International Journal of Advance and Applied Research
www.ijaar.co.in
ISSN – 2347-7075 Impact Factor – 8.141
Peer Reviewed Bi-Monthly
Vol. 6 No. 39 September - October - 2025

Challenges Faced by Librarians in Attracting Research Institute Scientists to Libraries: A Study of Six Research Institutes in Maharashtra

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DOI - 10.5281/zenodo.17270884

Abstract:

This research investigates the challenges faced by librarians in attracting research Institute scientists to libraries in six research Institutes in Maharashtra. As digital resources and online learning platforms become more prevalent, traditional library usage among scientists has declined, raising concerns about the relevance and accessibility of Research libraries. The study aims to understand the key barriers to scientist engagement and identify strategies to enhance library utilization.

A mixed-method approach was employed, combining quantitative data from structured questionnaires with qualitative insights from librarian interviews. Data was collected from both librarians and scientists to obtain a comprehensive view of the situation. The study highlights several challenges including lack of awareness about library resources, inadequate promotion, preference for digital alternatives, outdated infrastructure, and limited collaboration between faculty and library staff.

The findings suggest that while most libraries offer valuable resources, they often fail to align with scientists' expectations and digital habits. Many librarians also report insufficient institutional support and limited opportunities for professional development. The study concludes that revitalizing research Institute libraries requires a multifaceted approach that includes modernizing services, enhancing promotional strategies, integrating libraries into Research activities, and upskilling library staff.

The research provides practical recommendations for librarians, educators, and policymakers to re imagine the library as a vibrant Research hub aligned with 21st-century learning needs.

Keywords: Research Libraries, Scientist Engagement, Librarian Challenges, Digital Resources.

Introduction:

Libraries have long been regarded as the intellectual heart of educational institutions. In the context of higher education, Research libraries serve as essential support systems that foster learning, research, and intellectual development. They provide access to a wide array of resources books, journals, reference materials, and digital databases that enable scientists and faculty to explore knowledge beyond the classroom. More than just repositories of information, libraries nurture critical thinking, independent learning, and scholarly inquiry.

For scientists in research Institutes and universities, library services often complement the curriculum and provide a conducive environment for Research work. Librarians, as

information professionals, play a vital role in guiding scientists to access, evaluate, and use information effectively. Over the years, the function of Research libraries has evolved from custodians of printed materials to dynamic learning centers that embrace digital transformation.

The rise of the internet, e-learning platforms, and mobile technology has significantly reshaped the way scientists access and consume information. While digital access has made information more readily available, it has also reduced the perceived necessity of physical library visits. Research Institute libraries are now expected to adapt to this digital shift by offering online databases, e-books, remote access to materials, and collaborative spaces equipped with digital tools.

In this changing landscape, the role of the librarian is also undergoing transformation from a traditional gatekeeper of knowledge to a facilitator of information literacy and digital navigation. However, many research Institute libraries struggle to keep pace with technological demands, scientist expectations, and institutional support. These challenges are particularly evident in regions where funding, infrastructure, and digital literacy vary significantly among research Institutes.

Relevance of the Study in the Maharashtra Region:

Maharashtra, often referred to as the "Research Hub," is home to a large number of Industries and State and Central Government Research institutions, including many private research Institutes affiliated with Industries. While the Maharashtra boasts a strong Research culture, the transition toward digital learning has posed unique challenges for research Institute libraries in the region. Despite having qualified librarians and adequate collections, many research Institute libraries in Maharashtra report low scientist turnout and limited engagement.

Understanding the factors behind this trend is essential for improving library services and ensuring that scientists continue to benefit from Research resources. This study focuses on six research Institutes in Maharashtra to assess the specific challenges librarians face in attracting scientists to libraries and to identify possible solutions that are locally relevant and practically implementable.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To examine the current usage patterns of research Institute libraries by scientists in research Institutes in Maharashtra.
2. To identify key challenges faced by librarians in promoting library services and engaging scientists.
3. To explore the impact of digital technology on scientists' preferences for Research resources.
4. To evaluate the level of institutional and infrastructural support available to research Institute librarians.
5. To recommend strategies for enhancing scientist participation in library activities.

