

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF EVENING STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH LIBRARY SERVICES AT VIKAS COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates user satisfaction and operational efficiency at the Vikas College library, focusing specifically on the distinct requirements of evening session students within the framework of modern hybrid learning and digital transformation. Utilizing a quantitative research design, empirical survey data were collected from a sample of 118 active library users. The questionnaire assessed demographic profiles, physical usage patterns, digital service adoption, service quality parameters, and structural barriers to access. The study exposes a critical scheduling paradox for evening learners and underscores the necessity of moving beyond passive e-resource awareness toward active information literacy. The paper concludes that a user-centric approach—supported by administrative flexibility, targeted digital skill workshops, and optimised remote authentication systems—is essential to successfully transition the facility into an inclusive, hybrid knowledge ecosystem.

Keywords: *User Satisfaction, Library Services, Evening Session Students, Academic Libraries, Information Access, Night College Library Services, Vikas College, Hybrid Library.*

1. Introduction

Libraries have traditionally been regarded as the heart of academic institutions, playing a vital role in the dissemination of knowledge and the promotion of intellectual growth. With the evolution of information technology, the role of libraries has expanded from being mere repositories of books to dynamic information centers offering both print and digital resources.

In the context of higher education, user satisfaction has emerged as a critical indicator of library performance. A user-centric approach is essential to ensure that library services meet the expectations of diverse groups of learners. Among these, evening session students represent a unique category. These students often juggle academic responsibilities with professional or personal commitments, making their interaction with library services different from that of regular day scholars.

Vikas College caters to a large number of evening session students across various disciplines. Despite the availability of library resources, it is essential to evaluate whether these services effectively address the needs of evening learners. This study aims to bridge that gap by assessing the level of satisfaction

among evening students and identifying areas for improvement.

1.1 About Vikas College:

Vikas College of Arts, Science and Commerce, located in Vikhroli (East), Mumbai, was established in 1986 under the aegis of the Vidya Vikas Education Society. The institution was founded with the vision of providing quality higher education to the underprivileged classes.

College has evolved into a multidisciplinary institution offering undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Arts, Science, and Commerce streams. The college is affiliated with the University of Mumbai. The campus is equipped with modern infrastructure and facilities, including well-equipped laboratories, a library, an auditorium, an audio-visual Centre, IT-enabled classrooms, a gymkhana, and a canteen. The distinctive feature of the College is its provision for both day and evening (night) sessions, catering to students who pursue education alongside employment or other responsibilities. The evening section plays a crucial role in providing flexible learning opportunities and access to higher education for working students.

The college library serves as a central hub for academic resources, offering a wide collection of books, journals, reference materials, and

digital resources. It plays a vital role in supporting teaching, learning, and research activities for both day and evening students.

With its commitment to inclusivity, accessibility, and continuous improvement, Vikas College continues to contribute significantly to the educational landscape of Mumbai.

1.2 College Library

The library of Vikas College of Arts, Science and Commerce serves as a central academic resource hub, supporting the teaching, learning, and research needs of students and faculty. The library houses a rich collection of more than **20,000 books**, covering a wide range of subjects across Arts, Science, and Commerce streams.

In addition, the library subscribes to 68 magazines and journals and provides access to 18 newspapers, ensuring that students remain updated with current affairs and developments. To support digital learning, the library also offers access to the NLIST (National Library and Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content) online database, enabling users to access a vast collection of e-books and e-journals.

The library is managed by a qualified librarian, supported by three library attendants, ensuring efficient functioning and user assistance. It provides a comfortable and well-maintained study environment with a seating capacity of 100 students in the reading area and a separate reading room for teachers with a capacity of 10.

The library is well-organised with dedicated sections for circulation, reference, and reading, offering a quiet and conducive environment for study. It caters to both day and evening session students and plays a vital role in fostering reading habits, independent learning, and academic excellence.

