necessary, hospital, prison and infirmary are to be covered under this services. (Encyclopaedia of modern library and information science ed by Manisha Dawra, pp.57). The public libraries are social institutions which support the lifelong learning process. Public library is considered as an essential part of modern society. Due to rapid development of the information technology, revolutionary changes in the organization and management of information in the Public libraries have been occurred. In the 21st century, Public Library has been taking an important role in fostering Information literacy skills among the readers. Day by day libraries are facing new challenges, new demands, new expectations and variety of information services from the readers. Public library need to cope up with readers which are directly and indirectly related to cultural, educational and economic condition of nation. It has no boundary of readers in sex, caste, age in knowledge acquiring field.

The application of ICT is very important now a days for library networking system. There is a need for public library network system in Assam. According to UNESCO's 'Terminology of Documentation', public library is 'a library which serves

the population of a community or region free of charge or for a nominal fee”. “Public library is a living force for education, culture and information and is an essential agent for the fostering of peace and understanding between people and between nations”. At present, there is one State Central Library, 23 (twenty three) district libraries functional in the different district headquarters of Assam along with 14 sub divisional Libraries and 204 Rural Libraries located in Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Dhemaji, Dhubri, Dibrugarh, Diphu, Goalpara, Golaghat, Guwahati, Haflong, Hailakandi, Jorhat, Karimganj, Kokrajahr, Mangaldoi, Marigaon, Nagaon, Nalbari, North Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, Silchar, Tezpur and Tinsukia, Udalguri .

The contemporary years has brought about a paradigm shift in our lives. Our all the activities began differently, even reading habit. Now a day’s a good section of people have been changed their reading habits from print to non print version. To keep one engaged many more options are available in various activities. During this pandemic situation people got enough time to engage any activities. People of different age groups may have diverse reading habits. Students of schools and colleges may have an entire different interest than seniors or adults. *The study* is to analyze the time engagement of Library users on reading during this crisis period and their mode of selection of Library services based on their ages. For a Librarian it would be interesting to analyse the time invested by library users for reading content.

Objectives of the study:

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- To assess the reading attitude of readers at Lakhimpur District Library (LDL) of Assam.
- To examine the age wise pre lockdown & post lockdown member registration & time utilization by the users at LDL
- To find out the reading habits of users during pre lockdown & post lockdown
- **To** Analysis the problem and prospects currently faced by the Lakhimpur District Library (LDL) for providing proper atmosphere to the Library users in pre lockdown & post lockdown period.

Methodology:

The following methodologies have been adopted to carry out the study.

1. The primary data are collected from survey and observation method for which questionnaire have been prepared to collect the survey data. The primary data have been

collected from survey where 200 Nos. questionnaires' were distributed among the users to collect the data.

2. Personal interview, telephonic interview & conversations are used to assemble the data due to prevailing the Covid 19 pandemic situation.

3. The secondary data have been collected from published and unpublished documents, books, journals, website etc.

Lakhimpur District Library (LDL): An overview

The name Lakhimpur is believed to be originated from the word Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity. The flood prone Lakhimpur District is located in the North eastern part of North Bank of Brahmaputra river of Assam, India. The total population of the district is 10,42,137, where 529,674 Nos. male and 512463 Nos. are female as per the census report 2011. The district has the high literacy rate among the performed districts of the state with the literacy rate 78.39%. The district has been divided into two sub divisions namely Dhakuakhana and North Lakhimpur, where North Lakhimpur remains as district Head Quarter. It is a riverine district where Nos. Of important tributaries of Brahmaputra like Subansiri, Ranganadi, Boginadi, Dikrang etc have been flowing over the district. Due to chronic flood the district have huge fertile land for agriculture in the banks of these rivers. Therefore, District economy is mainly based on agriculture, where more than 80% people depend on Agri related activities. The District Library was established in 1968 at North Lakhimpur, Thana Road. There have been 10 Nos. of rural libraries functioning under its jurisdiction where 18th edition classification system has been introduced. The library has a rich collection on a wide range of subjects with a total collection of 100109 books. The Lakhimpur district library is doubled stories building comprising of a Museum and an auditorium. The library is in the ground floor with different sections includes : Reference section, children section, reading room section, science & technology section, Women's corner, senior citizen section, Librarian's chamber, office room, library assistants desk etc. The total numbers of registered users of LDL is 10228 on May 2021 with minimum of Rs 15/- taken as membership fee for the library .The library authority issued two Nos. of borrowers card to the users where two Nos. Books can be borrowed for duration of 14 days. The Library has been opening for users regularly from 11 am to 5 pm every day except Monday, 1st & 3rd Saturday of the month.

