Research Papers

USAGE AND INFORMATION NEEDS OF THE USERS AT CONNEMARA PUBLIC LIBRARY: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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Abstract

Users are the key persons of any library and information center. Library users are having various types of information needs and satisfactory levels. So the library and information professionals should have knowledge of understanding their users' needs, the ways to satisfy their users by providing right information at the right time. Hence, the present study undergone to identify the information needs and satisfactory level of users at Connemara Public Library, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. The data were collected from randomly selected users through questionnaire. This study focuses the availability of various library resources, services, facilities in Connemara Public Library. This study also identifies the preference of documents used by the library users. Finally, this study suggested some opinions to extend the services and to improve the satisfactory level of library users.

KEYWORDS :

Information needs, Users study, Information seeking behavior, Attitudes of library users.

INTRODUCTION:

According to Dr.S.R.Ranganathan, the ultimate aim of any library and information centre is to provide right information to the right people at the right time. In this digital era, the growth of information is increasing tremendously due to innovations of new emerging technologies. Library users are also play predominant role in transition of information to each other. User satisfaction and Information seeking behavior of library users are recognized as a major tool for any library to provide better services to its user community1.

The knowledge about information needs of library users will help the library to extend or re-orient its services, sources and facilities with regard to information needs and seeking behavior of users of the particular library2. The performance and success of any library and information center can be proved on the basis of the extent of satisfaction of its users. So the information system of collection, coordination, storage, organization and dissemination of any information should be designed at satisfactory level in libraries3.

The library and information science professionals should understand their users' needs and find the ways to satisfy their needs by providing them right information which will help to make user-centered information4.

USER STUDY AND INFORMATION NEEDS

The users can seek their needed information through Books, Periodicals, Newspapers, Pamphlets, Internet, Social Networks and by attending Seminars, Conferences, Workshops, Meetings and others5.

The term User Study generally means that the kind of information required by the user, the way of searching that particular information, identifying the satisfaction level of user, analyzing the relationship of users with information system bound with user study6. The term user study also defined variously as follows,

According to Britain "Empirical study of the use of the demand or need for, information are usually called user studies. In fact a study which is focused on users to understand directly or indirectly their information needs, use behavior and use pattern is usually called user study".

According to Wilson Davis one of the most important developments of research in the libraries and information field has been the growing emphasis on the user7.

LITERATURE SURVEY

Sinh, Nguyen Hong and Nhung, Hoang Thi Hong (2012) dealt to identify information needs, behavior and expectations of users towards using online databases at Central Library of Vietnam National University, Ho chi Minh City, Vietnam. They found that most of users do not know how to use the online databases and they are using e-mail for communicating to library staff. Also they found that English language is main barrier in using databases. Walsh, John (2008) examined this study to know the effect of orientation in order to increase the library usage among students at Cochise College Library, University of Arizona, Arizona, USA. It is observed that there is a significant increase in usage of library through the library orientation. Fourie (2006) described about seeking behavior of Web information among Library and Information Science Practitioners includes professional development programmes. Leckie, Gloria, J and Given, Lisa, M (2005) explained the role of public libraries for the development of social traits and dealt that how the public libraries satisfying the users information needs. Steinerova, Jela and Susol, Jaroslav (2005) studied about users' information behavior on information sources and information usage, information production. Waldmann (2003) considered the correlation between self efficacy and use of electronic or digital resources. Majid, Shaheen and Tan, Ai Tee (2002) described about information seeking behavior of engineering students at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. They also studied about information sources available in that university and preference of documents and their formats used by the students. Finally, they found that majority of the student preferred printed materials for reading. Brown (1999) studied about information needs of users belong to Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics departments of University of Oklahoma. He also found that most of the users preferred monographs and other printed materials for their reference purpose. Adedibu, L O and Adio, Gboyega (1997) surveyed about information needs and seeking patterns of medical students at Ladoke Alcintola University of Technology, Nigeria. In this survey, they found suggestions made by the respondents to improve the library services. Badu (1991) revealed that most of the students from University of Ghana preferred first their Department Library for their reference than the University Library.

CONNEMARA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Public library system has drastic developments in India from ancient days to present modern days. The free public library system of India was introduced in the year 1907 and celebrated its centenary year in the year 20078. Connemara Public Library is one of the National Depository Library established in 1896 and it is also served as a State Central Public Library of Tamil Nadu from 1950. It has rich collection of Books, Periodicals, Newspapers, Microfilms and some Rare-book collections. It receives a copy of all the books, periodicals and newspapers published in India. Collection of this library is shown approximately in the following table9.

