

**A STUDY OF USERS' ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES IN YOUNG
MIZO ASSOCIATION LIBRARIES IN AIZAWL DISTRICT,
MIZORAM**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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ASSOCIATION LIBRARIES IN AIZAWL DISTRICT, MIZORAM**

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I **VANLALFELI**, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of the work done by me, the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me, or to do the best of my knowledge to anybody else and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University / Institute.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Description
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CAS	Current Awareness Service
C-DAC	Centre for Development of Advanced Computing
CE	Community Engagement
DEIA	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility
DIPR	Directorate of Information and Public Relations
DRS	Digital Reference Service
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
ILL	Inter Library Loan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NML	National Mission for Libraries
OPAC	Online Public Access Catalogue
PDA	Patron Driven Acquisition
RD	Rural Development
RRRLF	Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation
SDI	Selective Dissemination of Information
SDT	Self Determination Theory
SLPC	State Library Planning Committee

SNS	Social Networking Sites
SMS	Short Message Service
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
UE	User Engagement
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UT	Union Territory
UX	User Experience
YLA	Young Lushai Association
YMA	Young Mizo Association
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The term ‘engagement’ has many different implications in social, professional, and technical contexts. In its most basic form, it describes the condition of being involved, focused, or dedicated to something. Engagement has become a key psychological notion that influences human behaviour and decision-making in a variety of fields, such as marketing, education, work, and leisure. For instance, human computer interaction (HCI) has changed over the past few decades due to the digital revolution, moving from more straightforward user interfaces to more dynamic and captivating experiences. An engaging experience is one that captures and maintains our interest.

In the modern world, user engagement entails more than just a positive experience. For example, the increasing popularity of gaming can be attributed in part to how captivating these games are for players. Users now have a variety of options that provide the material they want thanks to the growth of web-based platforms and apps. In such a setting, interfaces that do not sufficiently engage users are at a disadvantage. In addition to usefulness and usability, the hallmark of successful technologies today includes engagement. In other words, the very survival of technology-based platforms may be dependent on the degree of engagement they can produce from their users and the speed with which this engagement is built. (Vreede, 2019).

Businesses use user engagement, also known as product engagement, as a statistic to monitor audience interaction with brand content or services. Engagement may refer to downloads, subscriptions, clicks, shares, sign-ups, or comments, depending on the business or sector. Businesses frequently assess user engagement statistics to ascertain how well a product, piece of content, or marketing offers value and promotes recurring use for their clients. Depending on a company's objectives, some engagement activities may be more beneficial than others. For instance, storefront shops could find instant messaging programs less useful than online retailers. high user engagement can help businesses sell ad space, improve marketing tactics, and boost sales because it demonstrates that customers find value in their goods or service.

The study of human-computer interaction is where the phrase ‘user engagement’ originated. According to Hart (2012), user engagement is a limited explanation of the user experience that focuses on evaluating the quality of the product during contact. “The emotional, cognitive, and behavioural connection that exists, at any point in time and possibly over time, between a user and a resource” is how Attfield (2011) described user engagement. However, O'Brien (2008) defines user engagement as “a quality of user experience with technology that is characterized by challenge, aesthetic and sensory appeal, feedback, novelty, interaction, perceived control and time, awareness, motivation, interest and affect.” Lehmann (2012) emphasizes the phrase ‘web application’ in order to describe user involvement. This is due to the fact that the majority of computer-based information systems in use today are web-based. Because studies have demonstrated that user engagement has a substantial impact on ongoing use, which is one of the success indicators of any computer-based information system, the idea of user engagement has grown in importance and relevance in web-based environments (Masrek, 2018).

User Engagement is the link that forms between users and resources on an emotional, cognitive, and behavioral level and influences how people react to services. In other words, the depth and calibre of a person's long-term interaction with a system, service, or product is also referred to as user engagement. User engagement is a psychological condition that results from collaborative, co-creative consumer interactions with a focus agent or object, according to Brodie et al. (2011). It is a multifaceted concept with behavioural, emotional, and cognitive components. The behavioural dimension takes the form of observable behaviours like frequent visits, active participation, and the use of available resources; the emotional dimension deals with the level of positive affect, enthusiasm, and sense of belonging a user experiences; and the cognitive dimension involves the user's mental investment and attention directed toward a service or resource.

User engagement in information science context includes active participation, feedback, and a persistent desire to utilize a service again in addition to passive information consumption. According to Brophy (2005), library services encompass all of the facilities, activities, resources, and expert support that a library institution

offers to satisfy the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of its patrons. The physical provision of books, periodicals, and multimedia materials as well as digital services like online databases, electronic resource management, reference support, interlibrary loans, and community outreach initiatives are all included in the wide range of activities that make up library services. In addition to facilitating information access, modern library services are increasingly focused on user-centred design concepts, which aim to support meaningful learning experiences, critical thinking, and lifelong learning across a variety of patron groups.

1.1.1 USER ENGAGEMENT IN LIBRARY SERVICES

The concept of user engagement in library services has undergone significant transformation over the past two decades, shaped by advances in digital technology, shifting patron demographics, and evolving institutional mandates. Traditionally, libraries measured their effectiveness through quantitative metrics such as the number of books borrowed, foot traffic, and collection size. However, contemporary scholarship increasingly recognizes that such metrics inadequately capture the quality and depth of user interaction with library resources. Meaningful engagement, as Sashi (2012) argues, is not merely transactional but relational, characterized by sustained interaction, emotional investment, and reciprocal value creation between the library and its users. In this sense, a library that merely provides access to resources without fostering active, meaningful engagement fails to realize its full potential as an institution of knowledge and community empowerment. Libraries are uniquely positioned within the information ecosystem as trusted, neutral, and publicly accessible spaces, and these characteristics provide a distinctive foundation upon which deep user engagement can be cultivated. The physical library environment, when designed thoughtfully, functions as a third place - a social setting beyond home and workplace that invites sustained interaction, intellectual exchange, and community participation. Equally, digital library platforms, when intuitive and responsive, extend this sense of engagement into virtual spaces, allowing users to interact with collections and professional librarians regardless of geographic or temporal constraints.

The way that users interact with library services has completely changed as a result of the incorporation of digital technologies. Libraries can now interact with their patrons through more touchpoints thanks to the growth of online public access catalogues (OPACs), digital lending platforms, virtual reference services, and social media channels. This allows for real-time communication, tailored recommendations, and collaborative resource development. According to studies by Agosto (2011) and Hampton-Reeves (2011), libraries that invest in user-friendly technology interfaces and have an active online presence report higher levels of engagement among younger patron demographics, such as millennials and Generation Z users, who are increasingly using digital channels to seek information. However, there are obstacles to overcome in order to ensure that technological advancements truly meet the needs of all user groups rather than escalating already-existing disparities. These obstacles include issues of digital equity, information overload, and the depersonalization of service delivery.

Additionally, the interpersonal aspects of the library experience have a significant impact on user engagement with library services. Users' overall satisfaction and likelihood of long-term engagement are significantly influenced by the calibre of reference exchanges, the staff's reaction to patron inquiries, and the provision of individualized advising support. One of the most important indicators of user satisfaction and continuing patronage, according to Radford and Connaway (2007), is the relational competency of library personnel, which includes active listening, empathy, topic expertise, and communicative clarity.

Therefore, libraries are better positioned to cultivate the kinds of meaningful, reciprocal connections with their user communities that underlie continuous engagement when they invest in staff training, professional development, and the creation of a service-oriented organizational culture. Additionally, it is crucial to understand that user involvement in libraries is contextual by nature and differs depending on the type of institution, user demographics, and service contexts.

Public libraries serving varied metropolitan populations or special libraries serving specialized professional communities have different engagement issues than

academic libraries serving research-intensive universities. Similar to this, library services must create resource-appropriate and culturally sensitive engagement methods that take into account the unique socioeconomic realities of their user base in developing-country contexts, such as rural and semi-urban areas with poor infrastructure and connectivity. All things considered, encouraging real and ongoing user engagement is still one of the most important requirements for modern library management. This calls for an integrated strategy that takes into account the behavioural, emotional, and cognitive aspects of user interaction while also being sensitive to the changing institutional, social, and technological environment in which libraries function.

1.1.2. BENEFITS OF USER ENGAGEMENT IN LIBRARY SERVICES

User engagement in library services is not merely about counting visitors or circulation statistics. It is a holistic approach that prioritizes the user experience, inviting the community not just to consume library services, but to actively shape, co-create, and invest in them. This paradigm shift yields a multitude of benefits that ripple outward, positively impacting the individual user, the library as an institution, and the entire community fabric.

1. Benefits for the Individual User: Empowerment and Connection

The most immediate and profound benefits of user engagement are felt by the individual. When a library successfully engages its users, it transforms their relationship with the institution from one of passive consumption to active participation.

(a) **Enhanced Learning and Skill Development:** Engaged learning is effective learning. Interactive workshops, skill-sharing sessions led by community members, and hands-on maker programs move beyond the passive absorption of information. They foster critical thinking, creativity, and practical problem-solving. A teen who helps run a coding club, for example, deepens their own technical skills while developing leadership and communication abilities, benefiting far more than if they had simply borrowed a book on Python.

(b) **Increased Sense of Belonging and Social Connection:** In an increasingly digital and isolated world, libraries serve as vital third places-community anchors separate from home and work. Engaging programming like book clubs, conversation circles for new language learners, or community gardening initiatives transforms the library from a place of solitary study into a vibrant social space. These interactions build social capital, combat loneliness, and create a powerful sense of belonging, connecting users with neighbours who share similar interests.

(c) **Amplified User Voice and Agency:** Engagement is a two-way street. When libraries actively solicit feedback through surveys, suggestion boxes, or community advisory boards, and more importantly, act on that feedback, they empower users. When a patron sees their program idea come to life or a suggested book added to the collection, they feel a sense of ownership and investment. This transforms them from a mere customer into a stakeholder and a co-creator of the library experience.

2. Benefits for the Library: Reinforced Relevance and Resilience

For the library itself, prioritizing user engagement is not just a nice-to-have; it is a strategic imperative for survival and growth in a competitive information landscape.

(a) **Increased Relevance and Visibility:** By actively engaging with the community to understand its evolving needs, the library can develop services and collections that are directly responsive. This ensures the library remains a vital and indispensable community resource. A library that hosts workshops on local history, partners with small businesses to offer resources, or provides digital literacy training for seniors demonstrates its value in tangible, everyday life, increasing its visibility and positive perception.

(b) **Stronger Advocacy and Support:** An engaged user is a library's best advocate. Users who feel a deep connection to the library are far more likely to champion its cause. They will speak at city council meetings, rally support for funding measures, and share their positive experiences with friends and family. This organic, grassroots advocacy is more powerful and authentic than any marketing campaign, building a robust base of political and financial support for the library's future.

(c) **Data-Driven Decision Making and Innovation:** Engagement generates invaluable qualitative data. Through conversations, feedback forms, and participation patterns, libraries gain deep insights into community needs, interests, and aspirations. This intelligence allows library leadership to move beyond guesswork and make evidence-based decisions about collection development, program planning, and space utilization. It fuels innovation by highlighting unmet needs and inspiring new, user-centred services.

3. Benefits for the Community: Fostering Civic Health and Well-being

Ultimately, the benefits of user engagement unite to create a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant community.

(a) **Bridging Social Divides:** In an era of increasing polarization, libraries serve as rare, neutral public spaces where people from diverse backgrounds - different ages, cultures, socioeconomic statuses, and political viewpoints can interact constructively. Engaging programming that encourages dialogue and collaboration helps bridge social divides, fostering mutual understanding and respect. It strengthens the community's social fabric by creating shared experiences.

(b) **Driving Civic Engagement and Participation:** A library that engages its users models the very principles of a healthy democracy. By hosting candidate forums, providing non-partisan voter information, and offering programs on local issues, the library empowers citizens to become more informed and active participants in their community. When people learn to co-create at the library, they are better equipped to collaborate on solutions for larger community challenges.

(c) **Promoting Community Resilience and Well-being:** By connecting people with essential services, information, and each other, the library acts as a central node in a community's support network. A library that engages with social service agencies to host free tax preparation, offers programs on financial literacy, or provides a safe, welcoming space during a crisis directly contributes to the community's overall resilience and well-being. It becomes a trusted hub for navigating life's challenges.

In conclusion, the benefits of user engagement in library services are deep and multifaceted. It is a transformative strategy that moves the library beyond its traditional role, empowering individuals, strengthening the institution, and enriching the entire community. By listening, collaborating, and co-creating with its users, the library ensures its place not just as a repository of the past, but as an essential architect of the community's future.

1.2. PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. It is an essential component of knowledge societies, continuously adapting to new means of communication to fulfil their mandate of providing universal access to and enabling meaningful use of information for all people. It provides publicly accessible space for the production of knowledge, sharing and exchange of information and culture, and promotion of civic engagement. (IFLA-UNESCO, 2022).

Dr. S.R. Ranganathan defined public library as a library owned and maintained by the public of its area for the socialization of its books and kindred materials for free service to the people of the area. Therefore, a public library is freely open to all, irrespective of age, profession, race, sex, color or creed and provides free access to any literature required (Rath, 1991).

According to McColvin, (1925), “Public libraries are those which provide free services to the people of a particular region, from the adequate collection of usable books of their interests. These services are given without any discrimination of religion, political and other.”

Public libraries are social institutions that provide free access to information for the general public. The role of the public library is to provide resources and services in a variety of media to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education of the masses, information and personal development including recreations and utilization of leisure and cultural progress. However, despite the presence of libraries, users' searching habits have changed throughout time. Therefore, the staff members of these libraries are crucial in establishing a clear objective to draw in more patrons.

Although resources may be scarce at times, it is vital to figure out how to utilize what is presently available. Therefore, the present study has been taken up as it is necessary to look for ways to absorb library users and in order to address the issue of library users decline.

1.2.1 PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN INDIA AND MIZORAM

The public library plays an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by giving the individual access to wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas and opinions.

In ancient India, libraries were established mainly by emperors, major capitalists, and scholars. Later during the Mughal period, there was further growth in the library system as they were patrons of art and literature. (Zahid, 2008; Kandhasamy & Bhatt, 2021). The public library system in India came about through 185 years of British rule in India, from 1762 to 1947 (Augustine & Devarajan, 1990). Today, the public library system in the country consists of National Library, State Central Library, Regional/Divisional Library, District Central Library, Village/Town Library and other libraries run by non-government organisation. (Zirsangzuali, 2015). The Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation was established in 1972 to aid in the growth of the library. The creation of CALIPNET (Calcutta public libraries network), INDONET (India's information network), etc. are significant turning points in the evolution of the Indian library movement.

Dr. Ranganathan's vision of a public library legislation was only realized when India gained its freedom. A modified Bill was filed in the state legislature through the good offices of Avinaslingam Chettiar, the then-Minister of Education. The Madras Public Libraries Act was approved in 1948. Due to the lack of a comprehensive image, it is difficult to determine and characterize the current state of the Indian public library system. India is made up of 29 states and 7 union territories. Each public library system, organization, and financial aid pattern is unique. While the remaining states continue to offer public library services without law, 19 of them have passed library legislation. (Prasad, 2016)

Mizoram attained an important development with the enactment of library legislation. The Mizoram Public Libraries Bill was passed on 6th January, 1993 to provide the establishment of comprehensive public library system in the state of Mizoram. (Zirsangzuali, 2015; Ngurtinkhuma, 2008). Therefore, Mizoram has Mizoram Public Libraries Act, 1993 which has not been implemented till date by the Government of Mizoram due to financial constraints and other factors.

The first Public Library in the state of Mizoram was established by the Assam Government at Aizawl known as Sub-Divisional Library in 1968. The State Library was established by the U.T. Government of Mizoram in 1974. Today, there is one State Library at Aizawl, Five District Libraries (one each at Aizawl, Lunglei, Saiha, Kolasib and Champhai) (Ngurtinkhuma, 2008). There are three levels of public libraries, viz. State, District and Village libraries. State and District libraries are established and administered by the state government, but village libraries are established, managed and administered by local bodies, like NGO, Voluntary Organizations' or other local societies. (Ngurtinkhuma, 2011).

In Mizoram, government recognised Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) libraries have formed to be one of most functional library for the society. The different categories of NGO libraries in Mizoram includes YMA library, Rescue centre libraries, Adventure club library, Cultural club library, Public library (sponsored by local community) and Private libraries etc. At present 512 are government recognised NGO libraries and majority of these libraries are run by the largest voluntary organizations in the state called the Young Mizo Association, commonly known as YMA. YMA took many steps for imparting information which can uplift the community. In every locality there is a branch of YMA and they establish libraries where services are provided to the community.

1.3. SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Numerous studies have been carried out on users' engagement in different fields but in case of users' engagement practices based on a public library there is lack of adequate study. So, the present study is an attempt to fill up the gap. Libraries uphold and strengthen some of the most fundamental democratic ideals of our society; they

not only make information freely available to all, but also foster the development of a society (Kranich, 2012). Among the categories of different types of libraries viz., Academic, Public, and Special libraries, the public library provide resources and services through several means to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and personal development including recreation and leisure. They have an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by giving the individual access to a wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas and opinions (IFLA, 1994). Thus, the present study covered how to engage users in the library and what practices are required by the librarians for users' engagement.

Presently in Mizoram, there are 512 government recognised NGO libraries in Mizoram. Among this, Aizawl district constitutes 160 government recognised NGO libraries in which 136 libraries are exclusively YMA (Young Mizo Association) libraries (Mizoram State Library, 2023) and have been taken up for the present study.

Table 1.1. List of YMA Libraries in Aizawl District

Sl. No.	Name of the Library	Year of establishment	Year of recognition
1	Aibawk Branch YMA Library	1992	1992-1993
2	Aizawl Tlangnuam Branch YMA Library	1999	2000-2001
3	Aizawl Venglai Branch YMA Library	1995	1996-1997
4	Armed Veng Branch YMA Library	1991	1993-1994
5	Armed Veng South Branch YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
6	Bawngkawn YMA Library	1992	1993-1994
7	Bethlehem Veng YMA Library	1989	1991-1992
8	Bethlehem Vengthlang YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
9	Buizova Memorial Library (East	1982	1982-1983

	Phaileng YMA)		
10	Bungkawn Branch YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
11	Bungkawn Nursery YMA Library	2012	2013-2014
12	Bungkawn Vengthar YMA Library	2005	2009-2010
13	C.T.I Branch YMA Library	1993	1994-1995
14	Chaltlang Branch YMA Library	1986	1991-1993
15	Chaltlang Lily Veng YMA Library	2010	2009-2010
16	Chamring Branch YMA Library	1999	2000-2001
17	Chanmari YMA Library	1987	1987-1988
18	Chawlhmun Branch YMA Library	1981	1982-1983
19	Chawnpui YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
20	Chhimveng Branch YMA Library, Sakawrdai	1995	1999-2000
21	Chhinga Veng YMA Library	1981	1981-1982
22	Chite Veng YMA Library	1996	1998-1999
23	College Veng YMA Library	1993	1993-1994
24	Dam Veng YMA Library	1985	1996-1997
25	Darlawn Chhim Veng YMA Branch Library	1989	1995-1996
26	Darlawn Venghlun Branch YMA Library	1989	1995-1996
27	Darlawn Vengpui YMA Library	1994	1995-1996
28	Darlawnng Branch YMA Public Library	2008	2009-2010
29	Dawrpui Vengthar Branch YMA Library	1975	1991-1992
30	Dinthar YMA Library	1997	1991-1992
31	Durtlang North Branch YMA Library	1995	1996-1997
32	Durtlang YMA Library	2001	2004-2005
33	Electric Veng YMA Library	1979	1981-1982

34	Falkawn YMA Library	1995	1995-1996
35	Falkland Branch YMA Library	2011	2017-2018
36	Gate Veng Branch YMA Library Tlungvel	1995	1996-1997
37	Govt. Complex YMA Library	1987	1987-1988
38	Hmuifang Branch YMA Library	1988	1991-1992
39	Hmunnggak Branch YMA Library	1996	1996-1997
40	Hospital Area Branch YMA Library, Thingsulthlah	2001	2001-2002
41	Hualngohmun YMA Branch Library	1985	1986-1987
42	Hunthar Branch YMA Library	1995	1996-1997
43	ITI Veng YMA Library	1988	1996-1997
44	Kanan YMA Library	1992	1992-1993
45	Kelsih Branch YMA Library	1998	2002-2003
46	Kepran YMA Library	1975	200-2001
47	Khatla South YMA Library	1999	1999-2000
48	Khatla YMA Library	1983	1984-1985
49	Khawpuar YMA Library	2000	2001-2002
50	Khawruhlian Branch YMA Library	1991	1992-1993
51	Khawruhlian Vengthar YMA Library	2000	2000-2001
52	Kulikawn YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
53	Laipuitlang YMA Library	1996	1996-1997
54	Lawipu Branch YMA library	2000	2014-2015
55	Leitan YMA Library, Durtlang	2000	2000-2001
56	Luangmual YMA Library	1986	1993-1994
57	Lungleng I Branch YMA Library	1994	1996-1997
58	Lungsum Branch YMA Library	2009	2009-2010
59	Maubawk YMA Library	2010	2013-2014
60	Maubuang Branch YMA Library	1993	1993-1994

61	Mauchar YMA Library	2000	2001-2002
62	Melriat YMA Library	2005	2007-2008
63	Melthum Branch YMA Library	1998	1998-1999
64	Mission Veng North Branch YMA Library	1985	1996-1997
65	Model Mission Veng YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
66	Muallungthu YMA Library	1989	1991-1992
67	Muthi YMA Library	1994	1998-1999
68	N. Lungleng YMA Library	1997`	1998-1999
69	N. Serzawl Branch YMA Library	1995	1995-1996
70	Nausel YMA Library	1999	1999-2000
71	New Capital Branch YMA Library	2018	2018-2019
72	New Vervek YMA Library	1990	1991-1992
73	Pehlawn Branch YMA Library	1986	1992-1993
74	Phulmawi YMA Library	2000	2000-2001
75	Phulpui YMA Library	1987	1988-1989
76	Ramhlun North YMA Library	1997	1997-1998
77	Ramhlun South Branch YMA Library	1991	1993-1994
78	Ramhlun Sport Complex Branch YMA Library	1996	2002-2003
79	Ramhlun Vengthar YMA Library	1993	1993-1994
80	Ramthar North Branch YMA Library	1998	2020-2021
81	Ramthar Veng YMA Library	1988	1988-1989
82	Rangvamual YMA Library	1996	1996-1997
83	Ratu Branch YMA Library	1994	1995-1996
84	Republic Veng YMA Library	1995	1996-1997
85	Republic Vengthlang YMA Library	1995	2010-2011
86	Saikhamakawn YMA Library	1999	1999-2000
87	Sailam Branch YMA Library	1990	1993-1994

88	Sailutar Branch YMA Library	1991	1992-1993
89	Sairang Dinthar YMA Library	1997	1997-1998
90	Sairang YMA Library	1980	1982-1983
91	Sakawrtuichhun Branch YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
92	Salem Veng YMA Library	1995	1995-1996
93	Samlukhai Branch YMA Library	1975	1995-1996
94	Samtlang Branch YMA Library	1996	1996-1997
95	Saron Veng YMA Library	1992	1996-1997
96	Sateek Branch YMA Library	1988	1988-1989
97	Sawleng Branch YMA Library	1985	1988-1989
98	Selesih YMA Library	1987	1987-1988
99	Seling Branch YMA Library	2012	1988-1989
100	Sesawng Branch YMA Library	2000	2000-2001
101	Sialsuk South Branch YMA Library	1990	1988-1989
102	Sihhmui YMA Library	2013	2013-2014
103	Sihphir Br. YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
104	Sihphir Venghlun Branch YMA Library	1999	1999-2000
105	Sumsuih Branch YMA Library	2014	2017-2018
106	Tachhip Branch YMA Library	1991	1993-1994
107	Tanhrlil Vengthar Branch YMA Library	2014	2017-2018
108	Tanhrlil YMA Library	2000	2000-2001
109	Thakthing YMA Library	1995	1997-1998
110	Thalai Hmasawn Pawl Library, Mission Vengthlang	1972	1981-1982
111	Thiak Branch YMA Library	2001	2001-2002
112	Thingsul Tlangnuam Branch YMA Library	1977	1988-1989
113	Thingsulthliah Joint YMA Library	2005	2007-2008

114	Thuampui Veng YMA Library	1995	1996-1997
115	Tinghmun Branch YMA Library	1980	1981-1982
116	Tlangnuam Vengthar Branch YMA library	2015	2015-2016
117	Tlungvel Field Veng Branch YMA Library	2000	2000-2001
118	Tlungvel Gate Veng YMA Library	1996	1996-1997
119	Tlungvel Venghlun Branch YMA Library	1992	1994-1995
120	Tuikhuahtlang YMA Library	2000	2000-2001
121	Tuikual North YMA Library	1996	1996-1997
122	Tuikual South YMA Library	1995	1996-1997
123	Tuithiang Veng YMA Library	1993	1981-1982
124	Upper Republic Veng YMA Library	1997	1997-1998
125	Vaitin Branch YMA Library	1997	1997-1998
126	Vaivakawn Branch YMA Library	1989	1991-1992
127	Venghlui YMA Library	1988	1996-1997
128	Venghnuai Branch YMA Library	1991	1992-1993
129	Vengthar Branch YMA Library, Tlungvel	2001	2002-2003
130	YMA Central Jail Veng Library	2017	2020-2021
131	Zarkawt YMA Library	1996	1996-1997
132	Zemabawk North YMA Library	1997	1997-1998
133	Zemabawk YMA Library	1979	1981-1982
134	Zohmun YMA Library	1991	1993-1994
135	Zotlang YMA Library	1995	1996-1997
136	Zuangtui YMA Library	1994	1996-1997

Source: Mizoram State Library, Department of Art & Culture, Government of Mizoram (2023)

1.4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature reviews serve as an essential component of quantitative research. A review of the literature aids in comprehending and successfully addressing the fundamental analytical, logical, and operational elements of the study problem. By reviewing the relevant research, the researcher was able to formulate the problem and create tools for change. This would make it easier to find any gaps in the past efforts, which the current study helps to fill up this gap.

1.4.1 PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Chowdhury & Khan (2026) identifies the obstacles to meeting the diverse demands of Murshidabad district public library patrons. The study included focus groups and in-depth interviews with community stakeholders, library staff, and users using a descriptive research methodology. The study identifies several important problems, including a lack of technological integration, limited infrastructure, low financing, and insufficient staff. The results show a discrepancy between patron expectations and library services. In order to better match library services with customer needs and expectations, the study ends with recommendations for budget allocation, staff deployments, policy changes, and strategic planning.

Nuriddinova & Turgunbaev (2026) discusses that public libraries function not merely as repositories of books but as dynamic, non-compulsory learning environments that employ a triad of foundational strategies to foster emergent and early reading skills. It highlights the strategies including curating accessible and diverse collections, facilitating developmentally appropriate programming, and engaging in purposeful outreach and caregiver education. The study suggest that by providing equitable access, modelling positive reading behaviours, and fostering a child's motivation to read, public libraries make a unique and indispensable contribution to the complex process of becoming a competent reader and concludes with reflections on the challenges public libraries face in this mission and their evolving role in an increasingly digital society. The study concludes with reflections on the challenges public libraries face in carrying out their mission and their changing role in an increasingly digital society. It suggests that public libraries make

a unique and indispensable contribution to the complex process of becoming a competent reader by providing equitable access, modelling positive reading behaviours, and encouraging a child's motivation to read.

Audunson (2025) determines the conceptual framework for studying and talking about the public library's function as a gathering spot in a digital and multicultural society. It summarizes how Western cultures have evolved from being dominated by a single cultural canon, where the public library's function is to provide access to that canon, to being communities that accept and cherish a wide range of cultural expressions and ideals. Creating meeting spaces that have the ability to foster the kind of cross-cultural conversation that a society expects is a general difficulty. Research and theory on gathering spots and forums for community communication are discussed. According to the study, low-intensive meeting sites are those where people are exposed to other people's beliefs and interests, whereas high-intensive meeting places are those where people invest their primary engagement. The public library's potential as a low-intensive meeting space is examined, along with the significance that these spaces play in fostering community and tolerance.

Ni., et.al. (2025) employed a quantitative approach with 398 randomly sampled users of Fuzhou Municipal Library to investigate how interaction patterns in public libraries influence user satisfaction and loyalty, and to identify effective strategies for enhancing both outcomes through participatory activities, feedback mechanisms, and digital interactions. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis revealed that all examined factors - participatory activities, seminars and workshops, social media usage, feedback channels, personalized services, and digital interactions were significantly positively correlated with both satisfaction and loyalty. Digital interactions exerted the strongest impact on satisfaction, while personalized services most strongly influenced loyalty. The models explained 38.7% of the variance in satisfaction and 40.7% in loyalty, underscoring that prioritizing digital interactions, personalized services, responsive feedback mechanisms, and participatory engagement represents a core strategic approach for enriching user experience and cultivating enduring patron relationships. These findings highlight the critical importance of these factors and offer libraries a

clear framework for service improvement aimed at fostering more engaging and fulfilling user experiences.

Popović & Vilar (2025) investigate the connections between adult reading literacy and the function of Slovenian public libraries in encouraging reading and enhancing adults' reading abilities. They created theoretical reflections on the fundamental principles of adult reading competency development based on the review of pertinent literature. Two content segments of professional and scientific publications and professional journals in the field of librarianship and associated subjects in the Slovenian area or by Slovenian authors were analysed by the study using the content analysis approach. As a result, improving adults' reading skills is a component of the local public library's goal. With a focus on adults whose reading skills have not been developed in a way that would allow them to seamlessly integrate into modern society, the results show theoretical premises that link the accomplishment of Slovenian public libraries' mission to the development of adults' reading skills. The potential for public libraries to enhance their role as advocates for reading in general and as implementers of programs to improve the reading skills of adults who lack these skills in the most effective way is proposed, taking into consideration the theoretical underpinnings and utilizing the findings of international research.

Singh & Kumar (2025) examines the Delhi Public Library (DPL) and the Hardayal Municipal Heritage Public Library (HMHPL), two well-known libraries in Delhi, to know the value of public libraries. The paper inspects how these two libraries have changed to accommodate the public's shifting requirements while upholding its fundamental purpose of advancing education and literacy through a comparative analysis. It draws attention to their support of lifelong learning, cultural preservation, and social equality. The study concluded that a centralized state archive must be established immediately in order to compile and protect this wealth of data. It also suggests digitizing rare documents in order to improve access and guarantee long-term preservation. Policymakers may support the preservation of cultural heritage and the sharing of information for future generations by giving priority to the preservation and digitalization of rare documents.

Sharma (2025) focuses at India's public libraries' current situation and difficulties in light of the country's continuous digital development. Using government reports and pertinent literature, the study investigates at staffing trends, budgeting, collection development, ICT integration, and national policy frameworks. The results show that efforts to modernize are hampered by significant gaps in professional competence, infrastructure, and policy execution. To close the digital divide and improve library services for inclusive lifelong learning, the study suggests focused investments in digital infrastructure, professional development, steady funding sources, regulatory changes, and the creation of multilingual materials.

Kawamoto & Koizumi (2023) conducted a study through qualitative content analysis and time-series analysis of 175 related articles that discussed the roles and functions of the library as a place. The study aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the roles and functions of the library as a place in public libraries and to illustrate the transition of those roles and functions. A conceptual model was created by extracting and organizing 2,966 codes pertaining to libraries as a place. This model included 30 subcategories, 11 categories (Intelligence, Creativity, Novelty, Culture and History, Neutrality, Equality, Empowerment, Publicness, Privacy, Sociability, and Friendliness), and three symbolic infrastructures (Wisdom, Heritage, and Community). The survey discovered that responsibilities have changed from traditional ones and that ideas of the library as a location have evolved quickly during the 1990s.

Kandhasamy & Bhatt (2021) examines the role of both governmental and non-governmental organizations in advancing India's public library system. According to the report, the government of post-independence India has taken a number of actions, including creating plans, rules, committees, and a distinct autonomous agency for public libraries. Additionally, each state's public libraries are analysed which determine the effects of library laws, as well as identifying solutions for current shortcomings and possible obstacles in the establishment of new libraries.

Prasad, Naveen (2016) provides an overview of the evolution of India's public library system, with a specific focus on its development, current status, and the

planning processes shaping its future. Drawing on survey data from the mid-1990s, it examines the demographics and information needs of library users, their satisfaction with available resources and services, and the early impact of automation. The analysis pays particular attention to how factors like age, gender, and the rural-urban divide influence planning and service delivery, offering a descriptive account of the system's growth and transformation over time.

Ngurtinkhuma (2007) discussed the states of rural libraries in Mizoram and the organization and management of libraries recognized by the State Government. The role of Mizoram Library Association in promoting the development of libraries and discussed the importance of rural libraries as the center of local community for their soci-cultural development and recreational center as well.

Bhattacharjee (2002) discussed the role and objectives of RRRLF, highlights the different schemes of assistance and shows the pattern of assistance for books, storage, construction, children's libraries, voluntary organizations, audio-visual materials etc. The author also discussed the limitations in finance, manpower and economic backwardness in rural and remote areas that blocks the growth and development of libraries.

1.4.2 USER ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

AV & Mahjeet (2025) evaluated the communities' involvement in the community engagement program and services provided by Kannur, Kerala's public libraries among the various reader groups, including the Balavedhi, Yuvajanavedhi, Vanithavedhi, and Vayojanavedhi communities. The study found out that the majority of patrons utilize the community services offered by public libraries and suggest that they also need extra services like free Wi-Fi, access to ICT, and more e-governance tools.

Bhanu & Dhanyasree (2025) concentrate on the civic engagement programs implemented by the State Library Council in Kerala, India whether modern public libraries and how these establishments support community participation. In Kerala, the council has established a number of community forums that target particular

groups of people who participate in the library's programming according to their needs. The result shows that when village libraries create and manage community forums that meet the various requirements of their customers, they play a significant role in planning civic engagement programs.

Haider et.al. (2025) identify how users perceive digital technology and the behaviours that go along with it by combining the technological acceptance model, digital engagement, and service value in Pakistan public libraries. Users of public libraries in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province made up the study sample and the results demonstrated how crucial personnel civility, resource accessibility and availability, and collection quality are in determining service value.

Huang et.al. (2025) explores the potential of public libraries as vital platforms for advancing inclusive civic engagement in government Artificial Intelligence (AI) initiatives. Drawing on interviews with 34 staff members from three diverse U.S. libraries - Palo Alto Public Library (CA), Queens Public Library (NY), and Schaumburg Township District Library (IL). The research examines the design, implementation, and outcomes of AI-related library programs. The study also identifies critical challenges, including insufficient staff expertise, limited staff engagement, and the absence of a unified, comprehensive strategy for promoting AI programs to the public. By educating communities on AI fundamentals and enabling hands-on exploration of tools and applications, libraries are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between basic awareness and deeper civic involvement. The study concludes that future research should build on this foundation to develop actionable strategies that empower public libraries to facilitate more advanced levels of civic participation in government AI initiatives.

Wang, et.al. (2025) investigates and compares user engagement behaviours across multiple new media platforms, examining how engagement varies by platform type and the nature of promotional content. Findings reveal that while public libraries tend to accumulate larger followings on WeChat Official Accounts and Weibo, user engagement is significantly higher on TikTok, where interactive responses are more pronounced. Moreover, distinct patterns of user interaction emerge across different

content categories, underscoring the importance of platform-specific dynamics. These insights offer practical guidance for libraries seeking to develop targeted promotional strategies tailored to the unique characteristics of each platform, ultimately enhancing user engagement and amplifying the reach and impact of their new media presence.

