
WANDERING LEARNERS: TRANSFORMING LIBRARY SERVICES FOR NOMADIC COMMUNITIES – A CASE STUDY OF KOTA'S GOVERNMENT DIVISIONAL PUBLIC LIBRARY, RAJASTHAN

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Abstract: *This research delves into the intricacies of catering library services to nomadic communities, focusing on a pioneering case study conducted at the Government Divisional Public Library in Kota, Rajasthan. Nomadic populations, often overlooked in traditional library settings, pose unique challenges and opportunities for engagement. Through an immersive exploration of their needs, preferences, and socio-cultural dynamics, this study sheds light on innovative approaches to provide inclusive and tailored library services. The methodology employed a mix of ethnographic research and participatory methods to understand the nuanced requirements of these mobile communities. Findings reveal pivotal insights into resource accessibility, community integration, and the adaptive role of libraries in addressing the diverse needs of nomadic groups. This paper presents actionable strategies and recommendations for libraries worldwide seeking to extend their services inclusively to nomadic communities, emphasizing the vital role of tailored approaches in fostering literacy and knowledge dissemination among mobile populations.*

KEYWORDS: *Nomadic communities, Library services, Rajasthan Government Divisional Public Library Kota, Inclusivity, Community engagement, Ethnographic research, Mobile populations, Resource accessibility, Socio-cultural dynamics, Tailored approaches, Literacy promotion, Community integration, Participatory methods.*

Introduction:

The introduction to "Roaming Readers: Unraveling Library Services for Nomadic Communities – A Rajasthan Case Study at the Government Divisional Public Library, Kota" sets the stage by highlighting the significance of extending library services to oftenunderserved nomadiccommunities. It outlines the unique challenges faced by these mobile populations in accessing and benefiting from traditional library resources and introduces the case study conducted at the Government Divisional Public Library in Kota, Rajasthan. The introduction underscores the importance of this research in shedding light on innovative strategies to bridge the gap between library services and the diverse needs of

nomadic groups, emphasizing the potential for increased literacy and community integration through tailored approaches within library frameworks.

Nomadic library Services in India – A Bird Eye View :

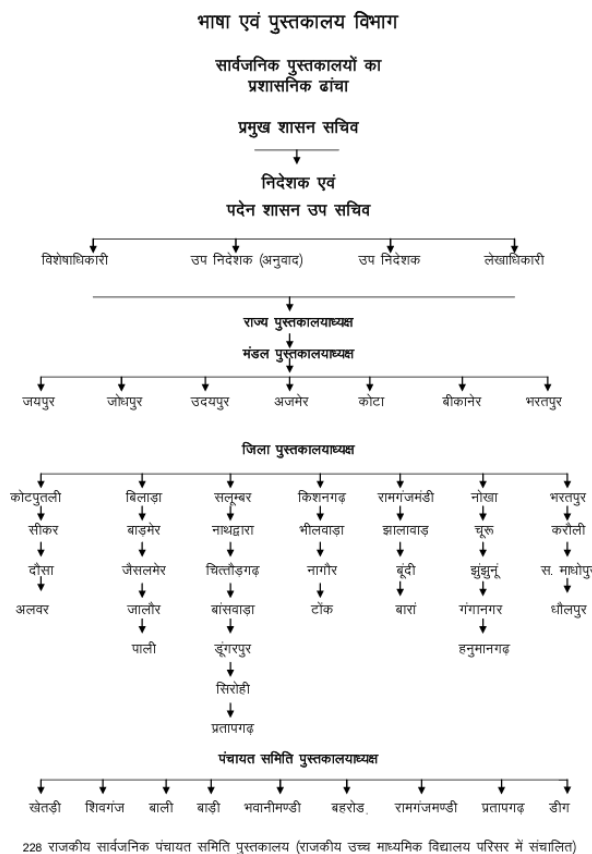
The concept of library services catering specifically to nomadic or mobile communities in India has evolved over time, but historically, formalized initiatives were relatively limited until recent decades. Nomadic or itinerant communities, such as the various tribal groups, gypsies, and other mobile populations, have traditionally had limited access to formal education and institutional resources like libraries due to their migratory lifestyle. However, with increasing recognition of the importance of inclusive education and social development, efforts have been made to extend library services to these marginalized groups. The Indian government, along with NGOs and various organizations, has initiated programs to bring educational resources, including libraries, closer to nomadic communities.

