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Library Services and Resource Utilization: A Case Study from College of Forestry, Sirsi, Uttara Kannada District, Karnataka

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Abstract

Libraries play a pivotal role in supporting academic excellence, research, and knowledge dissemination in higher education institutions. The present study assessed the utilization, satisfaction and effectiveness of library services at the College of Forestry, Sirsi, focusing on user demographics, visit frequency and purpose of use. Results indicated that males constituted 57% of respondents and females 43%, showing balanced gender participation with a slight male dominance, consistent with trends in forestry education. Undergraduate students formed the majority of users (71%), followed by M.Sc. (20%) and Ph.D. (9%) students, highlighting that the library mainly supports coursework and academic learning. Most students (41.7%) visited the library weekly, and 21% daily, demonstrating its continued importance as a learning hub. The majority (83%) used the library for study and educational purposes, while only 5% and 1% used it for leisure reading and other activities, respectively, affirming its academic orientation. Overall satisfaction with library services and resources was high, particularly for lending, information and internet facilities, though some users suggested improvement in cultural and outreach programs. Respondents expressed satisfaction with professional literature (72%) and electronic resources (73%), though multimedia and recreational collections received lower ratings. Similarly, positive perceptions were recorded for infrastructure, comfort and hardware facilities. The findings suggest that the College of Forestry library effectively meets educational and research needs but should enhance digital resources, recreational materials and user engagement initiatives for holistic development.

Keywords: Library utilization, user satisfaction, academic resources, forestry education and library services

Introduction

Libraries play a pivotal role in supporting education, research, and personal development by providing access to a wide range of information resources and services. They function as knowledge hubs that facilitate learning, encourage intellectual curiosity, and promote lifelong education. In academic institutions, libraries are integral to teaching and research processes, offering both print and digital resources that enhance the quality of instruction and learning outcomes (Ameen and Haider, 2007; Singh and Kaur, 2009) ^[2, 15]. To remain relevant in the evolving educational landscape, it is essential that libraries continuously assess and improve their services and collections in alignment with user needs and institutional goals. Assessing library resource utilization enables institutions to understand user behavior, preferences, and satisfaction levels, thereby providing evidence-based insights for strategic decision-making. Through systematic evaluation, libraries can optimize their collections, upgrade infrastructure, and adopt user-centered technologies to enhance accessibility and efficiency (Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu, 2012; Anunobi and Okoye, 2008) ^[9, 4]. This process not only improves the quality of service delivery but also reinforces the library's value as a central academic

support system. However, recent studies indicate a gradual decline in the frequency of library visits among students in higher education institutions, particularly in developing countries. Abosede and Ibikunle (2011) ^[1] observed that undergraduates in Nigerian universities have increasingly reduced their dependence on physical library resources, possibly due to the proliferation of digital information sources, lack of awareness about library facilities, or limited engagement with library environments. Such trends raise concerns about the potential implications for academic research, information literacy, and learning effectiveness. Quadri *et al.* (2014) ^[13] emphasized that access to accurate and relevant information is fundamental to students' academic growth and success. Libraries, therefore, must ensure that their services effectively meet these information needs to support independent study, enhance research competencies, and promote informed decision-making. The effectiveness of a library, as noted by Shrestha and Nirmala (1998) ^[14], can be gauged by how well it satisfies the information demands of its users and how extensively its resources are utilized. Recent literature further highlights the need for libraries to adopt a user-oriented and technology-driven approach. Omeluzor *et al.* (2017) ^[11], Anyaoku *et al.* (2020) ^[5], and Eze and Uzoigwe (2021) ^[8]

argue that modern libraries should integrate digital literacy programs, online databases, and interactive platforms to engage contemporary learners effectively. Such initiatives help bridge the gap between traditional and digital information systems while reinforcing the library's relevance in an era dominated by online learning and information access.

In this context, the present study titled "Library Services and Resource Utilization: A Case Study from College of Forestry, Sirsi, Uttara Kannada District" aims to evaluate the patterns of library usage, the effectiveness of available resources, and the level of user satisfaction among students of the College of Forestry, Sirsi. The present research was conducted to provide valuable insights for improving library services, strengthening academic support mechanisms and ensuring that the library continues to serve as a cornerstone of knowledge dissemination and scholarly growth.

Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted at the College of Forestry, Sirsi, located in Uttara Kannada District, Karnataka during the year 2023-2025. The college is one of the constituent institutions of the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad and serves as a major academic and research center for forestry education in the Western Ghats region.

A semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire survey method was employed to collect primary data from students regarding their utilization of library resources and services. The survey aimed to assess the level of awareness, usage patterns, accessibility, and user satisfaction with the existing library facilities. A total of 163 students (N = 163) from different academic levels participated in the study through voluntary response sampling. Respondents were encouraged to provide open-ended feedback to capture qualitative insights on areas requiring improvement. Prior to administration, the questionnaire was validated through expert review to ensure clarity, relevance and content validity. Data were collected during the academic session and analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as percentages and frequency distributions, to summarize the findings. Qualitative responses were categorized thematically to identify emerging patterns and perceptions related to library service utilization.

Results and Discussion

The results of the present study provide an overview of library resource utilization and user satisfaction among students and faculty of the College of Forestry. The gender distribution of respondents (Fig. 1) reveals that 57 per cent were male and 43 per cent were female, indicating a slightly higher participation of males. This shows that both genders were fairly represented in the study, though males formed a marginal majority. Such a trend is consistent with similar findings reported in forestry and environmental science studies, where male participation often exceeds that of females due to greater enrollment and involvement in field-based programs (Singh *et al.*, 2020)^[15].

Among the respondents, undergraduate (UG) students constitute the majority of library users, accounting for 71 per cent, followed by 20 per cent of Master's (M.Sc.) students and 9 per cent of Ph.D. scholars (Fig.2). This

indicates that the library is primarily used by undergraduate students for their academic and coursework-related needs. The relatively lower percentage of M.Sc. and Ph.D. users can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the number of students enrolled in postgraduate and doctoral programs is generally smaller compared to undergraduate enrollment. Secondly, M.Sc. and Ph.D. students often require advanced and specialized research materials such as scientific journals, theses, and online databases, which may not always be available in the college library. Additionally, many of them rely on digital resources and remote access to research materials, reducing their physical visits to the library. Moreover, postgraduate and doctoral students are often engaged in fieldwork, laboratory research, or data collection, which limits their time for in-person library use. These findings suggest that while the library effectively serves undergraduate students, there is a need to enhance advanced research resources and digital access to better support M.Sc. and Ph.D. students in their academic pursuits. The survey on library visit frequency among students of the College of Forestry, Sirsi, revealed that the majority of respondents (41.7%) visit the library on a weekly basis, indicating that the library remains an essential academic support center for most students. Regular weekly visits suggest that students rely on the library primarily for reference materials, assignments, and routine study activities. A considerable proportion of students (21%) reported daily visits, reflecting a group that depends heavily on the library for reading, accessing study materials and maintaining a disciplined study routine. Such frequent users likely include research scholars and final-year students who require continuous access to academic resources. Another 17% of respondents reported visiting the library monthly, while about 10% do so less often, showing a moderate engagement level. This group may represent students who rely more on digital resources or have limited time due to fieldwork and laboratory schedules. A smaller segment (7%) of students visit the library once every two weeks, whereas only 2% and 1% reported visiting every three months and every six months, respectively (Fig. 3). These minimal percentages indicate that very few students are irregular users of library services, possibly due to alternative study preferences, lack of awareness, or the availability of online resources. The findings highlight that more than half of the students visit the library frequently (weekly or daily), emphasizing the continuing relevance of physical library spaces in forestry education. The trend aligns with earlier studies (Kumar and Singh, 2018; Devi and Reddy, 2020)^[10, 7] which noted that accessibility, conducive study environments, and updated academic materials significantly enhance library utilization in higher education institutions. However, the presence of irregular visitors underscores the need for awareness programs and user orientation to encourage consistent library engagement. Enhancing e-resources, extending operational hours, and providing personalized assistance can further improve usage frequency and overall satisfaction.

With respect to major purpose of library usage data revealed that the majority of respondents (83%) primarily used the library for study and educational purposes, indicating that the library serves mainly as an academic resource center supporting coursework, research and assignments. A smaller

proportion (11%) utilized the library for work-related reasons such as project or technical report preparation, while only 5% used it for leisure reading and 1% for other purposes (Fig. 4). These results suggest that the library's services are predominantly oriented toward academic and professional needs, with limited engagement in recreational reading. This pattern aligns with findings from similar studies in academic institutions, where libraries function chiefly as centers for learning and research (Sharma and Singh, 2020) ^[15] and Devi and Reddy (2020) ^[7], who observed that students in forestry and agricultural institutions primarily depend on libraries for academic enrichment rather than recreational use. The dominance of educational use underscores the library's success in meeting students' academic demands, but also highlights the need to diversify resources and programs to promote leisure reading and holistic intellectual development among students. The present findings confirm that the library at the College of Forestry, Sirsi, serves mainly as an academic and research hub, effectively fulfilling its educational function while offering scope to expand leisure and informal learning resources to enhance overall user engagement.