2. Review of Literature

- Ranganathan (1931) revolutionised the field by introducing the Five Laws of Library Science, establishing that libraries must be fundamentally user-oriented, dynamic, and continuously evolving organisms designed to save the time of the reader.
- Parasuraman et al. (1988) developed the SERVQUAL instrument to evaluate service quality across five key human and physical dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.
- The Emergence of LibQUAL+: Recognising that generic commercial tools did not fully capture the academic research environment, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) adapted these principles into LibQUAL+.
- Hernon and Altman (1998) argued that service quality gaps often open or close based on human resource interactions. Their research proved that the helpfulness, approachability, and professional competence of front-line library staff are primary determinants of institutional loyalty and user satisfaction. This was supported by Andaleeb and Simmonds (1998), whose empirical testing in academic libraries revealed that user satisfaction depends heavily on the demeanour and responsiveness of library personnel, sometimes even overshadowing the physical volume of resources immediately available.
- Physical comfort and layout were historically proven to dictate library usage rates. Standard library management literature from this era (Kumar, 2010) maintained that an academic library must maintain highly organised collections, adequate seating comfort, and a quiet, conducive physical layout to ensure student retention within the facility.
- Clough and Sanderson (1998) explored the direct operational link between library operating hours and facility utility. Their research highlighted that static, conventional operating schedules often created artificial barriers for specialised student demographics whose primary classroom hours fell outside standard daylight operations.
- Academic libraries historically struggled to equitably serve students who balanced employment with higher education. Focus studies during this era (Lowe, 2001) pointed out that evening session learners suffer from extreme "time poverty." Because these students generally arrive on

campus only after conventional business hours, they routinely faced reduced service levels, restricted circulation desk operations, and minimal reference support compared to their daytime peers.

- Research by Hippo and Kuh (2003) demonstrated that non-traditional and evening students rely much more intensely on independent study environments. Because their schedules are heavily constrained by professional obligations during the day, these learners require administrative flexibility—specifically, extended evening hours and weekend access—to successfully meet their curriculum demands.
- The academic libraries began integrating initial digital catalogues, automated circulation tools, and early electronic resource packages; early-stage adoption barriers became visible. Massis (2003) noted that while electronic resources offered a potential lifeline for off-campus and evening learners, early implementation suffered heavily from a lack of user awareness, inadequate remote authentication gateways, and a lack of technical navigation skills among mature or part-time student cohorts.

Despite these studies, limited research has been conducted specifically on evening session students, especially in the context of Indian colleges. This study aims to contribute to this area by focusing on Vikas College.

3. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:

- To assess the level of satisfaction of evening session students with library services
- To evaluate the availability and adequacy of library resources
- To examine the suitability of library timings for evening learners
- To analyze the effectiveness of digital library services
- To identify challenges faced by evening students in accessing library facilities
- To suggest measures for improving library services

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design aimed at understanding the satisfaction level of evening session students.

4.2 Data Collection

- Primary Data: Collected through a structured questionnaire distributed among evening session students physically.
- Secondary Data: Collected from books, journals, research papers, and online sources

4.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample of 118 evening session students was selected using simple random sampling.

4.4 Tools for Data Analysis

Data was analysed using percentage analysis and presented through tables and charts for better interpretation.

4.5 Limitations of the Study

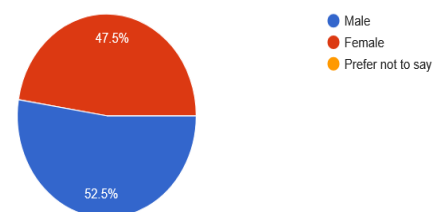
- The study is limited to Vikas College only
- Sample size is relatively small
- Responses are based on individual perceptions and may vary
- Time constraints limited deeper statistical analysis

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Gender Distribution:

Gender:

118 responses



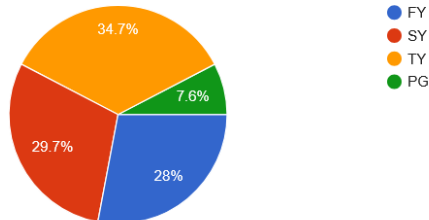
The above chart reveals that participants' gender-wise data was collected and analysed. A total of 118 valid responses were recorded. As illustrated in the above figure, the sample exhibits a relatively balanced gender distribution with a marginal variance.

Out of the total respondents, 52.5% ($n = 62$) identified as male, representing the slight majority of the sample. Female respondents constituted 47.5% ($n = 56$) of the total population. Although the survey provided a "Prefer not to say" option to accommodate

privacy and inclusivity, it recorded a 0% response rate, indicating complete disclosure among the participants. The narrow 5.0% difference between the two primary groups ensures an equitable representation of genders, thereby minimising potential gender-specific bias in the subsequent analytical findings.

