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Use Pattern and Information Needs of Young Users of Public Libraries in Karnataka with Special Reference to City Central Library (CCL), Dharwad

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Abstract

In this article an attempt has been made to investigate the use pattern and information needs of young users. For the study 200 questionnaires were distributed to the young users of City Central library, Dharwad, aged between 18-35 years and 196 duly filled questionnaires were received back with the response rate of 98%. In that, 180 (90%) questionnaires were found to be suitable for the analysis. Findings of the study revealed that City Central library plays a vital role in the life of youngsters and they are visiting the library regularly. Library usage and information needs of youngsters are mainly related to employment (81.11%) and education (66.57%). The study concludes with providing some of the important suggestions for overall development of information resources, services and infrastructure facilities of the CCL in order to provide better services to young users.

Key words: Public Library, City Central Library, Youngsters, User Studies, Information seeking Behavior, Information need.

Introduction

As prime users of public library, youngsters will have different requirements of information resources and services to satisfy their information needs. The information needs of youth are primarily related to their studies, employment and personality development. The public library plays a very significant role in life of youngsters by providing appropriate reading materials and services in addition with good reading atmosphere. The prime purpose of the public library is to provide information resources and services to meet the needs of individuals for education, information and personal development including recreation and leisure (IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994). Public library is the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups (IFLA public library service guidelines, 2010).

User studies are one of the most important areas of research in library and information science. User studies primarily deal with the kind of information required by the user, the ways and means used for searching for the required information, the use of the information obtained, the satisfaction/dissatisfaction arising from the use of information obtained, the flow of the information and the relationship of the user with the system (Gupta, 2012). Both Information need and information seeking behavior studies are part of research in the field user studies. Maurice B. Line has defined information need as, “what an individual ought to have for his work, his research, his edification, his recreation, etc” Thanuskodi (2012) and Wilson defines the term information seeking behavior as “the totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking and information use”(Wilson, 2000).

Review of Literature

Ole Pors (2006) analyses the purpose of higher education students in using public libraries and discussed on public libraries as complement for academic libraries. Parvathamma & Reddy (2009) studies public library usage of users majority of them are aged between 11 – 30 years. Authors suggest that, the public libraries need to develop their information resources, provide internet service and offer community-based services and literacy programs. Silvio (2006)

examine the information needs and information seeking behavior of immigrant youngsters from southern Sudan in the city of London and Ontario, Canada. The study found that, information needs of these youngsters are mainly academic in nature. Dutta (2009) argues that, weak economy has a deep effect on the availability and accessibility of information resources. Thanuskodi (2012) examines the information use pattern of the legal professionals of District Court. Findings show that practicing lawyers were using a range of information resources to satisfy their information needs.

Growth and Development of City Central Libraries in Karnataka

The Department of Public Libraries came into existence from 1st November 1966 consequent upon the implementation of Mysore Public Libraries Act, 1965 (Karnataka Public Library Act, 1965) (Kumbar, 2004). KPL act gave vision and strength for public libraries to flourish all across the state and at every level. According to the section 13 (b) of the KPL act, it is the prime responsibility of Department of Public libraries to promote the establishment of public library service in the state and section 16 (1) of the act has made provision for the establishment of City Central Libraries in urban areas having a population of more than one lakh, as the State Government may by notification specify, called the City Library Authority. Hence during the 4th plan period (1964-70), it proposed to establish 5 City Central Libraries, viz. Bangalore, Hubli-Dharwad, Mangalore, Mysore and Belgaum (KPL Act. 1965). At present there are 26 City Central Libraries in all the major cities across Karnataka.

Why Young Users of the City Central Library, Dharwad?

City of Dharwad is well-known for its educational system. It is popularly known as ‘Vidya Kaashi’ of North Karnataka region as it is home of three renowned universities, an IIT and colleges, (including medical, engineering and diploma). Along with formal educational institutes, the city of Dharwad is also having number of coaching centers which are providing training in various competitive examinations. Hence many youngsters come to the city of Dharwad for higher education and also to get trained themselves for competitive examinations from across Karnataka state particularly from North Karnataka region. Therefore this study is undertaken to assess the use of library resources, services and information needs of youngsters.

Objectives of the Study

- To know the respondents frequency of visit to City Central library (CCL).
- To know the purpose of respondents to visit City Central library (CCL).
- To assess the information needs of the respondents.
- To find out highly used resources and services by the respondents.
- To ascertain the level of satisfaction and the impact of resources and services on users
- To recognize the problems faced by respondents in using City Central Library.
- To suggest the ways and means for overall development of the CCL.

Methodology

Keeping the objectives of the study in mind well structured questionnaire was constructed and distributed among the young users (aged between 18-35 years) of City Central Library, Dharwad. For the distribution of questionnaires simple random sampling technique was used. Total 200 questionnaires were distributed and 196 questionnaires were received back with the response rate of 98%. The respondents were personally requested to fill up the questionnaire at their earliest convenience. In that, 180 (90%) were found to be suitable for analysis. Obtained data was put to excel worksheet for better analysis and understanding the desired objectives set for the study.

