



# Study To Assess The Feasibility Of Library Infrastructure In Secondary Schools Of Ladakh

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## Abstract

The current study was undertaken to assess and evaluate feasibility and existing infrastructure of libraries in the government secondary schools across the region of Ladakh UT. The study was focused both on Leh and Kargil districts. A comprehensive survey was conducted involving a total of 750 participants, comprising 650 students and 100 teachers from 16 government secondary schools. Same number of schools were taken i.e., 8 each from Leh and Kargil to study the whole region. The participants represented a mix of genders, diverse age ranges, and various academic backgrounds, including different student subjects and class levels, ensuring a randomized and inclusive dataset. Of the total respondents, 430 participants (57.3%) were from Leh and 320 (42.7%) from Kargil, reflecting a fairly balanced geographical representation. The finding during this study reveals a critical infrastructural gap, which shows none of the surveyed schools possess a dedicated library building for the students or staff. Instead, all existing libraries operate out of repurposed rooms within the main school structures. This lack of designated space significantly compromises the quality of library services and undermines the students' ability to access a quiet and focused study environment. The study serves as a crucial step towards addressing educational disparities in Ladakh and these results highlight an urgent need for policy-level interventions and infrastructural investment to strengthen educational support systems in the region.

## Introduction

Libraries have long stood as vital pillars of educational institutions, serving as gateways to knowledge, independent learning, and critical thinking. In the context of secondary education, especially within remote and under-resourced regions, libraries play an indispensable role in bridging educational disparities and supporting both students and teachers in their academic pursuits. Despite their critical importance, significant disparities exist in the quality, accessibility, and infrastructure of school libraries across different regions in India. This issue becomes particularly pronounced in geographically isolated areas such as Ladakh, where harsh climatic conditions, logistical challenges, and infrastructural constraints hamper the development and modernization of library services.

Ladakh, recently designated as a Union Territory, comprises two major districts—Leh and Kargil—both characterized by challenging terrains and sparse populations. In such a region, the presence of a functional and well-equipped school library can be a transformative force. However, anecdotal and observational

evidence suggests that school libraries in this region may lack the resources, space, and technological integration required to meet the evolving needs of students and teachers. While national education policies increasingly emphasize digital literacy and student-centered learning environments, the practical implementation of these goals in Ladakh remains uncertain and largely unexplored. This research focuses on evaluating the feasibility, infrastructure, and user attitudes toward library resources and services in government higher secondary schools of the Ladakh region. By involving a diverse set of participants—650 students and 100 teachers from 16 schools across Leh and Kargil—the study offers a data-driven analysis of the current state of school libraries. It further investigates how the lack of dedicated library spaces and inadequate facilities affects the academic experience and study culture of students. The research sample was deliberately stratified across age groups, class levels (11th and 12th), subjects, and geographic regions to ensure a balanced and representative dataset.

In addition to examining infrastructural shortcomings, this study places a strong emphasis on understanding user perceptions and satisfaction levels with existing library services. The attitudes of both students and teachers toward the library—as a physical space and as a learning resource—can provide critical insights into how these facilities are used, valued, and where they fall short. In an age where libraries are rapidly evolving into hybrid digital-physical spaces, it becomes imperative to assess how such transformations are received in remote educational environments like Ladakh. This study lays the foundation for a comprehensive investigation into the state of school libraries in Ladakh. It outlines the key objectives of the study, which are to assess library feasibility, identify infrastructural gaps, and analyze user attitudes toward existing library services. It also highlights the broader goal of informing educational policy and promoting equitable access to quality learning resources. The subsequent chapters of this paper will present a detailed review of the existing literature on school libraries in India and similar regions, describe the methodology employed in the research, analyze the findings based on the collected data, and finally, offer conclusions and actionable recommendations for stakeholders and policymakers.

## Review of Literature

Libraries play a foundational role in supporting educational development by enhancing access to knowledge, promoting reading habits, and facilitating independent learning. Numerous studies have established a positive correlation between library availability and academic performance. Krashen (2011) emphasizes that access to well-stocked libraries significantly improves reading skills, while Lance and Hofschire (2012) demonstrate that the presence of professionally staffed libraries positively impacts student achievement and teaching quality. UNESCO (2014) highlights that school libraries are essential for fostering literacy, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. This is particularly important in remote and marginalized regions where alternative learning resources are scarce. However, in India, the quality and accessibility of school libraries vary widely. Rao and Bansal (2019) observe that poor infrastructure and limited resources in rural schools hinder educational outcomes, despite policy efforts to promote equitable access.

