

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Impact of Rural Libraries on Self-Learning and Academic Performance: A Case Study in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

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Abstract: Rural libraries are often under studied as learning environments for secondary school students in peripheral regions. This qualitative study explores how rural public libraries motivate self-learning and shape learning performance among rural students preparing for the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (G.C.E. O/L) examination in Batticaloa District, Sri Lanka with special reference to Kaluwanchikudy DS Division. Using ten focus group discussions (FGDs) with O/L students (n=90) who sit for the G.C.E O/L Examinations in year 2026 the study examines the perceived motivational mechanisms, self-learning practices enabled by libraries, barriers limiting the effective learning and service features the library provides to students believe would enhance their performance outcomes. Thematic analysis identifies five dominant library driven mechanisms which are provision of a quiet disciplined study environment, access to learning materials and exam-oriented resources, motivational social ecology such as peer influence, role modeling and supportive staff, structured self-learning routines and goal-setting and confidence-building through practice and the feedback and informational support. However, the motivational potential is constrained by resource shortages, limited opening hours, weak digital facilities, language barriers and uneven staff capacity. The findings contribute to learning motivation and informal learning literature by showing how rural libraries operate as “capability-enabling spaces” that convert limited household resources into learning opportunities. Policy recommendations include strengthening exam-focused collections, extending hours during peak periods, creating guided self-learning programs, improving ICT support and implementing student-centered outreach with schools.

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ARTICLE HISTORY

Received
27 March 2026

Accepted
22 June 2026

KEYWORDS

Rural libraries, Self-learning, Learning motivation, Rural education, Batticaloa District.

INTRODUCTION

Educational performance in rural settings is shaped not only by schools, teachers and households but also by the broader learning ecosystem that surrounds students. Rural students preparing for high-stakes examinations such as the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (G.C.E. O/L) often face constrained learning resources, limited private tuition affordability, lower access to digital tools and fewer quiet study spaces at home due to household crowding or economic pressures. These constraints are particularly visible in peripheral regions where socioeconomic vulnerabilities and infrastructural gaps intersect with educational inequalities.

Within this context the rural public libraries can operate as important community institutions that supplement formal schooling. Libraries are traditionally framed as access points for books and information but contemporary research increasingly recognizes libraries as learning spaces that enable informal and self-directed learning (Aabo & Audunson, 2012; Lloyd, 2010).

For students, libraries can provide a disciplined environment for focused study, facilitate access to learning materials and offer social and emotional support that strengthens motivation and self-confidence. While urban libraries tend to have greater resources and visibility the rural libraries despite constraints may function as crucial “learning support infrastructures” for students who lack alternative study facilities.

Self-learning (or self-directed learning) refers to learners’ proactive engagement in diagnosing learning needs, setting goals, identifying learning resources, selecting strategies and evaluating learning outcomes (Knowles, 1975). Self-learning aligns with contemporary educational thinking that learners should develop autonomy, metacognitive skills and lifelong learning orientation (Zimmerman, 2002). Motivation is central to self-learning because students must sustain effort over time without constant external supervision. From a motivational perspective, students engage more deeply when learning environments support autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and when learners perceive that effort yields improvement (Dweck, 2006).

In rural Sri Lanka, especially in districts like Batticaloa, students’ educational trajectories are

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.65714/ejlis262102>



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Publisher: Eastern University, Sri Lanka

influenced by resource limitations and social context. Many students rely on school teachers and tuition classes for exam preparation, but these supports vary widely in quality and affordability. When students have limited access to textbooks, revision guides, past papers and practice opportunities the learning outcomes may suffer. Rural libraries may be one of the few public spaces where students can access materials, focus on learning and cultivate a habit of independent study. However, the mechanisms through which rural libraries motivate self-learning and influence “learning performance” (e.g., perceived improvements in understanding, exam readiness, confidence and study discipline) remain under-explored in this setting.

Research problem

The students who are in secondary level use the rural libraries (mostly grade III libraries) for their learning activities and obviously there is very limited empirical evidence explaining how rural libraries motivate learning activities of secondary level students in these rural areas of Batticaloa District. And also, these rural libraries are working as community service centers for these areas.

