

A STUDY ON INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF USERS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN TIRUNELVELI

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ABSTRACT

The Current Scenario is information explosion. The required information is available in different Sources among them, Libraries and internets are very important. The different methods behave differently for the collection of the required information. Hence, the researcher has chosen the topic "information Seeking Behaviour of users of public libraries in Tirunelveli District-An occupation based study" for intensive Study. For the Present Study, the Tirunelveli district has been stratified into seven areas covering 808 users of the public libraries have been chosen on random sampling method for this study. The respondents consist of students, government employees, and also private employees and others. For the collection of primary date from the users of libraries, a structured, close – ended questionnaire was used. Secondary information has been collected from books, journals and articles published in referred journals. The main concepts studied are frequency of library membership – occupation wise, approaches of libraries, sources of information, public libraries as local information centres, libraries as depository local information needs, library supports lifelong learning and library as a place of recreation and leisure interest.

Keywords: *Dynamic living force, information, Behaviour occupation, self recreation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

When a need is felt for anything, more often than not, people take action in order to satisfy that need. Different strategies or modes of action are resorted to. The same applies for the satisfaction of information needs. An

Ching –Chih Chen has defined information seeking as follows "Information seeking patterns are the paths persuaded by

According to Girja Kumar. "Information seeking behaviour is mainly concerned with who needs what kind of

T.D. Wilson defines what he calls "information behaviour as those activities a person may engage in when identifying his or

A public library is a dynamic, living force and the intellectual nucleus of the community it serves. It is an institution of the public and for the public. Therefore, they must be open to all, without any hindrance. They must be quickly and highly accessible. This principle implies that there must be

individual realizes that he needs information; he knows that in all probability, the information will not come to him on its own; therefore, he has to go about seeking it.

the individuals in the attempt to resolve a need."

information for what Purpose; how information is found evaluated and used."

her own needs for information, searching for such information in any way, and using or transferring that information".

appropriate public library service points available to everyone in the community. It requires the provision of urban as well as rural libraries. The public library keeps its door open for free and equal use by members living in the area of its operation, distinguishes it from an academic or a special Library.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following are some of the past studies on information seeking behaviour referred in the reference to the present study.

- i. A study by AINA (1985) launched a survey on information needs and information seeking involvements in six rural communities in Nigeria, used interview technique and identified that the farmers required information on a wide range of subjects, but all were concerned with ways of increasing production. The farmers made little effort to obtain the required information and very few visited agricultural institutions in search of information. Therefore it was decided that libraries should be established in rural areas to meet the needs of farmers.
- ii. In an analysis osheroft et.al,(1991) about physicians posed by physicians and medical students while attending ward rounds, were on average of five clinical questions per patient, 52% of the required factual information was answered from medical records and the rest were answered through library resources like text books and journals.
- iii. A study by Tripathi and Prasad (2001) titled as, "The information seeking behavior and use of information sources in physical sciences and social sciences –A Comparative study" was carried out to examine. The information seeking activities in physical sciences and social sciences. Attempts were made to cast light on the methods used by the physical scientists and social scientists for gathering information and their information needs. The methodology of questionnaire was used for the study. About 500 questionnaires were distributed among the faculty members in the disciplines of physical sciences and social sciences and 300 were received back making the response rate of 60%. The data collected by getting the questionnaires filled by the respondents were used for final analysis using M-STAT Package. The findings revealed that the two groups of scientists had distinct characteristics regard to the use of media and sources. Therefore, the information system and services should be activated to correlate with the characteristics of the groups.
- iv. In a study by shokean and Kushik (2002) entitled, "Information seeking behavior of social scientists of Haryana Universities, the objective was to identify the information seeking behaviour of social scientists working in the universities located in Haryana results revealed that most of the social scientists visited library daily. The first three preferred method of searching the required information by the social scientists were by searching through indexing and abstracting periodicals and citations in articles respectively. The Social scientists used current journals followed by books.
- v. Kumaran and vadivel (2003) in a survey on information seeking habits of scientists CECRI, karaikudi and BHEL, Trichy the objectives were to identify the various formal and informal channels to which engineers and scientists were exposed to become aware of their specific important information requirements, frequency of their visit to libraries and time sent by them to scan various communication channels. The study revealed that 75% of scientists and 95% of engineers depended on formal channels which were extensively used "library Bulletin" was found to be the top priority of engineers and scientists, 55% of engineers visited five to ten times in a month. About 33.3% of the scientists had spent more than 30 minutes to scan various communication media and 10% of the

engineers had spent more than 30 minutes for the same purpose.