Table No. 1. Collection of the Library

Sl.No	Type of Resources	No. of Collections
1	Books	7.5 lakhs
2	Periodicals	3512
3	Reference Materials	99782
4	Research Materials	27562
5	Electronic (Digitized) Resources	11255

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
This study focuses the following objectives,
1.To know the availability of various types of resources in the library.
2.To identify the frequency of visits to the library.
3.To know the satisfactory level of users with regard to the library collections.
4.To analyze the satisfaction of users with services and facilities provided in the library.
5.To know the preference of documents used by the users.
6.To suggest some opinions to extend the services and improve the satisfaction of users.

METHODOLOGY
For this study, sampling method adopted to select sample respondents. The questionnaire method used to collect data from the sample respondents. The questionnaires were distributed among respondents with questions related to details of users, library, collections, services, facilities provided in the library. Questionnaires were distributed to 300 randomly selected respondents. Out of 300, we got response from 250 users as sample respondents. These collected data were analyzed by using statistical tools.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA
The collected data were analyzed and interpreted by tabulation, charts and diagrams are furnished below,

Table No. 2. Respondents Vs Gender wise

Sl.No	Gender	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	168	67%
2	Female	82	33%
	Total	250	100%

Table No.2 indicates that out of 250 respondents, 168 belong to male category and the remaining 82 are female.

Distribution of Respondents By Gender wise
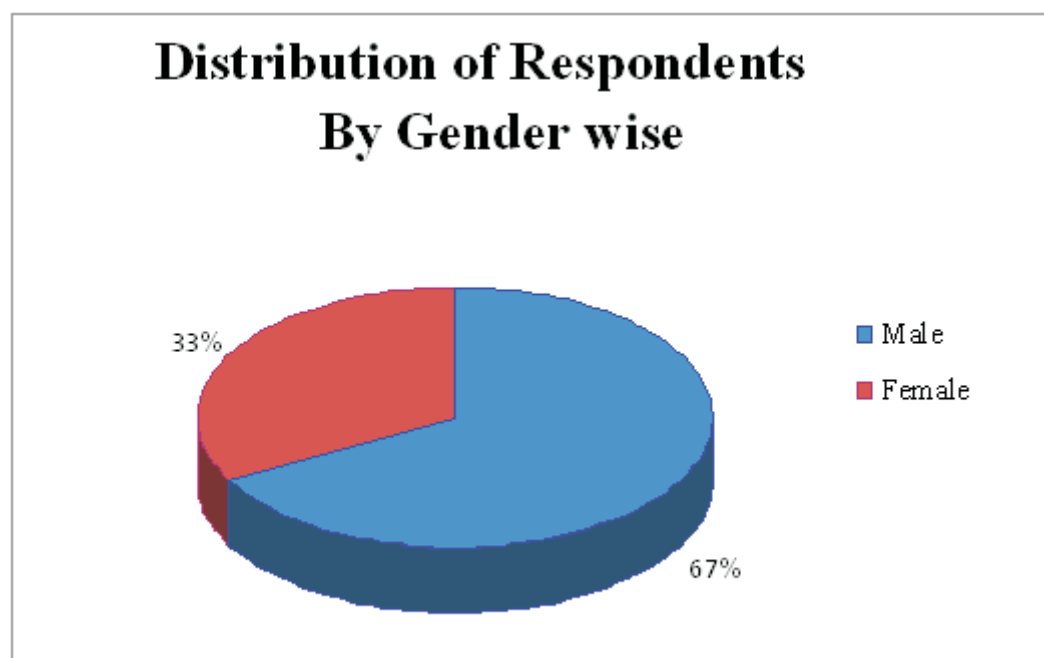
33%

67%

■ Male
■ Female

Figure No.1 Respondents Vs Gender wise

Table No. 3. Respondents Vs Frequency of visits to the Library

Sl.No	Frequency of visit	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Occasionally	60	24%
2	Once in a week	65	26%
3	Twice in a week	57	23%
4	Daily	68	27%
	Total	250	100%