Shin, et.al. (2024) examined the reading practices of public library users in Busan, evaluating their perceptions of existing programs, and identifying their preferences for future program types and directions. A survey was administered to 609 users across both online and offline platforms, yielding several key implications. The study found that the concept of reading has broadened beyond traditional print materials to encompass diverse digital media, a shift that must be reflected in future program design. It suggested that since time constraints and lack of information emerged as the primary barriers to participation, libraries should offer programs at more flexible times and expand outreach through strategic promotion and the continuity and variety of reading programs need to be strengthened. Moreover, programs should be differentiated by age group in terms of content, timing, scale, and format and ongoing user surveys are essential for continuous program improvement. The findings provide a valuable foundation for enhancing and diversifying library-led reading culture initiatives.

Lee (2023) investigates how public libraries may support sustainability and community resilience in times of crisis. The study creates a strong link between libraries and community resilience by means of a thorough literature review and a case study of Taiwan's Kaohsiung Public Library. The report promotes a comprehensive strategy to address community needs during crises and highlights the significance of public libraries as agents of community resilience.

Narimani et al. (2022) examined the link between user engagement and content on Instagram pages of Iranian public libraries by analysing 10,132 posts from 110 libraries. The study found that posts which announce upcoming programmes, library resources, and accomplished events received the maximum user engagement. Text and photo formats were found to be engaging, trailed by video. The study concludes

that user engagement rises with active hashtag use, interesting content formats, and user-friendly substantial such as event announcements and expressive messages.

Zou, Chen & Dey (2020) studied on 10 public libraries which were observed across the United States and a total of 305 respondents participated in the survey through Pinterest, Twitter, and Facebook to help librarians understand the impact of emerging technologies on participatory service building. The findings include that library can engage its users through social media and Users' preference can help the library choose the best-fit strategy engaging it users. It concludes that since visualization and popular topics can engage more users, the libraries should create more popular topics where users are interested on social media.

Maurya, et.al. (2018) stressed that Mizoram's rural public libraries are unsatisfactory to meet the needs of their users. According to the study, Mizo people read extremely little, which has an effect on how often they utilize libraries. According to the findings, the novelty of public libraries may contribute to the lack of advancement in socioeconomic growth. The majority of people in rural areas rely heavily on rural public libraries since they cannot afford to buy books to read. It implies that public libraries should be maintained by the government since they are crucial to the dissemination of knowledge in society.

Shafawi & Hassan (2018) in their study used a mixed method approach and the study population consists of selected State Public and Academic Libraries in Malaysia. The findings indicated that Information Quality, Perceived Interactivity, and Perceived Net Benefit are found to be significant predictors of users' engagement with social media. The study proposed a framework for social media engagement evaluation for libraries and adds that the proposed criteria can be applied to increase user's awareness and greater user's engagement of library services.

Zou & Dey (2015) studied Twitter's function in attracting people by emphasizing public libraries. Library user engagement initiatives are divided into four groups using topic-modelling techniques: literature exhibits, community development, engaging subjects, and library showcasing. A sentiment analysis of tweets gathered from ten public libraries is used to reexamine these four engagement tactics. The

study examines how libraries use user engagement tactics on Twitter using data mining of tweets and offers best practices for libraries interested in following social media initiatives to effectively engage their users.

Sung & Hepworth (2013) studied on concepts relating to community engagement in public libraries in the United Kingdom. The model created for this study identifies two underlying variables: "influence of authority" and "willingness to learn." It was discovered that "influence of authority" had a necessary impact on CE and recommended that the CE process place more emphasis on community ownership and leadership, while "willingness to learn" had a central impact on CE. It emphasized how crucial it is to have an open mind and adopt a collaborative, participative style while working with partnership organizations and the community. Additionally, this research points to an organic and community-driven form of CE.

Attfield et.al. (2011) proposed an approach to relating and developing unified measures of user engagement. The main aim is to define a framework in which user engagement can be studied, measured, and explained. They conclude that User engagement is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon which give rise to a number of potential approaches for measurement whether objectively or subjectively. And also finds on how existing user engagement metrics, web analytics, information retrieval metrics, and measures from immersion in gaming can bring new perspective to defining, measuring and explaining user engagement.

1.4.3 USER ENGAGEMENT IN OTHER LIBRARIES

Isa, et.al. (2025) investigates user engagement with digital reference services (DRS) in federal university libraries across Northwest Nigeria, employing the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) alongside the standards established by the Reference and User Services Association. Librarian communication, clarity of instruction, and proficiency in digital tool navigation are critical determinants of user satisfaction. While respondents demonstrated confidence in DRS accessibility, barriers such as response delays and complex interfaces persisted. The study extends TPB by integrating four novel constructs - librarian skills, technological competence,

complex tasks, and user attitude, thereby offering a more nuanced framework for understanding digital engagement behaviours. Key findings underscore the need for enhanced infrastructure, streamlined user interfaces, and real-time support tools. Recommendations include ongoing librarian training, targeted promotional campaigns, and the establishment of feedback mechanisms. Practically, the extended TPB model offers a valuable lens for shaping DRS policy and design in academic libraries, while future research may explore AI-powered DRS platforms, cultural dimensions of user behaviour, and longitudinal assessments of satisfaction trends.

Narzary (2025) examines how people use the Tamulpur College Library in Assam. The study addresses basic factors related to user involvement and library upkeep. This library provided the data for the study, which focused on user performance and resource maintenance. The results show that the Bodo department receives 26% of the book collection, while other departments receive less than 15% of the total. Interestingly, 36% of users are men and 64% of users are women, and 64% of users are between the ages of 20 and 24. This result makes it easier to identify user engagement tactics and performance in a variety of library services, programs, learning methods, and extra activities.

Pushpamala & Weerakoon (2025) investigated user engagement with promotional activities at the KRC Library to formulate actionable improvement strategies. The findings reveal a critical distinction between perceived and actual awareness: while 75% of respondents initially reported high awareness, subsequent assessment exposed only partial knowledge of specific activities, with library orientation programs and email notifications emerging as the most recognized. Social media proved to be the most effective communication channel, though other digital and physical modes maintained moderate effectiveness. The study derives strategic recommendations from student-reported motivating factors and barriers, emphasizing that effective library promotion must directly align with students' academic and personal needs, offer tangible recognition opportunities, remove participation obstacles, and continuously refine communication strategies to foster deeper, sustained engagement.

Mutuma et al. (2024) studied user engagement challenges in Meru University and Kenya Methodist University libraries. Using a descriptive survey, findings discovered effective resource usage of public catalogues and online databases, but noted difficulties with e-journals and institutional repositories due to inadequate digital quality and usability. The study concludes that user engagement demands improvements in the serviceability and eminence of digital platforms.

Paul et.al. (2024) investigates the integration of cutting-edge technologies and innovative methodologies to transform libraries into dynamic, user-centred environments that foster learning, interaction, and personal growth. The study explores a range of creative engagement strategies, from personalized approaches like recommendation systems to interactive digital platforms designed to deliver effective, tailored experiences for diverse user groups. It specifically examines the dynamics of consumer engagement focusing on elements of enthusiasm, social sharing, and collaborative learning and analyses their impact on the cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions of user interaction. The findings suggest that by integrating these technological and participatory approaches, libraries can create a synergistic environment that not only improves information management and user engagement but also adds significant value, promoting a cycle of continuous interaction and growth that leaves a lasting, positive impact on the community.

Sharma (2024) studied the academic library programmes, explores user motives, and also suggests evidence-based strategies for improvement in user engagement. It aims to qualify libraries to flourish in the digital era and carry on being important centres for connection, learning, and discovery by attending to user necessities and creating a prosperous community around them. The study results deliver useful material that libraries may utilize to exploit modern skills, launch welcoming spaces, and adjust to everchanging user behaviours.

T. A. et. al. (2023) searched the literature thoroughly by dividing it into different titles, conclusions, and important takeaways. The results show that integrating social media into libraries improves user engagement and has advantages. However, it was determined that the absence of policies, a lack of skilled staff, and financial

limitations were the main obstacles to a successful integration. Based on these results, a conceptual framework for effectively integrating social media into libraries is put forth. It consists of four steps: study, adoption, implementation, and interaction. These steps include determining the goals of the library, evaluating its resources, creating and implementing policies, establishing a social media strategy, and assessing its performance in order to improve user engagement.

Saadati et. al. (2021) investigates how the next generation of academic libraries would improve user collaboration using a pull strategy method based on design thinking and a user-centred approach in the University of West London library. It found that using technologies enables remote control of library buildings, including automatic doors, lighting, self-service kiosks, and public computers but these new trends are making the libraries more vulnerable with lower user engagement. And the study concludes that the researchers and librarians must rethink of using methods to design the future services that can increase the users' engagement in the next generation of libraries.

Vreede et.al. (2019) synthesizes insights from multiple disciplines to propose a universal, discipline-independent definition of engagement along with a corresponding measurement scale. It begins by delineating three distinct temporal levels of engagement based on duration: task or activity-level, initiative-level, and continuous, long-term engagement. The study further explores the multidimensional nature of the concept, examining the differences between affective, behavioural, and cognitive engagement. Building on this foundational framework, a comprehensive definition of engagement is established. The core contribution of this research is the development of a versatile measurement scale, refined iteratively through five distinct data samples to ensure robustness and applicability across diverse domains and contexts. The final scale demonstrates strong validity, having been successfully tested and confirmed in two distinct fields: online learning and work engagement.

Yap (2020) highlights current status of social media engagement of selected academic libraries in Kazakhstan during the COVID-19 crises. The library social media accounts of three organizations were investigated to review the number of

followers, frequency of posting, and its overall social media engagement. Using the post engagement rate (PER) formula, the study identifies and analyses the average PER Facebook pages maintained by academic libraries. It concludes that Library marketing and promotion in Kazakhstan needs to be addressed as public relations is not the primary focus. It emphasised that the use of social media as a tool for user engagement is not fully developed, the keenness of the library in terms of online communication and interaction and library staffing and identify their marketing background must be looked into. The study suggests that the pandemic situation must be the turning point of academic libraries to enhance their reach with their participants.

Adey & Mullins (2017) studied on the use and value of library resources of Nottingham Trent University and Alexander Street in steering an in-depth view of analytics, indicating user engagement and impact of use. The findings include that User engagement analytics need to be seen as an addition to counter usage reports and not as a replacement. It also suggests that for analytics to be truly useful and respected, more work is also needed so that consistency in reporting can be reached. The study concludes that finding the contented standard between having enough data and being filled will be something that can only be reached through experience, but the prospect of an improved understanding of how library users are engaging with resources is most essential.

Esson, et.al. (2012) examined effective engagement strategies for connecting with new-generation learners through both digital and face-to-face interactions, emphasizing the importance of demonstrating that participant input leads to tangible outcomes. The study included two case studies from Victoria University of Wellington Library: the first involves Te Rōpū Whakamanawa, a working group established with student involvement to address the needs of Māori and Pasifika staff and students; the second details a comprehensive “Library services for the future” review that gathered extensive stakeholder feedback through 32 diverse focus group sessions and supplementary online channels. The findings underscore that a forward-thinking academic library is defined by the calibre and breadth of its service programs, the success of which hinges on customer-driven design and development.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

1.5.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Studies for public libraries has been found through literature survey and these studies highlights that there are less users' year by year but these conclusions are solely based on the services and resources the libraries have provided. Declination of users' problem can be solved by preparing a model framework for user engagement. Furthermore, Public libraries are a community agency providing access at local level to a range of knowledge and information for the benefit of the individual and society as a whole. So, need arises to study the knowledge and information provided by librarians/library-in-charge of the YMA libraries of Aizawl district through their engagement practices as well as the problems which leads to the current status of their libraries and to suggest measures. From the LIS perspective, there have been few researches so far, based on user engagement practices and it was necessary to conduct this study and the results will be useful for professionals as well as the society in the context of Aizawl and Mizoram as well. All these reasons have prompted and motivated the scholar to take up this research problem.

1.5.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The prime objective of the present study is to trace out the users' engagement practices of YMA libraries in Aizawl. The specific objectives of the study are to

1. Explore ways and means of users' engagement practices followed by YMA libraries under study;
2. Study the experiences, problems and challenges faced by libraries in users' engagement practices in libraries under study;
3. Suggest strategies for the improvement of users' engagement in libraries under study; and
4. Propose a model framework to improve users' engagement practices for libraries.

1.5.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study attempts to understand the practices for users' engagement in YMA libraries of Aizawl District from Library Science perspective. The study is descriptive in design and cross sectional in nature. The primary data is collected through field survey with interview, observation and questionnaire methods from the librarians/library-in-charge of the YMA libraries in Aizawl District. A census sampling procedure is used for the study. At present, Mizoram has 512 government recognised NGO libraries. Aizawl district constitutes 160 government recognised NGO libraries in which 136 libraries are exclusively YMA (Young Mizo Association) libraries which is taken up for the present study. The primary data collected through field survey is processed with computer packages of MS excel. The secondary data is also collected through information sources such as books, articles, journals and online resources. The citation and references is based on the latest edition of American Psychological Association (APA).

1.6 CHAPTERIZATION

The present study has been divided into the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter discussed the terminology of user engagement in context to library services as well as public libraries in India and Mizoram. The significance and scope of the study, review of literature and the research design have been presented in detail.

Chapter 2: User Engagement: Conceptual Approach

This chapter described the Users' Engagement concepts, characteristics, models, measurement and its relation to library services.

Chapter 3: YMA Libraries in Mizoram: An Overview

This Chapter explained the geographical settings of the study area have been highlighted and the origin and structure of the Young Mizo Association (YMA). Moreover, the objectives and functions of YMA in library services is highlighted.

The chapter traces the development of public libraries in the state of Mizoram and establishment of YMA libraries as well as how they further function through RRRLF is discussed. Some pictorial information of the study areas is also shown.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis & Findings

In this chapter, the data which have been collected is tabulated and analysed using Microsoft Excel and graphical presentation is discussed. The findings of the study have also been elaborated based on the objectives of the study.

Chapter 5: Suggestions & Conclusion

This chapter presented the suggestions from the respondents and scholar and how it paves way for further research followed by the conclusion of the entire research work.

Bibliography: The bibliography is provided and arranged based on American Psychological Association (APA), 7th Edition style manual.

1.7 CONCLUSION

The public library stands as one of the most enduring and dominant social institutions, a cornerstone upon which the edifice of an enlightened, progressive, and equitable society is built. Its significance extends far beyond the mere storage and lending of books. It functions as a dynamic and democratic force that facilitates the multifaceted progress of the community it serves. At its core, the public library is a powerful agent of empowerment, uniquely positioned to support both the structured pathways of formal education and the deeply personal journey of self-education for the masses.

This fundamental mission-the provision of accurate, relevant, and timely information to all members of the community without discrimination is the common thread that unites every public library, regardless of its size or location. From the grandeur of the National Library and the extensive collections of a State Central Library down to the humble, single-room village library tucked away in a remote corner of a district, the purpose is identical. Each is a node in a vast, decentralized network of knowledge, a testament to the belief that access to information is a universal right, not a privilege

of geography or circumstance. The district library serves as a crucial intermediary, and the village library acts as the final, critical point of access, the last mile in the journey of information to the citizen.

Therefore, a nation's commitment to the development of its public library system is a direct reflection of its commitment to the development of its entire people. This understanding brings into sharp focus the urgent and critical need to uplift and modernize libraries at the grassroots levels - the village and small-town libraries. These are the institutions that serve the most vulnerable and often the most information-deprived segments of the population. All too often, they are characterized by inadequate infrastructure, outdated collections, a lack of technology, and an over-reliance on unpaid volunteers. This neglect creates a profound and detrimental information divide. If we truly aspire to holistic and inclusive national development, we cannot afford a scenario where a citizen's access to information is determined by their postal code.

The vision for the future must be one of parity and connection. The goal must be to bridge the digital and knowledge divide so that a student in a remote village, a small farmer seeking information on modern agricultural techniques, or a rural entrepreneur looking for market data can retrieve information with the same ease and efficiency as their counterparts in urban and metropolitan areas. This requires a concerted and multi-pronged effort: strategic investment in infrastructure, including independent library buildings and reliable internet connectivity; the adoption of modern technology through library automation; the professionalization of library staff; and the creation of dynamic, engaging programs that transform these spaces into vibrant community hubs. By empowering grassroots libraries, we are not simply maintaining buildings; we are investing in human potential, fostering equitable opportunity, and strengthening the very foundations of our democracy. The upliftment of the village library is, in essence, the upliftment of the nation itself.

The next chapter will discuss the existence of the public libraries in India as well as Mizoram and the functioning of Young Mizo Association (YMA) in Mizoram.

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CHAPTER 2

USER ENGAGEMENT: CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced, tech-driven world, libraries are redefining their role as vibrant hubs of learning, creativity, and community connection. At the heart of this transformation lies user engagement – the art of understanding, empowering, and delighting the diverse individuals who breathe life into library spaces. Effective user engagement is no longer a nicety, but a necessity, as libraries strive to stay relevant, responsive, and meaningful to their communities.

By embracing user engagement, libraries can unlock a treasure trove of benefits, from boosting user satisfaction and loyalty to fostering a sense of belonging and social cohesion. But what does user engagement truly mean in the context of libraries? How can libraries cultivate a culture of engagement that resonates with diverse users, from bookworms to tech enthusiasts, students to seniors? This exploration of user engagement in libraries will delve into the what, why, and how of building meaningful connections with users, and highlight the transformative impact it can have on individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

2.2 USER ENGAGEMENT DEFINITION

User engagement is a rich, multi-dimensional concept that has attracted considerable scholarly attention across disciplines including information science, psychology, human-computer interaction, and marketing. Defining it precisely in the context of library services requires drawing on these varied perspectives to arrive at a holistic understanding that encompasses the full spectrum of user-library interactions

Attfield et al. (2011): “User engagement is the emotional, cognitive and behavioural connection that exists, at any point in time and possibly over time, between a user and a resource.”

This definition is significant for several reasons. It identifies three interrelated dimensions - emotional, cognitive, and behavioural and highlights the temporal character of user engagement, acknowledging that it may be experienced within a single session or may evolve across multiple interactions over time. User engagement with a library resource is therefore not merely about how one interaction

unfolds, but about how and why people develop a sustained relationship with the library and integrate it meaningfully into their lives.

Building on this, O'Brien and Toms offered a perspective rooted in human-computer interaction that has particular relevance for digital library services:

O'Brien & Toms (2008): *“Engagement is a quality of user experience characterized by attributes of challenge, positive affect, durability, aesthetic and sensory appeal, attention, feedback, variety/novelty, interactivity, and perceived user control.”*

This definition draws attention to the experiential qualities of engagement - the sense of challenge, the aesthetic dimension, the feeling of control - that distinguish a truly engaged interaction from a mere transactional one. For libraries, this implies that thoughtful design of physical and digital spaces, collections, and services is integral to fostering genuine user engagement.

2.2.2 ENGAGEMENT AS A RESPONSE TO SERVICE VALUE

From a practical, service-oriented standpoint, user engagement can be understood as an assessment of an individual's response to a service. It reflects how valuable users find a product or service based on the degree to which they choose to interact with it, and is highly correlated with overall satisfaction and institutional sustainability. User attention is a finite and precious resource; when users choose to spend more of their time in a library - whether physically or virtually - they are sending a clear signal that they perceive value in that engagement.

Highly engaged users are more likely to return, to recommend the library to others, and to become advocates for library services within their communities. This makes user engagement not only an indicator of service quality but also a driver of the library's long-term relevance and impact.

The Signal (2018): *“Library professionals must design the service to help users quickly discover its value or they risk losing them.”*

This observation is particularly pertinent in the context of new users, who are often still forming first impressions and trying to discover the initial value of library services. On boarding - the process of introducing new users to the library's offerings and helping them navigate available resources is therefore a crucial inflection point in the user engagement journey. Users may have been drawn to the library out of pure curiosity, a personal recommendation, or an immediate informational need; in each case, it is the library's responsibility to facilitate a positive and meaningful first experience.

2.2.3 SOCIOCULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

Beyond the individual experience, user engagement in libraries carries important sociocultural and psychological dimensions. Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a useful lens through which to view library engagement: libraries can address not only basic informational needs but also higher-order needs for belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation. When a library successfully engages its users at these deeper levels, it becomes a space of personal growth and community identity.

Kuh's (2009) concept of student engagement in higher education, though originally developed in an academic context, offers valuable insights transferable to public library settings. Kuh defines engagement as the time and effort students devote to educationally purposeful activities, and the degree to which institutions deploy resources and organise learning opportunities to prompt them to participate in such activities. Applied to libraries, this framing emphasises the institution's active role in creating conditions that invite and sustain meaningful participation.

Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory (2000) illuminate the motivational underpinnings of user engagement. Their framework identifies three core psychological needs - autonomy, competence, and relatedness whose fulfilment is essential for intrinsic motivation and sustained engagement. Libraries that empower users to direct their own learning (autonomy), provide resources that help users build skills and knowledge (competence), and create welcoming communities of practice (relatedness) are well positioned to cultivate deep and lasting engagement.

2.2.4 DIGITAL AND TECHNOLOGY-MEDIATED ENGAGEMENT

The rise of digital technologies has significantly expanded the terrain of user engagement in libraries. Digital engagement encompasses interactions with online catalogues, e-databases, digital collections, social media platforms, library apps, and virtual programming. Researchers in the field of information science have proposed definitions that account for this digital dimension:

Doherty (2006): *“User engagement in the digital library context refers to the quality and depth of interactions between users and electronic resources, encompassing both the cognitive effort invested and the affective responses generated.”*

This definition highlights an important distinction: engagement in digital environments is not simply measured by click rates or time-on-page, but by the quality and meaningfulness of the interaction. A user who spends fifteen minutes carefully reading a digitised archival document is more deeply engaged than one who rapidly clicks through multiple pages without sustained attention.

Van Deursen and Van Dijk's (2014) framework of digital skills adds another layer to this understanding, recognising that users' ability to engage with digital library resources is mediated by varying levels of digital literacy. Libraries therefore have a responsibility not only to provide digital resources but to actively support users in developing the skills needed to engage with them effectively.

2.3 USER ENGAGEMENT CHARACTERISTICS

User engagement is a multifaceted concept that extends far beyond simple usability. It represents the depth of the connection between a user and an interactive system, encompassing emotional, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions. By understanding the key characteristics that define and promote engagement, designers and researchers can create more compelling, memorable, and ultimately more successful user experiences. The following seven characteristics provide a comprehensive framework for recognising, analysing, and fostering this profound state of interaction.

(i) Focused attention and Temporal Distortion

At the heart of a truly engaging experience lies the phenomenon of focused attention. This state is characterised by a deep, almost effortless immersion in an activity, to the extent that external distractions, including the presence of other people and surrounding environmental stimuli, are effectively filtered out. The user becomes completely absorbed in the task or interaction at hand.

A powerful and reliable indicator of this cognitive absorption is a distortion in the subjective perception of time. When an individual is deeply engaged, their internal clock seems to malfunction. Minutes can feel like seconds, and a user might be surprised to discover how much real-world time has elapsed during their interaction. This "time flies when you're having fun" effect is not merely a by-product of enjoyment but is considered an effective and objective indicator of cognitive involvement. The more profound the engagement, the greater the likelihood that the user will underestimate the passage of time. This temporal dissociation serves as a key metric for researchers and a hallmark of a successfully immersive interface.

(ii) Positive Affect and Emotional Investment

Engagement is not a purely cognitive process; it is deeply rooted in emotion. Positive affect refers to the spectrum of pleasurable emotions a user experiences during their interaction. These feelings are intrinsically motivating, meaning the activity itself is rewarding and enjoyable, encouraging continuation for its own sake. An initial spark of positive emotion—an 'affective hook' can be crucial in capturing a user's attention in the first place. This initial positive feeling, perhaps triggered by a pleasing animation, a witty piece of micro copy, or a rewarding discovery, can quickly blossom into a desire for exploration and active discovery.

Beyond this initial spark, positive affect fosters a deeper emotional investment. When users form a personal link to an experience feeling a sense of joy, satisfaction, or even pride in their interaction, they are more likely to persist through challenges and develop a lasting connection with the product or service. This emotional bond transforms a transactional interaction into a personally meaningful experience, laying the groundwork for long-term loyalty.

(iii) Aesthetics The Sensory Gateway

Aesthetics, concerning the sensory and visual appeal of an interface, serves as a critical gateway to engagement. It is not merely about making an interface pretty; it is about leveraging visual design to create an environment that is inviting, comprehensible, and emotionally resonant. In various contexts, from online shopping and educational webcasting to gaming, aesthetics are operationalised through elements such as thoughtful screen layout, the strategic use of colour, high-quality graphics and imagery, and the application of classical design principles like symmetry, balance, and hierarchy.

The impact of aesthetics extends beyond initial appeal. Research suggests a strong link between aesthetics and positive affect; a well-designed interface can evoke feelings of pleasure and calm, which in turn predispose users to a more positive overall experience. Furthermore, aesthetically pleasing experiences have been shown to promote the very focused attention discussed earlier. A harmonious and beautiful design can reduce cognitive load and stimulate curiosity, encouraging users to linger and explore. In essence, aesthetics act as a silent partner in engagement, subtly shaping the user's emotional state and cognitive focus from the very first glance.

(iv) Endurability: The Will to Return and Recommend

An engaging experience is not ephemeral; it leaves a lasting positive impression that influences future behaviour. This characteristic, known as endurability, refers to the likelihood of an experience being remembered as enjoyable and useful, creating a powerful desire to repeat it. It is the quality that transforms a one-time visitor into a loyal user.

Endurability is multi-faceted. It is reflected in a user's willingness to actively re-engage with the experience, returning of their own volition. More significantly, it manifests in their willingness to recommend the experience to others, acting as a voluntary advocate. This social endorsement is a powerful testament to the experience's value. At its core, endurability is tied to the user's perception that the experience met or exceeded their expectations, being perceived as successful, rewarding, or worthwhile. Research has identified several key drivers that promote

this lasting appeal, including the simple pleasure of having fun, the tangible rewards of convenience or incentives, and the intellectual satisfaction of discovering something new. These positive reinforcements create a memory loop that actively encourages later re-engagement.

(v) Novelty: The Fuel for Curiosity and Discovery

Human beings are innately curious, and interactive experiences can captivate us by appealing to this fundamental drive through novelty. Novelty involves presenting users with surprising, unfamiliar, or unexpected elements, whether in content, functionality, or overall design. This departure from the predictable captures attention and invigorates the interaction.

Novelty acts as a powerful catalyst for inquisitive behaviour. An unexpected animation, a cleverly hidden feature, or a fresh perspective on familiar content encourages users to explore, click, and delve deeper. This active discovery is a highly engaging process in itself. The source of novelty can be diverse, ranging from the consistent freshness of regularly updated content to the innovative application of a new technology that creates a unique interaction paradigm. By continuously offering new stimuli, an experience can sustain user interest over time and promote repeated engagement, as users return with the anticipation of encountering something they haven't seen before.

(vi) Reputation, trust and expectation

Before a user can even begin to engage, a fundamental prerequisite must be met: trust. Trust is the bedrock upon which all meaningful interaction is built. In the digital realm, a resource's or provider's reputation serves as a globalised form of this trust—a shorthand for the accumulated confidence that users place in it. A strong, positive reputation lowers the initial barrier to entry, making users more willing to invest their time and, potentially, their personal data.

However, trust is a complex construct that extends beyond mere technical assurances. While factors like secure, encrypted communications are necessary to establish a baseline of safety, true trust also depends on a series of implicit contracts.

These are the unspoken agreements between people, computers, and the organisations behind them. Users trust that an e-commerce site will deliver their purchase, that a search engine will provide unbiased results, and that a social media platform will handle their data responsibly. This mirrors the trust consumers place in ‘real-life’ organisations, which rely on their customers' faith in the accuracy of information or the quality of a service. Without this foundational trust, any potential for deep, sustained user engagement is fundamentally compromised.

(vii) The Pivotal Role of User Context

The experience of engagement is not solely a product of the design itself; it is profoundly shaped by the context in which the interaction occurs. User context encompasses the user's motivation for using the product, the incentives they perceive, and the tangible or intangible benefits they seek. These factors often exert a greater influence on the overall experience than traditional usability metrics like efficiency or ease of learning. A user browsing a site for leisure will have a vastly different experience and tolerance for complexity than the same user trying to complete a time-sensitive task on the same site. This dependency on context means that the same design can lead to wildly different experiences under different circumstances. A beautifully designed news app might feel engaging during a quiet morning coffee but frustratingly slow and distracting during a busy commute. A user's mood, their physical environment, their social setting, and their specific goals at the moment of interaction all coalesce to shape their perception. Acknowledging the pivotal role of user context is essential for designers, as it highlights the need for flexible and adaptable systems that can cater to a diverse range of situations and user needs, rather than striving for a single, static ideal of engagement.

In conclusion, these seven characteristics - focused attention, positive affect, aesthetics, durability, novelty, trust, and context do not operate in isolation. They form a dynamic and interconnected system that collectively elaborates on the rich tapestry of user engagement. By understanding these components, we can better recognise when engagement is occurring, diagnose why it might be failing, and

strategically promote it to create experiences that are not only usable but truly meaningful and captivating.

These characteristics go some way to elaborate the emotional, cognitive and behavioural components of user engagement about how engagement might be recognised, and even promoted (Attfield, et.al., 2011). In summary, the characteristics of user engagement in library services today are multifaceted. They are defined by a seamless technological presence that integrates with user workflows, a deep psychological connection built on cognitive investment and empathy, a participatory culture that invites co-creation and community interaction, and a personalized approach that dynamically responds to individual user needs. For libraries aiming to remain vital community and academic hubs, fostering engagement means orchestrating these characteristics into a cohesive strategy that empowers users to learn, interact, and grow in partnership with the library.

2.4. USER ENGAGEMENT MODELS

Studies have been taken up for User Engagement in different fields where they come up with models for user engagement. Some of the Models of User Engagement proposed in other disciplines by scholars are highlighted below as Figure 2.1 and 2.2.

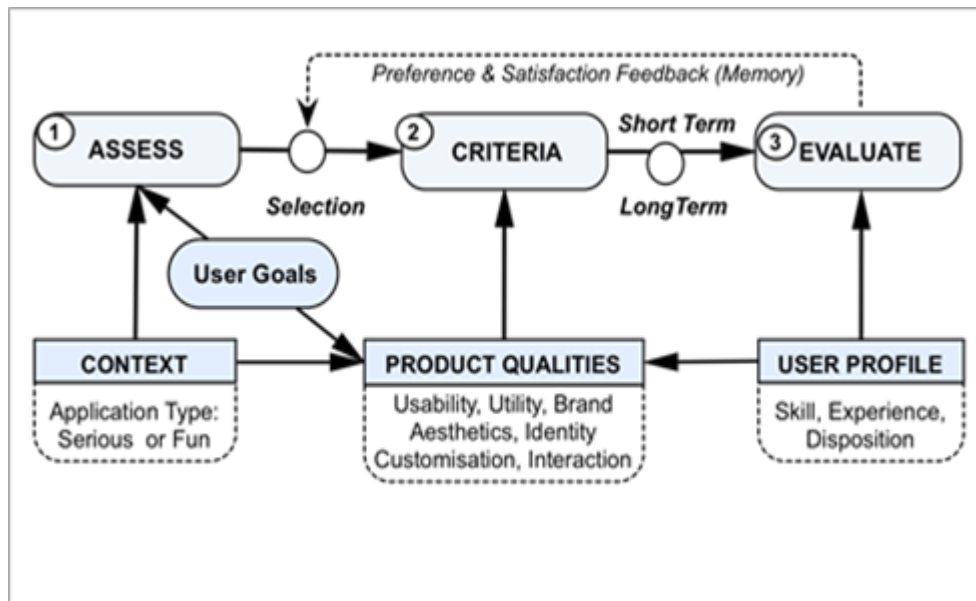


Fig. 2.1. The three-staged process model of User Judgement for Product Quality used to evaluate the nature of User Engagement (Hart et. al., 2012)

This model has been proposed by Hart, et. al., (2012) from the area of Computer Science where it focuses users' judgement within a specific period. It focuses on how judgements of quality criteria (e.g. usability, classic and expressive aesthetics) are connected to the user goal or task, the domain or application type and product features and found that the background of the application (serious or fun), and the users profile (skill and experience) determine the ranking of the criteria by which a product is mediated. It further concludes that experience of user engagement is determined by the quality criteria biased by the application domain and the user's background.

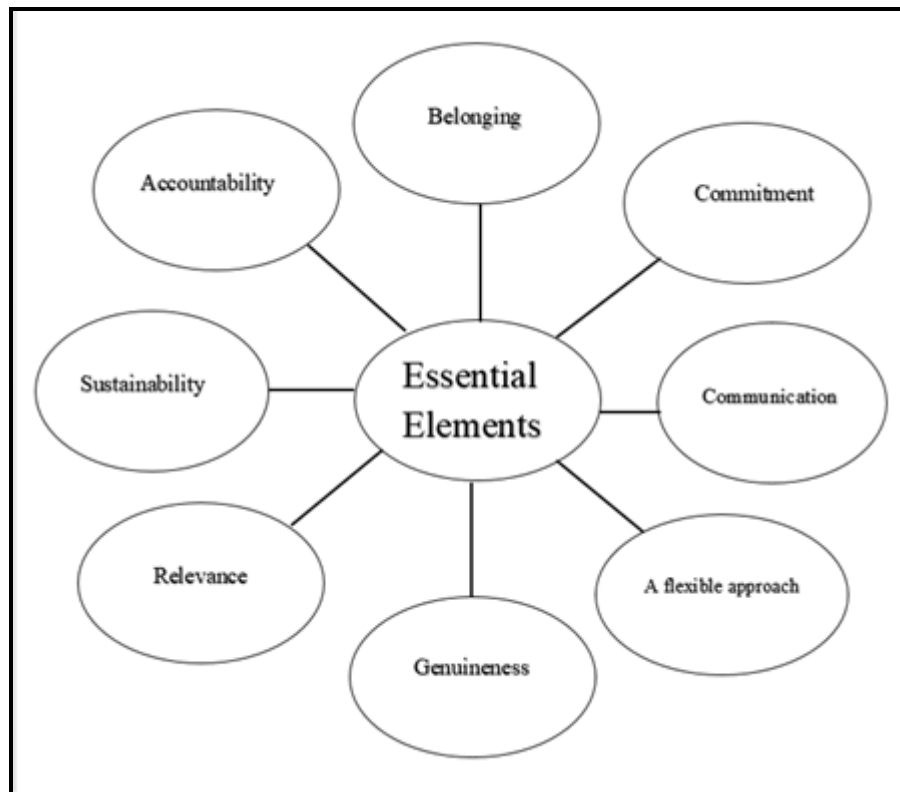


Figure 2.2. A Model of Essential Elements of Community Engagement in Public Libraries (Sung & Hepworth, 2013)

In research done by Sung & Hepworth (2013), they identified eight essential elements of Community Engagement (CE), which are, accountability, belonging, commitment, communication, a flexible approach, genuineness, relevance and sustainability. It also found two key essential variables in the CE process, that is, influence of authority and willingness to learn. The model that was established in this research recognised the significance of the community-driven feature in the CE process, and in this regard, ‘belonging’ reflected a community-driven and bottom-up approach in the CE process.

2.5 NEED OF USER ENGAGEMENT IN LIBRARIES

The necessity of user engagement in modern libraries extends far beyond simply attracting visitors; it is a fundamental strategy for ensuring institutional relevance, vitality, and mutual growth in a rapidly evolving information landscape. By moving

from a top-down service model to a collaborative partnership with users, libraries can transform themselves into indispensable community anchors.