The assessment of user satisfaction with various library services revealed an overall high level of satisfaction among respondents. The majority of users reported being satisfied with most services, notably lending services (75%), copying services (76%), and information and research services (70%), indicating that the library effectively supports students' academic and research needs (Fig. 5). A considerable proportion of users also expressed being very satisfied with access to the internet and library internet services, highlighting the increasing reliance on digital resources for academic activities. Only a small percentage of respondents were indifferent or dissatisfied, while very few expressed strong dissatisfaction, suggesting that most users find the library's resources, infrastructure and staff support adequate. However, slightly lower satisfaction levels were observed for cultural and educational programs, implying the need to strengthen outreach, extension lectures, and interactive academic events to enhance user participation (Fig. 5). These findings are in line with earlier studies by Kumar and Singh (2018) ^[10] and Devi and Reddy (2020) ^[7], who reported that accessibility, staff assistance, and up-to-date information resources are major determinants of user satisfaction in academic libraries. Similarly, Bhat (2019) ^[6] emphasized that digital and internet-based services have become essential for improving user experience and learning outcomes in forestry and agricultural institutions.

The analysis of user satisfaction with different library resources shows a generally positive response across all categories. A majority of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the available fiction (68%), professional literature (72%), magazines (70%), and electronic information resources (73%), highlighting the adequacy and accessibility of both print and digital materials. A significant proportion of users also expressed being very satisfied, especially with professional literature and magazine collections, which are directly relevant to academic and research activities (Fig. 6). In contrast, satisfaction levels were comparatively lower for music, audio, and video resources, where users were more indifferent or dissatisfied, possibly due to limited availability or lack of awareness

about these materials. Only a small percentage of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied overall, indicating effective management and alignment of library holdings with users' academic needs (Fig. 6). These findings are consistent with earlier studies by Devi and Reddy (2020) ^[7] and Patel *et al.* (2021) ^[12], who found that academic users prioritize access to professional and electronic resources over recreational materials. Similarly, Bhat (2019) ^[6] reported that the inclusion of updated electronic databases and professional literature significantly enhances user satisfaction and academic performance in higher education libraries. These results affirm that the College of Forestry library maintains a well-balanced collection, particularly in academic and electronic domains. However, diversifying multimedia and recreational resources could further enrich the learning environment and cater to broader user preferences.

The analysis of users' satisfaction with library infrastructure and facilities revealed predominantly positive perceptions across all parameters. A majority of respondents reported being satisfied with the size of the library (68%), quality of furnishings and the library hall (70%), social background indexes (75%), and hardware provided by the library (67%), indicating that the physical environment and available facilities are conducive to academic use (Fig. 7). A notable proportion of users also expressed being very satisfied, especially regarding furnishings and hardware facilities, suggesting comfort and adequacy in the study environment. Only a small number of respondents were indifferent or dissatisfied, and very few reported strong dissatisfactions, signifying minimal concerns regarding infrastructure (Fig. 7). These findings correspond with previous research by Kumar and Singh (2018) ^[10] and Anitha and Suresh (2021) ^[3], who highlighted that adequate space, comfortable seating and reliable equipment play a crucial role in enhancing library usability and user satisfaction. Devi and Reddy (2020) ^[7] also noted that the physical ambience and access to hardware resources such as computers and printers significantly influence student engagement and resource utilization in academic libraries. The present investigation suggest that the College of Forestry library provides a well-maintained and user-friendly physical environment. Continuous maintenance, ergonomic improvements, and periodic facility upgrades could further enhance user comfort and promote more active library participation.