It is observed from table No. 3 that 24% of the users visit the library occasionally, 26% of them visit once in a week, 23% of them visit twice in a week, and 27% of the users visit the library daily. So majority of the respondents visit the Connemara library daily.
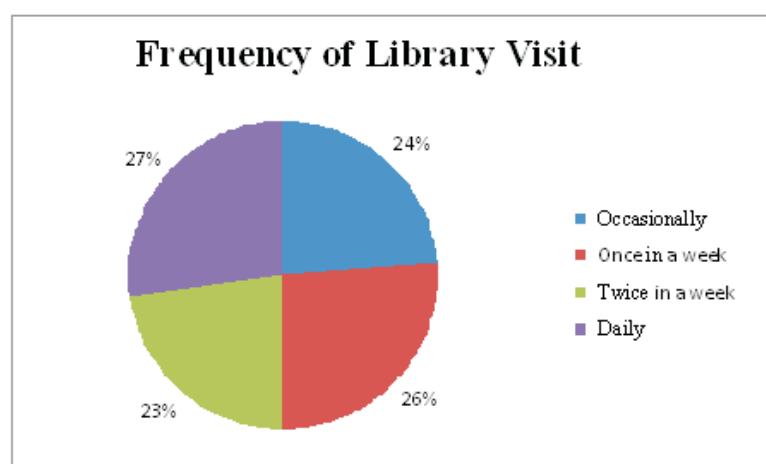
Figure No. 2 Respondents Vs Frequency of visits to the Library

Table No. 4. Respondents Vs Educational Qualifications

Sl.No	Educational Qualification	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	HSC	28	11%
2	Under Graduate (UG)	120	48%
3	Post Graduate (PG)	88	35 %
4	Above PG	14	6%
	Total	250	100%

From table no. 4 it is inferred that out of 250 respondents, 120 are qualified graduation is 48%. 35% of respondents are having post-graduation. Only 14 respondents are having qualification more than post-graduation. But 11% of respondents are qualified +2 is amount to 28 respondents.
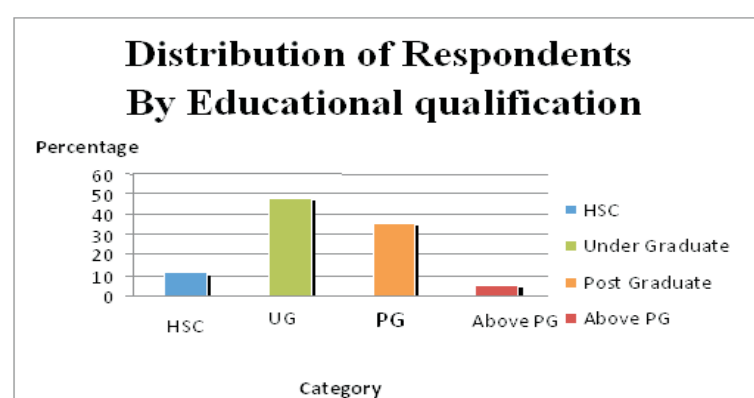

Figure No. 3 Respondents Vs Educational Qualification

Table No. 5. Respondents Vs Documents Preferred

Sl.No	Documents Preferred	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	Books	113	45%
2	Periodicals	79	32%
3	Reference Materials	43	17%
4	Research Materials	8	3%
5	Electronic Resources	7	3%
	Total	250	100%

From table no. 5, it is observed that 45% of respondents preferred books, 32% preferred periodicals, and 17% preferred reference materials. It is interesting to note that only 3% of respondents preferred electronic resources.
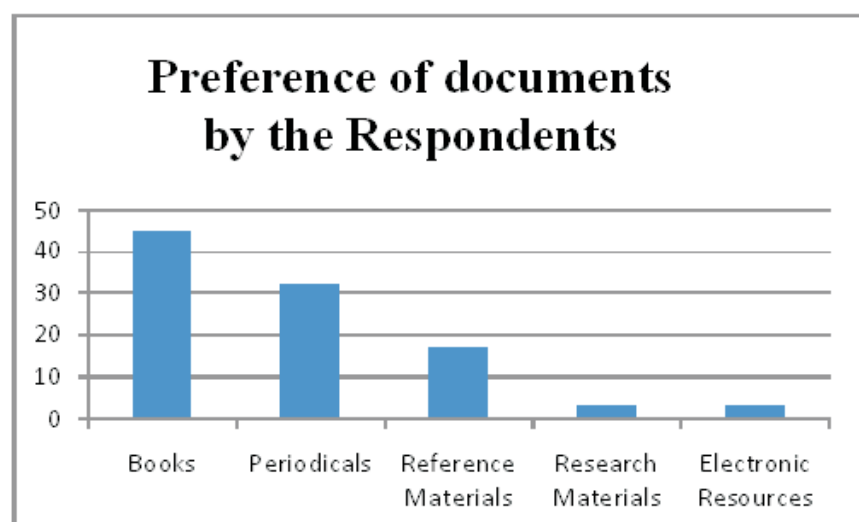

