Performance and Evaluation of Public Library in Kumbakonam

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Abstract

The public library is considered an essential part of modern society & plays a significant role in communication. It should be regarded as a social force which can significantly influence the service of the community. It can help in democracy creating political awakening, bringing social awareness and fostering creative leisure activities". A public library plays an essential role in supporting different sectors of the community. It can enable business people to improve their business. In children, it can create a love for reading, leading to the formation of reading habits at an early age. The present study is instigated to evaluate the performance of the public library at Kumbakonam by assessing its resources, infrastructural facilities and services. The researcher fabricated a questionnaire and distributed the same selected 250 public library users of Kumbakonam city and received 238 fully completed responses from the respondents.

Keywords
Public library; Kumbakonam Branch; Resources; Infrastructural facilities

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1. Introduction

Public libraries are a worldwide phenomenon. They occur in various societies, in differing cultures and at different stages of development. Although the varied contexts in which they operate inevitably result in differences in the services they provide, and the way those services are delivered, they usually have characteristics in common, which can be defined as follows: A public library is an organisation established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organisation. It provides access to knowledge, information and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic and employment status and educational attainment.

A public library is the product of modern democracy, and it is most again an agent for the integral education of the people is the institution which conserves & organises human knowledge to place it at the services of the community with any distribution. It is the living force for popular education. The objectives of a public library are associated with its parent body, i.e. community, and it has to cater to its users' information and recreational needs, i.e. community members. The main objectives of a public library are as follows:

- → To provide up-to-date and authentic information on all subjects;
- → To provide services free of cost or at nominal rates to each member of the society without any discrimination;
- → To give a harmless and elevating use of leisure;
- → To be responsible for the preservation and development of the cultural and archaic heritage of the community.
- → To offer the public information, books, diverse materials & facilities for the best service of their interests & academic requirements.
- → To simulate freedom of expression & a crucial constructive attitude towards solving social problems.
- → To extend the activities of the Centres of learning, offering educational possibilities to the people.

- → To help the people to acquire reading habits and the habit of self-study.
- → To develop the ability to learn from books without a teacher.
- → To educate man to participate creatively in the community life to promote a better understanding between individuals, groups & nations

2. Profile of sample unit

The Kumbakonam Town Branch Public Library is situated behind the famous Yanaiadi Elementary School, where the former Chief Minister, M.G. Ramachandran, started his educational journey. This library was established in 1952. More than 1,000 readers use this library every day. Students and those preparing for competitive exams use the library. More than 5,000 books on various subjects are available. But all the valuable books, journals, and newspapers are damaged because of a lack of infrastructure. As the ceiling of the library building leaks, the books get wet. This also drenches the chairs leaving visitors with no place to sit. The library functions in a portion of the Kumbakonam Municipal Dispensary building on rent.

3. Review of Literature

Ramalakshmi. N. (2019). carried out a study on user satisfaction of Sources and Services: Special Reference to Public Library in Chidambaram. The study's main objective was to determine how users rate the sources and services of the Public Library in Chidambaram. A total of 200 questionnaires were randomly distributed to the users of the Kumbakonam public library. Out of which 195 questionnaires were received. The study revealed the total number of members of this public library as 13115. It was observed that the majority of the respondents, i.e. 49.23% visited the library daily, and 43.08% visited the library weekly; 40% of the respondents visited the library for Newspaper Reading, M.MohammadYasir, DP. Balasubramanian, (2020) The Public Libraries are the pillars of social development and changing tools for economic background and below literate peoples in India. It is one of the parts in resource providers of political, economic and technological changing growths for the people of India. The work has endeavoured to study the profile of the public libraries, factors touching frequency of visiting public libraries, level of satisfaction with the services, and overall service quality. The visitors' register provided the framework of the respondents to be covered. Users of the public library of Tirunelveli city constituted the sampling frame. Taufiq, M, Rehman, S & Ashiq, M (2020) carried a research on the level of User Satisfaction with Resources and Services and the problems faced by the public library users of Public Libraries Lahore, Pakistan. A survey method and structured questionnaire were designed to collect data. They used a convenience sampling technique for sample selection. The findings showed that most respondents visited the public library daily and were satisfied with the circulation service.

