

## USE OF READING SPACE AND LIBRARY RESOURCES: CASE STUDY OF BHAI KAHN SINGH NABHA LIBRARY, PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA (PUNJAB)

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This study aims to investigate the use of reading space and library resources by the users of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha Library, Punjabi University, Patiala, PUNJAB. This study is based on the primary data collected from the readers who were studying in the Main Reading Hall and Night Reading Hall of the library. The findings of the study show that maximum number of respondents depend upon the internet to a medium extent. There is a good number of respondents who believe that with the advent of the Internet there is no decline in the use of library. The respondents visit reading halls daily for their academic work, research and for the preparation of competitive exams. This study will help to improve the services of the library, users' needs and problems faced by them while using the library and the reading space.

**Keywords:** Library and the Internet, Library Resources, Library Use, Patiala, Survey, Punjabi University, Reading Space.

### INTRODUCTION

A university library plays a pivotal role in education, teaching and research by providing a variety of resources and services in different formats to meet the information needs of the academic communities. The main aim of a university library today is to develop information literate students who are independent learners, critical thinkers and are aware of their information needs. A student can develop critical reading, learning and research skills by continuous reading. But it is believed that the reading culture among the present generation students is declining day by day due to various reasons such as availability of readymade study material on the internet, easy availability of smart phones and the growth of various social media apps such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Whatsapp, etc. which keep the students engaged in such a way that they spend their valuable time on these things instead of reading. But personal experience of the author at the Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha Library of Punjabi University, Patiala reveals

that the reading space of this library is always full with students and researchers. Not only this library but most of the university libraries also witness the same phenomena. This depicts the role of a library to motivate the students for reading by creating an environment where students can read in a peaceful environment with concentration and without any outer disturbance.

Libraries have also added to this by operating in a serene environment and stock with appropriate study materials to offer the services to the students that can adequately serve their needs. All these factors encouraged to take this topic for study to explore the use of reading space and library resources of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha Library of Punjabi University, Patiala. The Punjabi University was established on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1962 for catering to the educational needs of the rural students and it is the second university in the world after the Hebrew University of Israel to be named after a language. The main library of this university named as Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha Library is housed in an extensive, modern, air-conditioned and Wi-Fi enabled building having more than 5,54,000 volumes and 256 journals. Punjabi Reference Library, a special wing of this library is dedicated to special collection on history and culture of Punjab, Punjabi literature and language and on Sikhism. The main library has a majestic reading space with sitting capacity of 600 readers. A special night reading hall is also available for the readers with 365x24x7 opening with different facilities.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Selected literature was reviewed to study the use of reading space, library resources and

services. Sequeiros (2013) conducted a case study of a public library in Porto, Portugal to understand how public library readers interact with space, the internet technology and reading resources. The study shows that the library and its space and management style are flexible enough for meeting the different user needs. For the general reading atmosphere, high satisfaction was reported. Abbasi et al. (2014) conducted an online survey among the students of the University of Queensland, Australia to identify the various aspects of reading space. The findings revealed that students felt that furniture was quite comfortable and the qualities of physical space were third most significant property shown by users to prefer a specific library building beside the location and access of the resources. Ellison (2016) conducted a study to know how the library spaces can be effective in enhancing student's needs and learning practices at Bognor Regis Learning Resource Centre at the University of Chichester. The study found that the basic features like temperature, location, light, IT facilities, noise, security, cleanliness, etc. influence the effectiveness of learning environment and the students demand more space for reading with lack of noise, faster computers and better catering facilities.

Barfi et al., (2018) conducted a survey to examine the utilization of library resources by lecturers in the University of Cape Coast. The results of this study revealed that though there are many resources in the library but lecturers use library mainly for consultation of reference materials. They use library for research purposes and borrowing of books and utilize books more

