Reading Habits and Literacy Attitudes of Users in District Central Libraries in Tamil Nadu: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

The present article deals with, "Reading Habits and Literacy Attitudes in Tamil Nadu – An Analytical study" reading is such a good habit to strengthen one's personality and it induces a man to act innovatively and creatively for the welfare of mankind. They are 38 revenue districts in Tamil Nadu as on date as such there are 38 district central libraries which formed the population of study. For convenience a sample of 1900 users at the rate of 50 per district library (38x50=1900) have been selected on the basis of stratified random sampling method as respondents of the study. It stated out of 1900 respondents a maximum of 608 (35.68%) visit the library daily followed by 462 (24.32%) visit the library once in a week. About 394 (20.74%) respondents visit library twice in a week followed by monthly once and occasionally.

Keywords

Literacy, Concepts, Life long learning, Hypotheses.

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INTRODUCTION

The famous essayist Bacon said, "Reading makes a man perfect". The modern libraries play a vital role in enhancing the reading habit and uplifting the elite communities through technology oriented resourced. The individual readers attitude, need, knowledge, time management and so many other subjective factors related to reading along with the facilities, infrastructure, and available e-resources of the traditional as well as modern libraries and the different attitude of reading habits in the individuals.

TYPES OF USERS:

According to the kind of activity engaged the users are identified into three groups:
1. Researchers engaged in basic and applied sciences.
2. Technicians engaged in various fields of technology, industry, agriculture, medicine, industrial production and communication.
3. Managers, planners and decision makers who are engaged in coordinating developmental activities in science and technology at different levels.

CONCEPTS OF INFORMATION LITERACY:

Information Literacy is the ability to define one's information needs and then to access, process, evaluate and use information for decision making, learning and problem solving. The information services are key to the development of agriculture – based education, research, extension services and agribusiness. Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It enable learners to master contents and extend their investigations, become more self directed and assume greater control over their own learning.

READING HABITS AND ITS IMPORTANCE:

The activity of reading is regarded as a habit when it is repeatedly carried out. Reading is a long term habit starting from the very early age. In fact, reading, habit is an important tool for the development of personalities. Reading provides people with a sense of values which enables them to judge themselves. The emerging role of ICT and in particular use of e-resources is significantly changing the fabric of the reading habits of people. The library in terms of digital format consists of various electronic resources such as electronic books, electronic journals and electronic reports. These e-resources are available either in CD – ROM format, available in line.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

It is inevitable of the modern libraries and information centers of higher educational institutions to adopt new strategies in disseminating information, to suit the literacy attitudes and reading habits of the users. As libraries are growing organizations that play a vital part in the upliftment of the society, the researcher is keen to identify the reading habits and literacy attitudes of users in the district central libraries in Tamil Nadu. Hence, the statement of the problem chosen, for the study is "Reading Habits and Literacy attitudes of users in District central Libraries in Tamil Nadu – An Analytical Study".

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The present study covers all the thirty eight district central libraries in Tamil Nadu and the target group of population of the study includes all type of users of the services provides by district central library such as student research scholars, academicians and other segments of the population.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The following are some of the major objectives of the study:
1. To analyze the library usage and information seeking behavior of selected respondents.
2. To evaluate the infrastructure facilities offered by sample units.
3. To analyze and understand the problems and difficulties encountered by respondents.
4. To offer suitable suggestions for improvement in the performances of central libraries.
5. To review the origin and growth of district central libraries in Tamil Nadu.
6. To find out the frequency of visit to the library by the respondents.
7. To understand the purposes of visiting the library by the respondents.
8. To ascertain the level of satisfaction while using electronic resources.

