

# USERS SATISFACTION TOWARDS PUBLIC LIBRARIES: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UDUMALPET

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## ABSTRACT

*Libraries are major sources of providing equal, safe, and reliable access to information. Public libraries serve the general public. The work has attempted to study the profile of the public libraries, factors affecting frequency of visiting public libraries, level of satisfaction with the services of public libraries and overall service quality of public libraries. Visitors register provided the frame work of the respondents to be covered. Users of public library belonging to Udumalpet town constituted the sampling frame. A sample of 120 respondents using public library was selected adopting random sampling technique. Primary data required was collected using structured questionnaire. Secondary data was gathered from records maintained by the respective public library.*

*All the three libraries showed fluctuations in the number of registered members. The highest number of 558 members were registered in Ulavarsandhai library in the year 2013-14. The total number of visits by users of all the three libraries has shown improvement during the study period. The public libraries are collecting an amount of Rupee one towards delay in return of one book for every 15 days. Of the total books issued by all the three libraries during the study period, 38% was by Ulavarsandhai library, 34% was by Kuttai library and the balance 29% was by Gandhinagar library. All the three public libraries were having 135 racks, 132 lights, 132 chairs, 116 desks and 88 fans as infrastructure. 90% of the total books in all the three libraries were in Tamil language.*

*Of the respondents covered under the study, 58% were below 30 years. 58% of the respondents were male. 56% of the respondents were married. 48% were graduates. 30% were self-employed. 56% had become member of the public library between 2006-2010. 48% of the respondents obtained membership for light reading. 48% of the respondents were visiting the library everyday. 64% visit the library to read newspapers. The nature of support extended by public libraries in enhancing the knowledge was through availability of more number of books. 90% of the respondents visit public libraries due to self-motivation.*

*81% percent of the respondents visit the library alone. 38% spent one to two hours in the library. The respondents were highly satisfied with the availability of newspapers (533) followed by availability of books (524) and availability of magazines (492). The respondents highly preferred to read in Tamil language (570). High preference was for Dhinamani (549) and The Hindu (562) newspapers. 57% expected improvement in the number of books. 50% had problems relating to vehicle stand. Gender, marital status, occupation and membership in library were positively correlated with users' satisfaction. Age and marital status significantly affected frequency of reading newspapers. Gender significantly affected frequency of reading magazines. Gender and time spent in library significantly affected level of satisfaction for library services. The global society is undergoing rapid changes. However, in the globalised environment, lot of efforts has to be taken to upgrade public libraries to international standards through computerization and networking of resources.*

**KEY WORDS:** user satisfaction, public libraries, frequency of usage of library

Libraries are the major sources of providing equal, safe, and reliable access to information. It is a community center for constantly transmitting knowledge to individuals. It is an important hall mark of a developed society and works as a catalytic agent to propriety. The development of the institution of library is a natural and logical outcome of corresponding developments in different spheres of human knowledge. As food is necessary for human existence, books are vitally needed for intellectual existence. Library is a living depository of past culture and sustainer of the intellectual activities that anticipate future developments. The first library consisted of archives of the earliest form of writing, namely the clay tablets dating back to 2600 BC. Private or personal libraries made up of written books appeared in classical Greece in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC. In the 6<sup>th</sup> Century, the great libraries of the Mediterranean world remained those of Constantinople and Alexandria.

India has a rich library heritage. The ancient Indian literature like Rig Veda, Upanishads were based on philosophical thinking and treasures. In 400 A.D., Valabhi, Taxila, Vikramasila, Mithila and Nadia contributed for the enrichment of knowledge. In the history of development of Indian public libraries, the excavation made at Amaravati Nagarjunakonda with five story structure of storage of books was of great importance. The Nalanda University Odantapuri and Ujjain came into existence as the magnificent libraries in the northern India. In 1901, the Calcutta Public Library was amalgamated with Imperial Library by Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India. The Madras Public Library Act 1948 envisaged for the first time in India a comprehensive scale and levied state-wide library cess to finance, library services. The Five Year Plan started establishment of district libraries followed by the passing of Public Libraries Act of Madras 1958, Andhra Pradesh 1960, Mysore 1965 and Maharashtra 1967. The Union Ministry of Education drafted a Model Public Libraries Bill in 1962. There are 4531 libraries functioning in the state under the administrative control of the Directorate of Public libraries. The Connemara public library is one among the four National Repository Libraries in India.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Library and information services are fundamental to the goals of creating, disseminating, optimally utilizing and preserving knowledge and are instrumental in transforming into an egalitarian, progressive knowledge based society. In India, public libraries function with the support of Local, State or Central Government funding. The Library and Information Services (LIS) in the Government sector has not kept pace with the paradigmatic changes taking place in the society. Ineffective network of libraries causes ineffective utilisation of resources. Lack of bibliographic database of resources at national level affects quality and quantity of research activities. Hence, there is a need to study the profile of public libraries to identify ways and means of improving the libraries and usage of resources.