In the last couple of decades, there has been a growing emphasis on addressing the educational needs of nomadic communities. Initiatives have been launched to create mobile or community libraries that can travel or be stationed in areas frequented by these groups. These libraries often offer a range of resources including books, educational materials, and sometimes digital resources, tailored to the specific cultural and linguistic needs of these communities. Additionally, certain government schemes and policies have aimed at providing educational support, including library services, to marginalized groups like the Scheduled Tribes (STs) in India, which include many nomadic communities. These efforts have attempted to bridge the gap in access to educational resources and promote literacy among these traditionally underserved populations.

The historical background reflects a shift towards recognizing the importance of providing educational resources, including library services, to nomadic communities in India. These **efforts** continue to evolve and adapt to better suit the unique needs and circumstances of these mobile populations.

Rajasthan Public Library System:

In Rajasthan Public Libraries are governed by Language and Library Department (LLD) Government of Rajasthan Jaipur. On January 31, 2001, with the aim of accelerating the development of public libraries, the state government merged the Language Department with public libraries and renamed it as the 'Language and Library Department'. This department primarily works on the development, management, administration of public libraries in the state, and the promotion of the Hindi language. Through the Language and Library Department, the administration of these public libraries, previously numbering 44, has been systematically and quantitatively improved and managed.



CURRENT STATUS OF GOVERNMENT DIVISIONAL PUBLIC LIBRARY KOTA:

The Language and Library Department of the Rajasthan Government, Jaipur, conducted an evaluation of the arrangements at the Government Divisional Public Library in Kota. On this occasion, they extensively inspected book maintenance, new services, ledger records, analytical reports, reference services, audio book services, video lecture services, and services dedicated to visually impaired and disabled individuals. Collaborating with Dr. Deepak Kumar Shrivastav, the regional library director, they interacted with readers to understand their viewpoints positively. They expressed satisfaction with the library's genuine effort, mentioning that the library's implementation of "People Counting Cameras" and "Books on Screen" facilities demonstrates the creativity of a modern library. They proposed sharing these innovations with other libraries under the direction of the senior official.

During this event, Deputy Director (Translation) Dr. Renuka Rathore inaugurated an exhibition of competitive literature, while Special Officer Dr. Poonam Gupta initiated library automation. Dr. Renuka highlighted the uniqueness of the "Music Library Collection" at this location. She emphasized that the state library leads in establishing library services considering community interests. As a result, the library has been ranked number one in talk shows, second in LG B.T. services nationally, and first in Rajasthan. Dr. Poonam Gupta described Kota's library as an unparalleled example of top-notch and modern amenities. The well-organized collection of printed books caters superbly to the general readership.

Prolegomena To Government Divisional Public Library, Kota:

The Government Public Divisional Library Kota was established in the year 1910 as the Pioneer Public Library. This library used to run in Seth Danmal ji's Haveli, Bahadur Bazaar (Mansion Bapna), Kota. Government Public Divisional Library was transferred to Chhatra Vilas Bagh, Kota in 1968 and the relocation took place in the year 1984 in the urban improvement trust(U.I.T.) campus of Dadabari. Presently the library operates in front of income tax colony its own building in C.A.D. Colony, Dadabari, Kota. On 15 August, 1956, the Paoniyr Library was renamed the Government Divisional Public Library. Currently 19th edition of Dew Decimal Classification(DDC) is being used for classification in this library and classified catalog code(CCC) is being used for cataloging. Currently 66460 books are available in this library. The specialty of this library is that there are 1542 rare texts available here. There are certain features of Kota library which makes it different from other library, for example, according to the Indian Public Library Movement(I.P.L.M.), it is number one in the talk shows across the country. It is ranked first in Rajasthan and second in the country for transgender services. Music Library is the first in Rajasthan in the service, which has a collection of about 16000 songs, of which there are several thousand songs which are not present on the internet. There is a section in this library where there is only a collection of books on which the films are made and its name is Books on Screen. The library also has members ranging from auto rickshaw drivers, farmers, plumbers to administrative and police officers. Not only this, foreign researchers also come here to study. There are many programs under the Pathak Samvad Yojana throughout the year, due to which this library is very popular among the common people and for this reason, the people of the city now call it as the festival library.

The following services are available in the Government Public Divisional Library Kota.

 **Reference Service:**


The library has a reference room with a collection of reference texts for researchers. The reference service is very useful for local researchers.

 **Children Room:**

Children are made free members in the children's room. Its main aim is to arouse interest in children for studies.

