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Use of Information Sources and Services in Public Libraries: A Study

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Abstract **- The purpose of this paper is to explore the use of information sources and services of public library. This study selected 1527 registered users from 25 city / district central libraries in Karnataka State. The result of the study shows that 73.67% of public library users are students and most of them (48.13%) are from rural areas. Majority of users (62%) used the public library daily, and 73.3% of respondents spent more than 4 hours in public library. In this context, the public library should procure more number of books which are more relevant to the students. The public library needs to create awareness among the female users to visit the public library as well to make use of sources available in the public library. The basic facilities viz., separate reading hall, ladies waiting room need to be created. Apart from that the need based information services viz., novels, comics, women health related books need to be procured by public library.**
Keywords: **Public library, Information Sources, Information Services, Users**

I. INTRODUCTION

Public libraries are vital to a democratic society serve as societal equalizers, providing information resources and services to all people regardless of socioeconomic status, disability, or location (Nzivo, 2012). Public library known as social institution (Martin, 1937) serves as a medium to deal with social problems. The important aim and objective of a public library is to provide access to information, education, personal development, computer training program, careers services, job fairs etc through a variety of resources and services uniformly available to all publics with irrespective of race, religion, nationality, language, gender, age, disability, economic and employment status and educational background (Carol, 2001). The history of the development of the public library may be said to be as old as that of education in India (Ekbote, 1987). Public libraries in India made a remarkable growth in the post-independence of India (Bajpai & Jyoti Kumar, 2015). Public libraries are people-oriented institutions (Ghosh, 2005); people are interested in new resources and services, which should serve as a social, cultural, economic, educational, recreational center for the community. In this context the present study focuses on use of sources and services of public library by users.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the present study are

1. To know the extent of use of public library by users
2. To examine the frequency of visit and time spent in public library
3. To know the purpose of visit to public library
4. To find out the extent of use of public library sources and services by users

III. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

A. Study Area

The present study is confined to only 19 city/district central libraries in Karnataka State. There are 26 city central libraries and 30 district central libraries of which the study has been selected only 19 city/district central libraries. Apart from these, the study also covered 5 zonal libraries and one state central library. The scope and sample population of the present study is shown in figure 1.

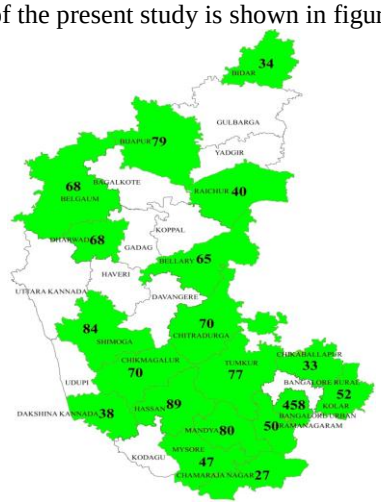

Fig. 1 Study Area and Sample Size

IV. METHODOLOGY

In order to collect the necessary data this study a well structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed both in English and Kannada language (Kannada is the local language of Karnataka State). The questions in the questionnaire are designed for the public library users to elicit the use of sources and services by public. The duly filled questionnaires were analyzed and the data were presented in the form of tables and charts.

The total number of registered users in the selected public library is 3,18,844. From this 1,527 (degree of accuracy / margin error: 0.025 and confidence: 95 per cent) samples were draw using the formula given by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

$$s = \frac{x^2 \mathrm{NP}(1-\mathrm{P})}{d^2(\mathrm{N}-1) + x^2 \mathrm{P}(1-\mathrm{P})}$$

s = required sample size
x^2 = the table value of Chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level.
N = the population size (3, 18,844).
P = the population proportion (assumed to be 0.025 since this would provide the maximum sample size).
d = the degree of accuracy expressed as '*p*' (i.e. Margin of error=5.0)

V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

TABLE I DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

Demographic Information		No. of respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	1206	79.00%
	Female	321	21.00%
Age	Below 20 year	253	16.56%
	20 to 30 years	1093	71.57%
	30 years Above	181	11.85%
Educational Background	SSLC	64	4.19%
	PUC	239	15.65%
	Under Graduate	747	48.91%
	Post Graduate	477	31.23%
Occupation	Students	1125	73.67%
	Working Professionals	322	21.08%
	Farmers / Labours	34	2.22%
	Unemployed	46	3.01%
Social Background	Urban	622	40.73%
	Semi Urban	170	11.13%
	Rural	735	48.13%

Data summarised in table I indicates the demographic characteristics of respondents. It shows that 79% of respondents are male and only 21% respondents are female. Not surprisingly 71.57% of respondents come under the age group of 20 to 30 years and 16.56% of respondents fall under the age group of below 20 years. In terms of educational background, collectively 80.14% of respondents are graduates and Post graduates. Majority of the respondents are students (73.67%), while others are working professionals (21.08%), unemployed (3.01%) and farmers/labours (2.22%). Table I also shows that 48.13% of respondents are from rural areas and 40.73% of them are from urban. Only 11.13% of them are from semi urban.