Figure No. 4. Respondents Vs Documents Preferred

Table No. 6. Respondents Vs Reason for Seeking Information

Sl.No	Reason for Seeking Information	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Academic Purpose	54	22%
2	Awareness with Current Knowledge	99	39%
3	Research Purpose	10	4%
4	Accompanying with others	7	3%
5	Preparing Competitive Exam	50	20%
6	General Reading	30	12%
	Total	250	100%

From Table No. 6 it is found that 22% of the respondents were seeking information for their academic purpose. 39% of the respondents seeking information to know the current news and information are amount to 99 respondents. 4% of the respondents came for research purpose, 20% of the respondents or 50 respondents came for preparing competitive examinations. 12% of the respondents are coming for general reading purpose. But only 3% of the respondents came to the library accompanying with others.
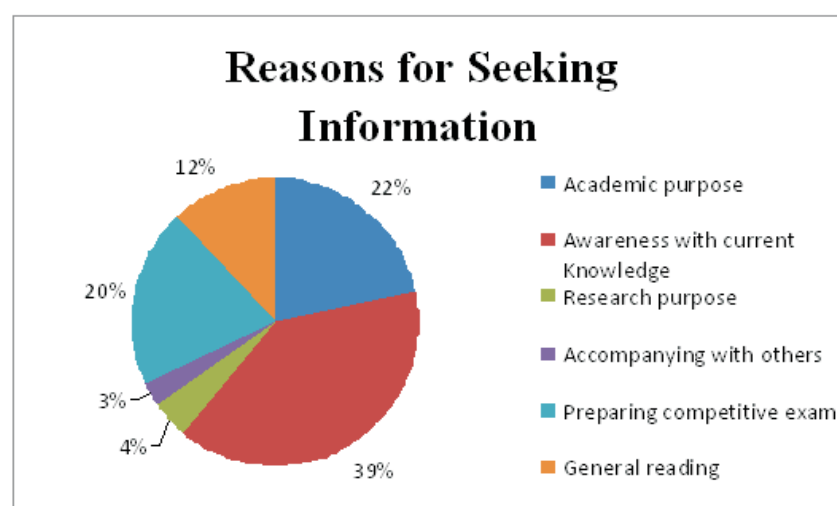

Figure No. 5. Respondents Vs Reason for Seeking Information

Table No. 7. Respondents Vs Type of Catalogue Used

Sl.No	Type of Catalogue	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Printed Catalogue	40	16
2	On line Public access catalogue (OPAC)	210	84
	Total	250	100%

From this Table No. 7 it is understood that 84% of respondents preferred OPAC (one line public access catalogue) to search their information is amount to 210 respondents.
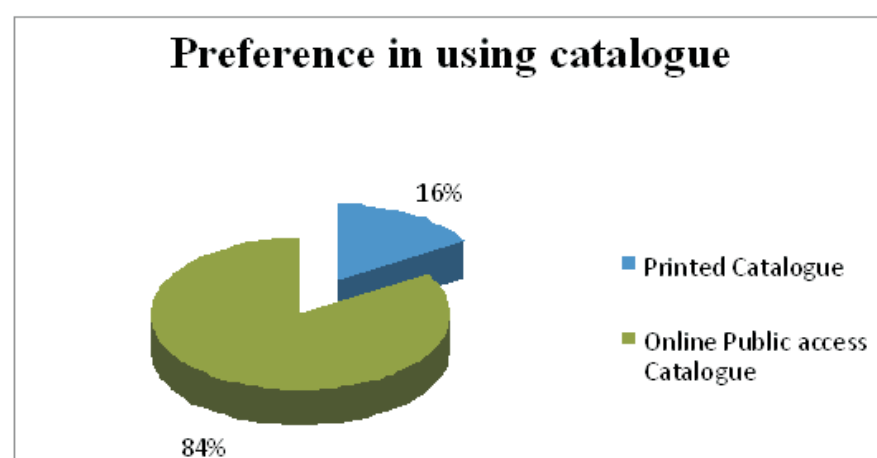
Figure No. 6. Respondents Vs Type of Catalogue Used