User Satisfaction is related positively to the degree of library usage, user orientation, quality of service in the library. It is not the output of a library alone but rather the outcome of library visits have decisive influence on user satisfaction. The idea of real satisfaction of users will help to know the effectiveness and efficiency with which public libraries are functioning. Thus, the present study is attempted with the following *objectives*:

- To study the profile of the public libraries in Udumalpet town.
- To assess the factors affecting frequency of visiting public libraries.
- To study the level of user satisfaction with the services of public libraries.
- To assess the overall service quality of public libraries.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is based on the secondary and primary data collected from three public libraries functioning in Udumalpet Town. The study attempts to identify the major factors affecting user satisfaction, level of satisfaction, expectations from public libraries, degree of usage of services and facilities provided by public library with an idea to measure the quality of facilities and services in public libraries.

## METHODOLOGY

Users of public libraries constituted the universe of the study. Users of public library belonging to Udumalpet town constituted the sampling frame. A sample consisting of 120 respondents using public library was selected adopting random sampling technique. Visitors register and membership register provided the frame work of the respondents to be covered. Primary data required was collected from the constituted sample using structured questionnaire by contacting the users in person. Secondary data relating to the study was gathered through newspapers, magazines, internet and records maintained by the respective public libraries. Discussions were held with librarians, members and users to ensure accuracy in the questionnaire prepared. Pilot study was conducted among 20 respondents, based on the feedback obtained the prepared questionnaire was restructured, reframed and redesigned. Formulated questions were well structured and tested to ensure logical sequence, reliability and validity of the data to be collected. Respondents were provided with required assistance by the researcher for filling up the questionnaire.

Statistical Package IBM SPSS Statistics 20 version was used to tabulate and analyse the primary data collected. Initially, a comprehensive data file was created with the variables and corresponding labels identified. For the purpose of analysis, the data were further processed by using simple statistical tools. Percentage analysis, rank analysis, scaling technique (highest scale was assigned the highest score and lowest scale was assigned the lowest score), chi-square test, ANOVA, correlation, Friedman rank, correlation coefficient were used.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Library is a collection of literary materials of Government publications, legislative measures, scientific developments, sports, entertainment required by a common citizen. The knowledge of the following related literature was of great importance to identify the gap in the existing research work:

**Narsh Kumar and Ashu Shokeon** (2015) identified that, 61% of the respondents were very much satisfied with the collection of newspapers and 37% were very much satisfied with the collection of current magazines. **Winneba and Owusu-Acheaw** (2014)'s study of 454 undergraduate students revealed satisfaction of overall services as the library was playing an important role to achieve University's objectives. **Sriram B and Rajev M K G** (2014) study of 640 respondents revealed 11% were staff members. 58% were between 30 and 40 years of age. 24% visited several times a day for various purposes. **Nirinimesh Pandiya and Mukut Sammah** (2014) study of 900 respondents adopting simple random sampling found that, user