Class

118 responses



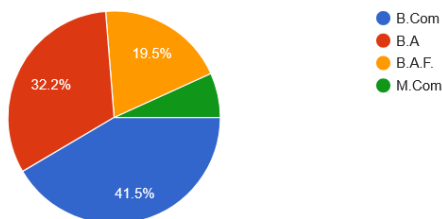
In all categories, Third Year (TY) students formed the highest proportion of respondents, contributing 34.7% of the total responses. This indicates that TY students showed the greatest level of participation and involvement in the survey. Second Year (SY) students accounted for 29.7% of the responses, while First Year (FY) students contributed 28%, showing that participation among FY and SY students was comparatively balanced.

On the other hand, Postgraduate (PG) students represented only 7.6% of the total responses, making them the least represented group in the survey. This comparatively lower percentage suggests limited participation from postgraduate students.

Overall, the chart indicates that the majority of responses were collected from undergraduate students, especially those in the Third-Year category. The data reflects a fairly balanced contribution among FY, SY, and TY students, whereas PG student participation remained significantly lower.

Programme (Course)

118 responses

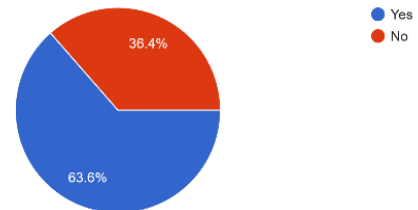


The pie chart shows the programme-wise distribution of 118 respondents. Among all programmes, B.Com students contributed the

highest number of responses with 41.5%, followed by B.A student at 32.2%. B.A.F students accounted for 19.5% of the responses, while M.Com students formed the smallest group. Overall, the majority of respondents belonged to undergraduate commerce programmes, especially B.Com.

Are you a working student?

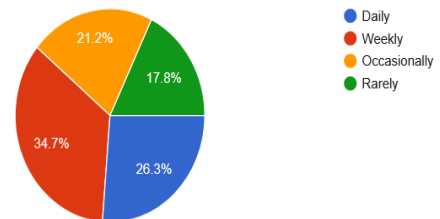
118 responses



The above chart reveals the distribution of working and non-working students among the respondents. It shows that 63.6% of the students are working while pursuing their studies, whereas 36.4% are non-working students. This indicates that a majority of the respondents are balancing both education and employment simultaneously.

Frequency of Library Visit

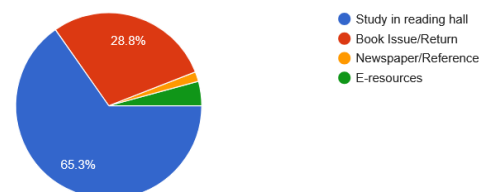
118 responses



The above chart expresses the frequency of library visits among the respondents. It reveals that the highest proportion of students, 34.7%, visit the library weekly, followed by 26.3% who visit daily. Additionally, 21.2% of the respondents visit the library occasionally, while 17.8% rarely visit the library. This indicates that most students make regular use of the library facilities.

Purpose of Visit

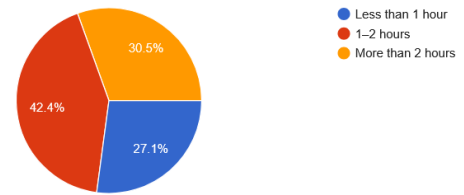
118 responses



The assessment of the primary motives behind library visits highlights a significant reliance on the physical space of the library. More than broken down into specific segments, 65.3% of the users primarily utilise the facility to study in the reading hall, followed by 28.8% (\$n = 34\$) who visit for routine book issue and return transactions. Minor proportions of the sample cited utilising e-resources (3.4%, \$n = 4\$) and newspaper or reference sections (2.5%, \$n = 3\$). The data demonstrates that the traditional roles of the library—providing study spaces and physical book circulation—remain the primary drivers of user traffic.