Table No. 8. Respondents Vs Type of competitive Exam Preparing

Sl.No	Type of competitive Exam	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	UPSC	45	18%
2	TNPSC	75	30%
3	RRB Exam	40	16%
4	NET / SET	30	12%
5	Bank Exam	60	24%
	Total	250	100%

From table no. 8 It is found that 18 % of the respondents preparing UPSC exam, 16% of the respondents preparing RRB Exam, 12 % of the respondents preparing NET and SET Exam, and 30% of the respondents are preparing Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission Exam.
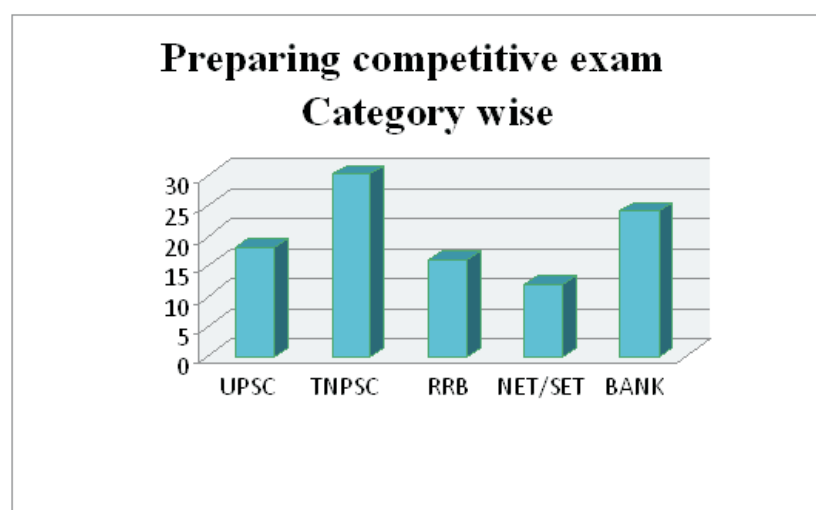

Figure No. 7. Respondents Vs Type of competitive Exam Preparing

Table No. 9. Respondents Vs Frequency of Borrowing Books

Sl.No	Frequency of Borrowing Books	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Often	195	78%
2	Occasionally	55	22%
	Total	250	100%

It is found from the above table no. 9 that 22% of respondents borrow books occasionally whereas 78% of respondents borrow books very often from the library is amount to 195 respondents.
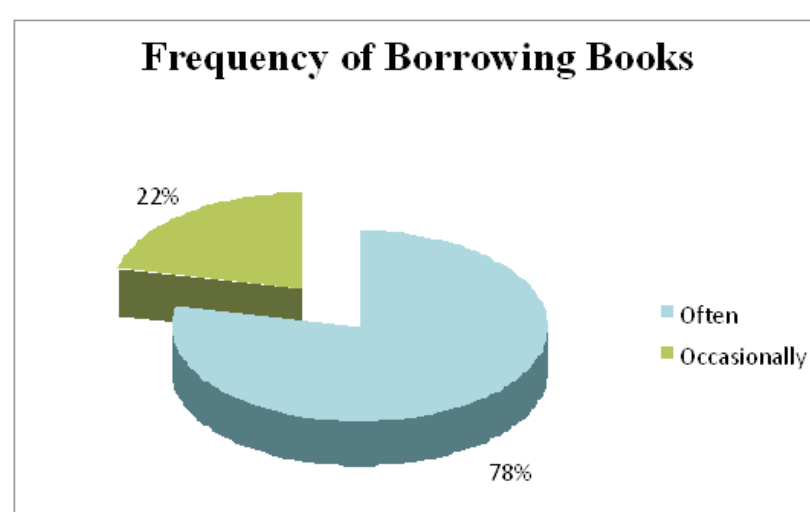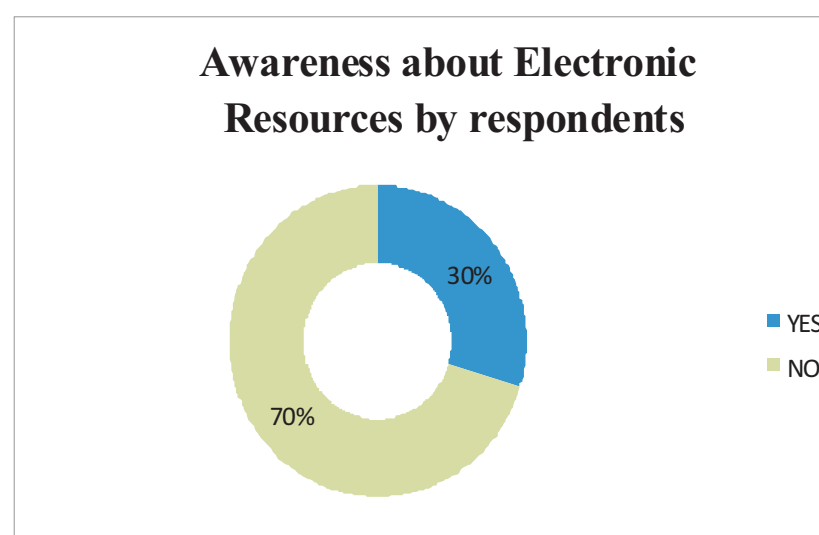