than any other source of information. This study recommended that more up to date and relevant materials should be acquired by the library, and lecturers should be informed of newly acquired materials. Gudi and Paradkar (2018) examined the user's satisfaction with library resources in Engineering College libraries of Pune. The users were found satisfied with the Text books, reference books, print journals and back volumes of print journals, e-resources, e-books and e-databases in the library. The authors suggested that librarian needs to take suggestions from users while purchasing resources and should concentrate on diverse and research-oriented resources. Maan (2018) conducted a survey to know the use of library resources and services at Punjabi University, Patiala. The study suggested that the library needs to continuously update the information about the resources and services according to the information needs of the library users and should also get the suggestions from the library users to enhance the use of library resources and services. Zhang and Nagatsuka (2018) studied the development of Public Reading Space (PRS) in China and Japan. Public reading space is a new way of public libraries to meet readers' needs in the digital and smart society by space transformation which opens free to the public. Different styles of PRSs are emerging in China and Japan in recent years which are developed by both the government and non government sectors to transform the reading environment for citizens in each community.

Usuka et al., (2019) investigated the availability of library aesthetics in the federal university library in South East, Nigeria. The

results show that the aesthetic facilities like signage, ventilation, art drawing, lightening, and exterior and interior designing influence the use of library as these make library comfortable, conducive and exciting for research, learning and reading. Fortun et al., (2020) conducted a comparative study on the use of internet and library as a source of information, and found that students prefer both library and internet for meeting their study needs in the internet era. It is found from the above literature review that the physical space of a library have a great impact on the users to prefer a specific library. The basic features of physical space such as temperature, light, location, noise, internet facilities, security and cleanliness have a great impact on the learning environment.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To sought opinions of users on the use of libraries in the Internet era;
2. To find out the use, frequency and purpose of using the reading space of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha Library, Punjabi University, Patiala;
3. To find out the use of various resources by the users of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha Library;
4. To find out the users' satisfaction level towards reading space;
5. To find out the various problems faced by the users in using the reading space of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha Library; and
6. To invite suggestions from library users to further improve the reading space.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey method of research was used to conduct this study. The students who were using university reading halls were selected and the data was collected from them. After the collection of data, it was analyzed and presented with the help of tables and figures. Findings and results are generalized from the data collected from the users as a whole.

**Research Tool:** A questionnaire tool was designed and used to collect the data from the users for the present study.

**Administration of the Questionnaire:** The questionnaire was personally distributed by using convenience sampling method to 100 users sitting in reading halls, 50 in main reading hall and 50 in night reading hall. The data was collected in a period of 2 weeks and during administration personal interactions were also made with the respondents for providing clarity about the terms used in the questionnaire.

**Response Rate:** 100 questionnaires were distributed in both the reading halls and all the dully filled questionnaires were received back. The response rate was 100% as the questionnaires were administered personally and the respondents were very helpful.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### General Information of the Respondents

The first part of the questionnaire consisted of the some basic questions pertaining to the general information of the respondents. The data collected on these aspects is presented below:

The table 1 shows that in the main reading hall (MRH), 60% of the respondents are male and 40% are females. In the night reading hall (NRH), 62% of the respondents are male and 38% are females. Further, it shows that the male members are higher in number than female members.

**Table 1: Gender-wise distribution of the Respondents**

Gender	Frequency (MRH)		Frequency (NRH)	
	N	%	N	%
Male	30	60	31	62
Female	20	40	19	38
Total	50	100	50	100

### Educational Qualification of the Respondents

The table 2 shows that in the main reading hall, 46% of the respondents are post graduates, 30% are graduates and 24% are pursuing doctorates. In the night reading hall, 52% of the respondents are post graduates, 28% are graduates and 20% are pursuing doctorates. So, a large number of respondents are post graduates, followed by the graduates and doctorates respectively.

**Table 2: Educational Qualification of the Respondents**

Educational Qualification	Frequency (MRH)		Frequency (NRH)	
	N	%	N	%
Graduation	15	30	14	28
Post Graduation	23	46	26	52
Doctorate	12	24	10	20
Total	50	100	50	100

### Designation of the Respondents

The table 3 shows that in the main reading hall, 52% of the respondents are researchers and

48% are students. In the night reading hall, 58% of the respondents are students, 22% are researchers and 20% are alumni members. This shows that the researchers mostly use the main reading hall as compared to the night reading hall and the alumni members prefer night reading hall for their study.