Therefore, it is essential to find out how the rural libraries motivate self-learning and learning performance of students in secondary level in the areas. The Grade eleven (11) students who sit for the GCE O/L examination in 20206 were taken as purposive sample for the study. This study filled the literature gap in finding out the role of rural low graded libraries in self-motivation and learning performances of secondary level students which would be significant to the enhancement of collection development and overall performance of these type public libraries in future would finally better improvement in academic performance of the areas.

Objectives of the study

This study aims to:

1. To explore how the rural-libraries motivate self-learning among rural G.C.E. (O/L) students in Kaluwanchikudy D.S Division in Batticaloa District.
2. To examine perceived contributions of rural low graded libraries to students' learning performance and exam readiness in the study area.
3. To identify key barriers limiting libraries' ability to motivate self-learning of secondary

level students and their academic performances.

4. To propose practical, context-sensitive strategies to strengthen rural libraries as self-learning support spaces for O/L students.

Significance of the study

The current research provides insights regarding the rural education prevailing in these areas. It is crucial to understand the role of rural libraries (grade III & grade II public libraries) in the academic performances of secondary level students which enable the policy makers and local authorities to the necessity of improvements of public libraries in lower grades (grade III and grade II) for the sake of overall academic performances of the areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Libraries are increasingly viewed as “third places” that provide inclusive public spaces for learning, social interaction and community development (Aabo & Audunson, 2012). Beyond the lending books the libraries facilitate informal learning by providing access to resources, supportive environments and opportunities to develop information and learning skills (Lloyd, 2010). The role of libraries is especially significant in contexts where schools and households cannot fully meet learners' needs.

Libraries are indispensable institutions within lifelong learning ecosystems which support continuous knowledge acquisition, experiential learning, and skill development for diverse populations across the lifespan. Therefore, dynamic transformation of libraries into inclusive learning hubs fortifies the community in societal learning needs. Strengthening library contributions requires strategic investments, policy support, and innovative collaboration. With such measures, libraries will continue to empower individuals to learn, adapt, and thrive throughout life (Aboobacker & Sanjeevi, 2026).

Now, the libraries and librarians are no longer passive keepers and preservers of books and they have progressed to become facilitators of information and lifelong learning opportunities with an emphasis on service, identifying user needs and communicating solutions. Furthermore, the positive impact of books and access to secondary reading materials on reading achievement, creativity, developing language skills and sustaining literacy has been widely

acknowledged. But it is difficult to find concrete impact among the academic literature as the positive examples of successful reading programmes or library provisions have to be mirrored by control students or communities that do not have access to the same reading programmes or library services (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2006).

The traditional mission of the public library—supporting the self-education of the citizenry in order that they may become fully participating members in a democratic society—has been devalued of late in favour of popularizing the library to attract more users. This shift has led to an emphasis on entertainment and marketing, and an abandonment of what many feel is the true purpose of a library. Loss of democratic tradition has simultaneously occurred on another front: civic space which allows for public assembly and discourse has disappeared or been downgraded into places for leisure and recreation rather than politics, with a concomitant decline in the quality of public discourse as citizens increasingly depend on profit-driven mass media for their “opinions.” By supporting public discourse, the public library can begin to reinvigorate both the quality of public discourse and its traditional commitment to democratic ideals (Colleen, A. and Ann, C. 2003).

Knowles (1975) conceptualized self-directed learning as a process in which individuals take initiative in diagnosing learning needs, formulating goals, identifying resources, choosing strategies and evaluating outcomes. For school students, self-learning is linked to study skills, reading habits, practice behaviors and time management. Zimmerman (2002) highlighted self-regulated learning as a cycle of forethought (goal-setting), performance (strategy use) and self-reflection (evaluation). Libraries may support these processes by offering resources, routines and environmental cues that strengthen study discipline.

Self-learning is not only a personal trait it is shaped by context. Learners with fewer resources need supportive environments to build autonomy and competence. Libraries can become as scaffolding spaces where students practice self-learning under light guidance gradually developing confidence and independence.

Motivation influences the quality and persistence of learning. Self-Determination Theory argues that motivation strengthens when environments support autonomy (choice and agency), competence (sense of mastery) and relatedness (social support) (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Libraries may foster autonomy by allowing students to select resources and manage their study time and competence by enabling practice and feedback and relatedness through supportive staff and peer learning.