In geographically isolated areas like Ladakh, the challenge is even greater. Singh and Kumar (2021) note that harsh climatic conditions, topographical barriers, and limited funding make it difficult to establish and maintain adequate library facilities. While digital libraries are gaining momentum in urban areas, the digital divide in remote regions continues to limit access to online learning resources (LISRA, 2020). User perception also plays a vital role in shaping library usage. Mathur and Patil (2020) found that students and teachers are more likely to utilize libraries when the environment is quiet, resourceful, and relevant to their curriculum. Studies by Thakur and Deka (2021) further reveal that factors such as age, class level, and subject background influence library engagement and satisfaction. Despite the growing body of literature on

school libraries in India, there remains limited research specifically targeting high-altitude, remote regions like Ladakh. This study addresses that gap by examining the current state of library infrastructure and user attitudes in secondary schools across Leh and Kargil. By doing so, it aims to contribute practical insights to guide library policy and development in similarly challenged regions.

## Methodology

### Research Design

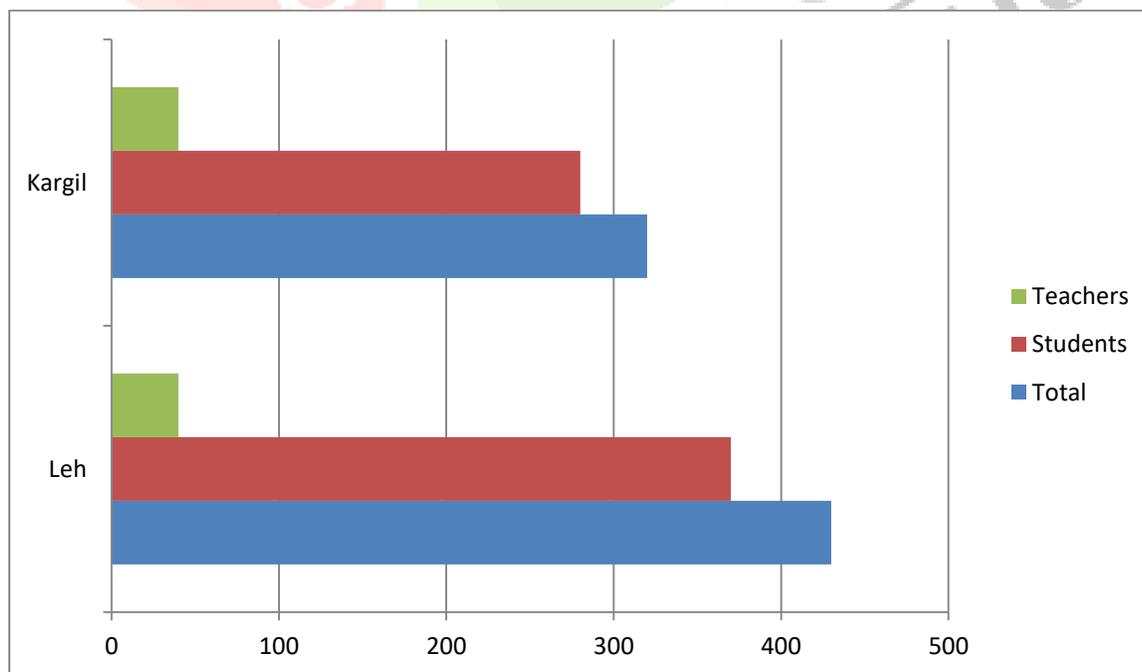
The study adopted a descriptive and quantitative research design to examine the feasibility and infrastructure of libraries in government secondary schools in Ladakh. A structured survey was used to collect primary data from both students and teachers across two districts—Leh and Kargil. The survey methodology enabled the researchers to capture a wide range of responses from various demographic groups, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the existing library conditions.

### Population and Sample

A total of 750 participants were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different age groups, districts, genders, academic classes, and subject areas. The sample consisted of 650 students and 100 teachers from 16 government secondary schools, evenly distributed across Leh (8 schools) and Kargil (8 schools).

