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Women Empowerment: Role of Public Libraries

Dr. Prashant S. Pagade
Librarian, Vidarbha Arts & Commerce College, Lakhani Dist : Bhandara

Abstract: ***The present study emphases on the role of public library on women empowerment. The population of the present study is women users of Bhandara District Library. To collect the data a questionnaire method was used. Out of 300 questionnaires were distributed, 188 questionnaires were returned. The study carried out to explore the awareness and use of information and communication technology tools and services in public libraries by women, the role of public libraries in the educational, cultural and socio-political development of women and to signifying appropriate method for women empowerment with the help of public library. The present Study shows that the empowerment programs organized by public libraries play an important role in women empowerment. A social program organized by the library also supports women empowerment. Information technology has a positive effect on women empowerment. Information sources in the library are not sufficient to meet the needs of women users and facilities of the library with regards to women need to be improved. Application of Information Technology area was very weak in case of women.***

Keyword: Public Library, Women Empowerment. Bhandara District.

I. INTRODUCTION

Empowering women has become the focus of considerable discussion and attention all over the world as well as associated with research in many educational disciplines including that of adult education. Today women is stigmatized and rebuked by the family and the society. In an attempt to bridge gender disparity in the developing world different agencies are trying to elevate the status of women so that they become increasingly visible in various roles such as socio economic, political and civil leadership. Over two decades of the women's movement across India, we have seen an increasing emphasis on the promotion of grass roots level organization for women development and discussions as women status and empowerment. In India women are more than man, most of this Women are living in bad condition they are suffering various problems since independence; the Government has implemented several empowerment programs to develop or empower the Women.

A. Objectives of the Study

1) To find out the frequency of use of public libraries by women.
2) To find out information services in public libraries mostly used by women.
3) To explore the awareness and use of information and communication technology tools and services in public libraries by women.
4) To evaluate the role of public libraries in the educational, cultural and socio-political development of women.
5) To signifying appropriate method for women empowerment with the help of public library.

II. METHODOLOGY

In this study, for the collection of data of this study a well designed questionnaire were used. For this study all the female users of the library are selected. In which the major users of this study are students, housewives, government employees and other people of Bhandara district public library. For this study a random sampling technique was used. 300 questionnaires were distributed among the users of the district public library. Out of which 188 questionnaires were returned. The collected data is analyzed and presented in the form of tables with necessary interpretation.

1) Category-wise Distribution of Data The details of category-wise members were collected and the information is tabulated as below.

Category	Number of questionnaires distributed	Responses received	Percentage
Students	82	56	29.78
Employees	63	39	20.74
Housewives	96	61	32.44
Others	59	32	17.02
	300	188	100

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The study shows that Out of 300 questionnaires were distributed among the women users of the public library, 188 questionnaires were returned. 32.44 % of housewives followed by 29.78% students, 20.74 % Employees and 17.02% of others give responses to the questionnaires. From this it is concluded that Housewives give most of responses and others give a least responses.

2) Frequency of Library Visit

Frequency	No. of responses	Percentage
Daily	58	30.85
Weekly	39	20.75
Monthly	44	23.40
Occasionally	47	25.00
	188	100

A question asked about the frequency of library visit to the users, the study shows that 30.85 % of users visit library on Daily basis, while 25.00% users visited occasionally followed by 23.40% users visited monthly and 20.75% on weekly basis. From this it is concluded that majority of users visited on daily basis to the public library.

Frequency	No. of responses	Percent
Excellent	62	32.97
Good	66	35.10
	37	19.68
Bad	13	06.91
Very Bad	10	05.32

To check their efficiency, their services help the women users in their empowerment, the women users were asked to comment on performance of staff is good, using the five response options as - a) Strongly agree, b) agree, c) neutral, d) disagree and e) strongly disagree

Majority of users i.e. 35.10 % agreed with the statement of performance of staff is good, 32.97% users strongly agreed and while06.91% disagree and 05.32% strongly disagree with the statement, remaining 19.68 % users remains neutral. This implies strong underlying fact that majority of the users satisfied with the services of the staff.

3) Services of the Library

District Public library conducted various programs like cultural programs, women's skill programs, reading competitions, seminars, talks etc. to its potential users. I this study researcher asked a question, which service is most commonly used by women for their empowerment.

Frequency	No. of responses	Percent
Reading Competition	60	31.91
Seminar	47	25.00
Cultural Program	23	12.23
Skill development Program	68	36.17
	188	100

The study shows that the 36.17 % of women users opined that women skill programs is more beneficial for women empowerment followed 31.91% opined for Reading competition, 25.00% for Seminar and 12.23% opined for Cultural programs is beneficial. The analysis indicated that majority of the women users of public library suggested that skill programs play an important role in women empowerment.

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Purpose of using internet	No. of responses	Percent
Carrier development	74	39.36
Self Study	44	23.40
Daily Purpose	49	26.07
Entertainment	21	11.17
	188	100

The users were asked to give their opinion about the purpose of using internet facilities, 39.36% of women user use internet for carrier development followed by 26.07% for daily purpose, 23.40% for self study and 11.17% for entertainment. From this it is concluded that most of the women users use internet for carrier development.