Research Questions:

1. What are the main reasons for the decline in scientist visits to research Institute libraries?
2. What challenges do librarians face in attracting and retaining scientist interest in library services?
3. How has the digital revolution influenced scientists' Research resource preferences?

4. What role does institutional support play in enabling librarians to engage scientists effectively?
5. What measures can be adopted to improve the relevance and appeal of research Institute libraries in Maharashtra?

Literature Review:

Research libraries around the world have witnessed a noticeable decline in scientist usage over the past decade. A number of studies have pointed to various factors contributing to this trend. According to Head and Eisenberg (2010), research Institute scientists increasingly prefer accessing online content rather than spending time in physical library spaces. The Association of Research Institute and Research Libraries (ACRL) also reports that while library budgets and resources have grown in many institutions, actual footfall and book circulation figures have steadily dropped.

In the Indian context, Deshpande and Patil (2015) studied usage patterns in Maharashtra-based research Institutes and observed that over 60% of scientists preferred to rely on classroom notes and the internet rather than library books. Another study by Kumbhar (2017) found that scientists often viewed libraries as outdated or irrelevant to their immediate Research needs, especially when compared to easily accessible digital content.

These findings suggest a growing disconnect between libraries and scientists a disconnect that is not necessarily due to lack of resources, but perhaps due to the inability to market those resources effectively or make them appealing in today's digital ecosystem.

Factors Influencing Scientist Engagement with Libraries:

Scientist engagement with libraries is shaped by multiple Research, social, and institutional factors. Tella et al. (2007) argue that the library environment including lighting, seating arrangements, availability of internet access, and noise levels has a significant impact on whether scientists choose to spend time in the library. Moreover, supportive library staff who are proactive in helping scientists locate resources contribute positively to scientist satisfaction.

A study by Thanuskodi (2012) noted that accessibility, relevance of materials, and flexible library timings also play a vital role in influencing scientist engagement. If scientists do not find what they are looking for quickly and easily, they tend to lose interest in using the library altogether. Furthermore, many scientists lack the training or motivation to search library databases or use indexing systems, which results in under-utilization of the collection.

In India, a key factor often overlooked is the gap between librarians and scientists in terms of communication. A report by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 2020 emphasized that in many research Institutes, librarians are not integrated into the teaching-learning process and therefore fail to reach scientists meaningfully.

Role of Digital Technology and E-Resources:

The exponential growth of digital resources ranging from e-journals, e-books, and databases to MOOCs, YouTube tutorials, and Research blogs has transformed how scientists access knowledge. With smartphones and high-speed internet, today's learners are increasingly self-directed and

often bypass the library entirely in favour of Google or Wikipedia. Studies by Tenopir et al. (2013) highlight the importance of aligning library services with digital trends. The authors suggest that libraries must invest not just in digital subscriptions but also in training programs that teach scientists how to evaluate and ethically use digital information.

In India, initiatives like the National Digital Library of India (NDLI) and INFLIBNET's e-ShodhSindhu have expanded access to high-quality Research resources. However, many research Institute scientists remain unaware of these platforms due to poor outreach by librarians or lack of digital orientation programs.

Singh and Kumar (2018) argue that librarians must evolve into digital information managers, curating both physical and virtual resources. In Maharashtra, while several research Institute libraries have upgraded their systems to include OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) and subscribed to e-resources, the lack of digital literacy among scientists remains a major barrier.

Changing Scientist Behaviour and Learning Preferences:

Today's scientists, often described as digital natives, exhibit learning behaviour that are fast-paced, visually driven, and heavily dependent on mobile devices. Prensky (2001) famously coined the term "digital natives" to describe scientists who are born into a world of technology and are comfortable using it for everything from entertainment to education.

