
Utilization of Information Resources by the Competitive Exam Aspirants in City Central Libraries of Karnataka

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Abstract

The education system in India is evolving, with various government departments conducting competitive exams to select candidates. Public libraries have become crucial resources for students and job seekers, particularly in Karnataka State, which has 26 city central libraries. This study focused on five main city central libraries in Bangalore, revealing that a significant majority (82.4%) of competitive exam aspirants rely on Karnataka board textbooks for preparation, dedicating 5 to 10 hours daily to library work. Respondents also utilize magazines and journals in both Kannada and English, with notable Kannada publications including Sparda Vijetha, Sparda Arivu, and Sparda Vani, while popular English magazines comprise Chronicle, Competition Success Review, and Current Affairs. Key journals mentioned are Economic and Political Weekly, Kurukshetra Yojana, and Down to Earth. The study recommends enhanced strategies for public libraries to optimize the use of competitive exam resources.

Keywords

Competitive exam aspirants, City Central Library, Information Resources, Karnataka.

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1. Introduction

The education system in India is undergoing rapid development, and various central and state government departments conduct competitive exams to select the best candidates. Many students attend these exams every year to secure jobs. The aspirants must utilise the appropriate information resources to prepare for competitive examinations. In recent years, public libraries have become the primary source of resources for students, job seekers, and the general public. The public library is often referred to as a people's university due to its universal characteristics. It is a democratic institution working on democratic principles. The public library is for the people, by the people, and of the people. In other words, a public library is freely open to all, irrespective of age, race, sex, colour, creed, or religion, and provides free access to everyone. The public Library system is dynamic, giving people knowledge, continuing education, and information. Public libraries play a vibrant role in the welfare of the public.

The Department of Public Libraries of Karnataka has tried to provide efficient resources and services to competitive exam aspirants through the city/district central libraries. For this purpose, the central libraries have a separate section called the Civil Services and Competitive Exam Section in the central library of every district in the state of Karnataka, which provides resources for competitive exam aspirants. The present study examines how competitive exam aspirants in the city's central libraries of Karnataka utilize the information resources.

2. Review of literature

Bankapur and Mallikarjun Kumbar (2023) studied the use of competitive examination resources at the City Central Library in Belagavi, revealing that 61.38% of respondents were male and 38.61% were female, with the majority aged between 22 and 24. A majority (58.39%) are undergraduates and 58.41% come from rural areas. Notably, 61.39% have library memberships, with 34.65% dedicating 7 to 8 hours to exam preparation. Preferences indicated that 66.33% chose offline resources, while 33.67% preferred online options, and 45.54% rated the library's services for exam preparation positively. Ananda Ramesh and Kishore Kumar (2020) found that 75.18% of users in Tamil Nadu primarily rely on local board textbooks and career-focused magazines for exam preparation, urging libraries to enhance resource utilization. In a related study, Ramesh and Kishore (2016) reported

that only 22% of students visited the public library for exam prep in Karaikal district. Furthermore, Baladhandayutham & Murugapandi (2015) indicated that 55.29% of users at the District Central Library in Sivagangai visit to prepare for competitive exams, expressing overall satisfaction with the services. Padma et al. (2014) emphasized that most visits to public libraries are for exam preparation, while Lata, Suman, and Sharma (2013) suggested improving library collections with current competitive exam materials. Saravanan and Jadhav (2013) noted that 20% of respondents used the library for competitive prep, with 30% of that group preparing for the TNPSC exam. Additionally, Gomathi (2012) reported that 21.03% of students utilized public libraries for competitive exam study, highlighting the importance of these libraries in supporting exam preparation efforts.

3. Objectives

- To identify the socio-economic and educational background status of the respondents.
- To examine the respondents' association in the city's central library
- To analyse the respondents' utilization of competitive exam resources in the city's central Libraries.

4. Scope of the Study

The present study is confined to the five main city central libraries in Bangalore, which are located in five zones. In the state of Karnataka, there are 26 city central libraries, of which the study has selected the five main city central libraries in Bangalore.