4. Statement of Problem

Tamilnadu Public Library Act of 1948, formerly known as the Madras public library Act, paved the way for dynamic public libraries in the state. Public libraries are fulfilling the reading requirements of the citizens to the fullest extent without making any discrimination based on membership in other academic libraries. Thus it is considered the Peoples University, and as such, libraries will focus on providing knowledge on all matters, including academic and non-academic. Besides, it focuses on general knowledge, Novels, Stories, Drama, Autobiography, Magazine, and Daily Newspapers. Women in large numbers use these resources. Now-a-day public libraries are functioning as mobile – channels in providing knowledge to the people of rural and urban areas. They are receiving the funds from the local body by leavening Cess in the form of a surcharge on the property tax or house tax at a rate of 6 paise per rupee. The public library is an institution for the Public, by the Public, and of the Public. Hence its performance should be evaluated. The researcher attempted to analyse the performance of the public library at Kumbakonam in the Thanjavur district.

5. Objectives of the study:

The researcher has the primary objective of analysing the performance of the public library branch at Kumbakonam. The following are the study objectives.

- → To identify the demographic characteristics of the readers, members and patrons of the public library at Kumbakonam.
- → To analyse the infrastructural facilities, resources and services of the sample unit.
- → To offer suitable suggestions to improve the performance of the public library at Kumbakonam.

6. Null and Alternative Hypotheses

$H_{O.}$: The selected respondents' opinion about the performance of the public library at Kumbakonam is not influenced by their infrastructural facilities, resources available and services offered.

$H_{1.}$: The selected respondents' opinion about the performance of the public library at Kumbakonam is influenced by their infrastructural facilities, resources available and services offered.

7. Scope of the study

Users are the key and the dynamic components of any library. Hence, their needs have to be identified. Especially, users' needs gain importance in today's knowledge society. The present study is to concentrate on the infrastructural facilities of the study unit, resources available in the library and staff approaches. The researcher tries to analyse how the sample respondents feel about the same.

8. Methodology

Members and users of the public library at Kumbakonam constituted the sampling frame. The visitor's index and membership register provided the framework for the respondents to be covered. A sample of 200 respondents using the public library at Kumbakonam was selected using a simple random sampling technique. Primary data was collected from the constituted selection using a structured questionnaire. The distributed 250 questionnaires to the visitors of the study unit randomly and received only 238 fully completed responses from the respondents.

9. Limitations

- The Thanjavur district has 112 public libraries, and the researcher selected only one unit at Kumbakonam.
- The sample size is restricted to 238 respondents.
- The validity of an empirical study is based on the truthfulness of the responses from the respondents.

10. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Frequency of Visiting Library

Frequency	Readers		Members		Patrons	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Daily	31	16.76	7	20.59	3	15.79
Twice a week	35	18.92	9	26.47	5	26.32
Weekly	53	28.65	11	32.35	6	31.58
Twice a Month	41	22.16	4	11.76	3	15.79
Monthly	19	10.27	2	5.88	2	10.53
Occasionally	6	3.24	1	2.94	0	0.00
Total	**185**	**100.00**	**34**	**100.00**	**19**	**100.00**

(Source: Primary Data)

Fig 1

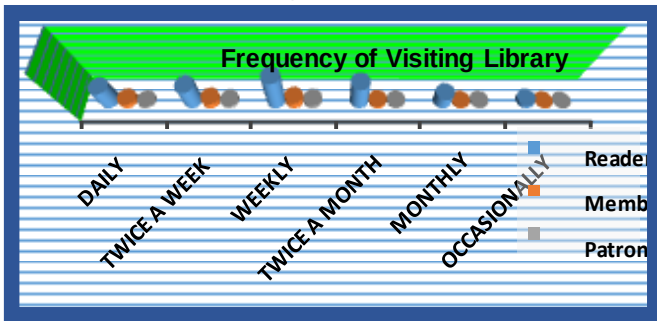


Table 1 and Figure 1 show the frequency of respondents visiting the library. A maximum of 53 (28.65%) readers, 11 (32.35%) members and 6 (31.58%) patrons saw the library weekly, followed by 41 (22.16%) readers, 4 (11.76 %) members, and 3 (15.79%) patrons visited the library twice a month