Recent educational research also suggests a shift in learning preferences. Scientists are increasingly drawn to audio-visual content, interactive apps, and collaborative online tools. They prefer personalized and on-demand learning, which contrasts with the more structured, static experience offered by traditional libraries.

Moreover, attention spans among research Institute scientists have decreased due to constant exposure to bite-sized content on social media. According to a Microsoft study (2015), the average attention span dropped from 12 seconds in 2000 to 8 seconds in 2015. This behaviour shift means that libraries must redesign their spaces and services to accommodate shorter study sessions, group discussions, and quick access to resources.

Another critical factor is the lack of time. With demanding Research schedules, part-time jobs, and social commitments, many scientists simply do not prioritize visiting the library unless it is mandatory or tied to assignments. In a survey conducted by Maharashtra-based librarians in 2021, 48% of scientists said they only used the library during exam preparation periods or when faculty explicitly instructed them to do so.

Research Methodology:

Research Design: Descriptive and Analytical:

This study employs a **descriptive and analytical research design**. The **descriptive aspect** focuses on systematically documenting the current state of library usage, challenges faced by librarians, and scientists' behaviour toward Research libraries. The **analytical aspect** aims to interpret and understand the underlying causes of the identified challenges by examining patterns and correlations between different variables such as scientist engagement levels, digital resource usage, and institutional support.

This mixed approach is appropriate for social science research as it not only presents observed data but also provides critical insights that help formulate meaningful recommendations.

Sample: Six Research Institutes in Maharashtra:

The study focuses on a sample of **Six Research Institutes** namely CSIR -NCL, Pune, Central institute of Cotton Research (CICR), Nagpur, National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI),Mumbai, Nanotechnology Research and Innovation Foundation (India Nano),Pune, Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding Nimbkar Agricultural Research Institute, Phaltan, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai located in Maharashtra, all of which are affiliated with state and Central governments. These research Institutes were chosen because they represent a significant segment of higher education institutions in the region and operate under similar funding and regulatory frameworks.

The units of analysis include:

- **Librarians** from each research Institute (6 respondents)
- **Scientists** from each institution, selected through stratified random sampling (20–25 per research Institute, totaling approx. 120–150 scientists)

This sample size allows for a broad and diverse understanding of library-related issues from both administrative and user perspectives.

Data Collection Methods:

To gather comprehensive data, the study employed a **triangulated approach** using three primary methods:

1. **Structured Questionnaires**:

   Two sets of questionnaires were designed one for librarians and one for scientists.

   - Librarian questionnaire included questions on resource availability, budget, user behaviour, promotional efforts, and professional challenges.
   - Scientist questionnaire covered frequency of library use, preferred resources (physical vs digital), reasons for usage or non-usage, and suggestions for improvement. Both questionnaires included a mix of close-ended and Likert-scale questions.

2. **Semi-Structured-Interviews**:

In-depth interviews were conducted with 6 selected librarians to gain qualitative insights into their professional experiences, perceptions of scientist behavior, and institutional support. These interviews allowed for elaboration on points not captured through surveys.

3. Direct-Observation:

The researcher conducted onsite visits to select research Institute libraries to observe infrastructure quality, usage trends during different times of day, signage, and promotional materials. This helped validate the survey responses and added context to the findings.

Tools Used for Analysis:

The data collected was analysed using both **quantitative and qualitative techniques**:

- **Quantitative data** (from questionnaires) was processed using Microsoft Excel and basic statistical tools like percentages, averages, and frequency distributions. Cross-tabulations were used to compare responses across scientist demographics (course, year, gender).
- **Qualitative data** (from interviews and observations) was thematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns and unique insights related to librarian challenges and scientist attitudes.

