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Awareness on Library Resources and Services in District Central Libraries: A Study among the users

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ABSTRACT: The paper examines the level of awareness on Library Resources and Services among the users. A well structured questionnaire was designed to collect the data from the users. Thus collected data were exported to the SPSS for analysis. The results showed that 60.5% of the users are highly aware of the “Newspapers” subscribed in the libraries and it is also found that the level of awareness on “Audio-Video Resources” is found low. Further, it is indicated that the level of awareness on “Reference Services” is found in the medium level only. It is evident that the libraries are well stored the books pertaining to the competitive examinations, as a result, 70.8% of the users are used the books for competitive examinations. Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that the authorities of the public libraries have to increase the usage of library resources and services by means of organizing training programme for the users as well as the staff members of the public libraries.

KEYWORDS: Public Libraries, Library Resources, Library Services, Subject Books, OPAC Service

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Dr.S.R.Ranganathan ‘The public Library is for the public, by the public and of the public’. The public Libraries are established to serve the people by providing access to information. At present, the public libraries have implemented the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to provide information in the digital forms. The library collects, processes, stores and disseminates information to the users in the digital formats. The IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines (Koontz & Gubbin 2010) describes the public library as an institution that provides access to knowledge, information and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services, while the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1994) states that a public library is a local gateway to knowledge by providing the basic conditions for lifelong learning, independent decision - making and cultural development of an individual and social groups. Obasi (2015) pointed out that a public library should be seen as the embodiment of the principle of the right to access and use information and to acquire knowledge.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kaul, H.K. (2002) opined that “Our public library system in the country failed totally in bringing knowledge to the doorsteps of every individual. It is advisable for us to look at the problem afresh, especially when the computer and communication technologies have now become available to us at a minimal cost. Ole Pors, N. (2006) investigated that “use of physical libraries and digital resources complement each other. Majority of students (60%) use the local public library for study purposes”. It is also recommended that library authorities should provide a basic access point to the Internet and that they need to be thinking of how to develop the services”. Mushtaq, A. and Arshad, A. (2022) indicate that “library users frequently visited the library for reading personal books and examination preparation; however, they never or rarely used e-databases, photocopy and printer services, computer stations, the internet, library catalog and socialization with friends”. Kumar, Singh and Yadave (2011) assessed that “access to the right information is found difficult for the users, because of lack of awareness and not able to locate the information”. It is recommended that librarians should initiate to necessary steps to increase the utilization



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of the resources by means of acquiring the required information. Adeoye and Popoola (2011) discovered that “many users still prefer electronic print. Based on this finding, they suggest that e-book offers from the publishers and libraries may be higher than many users' preferences. Mashilo T. Modiba Solomon Bopape 2017) found in the study that majority of the users indicated that public libraries as playing a significant and crucial role in bridging the digital divide and they are able to use the services for academic activities and to access email communications. The study recommends that the district government in Ngaka Modiri Molema sustain the provision of computers and internet services, and establish information literacy programmes in public libraries. Abdulsalam Abiodun Salman, Tinashe Mugwisi and Bertha Jantine Mostert(2017) investigated that the awareness of services was restricted to a few services, and accessibility to the major library services was found to be a challenge to many of the users due to unawareness of services, and lack of information literacy skills. It is recommended to improve access and to promote services among users. Oyeronke (2012) advocated that the main concern of public library services is to provide timely, accurate, current and reliable information to a community served. Public libraries could also render services such as lifelong learning by providing a range of material on a variety of topics which will allow people to follow their interests and support them in the development of their education (Amodeo and Carter, 1999). According to Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012) and Kim-Soon, Hasbi and Ahmad (2013) state that “ensuring customer satisfaction within the public library services depends on the provision of good quality and quantity of the services for learning and research.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the level of awareness about the Library Resources available in the District Central Libraries Trichy, Thanjavur and Perambalur districts.
2. To know the level of awareness among public about the Resources availability in District Central Libraries.
3. To know the level of awareness on Library Services among the users.
4. To find out the purpose of visiting the Libraries and
5. To ascertain the preferred Library Resources and Services available in the District Central Libraries.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted among the users visiting the District Central Libraries located in Trichy, Thanjavur and Perambalur districts. In order to fulfill the objectives of the study, a well structured questionnaire was designed to collect the data. A total of 372 questionnaires randomly administrated among the users District Central Libraries located in Trichy, Thanjavur and Perambalur districts. Out of 372 respondents, 309 respondents have responded and the response rate comes to 83.06%. The data collected were converted into SPSS for analysis.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The data collected were systematically analyzed to find out the results pertaining to the objectives of the study.