satisfaction was the most important factor and reason for quality improvements of a library. **Saini P K, Raj Kumar Bhakar and Bhoop Singh**(2014) identified that 100 respondents visited once in a week. 19% used Internet facilities. 29% spent one hour. Text books, Reference Books, Newspapers the user demand of online resources, Good Internet Facility, Print out, Photo copier, Scanning Facility were of much usage in the library. **Itumeleng Patrick Motiang Malcolm Wallis, Anis Mohamed Karodia** (2014) study at University of Limpopo, Medunsa Campus, South Africa found that, 41% were weekly users. 73% were undergraduates. 58% mainly used library to find books. **Isebella Mary A and Dhanavandan S** (2014) study in public libraries revealed that, 50% represented the age group of 20-30 years, 40% of women spent 30 minutes-one hour. 13 % visited library daily. 30% of the rural women visited to read newspapers. 21% used to obtain information for jobs/career. **Sivathaasam N** (2013) study of 220 users satisfaction was influenced by the availability of library materials. **Mukesh Saikia and Anjan Gohain**(2013) study at Tejpur University in India found that, 51% had the habit of visiting the library every day. 12% of the respondents visited the library to read newspapers, magazines and general reading books. 83% of student users used text books to meet class room preparation. 80% used online journals, 36% used project / thesis and 25% used CD/DVD/VCD. **Kawshal Chauha**(2013) opined that, 42% visited library 2-3 times in a week. Majority were satisfied with e-journals, reprographic services and collection of text books, journals, magazines provided by MM Engineering College. **Jayakrishnan J S** (2013) identified that Kerala Public Library Network had an average collection of 12307 books, 7 magazines, 5 newspapers. Users comprised of teachers, students and farmers. **Palaniappan M**(2013) study of University libraries in Tamilnadu revealed that, 45% in Alagappa University and 42% from Bharathidasan University were M.Phil scholars. 32% in Alagappa University visited the library daily followed by 30% on weekly basis. In Bharathidasan University, 47% visited the library on alternative days and 30% visited library daily. **Fehintola Nike Onifade, Susan Udoke Ogbuigi and Saturday Omeluzor U**(2012) identified that, only 11% of the respondents used the library daily and 26% used it weekly, 20% visited the library to collect materials for research, 16% used to prepare for seminar and 9% to read newspapers. 18% of the respondents used e-journals and e-books. **Rani S and Chinnasamy K** (2014) identified user friendliness, simple search strategy and fast connectivity as factors responsible for user satisfaction. **Gomathi P and Dhanavandan S**(2012) study on user satisfaction in Government Engineering College library, Salem revealed that, 25% were from ECE department. 26% visited library daily. 38% were using for less than 4 hours. 28% were using subject books. 38% were using digital library for one hour. 52% were satisfied with the library working hours. 44% were of the opinion that library staff was always ready to help users. **Suresh Kumar P K**(2012) study of service quality of the University libraries in Kerala found that, 60% were satisfied with the knowledge and courtesy of employees. Lighting and Ventilation was much appreciated. Effective utilization of the resources, services, products can be achieved through development of quality marketing approach. **Pooja** (2010) study of Central library, Kasturba Medical College identified that students were satisfied with the infrastructure facilities, technological advancements in the library. **Norliya Ahmed Kassim**(2009) study ensured, 34% visited more than once a week, many visited for more than one reason, 21% read newspapers and users were satisfied with the services, infrastructure and collections of the library. **Attia Fridous, Farzana Shafique**(2009) identified that, users of Government College University library, Lahore were highly satisfied with OPAC services and its functioning, reliability and staff cooperation. **Lakshmi N and Chitra Devi P**(2004) identified GVG college Granthagar was utilized more by first year science than arts students. Highest utilization was by the mathematics students. Majority utilized the library before 9.30 a.m. to make subject reference. Three-fourth of the visits was by aided course students from the first year. All the faculty members utilized the library. **Lakshmi N and Lalitha Bai** (2000) concluded that, autonomous status provided academic freedom to take enormous care in designing a socially relevant, need based curriculum demanding an increase in the usage of library. **Lakshmi N and Indirani D** (1994) study on library management of Sri GVG Visalakshi College Library, Udumalpet provided that, most of the arts students made more use of the library. Second year undergraduate students made more use of the library. However, utilization of public library, infrastructure availability and user satisfaction of public library need to be studied to ensure improvement in the highly dynamic environment.