Table 2: Purpose of Visiting the Public Library

Purpose	Readers		Members		Patrons	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Read newspapers/ magazines/	87	47.03	2	5.88	2	10.53
Consult reference books	12	6.49	9	26.47	3	15.79
Borrow and return books	21	11.35	13	38.24	5	26.32
Read subject books	31	16.76	4	11.76	4	21.05
Career information	18	9.73	3	8.82	2	10.53
General information	7	3.78	2	5.88	1	5.26
Entertainment	9.	4.86	1	2.94	2	10.53
Total	185.00	100.00	34.00	100.00	19.00	100.00

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 2 indicates the users' purpose for visiting the public library resources. It is found that a maximum

of 43.73 per cent of readers visited the public library for reading newspapers, followed by reading the subject books, borrowing and returning books, and knowing the Career information. Besides, 38.24 per cent of members visited the public library to borrow and return books, followed by consulting the reference books and reading the subject books. Further, it is noted that a maximum of 26.32 per cent of patrons visited the library to borrow and return books.

Table 3: Respondents' opinion about the Infrastructural facilities, Resources and Services of the Public library - Kumbakonam

Source of awareness	Response					Total	WAM	Rank
Physical facilities that are appealing	71	63	49	34	21	238	3.542	**IV**
A place for reflection and Creativity	96	54	43	27	18	238	3.769	**I**
Making information easily accessible for independent Use	59	46	57	62	14	238	3.311	**VI**
The working hour of the library is suitable	69	54	43	46	26	238	3.395	**V**
Bookshelves facilities / Display	47	57	65	34	35	238	3.197	**VIII**
The library has the sufficient reference collections	87	51	44	28	28	238	3.592	**III**
Ventilation and parking	53	71	38	24	52	238	3.206	**VII**
The library staff is always courteous.	55	49	41	48	45	238	3.088	**IX**
Leading newspapers available in the library	74	74	53	21	16	238	3.710	**II**
Notice board facilities	54	63	75	24	22	238	3.073	**X**
Computer and internet facilities	44	69	78	26	21	238	3.024	**XI**

Table 3 discloses the respondents' opinions about the infrastructural facilities, resources available and services offered by the public library at Kumbakonam. It is observed that the first position is given to the variable "A place for reflection and Creativity" with the weighted average score of 3.769, followed by the second rank allotted to the variable "Leading newspapers available in the library" with the score of 3.073 and third rank assigned to the variable "The library having the sufficient reference collections". Further, it is noticed that the variables Physical facilities that are appealing, working hour of the library is suitable and Making information easily accessible for independent use are got fourth, fifth and sixth positions respectively.

Table 4: Users' satisfaction with the performance of the public library

Impact	Responses of Respondents				
	Readers	Members	Patrons	Total	%
Strongly agree	93	16	8	117	49.16
Agree	47	9	5	61	25.63
Agree to some extent	26	4	3	33	13.87
Disagree	11	3	2	16	6.72
Strongly disagree	8	2	1	11	4.62
Total	**185**	**34**	**19**	**238**	**100.00**

Table 4 elucidates Users' Satisfaction with the performance of the public library. It is found that 49.16 per cent of respondents are highly satisfied with the performance of libraries, followed by 25.63 per cent satisfied, 13.87 per cent of respondents met to some extent, 6.72 per cent dissatisfied, and 4.62 per cent of respondents highly unhappy with the performance of libraries. It is further inferred that 74.39 per cent of respondents expressed a favourable opinion regarding the version of the public library at Kumbakonam.

