AWARENESS OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN DISTRICT CENTRAL LIBRARIES: A STUDY AMONG THE USERS

ABSTRACT

The paper examines the level of awareness of 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 to in the libraries and it is also found that the level of awareness of "Audio-Video Resources" is found low. Further, it is indicated that the level of awareness of "Reference Services" is found at the medium level only. It is evident that the libraries are well-stored books pertaining to the competitive examinations, as a result, 70.8% of the users have used the books for competitive examinations. Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that the authorities of public libraries have to increase the usage of library resources and services by means of organizing training programs for the users as well as the staff members of the public libraries.

Keywords: *Public Libraries, Library Resources, Library Services, Subject Books, OPAC Service*

Introduction

According to Dr. S.R. Ranganathan, 'The Public Library is for the public, by the public, and of the public". Public Libraries are established to serve the people by providing access to information. At present, public libraries have implemented Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to provide information in digital forms. The library collects, processes, stores, and disseminates information to the users in digital formats. The IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines (Koontz & Gubbin 2010) explain the public library is considered an institution, which enables the users to get information available in the Library by using the resources and services. IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1994) says that a public library is a knowledge gateway for the users for lifelong learning, decision - making and cultural development of both individuals and groups in society. Obasi (2015) pointed out that a public library should be considered as an embodiment of the principle which helps to acquire knowledge.

Review of Literature

Kaul, H.K. (2002) opined that "Our public library system in the country needs to improve its facilities to give knowledge and information to the users at their doorsteps. Computer and communication technologies are available to implement ICT in libraries at a low cost. Ole Pors, N.(2006) investigated that public libraries have been used by 60% of the users for study purposes". Mushtaq, A. and Arshad, A. (2022) indicate that "library users frequently visited the library for reading personal books and examination preparation". Kumar, Singh, and Yadav (2011) assessed that the "lack of awareness" has been found as a major barrier to access to the right information and not able to locate the information". Adeoye and Popoola (2011) that publishers and libraries are providing e-books that are higher than many users' preferences. Mashilo T. Modiba Solomon Bopape 2017) indicates that users use libraries for academic activities and to access email communications. Abdulsalam Abiodun Salman, Tinashe Mugwisi, and Bertha Jantine Mostert(2017) investigated that the awareness of services given few services and accessibility to the other library services was found as a challenge to many users due to a lack of awareness of services, and information literacy skills. Oyeronke (2012 stated that the main aim of public library services is to provide timely, accurate, current,

Dr. K.S. SIVAKUMAREN
Assistant University Librarian, Library,
MIT Campus Anna University, Chennai, Tamilnadu, India.

Dr. V. RAJASEKAR
Assistant University Librarian, Gr-I,
University Library, Anna University, Chennai, Tamilnadu, India.

and reliable information to users. Public libraries provide services for lifelong learning by providing related resources on various topics to the users for development education (Amodeo and Carter, 1999). According to Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012) and Kim-Soon, Hasbi, and Ahmad (2013) state that "ensuring the users' satisfaction in the public library services is highly dependent on good quality and quantity of the services for learning and research.

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 the public about the Resources available in District Central Libraries.

3. To know the level of awareness of 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.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted among the users visiting the District Central Libraries located in Trichy, Thanjavur, and Perambalur districts. To fulfill the objectives of the study, a well-structured questionnaire was designed to collect the data. A total of 372 questionnaires were randomly administrated among the users of 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.

Data Analysis and Results

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

Level of Awareness of Library Resources

The usage of 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 programs. In this study, an attempt has been made to find out the level of awareness of 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 of Library Resources

S. No.	Description	L	M	H	Mean	SD	Rank
1	General Books	28	128	153	2.4	0.65	3
		9.10%	41.40%	49.50%			
2	Subject Books	27	118	164	2.44	0.65	2
		8.70%	38.20%	53.10%			
3	Reference Resources	54	126	129	2.24	0.73	6
		17.50%	40.80%	41.70%			
4	Magazines	53	107	149	2.31	0.74	5
		17.20%	34.60%	48.20%			
5	Newspapers	37	85	187	2.48	0.7	1
		12%	27.50%	60.50%			
6	Books for Competitive Examination	47	116	146	2.32	0.72	4
		15.20%	37.50%	47.20%			
7	Braille Books/Resources	108	98	103	1.98	0.82	7
		35%	31.70%	33.30%			
8	Audio-Video Resources	138	98	73	1.78	0.8	8
		44.70%	31.70%	23.60%			

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

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 results that 41.7% of the users found a high level of awareness of "Reference Sources". However, it is observed that the level of awareness of "Braille Books and Resources (33.3%) and Audio-Video Resources (23.6%) are not found high. It is inferred that there is 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.