HYPOTHESES FRAMED AND TESTED:

The following are the null hypotheses framed and tested.
1. Ho: There is no significant association between profile variable of respondents and their library usage and information seeking behavior.
2. Ho: There is no significant association between frequency of visiting and their opinion regarding District Central Library inculcate the reading habits of the children, students and staff members.
3. Ho: There is no significant association between purpose of visiting and their satisfaction on e-resources.
4. Ho: There is no significant association between approaches of library staff and overall satisfaction level of respondents.
5. Ho: There is no significant association between minimum error rate in the work provided by library staff and problems of the respondents.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

For the present study, the required information has been collected both from primary and secondary sources. The selected sample respondents served as primary source and the records of the central libraries and library staff served as secondary source of information.

SAMPLING DESIGN:

There are thirty eight district central libraries in Tamil Nadu. All the 38 libraries are selected as sample units for the study. For the selection of respondents, simple, stratified random sampling method was followed. A sample of 50 users from each district central library forming a total of 1900 (50 x 38 = 1900) respondents have been selected for the study.

TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION:

For the collection of necessary primary data, a structured, close-ended questionnaire was used. In addition an interview schedule was prepared to collect secondary data. Hence, the questionnaire and the interview schedule were to main tools used for collection of data . In addition, informal talk with knowledgeable persons, Library records were also used.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRATATION:

The data collected were distributed to different tables sand as per the requisitions of the objectives of the study and analyzed. The main tools used for analysis and interpretation are simple statistical tools such as percentage analysis. Averages standard Deviation, spearman's and pearsons rank correlation, chi-square tests, multiple Regression Analysis. T-test, chi-square tests, Garett Ranking and Statistical Diagrams.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The study pertains to the central library's functioning in the state of Tamil Nadu only. Hence, the results of the study are applicable to the district central libraries selected for the study and the outcomes of the study cannot be generalized.

REVIEW OF PAST STUDIES:

The following are some of the pat studies connected with the title of the present study: Fahmi, et al, (2013) viewed an analytical study to discover the attitude towards the rural library services among youths n Malaysia. It also considers that the individual factors might influence attitudes towards the services offered. It is concluded that the rural youths have favorable attitude towards the services offered by local libraries and frequency of attending rural libraries has a positive relationship with attitude towards rural library services. Ajiboye and Tella (2007) have analyzed the Impact of information seeking behavior on the quality in higher education in Africa. It was found that the students gave primary importance for academic information. Helen (2005) conducted an online user survey to evaluate the performance of the main library and the six branch libraries of university of Hong Kong to identify any performance gaps, and to find out user preferences for print and electronic materials. Study brought out that majority of the respondents preferred to use online journals than print versions. On the other hand about 71.8 per cent users opted to use printed books over the electronic mode. Norhade (2005) studied on the users in Dentistry pharmaceutical library to know the level of usage of expensive resources and to see whether it meets with the demand. Kumbar et.,al., (2007) studied the use of periodical literature in the university of Agricultural Science, Daharwad. The study attempts to bring out the extent of use of periodical literature by agricultural scientists. It was recommended to arrange the periodicals properly and inform the new arrivals to the users for effective usage. Lakshmi, Chinnasami and Venkatachalam (2011) attempted to study the information seeking behavior of the users in V.M.K.V., Engineering College Library, Salem. The study also covers the use of reference sources in the library.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Public library is viewed as a social service centre to deliver an effective and free library service to the people. The concept of public library system encompassion every kind of public library such as state, Regional, District and Branch library. The data collected have been tabulated under different tables and analyzed after analyzing, using different statistical tools, the results have been arrived. A few of the important analysis have been given below.

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS:

Table-1 gives the details of the qualification of the respondents. The respondents consist of students of schools under-graduates, Post-Graduate students, Ph.D., research scholars and others.

Table-1. Educational Qualification of Respondents:

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage	Communicative percentage
Schooling	312	16.52	16.42
Under Graduate(UG)	459	24.16	40.58
Post Graduate(PG)	569	29.95	70.53
Ph.D.,Scholars	312	16.42	86.95
Others	248	13.05	100.00
Total	1900	100	

Source: Primary Data.