Goal orientation and growth mindset perspectives also suggest that learners persist more when they believe effort leads to improvement and when they adopt mastery goals rather than only performance goals (Dweck, 2006). Exam preparation contexts are often performance focused but libraries can help shift students toward mastery through consistent practice and self-monitoring.

Learning performance in qualitative studies is commonly captured through perceived improvements such as better understanding of subjects, improved reading and writing, stronger exam readiness, increased confidence and more disciplined study habits. While these perceptions do not replace objective marks but they provide meaningful evidence of learning outcomes in students’ lived experiences.

A useful lens is the capability approach which distinguishes between resources and actual opportunities to achieve valued outcomes (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011). A book or computer alone is not enough the students must have the ability and supportive conditions to use them effectively. In rural contexts libraries may expand capabilities by providing resources (books and past papers), conversion factors (quiet space, guidance) and supportive social norms that make learning possible. Thus, rural libraries may function as “capability enablers” which helps in improving education equity.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative research design using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to explore and share experiences and perceptions among rural O/L students regarding rural libraries in their self-learning motivation. FGDs are suitable for understanding collective norms and how students influence each other’s study behaviors especially in community settings (Krueger & Casey, 2015).

The research was conducted in Kaluwanchikudy DS Division in Batticaloa District, Sri Lanka focusing on rural library services in the study area. The Manmunai South and Eruvil Pattu DS Division is known as Kaluwanchikudy DS Division comprises the seven (07) public libraries and those are managed

by the Pradeshiya Sabha. The public libraries are Kaluwanchikudy Public Library, Kaluthavalai Public Library, Koddakallur Public Library, Kurumanvely Public Library, Palugamam Public Library, Periyakallar Public Library and Thettativu Public Library. The National Library and Documentation Services Board graded the public libraries managed by Pradeshiya Sabha as grade three to supra grade according to size of library collections, human resources and facilities available in the Library. The Kaluwanchikudy Library is a grade II library with larger collection size and e-resources facilities and the other Libraries are graded as grade III libraries. Grade III libraries comprises library collection fewer than 5000 books. Grade II libraries include 5000 to 15,000 books as collection size.

The Manmunai South and Eruvil Pattu DS Division stands as a performing rural division as the Pradeshiya Sabha actively maintains a strong network of libraries while other rural areas like Koralai Pattu North (Vaharai), Koralai Pattu South (Kiran) and Manmunai South West (Paddipalia) have lack of study spaces such as libraries. Therefore, the study focuses on The Manmunai South and Eruvil Pattu DS Division as study area representing rural areas of Batticaloa District.

The study area includes diverse rural communities where students face various levels of educational access, tuition availability and household learning resources. Rural public libraries in these areas generally provide reading spaces and printed materials and some have limited ICT facilities.

A purposive sample was used to recruit students who were preparing for G.C.E. (O/L) examinations in 2026, resided in rural areas of Kaluwanchikudy DS Division (Manmunai South and Eruvil Pattu DS Division) and who had experience using rural public libraries (regular and occasional users). As the students who sit for the G.C.E O/L examination 2026 was taken as sample for this study, the students from ten schools were selected and ten focus group discussions were conducted and each group includes nine (09) participants (estimated total $n = 90$). The total participants were enrolled in ten (10) schools and the focus groups were designed to include diversity in gender, school type and subject stream needs while maintaining comfortable peer dynamics. FGDs were held in neutral community locations such as library meeting rooms and school halls to ensure participants felt safe and could speak freely.

A semi-structured focus group discussion guide explored the following are, patterns of library use

(frequency, time of day, purpose), motivational experiences available in the library which encourages learning, self-learning practices developed in libraries (goal setting, revision, reading and practices to do past papers), perceived learning performances (understanding, confidence and discipline), barriers (resources, hours, language, staff and ICT), students' study challenges and learning environment at home and school and suggested improvements (services, programs, resources and outreach).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected through ten focus group discussions were analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis. The analysis followed the six-phase thematic analysis procedure proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) which are familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final analytical narrative. A simple descriptive analysis was also used to assess the pattern of library use among the participants. This descriptive summary supported the qualitative findings by indicating that many students visited libraries regularly, especially two or three days per week and during weekends. Therefore, the descriptive evidence and thematic findings together provided a clearer understanding of the role of rural libraries in supporting self-learning among rural G.C.E. (O/L) students.