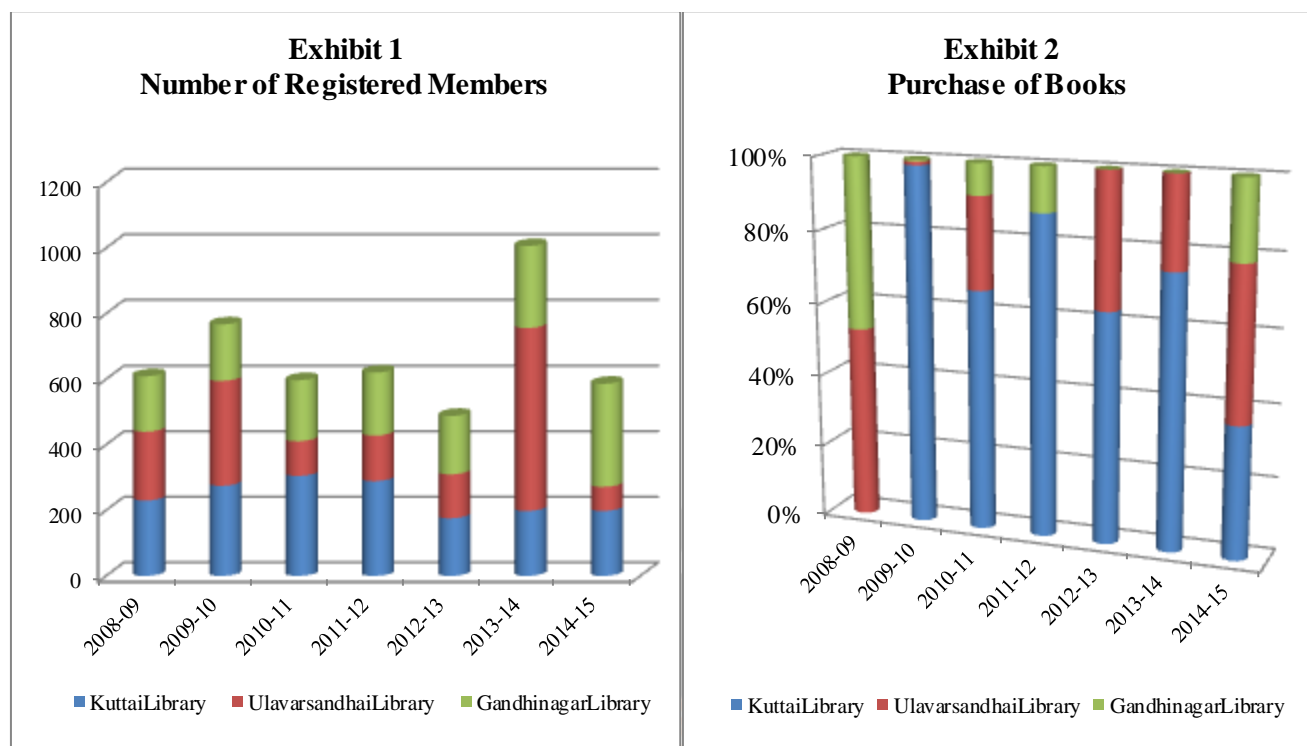
## FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

Analyses of the secondary data received from the three public libraries functioning in Udumalpet town revealed the following findings:

### A. Profile of Public Libraries in Udumalpet Town

All the three libraries showed fluctuations in the number of registered members. The highest number of 558 members were registered in Ulavarsandhai library in the year 2013-14 as shown in the Exhibit 1. The highest percentage of visits was in the year 2013-14. The total number of visits by users of all the three libraries shows improvement during the study period. 60% of total subscription during the study period was from Kuttai library. The public libraries are collecting an amount of Rupee one towards delay in return of one book for every 15 days. The highest fine collection of 19% was in the year of 2014-15. Among the three libraries covered under the study, the highest percentage of 94% of book purchase was by Kuttai library followed by Ulavarsandhai library (5%) and Gandhinagar library (2%) as shown in the Exhibit 2. The highest 17% of book issued was in the year 2012-13. Of the total books issued by all the





three libraries during the study period, 38% was by Ulavarsandhai library, 34% was by Kuttai library and the balance 29% was by Gandhinagar library. The highest number of books issued by Kuttai library was 2,95,925 in the year 2013-2014. All the three public libraries were having 135 racks, 132 lights, 132 chairs, 116 desks and 88 fans as infrastructure. 90% of the total books in all the three libraries were in Tamil language while 10% of books were in English language.

## B. USERS SATISFACTION ON INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The researcher has made an attempt to analyse the profile of public library users to understand the nature and characteristics of the respondent and the extent of user satisfaction towards public library in this part of the research work.

Of the respondents covered under the study, 58% were below 30 years, 18% belonged to the age group of 41 to 50 years, 13% were between 31 to 40 years of age and another 13% were above 50 years. 58% of the respondents were male. 56% of the respondents were married. 48% were Graduates, 28% were Post-Graduates, 13% were educated up to Higher Secondary Level, 8% were diploma holders and 4% were educated upto Secondary School Level. 30% were self-employed, 28% were students, 12% were home makers and 7% were retired. 87% were members in the public library. 56% had become member of the public library between 2006-2010. 48% of the respondents obtained membership for light reading as shown in the Table 1. 48% of the respondents were visiting the library everyday, 32% of the respondents were visiting the library almost every day and 20% of the respondents were visiting the library sometimes.

