# Internet-based library services: Study of college library websites in Burdwan, West Bengal

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### Abstract:

*The present study focuses on the analysis of websites of college libraries situated in Burdwan district of West Bengal. The study looks at the important steps libraries took to provide online library support services in post pandemic period. A total of 76 colleges and educational institutions have been selected for this study. The result reveals that most of the college libraries (69.74%) have provided information regarding awareness programme on their websites, 52.63% of the colleges have supplied the information of free internet resources for their students and only 31.58% of the libraries have given access of Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs) to the students through websites.*

**Keywords: Online service, library website, virtual service, library service, virtual platform.**

**1. Introduction:** The new normal has forced most people to make the switch to digital. The pandemic had a significant impact on library services when educational institutions nationwide were forced to close as a preventative measure to stop the virus's spread. The Indian government implemented a nationwide lockdown on March 22, 2020, after educational institutions of West Bengal had closed on March 18, 2020. Online support services were prioritized by library professionals as a means of managing the issue and satisfying customer demands. Thanks to the advancements in information and communication technology, a growing number of educational institutions and their libraries provided online and virtual services. Through the organization of online resources, online access to e-resources, institutional digital repository, open access material, remote access library services, mobile learning, and a variety of online research tools, they have provided online library services. In addition to assisting students in continuing their academic pursuits during the difficult times, these services compelled academic libraries to abandon their conventional layouts and join the world of rapid technological development in order to provide better services in a more practical and approachable manner.

The current study focuses on the different kinds of information regarding e-resources, online library services, activities, general information, etc. in the websites of those college

libraries in post pandemic period and in recent times. The study is based on a web analysis of the information found on the websites of the colleges in that district.

**2. Objectives** The main objectives of this study are as follows:

1) To find out how the college libraries are information in the websites as well as virtual platforms.
2) To find out the initiatives taken by the libraries for informing free resources to the students.
3) To state if the educational institutions offer pupils a variety of Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs) via public domain.

**3. Review of Literature:** Many academic libraries had been taken various new initiatives during this pandemic to serve the users better (Kim & Yang, 2022; Ali & Gatiti, 2020; Ahmad, Shoaib & Shaukat, 2021). Neog's (2020) studied different aspects of library services through social media during this pandemic. Strength of academic libraries in terms of well equipped is vital to serve users (Jana & Rout, 2021). During this crisis period library services have been severely affected that forced to introduce new protocols (Gopakumar & Anuradha, 2021). During the crisis period to provide library services new approaches have been proposed by Decker (2021) which can be categorized in three services like one adapted, one newly developed, and one collaboration across several units on academic campus.

Devan and Tripathi (2021) have proposed new mode of services after intensive study of Father Moses Library, Rajagiri College of Social Sciences (Autonomous), Ernakulam, India where they mentioned extensive use of social networks, adoption of an intuitive and responsive website design and blended librarianship. E-learning programmes through adoption of digital and electronic services have been recommended during the pandemic situation (Zareef & Ahmed, 2021). The study of post pandemic situation of the academic libraries is most significant (Saha & Majumdar, 2021; Begum & Elahi, 2022). Analysis of students' satisfaction after pandemic situation is also important. Library websites are vital sources of information to the students to know the every aspect of the library. The rich information in the library websites always has favorable effects on students' satisfaction. In this context, the current study determines the current state of college library websites.

**4. Methodology:** Online survey method has been applied to capture data from websites of various colleges having well equipped libraries. Basic information about the colleges and their websites has been collected from the website of The University of Burdwan. A total of 76 colleges have been selected for the study having rich information in their websites than those of others. The data was collected in during the period of January 2024. In few cases, telephonic conversations have been done with the librarians of the colleges for clarification of collected data, where needed. Two types of information have been collected from the websites. First category contains information relating to institution name, type of institution, activities, purchases related information, services, awareness programme, cleaning & dusting etc. The second category includes library resources like TLMs, free resources,

social media, webinars, workshops, lectures etc. The collected data have been scrutinized, tabulated and analyzed using MS-Excel spreadsheet.

## 5. Data Collections & Analysis:

**5.1 Basic information:** The present study has selected 76 colleges from three districts those have been covered by the University of Burdwan in West Bengal. The following table shows the distribution of the colleges in different districts.