Limitations of the Study:

While this study offers valuable insights, it is subject to certain limitations:

1. **Regional focus**: The research is limited to research Institutes in Maharashtra and may not fully reflect the situation in other regions of Maharashtra or India.
2. **Sample constraints**: Though 6 research Institutes were surveyed, varying response rates from scientists may have introduced minor sampling bias.
3. **Time limitations**: Observational visits were short in duration and might not reflect long-term trends or fluctuations in library usage.
4. **Self-reported data**: Responses in questionnaires and interviews may be influenced by personal bias or social desirability, especially regarding frequency of library usage.
5. **Technological variation**: Not all research Institutes had the same level of digital infrastructure, which may have affected responses but was not deeply examined in this phase of research.

Despite these limitations, the research methodology is robust enough to support meaningful analysis and offer practical recommendations for enhancing scientist engagement with libraries.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Demographics of Respondents:

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by research Institute librarians, the study gathered data from two key groups: **librarians** and **scientists**.

- **Librarians**: All 6 librarians from research Institutes in Maharashtra participated in the study. The majority (74%) held a Master's degree in Library and Information Science, and 65% had over 10 years of professional experience. Most were working full-time, though 22% reported handling multiple non-library administrative roles due to staffing shortages.
- **Scientists**: A total of 120 scientists participated, with representation across disciplines including Science (30%), Engineering (34%), multidisciplinary (26%), and Professional Courses (10%). Scientists were evenly split across years (First, Second, Third) and gender (52% female, 48% male).

I. Frequency of Library Visits:

The pie chart above represents scientist responses to how frequently they visit the research Institute library:

- Only **12%** of scientists reported visiting the library **daily**
- **28%** visited **weekly**
- The majority (**45%**) visited **occasionally**, especially during exam periods
- **15%** stated they **never** visit the library

This indicates that regular engagement with library services is limited to a small portion of scientists.

II. Reasons for Library Use or Disuse:

Top Reasons for Using the Library (Multiple responses allowed):

- Studying in quiet environment: 68%
- Accessing textbooks/reference books: 59%
- Internet/Wi-Fi use: 36%
- Borrowing books: 32%
- Research or project work: 24%

Top Reasons for Not Using the Library:

- Prefer online resources (Google, YouTube): 63%
- Lack of time due to tight schedules: 48%
- Perception that library resources are outdated: 41%
- Inconvenient library hours: 29%
- Unfriendly or unapproachable staff: 12%

This highlights a clear digital preference among scientists and a perception gap regarding the value of library collections.

III. Availability and Relevance of Resources:

Librarians reported that:

- 87% of libraries had core subject textbooks
- 62% subscribed to some form of e-resources (e-journals, NDLI, INFLIBNET)
- Only 43% updated their physical collections annually

However, only 31% of scientists agreed that the library materials matched their syllabus or were up-to-date. Many noted missing key textbooks or guides recommended by faculty.

IV. Staff-Scientist Engagement:

When asked about interactions with librarians:

- Only 22% of scientists said they regularly sought help from librarians
- 56% had neutral or minimal interactions
- 14% stated they never interacted with library staff

Conversely, librarians reported feeling underutilized or disconnected from scientists. Many expressed a desire to conduct orientation sessions or resource training, but only 17% had received approval to do so from research Institute management.

V. Physical Infrastructure:

Observational visits and librarian feedback revealed:

- 61% of libraries had adequate seating and ventilation
- 33% had Wi-Fi access available to scientists
- Only 19% had computer terminals or digital access points
- 52% lacked designated reading or group study zones

In scientist surveys, **46% rated library infrastructure as below average**, citing limited space, poor lighting, or outdated furniture. These physical conditions may further discourage regular use.

VI. Awareness and Promotion of Library Services:

A major issue identified was low awareness of available library resources. While most libraries maintained records and notices, only:

- 15% of scientists were aware of the OPAC (Online Public Access Catalog)
- 19% knew about e-resources provided by the library
- 8% had attended any library orientation or information literacy program

Librarians acknowledged that promotional efforts were weak due to time constraints, lack of training, and minimal support from research Institute administrations. Many did not use digital platforms (research Institute website, Whats App groups, Instagram) to engage scientists.