**Table 3: Designations of the Respondents**

Designation	Frequency (MRH)		Frequency (NRH)	
	N	%	N	%
Student	24	48	29	58
Researcher	26	52	11	22
Alumnus	00	00	10	20
Total	50	100	50	100

### Dependency upon the Internet for Study

The use of the Internet has a significant impact on the study of the students. They have to depend upon the Internet for various purposes. A question was asked to the respondents about the extent of their dependency on the Internet. The table 4 shows that in the main reading hall, 58% of the respondents agreed that they depend on the Internet for their study to a medium extent, 34% of the respondents depend on the Internet to a large extent and 08% of the respondents depend on the Internet to a lesser extent. In the night reading hall, 62% of the respondents depend on the Internet for their study to a medium extent, 24% of the respondents depend on the Internet to a large extent and 14% of the respondents depend on the Internet to a lesser extent. Further, it exhibits that till today, maximum number of the students use the internet for their study to a medium extent.

**Table 4: Dependency on the Internet**

Opinion	Frequency (MRH)		Frequency (NRH)	
	N	%	N	%
large extent	17	34	12	24
medium extent	29	58	31	62
lesser extent	4	08	07	14
Total	50	100	50	100

### Use of Library in the Internet Era

Now-a-days a common perception developed in the minds of the people is that with the advent of the Internet most of the study material is available on the Internet so the use of libraries is decreasing. So, a question was asked to the users to know their opinions about this. The table 5 shows that in the main reading hall, maximum number of the respondents (46%) believe that there is no decrease in the use of library, 40% of the respondents believe that the use of library is decreasing and 14% of the respondents don't have any opinion regarding this. In the night reading hall also, the maximum number of the respondents (54%) believe that the use of library is not decreasing, 28% of the respondents believe that the use of library is decreasing and 18% of the respondents didn't show any opinion regarding this. In tune with this, Fortun et al. (2020) found that the students prefer both library and the internet for meeting their study needs. So, it is concluded that even today when the impact of the Internet can be seen in every aspect of life, the maximum number of library users think that there is no decrease in the use of library

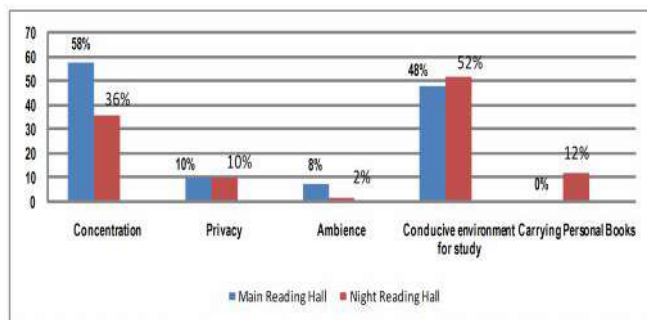
### Use of Reading Space

A Reading Space is a place where a person read, learn and assimilate things in a silent and quiet environment. A question was asked to the

**Table 5: Use of Library in the Internet Era**

Opinion	Frequency (MRH)		Frequency (NRH)	
	N	%	N	%
Yes	20	40	14	28
No	23	46	27	54
Can't Say	7	14	09	18
Total	50	100	50	100