1) Improves user experience by fostering deep customization and co-creation

User engagement transforms the library from a static service provider into a dynamic, responsive entity. Instead of assuming what users need, engagement mechanisms like suggestion boxes, focus groups, and participatory design workshops allow libraries to gather direct, actionable insights. This leads to the creation of highly customized services-such as targeted research guides, adaptable maker-spaces, or personalized reading recommendations that directly address specific community needs. Furthermore, when users are co-creators, they bring innovative ideas that library staff might not have considered, leading to more creative and effective solutions. This collaborative approach ensures the library environment, both physical and digital, is intuitively designed for actual use patterns, not theoretical ones, resulting in a seamless and more satisfying interaction with library resources.

2) Increases user satisfaction and builds lasting loyalty and advocacy

When users see their input leading to tangible changes - a new database, adjusted opening hours, or a popular new program series, it creates a powerful sense of ownership and value. This moves satisfaction from a passive state (content with what's offered) to an active one (invested in the library's success). An engaged user is more likely to become a loyal advocate, championing the library within their social networks, defending its funding, and participating in its growth. This deep-seated loyalty is crucial in an era of competing information sources and budgetary pressures, as it transforms users into a resilient support base that ensures the library's continued viability.

3) Fosters community engagement by bridging gaps and empowering local leadership

User engagement acts as a powerful catalyst for building social capital. By creating spaces and programs where users can interact, share ideas, and collaborate on projects such as community gardening initiatives, local history digitization projects,

or civic discussion forums, the library becomes a true town square. This engagement breaks down social differences, connecting diverse groups (different ages, cultures, or socioeconomic backgrounds) and fostering mutual understanding. More importantly, it empowers users to become not just consumers of library services, but active contributors to their community's development. The library provides the platform and resources, while engaged citizens drive the positive change, strengthening the entire community's fabric and resilience.

4) Supports lifelong learning by cultivating critical skills and community-led knowledge exchange

In a world of fragmented and often unverified information, user engagement is essential for developing sophisticated information and digital literacy skills. Interactive programs like citizen science projects, community-led skill-sharing workshops, or collaborative research clubs transform learning from a passive intake of information into an active, social endeavour. Users do not just acquire knowledge; they learn how to critically evaluate sources, synthesize information, and apply it creatively in a supportive environment. Furthermore, by facilitating peer-to-peer learning, the library taps into the vast, diverse expertise within the community itself. This positions the library not just as a gateway to external information, but as a vibrant hub for creating and sharing local knowledge, essential for navigating and succeeding in a complex world.

2.5.1. COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND LIBRARY SERVICES:

User engagement in library services has shifted from a passive model of quiet circulation to an active, community-centric partnership. Modern libraries no longer just house collections; they curate experiences that invite patrons to co-create value through interactive programming, digital literacy workshops, and collaborative "makerspaces." By leveraging data-driven insights and social media outreach, libraries can tailor their services to meet the specific cultural and educational needs of their neighbourhood, transforming the institution into a vibrant "third place" between home and work. This proactive approach ensures that the library remains a

relevant, indispensable hub for lifelong learning and social connection in an increasingly digital world.

User engagement is a crucial aspect of collection development in libraries, as it ensures that the library's collection meets the needs and expectations of its users. Here are some ways user engagement can be incorporated into collection development:

2.5.1.1. BENEFITS OF USER ENGAGEMENT IN COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND LIBRARY SERVICES

1. Improved Relevance and Usage:

User participation directly raises the quality and relevance of library collections. When patrons are consulted in acquisition decisions, they are far more likely to utilize the materials they helped select, reducing the proportion of underused or dormant resources. This is powerfully demonstrated by Patron-Driven Acquisition (PDA) models, where circulation statistics have been used to support management practices related to collection development, acquisition, storage, and preservation, helping libraries build evidence-based collections aligned with real demand. A study by Walton et al. (2022) found that moving to a demand-driven acquisitions process for print books resulted in substantial budgetary savings without sacrificing patron service.

2. Better Decision-Making through Data:

Libraries now use analytics to understand user behaviours, anticipate student needs, and design responsive, personalised services. AI algorithms can analyze individual user preferences and behaviours to recommend relevant resources, enhancing user satisfaction and engagement. Predictive models can also forecast trends in library usage and collection development by analyzing user behaviour and engagement patterns, AI can provide insights into future demand.

3. Personalized Library Experiences:

Analysing patterns in resource access, database usage, and engagement enables targeted recommendations, bespoke workshops, and proactive interventions that

directly improve student outcomes. This shift moves libraries from reactive to proactive collection management.

2.5.1.2. STRATEGIES FOR USER ENGAGEMENT IN COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND LIBRARY SERVICES

1. User Surveys, Feedback, and Needs Analysis:

User needs analysis is the process of learning more about a target population with a view to identifying their information needs — also referred to as community analysis, user studies, information needs analysis, needs assessment, and information audit. These tools remain foundational to evidence-based collection development.

2. Patron-Driven and Demand-Driven Acquisitions (PDA/DDA):

Patron-Driven Acquisition (PDA) and similar models allow library users to find and identify desired books and journal articles before the library purchases them, Drake fundamentally inverting the traditional librarian-led acquisition model. Surveys of library workers reveal that patron requests and feedback heavily influence purchasing decisions, and that practitioners are deeply attentive to patron needs when determining the shape and contents of a library's collection.

3. Social Media Engagement:

The integration of social media into libraries has become a popular worldwide trend, offering the potential to improve services and increase user participation. A framework proposed by Yadukrishnan et al. (2023) demonstrates that the successful integration and implementation of Web 2.0 tools help in enhancing user engagement. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter allow libraries to solicit real-time collection suggestions and build community around library resources.

4. Learning Analytics and Digital Engagement:

Learning analytics - defined as the measurement, collection, analysis, and reporting of data about learners and their contexts - presents unprecedented opportunities for academic libraries to enhance teaching, learning, and institutional effectiveness. A study at Sebelas Maret University Library found that the development of a mobile

application to access digital resources produced a 30% increase in active users within a year, illustrating the direct impact of technology-enabled engagement on collection use.

5. Collaborative and Community-Led Collection Development:

Libraries need to pool their resources and collaborate to provide access to materials they do not hold — collaboration and partnership, resource sharing, purchase on demand, and evidence-based acquisition are key to success. Emerging trends in collaborative collection development also reflect a growing emphasis on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA), with libraries increasingly thoughtful about acquiring resources that support diverse communities and authors.

6. AI-Powered Personalization and Recommendation:

With artificial intelligence, libraries can implement recommendation systems and virtual assistants that cater to individual user preferences, enabling more personalized and efficient access to resources. Big data analytics can analyze user behaviour and usage patterns, providing libraries with valuable insights to refine their services and offerings, leading to increased user engagement.

2.5.1.3. BEST PRACTICES FOR USER ENGAGEMENT IN COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND LIBRARY SERVICES

1. Transparency and Responsiveness:

Libraries must clearly communicate collection development policies and respond promptly to patron suggestions. Library users are accustomed to modern technology platforms outside the library, and they expect the same level of simplicity and functionality, underscoring the importance of user-friendly acquisition and feedback systems.

2. Inclusive Engagement Across Diverse Communities:

Current trends in collection development include the role of diversity in collections, evidence-based collection building, and patron-driven acquisition as well as responses to book challenges and censorship issues. Libraries must engage diverse

user groups including marginalized and underrepresented populations to ensure collections reflect the full breadth of community needs.

3. Moving from Reactive to Predictive Models:

Leveraging analytics allows libraries to move from reactive service provision to predictive, proactive models, optimizing their impact on learning outcomes. Regular evaluation of engagement strategies, informed by both quantitative usage data and qualitative patron feedback, is essential.

4. Integrating Emerging Technologies:

Libraries are placing considerable emphasis on improving the user experience to provide engaging and seamless interactions, with users receiving personalised recommendations that align with their interests and preferences. Meanwhile, libraries are evolving into vibrant hubs that foster collaborative learning and innovation, equipped with technologies such as augmented reality and virtual reality that enable interactive group work, workshops, and immersive learning experiences.

2.5.2. STRATEGIES FOR USER ENGAGEMENT IN LIBRARIES

In a time of rapid digital change, changing demographics, and changing demands for education and leisure, the idea of engagement has evolved from a trendy term to a key component of contemporary librarianship. Libraries are becoming dynamic community hubs, digital navigation centres, and active participants in their clients' lifetime learning journeys rather than static book repositories. Libraries' long-term survival depends more on how deeply they are connected to the communities they serve than on how big their collections are.

This change in emphasis necessitates switching from a passive, transactional style of engagement, in which the library merely offers materials and waits for patrons to arrive, to an active, relational model. Realizing a library's goal of being genuinely inclusive and representative requires a proactive approach. By removing barriers pertaining to culture, age, socioeconomic level, and digital skills, it guarantees that library services represent the rich diversity of the community. Additionally, this engagement is the driving force behind educational attainment; libraries may create

programs and curate resources that directly inspire and assist achievement by knowing the unique needs of students, job seekers, and lifelong learners.

At its core, this philosophy reinforces that high-quality customer service is not just about politeness at the front desk, but about the entire ecosystem of library interaction. It is about ensuring that every policy, every program, and every resource is designed with the user's experience and needs as the foundational principle. The following four-part framework provides a comprehensive roadmap for embedding this user-centric vision into the operational fabric of the library, transforming engagement from an abstract goal into a tangible practice.

(a) Customer Identification: Beyond Demographics to Deep Understanding

This initial step is the foundational research phase of the engagement strategy. It goes far beyond simply counting library card holders. Effective customer identification is an ethnographic endeavour aimed at painting a comprehensive and nuanced portrait of the community.

- Moving Beyond the Obvious: While demographic data (age, income, ethnicity) is a starting point, identification must probe into psychographics and community dynamics. This involves mapping the community's assets—not just its needs. Who are the formal and informal leaders? What are the existing community groups, faith organizations, and local businesses? Where do people naturally congregate, both physically and online?

- Identifying the ‘Silent’ and ‘Non-User’: A critical component is identifying those who are ‘not’ currently using the library. Why are they absent? Is it due to a lack of awareness, perceived irrelevance, physical or digital barriers, or a past negative experience? Understanding these barriers is just as important as understanding the habits of active users. This might involve analyzing local census data, school district performance metrics, or economic indicators to identify pockets of the community that could benefit most from library services, such as new immigrants, unemployed workers, or underserved rural populations.

- Creating User Personas and Segments: The data gathered is then synthesized into user personas or community segments. For example, instead of a vague ‘teenager,’ the library might identify ‘The Creative Hobbyist,’ ‘The Homework-Helper Seeker,’ or ‘The STEM Enthusiast.’ This granular understanding allows for the development of highly targeted services later in the process. The ultimate goal is to move from asking ‘How many people use us?’ to ‘Who are our people, who could be our people, and what are the textures of their lives?’

(b) Customer Consultation: Co-Creating the Library Experience

With a clear understanding of ‘who’ the community is, consultation is the active, ongoing dialogue to determine ‘what’ they truly need and want. This moves consultation from a one-off survey to a continuous, embedded practice of co-creation. It positions the community not just as consumers, but as partners and co-designers of the library service.

- Methods of Active Engagement: Consultation is a spectrum of activities. It includes traditional methods like surveys and focus groups, but crucially, it extends to innovative and immersive techniques. This could involve Community Conversations & World Cafés by hosting informal, facilitated discussions in neutral community spaces (coffee shops, community centers, places of worship) to hear from people who may not visit the library. Participatory Design Workshop where specific user groups (e.g., teens, small business owners) are invited to sit down with librarians and designers to literally sketch out what a new teen space or a business resource center should look like and offer. Advisory Groups who establish diverse, representative advisory boards that meet regularly to provide ongoing guidance on service development and strategic direction. Ethnographic Observation in which Librarians spend time in community spaces to observe behaviors, needs, and challenges organically.

- Closing the Loop on Consultation: The most critical aspect of this stage is closing the feedback loop. When a community takes time to provide input, they must see how it was used. “You asked, we listened, and here’s what we changed” is a powerful message that builds trust and encourages future participation. If an idea

cannot be implemented, the library must communicate ‘why’, demonstrating transparency and respect for the input received. The outcome of robust consultation is a suite of services and resources that have been validated and shaped by the community, ensuring they are relevant, accessible, and welcomed.

(c) Customer Communication: Building a Transparent and Responsive Dialogue

This component governs the ‘how’ of the library's relationship with its users. It’s a two-way street that encompasses the library’s outward messaging (promotional and informational) and, just as importantly, its systems for receiving and acting on user feedback. It is the mechanism for building and maintaining trust.

- Proactive and Accessible Outreach: Communication must be strategic and multi-channel to reach the diverse segments identified earlier. This means moving beyond a newsletter and a website to include a robust social media presence, partnerships with local media (community radio, ethnic newspapers), physical signage in multiple languages, and direct outreach through community partners. The message must be clear, consistent, and tailored to the audience—promoting early literacy programs in pediatricians' offices, for example.

- The Feedback Loop as a Service Standard: A modern library treats complaints, comments, and suggestions not as annoyances, but as vital intelligence and opportunities for service recovery. This requires multiple, easy-to-use channels by providing simple ways for users to give feedback—online forms, suggestion boxes, a dedicated phone line, and training staff to actively solicit feedback during interactions. A transparent and timely response protocol establishing clear service standards for how and when feedback will be acknowledged and addressed. For example: "All complaints will be acknowledged within 24 hours, and a full response will be provided within five working days." Public Reporting by regularly publishing anonymized data on the feedback received and the actions taken (e.g., in an annual report or on the website) demonstrates accountability and shows the community that their voice has a tangible impact on library operations.

(d) Customer Service Standards: Measuring What Matters and Demonstrating Improvement

The final piece of the framework is the mechanism for quality control and strategic evolution. Standards and measurement transform the soft skills of engagement into hard data that can be analyzed, acted upon, and used to advocate for the library's value. It is the tangible proof of the library's commitment to its users.

- **Defining Meaningful Metrics:** Service standards must go beyond counting footfall and circulation figures. While these are important, they don't measure quality of experience or impact. Meaningful metrics include: Satisfaction Scores using post-visit surveys (via SMS, email, or tablets at exit points) to ask specific questions about the user's experience, the helpfulness of staff, and whether they found what they needed. Outcome-Based Measurement by tracking the impact of a service. For example, for a job-seeking workshop, the metric isn't just attendance, but the number of attendees who report feeling more confident in their job search or who secure an interview. Mystery Shopping by using trained community members to pose as users and evaluate the library against its own customer service standards, providing an objective view of the user experience.

- **Continuous Improvement and Advocacy:** The data collected is not for a dusty shelf. It is analyzed in real-time and in periodic reviews to identify trends, celebrate successes, and pinpoint areas for improvement. If satisfaction with digital resource navigation is low, it triggers staff training or a redesign of the website. This data becomes a powerful advocacy tool; it provides concrete evidence of the library's positive impact on educational attainment, community well-being, and social inclusion, which is essential when communicating with funders, stakeholders, and the community at large. It closes the loop by showing that the library is a learning organization, constantly adapting to better serve its public.

2.6. OVERVIEW OF USER ENGAGEMENT IN THE DIGITAL AGE:

In the digital age, user engagement has undergone a transformative shift, primarily driven by the proliferation of social media platforms that enable libraries to connect with users in unprecedented ways. Social networking sites (SNS) serve as critical

tools for fostering interaction, as libraries embrace their role within these digital ecosystems to enhance service delivery and community involvement. The research indicates that while these platforms can facilitate the sharing of information and foster user connections, they also present challenges such as privacy concerns and the risk of misinformation as libraries harness these tools for effective user engagement, it becomes essential to align social media strategies with institutional missions and goals. Furthermore, the necessity for training and infrastructure to support library professionals in effective SNS utilisation is imperative, highlighting the evolving nature of user interactions in contemporary library settings. This multifaceted approach not only enriches engagement but also promotes the library's visibility as a key resource in the digital landscape.

2.6.1. MEASUREMENTS OF USER ENGAGEMENT

User engagement is a multifaceted, complex phenomenon with emotional, cognitive and behavioural dimensions. This gives rise to a number of potential approaches for its measurement, including:

- Self-reporting through questionnaires, surveys and interviews
- Physiological approaches, which include observational methods, such as facial expression analysis, speech analysis, and desktop actions; and neuro-physiological signal processing methods, such as respiratory and cardiovascular accelerations and decelerations, and muscle spasms
- Web analytics, which include online behavioural metrics, including click through rates, number of page views, time spent on a site (i.e., dwell time), frequency of return visits, etc.

There are a number of dimensions of measurement that should be considered in any methodological discussion, namely scale, setting, temporality, objectivity, and the unit of measurement. Here we briefly describe what we mean by each of these in terms of investigating user engagement:

- Scale refers to the size of the study, and may range from a handful of individuals participating in a diary, interview or eye-tracking study, to

hundreds of people responding to an online survey, to thousands of searchers documented through web analytics.

- Setting may be “in the wild” or in the laboratory. Laboratory studies may be necessary to observe behaviours directly, particularly if eye tracking or physiological sensors are the preferred way of recording this behaviour. They also allow researchers to maintain a higher level of consistency and control, which enhances the internal validity of the research. However, studies conducted “in the wild” or field will have greater external validity and be more “true to life”. Examples range from collecting and analyzing log file data to conducting ethnographic research in participants’ homes or workplaces.
- By temporality we mean the “snapshot” of user engagement, in terms of whether it is short-term or long-term. In both of these cases, we must consider whether the timeframe is capturing single individuals in one or multiple sessions, or all activity on a particular website within a period of a few hours or several weeks. In other words, the user, the web application or both may be the unit of analysis.
- Objectivity is a challenging term, as it is sometimes used to infer the “truthfulness” of conclusions reached by the measurement. For our purposes, we use the definition of subjectivity as the “internal, psychological world” of research participants, such as an account obtained through self-reporting, and objectivity to mean the things “external” to the psychology of the user, such as web log behaviour.
- In the case of user engagement, the unit of measurement may be process-based or product based: - By process-based, we mean the data points collected over time. For example, we might be interested in how individual skin conductance levels (a physiological measure associated with affect) change over the course of interacting with a news website when viewing positive and negative content, or we might examine click through patterns of a particular website across thousands of its users. With process-based

measures, the intention is to discover where a behavioural, cognitive, or affective change occurred during the course of interacting with an application. Product-based or outcome measures are usually summative in nature. We might use a questionnaire or think-after protocol to ask searchers about their experiences after the fact, or we might calculate totals based on process measures, such as the overall number of clicks, dwell time, etc. Product-based measures are useful for trying to elicit feedback from users in their own words, or for the purposes of comparing web applications, for instance, which travel website has the greatest bounce rate.

2.7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, user engagement is not merely a beneficial add-on to traditional library services; it is the critical, life-sustaining force that determines a library's relevance, vibrancy, and impact in the 21st century. It represents a fundamental shift from a collection-centred model to a user-centred one, where the library is defined not by what it has, but by what it does with and for its community. By prioritizing deep, authentic engagement, libraries can build strong, trust-based relationships with users, moving beyond viewing them as passive patrons to recognizing them as active partners, co-creators, and essential stakeholders. This approach enables libraries to move past assumptions and truly understand the nuanced needs, aspirations, and challenges of their diverse communities. In turn, this understanding allows for the delivery of services, resources, and programs that are not just used, but are genuinely relevant, highly responsive, and deeply impactful. When a library successfully engages its users, it fosters a powerful culture of inclusivity, creativity, and lifelong learning, transforming from a quiet repository of books into a dynamic community hub and a launchpad for personal and collective growth. This active role is fundamental to contributing to the social cohesion, economic vitality, and cultural enrichment of the communities they serve.

As libraries continue to navigate an era of rapid evolution, driven by both technological advancements and shifting user expectations, user engagement will remain not just a vital component of their success, but the very compass that guides

their direction. The libraries of the future will not be judged solely on the size of their collections or the speed of their Wi-Fi, but on their ability to foster connection, facilitate creation, and solve community problems. By staying relentlessly focused on authentic user needs which requires ongoing dialogue and a willingness to adapt libraries can ensure their services remain essential. This requires a multi-faceted strategy, leveraging multiple channels of engagement to meet users where they are through physical, digital, outreach and embedded engagement.

Crucially, this evolution involves empowering users to take an active role in shaping the library itself. This can manifest through user advisory boards, co-designed programming where community members lead workshops, or crowdsourced collection development where users have a direct say in the materials the library acquires. By embracing this collaborative model, libraries can ensure they remain not just vibrant and relevant, but truly indispensable to the communities they serve, acting as a trusted anchor institution in a rapidly changing world.

Ultimately, user engagement is far more than a strategy, a metric to be tracked, or a box to be checked on a library plan. It is a mindset, a deeply held philosophy that recognizes the inherent value and untapped potential of every single user. It is a commitment to seeing the library not as an island, but as an integral part of a vibrant ecosystem. This mindset actively seeks to dismantle barriers-whether physical, technological, linguistic, or cultural and to create a truly collaborative, user-centred environment that is inclusive of all voices, innovative in its approach, and impactful in its outcomes. It is in this environment that the library's true value is unlocked.

By wholeheartedly embracing user engagement as its core mission, a library does more than just improve its circulation statistics or program attendance. It unlocks the full potential of its users, transforming them from information consumers into knowledge creators, critical thinkers, and engaged citizens. It empowers an immigrant to navigate a new country, a child to discover a love of reading, a small business owner to find their footing, and a community to come together to solve a shared challenge. In doing so, the library makes a lasting, tangible difference in

individual lives and in the collective fabric of the community. It ceases to be a building and becomes an essential force for learning, connection, and positive change, a testament to the powerful idea that when we invest in engaging our communities, we build a stronger, more hopeful future for everyone.

The next chapter will highlight how these libraries can attract their users through concepts and models from different studies.

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CHAPTER 3

YMA LIBRARIES IN MIZORAM: AN OVERVIEW

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Public libraries have long been regarded as social institutions. No matter the user's age, race, sex, colour, creed, or religion, this is the sole institution that serves all of them. In order to reach the masses of people who are literate, illiterate, and semiliterate, public libraries are essential. By facilitating access to knowledge and information, they act as a stimulant for sociocultural and educational growth. When it comes to supplying knowledge through the public libraries, Non-Governmental Organization are crucial especially in Mizoram. The largest voluntary organization in Mizoram, Young Mizo Association (YMA), is the driving force behind the promotion of NGO libraries. Therefore, this chapter focuses mainly on the existence and the efforts of the Young Mizo Association (YMA) for the promotion and development of libraries in Mizoram.

3.2. THE STATE OF MIZORAM

One of India's north-eastern states, Mizoram covers an area of about 21,087 square kilometres. As the southernmost state in the Northeast, it shares a three-quarters international boundary with Myanmar to the east and south and Bangladesh to the west. According to the 2011 census, there were 10,97,206 people living in Mizoram, with 5,55,339 men and 5,41,867 women and 91.33% literacy rate of Mizoram has the third-highest in India. Census of 2021 has been postponed until 2025 but the projection of Mizoram 2026 Population on the basis likely Population Growth Rate 1,430,000. (Census of India, 2026). At present, with an official literacy rate of 98.2% as of May 2025, Mizoram was proclaimed India's first fully literate state in 2025, according to data from DIPR Mizoram and the Press Information Bureau. The ULLAS-Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram (New India Literacy Programme) and community-based educational efforts were the main forces behind this accomplishment (DIPR, 2025)

According to some historians, the migration to Mizoram occurred between 1650 and 1700 AD, while others thought it happened between 1700 and 1780 AD. (Lalchhuanawma, 2013). Various clans, led by village chiefs, lived in Mizoram prior to the arrival of the British. For administrative reasons, it was split into the North and South Hills after being proclaimed a part of British India in 1895. Aizawl served as

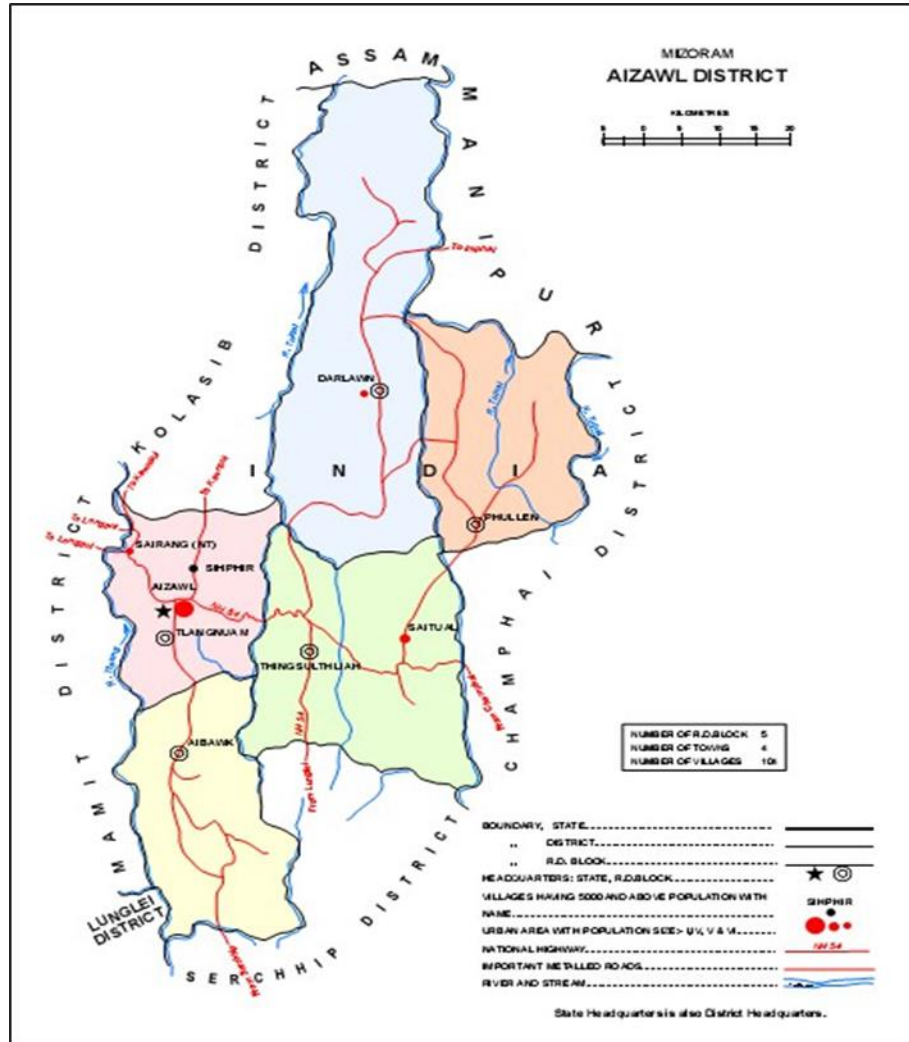
the district headquarters after the North and South hills were combined to form the Lushai Hills District in 1898. As of 1935, the Lushai Hills District was classified as a "excluded area." In 1952, the Lushai Hills District Autonomous District Council was established, abolishing chieftainship in Mizo society. Mizoram remained a part of Assam until 1972, when it became a Union Territory. Mamit, Kolasib, Aizawl, Champhai, Serchhip, Lunglei, Lawngtlai Siaha, Hnahthial, Saitual, and Khawzawl districts are among the 11 districts that make up Mizoram. Additionally, there are 23 subdivisions and 26 R.D. Blocks for administrative purposes. Located in the southern districts of Lawngtlai and Siaha, there are three autonomous district councils: the Lai, Chakma, and Mara municipalities. The State has 704 inhabited villages and 23 towns, according to the 2011 census.

3.2.1. AIZAWL

The British founded Aizawl as a fortified military station on February 25, 1890 (Lalchhuanawma & Khiangte, 2018) and it is the capital of Mizoram. It is situated in the northern region of Mizoram at 23° 43'38" North, 92° 43'03" East, north of the Tropic of Cancer. It has a moderate, humid subtropical climate and is 3715 feet above sea level. The Tuirial River Valley lies to its east, while the Tlawng River lies to its west. Summer temperatures range from 20 to 30 degrees Celsius, while winter temperatures range from 11 to 21 degrees Celsius with significant monsoon rainfall. As of today, within the Aizawl district's Tlangnuam Block, Aizawl is a notified town. Even after British rule ended, Aizawl's steady growth drew people to live in the city, and now it serves as a hub for trade, commerce, education, administration, and religion, all of which help the locals adopt modern culture.

On March 5, 1966, Aizawl saw the implementation of village regrouping and airstrikes during the conflict. During these times, a number of significant civil society organizations were founded in the state of Mizoram. The largest and oldest civil society organization, the Young Mizo Association, was founded in Aizawl on June 15, 1935. YMA's main office is located in Aizawl.

Fig.3.1. Map of Aizawl District



Source: District Census Handbook (Census of India, 2011)

There were 2,93,416 people living in Aizawl as per the 2011 Census of India, with 1,44,913 men and 1,48,503 women. In Aizawl, men make up 49.39% of the population, whereas women make up 50.61 percent. The capital city of the state, Aizawl, is home to more over one-third of its population, and the urban density per square kilometre is 1667. Men made up 98.52 percent of the total literacy rate, while women made up 98.21 percent. The overall literacy rate was 98.36 percent. In Aizawl, 93.63% of the population is Christian, 4.14% is Hindu, and 0.59% is Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, or Jains. There are 60,635 households in Aizawl overall. It

is also the hub of the State's business and economic activity and the location of all significant administrative government agencies. The Mizoram government designated Aizawl as a city in 1999 (Kamath & Waingankar, 2015).

3.3. ORIGIN OF YOUNG MIZO ASSOCIATION (YMA)

By 1935, the majority of the indigenous Mizo way of life had been converted to Christianity, a formal education system had been established, British control was set to end, and Indian politics would take over local government. Zawlbuk's primitive tribal government was unraveling. There was an urgent need to replace the tribal institution since the customary social security, custom, and training ground for young males was ending.

As fate would have it, the Welsh missionaries and the Mizo church leaders were driven to the nearby home of Miss Kattie Hughes (known to Mizos as Pi Zaii) at Aijal (now Aizawl) on Monday evening, June 3, 1935, following a thunderstorm. There, over a cup of tea, they made an improvised proposal to form an association that would bring all Mizo people together. In order to rhyme with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the original proposed name for the Christian organization was Young Mizo Christian Association. However, upon closer examination, they discovered that this term had a constrictive and religiously fundamentalist meaning. Then Rev David Edward (Zorema Pa) came up with "Young Lushai Association" akin to their familiar Young Wales Association in Wales. The name was unanimously accepted. It was also agreed that the association would be formally inaugurated on the coming 15 June.

Originally established as the Young Lushai Association (YLA) on 5 June 1935 during a public gathering at Nepali School in Sikulpuikawn, marked by a candle-lighting ceremony and the election of officials; the organization rapidly expanded, with branches forming in every village and enrolling nearly all adult Mizo's as members. In the wake of Indian independence, rising political and ethnic consciousness in the Lushai Hills led to calls for a formal political party. Although the widely endorsed YLA was proposed in 1945 to assume that role, opposition from its central committee instead catalyzed the formation of the Mizo Union, a distinct

political body. This shift ushered in a broader, more inclusive understanding of the term “Mizo” surpassing “Lushai,” a Welsh-derived designation for the Lusei clan and culminated on 7 October 1947, when the central committee formally renamed the organization the Young Mizo Association (YMA). The Mizo people's largest and most extensive non-profit, secular, and non-governmental organization is the Young Mizo Association (YMA). On May 14, 1977, it was registered with the Government of Mizoram under the Indian Societies Registration Act (XXI of 1860) as SR No. 4 of 1977. All of Mizoram as well as portions of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Tripura are covered by the association, which is run by a central committee (Central YMA) with its headquarters located in Aizawl with nine sub-headquarters and 831 branches. The YMA is the Mizos' biggest and most extensive non-governmental and non-profit organization.

The three main objectives of the YMA are:

1. To make productive use of leisure time (Hun awl hman that)
2. To seek for development and progress of Mizoram (Zofate hmasawwnna ngaihtuah)
3. To uphold and revered Christian values (Kristian nun dan tha ngaihsan)

It was registered on 14 May 1977 with Mizoram Government. The Y.M.A. flag has is composed of three colour, red on the top, white in the centre and black at the bottom. The three different colours signify as under.

- | | | |
|----------|---|---|
| a) Red | - | It present the popularity of YMA |
| b) White | - | It denotes the purity of YMA |
| c) Black | - | It stood for the family in grieve and also symbolized that is friends of the weaker section |

3.3.1. STRUCTURE OF YMA

Three hierarchical organizational structures make up YMA's organizational structure. The highest authority within YMA is the Central YMA (CYMA). The CYMA oversees and controls YMA's operations. The capital of Mizoram, Tuikhuahtlang,

Aizawl, is home to the central YMA headquarters. The structure houses the institution of free enrolment computers, the YMA press, the Central YMA office, and the Central YMA hall. The nine sub-headquarters of the YMA are situated at Champhai, Serchhip, Mamit, Lunglei, Kolasib, Khawzawl, Siaha, Hnahthial, and Saitual.

Group YMA is located next to Central YMA. Several branches from several local clubs come together to form Group YMA. Its creation was motivated by the need to facilitate administration and communication while bolstering YMA's growth. Branch YMA comes next to group YMA and can be established in any area of the city or hamlet.

Although the branch of YMA comes last in terms of organizational structure, they play a crucial part in carrying out the organization's goals and objectives. Branch YMA can also be established outside of Mizoram, where there is a Mizo community, provided that they share the same culture. There are 831 YMA branches, nine sub-headquarters, and more than 5 lakh members as of 2026. The YMA also opened branches in the neighbouring North-East states of Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Tripura. The purpose of these branches is to integrate Mizos who live outside of Mizoram.

In 1941, Central YMA's highest governing body, the general conference, was established. The general conference has been conducted annually since 1978, with a few exceptions. The annual theme is determined by the YMA General Conference, which is organized by central YMA. All branches of YMA are required to conduct their annual activities in conformity with the subject.

There are various committee under the Central YMA in order to enable an efficient working of the organization, these committees classified are as follows:

- a) Annual theme committee
- b) Sports committee
- c) Literature committee
- d) Project committee
- e) Press committee

- f) Training and youth affairs committee
- g) Building and property committee
- h) Documentation and IT committee
- i) Science and environment committee
- j) Cultural committee
- k) Disaster management committee
- l) Education committee
- m) Finance committee
- n) Health and sanitation committee
- o) Legal committee
- p) Recreation committee
- q) Resource committee

3.3.2. OBJECTIVES OF YMA LIBRARIES

The core objectives of YMA libraries are deeply connected to the organisation's benevolent mission to educate and uplift the Mizo community.

- 1) **Promote the Habit of Reading and Learning:** A primary goal is to inculcate a strong culture of reading among community members of all ages. This objective is often aligned with the YMA's annual theme; for instance, in 2020, the central theme was the "Promotion of reading and learning," which spurred many library-related activities.
- 2) **Ensure Effective Utilisation of Time:** Libraries provide resources that encourage people to engage in constructive and meaningful activities during their leisure time.
- 3) **Boost Community Morale and Well-being:** Beyond just education, libraries aim to serve as a source of consolation, stress relief, and mental stimulation. During the COVID-19 lockdown, this objective became particularly prominent, with library services framed as a way to help people overcome isolation, anxiety, and boredom.
- 4) **Support Education and Youth Empowerment:** YMA libraries function as academic support systems for students. They provide access to a wide range of books,

including reference materials and competitive exam preparation guides, to help empower the youth and support their educational journeys.

5) Inculcate Good Morals and Values: By providing access to literature, including biographies and thoughtful fiction, the libraries aim to help readers find role models, develop empathy, and learn valuable life lessons

3.3.3. FUNCTIONS OF YMA LIBRARIES

YMA libraries carry out their objectives through a variety of traditional and innovative functions, often managed by dedicated ‘Library and Documentation Sub-Committees’ at the branch level.