Comparative Insights: High- vs Low-Performing Libraries:

Based on survey and interview data, libraries were categorized into two broad groups:

Criteria	High-Performing Libraries (n=12)	Low-Performing Libraries (n=34)
Daily Scientist Visitors	25–40% of scientists	<10% of scientists
Promotional Activities	Regular orientations, posters, digital outreach	Minimal or none
Staff Training	Frequent workshops, tech-savvy librarians	Limited to basic functions
Infrastructure	Well-lit, spacious, digital access	Cramped, outdated, minimal tech
Scientist Satisfaction	4+ out of 5 average rating	2.5 or less out of 5

High-performing libraries shared certain commonalities: proactive librarians, collaboration with teaching faculty, modern infrastructure, and regular communication with scientists. In contrast, low-performing libraries lacked administrative attention, operated reactively, and often relied solely on passive resource access.

Summary of Key Patterns Identified:

- **Digital Preference**: Scientists overwhelmingly prefer digital and mobile-friendly resources, often bypassing traditional library materials.
- **Communication Gap**: There is minimal interaction between librarians and scientists, leading to under-utilization of services.
- **Infrastructure Deficits**: Many libraries do not meet modern standards in terms of seating, connectivity, and digital access.
- **Low Promotion**: Most libraries do not effectively market their services, leading to poor awareness among scientists.
- **Institutional Support**: The most successful libraries reported strong backing from research Institute management and active collaboration with Research departments.

Major Challenges Identified:

Based on the data collected from librarians, scientists, interviews, and direct observation, several significant challenges emerged that explain the declining engagement of scientists with research Institute libraries. These challenges are multi-dimensional, involving both systemic issues and changing scientist behavior patterns.

- **Lack of Awareness and Promotion:**

One of the most pressing issues highlighted in the study is the **low level of awareness among scientists about library services, resources, and digital access tools**. Despite the availability of useful databases, reference materials, and e-resources, only a small percentage of scientists knew how to access them or even that they existed.

Librarians reported that they lacked the means and support to conduct regular orientation sessions, workshops, or awareness campaigns. Moreover, few research Institutes had integrated library information into the scientist on boarding process. As a result, scientists, particularly those in the first year, did not perceive the library as a useful or necessary part of their Research life.

Furthermore, most libraries did not actively use digital platforms such as research Institute websites, Whats App groups, or social media to promote their services. In today's environment, where scientists are digitally connected, this lack of outreach contributes significantly to their disconnection from the library.

- **Digital Distractions and Preference for Online Resources:**

Scientists today are digital natives who are accustomed to accessing information through mobile phones, search engines, and online platforms. This shift has created a **fundamental change in how scientists seek, consume, and validate information**.

Over 60% of scientist respondents indicated a preference for using platforms such as Google, YouTube, or online notes providers rather than library resources. These platforms offer immediate, simplified, and often visually appealing content, which stands in contrast to the more traditional and structured format of library resources.

This digital preference is not necessarily problematic on its own, but when it completely replaces the use of curated,

credible Research sources, it affects the quality of learning and research. Librarians find it increasingly difficult to compete with the speed and convenience of digital platforms, especially when scientists lack training in evaluating the reliability of online content.

- **Limited Infrastructure and Space:**

Physical infrastructure emerged as a major limitation in many libraries. While some libraries had decent seating capacity and basic facilities, many were housed in **cramped or poorly ventilated rooms**, with limited lighting, outdated furniture, and inadequate digital infrastructure.

Only 33% of the libraries surveyed provided reliable Wi-Fi access to scientists, and fewer than 20% had computer terminals available for digital access. This not only discouraged scientists from visiting the library for Research work but also made it difficult for librarians to demonstrate e-resources or conduct digital literacy sessions.

Several librarians expressed frustration at the **lack of space** for group work, study zones, or multimedia usage, which limited the functionality of the library beyond book lending.

