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PKM Kaushamalika & CN Fernando

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To cite this article:

Kaushamalika, P.K.M. & Fernando, CN. (2024). Reading Habits of the Adult Readers of Kotahena Public Library of Sri Lanka. *International Journal of Librarianship*, 9(4), 73-86. <https://doi.org/10.23974/ijol.2024.vol9.4.403>

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Reading Habits of the Adult Readers of Kotahena Public Library of Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the reading habits of adult readers and use of library resources and services of Kotahena Public Library, Colombo: Sri Lanka. Readers who come to the library have different reading habits. Libraries are assisting in providing the right information to the right users, right format at the right time. This study was conducted using a survey method and adopted a deductive approach. Structured questionnaires through Google Forms were used to collect data. Questionnaires were distributed through WhatsApp to 80 respondents which covers the total population. The study found that reading has improved the lives of readers. Primary data was used for the conducted research. Data was collected through the questionnaire from two main questions and collected data was analyzed using quantitative techniques. The study found that adults' purposes, types of reading materials and time, allocation, place, language for reading by adult users that visiting the Kotahena Public Library. Findings of the study can be used to reinforce the services with which the users were satisfied, focus on services that need more improvement according to user concerns, and to take steps for resolution of identified problems to gain users' satisfaction.

Keywords: Reader, Reading Habits, Reading preferences, Public library, Public library resources and services, Adults Readers

INTRODUCTION

Reading habits can vary significantly based on factors such as age, education, occupation, and personal interests. Adult readers often exhibit diverse reading habits influenced by personal interests, lifestyles, and access to resources. Reading purpose is a main habit because adults read for various reasons such as relaxation, education, professional development and staying informed about current events. Adults' reading preferences for reading environments also differ from each other. Some quiet spaces like libraries while others read during break. Furthermore, many adult readers engage in discussions about books through online platforms, book clubs, libraries, and social media platforms. And the reading frequency varies widely. Some adults read daily, but others might read only occasionally.

Reading habits vary by age group, gender, and information needs. Electronic media have negative effects on reading which impacts the changes in reading formats. The shift from physical books to digital formats can impact the reading experience. The rise of multimedia content can

shift preferences away from reading text-based materials. Lot of people are engaging online reading materials. They prefer e books over traditional reading. Online reading includes engaging with comments, forums, and social media. And the internet provides an endless supply of information on any topic.

In this study will focus about satisfaction of readers for library services. Some libraries face different problems such as insufficient funds and space. Moreover, study examines the types of reading materials that are most used by library adult users. There are various types of reading materials such as books, journals, articles, encyclopedias, magazines, and web pages.

Libraries provide information, instructions, learning, leisure, and cultural opportunities. The Kotahena Public Library is one of the branch libraries of the Colombo public library. It is one of the largest libraries in Sri Lanka. Kotahena Public Library has been providing various services for readers since 1960. There are more than 30,000 books on various titles are available in Sinhala, Tamil, and English language. There are more services offered by Kotahena Public Library such as magazine and newspapers, educational supports for school and students, internet services, multimedia section, new arrival books and periodical notification, reference section, reader circle, lending section, photocopying, and printing services. The main objective of the research is to identify the reading habits of Adult Readers of Kotahena Public library. The reading process and purpose differ from person to person every time. Readers can develop their reading habits with the support of the library resources and services.

Reading is a lifelong process which never ends. People read various kinds of literature whether it is available in print or electronic format every day for their own purposes and gain information and knowledge. Libraries are assisting by also providing the right information to the right users, the right format at the right time. The public library strengthens democracy by providing information to the people of all sections of society. This study discusses the reading habits of Kotahena Public readers and the focus on which types of reading materials adult readers use in Kotahena Public library.

The Colombo Public Library is one of the largest libraries in Sri Lanka. Kotahena Public Library is one of its branch libraries. It has been providing various services to Kotahena readers since the 1960s. There are approximately 30,000 books on various titles are available in Sinhala, Tamil, and English languages. There are 14 daily newspapers, around 75 weekly and monthly magazines for the daily reading section and there are 3,200 registered readers in Kotahena Public library. According to the system, 60% Adult readers using library. The library is mostly used by adult readers. Many of them are housewives. 65% of our library users are women. This study is investigating habits of adult readers in Kotahena Public library.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to explore and identify the reading habits of adults.