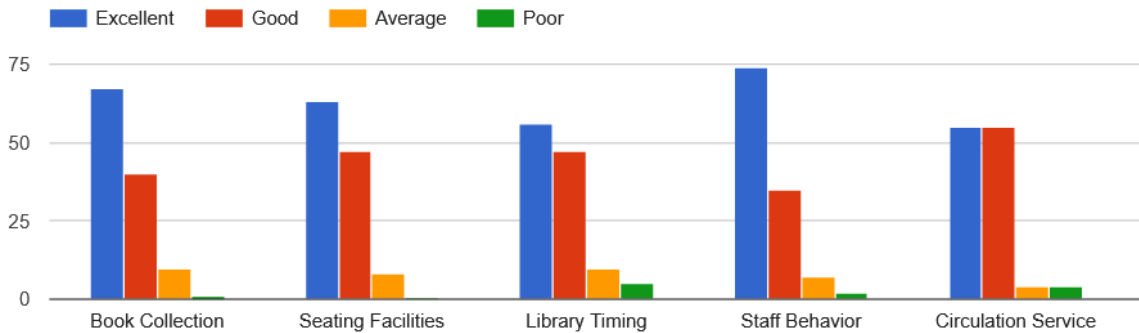
Time Spent in Library

118 responses



Duration of Library Visits

The distribution of time spent by respondents in the library indicates deep user engagement. The majority of patrons, 42.4% (\$n = 50\$), utilise the library for 1–2 hours, followed closely by 30.5% who spend more than 2 hours per visit. Short-duration visits of less than an hour account for 27.1% of the total sample. These metrics reveal that nearly three-quarters of the library users (72.9%) occupy the space for extended durations, reinforcing the institutional demand for well-maintained, comfortable physical reading environments.

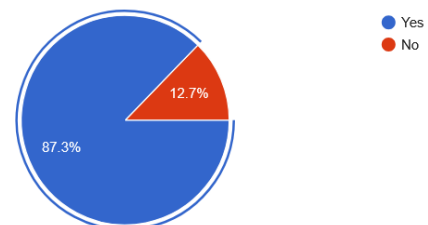


An evaluation of primary library services and facilities shows exceptionally high satisfaction rates across all tested parameters. Staff Behaviour achieved the highest individual baseline, with 62.7% of respondents rating it as "Excellent." Infrastructure and assets also scored strongly; the Book Collection and Seating Facilities received positive markers ("Excellent" or "Good") from 90.7% and 93.2% of the participants, respectively. Operational metrics showed steady performance, with Circulation Services capturing an equal split of 46.6% between "Excellent" and "Good" ratings, while Library Timing saw a combined favourable rating of 87.3%. The uniformly low frequencies in the "Average" and "Poor" categories across all dimensions demonstrate that the library

successfully meets user expectations in both service quality and infrastructural provisions.

Are library hours convenient?

118 responses

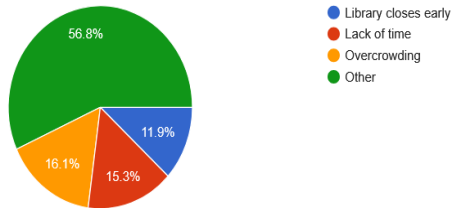


The feedback regarding the convenience of institutional library hours indicates widespread satisfaction among the user base. The overwhelming majority of the respondents, 87.3%, stated that the existing operational hours are convenient for their academic

endeavours. On the other hand, **12.7%** ($n = 15$) of the participants found the timings inconvenient. This high rate of affirmation demonstrates that the library's operational schedule successfully accommodates the standard timelines of the student population, leaving a minimal margin of unfulfilled demand.

If No, what issues do you face?

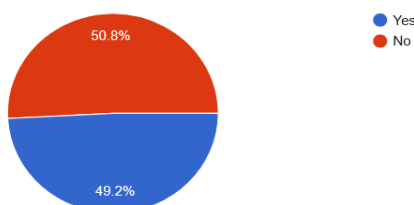
118 responses



The analysis of obstacles encountered by users regarding library accessibility reveals several key operational concerns requiring administrative attention. The most commonly reported issue was overcrowding, identified by 16.1% ($n = 19$) of respondents, indicating limitations in space availability during peak hours. This was followed closely by lack of time, reported by 15.3% of users, reflecting situational constraints that affect library usage. Additionally, 11.9% of respondents considered early closing hours a significant barrier to access. A majority of 56.8% selected "Other," suggesting that many users do not face major accessibility challenges or experience issues outside the listed categories. Overall, the findings suggest that improving space management during busy periods and reconsidering library operating hours could significantly enhance user convenience and satisfaction.

Need extended hours?

118 responses

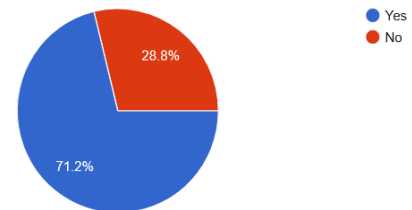


The assessment of user demand regarding extended library hours revealed a closely contested split among participants. Approximately 49.2% (58) of the respondents expressed a definite need for prolonged

operating hours, while 50.8% (60) indicated that the existing schedule meets their needs. This balanced distribution demonstrates that while the library's current baseline schedule satisfies half of its patrons, there is a substantial, equal-sized segment of the student population seeking extended access. This high level of unfulfilled demand warrants administrative consideration for piloting extended operating slots during peak academic terms.