Review of Lakhimpur District Library Status:

The database received from the survey using the above mentioned questioners has reflected many dimensions of our study. Based on the database we shall analyze the infrastructure and basic facilities available in the library and also try to correlate the

changing nature of reading habits of the Library users in pre Lockdown and post Lockdown period of Covid 19 pandemic. We have demarcated the period of pre lockdown as the period from April 2019 to 24th March 2020 and post Lockdown as after 30th June 2020 to 20th March 2021).

Table1: Collection of Lakhimpur District Library:

Name of the Library	No. of Books	No. of Newspaper	No. of Magazines	Software used	E-Resources
Lakhimpur District Library	10010 9	National level 01 Nos State level 11Nos.	8	KOHA	Nil

(Source: Survey March, 2021)

The Table No. 1 reflects the books, magazines, newspapers strengths of the Lakimpur district Library. It is cleared from the table that 100109 Nos. of books available in the library. In case of newspaper only 01 nos. of National level News papers and 11 nos. of State level news paper available for users in the library. The magazine strengths of the library have not reflected an encouraging numbers in comparison to other district libraries of Assam. However, the library installed latest version of KOHA software to manage the library system but due to lack of trained manpower the software is not functional till date. It is pathetic to see that the library has not have any modern E-Resources available for which the young readers deprived to avail opportunities of E Resources in the Library and that leads to a negative impact to attract certain group of readers to the libraries.

Table No.2 Educational Qualification of the Library Users:

Qualification	Nos. of Frequency	Percentage
Below High School Level	26	17.33
Up to Higher Secondary Level	21	14
Up to graduation Level	55	36.66
Up to PG Level	48	32
Total	150	100

(Source: March/2021)

The Qualification and percentage of library users is shown in the Table No.2, We have provided 200 Nos. of Questioners among the active & enrolled Library users of different group, where 150 Nos. filled- in questioners were return back with rate of response percentage is 75.The data reading the qualification wise breakup of users where 55 (36.66%) nos. of up to graduation level is highest, followed by Up to PG Level 48 (32%). We have observed that up to HS level the representation of readers is low in comparison to other groups.

Table 3: Age wise membership of pre Lockdown & post Lockdown period in LDL:

Sl. No	Ages 5-12	Ages 13-25	Ages 25-40	Ages 41-80	Total Membership
Existing Member Pre Lockdown period	1,252	2996	1921	3843	10,012
New Member Post Lockdown period	35	61	53	67	216
Total	1287	3057	1974	3910	10,228

(Source: Survey, March, 2021)

Age wise status of Registered Members Of Lakhimpur District Library (LDL):

The Table No.3 depicts that the registration of the members as per the age group in LDL in pre lockdown period 2020 and registration of new members in post pandemic period. It is important to observe that the registration in post pandemic period has been slightly receded in comparison to other normal years. Among the age group, the registration is found to be more in the older age group in compare to younger age group. This is because of the less nos. of electronic facilities available in the LDL, which would have been more attractive option for the young age group readers.

Table 4: Per day Category of the Readers with subject interest& time utilization at Library

SL	Readers age group	Subject interest	Time utilization by readers in pre Lockdown period (Hours)	Time utilization by readers post Lock down period (Hours)
1	5-12	Story books, colour books, photographs, comics, magazines etc	1-3	1-2
2	12-25	Science and technology books, carrier guidance books , competitive books, novels, Newspapers, magazines etc.	1-4	1-3
3	25-40	carrier guidance books , competitive books, agriculture books, novels, Newspapers, magazines etc.	1-5	1-3
4	40 and above	Religious books, novels, Newspapers, magazines etc.	1-6	1-5

Source: (Survey, March/2021)

Scenario of Time Utilization by the Library Users:

The age wise time utilization and subject of Interest are shown in the Table No.3. The Table shows that time utilization of Users as per their subject interest has been increasing among the older category of readers in compare to the young category of readers. The time utilization is found to be highest among the 40 & above year's age group (1-6 hours) followed by 25-40 years age group (1-5hours), 12-25 years age group with less than 4 hours. However it is significant that time spent during post lockdown covid 19 periods less in the entire category irrespective of age group.

The reading habits of users in different age groups reflected their choice. The young age group preferred Story books, colour books, photographs, comics, magazines etc. They also searched for different E options but the Library has not had such facilities available to provide. The next age group (12-25 yr) preferred Science and technology books, carrier guidance books, competitive books, novels, Newspapers, magazines etc. The next age group (25-40 Yr) preferred agriculture books, novels, newspapers, magazines etc. The 40 and above years age groups preferred basically News papers, Novels & some religious books.