Table 5: Problems faced by the users in accessing the services of the library Hendry Garrett's Ranking

Sl.no	Particulars	Hendry Garrett's Score					Total	Rank
	Problems of users	1	2	3	4	5		
1	Non-availability of modern services and	3525	3540	3050	1880	600	**12595**	**V**

	equipment							
2	Lack of current materials	4050	4140	1200	1560	1300	**12250**	**VI**
3	Disturbing and noisy environment	5400	4080	1600	1760	550	**13390**	**I**
4	Lack of trained personnel	4800	3540	1400	1880	1000	**12620**	**III**
5	The behaviour of the library staff	4575	2880	2700	1560	900	**12615**	**IV**
6	Arrangement and layout of books & magazines	4425	3300	1900	1880	975	**12480**	**VII**
7	Poor Lighting & Cleanliness	3600	3420	2300	1560	1200	**12080**	**VIII**
8	Poor maintenance of library	4575	3480	2350	1160	1075	**12640**	**II**
9	Toilet facilities	4425	3420	1160	1420	1125	11550	**IX**

Table 5 denotes Hendry Garrett's Ranking of Problems users face while accessing the public library services. The first rank is given to the statement " Disturbing and noisy environment ", the second rank for " Poor maintenance of library ", and the third rank "Lack of trained personnel". Besides the fourth position allotted to the variable "The behaviour of the library staff", the fifth position and last position are allotted to "Poor Lighting & Cleanliness", and the sixth position is assigned to the variable "Lack of current materials".

Table 6: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Problems faced by the users in accessing the digitalised repositories					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	45.104[a]	144	.686	18.936	.000
Intercept	790.213	1	5.303	14.347	.000
Type	.818	2	3.806	10.297	.000
Frequency	.645	6	2.847	7.702	.000
Purpose	1.148	6	3.364	9.099	.000
Social status	.520	6	3.181	8.606	.000
Residence	1.996	5	1.496	4.048	.003
Error	19.769	93	.370		
Total	2212.174	238			
Corrected Total	64.873	237			
a. R Squared = .695 (Adjusted R Squared = .643)					

Table 6 reveals the two-way ANOVA between the Dependent Variable respondents' opinion about the performance of the library and the independent variable demographic profile of selected respondents. It is further inferred that the "F" value of independent variables are 10.297, 7.702, 9.099, 8.606 and 4.048 for Type of Respondent, Frequency, Purpose of visit, Social status and Residential area, respectively. The corresponding "p" value is less than the confidence level at a 5 per cent significance level. Hence it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the independent variable demographic profile of selected respondents and the Dependent Variable Users' opinion about the performance of the public library at Kumbakonam.

Table 7 - ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	d.f	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	312.741	5	26.062	36.690	.000[b]
	Residual	441.109	232	.710		
	Total	753.850	237			

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.924	.180		16.209	.000
	A place for reflection and Creativity	-.110	.028	-.129	-3.850	.000***

Leading newspapers available in the library	.144	.030	.166	4.753	.000***
The library having the sufficient reference collections	.231	.042	.193	5.487	.000***
Physical facilities that are appealing	.219	.028	.347	.680	.007***
Working hour of the library is suitable	.318	.022	.253	.796	.002***

a. Dependent Variable: Users' Satisfaction with the performance of the library

The above table seven exhibits the regression coefficients between the Dependent Variable: Users' Satisfaction with the performance of the public library and independent variables selected for the study. It also revealed the beta value, standard error and t value. Regression coefficients represent the mean change in the response variable for one unit of change in the predictor variable while holding other predictors in the model constant. The results of the R-square value (0.712) show a good correlation between the Users' Satisfaction with the performance of the library and the independent variables selected for the study. The six dimension's Beta value shows a positive correlation between the Users' Satisfaction with the performance of the library and the independent variables A place for reflection and Creativity, leading newspapers available in the library, the library having the good reference collections, Physical facilities that are appealing and Working hour of the library is suitable. All the six variables are significant at a 5 per cent significance level. It is concluded that there is a substantial relationship between Users' Satisfaction with the performance of the library and the independent variables selected for the study.