1. Maintaining and Curating Library Collections:

The fundamental function is to establish and maintain a physical collection of books, such as:

a) The Chaltlang Branch YMA Library was inaugurated in 2012 as the first computerised library among recognised libraries in Mizoram, featuring a collection of thousands of books, including children's literature.

b) The collections are typically diverse, including categories like Mizo and English fiction, non-fiction, biographies, autobiographies, poetry, history, and religious books.

2. Adapting Services to Community Needs:

YMA libraries have shown a remarkable ability to innovate. A prime example is the launch of the ‘Kawtkai Library’ (Doorstep Library) by the Ramhlun South branch during the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020. This service involved:

a) Sharing pictures of available books on WhatsApp groups for residents to choose from.

b) Delivering selected books (typically 3-5 for a 10-day period) free of cost to people's doorsteps while strictly following safety protocols.

c) Collecting the books back from readers' homes after the loan period.

d) This service was so successful that it evolved into a physical open-shelf system called “Kawtkai Library Version 2.0” after the lockdown was lifted.

3. Collaborating with Other Organisations:

YMA branches often collaborate with government and other agencies to enhance their library services. This includes:

- a) Receiving recognition and support from the state government.
- b) Obtaining funding for modernisation, such as the computerisation of the Chaltlang library through the Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF).
- c) Partnering with organisations like Assam Rifles, which inaugurated a fully equipped library at its Hnahlan camp in collaboration with the local YMA to benefit students in the area.

4. Encouraging Readership:

To actively promote reading, libraries engage in functions beyond just lending books. This includes planning to give away prizes to the most prolific readers, thereby gamifying and incentivising the reading habit.

3.4. DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARY IN MIZORAM

The establishment and growth of public libraries in Mizoram is a story deeply rooted in the arrival of Christian missionaries and has evolved through significant administrative and legislative milestones. The foundation was laid not with books, but with literacy itself, pioneered by two Christian missionaries, Rev. James Herbert Lorrain and Dr. Frederick W. Savidge. They arrived in Mizoram in 1894 under the Arthington Aborigine Mission. Their work was fundamental: they opened schools and, crucially, developed the Mizo alphabet, thereby creating a written language and enabling literacy. Their contribution to education was so profound that the Assam Government temporarily handed over the administration and inspection of schools to them. This early focus on education created the necessary conditions for a reading public and, eventually, a need for libraries.

The next phase marked the transition from missionary-led education to formal institutional libraries. In 1958, the first college in the region, Aijal College (now known as Pachhunga University College), was established, an initiative built upon the educational foundation laid by the missionaries. A key moment in the professionalization of library services came in 1961 with the appointment of Mr. Lalmakthanga as Librarian-cum-college clerk at the college. This appointment is regarded as the first professional appointment in the library field in all of Mizoram, signifying a move towards recognizing librarianship as a distinct profession.

The establishment of a true public library system, however, began later. The first public library, named the Aijal District Library, was established in 1969 in Aizawl. This was a pivotal moment, creating the state's first institution dedicated to serving the general public. The year 1972 was another crucial turning point as Mizoram became a Union Territory. This change in political status brought about administrative restructuring. Initially, library services were managed under the Director of Education, a placement that remained until 1988. This period saw the library system as a subordinate wing of the larger education department. In 1974, the Government of Mizoram demonstrated its commitment to expanding public access to knowledge by establishing three major libraries: the State Library of Mizoram in the heart of Aizawl, and District Libraries in the southern towns of Lunglei and Saiha. This was soon followed by the creation of two Sub-Divisional Libraries at Kolasib and Champhai, indicating a deliberate effort to extend library services beyond the capital and into other growing population centers.

A major administrative shift occurred in 1989 when the Directorate of Education was trifurcated into three separate departments: Higher and Technical Education, School Education, and the Art & Culture Department. It was at this point that public library services were placed under the purview of the Department of Art & Culture. This move was significant as it redefined the library's role, separating it from the formal education system and positioning it as a key institution for cultural preservation, lifelong learning, and community enrichment under the aegis of cultural affairs. By the time of this summary, Mizoram's public library system had been running for

forty-seven years since the establishment of its first public library in 1969, a testament to its enduring presence in the state.

The most significant, yet unfulfilled, step in the development of public libraries in Mizoram was the enactment of the 'Mizoram Public Libraries Act, 1993'. Passed on January 6th, 1993, this legislation was designed to provide a comprehensive and robust framework for the entire public library system in the state. The Act's primary objectives were forward-thinking and ambitious. It sought to establish a systematic, state-wide network of libraries, ensuring that library services were not ad-hoc but part of a cohesive plan. Most importantly, it aimed to place the system on a stable and progressive financial footing. The law mandated that all funding for public library services, including the salaries and allowances of staff, would be met from the state's consolidated fund. This would guarantee regular and reliable financial support, freeing libraries from the uncertainties of annual budgetary allocations. Furthermore, the Act provided for a system of grant-in-aid to support recognized village libraries, thereby aiming to extend the public library network to the grassroots level.

However, despite its passage over three decades ago, the Mizoram Public Libraries Act, 1993, has never been implemented. The primary reasons cited are financial constraints and other unspecified factors. This means that while the state has a library system with a history stretching back to 1969, it operates without the comprehensive legal and financial safeguards that the 1993 Act was designed to provide. The vision of a fully integrated, well-funded, and legally protected public library system for all citizens of Mizoram, from the state capital to its villages, remains an aspiration yet to be realized. The history of library development in Mizoram is therefore one of remarkable progress from missionary roots to professional service, but it is also a story halted at the threshold of its most crucial evolution.

3.5. OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

The administrative control of Public Libraries in Mizoram has evolved over time. Initially, they fell under the purview of the Education Department. However, following the department's trifurcation in 1988, their oversight was reassigned. Public libraries were placed under the newly formed Department of Art & Culture,

while academic and school libraries were allocated to the Department of Higher & Technical Education and the Department of School Education, respectively.

The public library landscape in Mizoram is diverse and can be categorized into four distinct types:

a) Government Libraries: These are libraries established and directly managed by the state government. They form the core of the structured public library system.

b) Government Recognized Libraries: This category consists of libraries run by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or other bodies that meet specific criteria set by the state government. In return for adhering to these guidelines, they receive financial and material assistance.

c) Libraries Run by Voluntary Organizations: These are community-driven initiatives, established and operated by local groups. Their management and funding are sustained through voluntary contributions from the local populace.

d) Private Libraries: These are public-access libraries developed and maintained by private entities or individuals passionate about library services.

The first two categories are the most structured and documented. Government libraries, including the State Central and district libraries, are under the direct control of the Art & Culture Department. The State Central Library serves as the apex body, responsible for promoting and guiding the entire public library system. Government-recognized libraries, run by NGOs, are crucial for meeting local information needs and receive government aid, often facilitated through the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF).

The third and fourth categories-voluntary and private libraries-are less formalized. Their numbers and operational details are difficult to ascertain due to a complete lack of maintained statistical records, making their overall contribution to the public library system unquantifiable

3.5.1. PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF MIZORAM

This category encompasses the State Central Library and the district libraries located at the headquarters of Aizawl, Lunglei, Saiha, Kolasib, and Champhai districts. These institutions are the pillars of the state's public library infrastructure.

3.5.2. STATE CENTRAL LIBRARY:

Founded in 1974, the State Central Library in Aizawl holds the position of the apex library in Mizoram. Its primary responsibilities include overseeing the operations of all district libraries and extending support to government-recognized libraries. A landmark achievement for the library was the construction of a new, four-storied building in the New Secretariat Complex, Khatla. Inaugurated in March 2011 by the then Chief Minister, Mr. Lalthanhawla, and funded with assistance from the RRRLF, this facility marked a significant milestone in the library's history.

The library has embraced technology to modernize its services. A major step was the initiation of library automation in 2011 using LIBSYS software. Today, the library is fully automated, with core functions such as circulation, cataloguing, acquisition, serials control, and the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) managed through this system. Further expanding its digital footprint, the library now houses a Digital Library, implemented by C-DAC, Kolkata, with funding from DeitY, Government of India. Inaugurated for public use in April 2015, this digital library provides access to a growing collection of digital content, though access is currently limited to within the library premises. A key achievement of this project is the digitization of 316 rare and copyright-free books, with future plans to create a library website to offer online access to these valuable resources.

The State Central Library boasts a multilingual collection, including books in English, Mizo, Hindi, and other Indo-Aryan languages. It also preserves back volumes of local newspapers, which are bound and maintained for archival reference. A vital function of the library is the procurement and distribution of books to recognized libraries, funded through the RRRLF's matching scheme. This program serves as the primary source of new collections for these smaller libraries.

The library is also a hub for professional and community engagement. It annually celebrates Librarian's Day on August 12th, featuring paper presentations by library professionals on relevant topics and presenting 'Best Reader Awards' to five children and five adults. It also observes National Book Week and Public Library Day on September 11th and May 22nd, respectively. Core services provided to the public include circulation, reference assistance, reprographic (photocopying) services, and access to the OPAC.

3.5.3 DISTRICT LIBRARY, KOLASIB

The library in Kolasib began in 1980 as a sub-divisional library. Its status was elevated to a District Library in 2001, following the creation of Kolasib District in 1998. Its collection is steadily growing, sourced from state government allocations and through RRRLF matching schemes, channelled via the State Library Planning Committee (SLPC). The library offers fundamental services, primarily circulation and reference.

3.5.4 DISTRICT LIBRARY, CHAMPHAI

Similar to Kolasib, the Champhai library was initially established as a sub-divisional library in 1982 and was upgraded to a District Library in 2001 after Champhai became a district. It benefits from the RRRLF matching scheme through the SLPC. The library is organized into distinct sections for circulation, reference, periodicals, and children. Its reference services are particularly well-utilized by the local community, especially students.

3.5.5. DISTRICT LIBRARY, LUNGLEI

Established shortly after the State Library, the Lunglei District Library was founded on May 22, 1975, by the education department. For over two decades, it operated from rented premises. It has since found a permanent home in the centrally located Saikuti Hall, which is maintained by the state government. The library receives book assistance through the RRRLF matching scheme and provides its users with circulation, reference, and periodical services.

3.5.6. DISTRICT LIBRARY, SAIHA

Located in the district capital of Saiha, within the Mara Autonomous District Council, this library was established on May 1, 1975, to serve the local population. Known as Saiha District Library, it also benefits from book assistance under the RRRLF matching schemes. Its services mirror those of other district libraries, offering circulation, reference, and periodical facilities.

3.5.7. DISTRICT LIBRARY, AIZAWL

The Aizawl District Library holds the distinction of being the first public library in Mizoram. It was established on February 12, 1968, in Aijal (now Aizawl) under the Assam government's Director of Public Instruction for Hills. Initially attached to the office of the Inspector of Schools, it was later converted into a Sub-Divisional Library in 1969. When Mizoram attained statehood and Aizawl was formally designated as a district, the library was finally upgraded to a District Library in 2001. To this day, it continues to operate from a rented building. Despite this, it maintains a full range of services through its circulation, reference, periodical, and children's sections.

3.6. GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZED NGO LIBRARIES

This is a widespread and vital component of Mizoram's public library network, with approximately 512 libraries currently holding government recognition. The state government has established a formal process for granting this status. New libraries can apply for recognition each year, and those that meet the prescribed guidelines are added to the list.

The primary benefit of recognition is eligibility for various forms of government assistance. This aid, often facilitated through the RRRLF's matching and non-matching schemes, includes book supplies, furniture and equipment, building grants, and support for establishing new sections within the library. All such assistance requires the recommendation and approval of the State Library Planning Committee (SLPC).

A key constraint, however, is the limited number of libraries that can receive assistance under the non-matching scheme in a single financial year due to budgetary provisions. Consequently, only a select few benefit from this type of aid annually. In contrast, book assistance under the matching scheme is a more universal benefit, provided to every recognized library each year through the State Central Library.

3.6.1. THE YOUNG MIZO ASSOCIATION (YMA) AND ITS LIBRARY NETWORK

The Young Mizo Association (YMA) stands as the premier non-governmental organization in Mizoram, with a presence in virtually every town and village across the state. Its foundational purpose is to serve the social good of the community, playing a crucial role in maintaining societal harmony and peace. Beyond this, the YMA is dedicated to guiding and educating the public, aiming for their holistic development and future progress.

Recognizing that libraries are essential instruments for both formal and non-formal education, the YMA took a landmark decision. During its 42nd General Conference, held at Khawzawl in 1987, the organization passed a resolution mandating that "All Branch YMAs should establish a library in their localities." This directive has had a profound and lasting impact on the state's literary landscape. As of 2026, there are 831 branch YMAs, and out of these, 467 have established libraries that have subsequently gained recognition from the government. These institutions have become vital community hubs, serving as centers for social education, local information dissemination, and the preservation of cultural heritage. They also foster creativity, performing arts, local enterprise, literary pursuits, and skill development, thereby contributing significantly to the intellectual and social fabric of their localities.

The Central YMA serves as the apex body, providing overarching guidance and maintaining connections with all branch YMAs throughout Mizoram. At the branch level, the governance structure is well-defined, comprising office bearers such as a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Advisers, along with a few executive members. To specifically

manage the library, a dedicated Library Sub-Committee is formed, subject to the approval of the branch's main office bearers. This sub-committee is responsible for the library's operations and is composed of members appointed from the local community. These individuals serve on a purely voluntary basis for a one-year term, contributing their time and effort to run and look after the library's daily affairs. In addition to this sub-committee, the branch office bearers directly appoint a separate librarian from the local community. Unlike the committee members, this appointed librarian receives a small honorarium or allowance, the amount of which varies depending on the decisions and capacity of the local branch authority.

The YMA libraries operate on a mixed financial model to ensure their sustainability. A primary source of regular funding comes from the branch YMA itself, which provides general financial assistance to meet the library's supplementary needs. Another significant and consistent source of income is the collection of various user fees. These include membership fees, late fees for overdue books, and lending fees for borrowing privileges.

Crucially, the libraries also benefit greatly from the generosity of the community. Donations flow in from library members, prominent citizens, and other generous individuals within the locality. These contributions are diverse and can include books to expand the collection, furniture and equipment to improve the facility, or direct cash donations to be used for various purposes. This culture of community giving represents a perennial and invaluable source of support, ensuring the libraries remain active and responsive to local needs.

Table. 3.1. District wise distribution of Govt. recognized YMA libraries in Mizoram

Sl. No	District	No. of YMA Libraries
1	Aizawl	136
2	Champhai	51
3	Hnahthial	25
4	Khawzawl	34
5	Kolasib	29

6	Lawngtlai	5
7	Lunglei	49
8	Mamit	42
9	Saitual	43
10	Serchhip	51
11	Siaha	2
	Total	467

Source: Mizoram State Library, Department of Art & Culture, Government of Mizoram (2023)

Among the YMA libraries, some of the libraries located in Aizawl District are displayed/highlighted below through pictures.



Fig. 3.2 Bethlehem Vengthlang Branch YMA Library



Fig. 3.3 Zarkawt Branch YMA Library



Fig. 3.4 Durtlang North Branch YMA Library



Fig. 3.5 Tuikhuahtlang Branch YMA Library



Fig. 3.6 Sairang Branch YMA Library



Fig. 3.7 Ramhlun South Branch YMA Library



Fig. 3.8 Kanan Branch YMA Library



Fig. 3.9. Tlangnuam Vengthar Branch YMA Library



Fig. 3.10. College Veng Branch YMA Library

3.6.2. GUIDELINES FOR THE RECOGNITION AND MANAGEMENT OF NGO LIBRARIES IN MIZORAM

The Art & Culture Department of Mizoram has established a formal framework to ensure the proper and uniform functioning of libraries managed by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) across the state. This framework is divided into two main parts: the criteria for obtaining recognition and the regulations for managing these libraries, followed by the conditions that can lead to de-recognition or cancellation. These guidelines are designed to maintain standards, promote accessibility, and regulate the relationship between the state government and NGO-managed libraries.

Part 1: Criteria for Recognition

To be eligible for recognition, an NGO library must meet a comprehensive set of criteria covering its collection, infrastructure, usage, legal status, and administrative practices. The key requirements are as follows:

1. Collection and Resources:

a) Minimum Book Stock:

A library must have a foundational collection of at least 500 books if located in an urban area, or 300 books if situated in a rural area. This ensures a basic level of resource availability for the community.

b) Record Keeping:

The library must have been in operation for a minimum of three years and must maintain proper, up-to-date records of its book stock, demonstrating consistent management over time.

2. Infrastructure and Accessibility:

a) Own Premises:

The library is required to have its own land and building, ensuring stability and permanence.

b) Basic Amenities:

In villages where electricity is available, the library must have an electric facility.

c) Public Access:

A fundamental requirement is that the library must be genuinely open to the public, serving as a community resource.

d) Usage:

The library must demonstrate its relevance by having an average of at least 30 users per month.

3. Administrative and Legal Compliance:

a) Legal Status: The applying organization must be a duly registered NGO under the Firms and Society Registration Act of 1860. This provides a formal legal identity.

b) Financial Accountability: The organization is required to maintain proper accounts, ensuring transparency and responsible management of funds.

c) Application Process:

i) Interested NGOs must obtain the prescribed application form from either the State Library or District Libraries.

ii) The completed application must be submitted to the Director, Art & Culture Department.

iii) Upon receiving an application, the Director will detail officers to conduct a spot verification to assess the library's compliance with the guidelines.

iv) Final recognition is granted only after the State Library Planning Committee (SLPC) is satisfied with the official inspection report.

4. Fees and Special Provisions:

a) Recognition and Renewal Fees: The framework includes a fee structure to formalize the recognition process and its continuation.

b) Recognition Fee (one-time): ₹500 for urban libraries and ₹300 for rural libraries.

c) Annual Renewal Fee: ₹300 for urban libraries and ₹200 for rural libraries, payable every year.

d) Preference: Priority for recognition will be given to villages that currently do not have any library, with the aim of expanding access to underserved areas.

e) Relaxation of Norms: The guidelines are not entirely rigid. The criteria or norms may be relaxed in certain specific cases, provided such relaxation is approved by the Chairman or the State Library Planning Committee (SLPC).

Part 2: De-Recognition/Cancellation Terms

Recognition is not perpetual and can be revoked if a library fails to adhere to the established terms. The conditions for de-recognition are clearly defined to ensure ongoing compliance and accountability.

a) Non-Payment of Fees: A recognized library that fails to deposit its annual renewal fee within the designated financial year will be subject to de-recognition. This ensures that all recognized libraries remain in good standing through regular administrative compliance.

b) Failure to Operate: Recognition will be cancelled for any organization or NGO that fails to run and maintain its library according to the stipulated standards. This ensures that the purpose of providing a public service is continuously fulfilled.

Consequences of De-Recognition:

The de-recognition of a library has immediate and significant consequences:

a) Cessation of Assistance: Once de-recognized, the library is no longer entitled to receive any form of assistance (financial or material) from the department.

b) Forfeiture of Materials: Any materials (e.g., books, furniture, and equipment) that were provided to the NGO library by the government are forfeited following de-recognition.

c) Disposal of Forfeited Materials: All forfeited materials returned to the department are to be disposed of by the department, but only in consultation with the State Library Planning Committee (SLPC), ensuring a structured and transparent process for handling returned assets.

In summary, these guidelines provide a complete lifecycle for NGO libraries in Mizoram, from the initial application and recognition based on stringent criteria, to the ongoing responsibilities, and finally, the terms under which recognition can be withdrawn. This system aims to foster a network of well-managed, accessible, and sustainable community libraries across the state.

3.7. ROLE OF RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY LIBRARY FOUNDATION (RRRLF):

Established in 1972 on the recommendation of the National Committee for the Bicentenary Celebration of Raja Rammohun Roy, chaired by the late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi, the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) was created as an autonomous organization fully funded by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. Its founding mission was to support and promote a nationwide network of libraries capable of reaching the remotest corners of the country, thereby fostering a widespread reading culture among the people.

As the Government of India's nodal agency for public library services, the RRRLF plays a multifaceted role in advancing the public library movement across the country. It operates through State Library Planning Committees (SLPC) or State Library Committees (SLC) in each state and union territory, with its headquarters in Kolkata and four zonal offices in Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai. Functioning as a promotional, advisory, consultancy, and funding body, the Foundation is entrusted with formulating a National Library Policy and developing a cohesive National Library System. In addition to driving the library movement, it advises the

central government on all aspects of library development, including the passage of library legislation by individual states.

RRRLF operates two types of schemes – Matching and Non-Matching. To participate in the matching scheme the concerned state govt. is required to contribute a pre-determined amount against which the RRRLF renders assistance on 50:50 ratio for the developed states, 60:40 ratio for all other states except North Eastern States and 90:10 ratio for North Eastern States. Under non-matching schemes assistance is rendered out of RRRLF own resources. Proposals under any schemes are required to be recommended by the State Library Committee/State Library Planning Committee. Different types of assistance can be availed under the schemes.

Categories of Assistance under RRRLF Schemes

The Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) provides financial support through two distinct categories: Matching Schemes, which require a contribution from the state government, and Non-Matching Schemes, which are fully funded by the Foundation.

Assistance under Matching Schemes

These schemes involve cost-sharing between the RRRLF and the state government, focusing on foundational infrastructure, collection development, and capacity-building initiatives:

1. Collection Development: Assistance for procuring an adequate and balanced collection of books, visual materials, and other learning resources to meet the informational and recreational needs of users.
2. Storage and Preservation: Support for the proper storage and preservation of library materials, including the acquisition of shelving, stacking systems, and protective equipment to ensure the longevity of collections.
3. Programmatic Activities: Funding to organize seminars, workshops, book exhibitions, and awareness-building programs aimed at promoting literacy, fostering community engagement, and enhancing professional development.

4. **Technology and Multimedia Equipment:** Assistance for public libraries to acquire computers with peripherals for library automation, as well as televisions, CD players, DVD players, and related equipment for educational and recreational purposes.
5. **Infrastructure Expansion:** Support for increasing accommodation, including the construction of new spaces, extension of existing buildings, or renovation projects that enhance the library's capacity to serve its community.
6. **Outreach Services:** Assistance for the establishment and operation of mobile libraries and book deposit centers, enabling libraries to extend their reach to remote, underserved, or rural populations.

Assistance under Non-Matching Schemes

These schemes provide fully funded grants to support specialized services, institutional development, and initiatives that promote inclusivity and accessibility:

1. **Support for Voluntary Organizations:** Financial assistance to voluntary organizations and non-governmental institutions engaged in delivering public library services, helping them strengthen their operations and expand their outreach.
2. **Development of Specialized Sections:** Funding to establish and develop distinct sections within general public libraries, such as reference sections, digital resource centers, or subject-specific collections tailored to community needs.
3. **RRRLF Children's Corners:** Assistance for creating dedicated children's corners within libraries, designed to provide vibrant, child-friendly spaces that encourage early literacy, learning, and recreational reading.
4. **Celebration of Institutional Milestones:** Support for libraries commemorating significant anniversaries, including 50th, 60th, 75th, 100th, 125th, 150th, and similar milestones, to mark these occasions with appropriate programs, events, or facility enhancements.
5. **Accessibility for Differently Abled Users:** Financial assistance aimed at providing facilities, resources, and assistive technologies to ensure that library services and spaces are inclusive and accessible to differently abled individuals.

3.7.1. THE PROCESS AND IMPACT OF BOOK ASSISTANCE UNDER RRRLF

The distribution of books to recognized NGO libraries is a cornerstone of the RRRLF's support for public library development in Mizoram. The process is formalized to ensure transparency and relevance. To this end, the Governor of Mizoram constitutes a Book Selection Committee, operating under the aegis of the SLPC and adhering to norms laid down by the RRRLF. This committee is responsible for the pre-selection of books to be purchased. Their recommendations are then presented to the full SLPC for final approval. Once approved, the books are procured and distributed annually to all recognized libraries through the State Central Library, Department of Art & Culture.

The text concludes by emphasizing the immense impact of this book assistance program. By consistently providing a steady stream of new and relevant reading material to hundreds of smaller libraries across the state, the RRRLF plays a fundamental role in sustaining these institutions, enriching their collections, and fulfilling its mission to promote reading and learning among the people of Mizoram.

3.8. THE ROLE OF STATE LIBRARY PLANNING COMMITTEE OR STATE LIBRARY COMMITTEE (SLPC):

At the directive of the RRRLF, every state and union territory is required to establish a State Library Planning Committee or State Library Committee. In Mizoram, the SLPC plays a crucial intermediary and supervisory role in the development of the public library system. Its key functions are to:

i) Plan Development: Prepare both long-term (perspective) and annual plans for library services within the state, ensuring they align with the assistance programs offered by the RRRLF.

ii) Facilitate Funding: Ensure that the state government pays its required share of contributions, thereby enabling the state to claim and receive matching grants from the RRRLF.

iii) Guide Book Selection: Select books that meet the community's needs and adhere to the guidelines prescribed by the RRRLF.

iv) Scrutinize Proposals: Review and scrutinize all proposals from libraries for various assistance schemes before they are recommended to the RRRLF for final approval.

v) Monitor Utilization: Oversee and ensure that all assistance received from the RRRLF is utilized properly and for the intended purposes.

vi) Promote Library Movement: Undertake any other activities that contribute to the growth and strengthening of the library movement in the state.

3.9. FUNDING SOURCES FOR LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

Several key agencies contribute to the welfare and development of libraries. These include:

a) Assistance from the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF): The RRRLF plays a pivotal role in supporting libraries through its matching and non-matching grant schemes. These programs provide substantial financial aid for a range of purposes, including the construction of library buildings, the procurement of books and periodicals, the purchase of furniture and equipment, and the establishment of specialized sections or services within the library.

b) Members of Parliament (MP) and Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Funds: Many libraries have successfully secured financial support from the discretionary funds allocated to Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assemblies. These funds are often utilized for infrastructure improvements, facility upgrades, and other capital-intensive projects.

c) Community Donations and Charitable Contributions: Donations constitute a vital source of support. The library committee often actively solicits contributions from library members and local residents for specific projects or general development. Additionally, the library benefits from philanthropic individuals who voluntarily provide equipment, furniture, or other resources, sometimes in the form of memorial gifts to honour a loved one.

d) Grant-in-Aid from the Social Welfare Department: The state government, through the Social Welfare Department, allocates an annual Non-Plan Fund budget of ₹1.3 lakhs specifically for the development of Children's Recreational-cum-Library Centres. This Grant-in-Aid is distributed annually to ten selected libraries, each receiving ₹13,000. To date, approximately 30 libraries have benefited from this funding program.

3.10. FINANCE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES:

Public libraries in the state, including State Central Libraries, District Libraries, and Village Libraries, receive their primary funding from the state government. However, the allocations from the state typically cover only the most essential operational needs, leaving these institutions with insufficient resources to meet the growing demands of modern library services. To supplement this, the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) steps in with crucial financial assistance. This support is provided primarily through a 90:10 matching scheme, wherein the RRRLF contributes 90% of the project cost while the state government is responsible for the remaining 10%, though the state's ability to fulfil this portion often depends on its prevailing fiscal situation. Additionally, the RRRLF offers non-matching schemes, under which the Foundation bears the full cost of the grant.

Government-recognized NGO libraries, such as those managed by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMA), operate under a different financial model. Their funding is derived from their parent or branch organizations, as well as from internally generated resources like membership fees and late fines. These libraries also benefit from both matching and non-matching RRRLF grants, which are channelled through the state government. Across all types of libraries, donations play a vital and sustaining role. Contributions in cash or kind from community members and other interested parties provide essential support, enabling libraries to maintain momentum, foster growth, and ensure their continued development.

3.11. CONCLUSION:

The development of public libraries in Mizoram has been a gradual yet significant process, beginning with the establishment of the first public library in 1968. A

pivotal moment in this evolution was the enactment of the Mizoram Public Libraries Act in 1993, which laid the foundational framework for a more organized and structured library system. To fully realize the vision of this legislation, proactive initiatives must be undertaken to ensure its effective implementation, thereby establishing a uniform pattern of public library services across the state. The role of the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) has been particularly transformative, especially for libraries managed by non-governmental organizations. Through its various schemes, the RRRLF has substantially elevated the status of these libraries by augmenting their book collections, improving infrastructure, and providing essential equipment. However, to extend these benefits to a greater number of libraries and facilitate their comprehensive upgradation, it is strongly recommended that the state government increase its matching share under the RRRLF schemes, thereby fostering a more robust and widespread library network.

Despite these advancements, significant challenges persist, particularly at the district level, where libraries are often found to be poorly maintained and inadequately equipped. These institutions suffer from a chronic lack of updated collections, insufficient resources, and substandard infrastructure, compounded by a severe shortage of qualified staff. This systemic neglect severely hampers their ability to function as effective centers of learning and information. To reverse this trend, it is imperative that due importance and priority be accorded to these district libraries. A concerted effort is required to upgrade their facilities, enrich their resources, and bolster their staffing levels. Only through such targeted interventions can these libraries be transformed into vibrant community hubs capable of delivering high-quality services and operating with the level of efficiency that the public deserves.

The next chapter will analyze the data collected through questionnaire method and highlight the interpretation as well as graphical presentation. The findings of the study have also been elaborated based on the objectives of the study.

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CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected in the study on user engagement practices in the Young Mizo Association (YMA) libraries of Aizawl District. The primary aim of this research is to understand how user engagement practices are employed in these libraries through quantitative approach for an inclusive understanding. The data is collected through questionnaire which is circulated among 136 YMA libraries and responded by 125 (91.91%) libraries. The data is tabulated and analysed using Microsoft Excel software including graphical representation aligning with the objectives of the study.

The findings presented herein gives a greater awareness of the role of library staffs and the hardships encountered for engaging users to the library beneficial for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers alike.

4.2. DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of data has been conducted based on the questionnaire and also interpretation is presented.

4.2.1 NUMBER OF LIBRARY COLLECTION

Sl. No.	Name of Library	Books	Periodicals
1	Aibawk Branch YMA Library	2441	0
2	Ainawn Veng Branch YMA Library	2280	1
3	Aizawl Tlangnuam Branch YMA Library	3640	1
4	Armed Veng Branch YMA Library	7339	1
5	Bawngkawn Branch YMA Library	2011	1
6	Bethlehem Branch YMA Library	9388	5

7	Bethlehem Vengthlang Branch YMA Library	4331	7
8	Buizova Memorial Library (East Phaileng YMA)	3128	1
9	Bungkawn Branch YMA Library	6421	1
10	C.T.I Branch YMA Library	2020	0
11	Camp Area Branch YMA Library, Thingsulthliah	1852	0
12	Chaltlang Branch YMA Library	6674	1
13	Chaltlang Lily Veng Branch YMA Library	5530	1
14	Chamring Branch YMA Library	2036	0
15	Chanmari Branch YMA Library	13000	2
16	Chawlhmun Branch YMA Library	2280	8
17	Chawnpui Branch YMA Public Library	7086	1
18	Chhimveng Branch YMA Library, Sakawrdai	2523	0
19	Chhinga Veng YMA Library	5204	1
20	Chite Veng Branch YMA Library	5607	0
21	College Veng Branch YMA Library	5977	3
22	Dam veng Branch YMA Library	3975	2
23	Darlawn Chhim Veng YMA Branch Library	2564	0
24	Darlawn Venghlun Branch YMA Library	3895	1

25	Darlawng Vengpui YMA Library	2063	0
26	Darlawng Branch YMA Public Library	1420	0
27	Dawrpui Vengthar Branch YMA Library	5208	1
28	Dinthar Branch YMA Library	4833	1
29	Durtlang Leitan Branch YMA Library	2600	1
30	Durtlang YMA Library	3756	1
31	Electric Veng Branch YMA Library	9817	1
32	Falkawn YMA Library	4015	1
33	Falkland YMA Library	536	0
34	Gate Veng Branch YMA Library Tlungvel	3515	1
35	Hmuifang Branch YMA Library	2800	0
36	Hmunnghak Branch YMA Library	2593	0
37	Hospital Area Branch YMA Library, Thingsulthliah	2857	1
38	Hualngohmun YMA Branch Library	3778	1
39	Hunthar Branch YMA Library	5684	1
40	I.T.I Veng Branch YMA Library	1600	1
41	Kanan Branch YMA Library	4694	1
42	Khatla Branch YMA Library	6200	3
43	Khatla South YMA Library	5714	1
44	Khawruhlian Branch YMA Library	4250	1
45	Kulikawn YMA Library	4945	3

46	Laipuitlang Branch YMA Library	4280	2
47	Lawipu Branch YMA Library	778	0
48	Luangmual Branch YMA Library	1696	1
49	Lungleng I Branch YMA Library	2500	0
50	Lungsum Branch YMA Library	1080	0
51	Maubawk YMA Library	4071	1
52	Maubuang Branch YMA Library	2388	0
53	Melriat YMA Library	2043	0
54	Melthum Branch YMA Library	4613	0
55	Mission Veng Branch YMA Library	1810	1
56	Model Veng Branch YMA Library	2361	0
57	Muallungthu YMA Library	4624	1
58	Muthi Branch YMA Library	1000	0
59	N. Lungleng YMA Library	1882	0
60	N. Serzawl Branch YMA Library	3060	0
61	New Capital Branch YMA Library	1853	1
62	Nursery Veng Branch YMA Library	3341	1
63	Pehlawn Branch YMA Library	2800	1
64	Phulmawi YMA Library	2275	0
65	Phulpui YMA Library	2725	0
66	Ramhlun North Branch YMA	1965	7
67	Ramhlun South YMA	6343	3

68	Ramhlun Sport Complex Library	2712	1
69	Ramhlun Vengthar YMA Library	4260	2
70	Ramthar North Branch YMA Library	1255	1
71	Ramthar Veng YMA Library	4072	2
72	Rangvamual YMA Library	1250	0
73	Ratu Branch YMA Library	3000	1
74	Republic Veng Branch YMA Library	4626	2
75	Republic Vengthlang Branch YMA Library	12014	3
76	Sailam Branch YMA Library	2008	0
77	Sailutar Branch YMA Library	5041	0
78	Sairang Branch YMA Library	4051	2
79	Sakawrtuichhun Branch YMA Library	5495	1
80	Salem Veng Branch YMA Library	3577	1
81	Samlukhai Branch YMA Library	3361	0
82	Samtlang Branch YMA Library	1230	0
83	Saron Veng Branch YMA Library	5532	1
84	Sateek Branch YMA Library	1620	0
85	Sawleng Branch YMA Library	3184	0
86	Selesih Branch YMA Library	1500	1
87	Seling Branch YMA Library	2000	0
88	Sesawng Branch YMA Library	1432	0

89	Sihphir Branch YMA Library	2000	1
90	Sumsuih Branch YMA Library	1927	0
91	Tachhip Branch YMA Library	1300	0
92	Tanhril Branch YMA Library	1890	3
93	Tanhril vengthar Branch YMA Library	4600	1
94	Thakthing Veng YMA Library	1082	1
95	Thalai Hmasawn Pawl Library, MSVT	3593	1
96	Thiak Branch YMA Library	2594	0
97	Thingsul Tlangnuam YMA Library	3000	1
98	Thuampui Branch YMA Library	3366	1
99	Tinghmun Branch YMA Library	2125	0
100	Tlungvel Field Veng Branch YMA Library	2917	0
101	Tlungvel Venghlun Branch YMA Library	6141	1
102	Tuikhuahtlang YMA Library	6011	2
103	Tuikual Branch YMA Library	6550	2
104	Tuikual North Branch YMA Library	4044	2
105	Tuithiang Branch YMA Library	5167	1
106	Upper Republic YMA Library	2000	1
107	Vaitin Branch YMA Library	1660	0
108	Vaivakawn YMA Library	5670	5
109	Venghlui Branch YMA Library	3857	1
110	Venghnuai YMA Library	6070	2

111	Vengthar Branch YMA Library, Tlungvel	2186	0
112	YMA Bungkawn Vengthar Branch	815	0
113	YMA Central Jail Veng Branch Library	1035	0
114	YMA Kepran Library	2765	0
115	YMA Khawpuar Library	1200	0
116	YMA Library Armed Veng South	7783	2
117	YMA Library Kelsih Branch	2100	0
118	YMA Library Saikhamakawn	3932	1
119	YMA Library, Sialsuk South Branch	2087	1
120	YMA Library, Zohmun	1460	0
121	Zarkawt Branch YMA Library	2692	1
122	Zemabawk Branch YMA Library	2654	1
123	Zemabawk North Branch YMA Library	3581	1
124	Zotlang Branch YMA Library	6997	1
125	Zuangtui Branch YMA Library	1540	1

Table 4.1. Number of library collection

The above table shows the number of library collection among the libraries under study where Chanmari Branch YMA Library and Republic Vengthlang Branch YMA Library are having highest book collection (above 10000). 26 libraries have book collection ranging between 5000-10000 while 117 libraries are having book collection below 5000. Further, Chawlhmun Branch YMA Library has largest number of periodical (8 periodicals), followed by Bethlehem Vengthlang Branch YMA Library and Ramhlun North Branch YMA Library having 7 number of

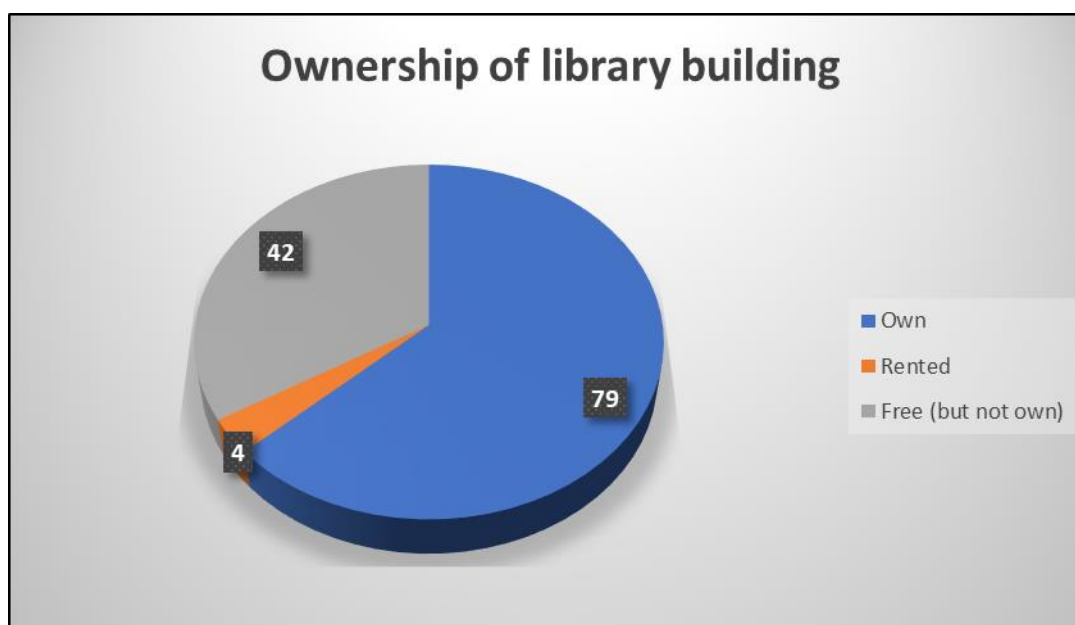
periodicals. 76 libraries are having between 1-5 number of periodicals while 46 libraries do not have any periodical.