5.1. Level of Awareness on Library Resources

The usage of the Library resources is more important in any library. It can be increased by educating the users about the resources by means of conducting various innovative programmes. In this study, an attempt has been made to find out the level of awareness on library resources available in the District Central Libraries among the users on three point scales such as “Low”, “Medium” and “High” and the same is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Level of Awareness on Library Resources

S. No.	Description	L	M	H	Mean	SD	Rank
1	General Books	28 9.1%	128 41.4%	153 49.5%	2.40	.65	3
2	Subject Books	27 8.7%	118 38.2%	164 53.1%	2.44	.65	2
3	Reference Resources	54 17.5%	126 40.8%	129 41.7%	2.24	.73	6



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4	Magazines	53 17.2%	107 34.6%	149 48.2%	2.31	.74	5
5	Newspapers	37 12%	85 27.5%	187 60.5%	2.48	.70	1
6	Books for Competitive Examination	47 15.2%	116 37.5%	146 47.2%	2.32	.72	4
7	Braille Books/Resources	108 35%	98 31.7%	103 33.3%	1.98	.82	7
8	Audio-Video Resources	138 44.7%	98 31.7%	73 23.6%	1.78	.80	8

L=Low, M=Medium, H=High, SD=Standard Deviation

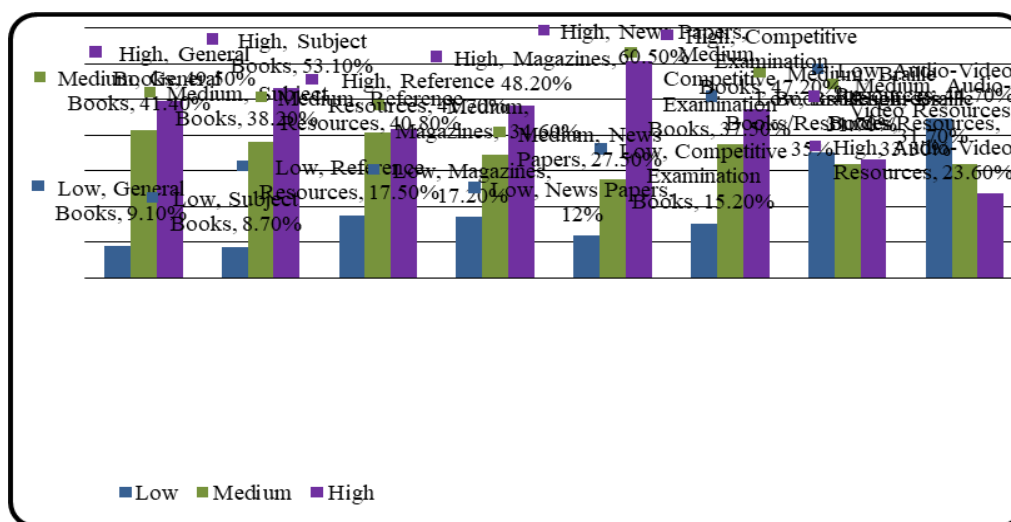


Figure1.Level of Awareness on Library Resources

It is found from Table 1 that majority of the users 60.5% are highly aware of “Newspapers” subscribed in the district central libraries. The second highest level of awareness can be found on “Subject Books” by 53.1% of the users. It is followed by “General Books (49.5%) and “Books for Competitive Examinations” (47.2%). A good number of users (48.2%) are highly aware of “Magazines”. Further, it is resulted that 41.7% of the users are found in the high level of awareness on “Reference Sources”. However, it is observed that the level of awareness on “Braille Books and Resources (33.3%) and Audio-Video Resources (23.6%) are not found high. It is inferred that there is a less deviation in the level of awareness among the users of District Central Libraries on awareness of library resources and it ranges from 0.65 to 0.80.

5.2. Level of Awareness on Library Resources

The information can be disseminated in the form resources and services to the users. The libraries are providing a variety of traditional and digital services to the users to keep the latest information. The usage of the services is depended on the awareness of services. Table 2 describes about the level of awareness on Library Services.