**Table 1:** Distribution of Participants by Role and District

District	Students	Teachers	Total Participants
Leh	370	60	430
Kargil	280	40	320
Total	650	100	750



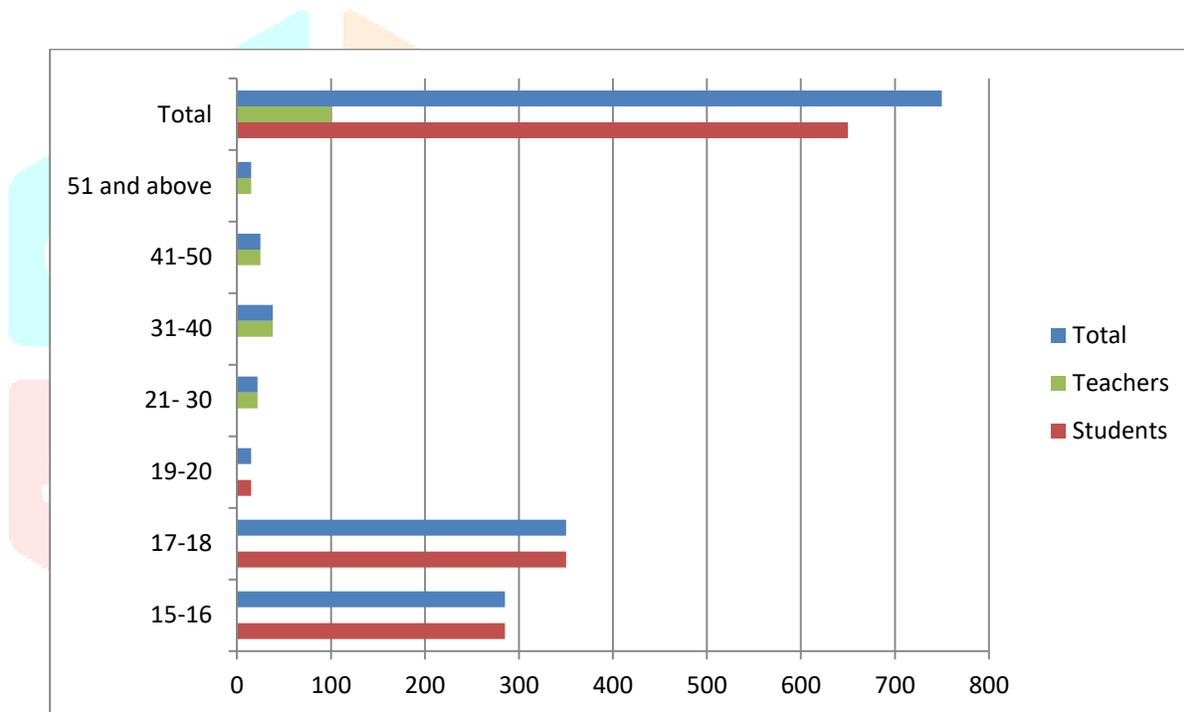
**Figure 1:** Graphical representation of distribution of participants by role and district.

## Age-wise Distribution

Participants were further categorized into different age groups, ensuring a balanced and inclusive representation.

**Table 2:** Age-wise Distribution of Participants

Age Group (Years)	Students	Teachers	Total
15–16	285	0	285
17–18	350	0	350
19–20	15	0	15
21–30	0	22	22
31–40	0	38	38
41–50	0	25	25
51 and above	0	15	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>750</b>



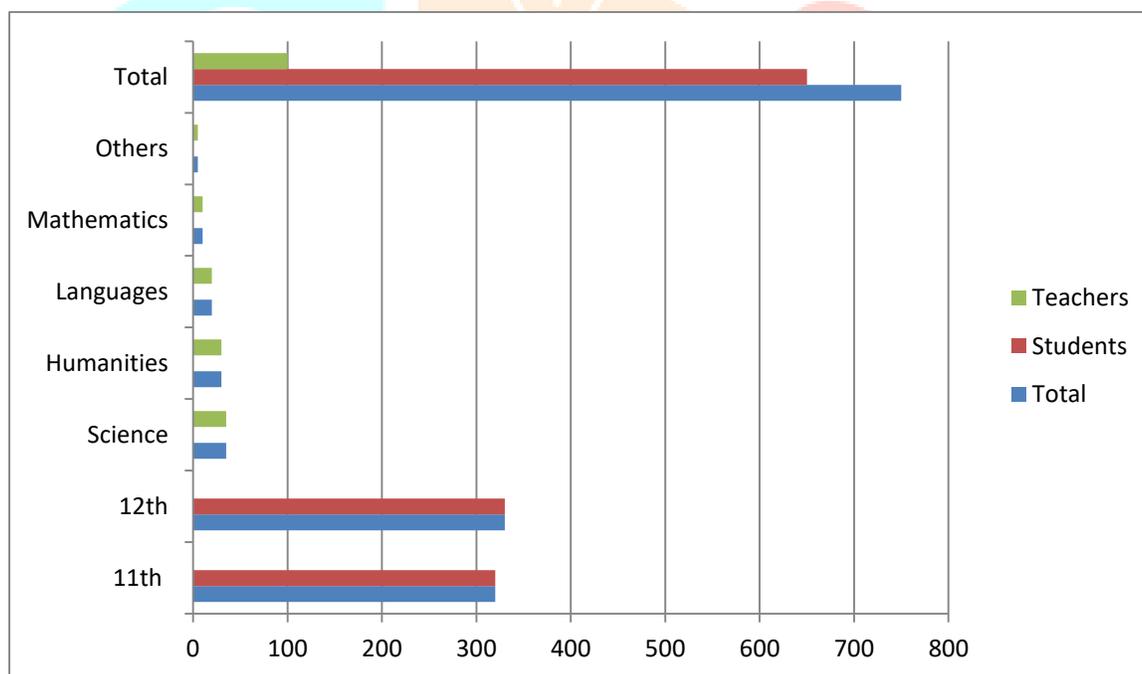
**Figure 2:** Graphical representation of age wise distribution of participants

