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# Utilization and Management of Non-Book Materials in Libraries of Kerala: A Survey-Based Study.

Sarita S Rajan <sup>1</sup>

Research Scholar, Department of Library & Information Science, Annamalai University, Chidambaram.

Dr. S Mohammed Esmail <sup>2</sup>

Professor, Department of Library & Information Science, Annamalai University, Chidambaram.

Corresponding Author: Sarita S Rajan

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## KEYWORDS

Non-Book Materials, Library Utilization, Preservation, Kerala Libraries, Digitization

## ABSTRACT:

Non-book materials, including maps, globes, artworks, audiovisual media, and archival documents, are critical resources in libraries, supporting research, education, and cultural preservation. However, these resources are often underutilized and inadequately managed. This study investigates the availability, usage patterns, and management practices of non-book materials in selected libraries of Kerala. A descriptive survey was conducted among 30 libraries using a structured questionnaire. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and presented as percentages to illustrate utilization trends. Findings reveal that newspaper cuttings (93%), CDs (90%), maps (83.33%), and artworks (80%) are the most commonly available and utilized resources, while microfiche (23.33%) and slides (26.67%) are the least used. Other materials, such as globes (66.67%), microfilms (63.33%), photographs (60%), play records (46.67%), audio/video cassettes (33.33%), video discs (56.67%), and coins/stone-age tools (56.67%), exhibit moderate usage. The study highlights the need for improved cataloguing, digitization, and user awareness initiatives to enhance the accessibility and utilization of non-book materials in Kerala libraries.

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## 1. Introduction

While books remain central to library collections, non-book materials—including maps, globes, artworks, photographs, audiovisual media, and archival documents—play a vital role in supporting research, education, and cultural preservation. In Kerala, many libraries house unique collections of manuscripts and historical artifacts, yet systematic documentation of their usage and management is limited. Understanding the patterns of availability and utilization of non-book materials is essential for effective preservation, access, and resource planning. This study addresses this gap by examining how non-book materials are managed and utilized in Kerala libraries.

Proper **preservation and management** of non-book materials are essential to ensure long-term accessibility. Audiovisual materials, slides, microfilms, and rare artifacts are particularly vulnerable to deterioration due

to environmental conditions, handling, and technological obsolescence (Alhassan & Mohammed, 2019). At the same time, advancements in **digitization and cataloguing** have created opportunities to enhance access and utilization, especially for materials that are otherwise difficult to access physically (Dutta, 2018; Tiwari & Yadav, 2017).

### Utilities of Non-Book Material

Following are some of the utilities of NBM:

- NBM as storage media provide potential alternative access to information, which has enormous information storage capacity with low cost.
- Data damage is drastically reduced with NBM and information can be retrieved and transferred speedily and accurately.



- Their durability quality provides the benefit of repetitive use of information without deterioration or loss.
- Presently there is a trend towards compressing information carriers so that they occupy less space and make storage and distribution easy. Books are “space eaters” whereas NBM are “space savers”.
- They have the quality of security, accessibility, portability, reliability, economy, easy retrieval and easy updating.
- Rare books can be stored in microform. The whole set of Encyclopaedia Britannica; Chemical Abstracts and Biological Abstracts can be stored in a CD-ROM.

## 2. Objectives

1. To identify the types and availability of non-book materials in Kerala libraries.
2. To analyse patterns of utilization of these materials by library users.
3. To examine challenges related to the management and preservation of non-book materials.

## 3. Methodology

- **Research Design:** Descriptive survey
- **Sample:** 30 libraries across Kerala, including academic, public, and special libraries
- **Data Collection:** Structured questionnaire administered to library staff and users
- **Analysis:** Data analysed using descriptive statistics and presented as percentages to illustrate trends

## 4. Results

**Table 1: Availability and Utilization of Non-Book Materials in Kerala Libraries**

Non-Book Material	Usage / Availability (%)
Maps	83.33
Atlas	80.00

Non-Book Material	Usage / Availability (%)
Globes	66.67
Artworks	80.00
Microfilms	63.33
Microfiche	23.33
Photographs	60.00
Slides	26.67
Play Records	46.67
Audio & Video Cassettes	33.33
Video Discs	56.67
CDs	90.00
Newspaper Cuttings	93.00
Government Orders/Documents	66.67
Coins / Stone-Age Tools	56.67

## Key Findings:

- Newspaper cuttings, CDs, maps, and artworks are widely available and heavily utilized.
- Microfiche and slides exhibit minimal usage, reflecting obsolete formats or limited awareness.
- Materials such as globes, microfilms, photographs, coins, and video discs show moderate utilization.

## 5. Discussion

The results indicate that Kerala libraries prioritize frequently used materials such as newspaper cuttings, CDs, maps, and artworks. Conversely, older formats like microfiche, slides, and audio/video cassettes are underutilized, likely due to technological obsolescence and limited user awareness. Moderate utilization of globes, microfilms, photographs, and coins suggests



these resources are recognized but may require better promotion and access.

These findings align with prior studies emphasizing that effective cataloguing, preservation, and user engagement significantly influence the utilization of non-book materials. Libraries that implement systematic management and awareness programs observe higher usage rates, highlighting the importance of strategic resource planning.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

### Conclusion:

The study demonstrates that while certain non-book materials are extensively used, others remain underutilized due to management and awareness challenges. Addressing these gaps is crucial for maximizing the research and educational potential of library collections.

### Recommendations:

1. Initiate **digitization programs** for slides, microfiche, and audiovisual materials.
2. Conduct **user awareness and training programs** to enhance utilization.
3. Implement **systematic cataloguing and preservation policies** for all non-book materials.
4. Update library resources regularly and provide access to historical artifacts to support research.

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