**Table 1: Distribution of the colleges in different districts**

| Sl. No. | Name of the Districts | No. of colleges | | | | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | State Govt. | Govt. Aided | Private | Total | |
| 1 | Birbhum | 0 | 17 | 3 | 20 | 26.32 |
| 2 | Hooghly | 7 | 18 | 4 | 29 | 38.16 |
| 3 | Purba Bardhaman | 2 | 20 | 5 | 27 | 35.52 |
| Total | | 9 | 55 | 12 | 76 | 100 |

**Results:** The above table shows that 26.32% institutions have been selected from Birbhum district and the height numbers of institutions (28.16%) have taken from Hooghly district. This study has no government institutions from Birbhum district.

**5.2 Information on Free Resources:** Students can benefit greatly from a multitude of online materials that are readily available on the internet. It is very useful to inform those resources to the students through library websites or the websites of the mother institutions. The present survey has tried to show this type of information in the table that follows.

**Table 2: Information of internet resources in the websites**

| Inf. of Internet resources | Type of colleges | | | Total | % |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | State Govt. | Govt. Aided | Private | | |
| Yes | 2 | 31 | 7 | 40 | 52.63 |
| No | 7 | 24 | 5 | 36 | 47.37 |
| Total | 9 | 55 | 12 | 76 | 100 |

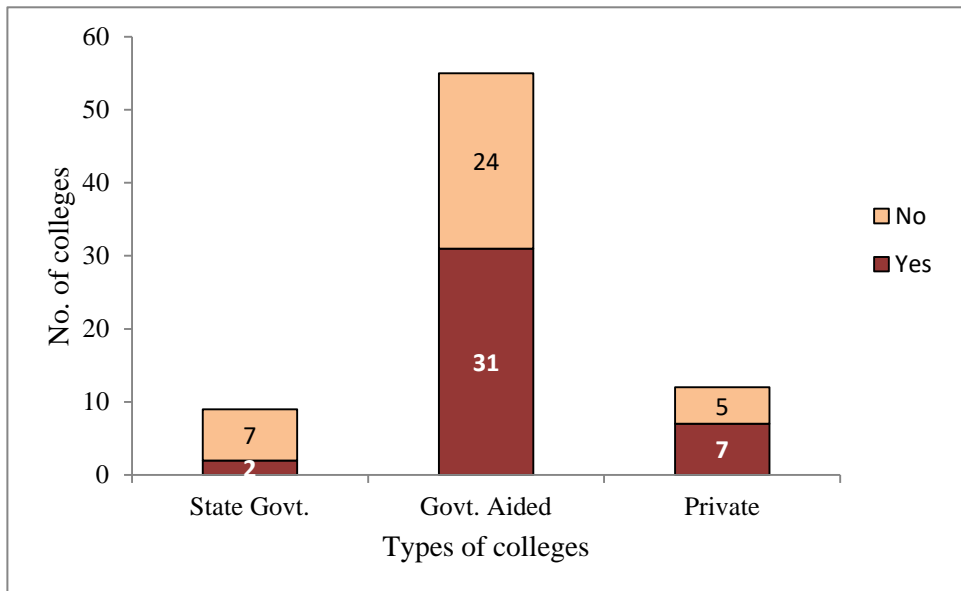From the above table following chart has been given below:

Chart no.1: Information of free resources

**Results:** From the above table and chart it is concluded that 40 colleges (52.63%) have given information regarding free resources in their websites and 36 colleges (47.37%) have not given that information. The analysis shows 2 State Govt. colleges, 31 Govt. Aided colleges and 7 Private colleges have uploaded that type of information in their websites.

**5.3 Information on Awareness Programme:** Information on disease awareness programs, safety measures, how to handle books and other materials, social distancing, etc., was crucial during the Covid-19 outbreak. Even today, providing students with such information is crucial to their well-being. These kinds of information in detailed must be disseminated to faculties and the student communities via institutional websites and social media accounts. The present study states the following results in this regard.

**Table 3: Awareness of Well-being**

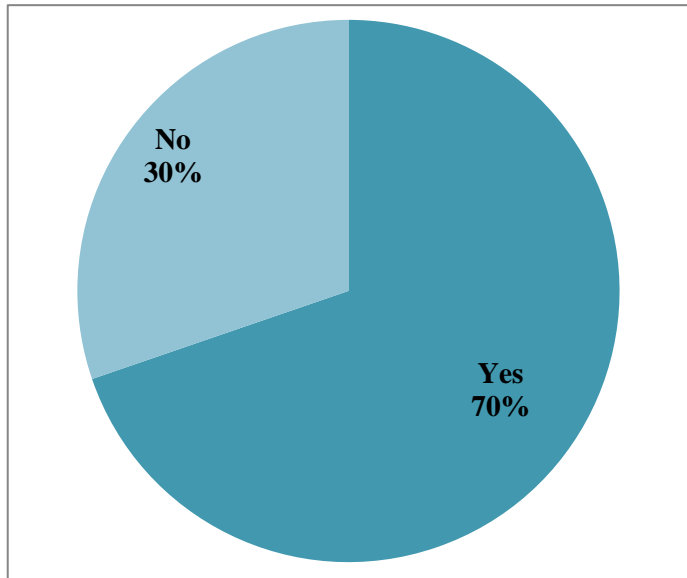| Inf. on awareness programme | Type of colleges | | | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | State Govt. | Govt. Aided | Private | | |
| Yes | 5 | 41 | 7 | 53 | 69.74 |
| No | 4 | 14 | 5 | 23 | 30.26 |
| Total | 9 | 55 | 12 | 76 | 100 |