5. Methodology

To collect comprehensive and relevant data for the study, a well-designed questionnaire is used to gather primary data. In order to determine Utilization of information resources by the competitive exam aspirants in city central libraries of Karnataka, the questionnaire was designed with the study's objectives in view. The prepared questionnaires were distributed 60 each to five selected city central libraries in Bangalore City, Karnataka. Three hundred questionnaires were distributed, and 250 were received. The duly filled questionnaires were further used for data analysis, and the analyzed data are presented as tables and graphs.

6. Data analysis and Interpretation

The primary data collected from the respondents of the city central libraries in Bangalore are analyzed and interpreted as follows.

6.1. Socioeconomic and educational background of the respondents

The socioeconomic and educational backgrounds of the respondents were studied in terms of their gender, age group, educational qualifications, residence, employment status, and family income.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	131	52.40
Female	119	47.60
Total	250	100

Table 1 shows that 52.40% of respondents are male, whereas only 47.60% are female.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by age group

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
<20	11	4.40
21-25	31	12.40
26-30	121	48.40
31-35	87	34.80
Total	250	100

It is observed from Table 2 that 48.40% of the respondents belong to the 26 to 30 age group, 34.80% belong to the 31 to 35 age group, 12.40% belong to the 21 to 25 age group, and 4.40% belong to the below 20 age group. Therefore, it is clear that most (48.40%) respondents are in the 26 to 30 age group.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by Occupation.

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Students	96	38.4
Unemployed	142	56.8
Employee	12	4.8
Total	250	100

The analysis of Table 3 shows that 56.8% are unemployed, 38.4% are students, and 4.8% are employed in the private sector. Therefore, it was found that the majority (56.8%) are unemployed.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by social background.

Social Background	Frequency	Percentage
Rural	124	50.40
Urban	126	49.60
Total	250	100

It is observed from Table 4 that 50.40% of the population resides in rural areas and 49.60% in urban areas. Hence, it was found that most respondents (50.40%) belonged to rural areas.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by educational background.

Education Background	Frequency	Percentage
UG	135	54
PG	115	46
Total	250	100

Table 5 illustrates that 54% are undergraduate, and 46% are postgraduate. Therefore, it was clear that most respondents (54%) are undergraduates.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents by economic background.

Economic Background	Frequency	Percentage
Below 3 lakhs	168	67.2
5 lakhs	58	23.2
10 lakhs	24	9.6
Total	250	100

Table 6 shows that 67.2% are in the below three lakhs income group per annum, 23.2% are in the five lakhs income group, and 9.6% are in the 10 lakhs income group. Therefore, it is evident that most respondents (67.2%) belong to the income group of less than three lakhs per annum.

6.2. Utilisation of the city's central library by competitive exam aspirants

The data on preparation for competitive exams, status of member of the public library, advisor to use the public library, period of using the public library, purpose of visit to the public library, frequency of visiting the public library, utilization of competitive exam books, competitive exam magazines, and journals were collected from the respondents and analyzed as follows.

Table 7: members of the public library

Member of the Public Library	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	122	48.80
No	128	51.20
Total	250	100

Table 7 shows that 51.20% are non-members of the public library, whereas 48.80% are members of the public library. Therefore, it is clear that most (51.20%) respondents are not public library members.

Table 8: Purpose of Visit to Public Library

Purpose of Visit to the Public Library	Frequency	Percentage
Borrow books	24	9.60
To prepare for competitive exams	250	100.00
Read the newspaper/magazines	85	34.00
Read subject-related books	53	21.20

The total number is more than 100 percentage because of multiple-choice questions

Table 8 shows that 100% of respondents visit the public library to prepare for competitive exams. 34% of respondents visit the public library to read newspapers/magazines. 21.20% visit the public library to read subject-related books. 9.60% of respondents visit the public library to borrow books. Therefore, it is clear that most (100%) respondents visit the public library to prepare for competitive exams.