The age, education and occupational background of the respondents indicate that public libraries are used in the process of developing career status mostly by students who fall under the age group of 20-30 years.

TABLE II METHODS OF KNOWING ABOUT PUBLIC LIBRARY

Methods	Numbers	%	Cumulative %
Through Myself	675	44.20	44.20
Family Members	97	6.35	50.55
Friends	478	31.30	81.85
Teachers	175	11.46	93.31
Neighbours	26	1.70	95.01
General Public	76	4.97	100

Public library users were also requested to mention their methods of knowing about public library and data are presented in table II. It is evident from the table that, 44.20% of respondents came to know about public library by themselves. In addition to that friends (31.30%) and teachers (11.46%) helped them to know about public library.

TABLE III FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Frequency	Numbers	%	Cumulative %
Daily	946	62.0	62.0
2 to 3 days per week	285	18.7	80.7
Once in a week	132	8.6	89.3
Once in a month	52	3.4	92.7
Occasionally	112	7.3	100

The data represents in table III show the frequency of visit to public library. Very interestingly, more number of respondents (62%) visited the public library daily. About 285 (18.7%) respondents visited public library 2 to 3 days per week. However, less percent respondents visit to public libraries once in a week (8.6%), occasionally (7.3%) and once in a month (3.4%).

TABLE IV TIME SPENT IN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Time Spent	Numbers	%	Cumulative %
Half an hour	76	5	5
One hour	148	9.7	14.7
Two hours	184	12	26.7
More than 4 hours	1119	73.3	100

The respondents were asked to indicate, time spent in public library and data is described in table IV. Very interestingly 73.3% of the respondents spent more than 4 hours in public library. Only 9.7% of students spent one hour in a day.

The public library users were requested to mention the purpose of visit to public library and the data are presented in table V. Surprisingly, most of the respondents (44%) visiting public library always with the main purpose of preparing for competitive/academic exams. Similarly, the study of Sunilkumar & Jayakumara (2015) also found that 47.82% of respondents visit 'Very frequently' to read text and competitive exam books. Majority of the respondents visited the public library always to read newspaper/

magazines (38.57%). Only, 7.13% of respondents use the public library very often for reading novels/short stories. It is illustrated that there is considerable decrease in reading of novels/short stories by public.

TABLE V PURPOSE OF VISIT TO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Purpose	Always	Very Often	Some Times	Rarely	Never
To read newspapers / Magazines	591 (38.57%)	225 (14.73%)	200 (13.09%)	59 (3.86%)	454 (29.73%)
To read novels /short stories	157 (10.28%)	109 (7.13%)	213 (13.94%)	146 (9.56%)	902 (59.07%)
To read text books / borrow or return books	385 (25.24%)	140 (9.16%)	133 (8.70%)	66 (4.32%)	803 (52.58%)
To prepare for competitive /academic exams	672 (44%)	163 (10.67%)	98 (6.41%)	44 (2.88%)	550 (36.01%)
To read children books	72 (4.71%)	62 (4.06%)	124 (8.12%)	112 (7.33%)	1157 (75.76%)
To spend leisure time	79 (5.17%)	85 (5.56%)	118 (7.72%)	81 (5.30%)	1164 (76.22%)
To use library's computers / Internet	80 (5.23%)	72 (4.71%)	110 (7.20%)	86 (5.63%)	1179 (77.21%)
To meet friends	60 (3.92%)	40 (2.61%)	101 (6.61%)	106 (6.94%)	1220 (79.89%)
To take part in cultural activities/events/ exhibitions (lectures, reading groups etc.)	66 (4.32%)	74 (4.84%)	90 (5.89%)	97 (6.35%)	1200 (78.58%)

Miserably, most of the respondents never interested to use of public library for the purpose of to read children books (75.76%), to spend leisure time (77.21%), to use library's computers/Internet (77.24%), to meet friends (79.89%) and to take part in cultural activities/events/exhibitions, lectures, reading groups etc (78.58%).