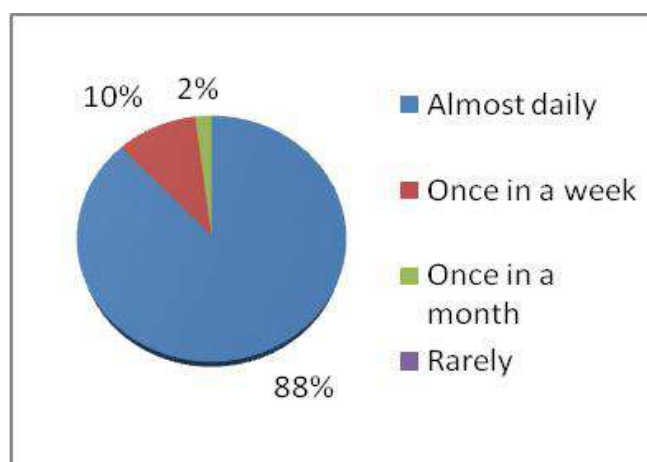
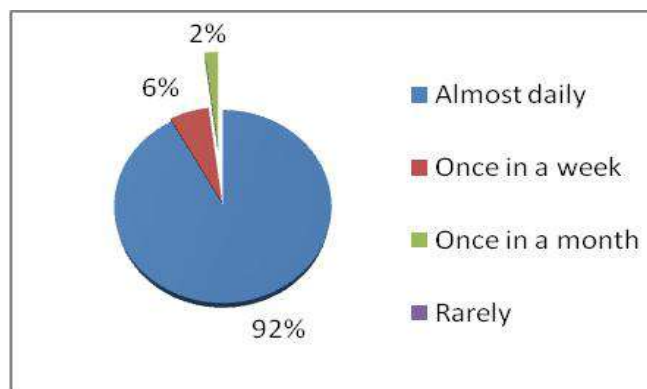
respondents to know the reasons for using reading halls. From the figure 1 it can be seen that in the main reading hall, 58% respondents use this reading hall to concentration on the study. 48% for conducive environment, 10% for privacy and 5% for ambience. In night reading hall, 52% respondents use the reading hall for conducive environment, 36% for concentration, 12% for carrying personal books, 10% for privacy, and 2% for ambience. So, the respondents use these reading halls mainly for concentration on their studies and for conducive environment and some of the respondents prefer using night reading hall because of the facility of carrying personal books in the night reading hall. These findings are corroborated with the Abbasi et al. (2014) and Ellison (2016). The study reveals that the reading space of the library has impact on its use and the basic features like location, temperature, light,

**Figure 1: Reasons for using the Reading Halls**

IT facilities, noise, security, cleanliness, etc. influence the effectiveness of learning environment.

### Frequency of Using the Reading Halls

Reading is very essential and pre-requisite for the overall development of a human being and the society. Reading can help to improve the skills, nurture the intellect of a person, develop good imagination, sharpen the mind, develops good decision making, help discover new things and ideas and help conduct well in the social and professional life. So, the users were asked about how frequently they use reading halls.

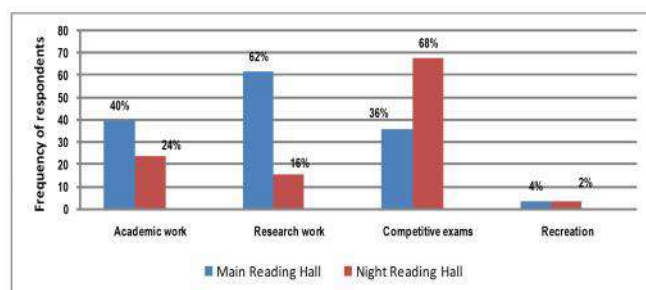
**Figure 2.1 (MRH)****Figure 2.2 (NRH)**

The figures 2.1 and 2.2 shows that in the main reading hall, maximum number of the respondents (88%) use the reading hall on daily basis, while 10% of the respondents use it once a week and only 2% respondents use it once a month. In the night reading hall also, the maximum number of the respondents (92%) use the reading hall everyday, while 6% of the respondents use it once a week and only 2% respondent use it once a month. So, the data shows that the maximum number of the respondents uses the reading halls on daily basis.

### Purpose of using Reading Halls

Providing a good reading space to the users in the university is like providing fertile soil to the seeds for developing them into fruitful plants for the future. An attempt was made to know the purpose of using the reading halls by the respondents.

**Figure 3: Purpose of using the Reading Halls**



The data in the figure 3 shows that in the main reading hall, 62% of the respondents use for their research work, 40% of the respondents use for academic work, 36% of the respondents use reading hall for preparing for competitive exams and 4% of the respondents use for recreation. In the night reading hall, 68% of the respondents use for preparing for competitive exams, 24% of the

respondents use for their academic work, 16% of the respondents for research work and 4% of the respondents use reading hall for recreation. So, in the main reading hall the maximum number of the respondents uses this reading hall for research work and in the night reading hall maximum number of the respondents use for the preparation of the competitive exams. A very less number of the respondents use the reading halls for the recreation.