The analysis of library usage purposes and pattern of utilisation shows that respondents use library resources for a variety of academic and personal needs. The majority reported using the library often for instructional support (62%), curriculum development (59%) and research (55%), highlighting its central role in supporting teaching, learning, and scholarly activities. A considerable proportion also used it very often for professional development (30%) and personal or recreational reading (35%), reflecting both academic and non-academic engagement with library materials. Only a small percentage of users indicated seldom or never using the library for these purposes, suggesting that overall utilization remains high across functions (Fig. 8). The relatively higher frequency of use for instructional and research purposes aligns with the academic nature of forestry education, where access to updated literature, reference books and journals is essential for coursework and

research-based learning. These findings are consistent with earlier studies by Kumar and Singh (2018)^[10] and Devi and Reddy (2020)^[7], who found that academic libraries primarily serve as hubs for research and curriculum-related activities. Similarly, Patel *et al.* (2021)^[12] emphasized that frequent library use for professional development and self-learning contributes to enhanced academic competence

among forestry and agricultural students. Overall, the findings indicate that the College of Forestry library successfully supports the academic as well as personal learning requirements of its users. Enhancing research assistance, expanding access to digital resources, and incorporating a wider range of general reading materials could further promote balanced and consistent library use.

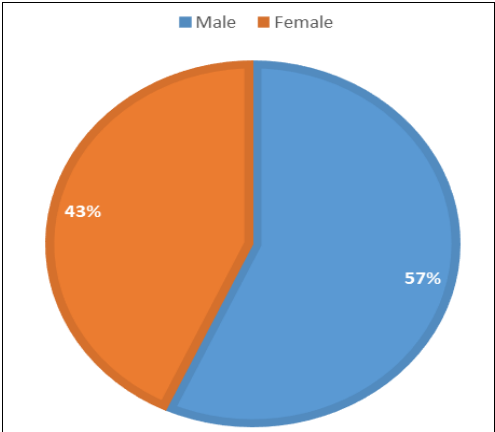


Fig 1: Respondents Gender Distribution

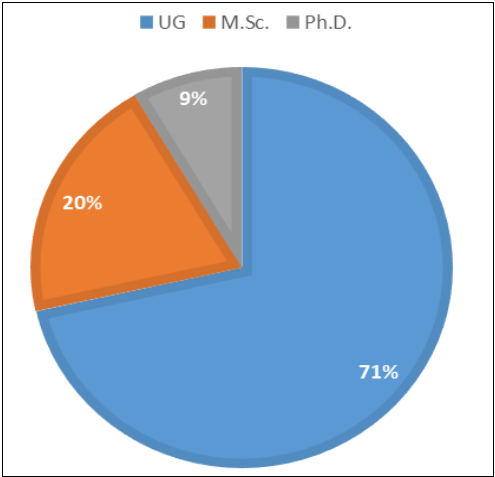


Fig 2: Class wise distribution of respondents

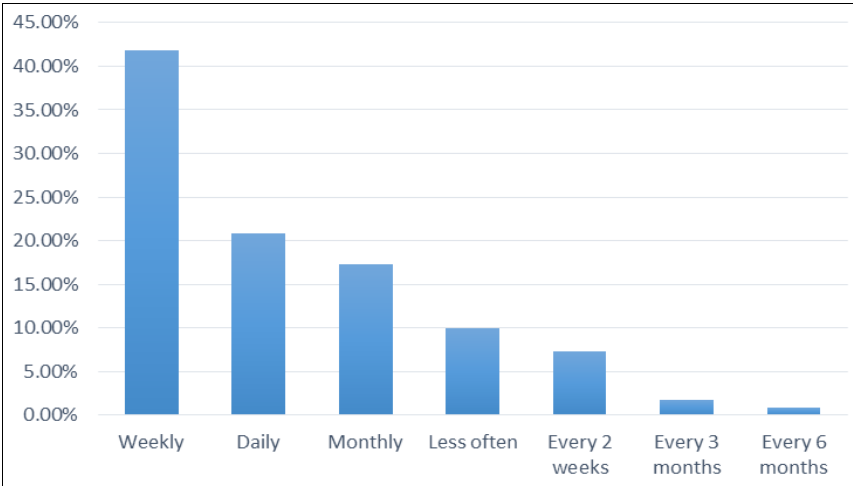


Fig 3: Frequency of library visits by the respondents

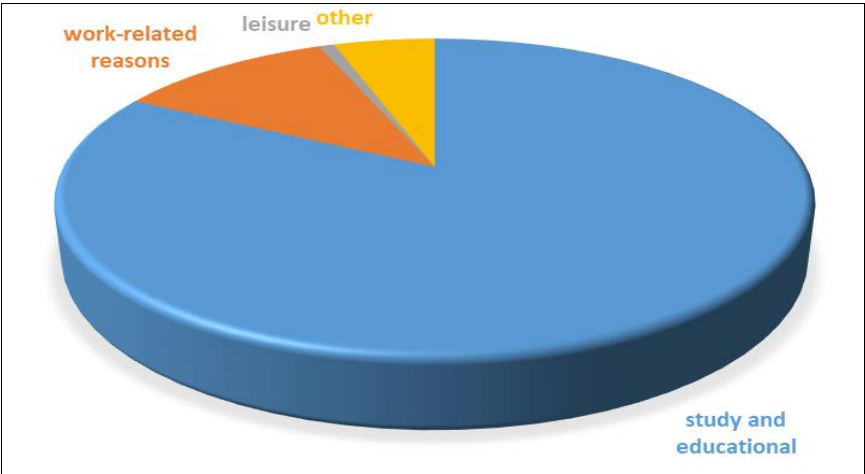


Fig 4: Primary usage of library services

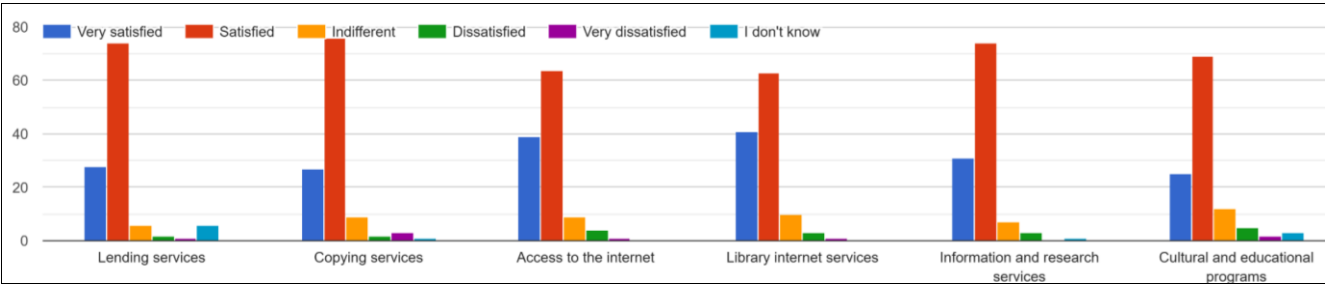


Fig 5: Perception and satisfaction level of respondents toward library services

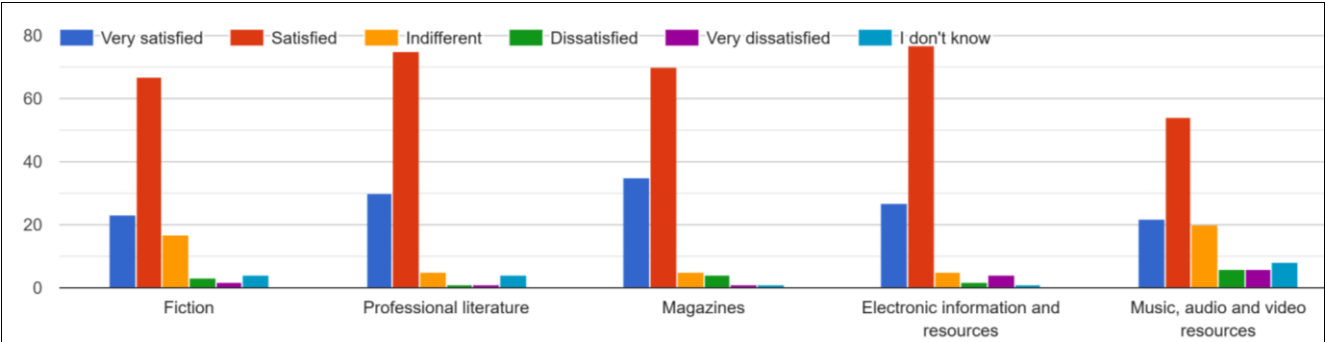


Fig 6: Evaluation of respondents' satisfaction with library services and resources