Readers. And,

1. To find out the purpose of adult users visiting the Kotahena Public library.
2. To examine the types of reading material most used by library adult users.
3. To examine the impact of reading habits on academic or career achievement
4. To identify frequency, favorite time allocation, place, and language for reading by Adults' users.
5. To find out the factors affecting reading habits.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Qureshi et al. (2008) have evaluated information needs and information seeking behavior of students in Universities of Pakistan. The study identified the impact of different factors involved in the general pattern of information gathering system by the students. Data was collected from 1000 respondents randomly selected from 9 universities through questionnaires. Correlation and regression tools were used for analysis. The study identified that awareness of resources, surrounding environment, student participation, educational and cultural background, ability to use tools, self- evaluation, and intuition were having positive impact on students' information needs and seeking behavior.

Pravathamma N. (2010) assessed the use of reading materials in Engineering College Libraries in Karnataka State. The main objectives of the study are to find out the frequency of visit; to the library by students and teachers, and librarians' opinion regarding their visit; to find out the time spent in the library during each visit; to identify the purpose of visit to library; to identify the access tools used for locating reading materials in the library; to identify information channels used to meet their information needs; to find out the purpose of using the reading materials and to find out the use of different types of reading materials, and adequacy of reading materials maintained in the library, and to find out the degree of association of opinion among students, teachers and librarians on the above aspects. The data were collected from 50 Engineering Colleges. The study revealed that 79 percent of the students and 85 percent of the teachers visit the library at least once in a week and the users mainly visit the library to borrow textbooks and consult card catalogue or OPAC to locate the required reading materials. The students either consult books and journals or discuss with friends and teachers to meet their information needs. However, teachers mostly depend upon books and journals and library study to satisfy their information needs. The Internet is used as an important journal of information. All the users are satisfied with adequacy of textbook collections, Indian journals, project reports and foreign journals.

Sri Lankan Libraries must set their objectives to meet the needs of society as a whole. Arulanantham, S. (2012) The political situation that prevailed in our country during the last decade resulted in the loss of well-reading habits among society. "Three-dimensional library" (3DL) is a new concept introduced by Foundation for Library Awareness (FOLA) in Sri Lanka. The three basic elements of the 3DL are objects and their meaning, Documents and related materials, Information bits. In the celebration of the reading month of the year 2011 October, FOLA organized an exhibition in Jaffna with the Model of a 3DL in some specific subjects. The feedback of this program was collected from the viewers on a random sample method, using questionnaires. The main objective of this research study is to identify and investigate the Impact of a Three-dimensional library on the development of Information Literacy of the readers. Using quantitative analysis of the feedback of the viewers of this program, the findings of the study showed remarkable positive impacts. Particularly improvement in their reading habit (98%), enrichment of their information literacy level (96%), development in their educational skills (97%), and enhancement of their social responsibility (99%) were identified as major impacts of this program. Further, this suggests the need to emerge to spread and to implement this idea at the national and international level to improve the information literacy of the people.

Ranjith, (2004) has conducted a study on the rural libraries in Kerala. Most of the libraries (75%) have women membership of less than 30%. 45% of the libraries work 9 hours or more, 30% of the libraries work 4 to 9 hours, and 25% work less than 4hours. The average daily reading time

was the highest among the youngest age groups of 15- 30 years of both male and female, the highest in degree holders, and 60% of the members are satisfied with the collection of the libraries.

Ramaraj URS, (1984) has surveyed the reading habits of clientele of the public libraries in the rural district of Bangalore. The distribution of population, occupations, membership pattern, extent of utilization of library services, and reading habits of users in terms of subjects and type of books read were discussed. The survey revealed that the development of infrastructures for library and information system for Bangalore rural district indicated a steady growth.

Dykeman (2008) investigates the impact of the internet on reading habits. The study emphasizes that the usage of television, radio, telecommunications, and the internet enhance their importance in civilization. The study describes that reading is always related to print materials like novels, textbooks, references, manuals, magazines, newspapers, journals, articles, poems, stories etc. but these new technologies have had a huge impact on modern life.