Figure No. 8. Respondents Vs Frequency of Borrowing Books

Table No. 10. Respondents Vs Awareness about Electronic Resources

Sl.No	Awareness about Electronic Resources	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	YES	74	30 %
2	NO	176	70 %
	TOTAL	250	100 %

It is described from the above table no. 10 that nearly 30% of the respondents have awareness about the electronic resources and 70% of the respondents do not have awareness. It is interesting to note that majority of the respondents' preferred print resources as reading comfort.

Figure No. 9. Respondents Vs Awareness about Electronic Resources

Table No. 11. Satisfaction Level of respondents Vs library Services

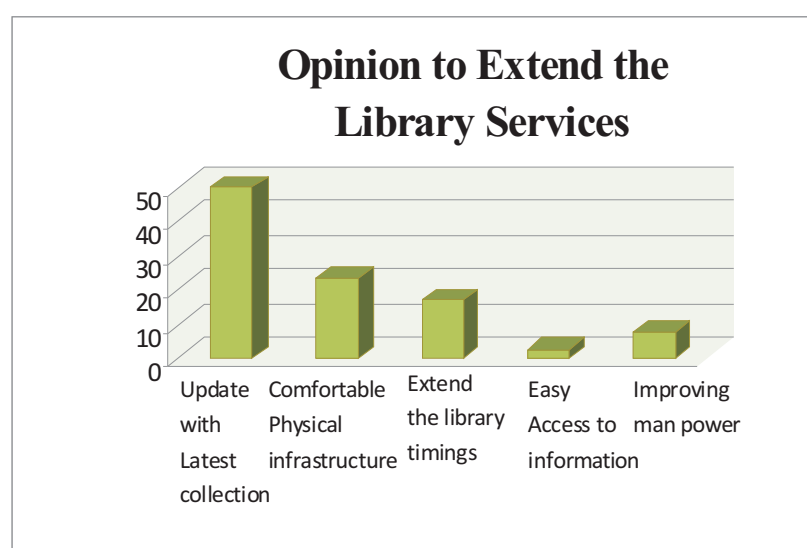| Sl.No	Services provided in Library	SATISFIED (%)	NOT SATISFIED (%)	TOTAL
1	Collection	182 (73)	68 (27)	250
2	Reference Assistants	198 (79)	52 (21)	250
3	Infrastructure	200 (80)	50 (20)	250
4	Library Hours	180 (72)	70 (28)	250
5	Lending Facilities	162 (65)	88 (35)	250
6	Rules and Regulations of the Library	176 (70)	74 (30)	250

Within parentheses indicate percentage.

From the above table no. 11 it is observed that majority of respondents are satisfied with services provided by the library. Out of that, 80% (highest percentage of satisfaction) of the respondents highly satisfied with infrastructure of the library are amount to 200 respondents. Only 21% (lowest percentage of dissatisfaction) that means 52 respondents are not satisfied with reference assistants given by the library.

Table No. 12. Respondents Vs Opinion to Extend the Library Services

Sl.No	Opinions to Extend the Library Services	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	By Updating with Latest Collection	125	50%
2	By Giving Physical infrastructure for Reading Comfort	58	23%
3	By Extend the Library Timings	42	17%
4	By Having easy access to information	6	2%
5	By Improving Man power	19	8%
	TOTAL	250	100%

From the table no. 12 it is found that 50% of the respondents interested to increase or update the collection of the library. 17% of the respondents have suggested having easy access to information in the library. 8% of the respondents suggested improving the manpower of the library. But only 2% of the respondents have opinioned to extend the library timings.