The users were asked to give their opinion about the effect of information technology on women empowerment, 54.26% of respondent's opined positive effect on women empowerment, while 45.74% of users opined negative effect. .This conclude that information technology have a positive effect on women empowerment.

Resources	Number of responses	Percentage
Positive	102	54.26
Negative	86	45.74
	188	100

As per the above table shows that woman respondents give first preference to newspapers 40.43% followed by periodicals 35.63%, internet 12.23% and books 11.71% respectively.

Resources	Number of responses	age
Books	22	11.71
Periodicals	67	35.63
Newpaper	76	40.43
Internet	23	12.23
	188	100

From the above table it is seen that newspaper are the most supporting resource among women empowerment followed by periodicals and internet. Very few percentage of womens opened that books is supporting to women empowerment.

Programmes	Number of responses	age
Social	62	32.98
Financial	23	12.23
Cultural	58	30.85
Technological	45	29.94
	188	100

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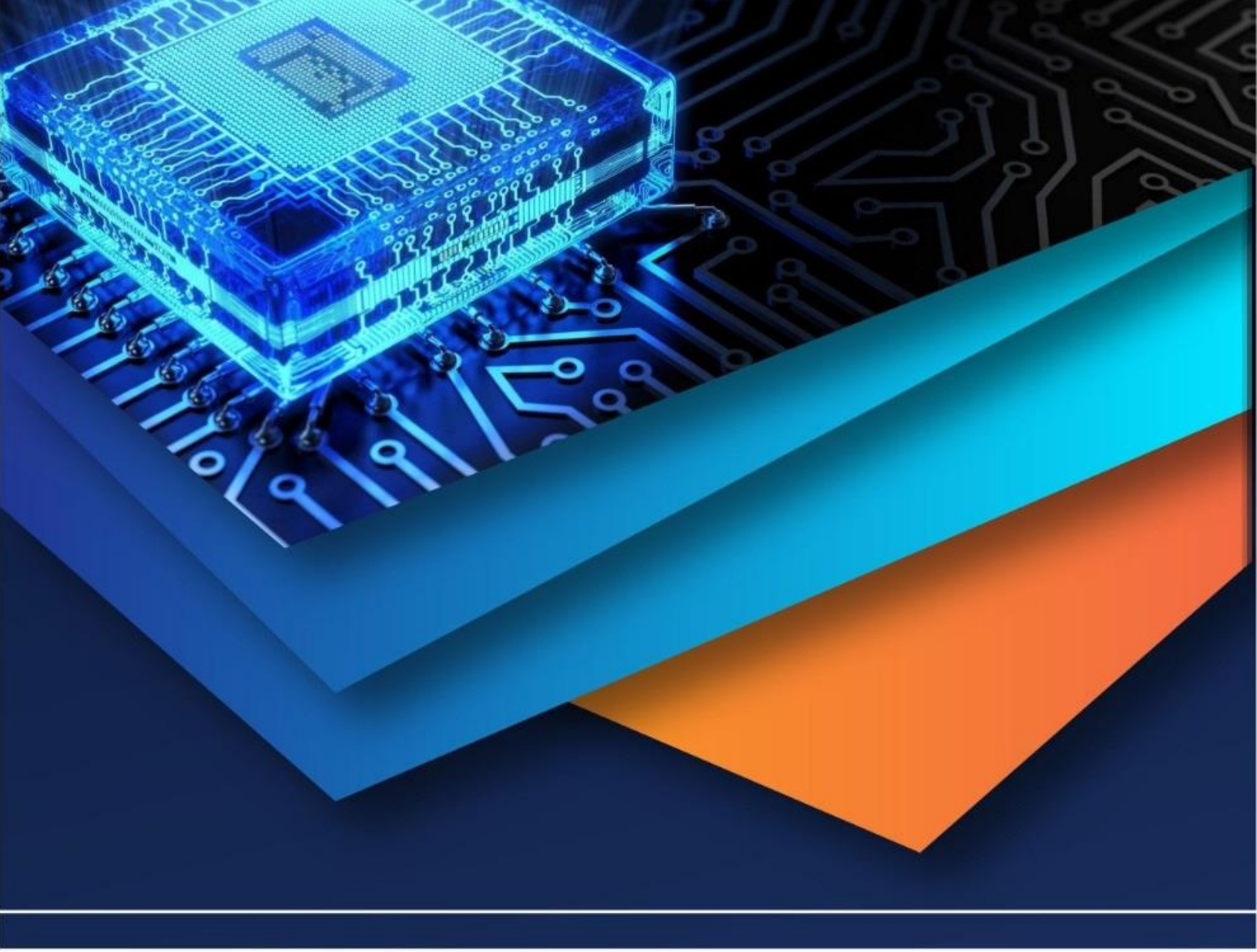
III. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1) Majority of the users opined that the skill development programmers plays an important role in women empowerment.
2) The library provides internet facilities to the users and majority of the users are aware of the information technology applications.
3) A good number of the women under study use internet for carrier development.
4) The majority of the respondents opined that information technology have a positive effect on women empowerment.
5) Newspapers is the most supportive resources among women followed by Periodicals.
6) Majority of the users think skill development programs organized by the library supports women empowerment.

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