### Academic and Subject Distribution

To ensure academic diversity, student participants were selected from classes 11 and 12, representing different educational streams. Similarly, teachers were categorized based on their subject expertise.

**Table 3: Class-wise Distribution of Students and Subject-wise Distribution of Teachers**

Class		Number of Students
11th		320
12th		330
Total		650
Subject-wise Distribution of Teachers		
Subject Area		Number of Teachers
Science	35	35
Humanities	30	30
Languages	20	20
Mathematics	10	10
Others	5	5
Total		100



**Figure 3:** Graphical representation of class-wise distribution of students and subject-wise distribution of teachers.

### Data Collection Procedure

Structured questionnaires were distributed physically in schools across both Leh and Kargil districts. The survey included both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions focused on the presence and condition of library infrastructure, access frequency, resource availability, environment quality, and perceived impact on learning. Respondents completed the survey voluntarily, and school administrations facilitated access while maintaining confidentiality and ethical standards throughout the study.

## Data Analysis

The data were tabulated and analyzed using basic descriptive statistics. Percentages and frequency distributions were calculated to identify trends, patterns, and regional comparisons. The findings were then correlated with qualitative feedback to gain deeper insights into the infrastructural deficiencies and their academic consequences.

To ensure a comprehensive and representative analysis, the study employed a descriptive survey method using structured questionnaires distributed across 16 government secondary schools in Leh and Kargil. A total of 750 participants—including 650 students and 100 teachers—were selected through a randomized, demographically diverse sampling approach. The survey captured both quantitative and qualitative data on library infrastructure, access, usage patterns, and the perceived impact on academic performance, offering valuable insights into the current state and feasibility of school libraries in Ladakh.

## Results and Discussion

The data analysis revealed several critical findings:

### Absence of Dedicated Library Buildings

Shockingly, none of the 16 surveyed schools had a standalone library building. All libraries operated out of existing classrooms or office spaces repurposed as library rooms. This compromises the fundamental role of a library as a quiet, resource-rich, and conducive study environment.

### Lack of Silent Study Spaces

Students reported that library periods are often disrupted due to shared spaces or overlapping academic activities. Teachers echoed this concern, citing the lack of a silent atmosphere as a major deterrent to effective library usage.

### Impact on Academic Development

The absence of proper library infrastructure was seen to negatively affect:

- Students' ability to conduct self-study or research
- Reading habits and exposure to diverse literature
- Overall academic engagement and curiosity

### Regional Differences

While the overall situation was similar in both districts, schools in Leh showed slightly better book availability, possibly due to better logistical connectivity. However, this did not translate into improved infrastructure.

### Need for Policy Intervention

This study underscores the urgent requirement for:

- Government investment in standalone library infrastructure
- Regular supply of age-appropriate books
- Training and deployment of dedicated library staff
- Integration of library periods into the academic timetable

## Conclusion

The research clearly demonstrates a systemic deficiency in library infrastructure across government secondary schools in the Ladakh region. The absence of dedicated library buildings not only limits access to resources but also hampers students' academic development and their ability to engage in independent learning. With education being a key driver for development in remote regions like Ladakh, there is an urgent need for educational authorities and policymakers to recognize libraries as critical learning spaces and prioritize their development accordingly.

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