**TABLE 1: Purpose of Membership**

Purpose of Membership	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
For light reading	58	48.3
For time pass	37	30.8
To enrich knowledge	58	48.3
To develop regular reading habit	47	39.1
To read newspapers only	15	12.5

64% visit the library to read newspapers, 54% visit the library to read books. The nature of support extended by public libraries in enhancing the knowledge was through availability of more number of books for 59%, promoting regular reading habit for 52%, conducive environment for 45%, co-users support for 33%, proximity of location for 29%, co-operation of library staff for 23%, arrangement of books in the public libraries for 16%. 90% of the respondents visit public libraries due to self-motivation while 10% of the respondents were motivated by previous users.

81% percent of the respondents visit the library alone, 46% visit the library along with friends, 8% of the respondents visit the library along with relatives and 3% visit the library along with children. 38% spend one to two hours in the library, 26% spend 30 minutes to one hour in the library, 22% spend more than two hours in the library and 15% spend less than 30 minutes in library. The respondents were highly satisfied with the availability of newspapers (533) followed by availability of books (524) and availability of magazines (492). The respondents highly preferred to read in Tamil language (570) followed by English (512). The respondents highly preferred to read Dhinamani (549) and The Hindu newspaper (562). The highest preference

was for Kalki(534) and Employment News(537). Respondents were highly satisfied with the behaviour of library staff (550) as shown in the Table 2.

**TABLE 2:Extent of Respondents Satisfaction on Library Services**

Library Services	Highly satisfied (5)	Satisfied (4)	Neutral (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Highly Dissatisfied (1)	Score
Behaviour of library staff	71	48	1	-	-	550
Safety of material	50	65	4	-	1	523
Working hours	49	67	3	1	-	524
Location of library	51	57	10	2	-	517
Arrangement and layout of books	51	54	14	1	-	515
Arrangement and layout of magazines	44	61	14	1	-	508
Arrangement and layout of newspapers	55	54	10	1	-	523
Layout of new arrivals	47	61	9	3	-	512
Lighting	34	54	27	5	-	477
Maintenance of library	50	62	8	-	-	522
Facilities in the library	38	64	16	2	-	498
Quality of maintaining books	34	69	15	2	-	497
Cleanliness	29	49	26	15	1	450
Toilet facilities	10	29	41	31	9	360
Rules and regulations	40	73	6	1	-	512
Cooperation from library staff	58	58	4	-	-	534

57% expected improvement in the number of books. 50% of the respondents had problems relating to vehicle stand. Gender, marital status, occupation, membership in library was positively correlated and age, educational qualification and time spent in library were negatively correlated with library users satisfaction. Age and marital status significantly affected frequency of reading newspapers. Gender significantly affected frequency of reading magazines. Gender and time spent in library significantly affected level of satisfaction for library services.

## CONCLUSION

The global society is undergoing rapid changes. The growth and development of any society is based on the development of its human resources. Of the infrastructure required for human development, library and its utilisation play a major role. Public libraries are an integral part of the society in effective and efficient utilization of time by way of offering facilities required for intellectual and life skills development. All the three libraries showed fluctuations in the number of registered members. The total number of visits by users of all the three public libraries covered under the study shows improvement. Enrichment of knowledge and light reading were the main purpose of obtaining membership in public. Users mostly visited public library to read newspapers. Users were able to enhance knowledge due to the availability of required books in the public libraries and due to the enabling environment for the promotion of regular reading habits. However, the results of the study shows that government has to take lots of efforts to upgrade public libraries to international standards through computerization and networking of resources under the globalised Information Communication and Technology environment.

## SUGGESTIONS

The changes in the society have naturally affected the changing needs. Public library must become an active agent of developing better citizens by way of ensuring an attractive environment to make people become the member and user of the public library. Libraries covered under the study have to take adequate steps to maintain and increase the number of users particularly registered members. Improvement should be made in journals section. Library functioning should be equipped with internet based facilities. Computerisation and Networking of public library system at the national level should be ensured for better information and library services.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- It is a micro level study and so the findings are applicable only to Udumalpet town.
- Due to time constraint, the size of the sample has been restricted to 125 public library users.
- The findings are based on the information collected through the structured questionnaire only.
- The results based on library users opinion drawn from Udumalpet town public libraries. Conclusions may not be applicable to other areas or for future period as user satisfaction undergoes changes in the dynamic environment and is based on the degree of improvements brought out in the public library.

## SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

The present study focused on users' satisfaction towards public library hence, future researches could carry out relating to the following topics:

- A comparative study of user satisfaction towards public libraries between districts, states and countries.

- A comparative study on Attitude and Awareness towards usage of public libraries among men and women.
- Attitude and Awareness towards usage of public libraries in rural areas.

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