A pie chart has been give from the above table

Chart no.2: Information on awareness

**Results:** Five State Government institutions, forty-one Government Aided colleges, and seven private colleges still provide information about various awareness programs for their users. In the above table, 53 colleges in all, or almost 70%, have made awareness-related material available to their staffs and students through their websites. However, 23 colleges (30% approximately) have not given their stakeholders any information in this regard.

**5.4 Link for old question papers:** One of the important services of the library for the students is to provide old question papers. During pandemic this service was essential to the students as total closure of physical classes occurred during that period. Students at the time were curious to see the previous exam question papers. Current research seeks to see if libraries are still providing this service today through their websites. These data, which have been collected for this study, are listed below.

**Table 4: Question papers available in the websites**

| Inf. on question papers | Type of colleges | | | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | State Govt. | Govt. Aided | Private | | |
| Yes | 5 | 40 | 5 | 50 | 65.79 |
| No | 4 | 15 | 7 | 26 | 34.21 |
| Total | 9 | 55 | 12 | 76 | 100 |

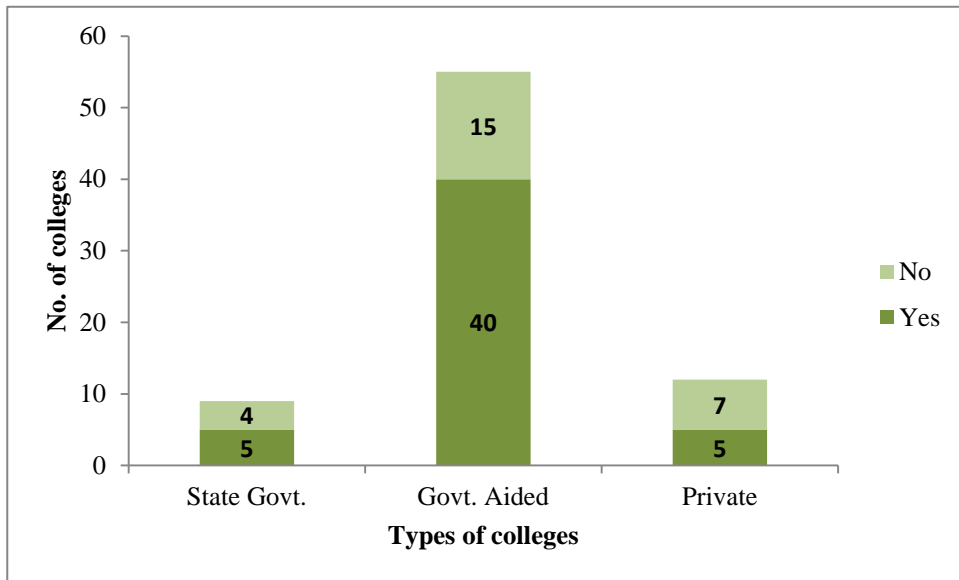To help in understanding the above table, a chart has been provided.

Chart no.3: Information of old question papers in the websites

**Results:** Of the 76 colleges, 50 (65.79%) have provided the necessary information on old question papers in their websites, while 26 (34.21%) have not provided any information at all. In this regard, 40 out of 55 government-aided colleges, 5 out of 12 private colleges, and 5 out of 9 state colleges have all had a part to play.