Table 5: Age wise readers in pre Lockdown and post Lockdown at LDL

Age(in years)	pre Lockdown frequency	Percentage	post Lockdown frequency	Percentage
5-12	18	12	Nil	00
12-25	25	16.67	18	12
25-40	89	59.33	98	65.33
40 and Above	18	12	34	22.67
Total	150	100	150	100

Source: (Survey, March/2021)

Age wise reader's Status of pre Lockdown and post Lockdown in LDL:

The Table No. 5 clearly shows the age wise readers status in the LDL, where slight increase of percentage shows in post lockdown period between the age group of 25-40 years (65.33 %). The 40 & above years age group (22.67%) has the highest Nos. of increase in compare to other groups. Due to non opening of 5-12 years section in the library in post lockdown period the attendance has been remain nil in this category of age. And 12-25 age groups the decline trend is prevailing in the post lockdown period. It reflects the impact of Covid 19 pandemic among the readers.

Table No. 6 Occupation wise readers' category

Status	Frequency (Pre Lockdown)	Percentage	Frequency (Post Lockdown)	Percentage
Students	73	48.67	80	53.34
Business Personnel	11	7.33	5	3.33
Govt/Private Employees/ Others	43	28.67	51	34
Media Professionals	23	15.33	14	9.33
Total	150	100	150	100

It is observed from the Table No. 6 that Students category of readers' dominate both the pre Lockdown & Post lockdown period, where the frequency is similar with raising trend in Post lockdown period. This group is followed by the Govt / Private Employees/Others group category, where the frequency & percentage is in the same range for both the period with little increasing trend in the Post lockdown period. However the percentage of Media Professional & Business personnel groups showing downward trend in Post lockdown period.

Table: 7 Gender wise Distribution of the Library Users

Sex	Numbers in pre Lockdown period	percentage	Numbers in post Lockdown period	percentage
Male	61	40.67	84	56
Female	89	59.33	66	44
Total	150	100	150	100

The data relating to the Gender wise breakup of LDL is shown in the table No.7. It is observed from the table that female user's dominance is more in the pre lockdown period in compare to Male. But in post Lockdown period we have observed a contrasting picture where male users dominance is in higher side.

Table: 8 Types of reading materials used by the users in LDL

Types of reading materials	Frequency	percentage
Text books	12	8
Newspapers	32	21.33
Magazines	25	16.67
General knowledge books	28	18.67
Fiction/Novels/story books	44	29.33
Biographies	9	6
others	150	100

The list of brief reading materials shown in the table indicates that Fiction/Novels/story books category has highest number of users in compare to other type of reading materials followed by Newspaper category.

Table: 9 Opinions about Library services

Opinion	No. of Response	percentage
Fully -Satisfied	35	23.33
Satisfied	75	50
Partially Satisfied	24	16
Not Satisfied	16	10.67
Total	150	100

The opinion about the satisfaction of existing Library services at LDL shows that majority of 75 (50%) are satisfied, followed by 35(23.33%) are fully –Satisfied, 24(16%) are partially satisfied & 16 (10.67) are not satisfied with the available resources with the Library.

Findings:

The major findings of the study on Lakhimpur District Library (LDL) summarized as follows:

1. The Educational qualification of the library users found to be high in graduation level followed by the PG level.
2. The age wise reading habits and time utilization has indicated that above 40 years of age group utilized more time in both pre& post Lock down period. The kids groups which were found to be absent post lockdown period indicate the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic.
3. The age wise users found to be high in the age group of 25-40 years group for both the pre & post lockdown period followed by above 40 years group. However the rate of increase of readers in post lockdown period significantly increased in the 40 years and above group.

4. The division of users on sex, it is seen that female has outnumbered the male in the pre lockdown period. But we observed that male users slightly increased in post lockdown period.
5. The analysis of profession of the users at LDL it was clear that Students category outnumbered all other profession followed by the Govt. service holder/other category.
6. During pre lockdown & post lockdown period the users the numbers of Kids users are not significant where only limited kids are studying story books.
7. The 12-25 years group of readers was busy with their favorite books, and few were using competitive books, novel from the library.
8. The 25-40 years & 40 years & above year's group preferred different News papers, Novel & Local Journals and had utilized good time in the library.
9. Majority of the users keep searching on information about Covid -19 probably to keep safe of the disease and up-to-date information about it.
10. Non-availability of information resources is a factor that hindered the readers from reading during the Lockdown.
11. Before lockdown some user awareness programmes were organized by the library for creating reading interest towards library among the people but after pandemic it was not organized.
12. The 50% of users satisfied with the existing library services where 10% of users were not satisfied with the available services of the Library.
13. In the age of ICT, lack of computers and internet facility library professionals cannot perform their duty properly.

Suggestions:

It is the duty of the library professionals to develop of reading habits among the people by organizing awareness activities Viz. lecture, meeting, quiz, arranging different types of competition etc. Therefore the Library should make efforts in providing services through automated library process which could be more effective for users.