Table-1 gives the details of the educational qualification of the respondents selected for study. A maximum of 569 covering 29.95 per cent of the total represented by post-|Graduate students followed by 459(24.16%) under graduate students formed the respondents. About 312 (16.42%) Ph.D, scholars represented the respondents.

FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO THE DISTRICT LIBRARY:

Table-2 displays the details about how often the respondents have visited the library for collection of data or to what extent they utilized the library.

Table-2. Frequency of Visit to the District Library

Sl. No.	Frequency of visit	No. of Respondents	Percentage to total	Cumulative total
1	Daily	678	35.68	35.68
2	Twice in a	394	20.74	56.42

	week			
3	Once in a week	462	24.32	80.74
4	Monthly	194	10.21	90.95
5	Occasionally	172	9.05	100
	Total	1900	100	

Source: Calculated from Primary data.

It is evident from table-2 that out of 1900 respondents a maximum of 608 (35.68%) visit the library daily followed by 462 (24.32%) visit the library once in a week. About 394 (20.74%) respondents visit library twice in a week followed by monthly once and occasionally. It is inferred from the above analysis that the majority of the users are visiting the library daily.

Table-3. Purpose of visiting Library

Sl. No.	Purpose of Visiting	No. of Respondents	Percentage to total
1	To borrow and return books	312	16.42
2	To read news papers/magazines/ employment information	102	5.37
3	To consult reference books	356	18.74
4	To read subject books	209	11.00
5	To refer question bank	98	5.16
6	To prepare cases	69	3.63
7	To complete class room assignments	153	8.05
8	To refer theses and dissertations	264	13.89
9	To take photo copy	68	3.58
10	To use Internal	213	11.21
11	Other purpose	56	02.95
	Total	1900	100

Source: Computed from Primary data.

Table-3 gives the details about the different purposes for which the respondents visit the central library. It is found that a maximum of 356 users visited the library to consult the reference books to increase their literacy level followed by borrow and return books. Use Research theses and dissertations". The respondents visited library to use internet, to read subject books, to complete class room assignments. It is inferred that nearly one fifth of the respondents visited the library to consult reference books related with their subjects. Infrastructure of Library.

Table-4. gives the opinion about accessibility of reading materials:

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to total	Communication percentage
Easy to access	1021	53.74	53.74
Fairly easy to access	516	27.16	80.89
Not easy to access	363	19.11	100
Total	1900	100	-

Source: Calculated from Primary data.

Table-4 depicts the selected district central library user's opinion regarding accessibility of reading materials. It is found that a maximum of 1021 users (53.74 per cent) said that they have easily accessed the materials in the central library followed by 'Fairly' easy to access and not easy to access which constitute 27.16 per cent and 19.11 percent respectively.

Library Provides Adequate Electronic Resource:

Table-5 reveals the district central library user opinion regarding the statement "Library Provides adequate electronic resources". It is seen that a maximum of 793 respondents covering 41.74 per cent strongly agree with the statement, 521 (27.32%) respondents also agree with the statement and 234 respondents (12.32%) not only comments regarding this statement.

Table-5 Adequacy of Electronic Resources provided

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to total	Cumulative percentage
1	Strongly agree	793	41.74	41.74
2	Agree	521	27.42	69.16
3	No comments	234	12.32	81.47
4	Disagree	222	11.68	93.16
5	Strongly Disagree	130	06.84	100
	Total	1900	100	

Source: Prepared from Primary data.

Table-6. Level of satisfaction in using Electronic Information Resources

Sl.	Satisfaction	No. of	Percentage	Cumulative

No.	Level	Respondents	to Total	Percentage
1	Highly Satisfied	709	37.32	37.33
2	Satisfied	589	31.00	68.32
3	No comments	214	11.26	79.58
4	Dissatisfied	254	13.37	92.95
5	Highly dissatisfied	134	07.05	100

Source: Computed from Primary data

Table-6 represents the level of satisfaction while using electronic information resources. It is revealed that a maximum of 709 (37.32%) respondents information resources of central libraries in the study area followed by 589 (31%) respondents are satisfied with services and 214 respondents did not give any opinion. The study further revealed that 254 (13.37%) dissatisfied with electronic information resources and 134 (07.05%) respondents are highly dissatisfied. It is inferred that 109 (37.32%) respondents are simply satisfied with electronic information resources.