4.2.2. ANALYSIS BY OWNERSHIP OF LIBRARY BUILDING

Sl. No	Category	No. of response	Percentage
1	Own	79	63.20%
2	Rented	4	3.20%
3	Free (but not own)	42	33.60%
	Total	125	100%

Table 4.2. Ownership of library building

Among the YMA libraries, 79 (63.20%) libraries owned and have a separate library building, while 42 (33.60%) libraries are located in a building free of cost but they do not own it while 4 (3.20%) libraries are on rented building.



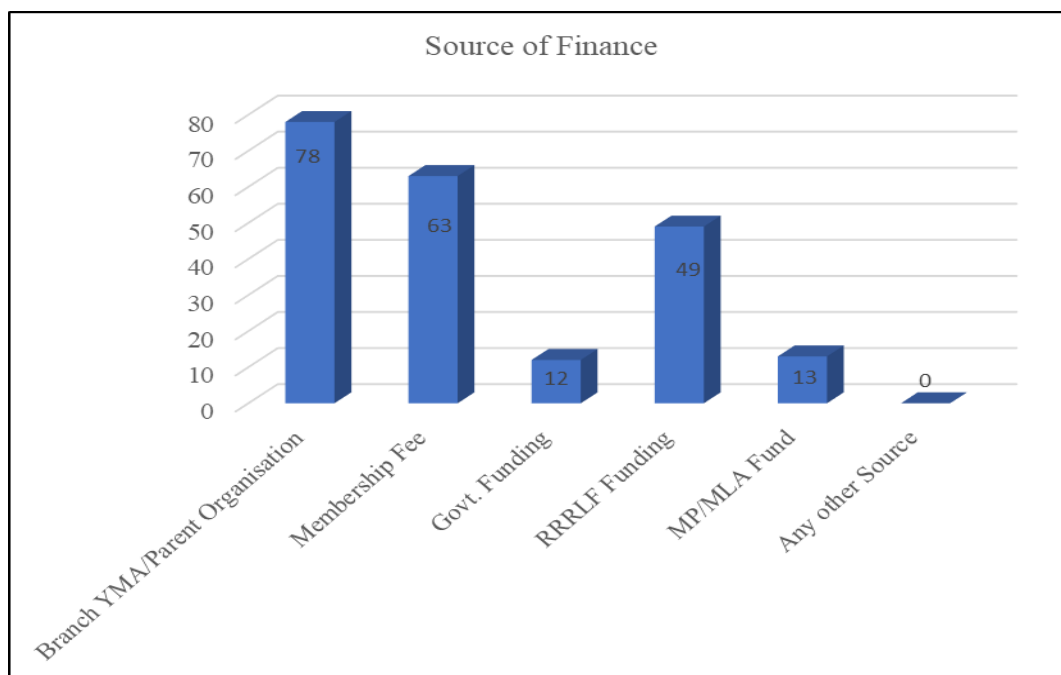
Graph. 4.1 Ownership of library building

4.2.3. ANALYSIS BY SOURCE OF FINANCE

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response (N=125)	Percentage
1	Branch YMA/Parent Organisation	78	62.40%
2	Membership Fee	63	50.40%
3	Govt. Funding	12	9.60%
4	RRRLF Funding	49	39.20%
5	MP/MLA Fund	13	10.40%
6	Any other Source	0	0%

Table 4.3. Source of Finance

Table. 4.3 indicates that Branch YMA/parent Organization allocates funds to 78 (62.40%) libraries. Membership registration fee is collected by 63 (50.40%) libraries, Government funding is received by 12 (9.60%), RRRLF funding by 49 (39.20%) libraries and MP/MLA Fund is received by 13 (10.40%) libraries. It can be summed up that funding from Branch YMA/Parent Organization and more funding from RRRLF is a need of the hour for proper functioning and maintenance of the libraries.



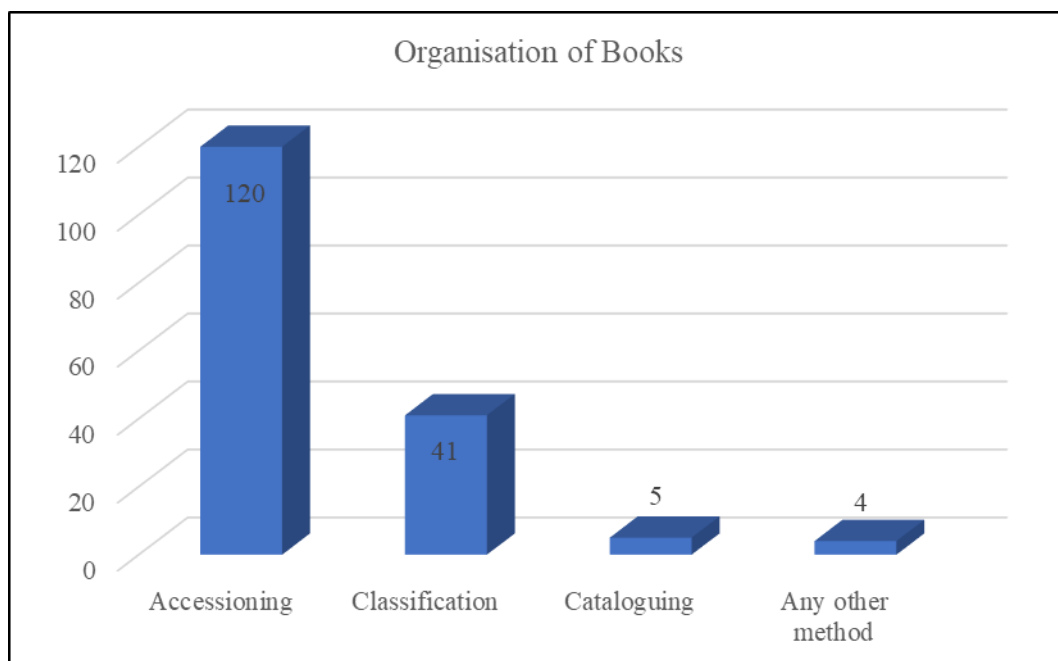
Graph 4.2. Source of Finance

4.2.4. ANALYSIS BY ORGANISATION OF BOOKS

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response (N=125)	% within Category
1	Accessioning	120	96.00%
2	Classification	41	33.60%
3	Cataloguing	5	4.00%
4	Any other method	4	3.20%

Table 4.4. Organisation of books

From the given table 4.4. it has been observed that among the YMA libraries, Accessioning is done by 120 (96.00%) libraries and Classification by 41 (33.60%) libraries. Cataloguing is prepared by 5 (4.00%) libraries while other method is followed by 4 (3.20%) libraries. For the better engagement of users, the techniques in which library resources are handled is important as it can paved a way for better utilization of the library resources.



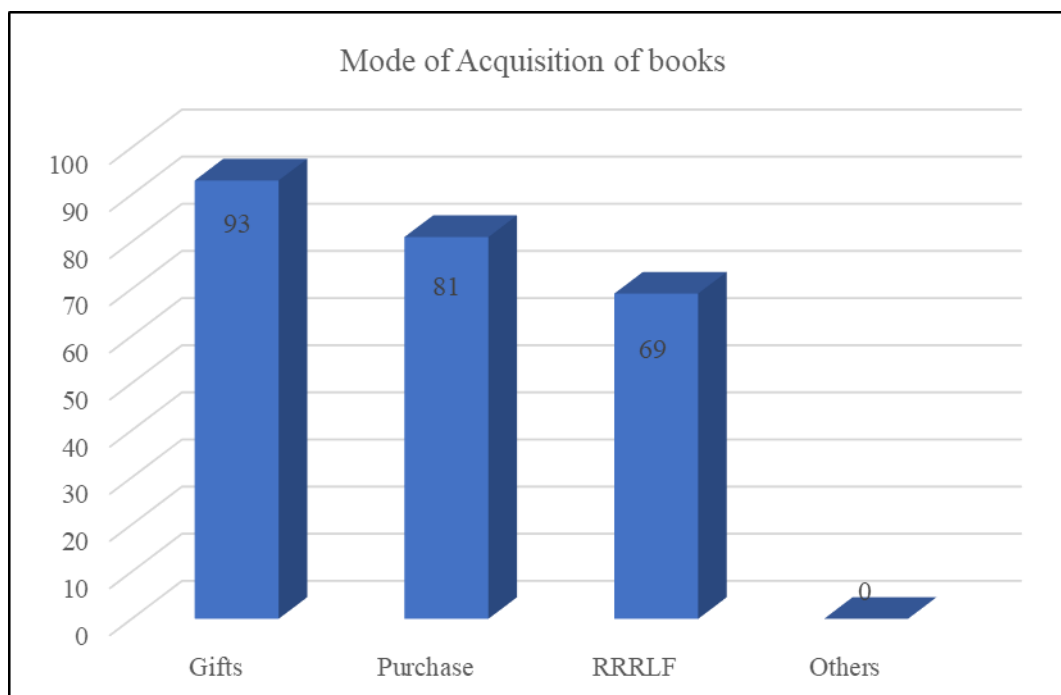
Graph 4.3. Organisation of books

4.2.5. ANALYSIS BY MODE OF ACQUISITION OF BOOKS

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response (N=125)	% within Category
1	Gifts	93	74.40%
2	Purchase	81	64.80%
3	RRRLF	69	55.2%
4	Others	0	0%

Table 4.5. Mode of Acquisition of books

From the table, 93 (74.40%) and 81 (64.80%) libraries acquire books through gifts and RRRLF. 69 (55.20%) libraries acquire books through purchase while other mode of acquisition is not applied in any library.



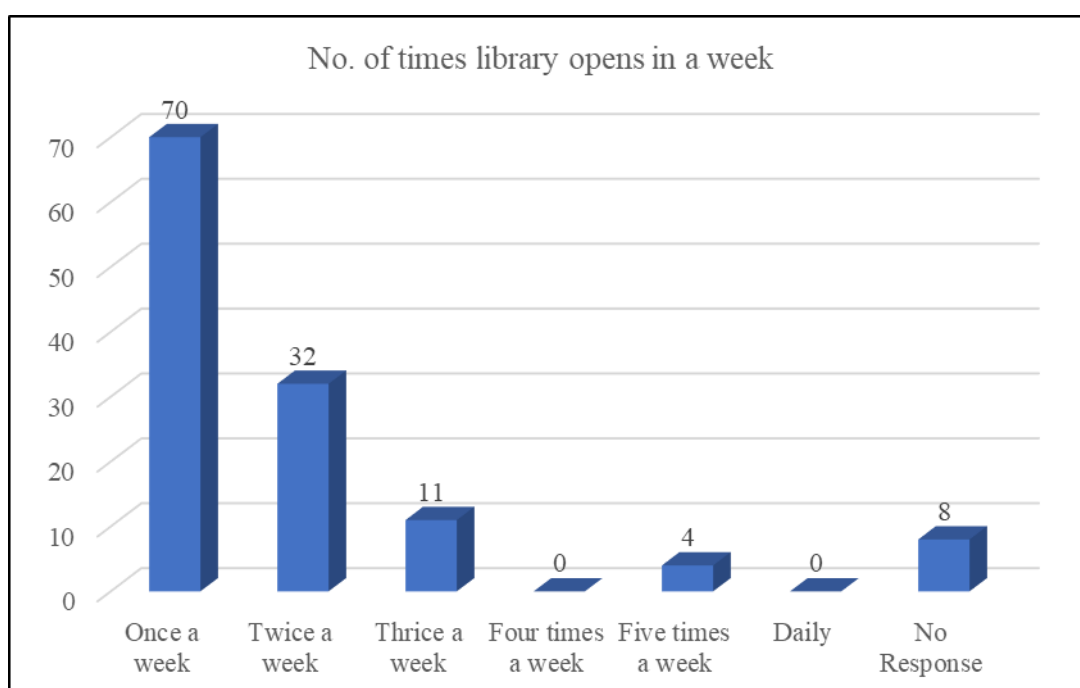
Graph 4.4. Mode of Acquisition of books

4.2.6. ANALYSIS BY NUMBER OF TIMES LIBRARY OPENS IN A WEEK

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response	Percentage
1	Once a week	70	56.00%
2	Twice a week	32	25.60%
3	Thrice a week	11	8.80%
4	Four times a week	0	0%
5	Five times a week	4	3.20%
6	Daily	0	0%
7	No Response	8	6.40%
	Total	125	100.00%

Table 4.6. No. of times library opens in a week

From the Table. 4.6, it can be seen that 70 (56.00%) of the libraries remain opened once a week, 32 (25.60%) libraries are opened twice in a week. Moreover, 11 (8.80%) libraries are opened thrice a week and 4 (3.20%) are opened five times a week. There are no libraries opened four times a week and daily respectively. There is no response from 8 (6.40%) libraries. This analysis implies that libraries are opened very few within a week.



Graph 4.5. No. of times library opens in a week

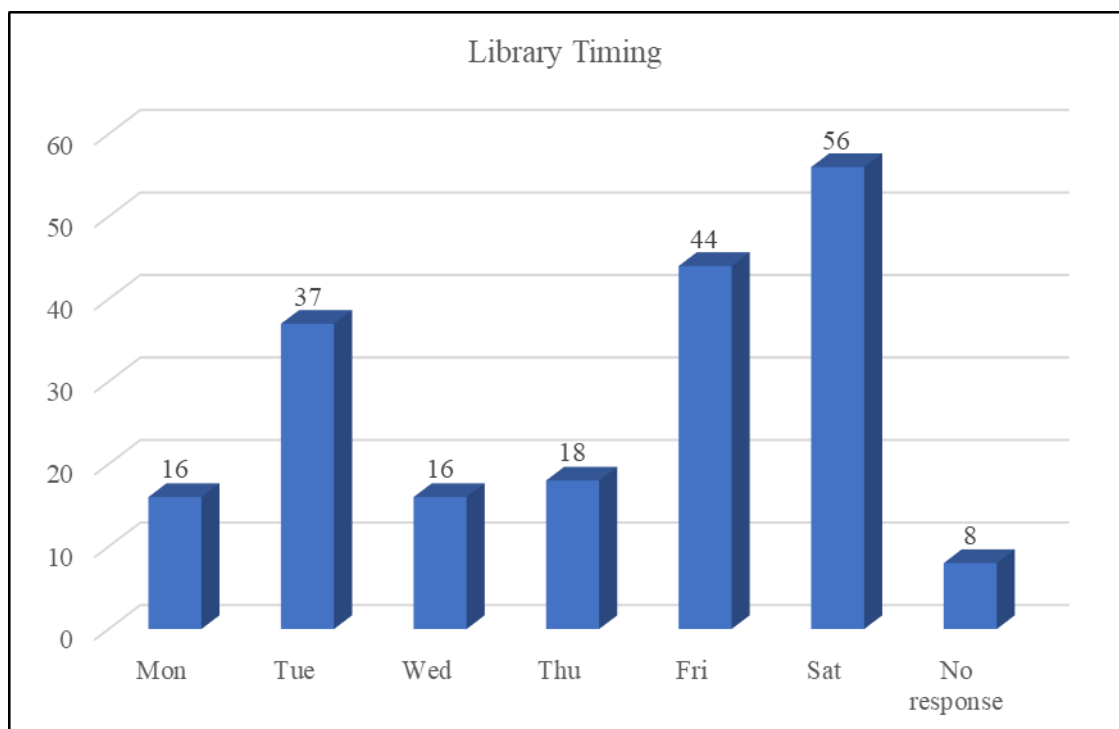
4.2.7. ANALYSIS BY LIBRARY TIMING

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response (N=125)	% within Category
1	Mon	16	12.80%
2	Tue	37	29.60%
3	Wed	16	12.80%

4	Thu	18	14.40%
5	Fri	44	35.20%
6	Sat	56	44.80%
7	No response	8	6.40%

Table 4.7. Library Timing

The library timing in days has been shown in the above table depicting that in Saturday most libraries 56 (44.80%) are opened as well as on Friday i.e, 44 (35.20%). This has been followed by Tuesday where 37 (29.60%) libraries are opened. On Thursday, 18 (14.40%) libraries are opened and 16 (12.80%) libraries are opened on Monday and Wednesday respectively. In some cases, since the libraries are opened more than once in a week, the preferred days of Friday and Saturday has especially come up in number. This is because more users are attracted on a weekend which needs to keep in mind for User Engagement.



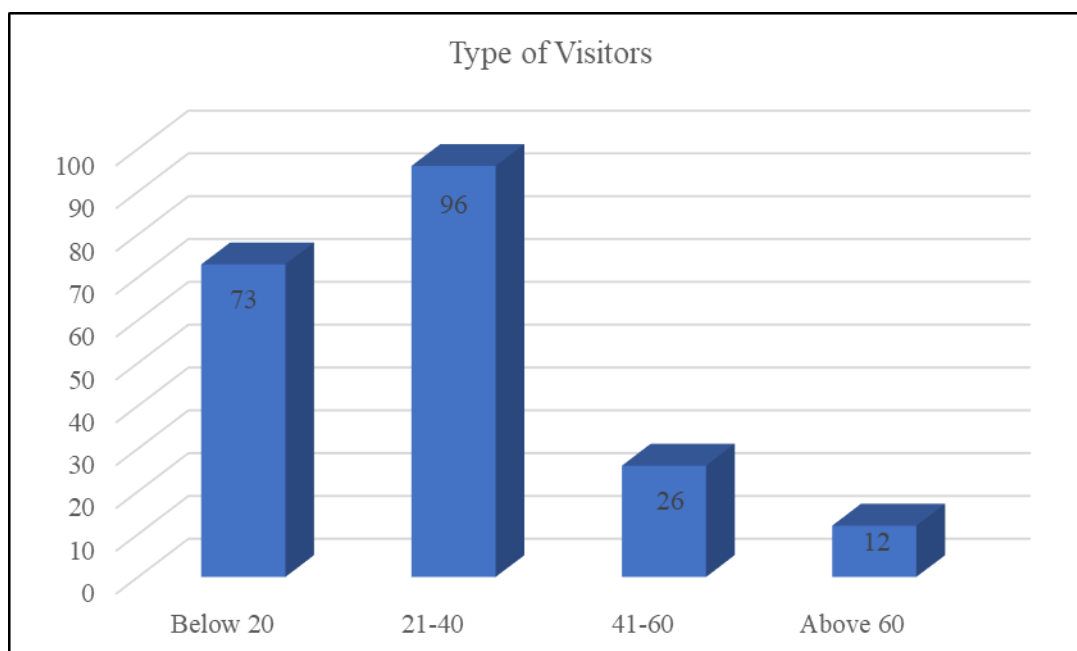
Graph 4.6. Library Timing

4.2.8. ANALYSIS BY TYPE OF VISITORS

Sl. No.	Age Category	No. of Response (N=125)	% within category
1	Below 20 years	73	58.40%
2	21-40 years	96	76.80%
3	41-60 years	26	20.8%
4	Above 60 years	12	9.60%

Table 4.8. Type of Visitors

96 (76.80%) of the YMA libraries are visited mainly from the age category between 21-40 years and is followed by age below 20 years which comes to 73 (58.40%) libraries. Further, 26 (20.80%) libraries are visited by the age between 41-60 years and 12 (9.60%) libraries are visited by 60 years above. This table clearly indicates that the youth and adults prefer more to visit the library.



Graph 4.7. Type of Visitors

4.2.9. NUMBER OF LIBRARY MEMBER & AVERAGE DAILY FOOTFALL

Sl. No.	Name of Library	No. of Library Member	Average Daily Footfall
1	Aibawk Branch YMA Library	54	1
2	Ainawn Veng Branch YMA Library	197	1
3	Aizawl Tlangnuam Branch YMA Library	150	1
4	Armed Veng Branch YMA Library	164	3
5	Bawngkawn Branch YMA Library	112	1
6	Bethlehem Branch YMA Library	251	1
7	Bethlehem Vengthlang Branch YMA Library	155	4
8	Buizova Memorial Library (East Phaileng YMA)	96	1
9	Bungkawn Branch YMA Library	0	0
10	I.T.I Veng Branch YMA Library	51	1
11	Camp Area Branch YMA Library, Thingsulthliah	48	1
12	Chaltlang Branch YMA Library	752	4
13	Chaltlang Lily Veng Branch YMA Library	143	1
14	Chamring Branch YMA Library	62	1

15	Chanmari Branch YMA Library	215	4
16	Chawlhmun Branch YMA Library	74	2
17	Chawnpui Branch YMA Public Library	24	1
18	Chhimveng Branch YMA Library, Sakawrdai	45	1
19	Chhinga Veng YMA Library	72	0
20	Chite Veng Branch YMA Library	203	1
21	College Veng Branch YMA Library	148	1
22	Dam Veng Branch YMA Library	77	1
23	Darlawn Chhim Veng YMA Branch Library	15	1
24	Darlawn Venghlun Branch YMA Library	367	2
25	Darlawn Vengpui YMA Library	67	1
26	Darlawnng Branch YMA Public Library	62	1
27	Dawrpui Vengthar Branch YMA Library	85	1
28	Dinthar Branch YMA Library	42	1
29	Durtlang Leitan Branch YMA Library	80	1
30	Durtlang YMA Library	89	1
31	Electric Veng Branch YMA Library	364	1
32	Falkawn YMA Library	93	1

33	Falkland YMA Library	27	1
34	Gate Veng Branch YMA Library Tlungvel	0	1
35	Hmuifang Branch YMA Library	26	1
36	Hmunnghak Branch YMA Library	39	1
37	Hospital Area Branch YMA Library, Thingsulthliah	58	1
38	Hualngohmun YMA Branch Library	321	1
39	Hunthar Branch YMA Library	223	1
40	I.T.I Veng Branch YMA Library	465	2
41	Kanan Branch YMA Library	52	1
42	Khatla Branch YMA Library	114	1
43	Khatla South YMA Library	57	1
44	Khawruhlian Branch YMA Library	32	1
45	Kulikawn YMA Library	73	1
46	Laipuitlang Branch YMA Library	245	2
47	Lawipu Branch YMA Library	47	1
48	Luangmual Branch YMA Library	70	1
49	Lungleng I Branch YMA Library	45	1
50	Lungsum Branch YMA Library	76	1
51	Maubawk YMA Library	503	2
52	Maubuang Branch YMA Library	70	1
53	Melriat YMA Library	35	1

54	Melthum Branch YMA Library	46	1
55	Mission Veng Branch YMA Library	34	1
56	Model Veng Branch YMA Library	23	1
57	Muallungthu YMA Library	286	2
58	Muthi Branch YMA Library	155	1
59	N. Lungleng YMA Library	55	2
60	N. Serzawl Branch YMA Library	120	1
61	New Capital Branch YMA Library	105	1
62	Nursery Veng Branch YMA Library	383	2
63	Pehlawn Branch YMA Library	50	1
64	Phulmawi YMA Library	64	1
65	Phulpui YMA Library	0	1
66	Ramhlun North Branch YMA Library	93	1
67	Ramhlun South YMA Library	603	3
68	Ramhlun Sport Complex YMA Library	128	1
69	Ramhlun Vengthar YMA Library	390	1
70	Ramthar North Branch YMA Library	138	1
71	Ramthar Veng YMA Library	84	2
72	Rangvamual YMA Library	21	1
73	Ratu Branch YMA Library	260	1
74	Republic Veng Branch YMA Library	96	2

75	Republic Vengthlang Branch YMA Library	19	2
76	Sailam Branch YMA Library	76	1
77	Sailutar Branch YMA Library	57	1
78	Sairang Branch YMA Library	104	1
79	Sakawrtuichhun Branch YMA Library	70	1
80	Salem Veng Branch YMA Library	70	1
81	Samlukhai Branch YMA Library	70	1
82	Samtlang Branch YMA Library	60	1
83	Saron Veng Branch YMA Library	67	1
84	Sateek Branch YMA Library	66	1
85	Sawleng Branch YMA Library	53	1
86	Selesih Branch YMA Library	430	1
87	Seling Branch YMA Library	70	1
88	Sesawng Branch YMA Library	86	1
89	Sihphir Branch YMA Library	120	1
90	Sumsuih Branch YMA Library	102	1
91	Tachhip Branch YMA Library	71	2
92	Tanhril Branch YMA Library	70	1
93	Tanhril vengthar Branch YMA Library	47	1
94	Thakthing Veng YMA Library	46	1
95	Thalai Hmasawn Pawl Library, MSVT	42	1

96	Thiak Branch YMA Library	19	1
97	Thingsul Tlangnuam YMA Library	0	0
98	Thuampui Branch YMA Library	300	3
99	Tinghmun Branch YMA Library	190	1
100	Tlungvel Field Veng Branch YMA Library	55	1
101	Tlungvel Venghlun Branch YMA Library	82	1
102	Tuikhuahtlang YMA Library	29	1
103	Tuikual Branch YMA Library	25	1
104	Tuikual North Branch YMA Library	55	1
105	Tuithiang Branch YMA Library	27	1
106	Upper Republic YMA Library	290	2
107	Vaitin Branch YMA Library	116	1
108	Vaivakawn YMA Library	1284	4
109	Venghlui Branch YMA Library	32	1
110	Venghnuai YMA Library	145	1
111	Vengthar Branch YMA Library, Tlungvel	80	1
112	YMA Library Bungkawn Vengthar Branch	158	1
113	YMA Central Jail Veng Branch Library	507	1

114	YMA Kepran Library	55	1
115	YMA Khawpuar Library	103	1
116	YMA Library Armed Veng South	259	1
117	YMA Library Kelsih Branch	26	1
118	YMA Library Saikhamakawn	50	1
119	YMA Library, Sialsuk South Branch	94	1
120	YMA Library, Zohmun	179	1
121	Zarkawt Branch YMA Library	593	1
122	Zemabawk Branch YMA Library	186	1
123	Zemabawk North Branch YMA Library	122	1
124	Zotlang Branch YMA Library	73	1
125	Zuangtui Branch YMA Library	505	1

Table 4.9. No. of Library Member & Average Daily Footfall

From the above table, the library with highest number of members is Vaivakawn YMA library 1284 library members, followed by 6 libraries ranging between 500-1000 library members viz. Chaltlang Branch YMA Library, Ramhlun South Branch YMA Library, Maubawk Branch YMA Library, YMA Central Jail Veng Branch Library, Zarkawt Branch YMA Library and Zuangtui Branch YMA Library. 114 libraries have members ranging from 1-500 while 4 libraries do not have any member at all.

Among these YMA libraries, the library having the highest average daily footfall are 4 libraries with 4 members which are Vaivakawn YMA Library, Chaltlang Branch YMA Library, Chanmari Branch YMA Library and Bethlehem Vengthlang Branch YMA Library. Ramhlun South Branch YMA Library,

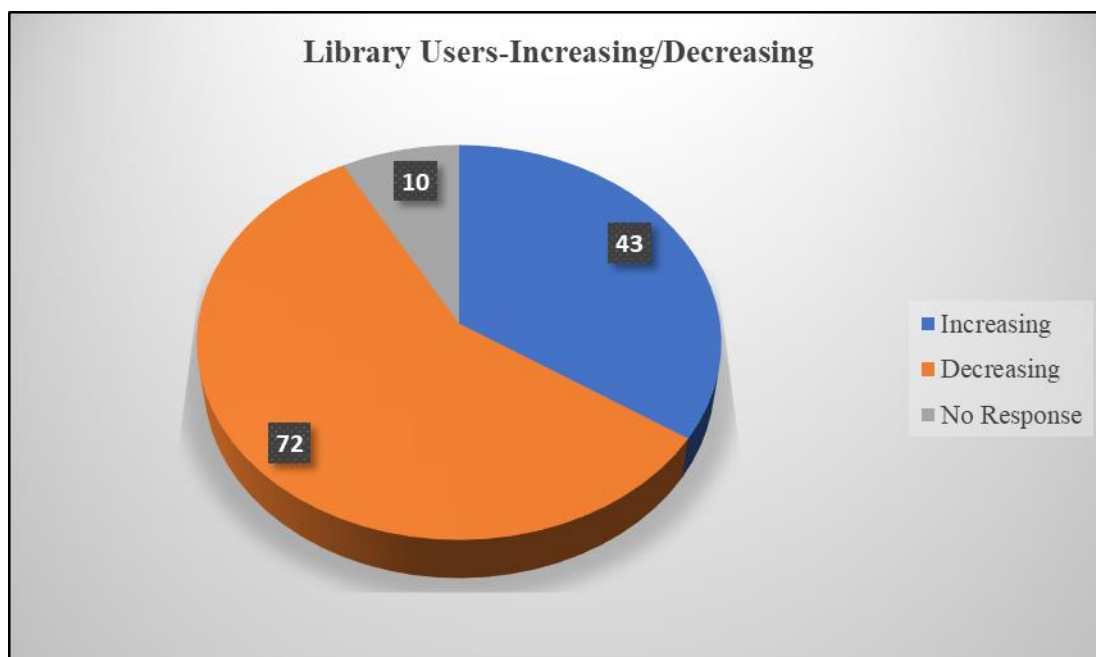
Thuampui Branch YMA Library and Armed Veng Branch YMA Library have average daily footfall of 3 members while 118 libraries have only 1-2 member in average.

4.2.10. ANALYSIS BY LIBRARY USERS INCREASING OR DECREASING DAY BY DAY

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response	Percentage
1	Increasing	43	34.40%
2	Decreasing	72	57.60%
3	No Response	10	8.00%
	Total	125	100%

Table 4.10. Library users are increasing or decreasing day by day

From the above table, it can be seen that library which find their users are decreasing day by day are 72 (57.60%) libraries while 43 (34.40%) libraries find users to increase day by day. There has been no response from 10 (8.00%) libraries. This proves that libraries are in great need of improving to engage users to avoid further declination of users in future.



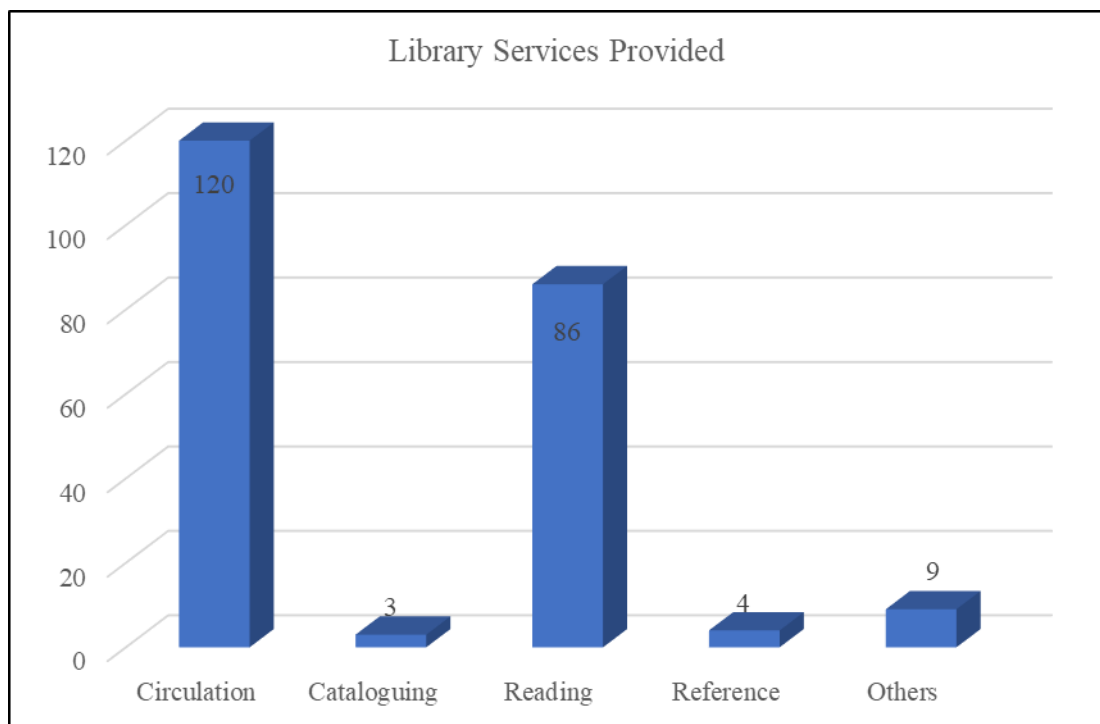
Graph 4.8. Library users are increasing or decreasing day by day

4.2.11. ANALYSIS BY LIBRARY SERVICES PROVIDED

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response (N=125)	% within category
1	Circulation	120	96.00%
2	Cataloguing	3	2.40%
3	Reading	86	68.80%
4	Reference	4	3.20%
5	Others	9	7.20%

Table 4.11. Library Services Provided

It was noticed following data analysis that circulation services is available in most of the libraries i.e., 120 (96%). 86 (68.80%) libraries offer reading services, 4 (3.20%) offer reference services, and 3 (2.40%) offer cataloguing services. Other sort of library services is given by 9 (7.20%) libraries. It is obvious that libraries must work harder to enhance their offerings in order to engage patrons.