Ibrahim (2004) assessed the extent of utilization of resources and services by users of a public library. The survey revealed that majority of users used library to study using library books followed by use for assignment and examination purposes using own books. About 40.9% of users were partially satisfied with the library material and were using it because they did not have any other alternative.

Rajendra S.P. (2013) in this study examined several aspects of library use, including frequency of visiting the library, satisfaction with library hours, library collection and level of user satisfaction from library services, and cover the use of reference sources in the library. The study exposed that users are highly satisfied with library collection and services of inter library loan, reference, and lending. The study suggested that the library authorities should conduct user education programs to educate the users about library resources and services.

Chandrashekara (2012) focused a study on the use of information resources and services of City Central Library, Mysore and Branch Libraries with the objectives to understand the socio-economic, educational, and occupational backgrounds of the public library users. Besides this, the study attempted to understand the needs of the users and tried to find out the satisfaction level of the users regarding services available in the public library. To achieve the objectives 1200 questionnaires were distributed, 835 i.e. 69.58% filled in questionnaires were received. The study shows that 40.95% users of CLL library and its branches visit the library daily. Most of the users, i.e. 70.41% visit the library to read short stories. Regarding the availability of books 44.55% users are satisfied but 32.36% are not satisfied. The study concludes that since the majority of the users are students and unemployed youth, public libraries need to enrich their information resource collection, provide access to Internet and offer community-based services., including literary programs.

Gilbert (2015) surveyed the users' satisfaction with public library services in Mubi Adamawa state. The study examines the types of services rendered and the resources available. The study would help to improve information on users' needs and services using a survey design and random sampling method, with a well-structured questionnaire data collected from 100 respondents comprising 20 civil servants, 15 businessmen/women and 40 students. The study reveals that most of the materials are outdated though relevant and imbalanced collection which means their needs are not adequate that the library is faced with the problem of information retrieval tools, and the services provided by the library is not adequate. It was recommended at

least 10-15% of the annual educational grant in the state should be allocated to the public library development, and the library should adopt a defined classification scheme on which materials can be classified and organized systematically on the shelves. This study was carried out (46.7%) of the users are satisfied with the collection of the library. 38.67% of the respondents were satisfied with the organization of the library materials. (33.3%) of the responses of the users are encouraging the attitude of the library staff.

RESERCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a survey. Primary data was collected. Questionnaire was used as the research instrument, and the collected data were analyzed using quantitative techniques.

When considering the Sample size and sampling techniques, The Kotahena Public library has 3200 registered users. But 1,000 members continue to use the library. The following describes it. All this data is taken from the Koha Library Management database.

6. Children Readers (3-17) - 200
7. Adult readers (18-59) - 650
8. Senior Citizen (60 above) – 150

The population of the study is adult readers (80) of the Kotahena Public library. Convenience sampling method was used to select the sample size.

The questionnaire is the main tool in the collection of data. A structured questionnaire has been adopted for this purpose. Questionnaires were distributed directly and through Google Form. Sixteen Questions are included in the questionnaire. Almost all the questions are structured or close-ended questions except for the last question which is an open-ended one. The Questionnaire has Five Main Sections based on the above four Research questions.

Data were analyzed by Descriptive statistics using MS excel 2007.

FINDINGS

A total of 80 (by hand 55 & Google form 75) questionnaires were distributed and 75 (by hand 55 & google form 25) questionnaires were returned with a response rate of 61.5%.

Readers between the ages of 18-30 (57.5%) participated in the survey more than any other age group. Higher education students participated more in the survey. 31-45, 46-59 age groups have contributed to the survey it is roughly equal. According to **Ranjith and Ramaraj URS**, studies, more than half of the public library users are between 16-25 years age group. Male readers use library more for their reading than female readers.

Females slightly outnumber males among those who filled out the survey. Females were 35 and males 45.