Table 9: Preparation for competitive exams by the respondents

Type of competitive exams	Frequency	Percentage
UPSC (IAS, IPS, IFS)	120	48.00
KPSC (KAS, KES, KSPS, etc.)	168	67.20
Bank	21	8.40
Police Department (PSI, SI, PC)	84	33.60
LIC	16	6.40
Railway	32	12.80
Clerical SDA, FDA others	88	35.20
PDO and GPS	104	41.60
Staff selection	40	16.00

UGC-NET	21	8.40
CSIR-NET.	14	5.60
K-SET etc.	20	8.00

Total number is more than 100 percentage because of multiple-choice questions

It is revealed from Table 9 that 67.20% are in the KPSC, 48% are in the UPSC, and 41.60% are engaged in preparation for the PDO and GPS exams. 35.20% are preparing for Clerical SDA, FDA, and others. 33.60% are involved in preparation for the Police Department exams, and 16.00% are engaged in preparation for SSC. 12.80% are in preparation for railway exams, and 8.40% are engaged in banking exam preparation. More than 8% of students are preparing for UGC-NET, CSIR-NET, K-SET, and other similar exams, and 6.40% are preparing for LIC exams. It was found that the majority (67.20%) were preparing for the KPSC exam.

Table 10: Adviser to use the public library to prepare for competitive exams

Adviser	Frequency	Percentage
Friends	147	58.80
Teachers	38	15.20
Self-Awareness	96	38.40
Family members	40	16.00
Competitive exam achiever	38	15.20
Library Professional	10	4.00

Total number is more than 100 percentage because of multiple-choice questions

Table 10 reveals that 58.80% of the respondents advised to use the public library were friends, 38.40% of the respondents were self-aware of using the public library, 16% of the respondents advised were family members, 15.20% of the respondents advised were teachers and competitive exam achievers, and 4% of the respondents advised were library professionals. Therefore, it is clear that most (58.80%) respondents' advisors to use the public library were friends.

Table 11: Frequency of visits to the public library

Frequency of visiting	Frequency	Percentage
Twice in a week	22	8.80
Occasionally	05	2.00

Once in a two days	34	13.60
Daily	164	65.60
Weekly	25	10.00
Total	250	100

From Table 11, it is observed that 65.60% of the respondents visit the public library daily, 13.60% of respondents visit the library two days a week, 10% of respondents visit weekly, 8.80% of respondents visit twice a day, and 2% of respondents have occasional visits to the public library. So, it is found that the majority (65.60%) of the respondents visit the public library daily.

Table 12: Period of time using the Public library

Period of time using public library	Frequency	Percentage
From 6 months	92	36.80
From 1 year	46	18.40
From 1 to 2 year	48	19.20
From 2 to 3 year	27	10.80
More than 3 years	37	14.80
Total	250	100

Table 12 illustrates that 36.80% are utilising the public library for six months, 19.20% are utilising the public library for the period of 1 to 2 years, 18.40% are utilising the public library for the period of 1 year, and 14.80% of respondents are using the public library for above 3 years. 10.80% have been utilising the public library for 2 to 3 years. Thus, it is evident that most respondents (36.80%) have been using the public library for at least six months.

Table 13: Time spent on the preparation of competitive exams

Time utilized per day for the preparation of competitive exams	Frequency	Percentage
Below 5 hrs	68	27.20
5-10 hrs	135	54.00
More than 10 hrs	47	18.80
Total	250	100

Table 13 illustrates that 54% of the respondents spent 5 to 10 hours daily in the public library to prepare for competitive exams. 27.20% of respondents spend less than 5 hours daily in the public library to prepare for competitive exams, and 18.80% spend more than 10 hours. Thus, it is evident that most respondents (54%)

spent 5 to 10 hours daily in the public library to prepare for competitive exams.

Table 14: Utilisation of Competitive Exam books by the respondents

Type of Books on Competitive Exams	Frequency	Percentage
Books on General Studies	52	20.8
Books on General knowledge	150	60
Books on Current Affairs	146	58.4
Books on General Science	98	39.2
Books on Quantitative Aptitude	108	43.2
Books on Logical Reasoning	108	43.2
Books on specific Subjects/Courses	30	12
Books on Computer/ICT	32	12.8
Books on English Grammar	36	14.4
Books on General Kannada	45	18
Books on General English	44	17.6
Books on Numerical ability	90	36
Books on Kannada Vyakarana	91	36.4
Books on Interview techniques	20	8
School Text Book & NCERT	42	16.8
School Text Book & Karnataka Board	206	82.4
Books on Personality Development	92	36.8
Books on Communication skill development	50	20
Specific guides for each Competitive Exam	45	18