Awareness of e-resources

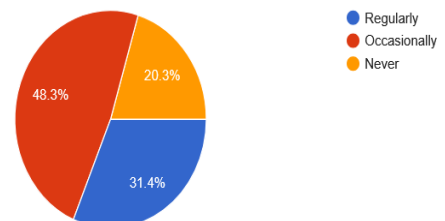
118 responses



The assessment of digital resource literacy shows a strong foundational familiarity, with 71.2% of respondents confirming awareness of the library's e-resources. The remaining 28.8% indicated no prior awareness. While this demonstrates a solid majority baseline of digital literacy, a comparative look at actual daily usage—where only 3.4% visit the library primarily to use e-resources—suggests that awareness is passive rather than active. Administrative focus should therefore pivot from general promotional campaigns to hands-on user orientation sessions to maximise the return on institutional investment in digital knowledge repositories.

Usage of digital resources

118 responses

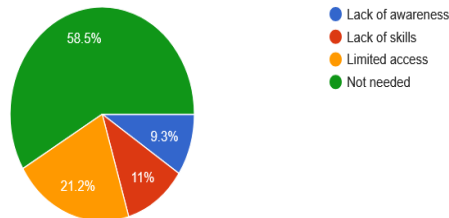


The assessment of electronic repository adoption shows that a strong majority of the user community actively interacts with digital assets. A combined **79.7%** of respondents utilize digital resources, split between **48.3%** occasional users and **31.4%** regular users. Meanwhile, **20.3%** of the cohort reported never utilizing digital provisions. Comparing this to physical facility metrics reveals that

while digital assets do not drive physical library footfall, they occupy a massive share of the users' actual study routines, confirming a successful shift toward hybrid user behaviors.

If not using, why?

118 responses



An inquiry into the factors hindering the adoption of electronic provisions revealed distinct structural and user-centric bottlenecks. Restricted utility was primarily driven by limited access options, cited by **21.2%** of the sample, followed by a lack of requisite digital navigation skills at **11.0%** and general unawareness at **9.3**. Conversely, **58.5%** reported that digital resources were "Not needed," aligning with the segment of students who either face zero technical Friction or remain satisfied with conventional print media. The metrics indicate that targeted user capacity-building and improved remote access networks are vital to minimising student non-adoption.

6. Findings

- The majority of students expressed satisfaction with the library facilities, services, and staff support, indicating a positive overall perception of the library environment.
- Overcrowding during examination periods emerged as a major concern, making it difficult for students to access seating and study resources effectively.
- Several students highlighted the need to extend library timings, especially during exams, with suggestions for early morning opening and late-night study access.
- Infrastructure-related issues such as inadequate fans, absence of air conditioning, limited seating space, and internet/Wi-Fi problems were repeatedly mentioned by respondents.
- Students emphasised the need for additional academic resources, including increased book stock, previous year

question papers, competitive exam books, and the availability of books in multiple languages such as Marathi, Hindi, and English.

- Many respondents appreciated the helpful and supportive behaviour of library staff, reflecting good student–staff relations and effective service delivery.
- Some students suggested promoting digital literacy and awareness regarding electronic library resources to improve utilization of online academic materials.

7. Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are made:

- Extension of Library Hours
- Enhancement of Digital Resources
- Regular Updating of Resources
- User Awareness Programs
- Dedicated Facilities for Evening Students
- Improved Internet Connectivity

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, while the library functions as a highly valued academic hub characterised by excellent staff support and robust physical usage, it faces a clear developmental turning point. The empirical data highlight a distinct operational duality: students rely heavily on the reading hall for extended physical study while simultaneously transitioning to remote digital resource consumption. However, a critical equilibrium in scheduling demand—where nearly half the user base requires extended hours—accentuates notable service gaps for evening session learners. By actively addressing documented friction points such as peak-hour overcrowding, digital database skill gaps, and restricted evening accessibility, the institution can bridge the gap between passive resource awareness and active scholarship. Ultimately, embracing this user-centric approach—backed by administrative commitment and modern technological integration—will optimise utility for evening learners, enhance independent scholarship, and successfully transform the facility into a fully inclusive, hybrid knowledge ecosystem.

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