Figure No.11. Respondents Vs Opinion to Extend the Library Services

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FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS
1.Library has rich collection of Books, Periodicals and Other Materials.
2.Majority of the respondents visit the library daily that is 27% or 68 respondents.
3.Majority of the respondents (73%) are satisfied with collection of the library.
4.Majority of the respondents (73.16%) are fully satisfied with services provided by the library.
5.Majority of the respondents (97%) preferred printed documents for reading as a comfort.
6.70% of the respondents do not have awareness about e-resources.
7.50% of the respondents suggested increasing or updating collection of the library. The remaining 50% of the respondents suggested providing physical infrastructure for reading comfort, to have easy access to information, to extend the library timings, to improve the manpower in library as 23%, 17%, 2% and 8% respectively.

CONCLUSION

From this study, it is concluded that majority of the users are satisfied with collection, services, infrastructure facilities and other services provided in the library. The library users under this study also suggested some opinions to extend the services in order to improve the satisfaction level of the users. This study also observed that majority of the users do not have awareness on electronic resources. The growth of digital or electronic information is being increased day-by-day with advent of information technologies. So the library and information science professionals should create awareness about electronic resources and market their services among their user community. The government also should take initiative to provide the financial support and required manpower to the libraries to extend their services.

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Annexure – 1
 Questionnaire for Library Users
Part A: Patron (Respondent) Details:
1.Name of the Respondent:
2.Gender: Male / Female
3.Age:
4.Educational Qualification: HSC / UG / PG / Above PG
5.Occupation:
6.Frequency of visiting this Library: Daily / Once in a week / Twice in a week / Occasionally

7.Purpose of visiting this Library:

Part B: Satisfaction with Library Resources and Services:

8.Are you satisfied with collection of the Library? Yes / No

9.Give your preference of Documents to Read?

(a)Book   [ ]   (b) Periodicals   [ ]

(c) Reference Materials   [ ]   (d) Research Materials [ ]

(e) Electronic Resources   [ ]

10.Are you satisfied with arrangement of Library Resources? Yes / No

11. Which type of Catalogue are you using for search?

(a) Printed Catalogue   [ ]

(b) OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)   [ ]

12. Are you satisfied with Building Infrastructure of this library? Yes / No

13. Give your reasons for seeking information or using this library?

(a) Academic Purpose   [ ]   (b) Awareness with Current Knowledge   [ ]

(c) Research Purpose   [ ]   (d) Accompanying with others   [ ]

(e) General Reading   [ ]   (f) Preparing Competitive Exam   [ ]

14. Give your preference of satisfaction with regard to IT facilities provided in this library?

(a) Photocopy Facility   [ ]   (b) Computer Facility   [ ]

(c) Printing Facility   [ ]   (d) Scanning Facility   [ ]

(d) Access to Electronic Resources Facility   [ ]

15. Give your preference of preparing competitive exam, if you prepare?

(a) UPSC   [ ]   (b) TNPSC   [ ]   (c) Railway Exam   [ ]

(d) NET / SET   [ ]   (e) Bank Exam [ ]

16. Give your frequency of borrowing books from this library?

(a) Often   [ ]   (b) Occasionally   [ ]

17. Do you have awareness about Electronic Resources? Yes / No

18. Give your level of satisfaction with Services provided in the library?

Sl.No	Services provided in the library	Satisfied	Not Satisfied
1	Collection		
2	Reference Assistants		
3	Infrastructure		
4	Library Hours		
5	Lending Facilities		
6	Rules and Regulations of the library		

19. Suggest your opinion to extend the library services as follows?

(a) By updating with latest collection   [ ]

(b) By giving Physical infrastructure for Reading comfort   [ ]

(c) By extend the library timings   [ ]

(d) By having easy access to information   [ ]

(e) By improving manpower   [ ]

Annexure – 2
Abbreviations

HSC   :   Higher Secondary Certificate
OPAC   :   Online Public Access Catalogue
UPSC   :   Union Public Service Commission
TNPSC   :   Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission
RRB   :   Railway Recruitment Board
NET   :   National Eligibility Test
SET   :   State Eligibility Test