1. To find out the purpose of adult users visiting the Kotahena Public library.

Table 1: Purpose of reading by the respondents

	1	2	3	4	5
	Most Uses	Often	sometimes	Rarely	Never
1.To pass examinations	27 (33.75%)	8 (10%)	16 (20%)	7 (8.75%)	22 (27.5%)
2.To gather information for assignments	13 (16.25%)	12 (15%)	25 (31.25%)	7 (8.75%)	23 (28.75%)
3. To get information on particular issue	19 (23.75%)	13 (16.25%)	20 (25%)	9 (11.25)	19 (23.75%)
4 To upgrade knowledge	46 (57.5%)	17 (21.25%)	7 (8.75%)	7 (8.75%)	3 (3.75%)
5. For leisure/ pleasure/ relaxation	47 (58.75%)	8 (10%)	15 (18.75%)	7 (8.75%)	3 (3.75%)
6. For research purpose	17 (21.25%)	8 (8%)	20 (25%)	15 (18.75%)	20 (25%)
7.Gather knowledge in general areas of interest	35 (43.75)	15 (18.75%)	11 (13.75%)	11 (13.75%)	8 (10%)
8. Other	11 (13.75%)	9 (11.25%)	19 (23.75%)	8 (10%)	8 (10%)

Table – 1 reveals the different purposes for which the respondents read. Reading is a multipurpose activity. There are three primary purposes for reading, and each one is identified by different motivations, activities, and strategies. The first one is reading for pleasure, second is reading for literal understanding and third one is reading for analysis, interpretation, and application. For that reason, the respondents were asked to give a reason for their involvement in the reading process.

Most of the 80 people who participated in the survey, most of them 47 (58.75%), strongly agreed that reading is their hobby (leisure/ pleasure/ relaxation). Only 3 people (3.75%) disagree with this statement. Another 30 (37.5%) agreed with this statement to some extent. Likewise most of the survey participants strongly agreed that they read to improve their knowledge (57%). Others almost agreed with this statement (40%). Only 3 rejected this statement.

For the purposes of passing exams (27.5%), To gather information for assignments (28.75%), and preparing for exams (25%), a large percentage of people do not use the library.

2. To examine the types of reading material most used by library adult users.

Table 2: Most used reading materials

S/N	resources	1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never
1	Books	67 (83.75%)	9 (11.25%)	0	2 (2.25%)	2 (2.25%)
2	Magazines	18 (22.5%)	21 (26.25%)	20 (25%)	11 (13.75%)	10 (12.5%)
3	News papers	29 (36.25%)	8 (10%)	23 (28.75%)	11 (13.75%)	9 (11.25%)
4	Newspapers Clippings	14 (17.5%)	9 (11.25%)	23 (28.75%)	21 (26.25%)	13 (16.25%)
5	Reference materials	22 (27.5%)	13 (16.25%)	19 (23.75%)	11 (13.75%)	15 (18.75%)
6	Non-book materials	13 (16.25%)	7 (8.75%)	14 (17.5%)	19 (23.75%)	27 (33.75%)
7	Government publications	16 (20%)	12 (15%)	16 (20%)	18 (22.5%)	18 (22.5%)
8	Other resources (rare materials, pamphlets, brochures)	6 (7.5)	12 (15%)	11 (13.75%)	21 (26.25%)	30 (37.5%)

According to this survey result, the number of people reading books in the library is very high 78 (97.5%) out of 80. The rate of those who do not use other resources 30 (37.5%) and the rate of those who do not use non-book materials 27 (33.75%) are very high.

People who don't utilize the library's books, periodicals, newspapers, news clippings, reference materials, non-book materials, government publications, and other resources are 2(2.25%), 10(12.5%), 9(11.25%), 13(16.25%), 15(18.75%), 27(33.75%), and 18(22.5%), 30(37.5%) in number (rate), correspondingly.

Similar findings were reported by Haruna, (2004) on assessing the extent of utilization of resources and services by users of a public library. The survey revealed that the majority of users used the library to study using library books followed by use for assignment and examination purposes.