Table 2: Level of Awareness on Library Services

S. No.	Description	Low	Medium	High	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Circulation Services	57 18.4%	198 64.1%	54 17.5%	1.99	.60	4
2	Library Automation	62	185	62	2.00	.63	2



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		20.1%	59.9%	20.1%			
3	Reference Service	46 14.9%	190 61.5%	73 23.6%	2.08	.61	1
4	Card Catalogue Service	89 28.8%	164 53.1%	56 18.1%	1.89	.67	5
5	OPAC Service	178 57.6%	96 31.1%	35 11.3%	1.53	.69	8
6	News Paper Clipping Service	82 26.5%	145 46.9%	82 26.5%	2.00	.72	2
7	New Arrival Service	118 38.2%	140 45.3%	51 16.5%	1.78	.70	7
8	Library Extension Services	112 36.2%	127 41.1%	70 22.7%	1.86	.75	6

(SD=Standard Deviation)

It is found from Table 2 that the level of awareness on “Circulation Services” are resulted in “Medium” level (64.1%). It is indicated that the level of awareness is found on “Medium” level on “Reference Service” (61.5%) and “Library Automation”(59.9%). It is only 53.1% of the users are aware of “Card Catalogue Service” at “Medium” level. The awareness of the users on “Newspaper Clipping Service” (46.9%) and “New Arrival Service”(45.3%) can also be seen in the “Medium” level. Only few users are aware of “OPAC Service” (31.1%) and “Library Extension Services” (41.1%). There is a less deviation in the level of awareness on Library Services and it ranges from 0.60 to 0.75.

5.3. Purpose of visiting the Library

The purpose of visiting the Libraries is differed from user to user based on the information requirements, Age and Sex. In this study six, major purposes were identified and analyzed on “Likert’s Five point Scale “Strongly Disagree”, “Disagree”, “Un Decided”, “Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” and the same is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Purpose of visiting the Library

S. No.	Description	SD	DA	UD	A	SA	M	SD	R
1	To browse Newspaper	50 16.2%	25 8.1%	105 28.8%	93 35.3%	36 11.7%	3.18	1.23	3
2	To refer reference books	48 15.5%	14 4.5%	63 20.4%	138 44.7%	46 14.9%	3.38	1.25	2
3	To borrow books	69 22.3%	37 12%	40 12.9%	134 43.4%	29 9.4%	3.05	1.35	4
4	To prepare for Competitive Examinations	37 12%	12 3.9%	41 13.3%	112 36.2%	107 34.6%	3.77	1.29	1
5	To browse Internet	63 20.4%	30 9.7%	94 30.4%	96 31.1%	26 8.4%	2.97	1.25	6
6	To participate in the Library Extension Services	61 19.7%	36 11.7%	68 22%	123 39.8%	21 6.8%	3.02	1.25	5

SD=Strongly Disagree, DA=Disagree, UD= Un Decided, A=Agree and SA=Strongly Agree, R=Rank

It is observed from Table 3 that majority of the users (70.8%) are visited the district central library to “Prepare for Competitive Examinations”. The result further shows that 59.6% of the users used the library to “Refer Reference Resources”. It is indicated that 57% of the users visited the library for the purpose of “Browsing the News Papers”. It is evident that 52.8% of users visited the library to “Borrow Books”. It is stated in the result of the study that 46.6% of the users used the library to “Participate in the Library Extension Services”, whereas, 39.5% of the users visited the library for “Internet Browsing”.



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5.4. Preferred Library Resources and Services

The study has also analyzed to find out the priority of the resources and services among the users on nominal scale and the same is given in Table 4.

Table 4: Preferred Library Resources and Services

S. No.	Description	Yes	No	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Subject Books	223 72.2%	86 27.8%	1.72	.44	1
2	General Books	217 70.2%	92 29.8%	1.70	.45	3
3	Books for Competitive Examinations	221 71.5%	88 28.5%	1.71	.45	2
4	Fiction	105 34%	204 66%	1.33	.47	7
5	Job -Related Books	111 35.9%	198 64.1%	1.35	.48	6
6	Library Automation Service	187 60.5%	122 39.5%	1.60	.48	4
7	OPAC Service	88 28.5%	221 71.5%	1.28	.45	8
8	Library Extension Service	171 55.3%	138 44.7%	1.55	.49	5

(SD=Standard Deviation)