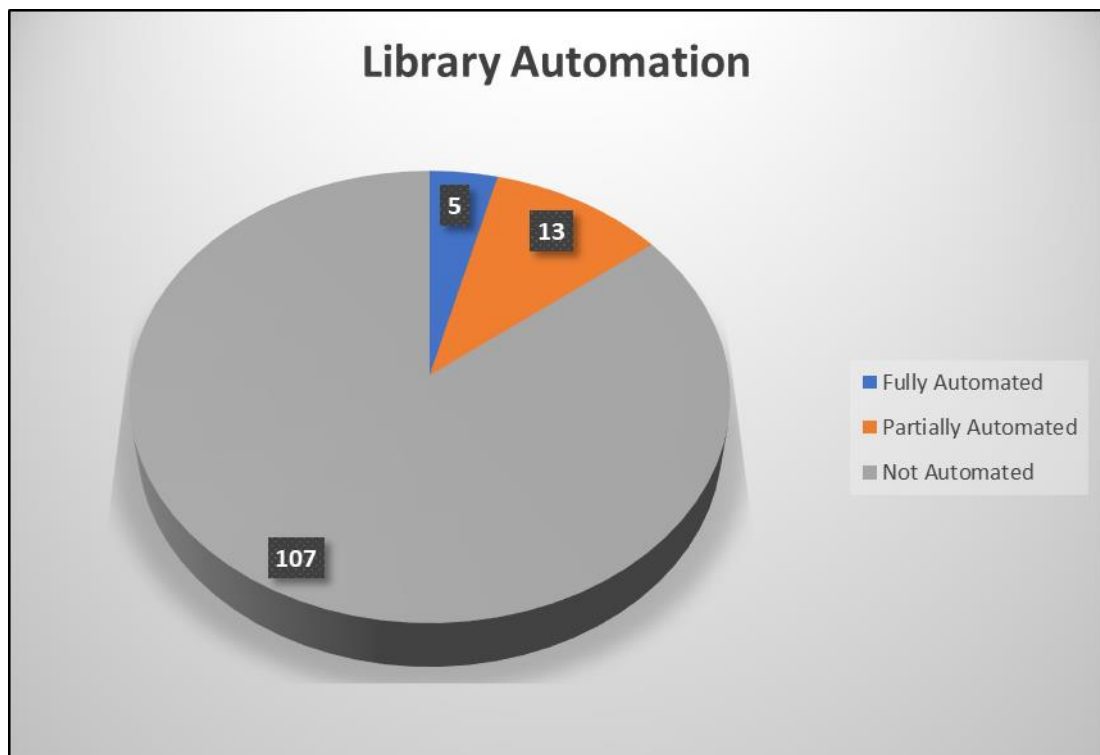
Graph 4.9. Library Services Provided

4.2.12. ANALYSIS BY LIBRARY AUTOMATION

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response	Percentage
1	Fully Automated	5	4.00%
2	Partially Automated	13	10.40%
3	Not Automated	107	85.60%
	Total	125	100%

Table 4.12. Library automation

The above table shows that only 5 (4.00%) are fully automated and 13 (10.40%) libraries are partially automated. The fact that the majority of the libraries 107 (85.60%) have not begun automation is regrettable and if certain steps can be taken for automation of libraries, users will be more engaged as it one type of attraction of users.



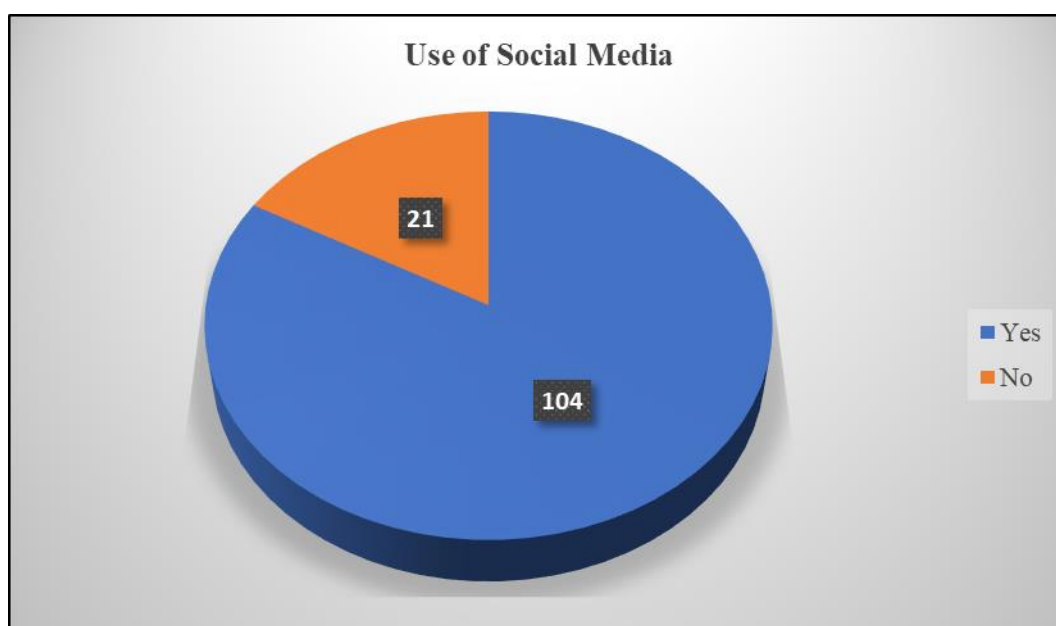
Graph 4.10. Library automation

4.2.13. ANALYSIS BY USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response	Percentage
1	Yes	104	83.20%
2	No	21	16.80%
	Total	125	100%

Table 4.13. Use of social media

104 (83.20%) libraries have responded that they use social media for user engagement which directs that an important step for user engagement have been practiced while 21 (16.80%) do not use social media for user engagement.



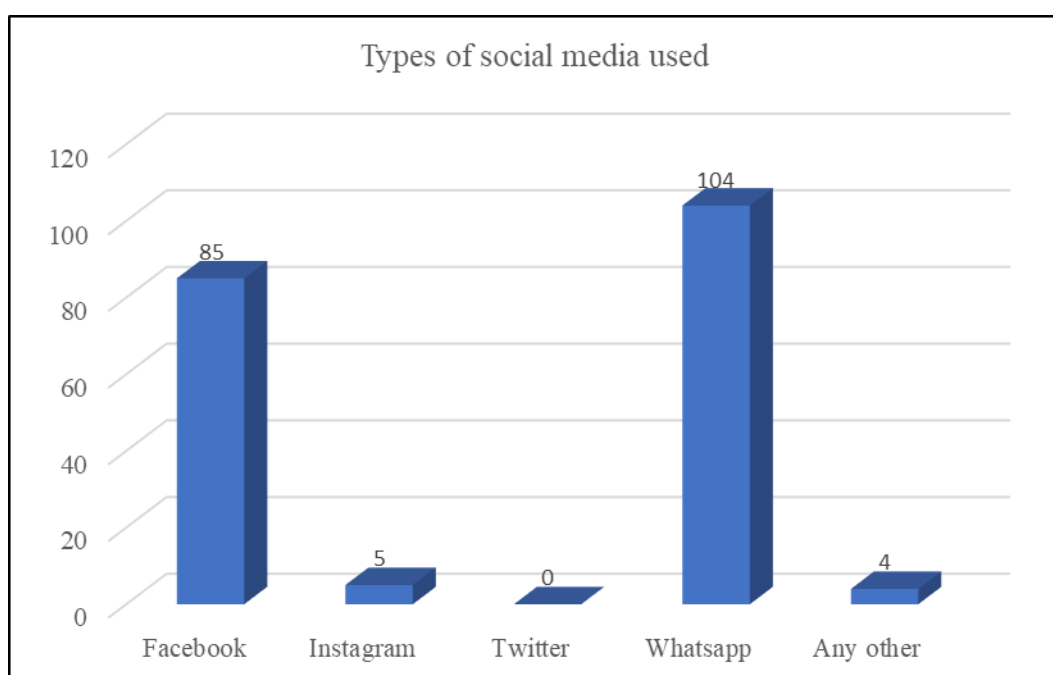
Graph 4.11. Use of social media

4.2.14. ANALYSIS BY TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA USED

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response (N=125)	% within category
1	Facebook	85	68.00%
2	Instagram	5	4.00%
3	Twitter	0	9.60%
4	WhatsApp	104	83.20%
5	Any other	4	3.20%

Table 4.14. Types of social media used

From the table above, it can be observed that WhatsApp is utilized by majority i.e., 104 (83.20%), 85 (68.00%) of the libraries used Facebook, 5 (4.00%) libraries used Instagram. Other sort of social media is used by 4 (3.20%) libraries.



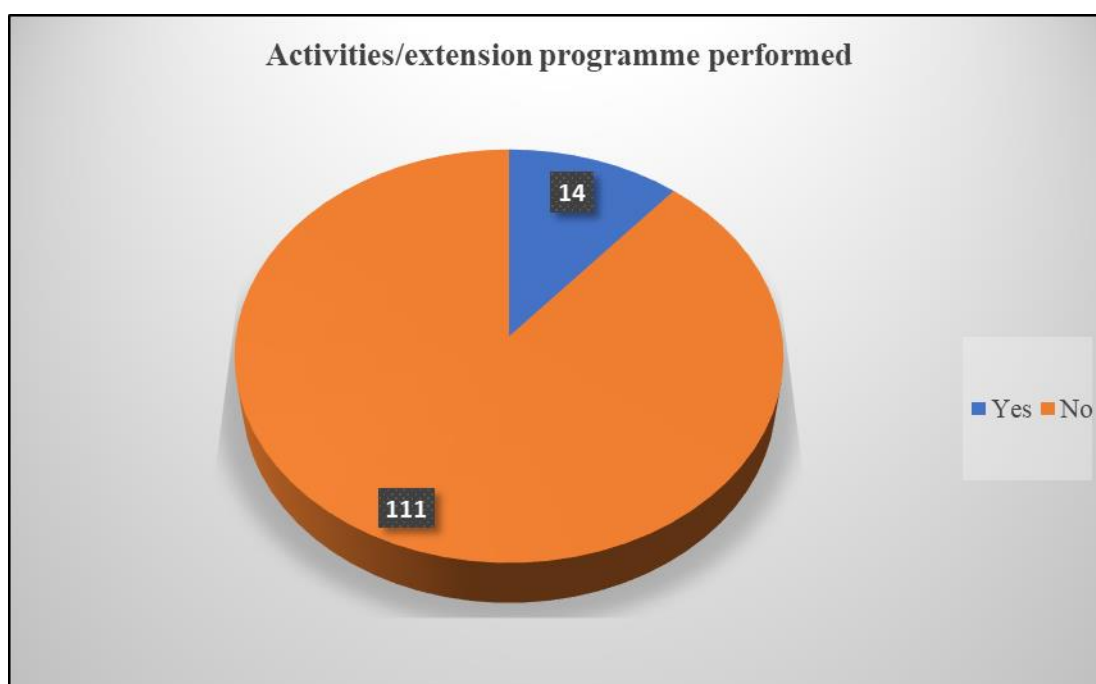
Graph 4.12 Types of social media used

4.2.15. ANALYSIS BY ACTIVITIES/EXTENSION PROGRAMME PERFORMED

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response	Percentage
1	Yes	14	11.20%
2	No	111	88.80%
	Total	125	100%

Table 4.15. Activities/extension programme performed

The above table shows that majority of the 111 (88.80%) libraries do not have any activity for user engagement while 14 (11.20%) libraries have performed activities/extension programme. This indicates that the level of engagement for users cannot be high as activities/extension programmes are sources of attraction for users.



Graph 4.13. Activities/extension programme performed

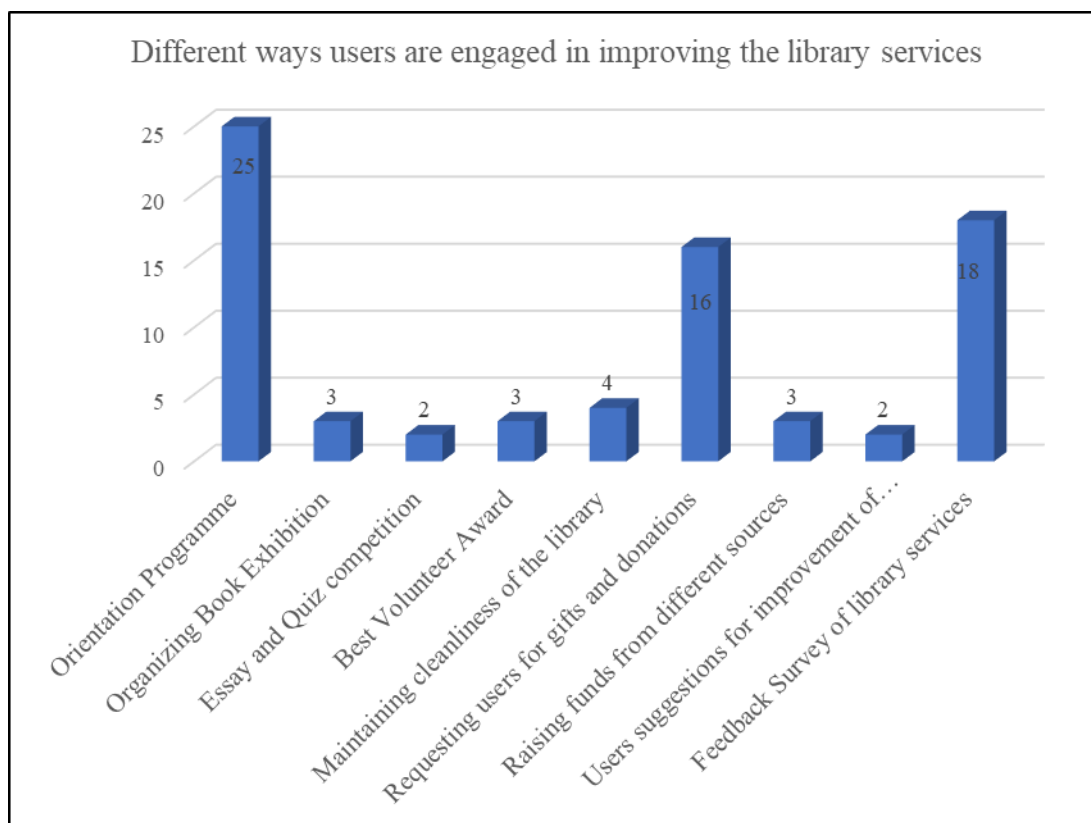
4.2.16. ANALYSIS BY DIFFERENT WAYS USERS ARE ENGAGED IN IMPROVING THE LIBRARY SERVICES

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response (N=125)	% within category
1	Orientation Programme	25	20.00%
2	Organizing Book Exhibition	3	2.40%

3	Essay and Quiz competition	2	1.60%
4	Best Library User Award	3	2.40%
5	Maintaining cleanliness of the library	4	3.20%
6	Requesting users for gifts and donations	16	12.80%
7	Raising funds from different sources	3	2.40%
8	Users' suggestions for improvement of services	2	1.60%
9	Feedback Survey of library services	18	14.40%

Table 4.16. Different ways users are engaged in improving the library services

The above table shows that 25 (20.00%) have conducted Orientation Programme, Feedback Survey of library services is led by 18 (14.40%) and requesting users for gifts and donations are done by 16 (12.80%) libraries. Organizing Book Exhibition, Best Library User Award and raising funds from different sources are done by 3 (2.40%) libraries respectively. Essay and Quiz competition and Users suggestions for improvement of services are done by 2 (1.31%) libraries correspondingly for the engagement of users.



Graph 4.14. Different ways users are engaged in improving the library services

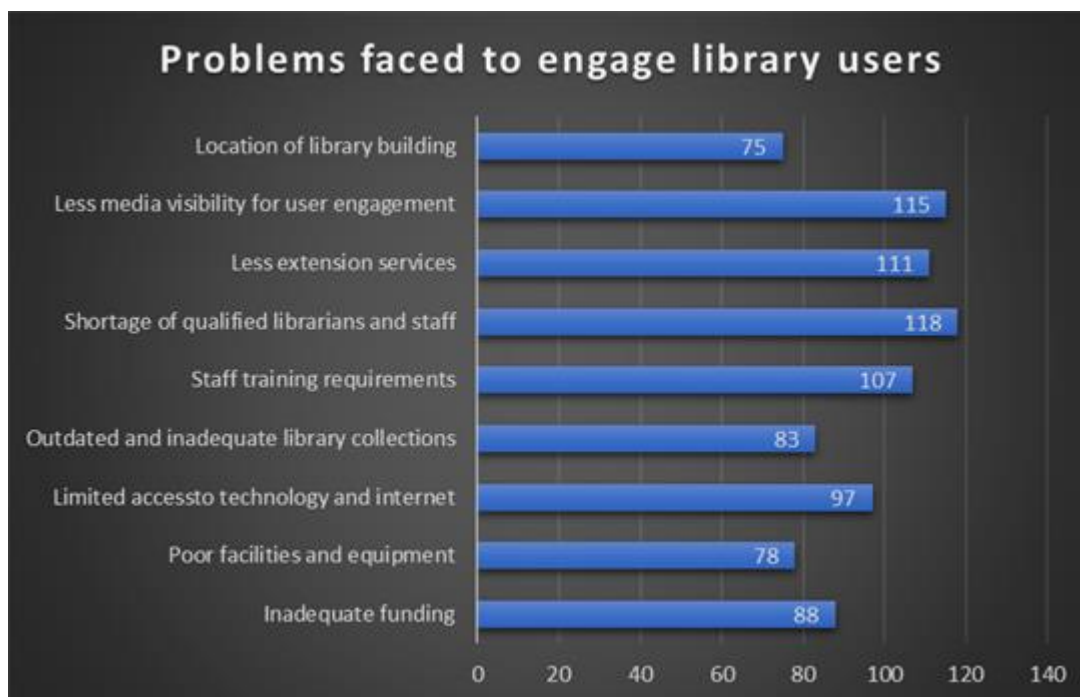
4.2.17. ANALYSIS BY THE PROBLEMS FACED WHICH MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO ENGAGE THE LIBRARY USERS

Sl. No	Category	No. of Response (N=125)	% within category
1	Inadequate funding	88	70.40%
2	Poor facilities and equipment	78	62.40%
3	Limited access to technology and internet	97	77.60%
4	Outdated and inadequate library collections	83	66.40%

5	Staff training requirements	107	85.60%
6	Shortage of qualified librarians and staff	118	94.40%
7	Less extension services	111	88.80%
8	Less media visibility for user engagement	115	92.00%
9	Location of library building	75	60.00%

Table. 4.17. Problems faced to engage library users

The above table highlights the problems faced by the YMA libraries under study. Their main problems have been analysed such that the problem of shortage of qualified librarians and staff are faced by 118 (94.40%) libraries, less media visibility for user engagement 115 (92.00%) libraries, less extension services by 111 (88.80%) libraries. Staff training requirements by 107 (85.60%) libraries, limited access to technology and internet by 97 (77.60%) libraries, 88 (70.40%) libraries have problem with inadequate funding, outdated and inadequate library collections are faced by 83 (66.40%) libraries, poor facilities and equipment by 78 (62.40%) libraries and location of library building by 75 (60.00%) libraries.



Graph. 4.15. Problems faced to engage library users

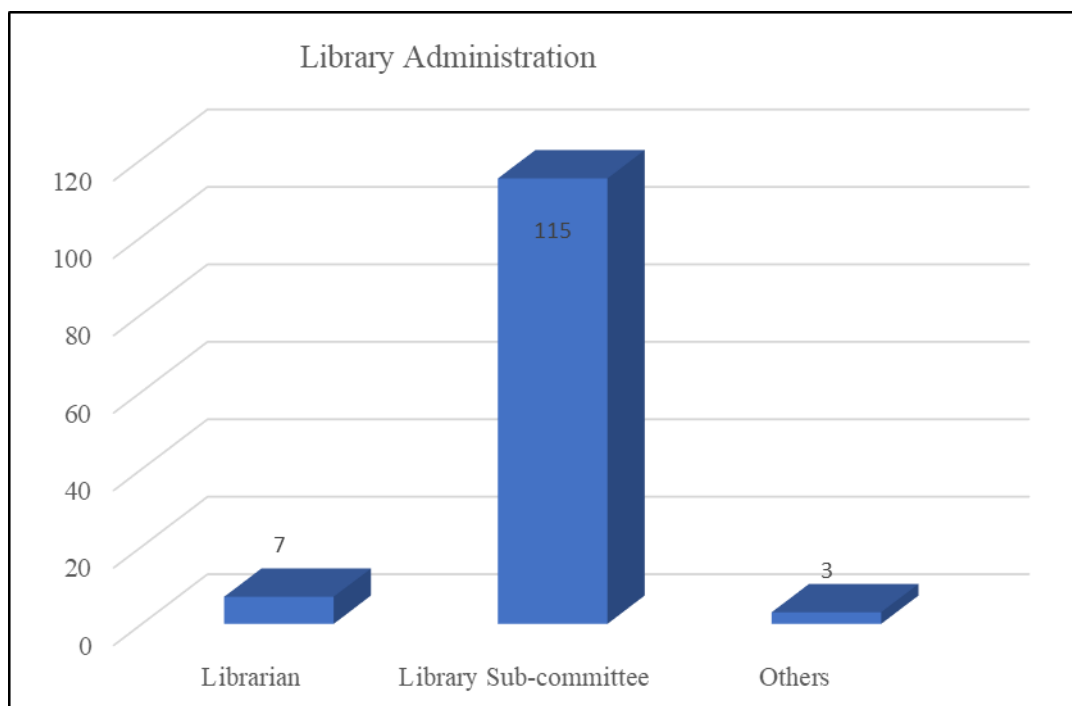
4.2.18. ANALYSIS BY LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response	Percentage
1	Librarian	7	5.60%
2	Library Sub-committee	115	92.00%
3	Others	3	2.40%
	Total	125	100%

Table 4.18. Library Administration

Table. 4.18. indicates that majority of the YMA libraries i.e, 115 (98.68%) are run by Library Sub-Committee. 7 (5.60%) have librarian which shows that extra efforts are taken by these libraries although they are already having Library sub-

committee while 3 (2.40%) claimed to be run by other methods. It is clear that almost all libraries need a proper librarian for the administration and management of the libraries.



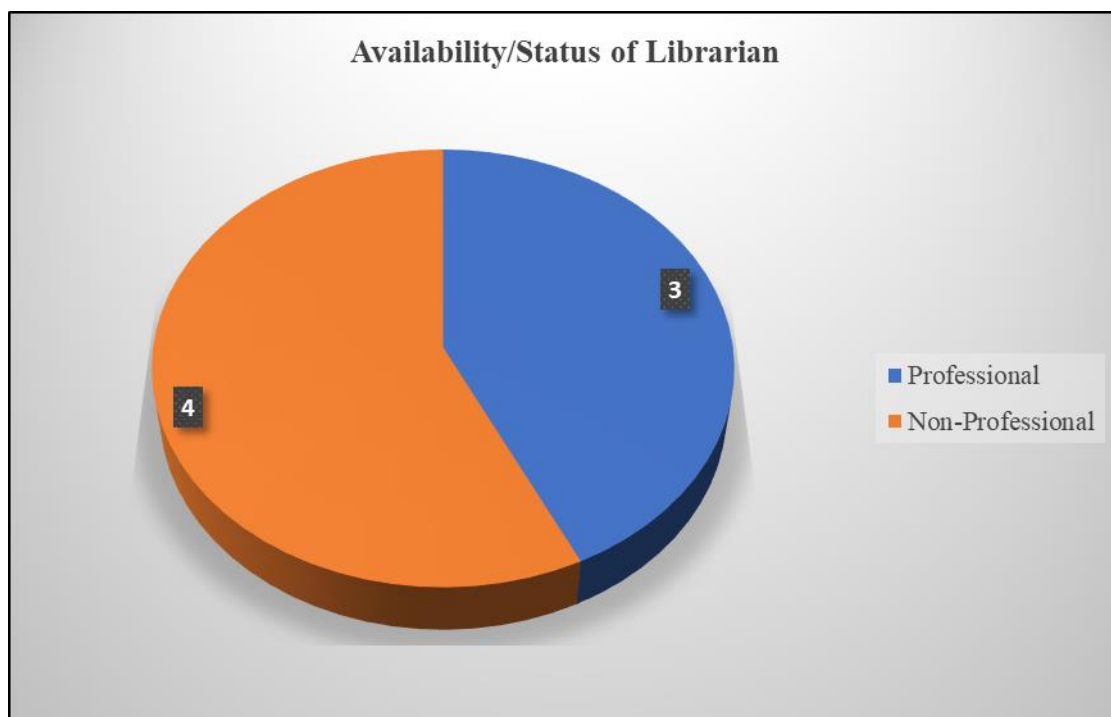
Graph 4.16 Library Administration

4.2.19. ANALYSIS BY AVAILABILITY/STATUS OF LIBRARIAN

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response (N=125)	Percentage
1	Professional	3	2.40%
2	Non-Professional	4	3.20%

Table 4.19. Availability/Status of Librarian

Table. 4.19 indicates that among YMA libraries under study, only 3 (2.40%) libraries have Professional Librarian and 4 (3.20%) libraries have Non-Professional Librarian. This indicates that the remaining 118 (94.40%) YMA libraries do not have proper librarian.



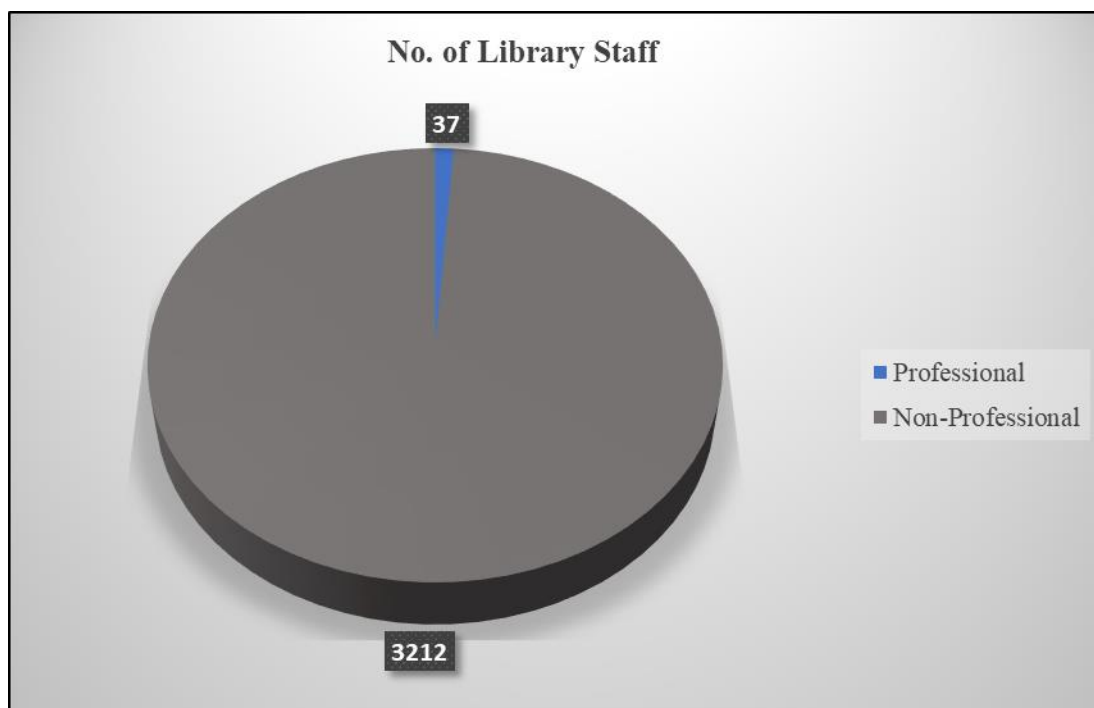
Graph 4.17. Availability/Status of Librarian

4.2.20. ANALYSIS BY NUMBER OF LIBRARY STAFF

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response	Percentage
1	Professional	37	1.14%
2	Non-Professional	3212	98.86%

Table 4.20. Number of Library staff

From the above table, it is observed that the YMA libraries under study have 37 (1.14%) Professional library staff while 3212 (98.86%) are Non-Professional library staff. It has resulted to this because YMA libraries are based on voluntary state and mostly the library staffs are from the locality itself and therefore the Non-Professional library staff has come in large number.



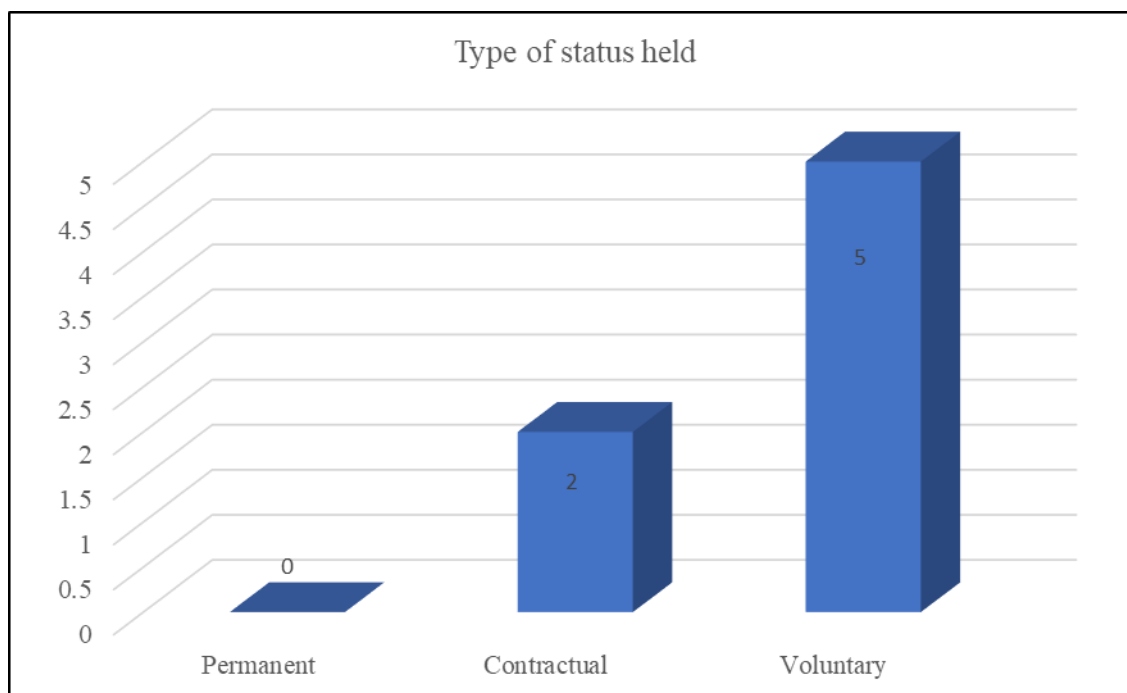
Graph 4.18. Number of Library staff

4.2.21. ANALYSIS BY TYPE OF STATUS HELD BY LIBRARIAN

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response (N=125)	Percentage
1	Permanent	0	0%
2	Contractual	2	1.60%
3	Voluntary	5	4.00%

Table 4.21. Type of status held

The above table shows the status held by the Librarian in YMA Libraries. The Librarian under Contractual are 2(1.60%) and Voluntary comes to 5 (4.00%). Even with the low rate of proper librarian, the YMA Libraries having librarian are not having permanent librarian which is insignificant for the wellbeing of the libraries.



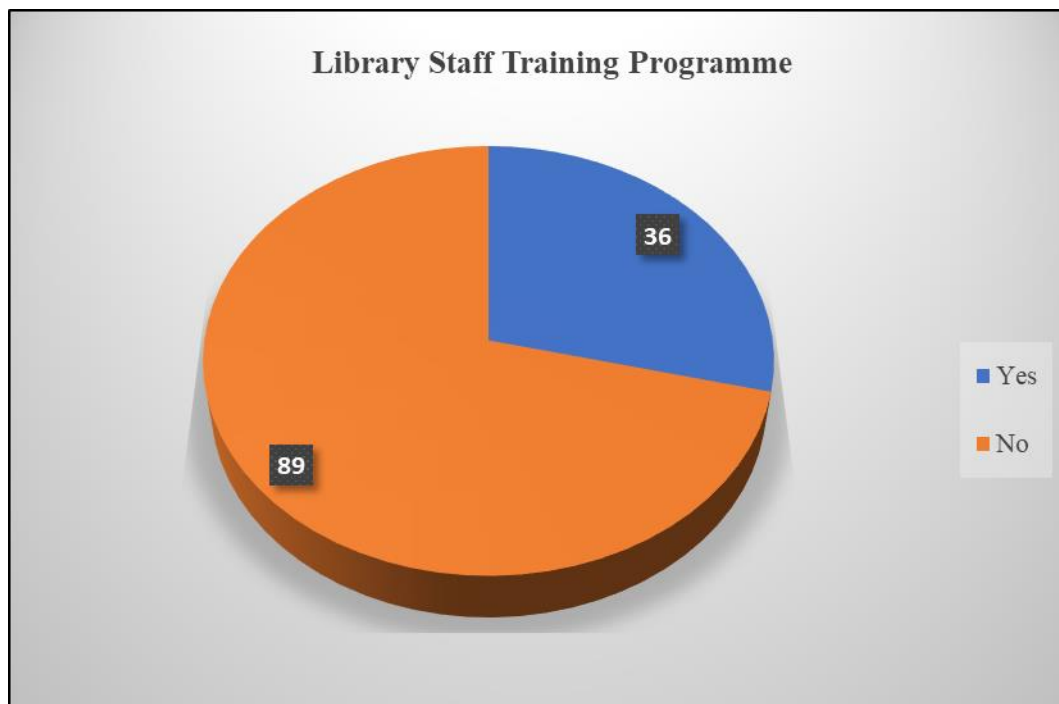
Graph 4.19. Type of status held

4.2.22. ANALYSIS BY USER ENGAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR LIBRARY STAFF

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Response	Percentage
1	Yes	36	28.80%
2	No	89	71.20%
	Total	125	100%

Table 4.22. User Engagement training programme for library staff

Table 4.22. makes it evident that only few libraries 36 (28.80%) have training programme for library staff while majority of the libraries 89 (71.20%) do not have at all.



Graph 4.20. User Engagement training programme for library staff

4.3. FINDINGS

This section discusses the findings regarding the user's engagement practices by Young Mizo Association (YMA) libraries of Aizawl District. Data were collected from all Young Mizo Association (YMA) libraries of Aizawl District. The chapter concludes with practical suggestions for improving the engagement practices for users by the libraries.

Before conducting this study, a total of four objectives were defined. The findings for each objective are discussed below:

Objective 1: Explore ways and means of users' engagement practices followed by YMA libraries under study.