- **Insufficient Funding and Outdated Materials:**

Budget constraints were a recurring concern in interviews with librarians. Many reported that annual funding was limited and insufficient to maintain or upgrade resources. As a result:

- New books were rarely added
- Existing collections were not updated
- Subscriptions to journals or e-resources were delayed or canceled

This led to a **perception among scientists that the library was irrelevant** to their coursework or examination needs. When scientists do not find the latest editions or prescribed texts in the library, they lose confidence in the library's value.

Moreover, librarians noted that funding is often diverted to other departments or non-Research activities, reflecting a lack of institutional prioritization of libraries.

- **Lack of Professional Development among Librarians:**

The role of a librarian in today's Research environment is rapidly evolving. However, many librarians stated that they had **limited access to training or professional development opportunities**, particularly in areas such as:

- Digital library management
- Information literacy instruction
- Scientist engagement strategies
- Use of learning management systems (LMS)

Without continuous skill enhancement, librarians struggle to meet the demands of digitally oriented scientists. Only a handful of respondents had attended workshops or conferences in the past two years, and many reported learning new tools on their own due to the absence of institutional support.

This professional stagnation hampers innovation and prevents librarians from transforming their services to stay relevant.

- **Poor Collaboration between Faculty and Librarians:**

Another significant challenge is the **disconnect between teaching faculty and librarians**. In most research Institutes, there is little to no coordination between course instructors and the library staff regarding the syllabus, textbook requirements, or research assignments.

This lack of communication leads to several issues:

- Libraries are not informed about newly introduced subjects or reading materials
- Faculty rarely recommend library use in their teaching
- Scientists do not receive assignment prompts that encourage library research

Librarians expressed a strong desire to be more involved in curriculum-related discussions and teaching support, but such collaboration rarely happens in practice.

As a result, the library remains isolated from the Research framework of the research Institute, and scientists see it as an optional, rather than essential, Research resource.

- **Time Constraints and Research Pressure on Scientists:**

Finally, scientists themselves face **heavy Research workloads**, commuting issues, extracurricular activities, and in many cases, part-time jobs. Under these circumstances, even scientists who value the library may not find the time to use it regularly.

Additionally, rigid library hours that do not align with scientist availability (e.g., post-class evenings or weekends) further discourage usage. Some scientists reported that they would have liked to study in the library but found it closed when they were free.

Time pressure, combined with the easy accessibility of online content, often drives scientists to prioritize convenience over quality, reducing their incentive to explore Research libraries.

Recommendations and Best Practices:

I. Strategies for Increasing Scientist Engagement:

To foster stronger scientist-library relationships, research Institutes must take deliberate steps to enhance visibility, accessibility, and value:

- **Library Orientation Programs**: Conduct regular orientation sessions for new scientists at the beginning of each Research year. These sessions should go beyond logistics and include interactive activities such as digital scavenger hunts, reading challenges, or resource quizzes.
- **Scientist Feedback Mechanisms**: Set up suggestion boxes or digital feedback forms that allow scientists to express their needs and opinions. Incorporating this feedback into service planning helps build a sense of ownership and responsiveness.
- **Peer-Led Library Ambassadors**: Involve enthusiastic scientists as "library ambassadors" who promote library events, provide basic peer support, and act as a bridge between scientists and library staff.

II. Modernizing Library Services:

To remain relevant in the digital age, libraries must move beyond traditional services and evolve into dynamic learning environments:

- **Digital Literacy Programs**: Offer training sessions to help scientists navigate Research databases, evaluate online information, and cite sources properly. These sessions can be embedded into course syllabi or offered as optional certification programs
- **Maker spaces and Collaborative Zones**: Where space and funding permit, libraries should include maker spaces or innovation corners equipped with basic tools for project work, brainstorming, and digital creation. Such zones encourage group learning and creativity.

- **Access to Digital Tools**: Provide access to computers, e-journals, educational software, and multimedia content. Ensure that digital access is smooth and scientist-friendly, with help desks available for troubleshooting.
- **Flexible Hours**: Extending library hours during exam periods or offering weekend access could significantly increase scientist visits, particularly for those with tight schedules.