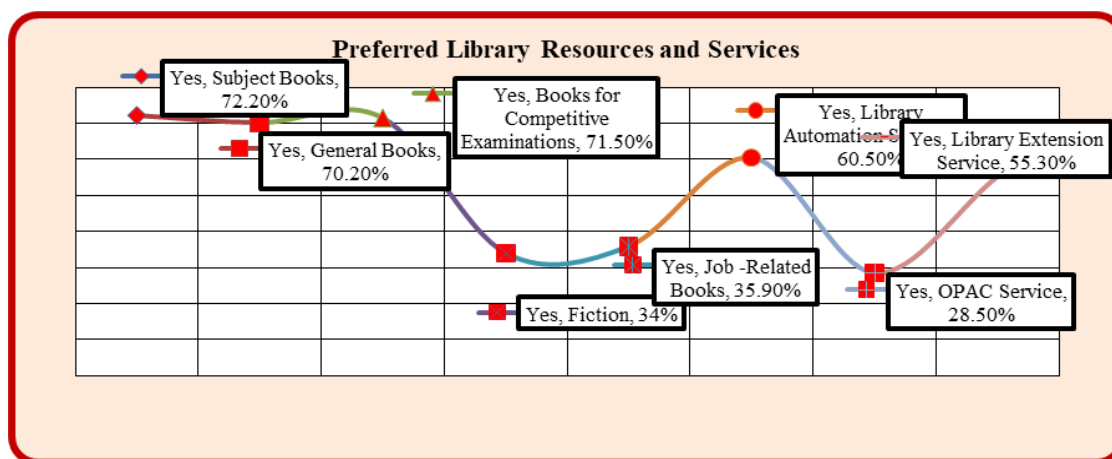


Figure 2. Preferred Library Resources and Services

It is found from Table 4 that high priority is given for “Subject Books” by 72.2% of the users, whereas 71.5% of users are preferred “Books for Competitive Examinations”. Further, 70.2% of the users are interested on ‘General Books”, which is followed by “Library Automation Services” by 60.5% of the users. A good number of users (55.3%) are given priority for “Library Extension Services” and “Job-Related Books” (35.9%). However, it is found that less priority is given for “Fiction Book” and “OPAC Service” by 30% and 28.5% of the users respectively.

5.5. Overall Rankings

Based on the results of the study, overall rankings found in each objective are given in Table 5.



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Table 5: Overall Rankings

S.No.	Description	First Rank	Last Rank
1	Awareness of Library Resources	Newspapers (60.5% , Table 1)	Audio-Video Resources (23.6, Table 1)
2	Awareness on Library Services	Reference Service (85.1% , Table 2)	OPAC Service (42.4%, Table 2)
3	Purpose of Visiting Library	To prepare for Competitive Examinations (70.8%, Table 3)	To browse Internet (39.5%, Table 3)
4	Preferred Library Resources and Services	Subject Books (72.2%, Table 4)	OPAC Service (28.5%, Table 4)

- Table 5 explains that “Newspapers” has been found in the highest level of awareness among the majority of the users, whereas, “Audio-Visual Resources” has been found in the lowest level of awareness.
- Majority of the users are well aware of “Reference Services”, but “the level of awareness on “OPAC Service” can be seen in the lowest level.
- The District Central Libraries have been used by the majority of the users to “Prepare for Competitive Examinations”. It is only few users have used the “Internet Services” available in the Libraries.
- “Subject Books” have been highly preferred by majority of the users than “OPAC Service”

VI. CONCLUSION

Public Libraries play a vital role for community development in any country. In order to sustain, the present public libraries are well equipped with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to cater the information needs of the people. The requirements of the users for information are changing from print form to digital form. It forces that public library to add the resources, services, process, store and disseminate information both print and digital forms. According to the results of the study, majority of the users are well aware of traditional resources and services than the digital services. However, the users are still preferred the traditional services due to unaware of ICT based services e.g. Library Automation and OPAC Service. The public libraries are organizing various extension services for the users, but participation of users are to be increased. According to results of the study, majority of the users are using the public libraries to prepare for the competitive examinations and Subject Books are given high priority by the users. However, the services provided by the public libraries are not reached among the larger section of the users. Based on the results, it is recommended that the authorities of District Central Libraries of Trichy, Thanjavur and Perambalur shall take necessary steps to educate the users about the library resources and services, since, the usage of ICT based services are not reached the user community well. In the ICT world, the information is being published, not only in the traditional form, but also in the digital form. It is understand from the results that majority of the users prefer the traditional resources and services than digital resources and services. The authorities of the public libraries have to organize a training programme for the users to educate the advantages of the digital resources and services.

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