11. Findings

- → It is observed that a maximum of 53 (28.65%) readers, 11 (32.35%) members and 6 (31.58%) patrons saw the library weekly, followed by 41 (22.16%) readers, 4 (11.76 %) members, and 3 (15.79%) patrons visited the library twice a month.
- → It is found that a maximum of 43.73 per cent of readers visited the public library for reading newspapers, followed by reading the subject books, borrowing and returning books, and knowing the Career information. Besides, Further, it is noted that a maximum of 26.32 per cent of patrons visited the library to borrow and return books.
- → It is observed that the first position is given to the variable "A place for reflection and Creativity" with the weighted average score of 3.769, followed by the second rank allotted to the variable "Leading newspapers available in the library" with the score of 3.073 and third rank assigned to the variable "The library having the sufficient reference collections". Further, it is noticed that the variables Physical facilities that are appealing, working hour of the library is suitable and Making information easily accessible for independent use are got fourth, fifth and sixth positions respectively.
- → It is found that 49.16 per cent of respondents are highly satisfied with the performance of libraries, It is further inferred that 74.39 per cent of respondents expressed a favourable opinion regarding the version of the public library at Kumbakonam.
- → Regarding the problems of the respondents, The first rank is given to the statement " Disturbing and noisy environment ", the second rank for " Poor maintenance of library ", and the third rank "Lack of trained personnel". Besides the fourth position allotted to the variable "The behaviour of the library staff", the fifth position and last position are allotted to "Poor Lighting & Cleanliness", and the sixth position is assigned to the variable "Lack of current materials".
- → The two-way ANOVA between the Dependent Variable respondents' opinion about the performance of the library and the independent variable demographic profile of selected respondents. It is further inferred that the "F" value of independent variables are 10.297, 7.702, 9.099, 8.606 and 4.048 for Type of Respondent, Frequency, Purpose of visit, Social status and Residential area, respectively. The corresponding "p" value is less than the confidence level at a 5 per cent significance level. Hence it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the independent variable demographic profile of selected respondents and the Dependent Variable Users' opinion about the performance of the public library at Kumbakonam.

→ The beta value, standard error and t value are the regression analysis. Regression coefficients represent the mean change in the response variable for one unit of change in the predictor variable while holding other predictors in the model constant. The results of the R-square value (0.712) show a good correlation between the Users' Satisfaction with the performance of the library and the independent variables selected for the study. Physical facilities that are appealing and Working hour of the library is suitable. All the six variables are significant at a 5 per cent significance level. It is concluded that there is a substantial relationship between Users' Satisfaction with the performance of the library and the independent variables selected for the study.

12. Suggestions

- ↗ The library authorities should provide the reading environment in the public library at Kumbakonam.
- ↗ Bookshelves facilities / Display and notice board should be arranged for the public library at Kumbakonam.
- ↗ Computer and internet facilities would be improved in the library.
- ↗ The library staff is always courteous with the users of the library.
- ↗ Ventilation and parking facilities might be enhanced in the library.
- ↗ The library should be maintained appropriately.
- ↗ Well-trained personnel are needed for the library to provide better services to the users.

13. Conclusion

The public library is the local information centre, making all kinds of knowledge and information sources readily available to its users. The public library services are rendered based on equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific services and sources must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example, linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison. All age groups must find materials relevant to their needs. Collections and services must include all types of appropriate media and modern technologies as well as traditional materials. The material must reflect current trends and the evolution of society, as well as the memory of human endeavour and imagination. Collections and services should not be subject to ideological, political or religious censorship or commercial pressures. The Government should allot funds for the purchase of more books and journals. The Librarians are qualified personnel and are the right persons to judge the demands of the users. The Library Professionals should be trained in Computerisation of Library activities. Only eligible persons are to be posted in the library for the development and enhancement of the Libraries.

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