Table-7. Satisfaction about Reading Materials

Sl. No.	Level of satisfaction	No. of respondents	Percentage to Total	Cumulative Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	419	22.05	22.05
2	Agree	919	48.37	70.42
3	Neutral	148	07.79	78.21
4	Disagree	269	14.16	92.37
5	Strongly disagree	145	07.63	100
	Total	1900	100.00	

Source: computed from Primary data.

Table-7 discloses that the district central library users satisfaction about the availability of reading materials in the library. It is seen that a maximum of 919 (48.37%) respondents are satisfied with availability of reading materials in the library followed by 419 (22.05%) respondents are highly satisfied with availability of reading materials and 148 (7.79%) respondents have remained (neutral. It is further inferred that 269 (14.16%) dissatisfied and 145 (7.63%) highly dissatisfied about the availability of Reading materials in the library.

Table-8. Problems faced while Access to Information

Sl. No.	Problems faced	No. of Respondents	Percentage to total	Cumulative Percentage
1	Irrelevant Information	234	12.32	12.32
2	Over loaded information	311	16.37	28.68
3	Downloading PDF files lakes more time	396	20.84	49.53
4	Slow access speed	518	27.26	76.79
5	Internet caused depression	317	16.68	93.47
6	Other problems	124	6.53	100
	Total	1900	100	

Source: Calculated from Primary Data

Table-8 gives the details of the problem faced by the respondents while internal access to information. It is found that a maximum of 518 respondents said that it is slow access speed followed by 396 (20.89%) said that down loading PDF files takes more time. About 317 (16.68%) said that internet caused depression because of slow access speed. About 234 (12.32%) and other 124 (6.53%) of the library staff either non co-operative or supplied irrelevant information.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

The following are some of the findings of the study:

1. The study reveals that a maximum of 608 (35.68 percent) respondents visited the library daily followed by once in a week, twice in a week, once in a month and occasionally which constitute 24.32 percent, 20.74%, 10.24% and 9.05 percent respectively. It is inferred from the study that most of the users are visiting the library daily.

2. It is found that a maximum of 356 users visited the library to consult reference books to increase the literacy level followed by Borrow and return books, use theses and dissertations, to use internet, to read subject books and to refer question bank. It is inferred that nearly one-fifth of the respondents visited the district central library to consult reference books related to the subject of their study.

3. It is found that a maximum of 1021 (53.74%) users accept that the infrastructure of the library is very good and easy for them to access.

4. It is found that a maximum of 983 (51.74%) used electronic resources only followed by both Electronic and Printed materials.
5. It is understood that a maximum of 709 (37.32 per cent) highly satisfied with the electronic information resources in the study area.
6. It is found that first rank was given to the attitude of the librarians followed by Library collections, lighting facilities, location of the library environment, seating and other facilities available in the library which constituted the second, third fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh rank respectively.

SUGGESTIONS:

Based on the findings of the study, the following are source of the suggestion given for implementation:
1. The district central libraries must take necessary steps to increase the members frequency of visit to library.
2. Subscription should be increased to various e-journals.
3. Online reservation of reading materials is not known to most of the members. So the library officials must make awareness among visitors about on line reservation.
4. Many journals and E-magazines are not known to most of the visitors. Hence, it is suggested that the library department should crease awareness about the new arrivals.
5. The relationship of the library staff with users of library should be improved and should be more congenial.

CONCLUSION:

Public libraries are imperative since they develop literacy, motivate imagination and expand personal perspectives. It enables access to a common cultural heritage and support education at all levels. In order to keep up with the current trends, libraries must consultant assesses its functions. The users are the ultimate beneficiaries and can suggest effective measures to improve the existing facilities in the libraries.

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