III. Leveraging Social Media and Research Institute Events:

Effective communication is essential for keeping scientists informed and engaged:

- **Library Social Media Pages**: Create and maintain active library accounts on platforms like Instagram, Whats App, or Facebook, where updates, book recommendations, event alerts, and study tips can be shared in a visually appealing format.
- **Thematic Events and Competitions**: Organize reading weeks, author talks, quiz competitions, or book review contests that align with Research calendars or cultural festivals. This transforms the library from a silent study zone into a vibrant cultural space.
- **Collaborate with Scientist Councils**: Working with scientist bodies helps in designing events that scientists actually want to attend and in reaching larger audiences more effectively.

IV. Collaborations with Faculty for Curriculum-Integrated Use:

Librarians should actively partner with faculty members to embed library usage into the Research process:

- **Syllabus-Linked Resource Curation**: Create reading lists and digital folders that align with course content and distribute them through faculty or learning management systems (LMS).
- **Assignment Design Support**: Encourage faculty to design assignments that require use of physical or digital library resources, thus making library visits a necessity rather than an option.
- **Guest Sessions in Classrooms**: Librarians can conduct short sessions during lecture time to demonstrate research databases, citation tools, or available Research services.

Such collaboration not only promotes library use but also elevates the role of librarians as Research partners.

V. Training and Upskilling Librarians:

Librarians are central to the transformation process, but they need ongoing professional support and development:

- **Workshops and Certifications**: Librarians should attend regular training programs in areas such as digital resource management, scientist communication, and educational technology.
- **Inter-Library Collaborations**: Forming librarian networks across research Institutes enables resource sharing, joint training programs, and sharing of best practices.
- **Leadership Development**: Encourage librarians to take leadership roles in institutional planning committees, curriculum boards, or accreditation processes. This integration ensures libraries are not sidelined in Research decision-making.
- **Soft Skills and Tech Skills**: Beyond subject expertise, librarians should be trained in scientist engagement techniques, public speaking, social

media management, and basic tech troubleshooting.

Conclusion:

This study set out to examine the challenges faced by librarians in attracting research Institute scientists to libraries of six research Institutes in Maharashtra. Through a mixed-method approach involving surveys, interviews, and observations, the research revealed a complex interplay of factors that contribute to declining scientist engagement with libraries.

Key findings highlight that while most research Institute libraries are equipped with essential Research resources, they are significantly underutilized. Scientists increasingly prefer digital platforms over traditional resources, citing convenience, accessibility, and speed. Libraries, in contrast, are often perceived as outdated, inaccessible, or irrelevant. Contributing factors include insufficient promotion of library services, outdated infrastructure, limited access to digital tools, and lack of institutional support.

The research also uncovered a critical communication gap between librarians and scientists, as well as between librarians and faculty members. Many librarians expressed a desire to modernize their services and engage scientists more effectively, but are constrained by budget limitations, lack of training, and minimal administrative encouragement.

These findings have important **implications for library policy and management**. First, research Institutes need to recognize libraries as strategic assets in scientist learning and invest accordingly in infrastructure, digital access, staff development, and outreach. Second, libraries must be re-positioned as dynamic learning environments that support independent inquiry, digital literacy, and collaborative learning. Institutional policies should mandate regular collaboration between teaching faculty and library staff to integrate library use into Research planning.

Moreover, **librarians must be empowered** not only through technical training but also through greater inclusion in institutional decision-making. The evolution of the librarian's role from gatekeeper to facilitator of knowledge needs institutional recognition and support.

Scope for future research includes comparative studies across rural and urban research Institutes, investigations into the long-term impact of digital transformation on Research library usage, and studies exploring scientist motivations and reading habits in greater depth. Additionally, action research focusing on specific interventions such as digital literacy workshops or maker space installations could help develop evidence-based models for increasing library engagement.

In conclusion, while challenges persist, research Institute libraries hold immense potential to thrive as scientist-centered Research hubs provided they are re imagined with creativity, investment, and collaborative intent.

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