3. OBJECTIVES

- i. To find out the Library membership of the respondents based on their occupations.
- ii. To study the frequency of library visit of the respondents based on the occupation
- iii. To know the purpose of library visit by the respondents based on the occupation.
- iv. To find out the approaches of the respondents to the library by occupation
- v. To identify the sources of information used by the respondents based on the occupation
- vi. To know the respondent's opinion about public libraries as "local information centre by occupation.
- vii. To know the respondent's opinion about libraries as depository of local information needs by occupation
- viii. To know the respondent's opinion about Library support "lifelong learning" by occupation.
- ix. To know the respondent's opinion about library

4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

This study is concerned with "Information Seeking behaviour of Users of public Libraries in Tirunelveli District : An Occupation Based Study " from the revenue administration point of view Tirunelveli district comprises of eleven taluks . But, for the library administrative

convenience, the said taluks are grouped into seven namely Tirunelveli, Palayamkottai, Sankarankovil, Ambasamudrum, Tenkasi, Alangulam and Nanguneri. The present study attempts to analyse the Information seeking behaviour of users of public libraries in these Taluks.

5. METHODOLOGY

The study is mainly based on the primary data collected from the users of sample public libraries in Tirunelveli district through a well designed, structured

Since complete coverage of such a large population in a scientific enquiry is impossible, for the purpose of the study a random sampling method was adopted.

questionnaire. Also secondary data has been collected from sources like text books, Reference books and other sources. Such as articles published in referred journals.

Samples of 808 respondents were chosen from the seven library administrative taluks, in order to study the information seeking behaviour of users of public libraries.

Table 1: Library Membership by Occupation

Occupation	District library	Branch libraries	Both	None	Total
Student	8 (0.49%)	188 (11.63%)	40 (2.47%)	484 (29.95%)	720 (44.55%)
Service	80 (4.95%)	192 (11.88%)	40 (2.47%)	264 (16.33%)	576 (35.64%)
Self-employed	-	48 (2.97%)	16 (0.99%)	56 (3.46%)	120 (7.42%)
Others	24 (1.48%)	64 (3.96%)	32 (1.98%)	80 (4.95%)	200 (12.37%)
Total	112 (6.93%)	492 (30.44%)	128 (7.92%)	442 (54.7%)	1616 (100)

Source: Primary Data

Table 2: Frequency of library visit by Respondents-Occupation wise

occupation	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	occasionally	Total	Total
Student	28 (1.73%)	200 (12.37%)	84 (5.19%)	408 (25.24%)	720 (44.55%)	720 (44.55%)
Service	42 (4.45%)	112 (6.93%)	48 (2.97%)	374 (21.28%)	576 (35.64%)	576 (35.64%)
Self-employed	-	56 (3.46%)	12 (0.74%)	52 (3.21%)	120 (7.42%)	120 (7.42%)
Others	4 (0.49%)	48 (2.975%)	24 (1.48%)	120 (7.42%)	200 (12.37%)	200 (12.37%)
Total	54 (6.68%)	415 (25.7%)	168 (10.39%)	924 (57.17%)	1616 (100%)	1616 (100%)

Source: calculated from primary data

The well-tested questionnaire was distributed personally to the users of the sample libraries in Tirunelveli district. Sufficient time was given to the respondents for furnishing the information. The questionnaire also included questions on various concepts of library.

Table 3: Purpose of library visit occupation wise

Occupation	To read books	To read periodicals	To barrow books	Others	Total
Student	216 (13.36%)	32 (11.63%)	400 (2.47%)	72 (29.95%)	720 (44.55%)
Service	168 (4.95%)	80 (11.88%)	260 (2.47%)	68 (16.33%)	576 (35.64%)
Self-employed	40 (2.47%)	56 (3.46%)	24 (1.48%)	-	120 (7.42%)
Others	56 (3.46%)	16 (0.99%)	128 (7.92%)	-	200 (12.37%)

Source: computer from primary data.

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

By occupation, out of the 808 respondents, 11.63% are members of Branch library members, 2.47% are members of both the library members and 0.49% are District Library members from students. 11.88% of service personal are Branch library members and 4.95% are District Library members, whereas only 2.47% are member of both the libraries. Service personnel's claim the highest

It is revealed from the analysis of the above table that, among the District and Branch libraries visitors by occupation, 57.17% visits the library occasionally whereas

number in library membership in Branch Libraries, followed by students having 11.63% self-employed and other category of persons were not very font of library membership, which can be assumed that they have no time to access information from the libraries that may be due to their daily works or engagements.

students claim highest in number i.e., 25.24% of the total respondents. Occasional are the highest, and followed by weekly and daily.