3. To examine the impact of reading habits on academic or career achievement

Table 3: Impact academic/career achievements

S/N	Statement	1 Agree	2 Uncertain	3 Disagree
1	Reading enhances my quality of life	74 (92.5%)	4 (5%)	2 (2.5%)
2	Reading Increases my General Knowledge	77 (96.25%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.25%)
3	Reading Improves my Concentration and the Ability to Focus	66 (82.5%)	11 (13.75%)	3 (3.75%)
4	Reading improves my versatility boosts decision making power	61 (76.25%)	11 (13.75%)	8 (10%)
5	Reading is Motivational	66 (82.5%)	11 (13.75%)	3 (3.75%)
6	Reading helps to develop my emotional intelligence	59 (73.75%)	19 (23.75%)	2 (2.5%)
7	Reading influences my success in the academic activities	60 (75%)	10 (12.5%)	10 (12.5%)
8	Reading enhances my analytical thinking skills	63 (78.75%)	8 (10%)	9 (11.25%)
9	Reading helps me to choose my career	56 (70%)	15 (18.75%)	9 (11.25%)
10	Reading improves my professional competencies	59 (73.75%)	11 (13.75%)	10 (12.5%)

Table 3- shows the impact of reading habits on academic or career achievements of the respondents. Majority of the respondents i.e., 74 (92.5%) agreed with the statement "Reading enhances my quality of life", 4 (5%) uncertain and 2 (2.5%) of them disagreed with the statement.

About 74 (96.25%) respondents agreed with the statement "Reading Increases my General Knowledge" and only 2 (2.5%) of them felt uncertain with the statement.

About 66 (82.5%) of the respondents agreed with the statement "Reading Improves my Concentration and the Ability to Focus", 11 (13.75%) of them felt uncertain 3 (3.75%) disagreed with the statement.

The statement "Reading improves my versatility and boosts decision making power" was agreed upon by about 61 responders (76.25%). 8 (10%) of them disagreed with the statement, while 11 (13.75%) of them felt uncertain

A total of 66 respondents (82.5%) agreed with the statement "Reading is Motivational," whereas 11 (13.75%) were uncertain and 3 (3.75%) disagreed.

Most respondents 59 (73.75%) agreed with the statement that "Reading helps to develop my emotional intelligence", while 19 (23.75%) expressed uncertain and 2 (2.5%) disagreed.

Reading influences my success in the academic activities, according to almost 60 (75%) of the respondents; 10 (12.5%) felt uncertain about the statement, while 10 (12.5%) disagreed with it.

About 63 (78.75%) of the respondents agreed with the statement "Reading enhances my analytical thinking skills", 8 (10%) of them felt uncertain 9 (11.25%) disagreed with the statement.

The statement " Reading enhances my analytical thinking skills " was agree by 63 of the respondents (78.75%), whereas 9 respondents (11.25%) disagreed with it and 8 (10%) expressed uncertainty.

About 56 (70%) of the respondents agreed with the statement "Reading helps me to choose my career" 15 (18.75%) of them expressed uncertainty, while 9 (11.25%) disagreed.

Reading improves my professional competencies, according to almost 59(73.75%) of the respondents; 11 (13.75%) felt uncertain about the statement, while 10 (12.5%) disagreed with it.

4. To identify frequency, favorite time allocation, place, and language for reading by adult users

Table 4.1: Reading frequency of adult users

S/N	Reading frequency	No. of responder	percentage
1	Almost daily	46	57.5%
2	Once a week	10	12.5%
3	Several time a week	9	11.25%
4	Whenever I need occasionally	15	18.75%
5	Other	-	-

Majority of readers 46 (57.5%) answered the above question as Almost daily. 10 people (12.5%) read once a week and 9 people (11.25%) read for Several time a week and 15 (18.75%) people said that Whenever I need occasionally.

Ranjith, (2004) has conducted a study on the rural libraries in Kerala. His study found same thing that, the average daily reading time was the highest among the youngest age groups of 15-30 years of both male and female. A similar survey done by Chandrashekara and Mohan, (2012) shows that 40.95% of users of CLL library and its branches visit the library daily.

The use of reading materials in Engineering College Libraries in Karnataka State by Pravathamma (2010) main objective of the study was to find out frequency of visit, to the library

by students and teachers. The data was collected from 50 Engineering Colleges. The study revealed that 79 percent of the students and 85 percent of the teachers visit the library at least once a week.

Table 4.2: Time spent on reading on daily

S/N	Time spent on reading on daily	No. of responder	percentage
1	Less than an hour	7	8.75%
2	At least 1 hour	17	21.25%
3	Two hours	12	15%
4	Few hours	25	31.25%
5	Depends on the purpose	19	23.75%
6	Other	-	-

Table – 4.2 depicts the amount of time the respondents devote to reading in a day. Most of the respondents i.e., 25 (31.25%) spend few hours on reading. followed by 23.75% people read depending on the purpose, 17 (21.25%) people read at least 1 hour, and 7 (8.75%) people read less than 1 hour.