 **Reading room:**

In the reading room, 78 types of journals on various subjects are made available for the readers to study, along with daily newspapers.

 **4 Technical department:**

The technical department is connected with the indirect service of readers, in which the accessioning, classification and cataloging of new books is done before book exchange.

LIBRARY STATISTICS:

There are two types of members in the library.

- Lifelong Members
- Annual Members
- Family members
- Monthly Members

- Visually Impaired members
- Transgender Members
- Nomadic Members

LIBRARY STATISTICS

Total Titles	Holdings	Members	Copies Issued
66039	69389	2775	225

Currently the library has a total of 550 lifetime members and approximately 500 annual members. The annual membership period is from 1 April to 31 March. Library hours are from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm.

Under the Government Public Divisional Library, Kota, four district libraries are located in Ramganjmandi, Jhalawar, Bundi and Baran.

ABOUT NOMADIC LIBRARY SERVICES INTRODUCED IN GOVT. DIVISIONAL PUBLIC LIBRARY, KOTA:

In a groundbreaking development, the Kota Government Public Library in Rajasthan has rewritten the narrative of public library services by reaching out to the nomadic community. This pioneering initiative not only sets a precedent in Rajasthan's library history but also underscores a commitment to inclusivity and accessibility.



Photo Credit: Dr. Deepak Kumar Shrivastava

Figure 1: Photo of a Nomadic family person

Dr. Deepak Kumar Shrivastava, the Divisional Librarian, spearheaded this transformative approach to engage the predominantly illiterate nomadic population. Recognizing their affinity for visual mediums such as pictorial and photo books, coupled with an interest in audio books, the library decided to tailor its services to cater to these preferences.

A momentous occasion unfolded on Library Day with the registration of Pappu Luhar as the inaugural nomadic public library patron. Pappu Luhar was granted an honorary free membership, symbolizing the commencement of this trailblazing initiative.

In expressing his thoughts on the newly introduced library services, Pappu Luhar articulated that while he may not engage with books in the traditional sense, the ability to listen and view the content holds immense value for advancing a more enlightened society. This innovative connection forged between the Kota library and the nomadic community signifies a progressive step towards promoting knowledge and culture. The Kota Government Public Library's commitment to breaking barriers and extending its services to traditionally underserved communities not only enriches the lives of the nomadic population but also sets a commendable example for libraries across the region. This landmark move emphasizes the library's dedication to making knowledge accessible to all, regardless of their background or literacy levels. (4)

IMPORTANT ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

The research paper uncovered significant findings regarding library initiatives for marginalized communities in India. In Karnataka, 127 libraries were established specifically for nomadic communities, catering to their needs in nomadic regions. Moreover, 100 additional libraries were set up in slum areas under the same initiative. These libraries were equipped with books, periodicals, and furniture. Notably, the staff working in these centers received increased honorarium as per government directives. However, in Rajasthan, the Kota Government Divisional Public Library stood out as the sole institution providing similar services. It commenced its services by offering pictorial and audio books, recognizing the literacy challenges faced by the community, some of whom are illiterate or only recently literate.

CONCLUSION:

The findings of this research underscore the vital role of libraries in addressing the needs of marginalized communities, particularly in Karnataka and Rajasthan. The establishment of specialized libraries in Karnataka for nomadic and slum communities has shown promising results in catering to their specific requirements. Equipping these libraries with diverse resources like books, periodicals, and furniture signifies a step toward inclusivity and access to knowledge. However, the limited presence of such specialized libraries in Rajasthan, with the Kota Government Divisional Public Library being the sole provider, indicates a gap in addressing the needs of marginalized communities in the state. The initiation of services with pictorial and audio books acknowledges the diverse literacy levels within these communities, reflecting an understanding of their unique challenges.

RECOMMENDATION:

To further improve library services for marginalized communities, several recommendations can be made. Firstly, there's a need for an expansion of such specialized libraries across Rajasthan to ensure wider access. Collaboration between government bodies, NGOs, and local communities can facilitate the establishment of these libraries.

Additionally, enhancing the diversity of resources beyond pictorial and audio books, to include multilingual materials and educational aids, could significantly benefit these communities. Moreover, capacity-building programs for library staff focusing on cultural sensitivity and community engagement could enhance the effectiveness of these initiatives. Overall, the research suggests the necessity of scaling up similar library initiatives nationwide and emphasizes the importance of tailoring services to meet the diverse needs of marginalized populations, ensuring equitable access to information and knowledge.

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