Analysis and Interpretation

Gender-Wise Distribution of Respondents

Out of 180 respondents surveyed, 147 (81.67%) are male and 33 (18.33%) are female. It is noticed that; male respondents are the major users of the CCL as compared to female.

Age-Wise Distribution of Respondents

Majority of youngsters i.e. 91 (50.56%) belongs to the age group of 18-25 and 65 (36.11%) belongs age group of 26-30. Whereas only 24 (13.33%) belongs to the age group of 31-35. It is noticed that, respondents aged between 18-25 visits the CCL more as compared to other two age groups.

Frequency of Visit to City Central Library

It is evident from the analysis that, out of 180 respondents participated in survey, 95 (52.78%) respondents visit City central Library every day, 37 (20.56%) visit once a week and 32 (17.78%) visit library 2-3 days a week. Whereas Only 12 (6.67%) and 4 (2.22%) visit the library monthly and occasionally respectively. It is observed that majority i.e. 164 (91.11%) respondents are the regular visitors of City Central Library.

Time Spent by Respondents in One Visit

Majority i.e. 103 (57.22%) respondents spend more than three hours in one visit to the library, 32 (17.78%) respondents spend one to two hours and 26 (14.44%) spend two to three hours. Whereas, only 19 (10.56%) respondents said that they spend less than one hour in one visit to the library. It is observed from the table that majority i.e. 103 (57.22%) respondents spend more than three hours at one visit. This clearly indicates that CCL of Dharwad is the most attractive place for the young users.

Purpose of Library Visit

Purpose of respondents to visit City Central library is shown in **table 1**. Majority i.e. 121 (67.22%) respondents visit library with the purpose of preparing for Competitive Examinations, 86 (47.78%) respondents visit library to read news paper/magazines. While 62 (34.44%) respondents visit library to read books related to their subjects. Whereas only 17 (9.44%) and 12 (6.47%) visit library to borrow books and for Leisure/Entertainment respectively. It can be noticed from the table that majority of the respondents visit CCL with the purpose of preparing for competitive examinations and read subject books.

Table 1: Purpose of Library Visit by the Respondents

Sl. No	Purpose of Visit	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
1	Borrow books	17	9.44
2	Leisure/ Entertainment	12	6.67
3	Prepare for competitive exams	121	67.22
4	Read newspapers/Magazines	86	47.78
5	Read subject books	62	34.44

Information Needs

Table 2 reveals major information needs of respondents. Table shows that information needs of respondents are mainly related to Employment i.e. 146 (81.11%) and Education i.e. 120 (66.67%). Followed by politics 57 (31.67%), Government Policies/Programs 55 (30.56%), business 25 (13.89%). Whereas information needs related to agriculture were least required by respondents with only 11 (6.11%). It is observed from the table that the young user information needs are mainly related to employment and education.

Table 2: Information Needs of the Respondents

Sl. No	Information Needs	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
1	Educational	120	66.67
2	Employment	146	81.11
3	Political	57	31.67
4	Agricultural	11	6.11
5	Business	25	13.89
6	Government policies/Programs	55	30.56
7	Others (Entertainment, leisure etc.)	37	20.56

Highly Used Library Resources

Table 3 illustrates the highly used library resources by the respondents. The table shows that, news paper/ magazines are highly used by most of the respondents i.e. 109 (60.56%) followed by reference books 99 (55.00%), text books 92 (51.11%), government publications 79 (43.89%), competitive books 38 (21.11%). Whereas only 33 (18.33%) of the respondents use fictions/novels. It can be noticed from the table that news paper/ magazines and reference books are the most used resources of the library by the respondents.

Table 3: Highly Used Library Resources by the Respondents

Sl. No	Library Resources	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
1	News Papers/ Magazines	109	60.56
3	Text books	92	51.11
4	Reference books	99	55.00
5	Competitive books	38	21.11
6	Government publications	79	43.89
7	Fictions/Novels	33	18.33
8	Others	26	14.44

Highly Used Library Services

Table 4 depicts highly used services of CCL by the respondents. It shows that, majority of the respondents i.e. 151 (83.89%) use reading room service and 73 (40.56%) use reference service. Followed by book lending service 59 (32.78%) and inter library loan 39 (32.78%). Whereas internet, photocopy, services are not provided by the CCL.