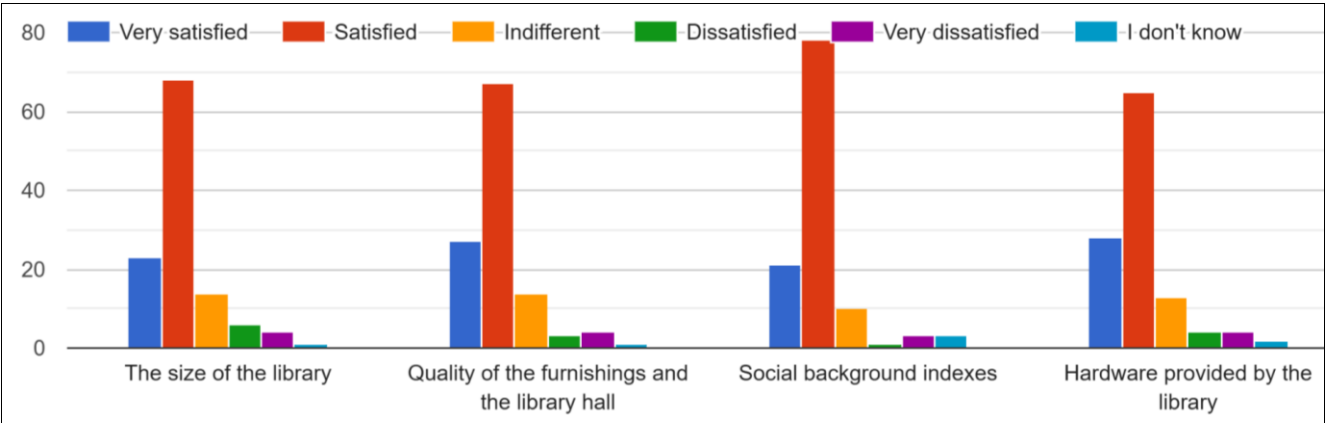


Fig 7: Extent of satisfaction among respondents on library resources and services

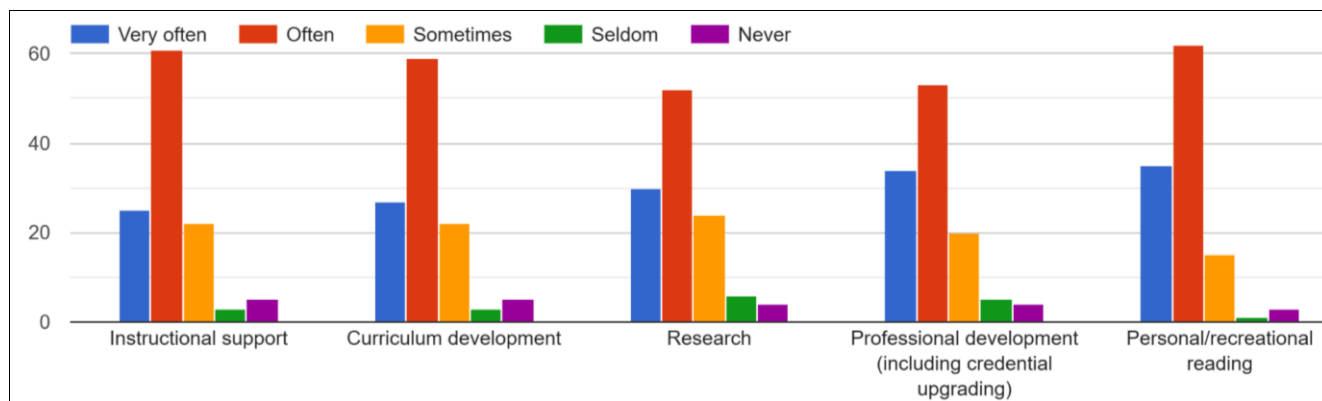


Fig 8: Utilisation pattern of library resources and services among respondents

Conclusion

The study on library services and resource utilization at the college of forestry, Sirsi, Uttara Kannada district reveals a high level of user satisfaction and active engagement with library facilities. Most respondents visit the library regularly weekly or daily indicating its continued relevance as an essential academic hub. Users expressed strong satisfaction with core services such as lending, copying, internet access and information support, while also appreciating the availability of professional literature, magazines and electronic resources. The library's infrastructure, including space, furnishings and hardware, was generally rated positively, contributing to a comfortable and conducive learning environment. Furthermore, the library plays a vital role in supporting instructional activities, curriculum development, research, and professional growth, reflecting its integral role in academic success. However, relatively lower satisfaction levels were observed for cultural programs, multimedia resources, and recreational materials, suggesting potential areas for improvement. Overall, the findings affirm that the College of Forestry library is efficiently managed, well-utilized and user-oriented, serving as a key pillar for academic and research excellence. Continued enhancement of digital resources, user engagement initiatives and diversified collections will further strengthen its role in supporting holistic learning and scholarly development.

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