Since the study was qualitative in nature, learning performance was understood in terms of students' perceived improvement in subject understanding, study discipline, reading and writing ability, exam readiness and self-confidence rather than direct measurement of examination marks.

The students use the library after school hours to until 8.00 pm according to the facilities provided by the specific libraries in rural areas to facilitate the studies of school students during the weekdays. In the weekends, during office hours the library could be used by the students. The students are encouraged to study their own school notes and after office hours the library reading area is only used by the students while other sections are closed in the library. The analysis produced five major themes explaining how rural libraries motivate self-learning and influence learning performance alongside two cross-cutting barrier themes.

The library as a disciplined and quiet learning environment

Among the focus groups the students declared that the home environments were with distractions from family members and visitors and not facilitated with calm or peaceful environment. But, the library enhanced the study mode and strengthening efficient use of time for studying. The routine library rules such as keeping silence and limited access to mobile devices are very supportive for the students to continuous consistent learning process in these rural libraries. The organized seating seems as supportive rather than restrictive. Many of the students stated that the presence of other students who actively reading and learning in the library created a social norm that encourage the learning.

The library functions as a well-organized environment for the students which increase the self-control and reducing distraction while studying in the library. Therefore, it supports the self-regulated learning by empower the sustained study sessions.

Access to learning materials and exam-oriented resources

The students emphasized that the libraries motivate the self-learning primarily even though the library provides prime resources such as textbooks, subject wise exam guides and past papers of G.C.E O/L examinations held previously. Even these rural public libraries have small collections were valued the most for the students because of the high user demand of library resources.

Students described the motivational effect of “resource prominence” as the accessibility of books and exam materials in the shelves. It also empowers their awareness of what they should study which enable to focus on their enhanced learning among the students. However, many focus groups reported scarcities of updated learning materials and limited copies of new editions creates competition among the users. Therefore, the students relied on peer sharing or tuition materials instead as most of the materials are outdated.

Hence, if the libraries encourage and motivate self-learning by the students to manage the scarcity of library resources which facilitate the own learning processes. The local authorities which control and manage the libraries should take responsibility to expand the library collections with relevance and currency of materials in the rural libraries.

The resource and services are major constraints mentioned by the users of these rural low graded libraries. They highlighted the lack of updated exam guides, subject wise study materials, insufficient seating facilities during peak seasons and poor lighting or ventilation in some libraries. Since these reasons resulted in reduced motivation and less attractive libraries for other non-users of the libraries. And also it was noted that the reading spaces are not enough and seating availability is not enough for the students and often returned back home as filled with students. The non-availability of IT facilities was result in non-use of online learning materials in the library.

Another restriction in these rural public libraries are the digital gaps, relevant collections in Tamil medium and uneven human resources in these libraries. The students desired basic ICT support (computers and internet for educational contents) should be made available in the libraries but many were lack of ICT facilities. Students mentioned the language barriers where resources were not sufficiently available in Tamil medium especially relevant study materials which very much needed for their studies.

Motivational social ecology - peer influence, role models and supportive staff

A social learning atmosphere inside the libraries act as a motivational learning common. The students described it as a motivational and instructional approach. While students observe other who study long hours and use effective strategies created informal role models for the students. The library staff was supportive and guided to find suitable books and encouraged us to study in the library. This attitude enhanced motivation for students to learn and maintained a respectful study environment in the library.

Some students also mentioned the staff who are impatient or unapproachable in few libraries who reduce motivation in learning in the library especially for gentle students. Therefore, the motivation is not only internal but also it is socially produced. Libraries create relatedness and belonging strengthening intrinsic and identified motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The human resources such as skilled and qualified staff were varied in rural libraries. The supportive staff increased motivation but the rigid or unhelpful attitudes of staff decreased the motivation.

Formation of self-learning routines, goal-setting and time management

Students explained that library use helped them to build consistent study routines after school, weekends and closer to exam months. Many described that they were efforts in setting small goals (e.g., completing a past paper and revising one unit) during each library visit. Students used the library as a commitment device which is the place where everyone felt obligated to study. This reduced the procrastination of learning by the students.