- i. The majority of libraries 120 (96%) provide circulation services; 86 (68.80%) offer reading services; 4 (3.20%) offer reference services; and 3 (2.40%) offer cataloguing services. Nine (7.20%) libraries provide other types of library services. It is clear that in order to

engage users, libraries need to put in more effort to improve their services (Table 4.11).

ii. 72 (57.60%) libraries report a daily decline in users, while 43 (34.40%) report a daily gain in users. This indicates that libraries must make significant improvements to better engage users and prevent future usage declines (Table 4.10).

iii. 14 libraries (11.20%) have implemented activities or extension programs, while majority 111 libraries (88.80%) do not have any user engagement activities. Given that activities and extension programs serve as sources of user attractiveness, this suggests that user engagement cannot be high (Table 4.15).

iv. While 21 (16.80%) libraries do not use social media for user interaction, 104 (83.20%) libraries stated that they do, indicating that an important step for user engagement has been practiced. (Table 4.13). Majority 104 (83.20%), of the libraries use WhatsApp, while 85 (68.00%) use Facebook and 5 (4.00%) use Instagram. Four libraries (3.20 percent) use other forms of social media (Table 4.14).

v. 25 (20.00%) have conducted Orientation Programme, Feedback Survey of library services is led by 18 (14.40%) and requesting users for gifts and donations are done by 16 (12.80%) libraries. Organizing Book Exhibition, Best Library User Award and raising funds from different sources are done by 3 (2.40%) libraries respectively. Essay and Quiz competition and Users suggestions for improvement of services are done by 2 (1.31%) libraries. This proves that though efforts have been given by some libraries there is still a need to practice the engaging activities for most libraries (Table 4.16).

Objective 2: Study the experiences, problems and challenges faced by libraries in users' engagement practices of libraries under study.

- i. 3 (2.40%) libraries have Professional Librarian and 4 (3.20%) libraries have Non-Professional Librarian. The remaining 118 (94.40%) YMA libraries do not have proper librarian (Table. 4.19). The Librarian under Contractual are 2(1.60%) and Voluntary are 5 (4.00%). Even with the low rate of proper librarian, the YMA Libraries having librarian are not having permanent librarian which is insignificant for the wellbeing of the libraries (Table. 4.21).
- ii. Majority of the YMA libraries i.e, 115 (98.68%) are run by Library Sub-Committee. It is observed that almost all libraries need a proper librarian for the administration and management of the libraries (Table. 4.3). It is observed that the libraries have 37 (1.14%) Professional library staff while 3212 (98.86%) are Non-Professional library staff. It has resulted to this because YMA libraries are based on voluntary state and mostly the library staffs are from the locality itself and therefore the Non-Professional library staff has come in large number (Table. 4.18).
- iii. Among the YMA libraries, 79 (63.20%) libraries are owned and have a separate library building, while 42 (33.60%) libraries are located in a building free of cost but they do not own it while 4 (3.20%) libraries are on rented building (Table. 4.2).
- iv. 78 (62.40%) libraries receive funding from the branch YMA/parent organization. 63 libraries (50.40%) collect membership registration fees, 12 libraries (9.60%) receive government financing, 49 libraries (39.20%) receive RRRLF support, and 13 libraries (10.40%) receive MP/MLA Fund. In summary, further financing from RRRLF and funding from the Branch YMA/Parent Organization are urgently needed for the library's upkeep and appropriate operation as they are directly linked with the management and administration of the libraries (Table. 4.3).

v. Among the YMA Libraries, 70 (56.00%) libraries remain opened once a week and 32 (25.60%) libraries are opened twice in a week. Moreover, 11 (8.80%) libraries are opened thrice a week and 4 (3.20%) are opened five times a week. There are no libraries opened four times a week and daily respectively. The study found that libraries are opened very few within a week (Table. 4.6). In relation to this, the opening days have been studied and found that Friday and Saturday have particularly increased in number because the libraries are open multiple times a week. This is due to the fact that weekends draw more users, which should be considered for user engagement (Table. 4.7).

vi. It has been noted that of the YMA libraries, 120 (96.00%) complete accessioning, whereas 41 (33.60%) complete classification. Five libraries (4.00%) prepare catalogues, whereas four libraries (3.20%) use different methods. The methods used to manage library resources are crucial for improving user engagement since they can lead to better usage of the resources (Table. 4.4).

vii. 69 (55.20%) libraries purchase books, whereas 93 (74.40%) and 81 (64.80%) libraries obtain books through gifts and RRRLF, respectively. No library uses any other method of acquisition (Table. 4.5).

viii. The highest number of library member is found in Vaivakawn YMA library with 1284 library members, followed by 6 libraries ranging between 500-1000 library members, 114 libraries have members ranging below 500 while 4 libraries do not have any member at all due to ongoing construction of library building and some prefer not to have separate library member and consider anyone among the locality to access and utilise the library. The library having the highest average daily footfall are 4 libraries with 4 members. 3 libraries have average daily footfall of 3 members while 118 libraries have only 1-2

member in average. This shows that even in libraries having high library members the library is not visited regularly by the members (Table. 4.9).

ix. The Chanmari Branch YMA Library and Republic Vengthlang YMA Library are the two YMA libraries with the most collections (more than 10,000). 117 libraries have book collections under 5000, whereas 26 libraries have collections between 5000 and 10,000. Additionally, 46 libraries lack any type of periodicals, whilst Chawlhmun Branch YMA Library has the most i.e, 8 periodicals (Table. 4.1).

x. The majority of YMA library users are between the ages of 21 and 40 (96, or 76.80%), followed by those under the age of 20 (73, or 58.40%). Additionally, those between the ages of 41 and 60 frequent 26 (20.80%) libraries, while people 60 and older attend 12 (9.60%) libraries. It is evident from this table that youth and adults are more inclined to visit libraries (Table 4.8).

xi. 13 (10.40%) libraries are partially automated, and 5 (4.00%) are entirely automated. It is unfortunate that the bulk of the 107 libraries (85.60%) have not started automation. If specific actions can be performed to automate libraries, users will be more engaged because it is one kind of user attraction (Table 4.12).

xii. Only a small number of libraries i.e, 36 (28.80%) have training programme for library staff while most of the libraries 89 (71.20%) do not have at all for engaging users (Table 4.22).

xiii. The main problems with user engagement in the libraries under study have been analysed and found that shortage of qualified librarians and staff are faced by 118 (94.40%) libraries, less media visibility for user engagement 115 (92.00%) libraries, less extension services by 111 (88.80%) libraries. Staff training requirements by 107 (85.60%) libraries, limited access to technology and internet by 97

(77.60%) libraries, 88 (70.40%) libraries have problem with inadequate funding, outdated and inadequate library collections are faced by 83 (66.40%) libraries, poor facilities and equipment by 78 (62.40%) libraries and location of library building by 75 (60.00%) libraries. (Table 4.17).

Objective 3: Suggest strategies for the improvement of users' engagement in libraries under study.

Based on the analysis and findings, the following strategies have been suggested for improving the Young Mizo Association (YMA) Libraries under study on user's engagement.

1. Understanding User Needs

As seen in Table 4.8, Table 4.9 and Table 4.10, it has been found that there are less visitors in the library and the visitors are mostly youth and adults. To effectively maximize library services that will engage users, a thorough grasp of their requirements and preferences is necessary. By taking this crucial step, libraries may better adapt their services to the requirements of their communities and respond to shifting demands. One of the best methods for identifying user needs is to conduct a systematic needs assessment. User feedback analysis by giving out questionnaires and to library users, libraries can gather vital data in a number of ways. This allows for a direct discussion of patron experiences, preferences, and possible areas for development. These technologies can gather qualitative input, like suggestions for new goods or services, as well as quantitative data, like satisfaction ratings.

2. Improving Accessibility

As observed in Table 4.10 there has been a large decline in library users' day by day, so this figures that there is a need for improvement. Enhancements in accessibility guarantee that library services are inclusive and available to all members of the community. Make that the library's amenities meet accessibility standards, including accessible restrooms, elevators, and ramps. A friendly

atmosphere is also enhanced by areas that are well-lit and have clear signage. Add assistive tools, including screen readers and speech recognition software, to websites and catalogs to encourage digital accessibility. Make sure that people with impairments may access all digital content. Provide resources and programs that are inclusive to poor groups, non-native speakers, and those with disabilities. Providing resources in several languages and providing sign language interpretation are two instances of inclusive practices.

3. Optimizing digital resources and tools:

After the results found in Table 4.13 and Table 4.14, the study recommends having a strong social media presence in order to interact with users, advertise library services, and foster a feeling of community. For the purpose of supporting users' research and leisure needs, the library must offer online resources such e-books, online databases, and streaming services. Author discussions and online book clubs are also recommended as ways to interact with users and give them access to library resources.

4. Leveraging technology to boost efficiency:

In Table 4.12, it is found that the rate of library automation is very low. Libraries may increase service delivery and streamline operations by embracing technology. Automate inventory management, circulation, and categorization to boost productivity and cut down on manual labour. Automated book returns and self-checkout kiosks allow staff to provide more individualized service while speeding up transactions. Libraries may improve their services, increase productivity, and better meet the needs of their patrons by using technology developments. Adopting technology not only modernizes library operations but also provides innovative approaches to improve user engagement and enjoyment in an increasingly digital world.

5. Provide training to library staff for user engagement

The majority of the libraries in the study lack user engagement training, as seen in Table 4.22. In this day and age, it is essential to regularly train staff members on

customer service best practices, including communication, dispute resolution, and new technologies. Ensuring that staff members are informed and amiable results in a satisfying user experience which leads to user engagement in the libraries.

6. Organizing Programs and Events based on Community-led Activities:

With reference to Table 4.15 and Table 4.16, it has been observed that the YMA libraries engagement activities are very low. In order to overcome this, the study has come up with another strategy. Libraries that offer participatory programs attract and keep users. Seminars, local talent displays, cultural events, skill-sharing workshops, and sustainability projects are all engaging experiences that can cater to a variety of interests and foster community involvement. These gatherings provide chances for social contact and intellectual exchange, strengthen communities, and address local issues by encouraging mutual support and shared learning. In order to get input and establish connections with the community, libraries can also engage in outreach programs, work with neighbourhood associations, and take part in events.

7. Establishing a Reward System (Giannaros et al., 2020)

In Table 4.16, it is found that reward system is practiced in some libraries but most of the libraries have not yet introduced. Therefore, monthly challenges that provide special benefits to customers who visit the library more frequently can be used to measure usage and identify the most active users who may be eligible for special awards like gift cards, special access, discounts on value-added services, etc. By spreading the word about the incentive program via newsletters, social media, and library posters and gathering user feedback so that awards can be changed and the program can be enhanced to better meet the needs of the users. This will be helpful in showing how reward schemes evolve in connection with community involvement and greater library use. The program's accomplishments will be emphasized to serve as a foundation for any upcoming financing and further growth. This is one important strategy that will assist attract and engage library users for a vibrant library community.

By focusing on these strategies, libraries can improve the relevance and responsiveness of their services to the requirements of their users by concentrating on these strategies. An ideal library that adapts to the changing needs of its community must embrace digital integration, provide innovative programming, enhance accessibility, and deliver first-rate customer service.

Objective 4: Propose a model framework to improve users' engagement practices for YMA libraries under study.

A model framework has been proposed Figure 1 which is crucial for YMA libraries under study, as it highlights the key steps to enhance user engagement. These steps provide a clear roadmap for libraries to follow in order to improve user engagement and ensure the successful integration of the process into their services. The continuous process of user engagement requires proper surveillance and maintenance, and the framework provides a guide for libraries to successfully increase user engagement. By using the attributes in the framework, libraries can effectively nurture user engagement.

Let us look in detail of the framework.

1. The source: In this model, the Young Mizo Association libraries are the main source where user engagement practice is to be improved.

2. Library Collection: As observed in the findings 4.3., the library collections are still very few based on their library establishment years, periodicals subscription is very less and there are no libraries which are acquainted with electronic resources. So, the study finds it to be crucial to include in the framework for the YMA libraries as the type of collection can be a turning point in engaging users.

3. Library services: By keeping in mind the weaknesses of library services provided by the YMA libraries under study, the framework highlights a larger area in library services. Circulation, Cataloguing, Reference, Reading, Information & Digital Services which includes Current Awareness Services (CAS) & Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), Internet/Wi-Fi,

Document Delivery which comprises photocopying, printing, scanning, and interlibrary loans (ILL). Though some libraries have practiced library services like circulation services, the other services are not much found in the study. Therefore, all these library services have been included for improvement of user engagement practice as they are not yet available in majority of the libraries under study.

4. Implementation/Adoption: In order to engage users, the following points are included in the framework

a) Recognizing library users' needs: A step crucial for engaging library user is to know the need, purpose and how they will receive and gather the information they needed.

b) Library Staff Training: The study finds that majority of the libraries have never trained especially in case of user engagement. A trained staff will be able to identify the needs and meet the demands of users which will further lead to the engagement of the user.

c) Community building: Foster a sense of community among users through events, programs, and activities.

d) Multi-channel Engagement: Engage users through multiple channels, including physical spaces, digital platforms, and outreach programs.

e) Feedback Mechanisms: Establish feedback mechanisms to gather user input and improve services.

f) Partnerships and Collaborations: Collaborate with other organizations and stakeholders to expand library services and reach.

g) Government Policy: To guarantee financial stability, create state-level committees, and specify the roles of the central and state governments, the government passes public library acts. Policies encourage collaboration between libraries, schools, and community centers to optimize resources and support the implementation of contemporary ICT (Information and Communication Technology), such as computerization, internet connectivity, and electronic resource development in public libraries.

h) YMA Policy: YMA decided in 1987 that “All Branch YMAs should establish libraries in their localities” because they recognized the value of libraries in delivering both formal and informal education.

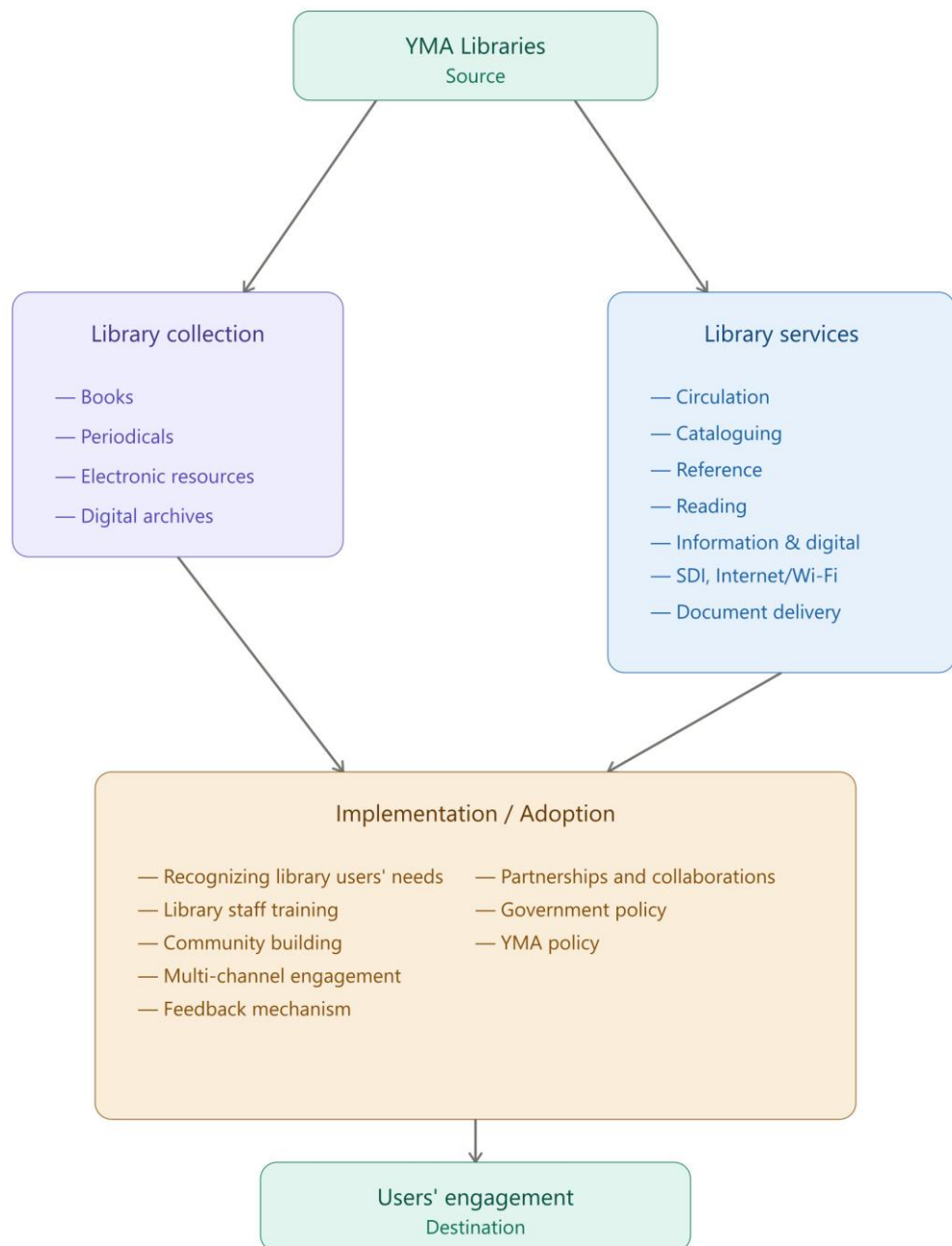


Fig. 4.1. A model framework proposed to improve users' engagement practices

4.4. CONCLUSION

The user engagement practices of the Young Mizo Association (YMA) libraries were systematically determined through the comprehensive data gathered during this study. The process of analyzing the collected raw data and interpreting the findings in alignment with the study's objectives served as more than mere academic inquiry; it constituted a purposeful journey toward developing a workable and contextually relevant solution for the critical issue of low user engagement that prompted this investigation. Each stage of analysis from the initial organization of survey responses to the nuanced interpretation of engagement patterns across different demographic groups revealed deeper insights into the current state of these community-managed institutions. The findings illuminated not only the existing practices but also the significant gaps that hinder meaningful interaction between the libraries and their potential users. Upon completing the data analysis, it became unequivocally clear that additional, concerted effort will be required by the libraries in question to transform their current operational models and attract a broader base of users. This necessary work encompasses a range of strategic interventions: modernizing collections to reflect contemporary reading interests, adopting technology to streamline services, training staff or volunteers in proactive user engagement techniques, and repositioning the library within the community as a dynamic hub for learning and interaction rather than merely a repository of books. The study thus concludes that while the foundational structures of YMA libraries are sound, their future relevance and sustainability will depend entirely on the deliberate and sustained implementation of the improvements identified through this analytical journey. Following data analysis and graphical representation, the results are provided in accordance with objectives of the study.

Based on the data analysis and findings, the next Chapter will provide suggestion and conclusion of the entire study as well as future research directions.

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CHAPTER 5
SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter has delved into a critical examination of user engagement practices within the libraries managed by the Young Mizo Association (YMA) in the Aizawl District of Mizoram. Through a comprehensive process of analysis and interpretation of the collected data, the study moves beyond a mere description of current activities to offer a diagnostic assessment of the landscape. The findings reveal a significant and concerning gap: while these community-managed libraries serve as essential local institutions, their current practices largely fail to foster deep, meaningful, and sustained engagement with their users. The analysis indicates that user interaction is often limited to traditional, transactional services i.e, primarily the borrowing and returning of books with minimal proactive effort to cultivate a vibrant, participatory community around the library. This lack of dynamic engagement represents a missed opportunity, not only for enhancing the user experience but also for positioning the libraries as central, active hubs of community life and lifelong learning.

In direct response to these identified shortcomings, this chapter does not simply conclude with criticism; it culminates in the proposition of a forward-thinking framework and a set of actionable strategies designed to fundamentally transform the user-library relationship. The core premise of this proposed transformation is a paradigm shift in the role of the library itself. The study asserts that in the modern information landscape, where content is abundant and easily accessible, a library's value can no longer be defined solely by the collections it houses. Instead, its worth is increasingly determined by the experiences it creates and the connections it facilitates. Information providers from librarians to managing committees must evolve from being mere custodians and displayers of information into architects of compelling, interactive, and personalized user experiences. This means curating not just books, but also programs, discussions, workshops, and digital interactions that resonate with the community's interests and aspirations.

Furthermore, the proposed framework is built on the powerful recognition that library users themselves are not passive consumers but valuable resources. Their

knowledge, skills, passions, and diverse perspectives are an untapped asset. The recommended strategies, therefore, focus on creating avenues for co-creation and collaboration, where users are invited to become active participants and contributors. This could involve user-led book clubs, community storytelling initiatives, skill-sharing workshops led by local experts, or platforms for users to showcase their own creative works. By shifting the focus from a one-way delivery of information to a multi-directional exchange of ideas and experiences, YMA libraries can transform their users from silent patrons into a vibrant, engaged, and invested community. This holistic framework, centered on experience and participation, offers a viable pathway for the YMA libraries in Aizawl District to not only bridge their current engagement gap but also to re-establish themselves as indispensable, thriving centers of community and intellectual life for the 21st century.

5.2 SUGGESTIONS RECEIVED FROM THE RESPONDENTS TO ENGAGE MORE USERS IN THE LIBRARY

The suggestions received from the respondents for better user engagement in a more generalized form are given below:

1. Curating a Dynamic and Relevant Collection through Regular Content Updating

The cornerstone of any vibrant library is a collection that feels alive and responsive to the community's needs. A static collection, no matter how impressive at its inception, quickly becomes a graveyard of outdated information, failing to attract repeat visitors. Therefore, it is imperative for YMA libraries to establish a systematic process for the regular updating of their contents. This goes beyond merely adding new titles; it involves a conscious effort to curate a balanced mix of materials. Libraries must prioritize the procurement of the latest published books in both the local Mizo language (to preserve cultural heritage and ensure accessibility for all age groups) and other languages, primarily English (to support academic pursuits, competitive exam preparation, and connect users with global knowledge). This dual-language approach ensures inclusivity and caters to

the diverse linguistic preferences of the community. A 'new arrivals' shelf, prominently displayed and refreshed monthly, can create a sense of anticipation and discovery, encouraging users to visit frequently to see what's new. By treating the collection as a living entity that requires constant nourishment, the library positions itself as a relevant and indispensable source of current information and contemporary literature.

2. Cultivating a Reading Culture through Proactive Community

Outreach

The existence of a library does not automatically guarantee its use; reading habits must be actively cultivated, especially in an age dominated by digital distractions. YMA libraries must move beyond their passive role and become proactive agents of literacy by designing and implementing regular library awareness programmes. These programmes should be specifically targeted at inculcating reading habits within the wider community. This could involve outreach to local schools for storytelling sessions and class visits, establishing partnerships with anganwadi centers to promote early childhood literacy, and organizing community reading challenges or "book talks" in public spaces like local markets or community halls. The goal is to demystify the library, making it a familiar and welcoming space for non-users and demonstrating the joy and utility of reading. By consistently engaging with the community outside the library's walls, YMA libraries can break down barriers, attract new demographics, and foster a culture where reading is viewed not as a chore, but as a valuable and enjoyable leisure activity and a tool for lifelong learning.

3. Strategic Procurement to Foster Deeper User Engagement

Resource allocation for book procurement must be strategic, driven by the goal of maximizing user engagement. A significant shift in focus is recommended towards building robust collections in three key areas: informative/reference materials, and children's literature. Firstly, investing in a comprehensive and up-to-date reference section—including encyclopedias, dictionaries, atlases, and yearbooks positions the library as a reliable information hub for students and

lifelong learners. Secondly, and most critically, is a dedicated focus on children's books. A vibrant, colorful, and regularly updated children's section is the single most effective tool for creating lifelong library users. By engaging children through attractive books, picture books, and graded readers, the library not only fosters early literacy but also indirectly engages their parents, who are more likely to visit and become users themselves. This strategic procurement ensures that the library's resources are invested in areas with the highest potential for generating sustained and meaningful interaction with the community.

4. Establishing a Permanent Identity with Independent Infrastructure and Modern Technology

The physical environment of a library profoundly impacts user perception and experience. Many YMA libraries operate out of shared or inadequate spaces, which can limit their functionality and visibility. A key long-term goal must be the establishment of independent library buildings. A dedicated structure provides the library with a permanent identity and a dignified presence within the locality, signaling its importance as a community institution. An independent building allows for the design of dedicated, noise-managed zones for silent study, children's activities, and community meetings, which is impossible in a shared space. Furthermore, this infrastructure must be complemented by the integration of modern technology. This includes reliable internet connectivity, public access computers, and equipment for audio-visual presentations and digital literacy classes. By combining a dedicated physical space with technological resources, the library transforms into a modern community learning center, equipped to serve the informational needs of the 21st century.

5. Embracing the Digital Era through Comprehensive Library Automation

To remain relevant in an increasingly technology-oriented world, YMA libraries must move beyond manual systems and embrace library automation. Implementing a Library Management System (LMS) is not merely an administrative upgrade; it is a fundamental shift towards a more efficient and

user-friendly service. Automation streamlines core operations like circulation (check-in/check-out), cataloging, and inventory management, freeing up staff time to focus on user engagement rather than tedious paperwork. More importantly, it provides immense benefits to users. An automated system, ideally with a web-based Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC), allows users to search for books from their homes, check the availability of a title, and even place holds. This transparency and convenience significantly enhance the user experience. Automation is the foundational step towards creating a technology-oriented library that meets the expectations of a generation raised on digital convenience, positioning the YMA library as a modern and forward-thinking institution.

6. Professionalizing Service through Permanent, Qualified Staff

The most sophisticated collection and technology are rendered ineffective without skilled human resources to manage and mediate them. The current reliance on volunteers, while commendable, is unsustainable for ensuring consistent, high-quality service. It is strongly recommended that each locality, perhaps through a collective of YMA branches or with local government support, prioritize the employment of at least one permanent, trained library staff member. A dedicated librarian provides continuity, institutional memory, and professional expertise. This individual would be responsible not just for clerical tasks, but for actively engaging with users, curating the collection based on community needs, planning awareness programmes, and managing automated systems. A paid, professional staff member brings a level of accountability and commitment that is difficult to replicate with a rotating volunteer base, ensuring a better outcome in serving the users and stewarding the library's resources for long-term growth.

7. Fostering a Dynamic Calendar of Events and Feedback Loops

A library should be a place of continuous activity, not just quiet solitude. To achieve this, YMA libraries must commit to organizing a regular and varied calendar of events. This includes book exhibitions to showcase the collection and generate interest, orientation programmes for new users (especially students) to teach them how to use the library effectively, and author interactions or

storytelling sessions. Furthermore, a crucial but often overlooked component of user engagement is the establishment of formal feedback services. This could be as simple as a suggestion box or as sophisticated as an annual user satisfaction survey. Actively soliciting and visibly acting upon user feedback whether for book recommendations, preferred event topics, or requests for extended hours demonstrates that the library values its users as partners. This two-way communication transforms users from passive recipients into active stakeholders, fostering a deeper sense of ownership and loyalty.

8. Securing Sustainability through Diversified and Consistent Funding

All the aforementioned recommendations are contingent upon one critical factor: financial sustainability. The current reliance on limited and sporadic funding is the single greatest threat to the long-term viability and growth of YMA libraries. A concerted and strategic effort must be made to diversify and secure funding sources. This involves aggressively pursuing more financial assistance from government bodies at the local, state, and central levels, including maximizing access to schemes from the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF). Simultaneously, libraries must cultivate relationships with local businesses for corporate social responsibility (CSR) sponsorships, launch "friend of the library" fundraising campaigns within the community, and apply for grants from charitable organizations focused on education and literacy. Moving from irregular ad-hoc funding to a model of regular, predictable income is essential for enabling the kind of long-term planning, infrastructure investment, and consistent programming required to truly transform YMA libraries into thriving community assets.

5.3. SUGGESTIONS FROM THE SCHOLAR

Based on the findings of the study, suggestions have been drawn in the following:

1. Awareness on the usefulness and its benefits must be organised more. Though it is have found that there are many library members enrolled in one library, the regular user rate is very low. This is the first step to take in order to engage users in the library.

2. Visibility on the web through social media is also mandatory for libraries so that users can know what they can access and the type of information useful for them. Updating the library contents on a regular basis will surely attract users and engaged more in the library.

3. Library housekeeping operations in this modern age must be upgraded to Integrated Library Management Systems by purchasing or adopting free software available online. As observed in the findings majority of the YMA libraries are not automated and so this is one major drawback for engaging users. Automation improves user experience, decreases human error, eliminates redundant work, and frees up staff members to concentrate on and deliver better, user-centric services.

4. In most of the libraries under study, either librarian or professional staff are hardly found. The authorities of the YMA must look into this matter in the best possible way for recruiting a proper librarian. Libraries need proper librarians because they have many skills, knowledge, and credentials that are necessary to run and handle the library well. In order to manage the library's collection, provide exceptional user services, and encourage literacy and lifelong learning in the community, a qualified librarian is necessary which will further lead to engaging users in the library.

5. Though 79 (63.20%) libraries have separate building and owned by them, the study observed that the location of majority of the libraries is unacceptable. A library's location is essential for optimizing accessibility, usage, and community effect. In addition to ensuring user convenience and lowering expenses per reader served, a central location also increases general, consistent utilization. Higher attendance rates for social, educational, and digital services are fostered by a prominent location.

6. The libraries under study require adequate funding in order to keep their staffing, technology, and collections current, guaranteeing that they continue to be useful, accessible, and sustainable community services. Libraries can promote literacy, workforce development, and fair access to information by having enough

funding to sustain vital services including digital access, instructional initiatives, and building upkeep. The funding agencies such as the YMA branch must give special interest during allocation of budget for their libraries and also grasp opportunities provided through the RRRLF matching and non-matching schemes respectively.

7. Majority of the libraries under study do not have training at all and this creates difficulty for the staff especially in engaging users. Several staff training programs are necessary for the library staff to perform library works well and meet the demands of users. Staff training programs give personnel the necessary skills and keep them up to date on the latest advancements and innovations. Staff members' dedication to work performance reflects the calibre of their training and growth. Therefore, the YMA libraries must have more staff training to attract, engage users and for better services in the library.

8. The collection of the libraries is mostly based on books and few periodicals and the number of collections is not so high based on their establishment and users seems to have declined yearly. It is suggested that even if the library budget is limited the library must purchase collection based on the user preferences. These preferences can be sort out through feedback systems or questionnaire and careful selection during acquisition can be done. This will enable users to be more engaged if their interests are met.

9. The activities and extension programs are hardly practiced among the YMA libraries based on the findings of the study. These activities and programs are important to provide services outside of the library's doors, turning it into a centre for the intellectual, cultural, and social life of the community while drawing in new users, encouraging literacy, and making the most of its resources. These initiatives, often known as outreach services and it consist of educational workshops, exhibitions, and mobile libraries. Moreover, these programmes can engage more users by practicing it once or twice in a year and for fulfilling these programmes the YMA branch of each locality is also very important as they hold the key in the development of their own libraries.

10. Best Library User Award, Orientation Programme, Essay and Quiz competition and other engaging programs are not offered much by libraries under study. Therefore, if these programmes are organized more it will help in engaging users of the library.

5.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Building on the findings of the present study, further research on user engagement is recommended, particularly focusing on students, research scholars and for the Librarians/Staffs of the Young Mizo Association (YMA) libraries in Mizoram. The following areas offer promising directions for future investigation:

i. By adopting longitudinal and mixed-methods designs that capture the dynamic and qualitative dimensions of user engagement over extended periods, it would provide deeper insights into how engagement evolves and how meaningful connections with library resources and services are formed.

ii. Further research can also be conducted by expanding the scope i.e., including the library users in the study to draw more accurate and context-specific findings related to user engagement challenges.

iii. The study can be extended to library professionals of different libraries of their practices for users' engagement.

5.5. CONCLUSION

The main objective of the study was to explore ways and means of users' engagement practices followed by YMA Libraries and hunt up their experience, problems and challenges faced. The data from the survey have shown clearly the practices and what these libraries lack for user engagement. The findings indicate that user engagement programs are not held much and the problem they face for this is because they are poorly funded from their YMA branch in the locality. Training of library staffs has not been given much and the staffs are mostly non-professional. The library users are declining year by year in most libraries and this is the reason engaging of users have become a key point as of today. In conclusion, effective user engagement is crucial for building a loyal and active

community. By understanding user needs, preferences, and behaviors, libraries can design and implement engagement strategies that meet users where they are and foster meaningful connections. Through regular feedback, user-centered design, and multi-channel engagement, libraries can create a user experience that is both personalized and inclusive. By prioritizing user engagement, libraries can drive user satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy, ultimately achieving their goals and objectives. By putting users at the forefront of their efforts, libraries can build a strong foundation for long-term success. This study can be useful for the other researchers in this area as well as the government organizations and the executives and leaders under Young Mizo Association (YMA) so that more improvements can be made in engaging users. The topic of this research has been worthy to undertake and hopes that it will pave a way for further research in the area of User Engagement.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LIBRARIAN/ STAFF

on

A Study of Users' Engagement Practices in Young Mizo Association Libraries in Aizawl District, Mizoram

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pursuing my PHD programme under the supervision of Prof. Pravakar Rath in the Department of Library and Information Science, Mizoram University . I kindly request you to fill up the questionnaire and your response will be kept confidential and used for research purpose only. Thanking you.

Vanlalfeli
Ph.D. Scholar,
Dept. of Lib. & Inf. Science,
Mizoram University, Aizawl.

The respondent is requested to put tick mark wherever applicable or provide information wherever necessary.

1. **Name of the respondent** :.....
2. **Name of the Library** :.....
3. **Year of establishment** :.....
4. **Availability and status of Librarian:**
 - (i) **Professional/Non-Professional**
Yes ☐ No ☐
 - (ii) **Permanent** ☐ **Contractual** ☐ **Voluntary** ☐
5. **Library administration and management:**
Librarian ☐ **Library Sub-committee** ☐ **Others.....**
6. **Number of library staff:**
Professional:____/ **Non-Professional:**____/ **Total:**____
7. **Library Building Ownership:**
Owned ☐ **Rented** ☐ **Free (but not owned)** ☐
8. **Source of finance:**
Branch YMA/Parent Organisation ☐ **Membership Fee** ☐

Govt. Funding ☐ RRRLF Funding ☐ MP/MLA Fund ☐

Any other source ☐

9. Number of times library opens in a Week:

One ☐ Two ☐ Three ☐ Four ☐ Five ☐ Daily ☐

10. Library timing: _____

11. Organization of Books:

Accessioning ☐

Classification ☐

Cataloguing ☐

Any other Method ☐

12. Mode of acquisition of books:

Gifts ☐ Purchase ☐ RRRLF ☐

Others.....

13. Number of library collection:

Books	Periodicals	Others

14. Number of Library Members.....

Average Daily Footfall

15. Type of visitors:

Below 20yrs ☐ 21-40yrs ☐ 41-60yrs ☐ Above 60yrs ☐

16. Library automation:

Fully Automated ☐

Partially Automated ☐

Not Automated ☐

17. What type of Library Services do you provide?

Circulation ☐

Cataloguing ☐

Reading ☐

Reference ☐

Others ☐

18. Do you feel that the library users are increasing or decreasing day by day?

Yes ☐

No ☐

19. Activities or extension programme performed by the library for user engagement at any point of time?

Yes ☐

No ☐

20. Is there any User Engagement training programme for library staff?

Yes ☐

No ☐

21. Do you manage the use of social media for library user engagement?

Yes ☐ No ☐

22. If Yes, through which platform

Facebook ☐ Instagram ☐ Twitter ☐
Whatsapp ☐ Any other ☐

23. How are the users engaged in improving the library services?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| (i) Orientation Programme | ☐ |
| (ii) Organizing Book Exhibition | ☐ |
| (iii) Essay and Quiz competition | ☐ |
| (iv) Best Volunteer Award | ☐ |
| (v) Maintaining cleanliness of the library | ☐ |
| (vi) Requesting users for gifts and donations | ☐ |
| (vii) Raising funds from different sources | ☐ |
| (viii) Users suggestions for improvement of services | ☐ |
| (ix) Feedback Survey of library services | ☐ |

24. Please highlight the problems faced which makes it difficult to engage library users.

- (i).....
- (ii).....