TABLE VI USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES IN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Sources	To a Great Extent	To a Considerable Extent	To Some Extent	To a Little Extent	Not at All
Newspapers / Magazines	599 (39.22%)	300 (19.64%)	259 (16.96%)	145 (9.49%)	224 (14.66%)
Journals	467 (30.58%)	273 (17.87%)	264 (17.28%)	182 (11.91%)	341 (22.33%)
Novels / Short stories / Literature books	129 (8.44%)	115 (7.53%)	209 (13.68%)	293 (19.18%)	781 (51.14%)
Textbooks / Arts or Science books	242 (15.84%)	185 (12.11%)	187 (12.24%)	186 (12.18%)	727 (47.60%)
Children's books	95 (6.22%)	88 (5.76%)	134 (8.77%)	215 (14.07%)	995 (65.16%)
Competition exam books	566 (37%)	269 (17.61%)	198 (12.96%)	103 (6.74%)	391 (25.60%)
Reference sources	103 (6.74%)	90 (5.89%)	142 (9.29%)	194 (12.70)	998 (65.35%)
Audio and video sources	57 (3.73%)	67 (4.38%)	67 (4.38%)	122 (7.98%)	1214 (79.50%)

The respondents were asked to mention the information sources used in public library (Table 6). The most common used sources are newspapers (39.22%) and magazines. While 37% of the respondents used competition exam books & 30.58% of respondents are used journals. Unfortunately, other important sources of information such as novels/short stories/literature books (7.53%), children's books (5.76%), reference sources (5.89%), and audio & video materials (3.73%) were used by less percent of the users. This indicates that users are not satisfied with the overall information resources available at the public library. Similar study of Iwhiwhu & Okorodudu (2012) yielded related results about overall average of 1.67 as mean value showed that the available information resources in the Edo state central library is not adequate and this reduces the satisfaction level of users who patronise the library.

Attempt was also made to collect data on use of information services in public library & the data is presented in table VII. In total, 18.27% of respondents used reference services & 15.45% of respondents used circulation service in the public library. Only, 10% respondents used newspaper clipping service. It can be noted that none of the services being used to a great extent. Not surprisingly, labelling information services not at all satisfied with the respondents. Correspondingly, Uddin, Quaddus & Islam (2006) study found that overall average of 1.75 as mean value revealed that users are generally not satisfied with the services of Edo state central library.

TABLE VII USE OF INFORMATION SERVICES IN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Services	To a Great Extent	To a Considerable Extent	To Some Extent	To a Little Extent	Not at All
Reference services	279 (18.27%)	263 (17.22%)	263 (17.22%)	141 (9.23%)	581 (38%)
Issue /return document service	236 (15.45%)	160 (10.47%)	188 (12.31%)	204 (13.35%)	739 (48.39%)
Mobile library service	91 (5.95%)	82 (5.37%)	132 (8.64%)	159 (10.41%)	1063 (69.61%)
Internet service	129 (8.44%)	102 (6.67%)	152 (9.95%)	149 (9.75%)	995 (65.16%)
Newspaper clipping service	153 (10%)	115 (7.53%)	144 (9.43%)	139 (9.10%)	976 (63.91%)
Reprographic (Photocopy) service	79 (5.17%)	89 (5.82%)	119 (7.79%)	123 (8.05%)	1117 (73.14%)

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study yielded various interesting results with respect to the use of public library. First and foremost, very less percent of female (21%) users used public library. Therefore, the public library needs to create awareness among the female users to visit the public library. The basic facilities need to create viz., separate reading hall, ladies waiting room need to be created. Apart from that the need based information services viz., novels, comics, women health related books need to be procured by public library. The study shows that the percentage of students who were using public library comparatively high rather than other occupational groups. As a result, public libraries would give importance to provide students need based services and facilities to build their career. Moreover, majority of the respondents were from rural areas. So, public libraries in taluk/branch and gram panchayat library services and facilities need to be upgraded to satisfy the needs of public in rural areas. Secondly, Public library users came to know about public library by themselves. Therefore, it is suggested that public library authorities should plan to propagate on existence of public library through banners, hoardings, posters and social & mass media advertising.

It is also found that most of the respondents visit public library every day for their information needs and they spend more than 4 hours in public library. Hence, libraries may plan to create a pleasant environment to the use information services in public library. Another notable finding of the study was that less responses on use of information services in public library shows that there is no enough updated reference sources, less interest in issue/return document service, because majority of documents are novels/short stories/fictions, which are not interested to read by public. Whereas, mobile library service almost arrived at ruin stage, while entire Karnataka State has only 15 mobile libraries, which are unable to cater the information services to surrounding community for various reasons. Hence, it is suggested that increase and strengthen the mobile libraries to minimize the distance of residents, make possible to house wife's access, enabling to physically challenged persons and partially serve all kinds of publics, finally, to bridge the gap between place of library to remote rural area. Public library authority should plan for more mobile libraries because which can be act as nerve system of public library.

Further, this study also suggested that other types of users were not many in the public library such as physically challenged persons (blinds, dumb, deaf, handicapped etc), neo-literates, illiterates, farmers, etc. In such a case, public library should be in a position to serve such kind of users with acquiring special materials (braille documents, audio, video, multimedia and documentary movies) to the public library.

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