Table 4: Approaches of library by occupation

occupation	Social Information	Cultural Information	Educational information	Recreation leisure	Others	Total
Student	32 (1.98%)	74 (1.48%)	428 (26.48%)	172 (10.64%)	64 (3.96%)	720 (44.55%)
Service	56 (7.17%)	36 (2.22%)	208 (12.87%)	128 (7.92%)	88 (5.44%)	576 (35.64%)
Self-employed	64 (4.2%)	8 (0.49%)	16 (0.99%)	12 (0.74%)	16 (0.99%)	120 (7.42%)
Others	56 (3.46%)	4 (0.24%)	60 (3.71%)	32 (1.98%)	48 (2.97%)	200 (12.37%)
Total	108 (25.7%)	416 (25.7%)	168 (10.39%)	924 (57.17%)	1616 (100%)	1616 (100%)
	272 (16.83%)	72 (4.45%)	712 (44.06%)	374 (21.28%)	216 (13.36%)	1616 (100%)

Source: prepared from primary data.

The above table illustrates that out of the total respondents, 13.36% of students visit the District and Branch libraries to read books, which is 30 % among the student respondents. Consultation of periodicals is low, only 1.98% of total respondents (4.44% of students group)

The above table affirms that the students group has the highest in respect of District and Branch libraries visit for the purpose of educational information constituted 26.48% which is followed by service persons, 12.87%. In comparison to others points of

are for periodical consultations. 24.75% students of total respondents visit library to borrow books. Clearly we can see that service persons more consulted periodicals than students.

information, all the occupational groups rarely visited libraries for cultural information. Self-employed persons mostly visited District and Branch libraries for social information (4.2%), which is very high in comparison to other purposes.

Table 5: Sources of information by occupation

occupation	Books	Journals/ Periodicals	Audio Visual	Others	Total
Student	512 (31.68%)	112 (6.93%)	28 (1.73%)	68 (4.2%)	720 (44.55%)
Service	336 (20.79%)	200 (12.37%)	-	47 (2.47%)	576 (35.64%)
Self-employed	40 (2.47%)	56 (4.7%)	-	4 (0.24%)	120 (7.42%)
Others	120 (7.42%)	80 (4.95%)	-	-	200 (12.37%)
Total	1008 (62.37%)	468 (28.96%)	28 (1.73%)	102 (6.93%)	1616 (100%)

Source: primary data.

The above table depicts that 31.68% of students out of the total respondents used books as the main source of information in the District and Branch Libraries, whereas only 6.93% used journals/periodicals; and out of the service persons, 20.79% used books and 12.37% used journals. From the self-employed persons, 4.7% relied on journals and is

The above table clearly depicts that 23.6% of student groups are of the opinion that public libraries as local centre of information, but 11.39% do not agree, whereas, 9.9% have no idea. Out of the service persons, 23.26% agree and 7.67% are against

followed by books constituting 2.47% and for the other group of respondents, 7.42% on books and 4.95% on journals/periodicals. In all these categories of information, book mostly provided information to the library users and is followed by journals and periodicals.

it from the total respondents. 6.18% of self-employed persons does also agree and other group of occupants, 7.92% agree and 3.96% do not agree. All the categories of occupations, agreed that public library as local information center.

Table 6: Public libraries as local information centre by occupation wise:

occupation	Yes	No	No Idea	Total
Student	376 (23.26%)	184 (11.39%)	160 (9.9%)	720 (44.55%)
Service	376 (23.26%)	124 (7.67%)	76 (4.7%)	576 (35.64%)
Self-employed	100 (6.18%)	20 (1.23%)	-	120 (7.42%)
Others	128 (7.92%)	64 (3.96%)	8 (0.49%)	200 (12.37%)
Total	980 (60.64%)	392 (24.25%)	244 (15.09%)	1616 (100%)

Source: primary data.

The above table illustrates the statement of the various occupants on public libraries as depository of local community information centre. Among students, 13.11% of the total

population agreed that public Libraries deposit local information needs whereas 12.53% do not agree. Regarding self-employed persons, 5.19% do not agree and 1.48 % is against

them. The gap among the other group of occupants that 5.19% of the total respondents feel that public library deposits local information needs whereas only 4.95% do not agree.