However, students noted that limited opening hours in some libraries (closing early) reduced the ability to maintain routines especially for those traveling far or having tuition classes. Libraries support the forethought and performance phases of self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2002) by enabling planning, routine formation and effort persistence.

Confidence-building through practice, feedback and informational support

Students linked library based self-learning to build up their confidence which results improved reading speed, writing practice, understanding difficult subjects and reduced exam anxiety. Practice with past papers and reading reference materials strengthened perceived competence. While using the library the students build confidence in their studies. Students also described informal feedback mechanisms such as peer discussions, comparing answers and occasionally receiving guidance from older students or staff. Even without formal teaching these interactions improved confidence to students. The use of library also helped the students in discussion with the other students and correct their mistakes. Therefore, the competence pathway is central and the libraries motivate self-learning when they enable visible progress and mastery experiences which sustain motivation over time (Dweck, 2006).

This study demonstrates that rural libraries motivate self-learning and contribute to learning performance through interconnected environmental, resource, social, behavioral and psychological mechanisms. First, the library's disciplined environment operates as a self-regulation scaffold. When study environment at homes are disrupted and a quiet and rule-based space such as library spaces for studies reduce distractions and create an immediate learning

center. This aligns with research that learning spaces shape behavior through norms and cues (Aabo & Audunson, 2012).

Furthermore, the access to relevancy of library resources for the exams motivate the learning processes of students by reducing scarcity of materials and increasing perceived opportunities to learn. Students' emphasis on past papers and guides suggests that rural libraries must be strategically exam-oriented. From a capability approach perspective, resources expand students' opportunity sets but only if they are relevant and usable (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011). Likewise, where materials are outdated, the conversion from resources to learning outcomes weakens.

Moreover, the motivation is socially constructed. Peer influence, role modeling and supportive staff foster relatedness and belonging key drivers of self-determined motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Libraries serve as micro-communities of learners where students normalize effort and share strategies. This is significant because rural students may lack academically supportive peer networks at home or in the neighborhood.

Similarly, the libraries help students to build routines, setting the goals and time management are the core elements of self-directed and self-regulated learning (Knowles, 1975; Zimmerman, 2002). Students used the library as a commitment tool to reduce procrastination. However, short opening hours and travel time constraints limit routine formation. Policy designs should therefore treat "hours and accessibility" as motivational infrastructure rather than only operational details in these libraries specifically.

Further, the confidence building is the link between self-learning and perceived performance improvement. Students described mastery experiences through practice and progress, consistent with competence, motivation and growth mindset concepts (Dweck, 2006). When students repeatedly practice the exam papers and correct the mistakes would result in increase in their self-efficacy and sustaining their motivation.

At the same time, structural barriers weaken motivation of students such as resource shortages, limited seating, lack of ICT and uneven staff attitudes. These findings suggest that rural library development must be combined with upgrading the collection development with redesigning the services especially oriented with guided self-learning supports.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative study examined how rural public libraries motivate self-learning and contribute to learning performances among rural G.C.E. (O/L) students in Kaluwanchikudy D.S. Division (Manmunai South and Eruvil Pattu DS Division) in Batticaloa District through ten focus group discussions. Aligned with the research questions, the findings demonstrate that rural libraries function not merely as repositories of books but also represent as capability enabling learning environments that embrace motivation, positive learning behaviors and perceived academic performance.

The study found that rural libraries motivate self-learning primarily by providing a disciplined and distraction-free study environment, access to examination-oriented learning resources and a socially supportive learning atmosphere. Consistent with self-determination theory, these environments support students' autonomy, competence and relatedness, thereby strengthening intrinsic and identified motivation for learning (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For the students who are facing noisy atmosphere at homes and limited parental support for academic activities, the library becomes a psychologically significant space that legitimizes focused study and sustained effort for the students.

The findings revealed that regular library use facilitates the development of self-learning routines including move towards the goals, time management, independent revision and systematic practice of using past examination papers. These behaviors reflect key dimensions of self-directed and self-regulated learning where students actively plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning processes (Knowles, 1975; Zimmerman, 2002). The library environment acts as a commitment mechanism that reduces procrastination and encourages consistent engagement with learning tasks.