Table 4: Highly Used Library Services by the Respondents

Sl. No	Library Services	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
1	Books lending service	59	32.78
2	Reference service	73	40.56
3	Reading room service	151	83.89
4	Inter Library loan	39	21.67
5	Internet service	NA	
6	Photocopy service		

Level of Satisfaction

Table 5 assesses the satisfaction levels of respondents on resources and services provided by City Central Library. Data revealed that out of 180 respondents, 83 (46.11%) opined that they are satisfied with library resources and services, 21 (21.67%) opined that they are partially satisfied. Whereas 31 (17.22%) are fully satisfied with resources and services of city central libraries. While 19 (10.56%) remained uncertain and only 8 (4.44%) said that they are dissatisfied with library resources and services. Analysis of the data confirms that only 83 (46.11%) respondents are satisfied and 31 (17.22%) are satisfied with library resources and services.

Table 5: Satisfaction Level of Respondents on Resources and Services of CCL

Sl. No	Satisfaction Level	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
1	Fully satisfied	31	17.22
2	Satisfied	83	46.11
3	Partially satisfied	39	21.67
4	Uncertain	19	10.56
5	Dissatisfied	8	4.44
Total		180	100

Problem Faced

Table 6 deals with problem faced by respondents in using the resources and services of City Central Library. Majority i.e. 135 (75.00%) respondents opined that, inadequate relevant reading materials is the major problem and 111 (61.67%) opined that lack of infrastructure is the problem. followed by lack of adequate services i.e. 104 (57.78%), lack of guidance from library staff i.e. 92 (51.11%), lack of awareness about library resources and services i.e. 79 (43.89%). Whereas, 44 (24.44%) respondents opined that, proximity and timing of CCL is major problem. It can be noticed that inadequate relevant reading materials, Lack of infrastructure and lack of services are the major problems faced by respondents.

Table 6: Problem Faced by Respondents

Sl. No	Problem Faced	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
1	Lack of infrastructure facilities	111	61.67
2	Inadequate relevant reading materials	135	75.00
3	Lack of services	104	57.78
4	Lack of guidance from library staff	92	51.11
5	Lack of awareness about library resources and services	79	43.89
6	Public Library proximity and timing problem	44	24.44

Major Findings of the Study

- It is found from the study that male respondents visit CCL more i.e. 81.67% as compared to female (18.33%).
- It is found from the study that, respondents aged between 18-25 visits CCL more i.e. 50.56% as compared to other two age groups i.e. 26-30 and 31-35.
- It is found from the study that majority i.e. 164 (91.11%) respondents are the regular visitors of City Central Library.
- It is found from the study that, majority of the respondents visit CCL with the purpose of preparing for competitive examinations i.e. 67.22%.
- It is found from the study that information needs of the respondents are mainly related to Employment (81.11%) and Education (66.67%).

- It is found from the study that though majority of the respondents visit library to prepare for competitive examinations (67.22%) but lack of resources on competitive examinations is the major problem faced by the young users.
- It is found from the study that Internet and photocopy services are not provided by the CCL.
- It is found from the study that only 31 (17.22%) respondents are fully satisfied with library resources and services.
- It is found from the study that inadequate relevant reading materials (75%) and lack of infrastructure (61.67%) are the major problems faced by respondents.

Suggestions

- The study revealed that male respondents visit City Central Library more compared to females. Hence it is suggested to CCL authorities to take necessary steps to increase female users. It is also suggested that a separate section can be opened in the library to attract the female users.
- Study discovered that CCL is not providing internet and photocopy services to its users. Thus it is suggested to CCL authorities to introduce these important services to attract the young users. Since nowadays majority of the information is available online and also ICT and other modern technologies are playing a significant role in all areas of the library.
- Majority of the respondents are facing the problem such as inadequacy of reading materials. Therefore it is suggested to CCL authorities to procure adequate reading materials to better cater the information needs of the respondents. The collection of the public library should be according to the needs of young users. Therefore, collection development policy of the CCL should be developed by the experts in the field of LIS.
- Findings of the study depicts that most of respondents are job aspirants and visit CCL to prepare for competitive examinations. Hence it is suggested to CCL authorities to obtain adequate information resources related to competitive examinations and employment.
- It is suggested to the CCL authorities to conduct orientation/training programs for young users to promote library usage.
- It is suggested to CCL authorities to improve infrastructure facilities as majority of the respondents are unhappy with infrastructure facilities.

- It is suggested to CCL authorities to open library 24/7 so that, youngsters can use CCL at their convenient time. Because timings of the CCL should not become hindrance for youth in usage of the library.

Conclusion

It is an established fact that public libraries add immense value to the society. Value of public libraries is often defined in terms of reading materials and services public library is going to provide to the individual and to the whole society. Thus collection development policy is the most important aspect of any public library. The aim and purpose of the collection development policy should be based upon standards developed by experts in the profession. The information needs of the community especially of youngsters should be taken care of as they are the prime users of the public library. As Information seeking and information needs of the youngsters are changing in this digitized age, public libraries should be proactive and ready to serve youngsters with not only traditional resources and services but also with ICT and other modern technologies.

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