### Resources used by the Respondents in the Reading Halls

Students use various information resources for their study. So, a question was asked to know the resources used by the respondents while studying in the reading halls. The data in table 6 shows that in the main reading hall, 80% of the respondents prefer both the library and personal resources 12 % of the respondents prefer library resources and 8% of the respondents prefer personal resources. In the night reading hall, 56% of the respondents prefer personal resources, 42% prefer both and 2 % prefer library resources. So, in the main reading hall a large number of respondents prefer both the resources while in the night reading hall a large number of the respondents prefer personal resources. The respondents, who prefer to use library resources, are using the following types of library resources.

### Reasons for preferring Personal Resources

The respondents who prefer personal resources over the library resources gave the following reasons about their use of personal resources. The table 7 shows that in the main reading hall, 42% respondents prefer personal

**Table 6: Resources used by the Respondents**

Resources Used	Frequency (MRH)		Frequency (NRH)	
	N	%	N	N
Library Resources	6	12	01	02
Personal Resources	4	08	28	56
Both	40	80	21	42
Total	50	50	50	100

resources due to the lack of new resources in the library, 38% respondents prefer personal resources due to the lack of research related material, 32% respondents prefer personal resources due to the lack of competitive exams material and 18% respondents prefer personal resources due to the lack of adequate resources in the library. In the night reading hall, 60% respondents prefer personal resources due to

lack of competitive exam related material, 20% respondents prefer personal resources due to lack of research related material, 20% respondents prefer personal resources due to the lack of new resources in the library and 10% respondents prefer personal resources due to the lack of adequate resources in the library. So, due to these reasons it is felt that the library needs to update its collection development policy to add the latest and adequate resources to meet the demands of the users. These findings are similar to the study by (Barfi et al., 2018) which suggested that library need to acquire more up-to-date and relevant materials. Maan (2018) in his study also suggested that the university libraries continuously need to update the information resources and services according to the information needs of the library users.

**Table 7: Reasons for preferring Personal Resources**

Reasons for using Personal Resources	Frequency (MRH)		Frequency (NRH)	
	N	%	N	%
Lack of adequate resources in library	9	18%	05	10%
Lack of new resources	21	42%	10	20%
Lack of competitive resources	16	32%	30	60%
Lack of research related material	19	38%	10	20%

### **Satisfaction Level of the Respondents regarding the Reading Halls**

The question was asked to know the satisfaction level of respondents regarding reading halls and library resources, responses received are tabulated below: Table 8 shows that in the main reading hall 60% of the respondents and in the night reading hall 50% of the respondents were somewhat satisfied with the library collection. So,

the most of the respondents were somewhat satisfied with the library collection. These findings are similar to the findings of Gudi and Paradkar (2018) where the library users were found satisfied with the different resources of the library. 40% of the respondents in the main reading hall were highly satisfied with the reading space and 32% of the respondents in the night reading hall were somewhat satisfied with the



reading space of the library. In tune with this Sequeiros (2013) also found that the users are highly satisfied with the atmosphere in reading space. Also, there was a significant number of the

respondents who were dissatisfied and highly dissatisfied with the library collection, library staff and with the reading space.

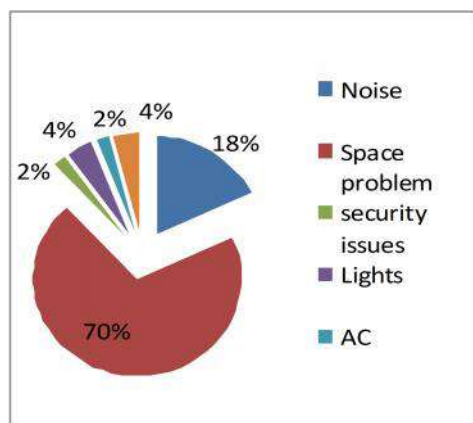
**Table 8 Satisfaction level of the Respondents regarding the Reading Space and Facilities**

Name of service	Highly Satisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Dissatisfied		Highly Dissatisfied	
	(MRH)	(NRH)	(MRH)	(NRH)	(MRH)	(NRH)	(MRH)	(NRH)
Library collection	20%	4%	60%	50%	10%	10%	2%	2%
Library staff	36%	32%	46%	28%	2%	8%	2%	6%
Physical facilities	28%	24%	46%	34%	0%	4%	2%	2%
Reading space	40%	26%	26%	32%	10%	2%	22%	8%