Total number is more than 100 percentage because multiple-choice questions

The analysis from Table 14 shows that 82.4% are interested in reading Karnataka board textbooks, 60% are reading books on general knowledge, 58.4% are utilizing current affairs books, 43.2% are reading quantitative aptitude and logical reasoning books, and 36.4% of respondents are reading books on Kannada Vyakarana. 36.8% of respondents are reading books on personality development, 36% are interested in books on numerical ability, 20.8% are reading books on general studies, 20% are reading books on communication skill development, and 18% are reading books on general Kannada and specific guides for each competitive exam. 17.6% are reading English language books, 16.8% are interested in reading NCERT textbooks, 14.4% of respondents are reading English grammar, 12.8% are reading on specific subjects/courses and computers/ICT, and 8% are reading books on interview techniques. Thus, it is evident that most (82.4%) of the respondents'

competitive exam preparation lies in reading the Karnataka board textbook.

Table 15: Utilisation of magazines and journals for Competitive exams by the respondents

Type of Magazines Competitive Exams	Frequency	Percentage
Kannada Magazines		
Avalokana	182	72.8
Ananya Sadhana	191	76.4
Sparda Chanakya	189	75.6
Sparda Spoorthi	195	78
Sparda Vijetha	225	90
Sparda Arivu	221	88.4
Sparda Vani	210	84
English Magazines	Frequency	Percentage
Chronicle	211	84.4
Competition Success Review	224	89.6
Current Affairs	218	87.2
Current Science	153	61.2
Drishti	190	76
Frontline	166	66.4
General Knowledge	223	89.2
Prathyogita Darpan	185	74
Reader Digest	201	80.4
Type of Journals	Frequency	Percentage
Down to earth	167	66.8
Economic and political weekly	210	84
Kurukshetra	189	75.6
Yojana	188	75.2

Total number is more than 100 percentage because multiple-choice questions

Table 15 indicates that over 80% of respondents are interested in reading magazines in both Kannada and English in preparation for competitive exams. In Kannada, the most popular magazines are Sparda Vijetha (90%), Sparda Arivu (88.4%), and Sparda Vani (84%). In English, most (more than 80%) of the interested magazines are The Chronicle, Competition Success Review, Current Affairs, General Knowledge, and Prathyogita Darpan. The respondents are most interested in reading journals for competitive exams, such as Economic and Political Weekly (84%), Kurukshetra (75.6%), Yojana (75.2%), and Down to Earth (66.8%).

7. Findings of the study

It was observed from the analysis that the findings are,

- 52.40% of respondents are male.
- 48.40% belongs to the 26 to 30 age group.
- 56.8% are unemployed.
- 50.40% belongs to the rural area
- 54% are undergraduate
- 67.2% are in the below three lakhs income group per annum
- 51.20% are non-members of the public library
- 67.20% are interested in preparing for the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) exams.
- 58.80% of the respondents who advised to use the public library were friends.
- 54% of the respondents spent 5 to 10 hours daily in the public library to prepare for competitive exams
- 82.4% respondents believe that competitive exam preparation lies in reading the Karnataka board textbook
- In Kannada, the most popular magazines are Sparda Vijetha (90%), Sparda Arivu (88.4%), and Sparda Vani (84%).
- The most popular magazines in English are The Chronicle, Competition Success Review, Current Affairs, General Knowledge, and Prathyogita Darpan.
- In reading journals for competitive exams, such as Economic and Political Weekly (84%), Kurukshestra (75.6%), Yojana (75.2%), and Down to Earth (66.8%).

8. Suggestion and Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is suggested that, since most competitive exam aspirants use the competitive exam section in city central libraries, the public library can take necessary steps to make them members, as most (51.20%) of the respondents are non-members. The public library can take suitable action to utilise competitive exam books and magazines more effectively, as some of these resources are underutilised by competitive exam aspirants in the city's central libraries in Karnataka. Since most respondents (67.2%, with an income below ₹ 3 lakhs) belong to the lower-income group, their primary source for competitive exam preparation is the public library.

In Karnataka, almost all educated unemployed individuals will prepare for a competitive examination to acquire a state or central government job. To support competitive exam aspirants, public

libraries provide necessary information sources and services through the 'Civil Services and Competitive Exam Section.' Many successful competitive exam achievers often claim that they cracked the competitive exams by utilising the central public libraries. Therefore, the aspirants should utilise the resources and services of the competitive exam section at an optimum level to succeed in their competitive exams.

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