Table 7: Libraries as depository of local information needs by occupation

occupation	Yes	No	No Idea	Total
Student	212 (13.11%)	348 (21.53%)	160 (9.9%)	720 (44.55%)
Service	236 (14.6%)	240 (14.85%)	100 (6.18%)	576 (35.64%)
Self-employed	24 (1.48%)	84 (5.19%)	12 (0.74%)	120 (7.42%)
Others	84 (5.19%)	80 (4.95%)	36 (2.22%)	200 (12.37%)
Total	556 (34.4%)	752 (46.53%)	308 (19.05%)	1616 (100%)

Source: Prepared from primary data:

By taking the total responses, 34.4 % of that total population agrees public Libraries as depository of local community information

The above table describes that 15.85% of service persons do not agree that public Libraries as lifelong learning center, whereas 13.36% agree and 6.43% have no idea. About 4.95% of self-employed persons also do not

The above table clearly depicts those public Libraries as a place of recreation and leisure interest. Out of the total respondents, 39.35% of student group, 33.17% of service persons, 7.42 % of self-employed persons and 11.38% others agreed public libraries as a place of recreation and leisure interest. On the

needs, whereas 46.53% do not agree and 19.05% have no idea.

agree library as lifelong learning centre while 1.48% agree. On the contrary, 7.42% of other categories of occupants agree and 3.21% do not agree public libraries as lifelong learning centre.

other hand, 4.45% of students, 1.23% of service, and 0.99% of others does not agree. From the table, it is clear that all the respondents of self-employed group agree to the point. By analyzing the data, it is assumed that public Libraries as a place of recreation and leisure interest.

Table 8: Library supports lifelong learning occupation wise

occupation	Yes	No	No Idea	Total
Student	308 (19.05%)	304 (18.81%)	108 (6.68%)	720 (44.55%)
Service	216 (13.36%)	256 (15.85%)	104 (6.43%)	576 (35.64%)
Self-employed	24 (1.48%)	80 (4.95%)	16 (0.99%)	120 (7.42%)
Others	120 (7.42%)	52 (3.21%)	28 (1.73%)	200 (12.37%)
Total	668 (41.33%)	692 (42.82%)	256 (15.85%)	1616 (100%)

Table 9: Library as a place of reaction and leisure interest occupation wise

occupation	Yes	No	No Idea	Total
Student	636 (39.35%)	72 (4.45%)	12 (0.74%)	720 (44.55%)
Service	536 (33.17%)	20 (1.23%)	20 (1.23%)	576 (35.64%)
Self-employed	120 (7.42%)	-	-	120 (7.42%)
Others	184 (11.38%)	16 (0.99%)	-	200 (12.37%)
Total	1476 (91.33%)	108 (6.68%)	32 (1.98%)	1616 (100%)

Source: Primary data

7. FINDINGS

- It is found that among the different occupation of the respondents, more number of service and student category having membership in branch library than district library.
- It is found that among the different occupation of the respondents more number of student's respondents occasionally visits the library.
- It is found that among the different occupation of the respondents more number of student respondents occasionally visits the library to barrow books than others.
- It is found that among the different occupation of the respondents more number of student respondents approaches the library for educational information.
- It is found that among the different occupations of the respondents more number of student's respondents stated that books are the main sources of information than others.
- It is found that among the different occupation of the respondents more number of students and service respondents agreed the statement that libraries as "local information centre".
- It is found that among the different occupation of the respondents more number of students and service respondents agreed the statement that libraries as "depository of local information needs".
- It is found that among the different occupation of the respondents more students agreed the statement that libraries as "lifelong learning centre".
- It is found that among the different occupation of the respondents more students respondents agreed the statement that library as a place of recreation and leisure interest by different age group.

8. CONCLUSION

Information is a valid vital and indispensable product of the modern society. It grows from experience, observation, inference, interaction and cultivation of knowledge. It is intended for socio-economical development without which the

present society cannot move. Such information is much essential for human activity. Nature of information needs varies from one individual to another depending upon subject of interest and available time.

From the present study the frequency of library visits of the respondent's shows that majority of the users are weekly and occasional visitors. The purpose of library

It is also found that the respondent approaches the library for getting educational information and books are the main sources of information. From the study it is concluded

visit indicates the majority of the respondents visit the library to borrow books. So it is important to note that books are the major information sources of the public library users. that majority of the respondents depend on the public library for their local information needs.

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