25. Any suggestions to engage users in the library.

- (i).....
- (ii).....

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2. **Vanlalfeli** (2025). Contribution of Government recognised Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Libraries to improve Users' Engagement practices in Aizawl City, Mizoram: A Study. *Mizoram Educational Journal*, XI(4), 75-83. <https://mizedujournal.com/images/resources/V11/Issue4/7.pdf>

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ABSTRACT
A STUDY OF USERS' ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES IN YOUNG
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DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
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**A STUDY OF USERS' ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES IN YOUNG MIZO
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1. INTRODUCTION

The term ‘engagement’ has many different implications in social, professional, and technical contexts. In its most basic form, it describes the condition of being involved, focused, or dedicated to something. Engagement has become a key psychological notion that influences human behaviour and decision-making in a variety of fields, such as marketing, education, work, and leisure.

The study of human-computer interaction is where the phrase ‘user engagement’ originated. According to Hart (2012), user engagement is a limited explanation of the user experience that focuses on evaluating the quality of the product during contact. “The emotional, cognitive, and behavioural connection that exists, at any point in time and possibly over time, between a user and a resource” is how Attfield (2011) described user engagement. However, O'Brien (2008) defines user engagement as “a quality of user experience with technology that is characterized by challenge, aesthetic and sensory appeal, feedback, novelty, interaction, perceived control and time, awareness, motivation, interest and affect.” Lehmann (2012) emphasizes the phrase ‘web application’ in order to describe user involvement. This is due to the fact that the majority of computer-based information systems in use today are web-based. Because studies have demonstrated that user engagement has a substantial impact on ongoing use, which is one of the success indicators of any computer-based information system, the idea of user engagement has grown in importance and relevance in web-based environments (Masrek, 2018).

User engagement in information science context includes active participation, feedback, and a persistent desire to utilize a service again in addition to passive information consumption. According to Brophy (2005), library services encompass all of the facilities, activities, resources, and expert support that a library institution offers to satisfy the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of its patrons. The physical provision of books, periodicals, and multimedia materials as well as digital services like online databases, electronic resource management, reference support, interlibrary loans, and community outreach initiatives are all included in the wide range of activities that make up library services. In addition to facilitating

information access, modern library services are increasingly focused on user-centred design concepts, which aim to support meaningful learning experiences, critical thinking, and lifelong learning across a variety of patron groups.

2. USER ENGAGEMENT IN LIBRARY SERVICES

The concept of user engagement in library services has undergone significant transformation over the past two decades, shaped by advances in digital technology, shifting patron demographics, and evolving institutional mandates. Traditionally, libraries measured their effectiveness through quantitative metrics such as the number of books borrowed, foot traffic, and collection size. However, contemporary scholarship increasingly recognizes that such metrics inadequately capture the quality and depth of user interaction with library resources. Meaningful engagement, as Sashi (2012) argues, is not merely transactional but relational, characterized by sustained interaction, emotional investment, and reciprocal value creation between the library and its users. In this sense, a library that merely provides access to resources without fostering active, meaningful engagement fails to realize its full potential as an institution of knowledge and community empowerment. Libraries are uniquely positioned within the information ecosystem as trusted, neutral, and publicly accessible spaces, and these characteristics provide a distinctive foundation upon which deep user engagement can be cultivated. The physical library environment, when designed thoughtfully, functions as a third place - a social setting beyond home and workplace that invites sustained interaction, intellectual exchange, and community participation. Equally, digital library platforms, when intuitive and responsive, extend this sense of engagement into virtual spaces, allowing users to interact with collections and professional librarians regardless of geographic or temporal constraints.

Additionally, the interpersonal aspects of the library experience have a significant impact on user engagement with library services. Users' overall satisfaction and likelihood of long-term engagement are significantly influenced by the calibre of reference exchanges, the staff's reaction to patron inquiries, and the provision of individualized advising support. One of the most important indicators of user satisfaction and continuing patronage, according to Radford and Connaway (2007), is

the relational competency of library personnel, which includes active listening, empathy, topic expertise, and communicative clarity.

Therefore, libraries are better positioned to cultivate the kinds of meaningful, reciprocal connections with their user communities that underlie continuous engagement when they invest in staff training, professional development, and the creation of a service-oriented organizational culture. Additionally, it is crucial to understand that user involvement in libraries is contextual by nature and differs depending on the type of institution, user demographics, and service contexts.

3. PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. It is an essential component of knowledge societies, continuously adapting to new means of communication to fulfil their mandate of providing universal access to and enabling meaningful use of information for all people. It provides publicly accessible space for the production of knowledge, sharing and exchange of information and culture, and promotion of civic engagement. (IFLA-UNESCO, 2022).

Public libraries are social institutions that provide free access to information for the general public. However, despite the presence of libraries, users' searching habits have changed throughout time. Therefore, the staff members of these libraries are crucial in establishing a clear objective to draw in more patrons. Although resources may be scarce at times, it is vital to figure out how to utilize what is presently available. Therefore, the present study has been taken up as it is necessary to look for ways to absorb library users and in order to address the issue of library users decline.

4. SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Numerous studies have been carried out on users' engagement in different fields but in case of users' engagement practices based on a public library there is lack of adequate study. So, the present study is an attempt to fill up the gap. Libraries uphold and strengthen some of the most fundamental democratic ideals of our society; they not only make information freely available to all, but also foster the development of a

society (Kranich, 2012). Among the categories of different types of libraries viz., Academic, Public, and Special libraries, the public library provide resources and services through several means to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and personal development including recreation and leisure. They have an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by giving the individual access to a wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas and opinions (IFLA, 1994). Thus, the present study covered how to engage users in the library and what practices are required by the librarians for users' engagement.

Presently in Mizoram, there are 512 government recognised NGO libraries in Mizoram. Among this, Aizawl district constitutes 160 government recognised NGO libraries in which 136 libraries are exclusively YMA (Young Mizo Association) libraries (Mizoram State Library, 2023) and have been taken up for the present study.

Table 1.1. List of YMA Libraries in Aizawl District

Sl. No.	Name of the Library	Year of establishment	Year of recognition
1	Aibawk Branch YMA Library	1992	1992-1993
2	Aizawl Tlangnuam Branch YMA Library	1999	2000-2001
3	Aizawl Venglai Branch YMA Library	1995	1996-1997
4	Armed Veng Branch YMA Library	1991	1993-1994
5	Armed Veng South Branch YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
6	Bawngkawn YMA Library	1992	1993-1994
7	Bethlehem Veng YMA Library	1989	1991-1992
8	Bethlehem Vengthlang YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
9	Buizova Memorial Library (East Phaileng YMA)	1982	1982-1983
10	Bungkawn Branch YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
11	Bungkawn Nursery YMA Library	2012	2013-2014
12	Bungkawn Vengthar YMA Library	2005	2009-2010
13	C.T.I Branch YMA Library	1993	1994-1995
14	Chaltlang Branch YMA Library	1986	1991-1993
15	Chaltlang Lily Veng YMA Library	2010	2009-2010
16	Chamring Branch YMA Library	1999	2000-2001
17	Chanmari YMA Library	1987	1987-1988
18	Chawlhmun Branch YMA Library	1981	1982-1983

19	Chawnpui YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
20	Chhimveng Branch YMA Library, Sakawrdai	1995	1999-2000
21	Chhinga Veng YMA Library	1981	1981-1982
22	Chite Veng YMA Library	1996	1998-1999
23	College Veng YMA Library	1993	1993-1994
24	Dam Veng YMA Library	1985	1996-1997
25	Darlawn Chhim Veng YMA Branch Library	1989	1995-1996
26	Darlawn Venghlun Branch YMA Library	1989	1995-1996
27	Darlawn Vengpui YMA Library	1994	1995-1996
28	Darlawng Branch YMA Public Library	2008	2009-2010
29	Dawrpui Vengthar Branch YMA Library	1975	1991-1992
30	Dinthar YMA Library	1997	1991-1992
31	Durtlang North Branch YMA Library	1995	1996-1997
32	Durtlang YMA Library	2001	2004-2005
33	Electric Veng YMA Library	1979	1981-1982
34	Falkawn YMA Library	1995	1995-1996
35	Falkland Branch YMA Library	2011	2017-2018
36	Gate Veng Branch YMA Library Tlungvel	1995	1996-1997
37	Govt. Complex YMA Library	1987	1987-1988
38	Hmuifang Branch YMA Library	1988	1991-1992
39	Hmunghak Branch YMA Library	1996	1996-1997
40	Hospital Area Branch YMA Library, Thingsulthiah	2001	2001-2002
41	Hualngohmun YMA Branch Library	1985	1986-1987
42	Hunthar Branch YMA Library	1995	1996-1997
43	ITI Veng YMA Library	1988	1996-1997
44	Kanan YMA Library	1992	1992-1993
45	Kelsih Branch YMA Library	1998	2002-2003
46	Kepran YMA Library	1975	200-2001
47	Khatla South YMA Library	1999	1999-2000
48	Khatla YMA Library	1983	1984-1985
49	Khawpuar YMA Library	2000	2001-2002
50	Khawruhlian Branch YMA Library	1991	1992-1993
51	Khawruhlian Vengthar YMA Library	2000	2000-2001
52	Kulikawn YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
53	Laipuitlang YMA Library	1996	1996-1997
54	Lawipu Branch YMA library	2000	2014-2015

55	Leitan YMA Library, Durtlang	2000	2000-2001
56	Luangmual YMA Library	1986	1993-1994
57	Lungleng I Branch YMA Library	1994	1996-1997
58	Lungsum Branch YMA Library	2009	2009-2010
59	Maubawk YMA Library	2010	2013-2014
60	Maubuang Branch YMA Library	1993	1993-1994
61	Mauchar YMA Library	2000	2001-2002
62	Melriat YMA Library	2005	2007-2008
63	Melthum Branch YMA Library	1998	1998-1999
64	Mission Veng North Branch YMA Library	1985	1996-1997
65	Model Mission Veng YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
66	Muallungthu YMA Library	1989	1991-1992
67	Muthi YMA Library	1994	1998-1999
68	N. Lungleng YMA Library	1997`	1998-1999
69	N. Serzawl Branch YMA Library	1995	1995-1996
70	Nausel YMA Library	1999	1999-2000
71	New Capital Branch YMA Library	2018	2018-2019
72	New Vervek YMA Library	1990	1991-1992
73	Pehlawn Branch YMA Library	1986	1992-1993
74	Phulmawi YMA Library	2000	2000-2001
75	Phulpui YMA Library	1987	1988-1989
76	Ramhlun North YMA Library	1997	1997-1998
77	Ramhlun South Branch YMA Library	1991	1993-1994
78	Ramhlun Sport Complex Branch YMA Library	1996	2002-2003
79	Ramhlun Vengthar YMA Library	1993	1993-1994
80	Ramthar North Branch YMA Library	1998	2020-2021
81	Ramthar Veng YMA Library	1988	1988-1989
82	Rangvamual YMA Library	1996	1996-1997
83	Ratu Branch YMA Library	1994	1995-1996
84	Republic Veng YMA Library	1995	1996-1997
85	Republic Vengthlang YMA Library	1995	2010-2011
86	Saikhamakawn YMA Library	1999	1999-2000
87	Sailam Branch YMA Library	1990	1993-1994
88	Sailutar Branch YMA Library	1991	1992-1993
89	Sairang Dinthar YMA Library	1997	1997-1998
90	Sairang YMA Library	1980	1982-1983
91	Sakawrtuichhun Branch YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
92	Salem Veng YMA Library	1995	1995-1996
93	Samlukhai Branch YMA Library	1975	1995-1996
94	Samtlang Branch YMA Library	1996	1996-1997
95	Saron Veng YMA Library	1992	1996-1997

96	Sateek Branch YMA Library	1988	1988-1989
97	Sawleng Branch YMA Library	1985	1988-1989
98	Selesih YMA Library	1987	1987-1988
99	Seling Branch YMA Library	2012	1988-1989
100	Sesawng Branch YMA Library	2000	2000-2001
101	Sialsuk South Branch YMA Library	1990	1988-1989
102	Sihhmui YMA Library	2013	2013-2014
103	Sihphir Br. YMA Library	1991	1991-1992
104	Sihphir Venghlun Branch YMA Library	1999	1999-2000
105	Sumsuih Branch YMA Library	2014	2017-2018
106	Tachhip Branch YMA Library	1991	1993-1994
107	Tanhrlil Vengthar Branch YMA Library	2014	2017-2018
108	Tanhrlil YMA Library	2000	2000-2001
109	Thakthing YMA Library	1995	1997-1998
110	Thalai Hmasawn Pawl Library, Mission Vengthlang	1972	1981-1982
111	Thiak Branch YMA Library	2001	2001-2002
112	Thingsul Tlangnuam Branch YMA Library	1977	1988-1989
113	Thingsulthliah Joint YMA Library	2005	2007-2008
114	Thuampui Veng YMA Library	1995	1996-1997
115	Tinghmun Branch YMA Library	1980	1981-1982
116	Tlangnuam Vengthar Branch YMA library	2015	2015-2016
117	Tlungvel Field Veng Branch YMA Library	2000	2000-2001
118	Tlungvel Gate Veng YMA Library	1996	1996-1997
119	Tlungvel Venghlun Branch YMA Library	1992	1994-1995
120	Tuikhuahtlang YMA Library	2000	2000-2001
121	Tuikual North YMA Library	1996	1996-1997
122	Tuikual South YMA Library	1995	1996-1997
123	Tuithiang Veng YMA Library	1993	1981-1982
124	Upper Republic Veng YMA Library	1997	1997-1998
125	Vaitin Branch YMA Library	1997	1997-1998
126	Vaivakawn Branch YMA Library	1989	1991-1992
127	Venghlui YMA Library	1988	1996-1997
128	Venghnuai Branch YMA Library	1991	1992-1993
129	Vengthar Branch YMA Library, Tlungvel	2001	2002-2003
130	YMA Central Jail Veng Library	2017	2020-2021
131	Zarkawt YMA Library	1996	1996-1997
132	Zemabawk North YMA Library	1997	1997-1998

133	Zemabawk YMA Library	1979	1981-1982
134	Zohmun YMA Library	1991	1993-1994
135	Zotlang YMA Library	1995	1996-1997
136	Zuangtui YMA Library	1994	1996-1997

Source: Mizoram State Library, Department of Art & Culture, Government of Mizoram (2023)

5. RESEARCH DESIGN

5.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Studies for public libraries has been found through literature survey and these studies highlights that there are less users' year by year but these conclusions are solely based on the services and resources the libraries have provided. Declination of users' problem can be solved by preparing a model framework for user engagement. Furthermore, Public libraries are a community agency providing access at local level to a range of knowledge and information for the benefit of the individual and society as a whole. So, need arises to study the knowledge and information provided by librarians/library-in-charge of the YMA libraries of Aizawl district through their engagement practices as well as the problems which leads to the current status of their libraries and to suggest measures . From the LIS perspective, there have been few researches so far, based on user engagement practices and it was necessary to conduct this study and the results will be useful for professionals as well as the society in the context of Aizawl and Mizoram as well. All these reasons have prompted and motivated the scholar to take up this research problem.

5.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The prime objective of the present study is to trace out the users' engagement practices of YMA libraries in Aizawl. The specific objectives of the study are to

1. Explore ways and means of users' engagement practices followed by YMA libraries under study;
2. Study the experiences, problems and challenges faced by libraries in users' engagement practices in libraries under study;

3. Suggest strategies for the improvement of users' engagement in libraries under study; and
4. Propose a model framework to improve users' engagement practices for libraries.

5.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study attempts to understand the practices for users' engagement in YMA libraries of Aizawl District from Library Science perspective. The study is descriptive in design and cross sectional in nature. The primary data is collected through field survey with interview, observation and questionnaire methods from the librarians/library-in-charge of the YMA libraries in Aizawl District. A census sampling procedure is used for the study. At present, Mizoram has 512 government recognised NGO libraries. Aizawl district constitutes 160 government recognised NGO libraries in which 136 libraries are exclusively YMA (Young Mizo Association) libraries which is taken up for the present study. The primary data collected through field survey is processed with computer packages of MS excel. The secondary data is also collected through information sources such as books, articles, journals and online resources. The citation and references is based on the latest edition of American Psychological Association (APA).

6. FINDINGS

This section discusses the findings regarding the user's engagement practices by Young Mizo Association (YMA) libraries of Aizawl District. Data were collected from all Young Mizo Association (YMA) libraries of Aizawl District. The chapter concludes with practical suggestions for improving the engagement practices for users by the libraries.

Before conducting this study, a total of four objectives were defined. The findings for each objective are discussed below:

Objective 1: Explore ways and means of users' engagement practices followed by YMA libraries under study.

- i. The majority of libraries 120 (96%) provide circulation services; 86 (68.80%) offer reading services; 4 (3.20%) offer reference services; and 3 (2.40%) offer cataloguing services. Nine (7.20%) libraries provide other types of library services. It is clear that in order to engage users, libraries need to put in more effort to improve their services.
- ii. 72 (57.60%) libraries report a daily decline in users, while 43 (34.40%) report a daily gain in users. This indicates that libraries must make significant improvements to better engage users and prevent future usage declines.
- iii. 14 libraries (11.20%) have implemented activities or extension programs, while majority 111 libraries (88.80%) do not have any user engagement activities. Given that activities and extension programs serve as sources of user attractiveness, this suggests that user engagement cannot be high.
- iv. While 21 (16.80%) libraries do not use social media for user interaction, 104 (83.20%) libraries stated that they do, indicating that an important step for user engagement has been practiced. (Table 4.13). Majority 104 (83.20%), of the libraries use WhatsApp, while 85 (68.00%) use Facebook and 5 (4.00%) use Instagram. Four libraries (3.20 percent) use other forms of social media.
- v. 25 (20.00%) have conducted Orientation Programme, Feedback Survey of library services is led by 18 (14.40%) and requesting users for gifts and donations are done by 16 (12.80%) libraries. Organizing Book Exhibition, Best Library User Award and raising funds from different sources are done by 3 (2.40%) libraries respectively. Essay and Quiz competition and Users suggestions for improvement of services are done by 2 (1.31%) libraries. This proves that though efforts have been given by some libraries there is still a need to practice the engaging activities for most libraries.

Objective 2: Study the experiences, problems and challenges faced by libraries in users' engagement practices of libraries under study.

- i. 3 (2.40%) libraries have Professional Librarian and 4 (3.20%) libraries have Non-Professional Librarian. The remaining 118 (94.40%) YMA libraries do not have proper librarian (Table. 4.19). The Librarian under Contractual are 2(1.60%) and Voluntary are 5 (4.00%). Even with the low rate of proper librarian, the YMA Libraries having

librarian are not having permanent librarian which is insignificant for the wellbeing of the libraries.

ii. Majority of the YMA libraries i.e, 115 (98.68%) are run by Library Sub-Committee. It is observed that almost all libraries need a proper librarian for the administration and management of the libraries. It is observed that the libraries have 37 (1.14%) Professional library staff while 3212 (98.86%) are Non-Professional library staff. It has resulted to this because YMA libraries are based on voluntary state and mostly the library staffs are from the locality itself and therefore the Non-Professional library staff has come in large number.

iii. Among the YMA libraries, 79 (63.20%) libraries are owned and have a separate library building, while 42 (33.60%) libraries are located in a building free of cost but they do not own it while 4 (3.20%) libraries are on rented building.

iv. 78 (62.40%) libraries receive funding from the branch YMA/parent organization. 63 libraries (50.40%) collect membership registration fees, 12 libraries (9.60%) receive government financing, 49 libraries (39.20%) receive RRRLF support, and 13 libraries (10.40%) receive MP/MLA Fund. In summary, further financing from RRRLF and funding from the Branch YMA/Parent Organization are urgently needed for the library's upkeep and appropriate operation as they are directly linked with the management and administration of the libraries.

v. Among the YMA Libraries, 70 (56.00%) libraries remain opened once a week and 32 (25.60%) libraries are opened twice in a week. Moreover, 11 (8.80%) libraries are opened thrice a week and 4 (3.20%) are opened five times a week. There are no libraries opened four times a week and daily respectively. The study found that libraries are opened very few within a week. In relation to this, the opening days have been studied and found that Friday and Saturday have particularly increased in number because the libraries are open multiple times a week. This is due to the fact that weekends draw more users, which should be considered for user engagement.

vi. It has been noted that of the YMA libraries, 120 (96.00%) complete accessioning, whereas 41 (33.60%) complete classification. Five libraries (4.00%) prepare catalogues, whereas four libraries (3.20%) use different methods. The methods used

to manage library resources are crucial for improving user engagement since they can lead to better usage of the resources.

vii. 69 (55.20%) libraries purchase books, whereas 93 (74.40%) and 81 (64.80%) libraries obtain books through gifts and RRRLF, respectively. No library uses any other method of acquisition.

viii. The highest number of library member is found in Vaivakawn YMA library with 1284 library members, followed by 6 libraries ranging between 500-1000 library members, 114 libraries have members ranging below 500 while 4 libraries do not have any member at all due to ongoing construction of library building and some prefer not to have separate library member and consider anyone among the locality to access and utilise the library. The library having the highest average daily footfall are 4 libraries with 4 members. 3 libraries have average daily footfall of 3 members while 118 libraries have only 1-2 member in average. This shows that even in libraries having high library members the library is not visited regularly by the members.

ix. The Chanmari Branch YMA Library and Republic Vengthlang YMA Library are the two YMA libraries with the most collections (more than 10,000). 117 libraries have book collections under 5000, whereas 26 libraries have collections between 5000 and 10,000. Additionally, 46 libraries lack any type of periodicals, whilst Chawlhmun Branch YMA Library has the most i.e, 8 periodicals.

x. The majority of YMA library users are between the ages of 21 and 40 (96, or 76.80%), followed by those under the age of 20 (73, or 58.40%). Additionally, those between the ages of 41 and 60 frequent 26 (20.80%) libraries, while people 60 and older attend 12 (9.60%) libraries. It is evident from this table that youth and adults are more inclined to visit libraries.

xi. 13 (10.40%) libraries are partially automated, and 5 (4.00%) are entirely automated. It is unfortunate that the bulk of the 107 libraries (85.60%) have not started automation. If specific actions can be performed to automate libraries, users will be more engaged because it is one kind of user attraction.

xii. Only a small number of libraries i.e, 36 (28.80%) have training programme for library staff while most of the libraries 89 (71.20%) do not have at all for engaging users.

xiii. The main problems with user engagement in the libraries under study have been analysed and found that shortage of qualified librarians and staff are faced by 118 (94.40%) libraries, less media visibility for user engagement 115 (92.00%) libraries, less extension services by 111 (88.80%) libraries. Staff training requirements by 107 (85.60%) libraries, limited access to technology and internet by 97 (77.60%) libraries, 88 (70.40%) libraries have problem with inadequate funding, outdated and inadequate library collections are faced by 83 (66.40%) libraries, poor facilities and equipment by 78 (62.40%) libraries and location of library building by 75 (60.00%) libraries.

Objective 3: Suggest strategies for the improvement of users' engagement in libraries under study.

Based on the analysis and findings, the following strategies have been suggested for improving the Young Mizo Association (YMA) Libraries under study on user's engagement.

1. Understanding User Needs: To effectively maximize library services that will engage users, a thorough grasp of their requirements and preferences is necessary. By taking this crucial step, libraries may better adapt their services to the requirements of their communities and respond to shifting demands. One of the best methods for identifying user needs is to conduct a systematic needs assessment. User feedback analysis by giving out questionnaires and to library users, libraries can gather vital data in a number of ways. This allows for a direct discussion of patron experiences, preferences, and possible areas for development. These technologies can gather qualitative input, like suggestions for new goods or services, as well as quantitative data, like satisfaction ratings.

2. Improving Accessibility: Enhancements in accessibility guarantee that library services are inclusive and available to all members of the community. Make that the library's amenities meet accessibility standards, including accessible restrooms, elevators, and ramps. A friendly atmosphere is also enhanced by areas that are well-lit

and have clear signage. Add assistive tools, including screen readers and speech recognition software, to websites and catalogues to encourage digital accessibility. Make sure that people with impairments may access all digital content. Provide resources and programs that are inclusive to poor groups, non-native speakers, and those with disabilities. Providing resources in several languages and providing sign language interpretation are two instances of inclusive practices.

3. Optimizing digital resources and tools: The study recommends having a strong social media presence in order to interact with users, advertise library services, and foster a feeling of community. For the purpose of supporting users' research and leisure needs, the library must offer online resources such e-books, online databases, and streaming services. Author discussions and online book clubs are also recommended as ways to interact with users and give them access to library resources.

4. Leveraging technology to boost efficiency: Libraries may increase service delivery and streamline operations by embracing technology. Automate inventory management, circulation, and categorization to boost productivity and cut down on manual labor. Automated book returns and self-checkout kiosks allow staff to provide more individualized service while speeding up transactions. Libraries may improve their services, increase productivity, and better meet the needs of their patrons by using technology developments. Adopting technology not only modernizes library operations but also provides innovative approaches to improve user engagement and enjoyment in an increasingly digital world.

5. Provide training to library staff for user engagement : In this day and age, it is essential to regularly train staff members on customer service best practices, including communication, dispute resolution, and new technologies. Ensuring that staff members are informed and amiable results in a satisfying user experience which leads to user engagement in the libraries.

6. Organizing Programs and Events based on Community-led Activities: Libraries that offer participatory programs attract and keep users. Seminars, local talent displays, cultural events, skill-sharing workshops, and sustainability projects are all engaging experiences that can cater to a variety of interests and foster community involvement.

These gatherings provide chances for social contact and intellectual exchange, strengthen communities, and address local issues by encouraging mutual support and shared learning. In order to get input and establish connections with the community, libraries can also engage in outreach programs, work with neighbourhood associations, and take part in events.

7. Establishing a Reward System (Giannaros et al., 2020): Monthly challenges that provide special benefits to customers who visit the library more frequently can be used to measure usage and identify the most active users who may be eligible for special awards like gift cards, special access, discounts on value-added services, etc. By spreading the word about the incentive program via newsletters, social media, and library posters and gathering user feedback so that awards can be changed and the program can be enhanced to better meet the needs of the users. This will be helpful in showing how reward schemes evolve in connection with community involvement and greater library use. The program's accomplishments will be emphasized to serve as a foundation for any upcoming financing and further growth. This is one important strategy that will assist attract and engage library users for a vibrant library community.

By focusing on these strategies, libraries can improve the relevance and responsiveness of their services to the requirements of their users by concentrating on these strategies. An ideal library that adapts to the changing needs of its community must embrace digital integration, provide innovative programming, enhance accessibility, and deliver first-rate customer service.

Objective 4: Propose a model framework to improve users' engagement practices for YMA libraries under study.

A model framework has been proposed Figure 1 which is crucial for YMA libraries under study, as it highlights the key steps to enhance user engagement. These steps provide a clear roadmap for libraries to follow in order to improve user engagement and ensure the successful integration of the process into their services. The continuous process of user engagement requires proper surveillance and maintenance, and the framework provides a guide for libraries to successfully increase user engagement. By

using the attributes in the framework, libraries can effectively nurture user engagement.

Let us look in detail of the framework.

1. The source: In this model, the Young Mizo Association libraries are the main source where user engagement practice is to be improved.

2. Library Collection: As observed in the findings, the library collections are still very few based on their library establishment years, periodicals subscription is very less and there are no libraries which are acquainted with electronic resources. So, the study finds it to be crucial to include in the framework for the YMA libraries as the type of collection can be a turning point in engaging users.

3. Library services: By keeping in mind the weaknesses of library services provided by the YMA libraries under study, the framework highlights a larger area in library services. Circulation, Cataloguing, Reference, Reading, Information & Digital Services which includes Current Awareness Services (CAS) & Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), Internet/Wi-Fi, Document Delivery which comprises photocopying, printing, scanning, and interlibrary loans (ILL). Though some libraries have practiced library services like circulation services, the other services are not much found in the study. Therefore, all these library services have been included for improvement of user engagement practice as they are not yet available in majority of the libraries under study.

4. Implementation/Adoption: In order to engage users, the following points are included in the framework

a) Recognizing library users' needs: A step crucial for engaging library user is to know the need, purpose and how they will receive and gather the information they needed.

b) Library Staff Training: The study finds that majority of the libraries have never trained especially in case of user engagement. A trained staff will be able to identify the needs and meet the demands of users which will further lead to the engagement of the user.

c) Community building: Foster a sense of community among users through events, programs, and activities.

d) Multi-channel Engagement: Engage users through multiple channels, including physical spaces, digital platforms, and outreach programs.

e) Feedback Mechanisms: Establish feedback mechanisms to gather user input and improve services.

f) Partnerships and Collaborations: Collaborate with other organizations and stakeholders to expand library services and reach.

g) Government Policy: To guarantee financial stability, create state-level committees, and specify the roles of the central and state governments, the government passes public library acts. Policies encourage collaboration between libraries, schools, and community centers to optimize resources and support the implementation of contemporary ICT (Information and Communication Technology), such as computerization, internet connectivity, and electronic resource development in public libraries.

h) YMA Policy: YMA decided in 1987 that "All Branch YMAs should establish libraries in their localities" because they recognized the value of libraries in delivering both formal and informal education.

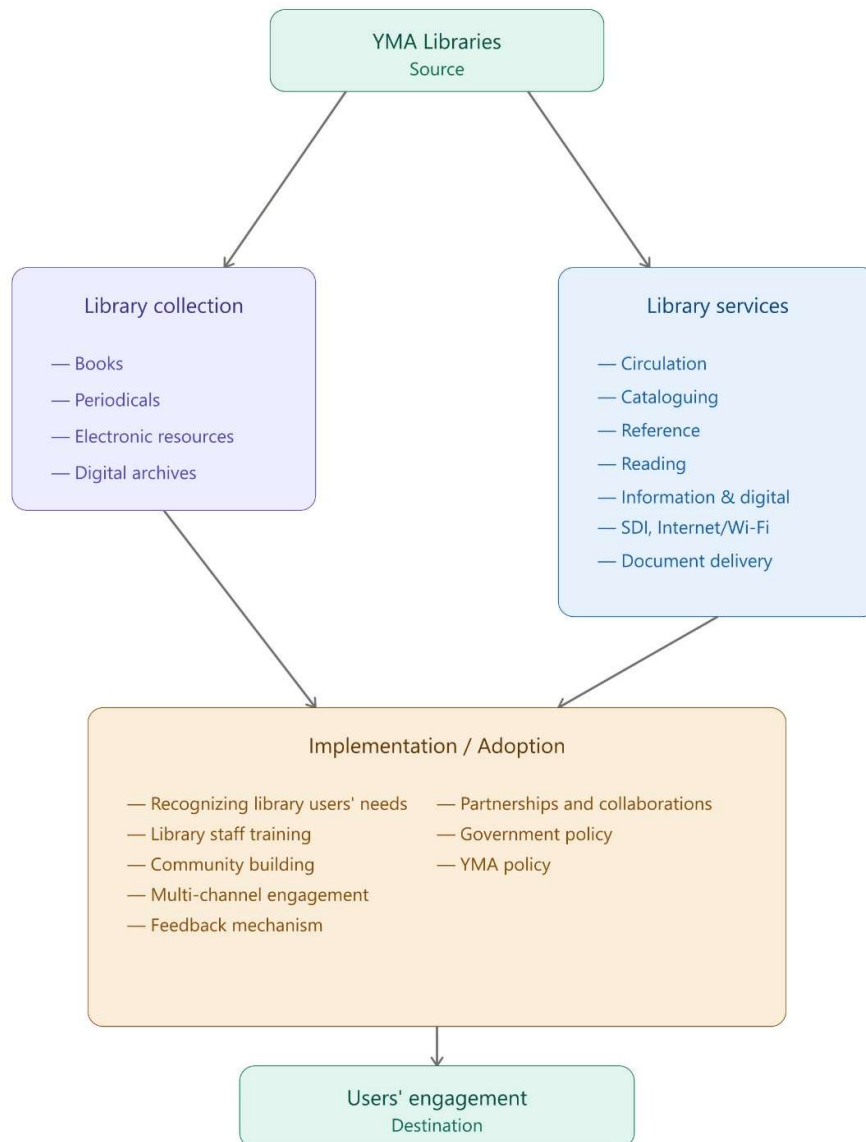


Fig. 4.1. A model framework proposed to improve users' engagement practices

7. CONCLUSION

The user engagement practices of the Young Mizo Association (YMA) libraries were systematically determined through the comprehensive data gathered during this study. The process of analyzing the collected raw data and interpreting the findings in alignment with the study's objectives served as more than mere

academic inquiry; it constituted a purposeful journey toward developing a workable and contextually relevant solution for the critical issue of low user engagement that prompted this investigation. Each stage of analysis from the initial organization of survey responses to the nuanced interpretation of engagement patterns across different demographic groups revealed deeper insights into the current state of these community-managed institutions. The findings illuminated not only the existing practices but also the significant gaps that hinder meaningful interaction between the libraries and their potential users. Upon completing the data analysis, it became unequivocally clear that additional, concerted effort will be required by the libraries in question to transform their current operational models and attract a broader base of users. This necessary work encompasses a range of strategic interventions: modernizing collections to reflect contemporary reading interests, adopting technology to streamline services, training staff or volunteers in proactive user engagement techniques, and repositioning the library within the community as a dynamic hub for learning and interaction rather than merely a repository of books. The study thus concludes that while the foundational structures of YMA libraries are sound, their future relevance and sustainability will depend entirely on the deliberate and sustained implementation of the improvements identified through this analytical journey. Following data analysis and graphical representation, the results are provided in accordance with objectives of the study.

Based on the data analysis and findings, the next Chapter will provide suggestion and conclusion of the entire study as well as future research directions.

8. SUGGESTIONS

1. Awareness on the usefulness and benefits of libraries must be organised more.
2. Visibility on the web through social media is also mandatory for libraries so that users can know what they can access and the type of information useful for them.
3. Library housekeeping operations in this modern age must be upgraded to Integrated Library Management Systems by purchasing or adopting free software available online.

4. In most of the libraries under study, either librarian or professional staff are hardly found and must recruit a proper librarian.
5. Though 79 (63.20%) libraries have separate building and owned by them, the study observed that the location of majority of the libraries is unacceptable. A library's location is essential for optimizing accessibility, usage, and community effect and a central location increases general, consistent utilization.
6. The libraries under study require adequate funding in order to keep their staffing, technology, and collections current, guaranteeing that they continue to be useful, accessible, and sustainable community services.
7. Staff members' dedication to work performance reflects the calibre of their training and growth and so the YMA libraries must have more staff training to attract, engage users and for better services in the library.
8. It is suggested that even if the library budget is limited the library must purchase collection based on the user preferences.
9. The activities and extension programs are important to provide services outside of the library's doors, turning it into a centre for the intellectual, cultural, and social life of the community while drawing in new users, encouraging literacy, and making the most of its resources.
10. Best Library User Award, Orientation Programme, Essay and Quiz competition and other engaging programs are not offered much by libraries under study. Therefore, if these programmes are organized more it will help in engaging users of the library.

9. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Building on the findings of the present study, further research on user engagement is recommended, particularly focusing on students, research scholars and for the Librarians/Staffs of the Young Mizo Association (YMA) libraries in Mizoram. The following areas offer promising directions for future investigation:

- i. By adopting longitudinal and mixed-methods designs that capture the dynamic and qualitative dimensions of user engagement over extended periods, it

would provide deeper insights into how engagement evolves and how meaningful connections with library resources and services are formed.

ii. Further research can also be conducted by expanding the scope i.e., including the library users in the study to draw more accurate and context-specific findings related to user engagement challenges.

iii. The study can be extended to library professionals of different libraries of their practices for users' engagement.