Table 4.3: favorite places to read

S/N	Favorite place	No. of responder	percentage
1	Library	29	36.25%
2	Home	26	32.5%
3	Study center	2	2.5%
4	Other	-	-

Table – 4.3 reveals the place of reading by the respondents. Most of the respondents i.e., 29 (36.25 %) preferred to read at Library, followed by 26 (32.5%) of the respondents read in Home, 2 (2.5%) of the respondents read in Study center. The details of those who read in more than one place are given below.

Library and Home = 10

Library, Home, Study center = 7

Library home and other = 2

Library, study center = 2

Home, study center = 2

Table – 4.4: Preferred language of reading by the respondents

Language	No. of responders	Percentage
English Only	8	10%
Sinhala Only	9	11.25%
Tamil Only	12	15%
Sinhala, English	8	10%
Tamil, English	29	36.25%
Sinhala, Tamil	4	5%
Sinhala, Tamil, English	10	12.5%

Table – 4.4 depicts the preferred language of reading by the respondents. 8 (10%) of the respondents prefer to read in only English language, followed by 9 (11.25%) of the respondents read in only Sinhala Language, 12 (15%) respondents read in only Tamil language.

The following are those who could read in two languages.

Sinhala, English 8(10%) Tamil, English 29(36.25%), Sinhala, Tamil 4 (5%). There are 10 (12.5%) people who can read in three languages.

5. To find out the factors affecting reading habits.

Table – 5: The Factors affecting reading habits

S/N	Statement	No. of responder	Percentage
1	Insufficient availability of books	19	23.75%
2	Unhygienic environment for library use	6	7.5%
3	Inconvenient library working hours	5	6.25%
4	Noise and other relative factors	21	26.25%
5	Difficulties in finding and obtaining books.	16	20%
6.	Lack of staff support	5	6.25%

Table – 5 shows the problems faced by the respondents in making use of the Kotahena library. It is observed from the table that 19(23.75%) of the respondents opined that library has inadequate reading materials, 21 (26.25%) responders report Noise and other relative factors, 16 (20%) readers complained that they face difficulty in finding books in the library.

The smaller number of respondents felt Lack of staff support 5 (6.25%), Inconvenient library working hours 5 (6.25%), Unhygienic environment for library use 6 (7.5%)

CONCLUSION

People frequently read, and their preferred reading materials include books, periodicals, newspapers, and other things. Reading influences positive personality, ideas, appropriate thinking, and attitude change, among other things. The significance of reading has led to study being done to comprehend the types of reading habits.

Numerous research studies on both children and adults have looked at the act of reading as well as the reading process. Additionally, research on reading habits revealed that reading is an active process that requires several abilities from readers before, during, and after they read a book. Studies in the subject show that the primary purpose of reading is to obtain knowledge and stay current on happenings.

Reading habits involve their participation in the growth of literate society. For instance, public libraries are considered as social living laboratories. Their resources and services replicate its community information delivery capabilities in society. They provide an adequate reading area and related facilities to accelerate reading habits among its users.

Findings of the study revealed that " Reading habits of Adult Reader of Kotahena Branch Library have positive attitude towards the reading. They enjoy reading and benefit from it. Most of the respondents strongly agreed that they read to update their personal knowledge. They need to improve their reading habits to lead a successful life both professionally as well as personally. For effective promotion of reading habits, skills and culture, reading must be made pleasurable and voluntary. The emergence of new technologies makes information searches easier, faster, and more efficient than ever. At present, rendering effective services through learning programs, diversified collections, and local partnerships as well global collaborations is becoming one of critical responsibilities for public libraries. Therefore, public libraries as an educational, cultural, and social institution should reshape their priorities to address the policies and services in enhancing the reading habits of adults for a better life in future.

Future studies should be carried out,

- The impact of information technology on reading should be studied.
- Studies on mobile library services: - This is especially true for readers who cannot come to the library elderly and disabled readers.

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