The Library should subscribe electronic books and audio-video resources for better understanding and service can be given to the user community. The Library should increase the various types of collection to provide information.

It is important to have separate section for children including the resources related to the interest of the children which will boost the reading habits among the children. The library should have more separate sections for the women, children, and senior citizen which will be user oriented.

And last, the library should provide canteen, restroom and entertainment facility for the users to make library more attractive towards users.

Conclusion:

Dr. S.R.Ranganathan's third law "every books its reader" of library science indicates that every book must be accessible to its reader. The effect of new technology should not be the barrier to the reading habits of public libraries. Reading is a good habit that one needs to develop in life. People got enough time during this Lockdown period so it is important to read a good book at least for a few minutes each day to stretch the brain muscles for healthy functioning. It would be interesting for a Librarian to analyze the time invested by library users for reading content. In this survey conducted for collecting data for reading habits of library user's pre & post lockdown period may help them to innovate new library services for their users in the coming years. These services may help the people to learn more activities that help them to overcome psychological stress and keep mind strength during the unexpected situation. The Lakhimpur District Library (LDL) is situated in the heart of the North Lakhimpur town, Assam, wherein many users daily visited the library in pre& post covid lockdown period. Therefore it is important to upgrade user's needs along with existing library resources so that the Library may able to provide full satisfaction to the users and attract new generation users to the Library.

Reference:

1. Dawra, Manisha, ed (2003),vol-5. *Encyclopaedia of Modern Library and Information Science*, New Delhi: Rajat Publications.
- 2.Prajapati ,Bhagwatiben Govindbhai, (2013), *Lbrary and Information Science*, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House LTD,p7.
3. Rohman, Dr.Wakidur,(2006),*LIBRARY WORLD CONVERGING INFO-TECH &HIGHER EDUCATON WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ASSAM, DEMOW,SIVASAGAR:PB MANCH,p20.*
4. <http://egranthalaya.nic.in/> (Access on April 2021)
5. Ramesh Babu, B, ed. et.al (2003), *Knowledge Management Today and Tomorrow*, New Delhi: Ess Ess Publications.
6. Dawra, Manisha, ed.(2003),vol-1. *Encyclopaedia of Modern Library and Information Science*, New Delhi: Rajat Publications.
7. Barman, B (2007), Scenario of rural library movement in Assam. In Narendra Lahkar (Ed), *Rural Libraries in the north East India; Problems and prospects*, Kolkata; Central Reference Library, 43-64

8. Kumari, J. Vijaya.(2010), Public Library systems. Anmal Publication, New Delhi
9. Mahipal, D.S. Reading habits of District Public Library Users: A Survey (Special reference to Baster reason Chattishgarh), International Journal of Library and Information Science.7 (4). (2017),
- 10 Patil, F.G. Reading habits of Public Library Users: A Case study of city Central Library, Mandya, Global journal for Research Analysis 6(5) 2017, 530-532, Access on 25/04/2021

APPENDIX: (i)

**Survey Design & Collecting Responses:
Sample Survey Questionnaire for Library Staff:**

SL.No.	Survey Questions	Answer Type(Short)
1	What is the total No. of Books in the Library?	
2	What are the total No. of Journals/Magazines in the Library?(Both National/Foreign)	
3	How many News Paper regularly available in the Library?(All Languages)	
4	What are the E Resource facilities available in the Library?	
5	What is the total Nos. of Registered Member pre & post Lockdown?	
6	Age wise Nos. of available Members in the Library.(5-12, 12-25, 25-40, 40 & above)	
7	Age wise Nos. of Daily Readers in the Library. pre & post Lockdown .(5-12, 12-25, 25-40, 40- & above)	
8	Is any awareness programme arranged by the Library staff pre and post Lockdown period? (Viz. lecture, awareness camp ,meeting, quiz, arranging different types of competition etc	

Signature of Librarian:

APPENDIX: (ii)

Sample Survey Questionnaire for Library Users:

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Education Qualification:

Present Profession:

Sl.No.	Survey Questions	Question type
1	How much time do you spend for library purposes? -Less than an hour -1 to2 hours -3 to 5 hours -5+ hours - I do not read books	
2	Which type of books do you prefer to read during normal days?	
3	What type of books you prefer to read during this extraordinary situation of Covid19 Outbreak? -eBook -printed Book -both -I do not read books	
4	How many hours do you spend at home to read books during lockdown period? -Less than an hour -1 to2 hours -3 to 5 hours -5+ hours - I do not read books	
5	Which type of content do you like to read at home/ Library during lockdown period? - Books - Magazines - News Papers - Research Papers - I avoid reading books	

Author Biography

Myself presently working as a Librarian (Senior Scale) in North Bank College, Ghilamara, Assam, India.