### Problems faced by the Respondents while studying in the Reading Halls

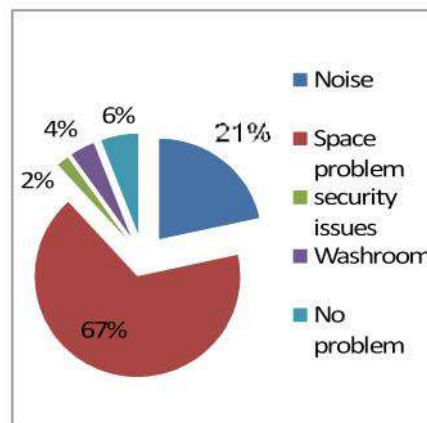
Reading space in the library has a great impact on how the users study as it can encourage study and inculcate reading culture among the users. The availability of comfortable tables, chairs, good

lighting, ventilation, and quiet atmosphere has always attract the users to reading halls of libraries so that they can make use of the library effectively. So, the respondents were asked to answer the problems faced by them while they are studying in the reading halls.



**Figure 4.1 (MRH)**

The figures 4.1 and 4.2 show that in the main reading hall 70% of the respondents and in the night reading hall 67 % of the respondents complained about the space problems. In the main reading hall, 18% of the respondents and in the night reading hall 22 % of the respondents



**Figure 4.2 (NRH)**

complained about the noise problem. The other problems like security issues, lighting, AC, electronic circuits, washroom etc. were also reported. These findings are in line with the study by Ellison (2016) which found that the users demand more space with less noise, adequate

computers with internet speed and better catering facilities.

## **SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

To improve the library services further, the respondents were asked to give suggestions and recommendations for which they were asked to give some positive points and some negative points related with the reading halls. The responses received are as follows:

The most common positive points related to reading halls given by the respondents are:

- Good lighting, furniture and infrastructure.
- Availability of WI-FI connection.
- Good environment for study.
- Silence, concentration and privacy.

The most common negative points related to the reading halls are:

- Less reading space as compared to the number of students.
- Sometimes there is a noise in the reading halls.
- Personal books in the main reading hall are not allowed.
- Paying fee for library pass by the alumni students.
- Disturbance from the library staff as sometimes they talk too loudly.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study of users of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha Library, Punjabi University, Patiala reveals that students and researchers from different departments of the university as well as alumni members are making good use of library reading

space and its resources. In the main reading hall, the respondents are mostly researchers and in the night reading hall there are mostly the students who are preparing for competitive exams. The study reveals that the maximum number of respondents depend upon the Internet for their study to a medium extent. It was encouraging to note that a good number of respondents believe that with the advent of the Internet there is a no decline in the use of library but there are also some respondents who believe that there is decline in the use of library in this internet era. The main reasons provided by these respondents are: personal availability of the Internet to everyone, quick accessibility of information on the Internet, lack of updated information in printed books, decline of reading culture among students, availability of digital books, students' preference to study online and increased dependency of students on Internet. The respondents use these reading halls mainly due to the concentration and conducive environment to study. The maximum respondents prefer to visit the reading halls every day for their academic work, research and preparing for competitive exams. Satisfaction regarding the reading space and facilities is quite high in the respondents of both the reading halls but most common problem faced by the users in both the reading halls is the availability of fewer seats as compared to the number of users, noise in the reading halls, not allowance of personal books in the main reading hall, fee for library pass by the alumni members and disturbance from the library staff. Also as emphasized by Zhang & Nagatsuka (2018), 'reading spaces are helpful in transforming the reading environment for citizens

in each community' hence, it is suggested that the library, if possible, can increase the reading space so that more users can avail the benefits of library resources and services. The library is already having a good collection, but material related with competitive exams and research should be updated to adequately meet the demands of the users.

There is no denying the fact that library of Punjabi University, Patiala is providing excellent services to its users but to meet the diverse and changing demands of the users some more initiatives can be taken. Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha Library will continue to serve the information needs of diverse user communities and also those interested in the culture, language and documentary heritage of Punjab.

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