**5.5 Provide Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs):** Providing TLMs to the students is another basic service of the library. This service was very significant at pandemic period. Due to the closure of physical classes during the corona virus pandemic, students could not borrow library books or other reading materials. As a result, TLMs were the only option for them at that time. The faculties of different colleges used to send different types of reading material to the students. In this case they used to take the help of various social media and upload all these reading materials on the college website. Today such services have become a part of daily activities of the libraries. The data found from the websites in this regard are as follows:

**Table 5: TLMs uploaded in the websites**

| Inf. on TLMs | Type of colleges | | | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | State Govt. | Govt. Aided | Private | | |
| Yes | 2 | 19 | 3 | 24 | 31.58 |
| No | 7 | 36 | 9 | 52 | 68.42 |
| Total | 9 | 55 | 12 | 76 | 100 |

To help in understanding the above table, a chart has been provided.
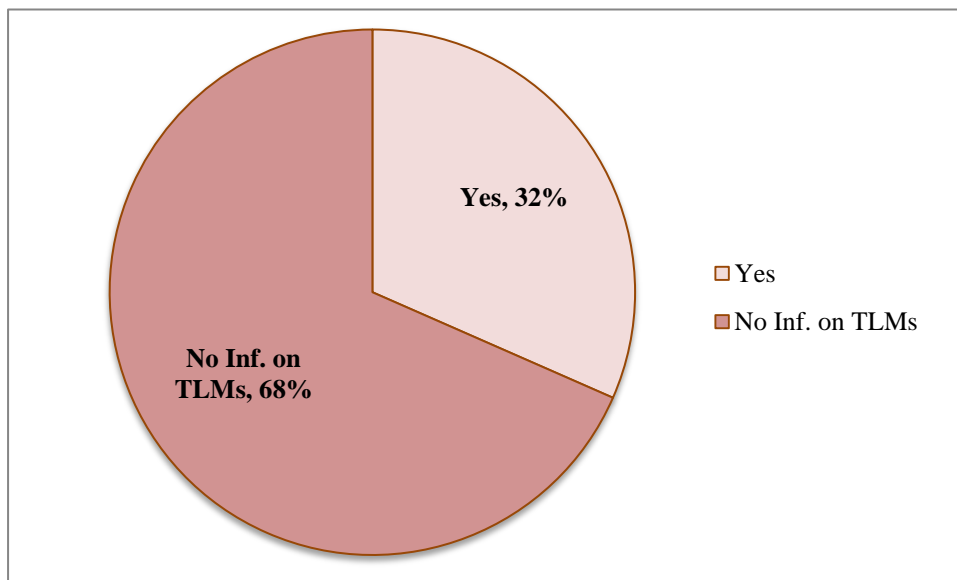


Chart no.4: TLMs provided by the institutions in their websites

**Results:** It is evident from the above table and chart that the majority of colleges and institutions, both public and private, did not provide TLMs via websites. It may be that these materials are not available or teachers no longer make the TLS or the teachers give TLMs directly to the students in their classes. Sometimes, it is considered that there are copyright and/or plagiarism issues of uploading TLMs for public access. The study shows that out of 76 institutions, only twenty-four (or 32%) colleges offer TLMs through their websites.

**6. Discussion:** Due to the sudden lockdown for Corona outbreak, it took a long time for the educational institutions to decide about the educational planning and programming. Most of the institutions accepted the online education system through various open access internet resources and also through social media. However, many educational institutions—particularly those in rural areas—faced a variety of IT infrastructure-related issues. In spite of the fact it is true that a large number of rural and urban colleges now provide their students with online learning opportunities. Moreover, blended learning has become a common practice today. Therefore, this type of study is very essential to know the present status of online activities by the college libraries. The majority of the colleges in this study are situated in semi-urban or rural locations. So, it won't be assumed that the best possible use of internet resources is made during this period. Out of 76 institutions, 36 (47.37%) did not provide information about free resources for their students on the websites of the colleges. As a result, many students are unable to access the necessary information of free educational resources through their library websites. It's encouraging that the majority of the colleges (70%) have carried out different awareness campaigns through online, and that the

websites have information about those activities. The survey found that over 68% of the library websites have no information about TLMs, for a variety of reasons.

**7. Conclusion:** Since the Covid-19 pandemic broke out, the majority of college libraries in West Bengal have informed their students about free online materials and other resources via their websites and various social media platforms. Due to this circumstance, today, library websites are becoming increasingly significant platforms for information dissemination. The work of librarians has become increasingly important for the benefit of students throughout this period due to the gradual increase of open educational materials. As a result, the way that students request the necessary information has changed, forcing libraries to update their websites. Librarians and other information professionals have turned to new technologies to better fulfill of their users' needs. This circumstance changed in-person communication to online communication and physical service to online service. So web based library services become popular during this period. However, maintaining a regular operation is difficult because the majority of institutions under this study are located in rural or semi-urban areas and the majority of students come from low-income families. The present study has tried to address all of that information which will further enhance the services in the library. The study also suggests carrying out additional, in-depth research in this area.

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