Level of Awareness of Library Resources

The information can be disseminated in the form of 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 the level of awareness of Library Services.

Table 2
Level of Awareness of Library Services

S. No.	Description	Low	Medium	High	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Circulation Services	57	198	54	1.99	0.6	4
		18.40%	64.10%	17.50%			
2	Library Automation	62	185	62	2	0.63	2
		20.10%	59.90%	20.10%			
3	Reference Service	46	190	73	2.08	0.61	1
		14.90%	61.50%	23.60%			
4	Card Catalogue Service	89	164	56	1.89	0.67	5
		28.80%	53.10%	18.10%			
5	OPAC Service	178	96	35	1.53	0.69	8
		57.60%	31.10%	11.30%			
6	News Paper Clipping Service	82	145	82	2	0.72	2
		26.50%	46.90%	26.50%			
7	New Arrival Service	118	140	51	1.78	0.7	7
		38.20%	45.30%	16.50%			
8	Library Extension Services	112	127	70	1.86	0.75	6
		36.20%	41.10%	22.70%			

(SD=Standard Deviation)

It is found from Table 2 that the level of awareness of "Circulation Services" resulted in a "Medium" level (64.1%). It is indicated that the level of awareness is found on the " Medium" level on "Reference Service" (61.5%) and "Library Automation" (59.9%). It is only 53.1% of the users are aware of the "Card Catalogue Service" at the "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 a few users are aware of "OPAC Service" (31.1%) and "Library Extension Services" (41.1%). There is less deviation in the level of awareness of Library Services and it ranges from 0.60 to 0.75.

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	25	105	93	36	3.18	1.23	3
		16.20%	8.10%	28.80%	35.30%	11.70%			
2	To refer to reference books	48	14	63	138	46	3.38	1.25	2
		15.50%	4.50%	20.40%	44.70%	14.90%			
3	To borrow books	69	37	40	134	29	3.05	1.35	4
		22.30%	12%	12.90%	43.40%	9.40%			
4	To prepare for Competitive Examinations	37	12	41	112	107	3.77	1.29	1
		12%	3.90%	13.30%	36.20%	34.60%			
5	To browse Internet	63	30	94	96	26	2.97	1.25	6
		20.40%	9.70%	30.40%	31.10%	8.40%			
6	To participate in the Library Extension	61	36	68	123	21	3.02	1.25	5
		19.70%	11.70%	22%	39.80%	6.80%			

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

It is observed from Table 3 that the majority of the users (70.8%) 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 "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".

Preferred Library Resources and Services

The study has also been analyzed to find out the priority of the resources and services among the users on the 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 / 72.20%	86 / 27.80%	1.72	0.44	1
2	General Books	217 / 70.20%	92 / 29.80%	1.7	0.45	3
3	Books for Competitive Examinations	221 / 71.50%	88 / 28.50%	1.71	0.45	2
4	Fiction	105 / 34%	204 / 66%	1.33	0.47	7
5	Job-Related Books	111 / 35.90%	198 / 64.10%	1.35	0.48	6
6	Library Automation Service	187 / 60.50%	122 / 39.50%	1.6	0.48	4
7	OPAC Service	88 / 28.50%	221 / 71.50%	1.28	0.45	8
8	Library Extension Service	171 / 55.30%	138 / 44.70%	1.55	0.49	5

(SD=Standard Deviation)

It is found from Table 4 that high priority is given to "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 in '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.

Conclusion

Public Libraries play a vital role in community development in any country. To sustain, the present public libraries are well equipped with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to cater to the information needs of the people. The requirements of the users for information are changing from print form to digital form. It forces public libraries to add the resources, services, process, store, and disseminate information in both print and digital forms. According to the results of the study, the majority of the users are well aware of traditional resources and services than the digital services. However, the users have still preferred the traditional services due to being unaware of ICT-based services e.g. Library Automation and OPAC Services. According to the results of the study, the majority of the users are using public libraries to prepare for competitive examinations, and Subject Books are given high priority by the users. However, the services provided by public libraries are not reached the larger section of 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 by organizing a training program for the users to educate the advantages of the digital resources and services.

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