The students perceived clear improvements in learning performance associated with library-supported self-learning. These improvements were expressed in terms of better subject understanding, increased reading and writing competence, enhanced exam preparedness and greater confidence in facing the O/L examination. Such confidence-building aligns with growth mindset and mastery learning perspectives where repeated practice and visible progress strengthen learners' self-efficacy and persistence (Dweck, 2006). Although performance was assessed subjectively these perceived gains are

educationally significant as they influence sustained motivation and learning engagement.

The study identifies several structural and service-level barriers that limit the motivational effectiveness of rural libraries. These include shortages of updated O/L-relevant materials, limited seating and study space during peak periods, restricted opening hours, inadequate ICT facilities, language constraints in learning resources and uneven staff capacity. From a capability perspective, these barriers weaken the conversion of available resources into effective learning opportunities, particularly for students from socio-economically constrained households (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011).

Finally, the study concludes that rural libraries in Batticaloa District can significantly enhance students' self-learning motivation and learning performance if they are strategically repositioned as student-centered learning support hubs. Policy-relevant interventions include strengthening examination focused collections, extending library hours during critical academic periods, introducing guided self-learning and study skills programs, improving basic digital learning support and fostering stronger school library partnerships. Such interventions would allow rural libraries to function as inclusive educational institutions that reduce learning inequalities and complement formal schooling.

Overall, this study contributes to rural education and library science literature by empirically demonstrating how rural libraries operate as motivational and behavioral infrastructures for self-learning among secondary school students. By situating rural libraries within motivation theory, self-directed learning frameworks and the capability approach, the research highlights their underutilized potential in improving educational outcomes in peripheral regions. Strengthening rural libraries is therefore not only a cultural or informational investment but a strategic intervention in human capital development and educational equity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthening staff capacity and student-friendly culture: Student-centered service trainings such as short trainings for rural library staff on adolescent learning needs, supportive communication and guidance on locating materials is essentially needed for the staff of these type libraries to upgrade the standard of the libraries. Furthermore, the display of motivational messages such as displaying simple motivational

posters and exam preparation schedules could enable users to promote reading and practice study habits.

ICT and digital learning support: Basic ICT corner with even 2–3 computers with safe educational access could assist the student to enhance their educational needs. Offline digital resources could be very useful if internet access is limited in the libraries. The offline digital resources such as offline contents of downloaded videos, e-books, past paper archives ...etc. via library computers is more effective for the learning process of students in the libraries. Further, digital literacy micro-support could simply assist on searching educational resources, typing and using learning apps especially valuable for rural students with limited digital confidence.

School library partnership: School referral system would be beneficial for the students in these rural areas. The schools could encourage students who use these rural public libraries by issuing certificates or letters of appreciation could be an encouragement for the O/L students to learn in these rural libraries. Similarly, teacher collaboration such as teachers can recommend reading lists and past paper sets to the rural public libraries which embrace the relevant library collections for the O/L students. Further, the mobile or outreach services by the rural libraries to the schools in surrounding areas would help to improve learning by the students. Small boxes of books or weekend library outreach programmes for villages far from the libraries would enhance the utilization of useful library resources for students.

Suggestions for Library service improvements for O/L self-learning

- O/L Exam Resource Corner: Create a dedicated section with updated O/L textbooks, short notes, model papers and subject-wise past papers. Prioritize high-demand subjects (Mathematics, Science, English, Tamil).
- Peak-season extended hours: Extend library hours during the 3–4 months before O/L examinations including weekend sessions.
- Quiet study zones and seating plan: Ensure silent zones, adequate seating, lighting and ventilation. Use simple desk allocation methods during peak times.
- Guided self-learning support: Weekly “study skills mini-sessions” (30–45 minutes) on goal-setting, time planning and past-paper strategy. This can be led by librarians or volunteer teachers.
- Peer learning circles: Facilitate student-led revision circles with basic rules to avoid noise. Encourage seniors/alumni mentoring

Limitations and Future Research

This qualitative study relies on student perceptions and does not directly measure exam marks. Future research could use mixed methods by combining qualitative mechanisms with quantitative tracking of attendance, study hours and pre/post performance indicators. Further studies could also compare libraries with and without ICT services, examine gendered differences in library use and explore parents’ and librarians’ perspectives to triangulate findings.

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