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# **The Impact of Public Library services on the People of Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India**

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## **Abstract:**

The study was initiated to understand the impact of public library services on the people of the Tirunelveli district. The public library is a system that provides access to knowledge, information, and works of 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. The researcher selected 200 persons randomly from Palayamkottai and Melapalayam, distributed the questionnaires personally, and received 182 fully completed questionnaires from the respondents. Moreover, the researcher found that the Tirunelveli district central library influences its users through valuable resources, services, and staff approaches.

**Key Words: Public Library, Sources & Services, Users, Tirunelveli District.**

## **1. Introduction:**

The public library service is developed to meet the need of the community. If the community need is well defined, the tasks become easier for the librarian. The public library's responsibility is to provide informal counselling and guidance to derive information from various sources to different users with varied demands. The Public Library Service: IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines for Development (1994) in the chapter, "Meeting the needs of the users has suggested

identifying potential users including persons with special needs like indigenous people, people with disabilities, housebound people, people in hospitals, in prison, within various organisations and people in different professions. This document has also suggested identifying non-users of libraries.

Feather and Sturgis (1997) state: "Libraries that are provided through public funding for public use and the public good are public libraries." UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1949, revised in 1972, states that a public library is established under the "clear mandate of law. Public Libraries are maintained wholly from "public funds", they levy no "direct charge" (fees) from its users for any services and there are open for free and equal use by all community members irrespective of race, colour, caste, creed, religion, age, sex, nationality, language, status or level of educational qualifications. Public libraries are the local gateway to knowledge, providing an essential condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making, and cultural development of individuals and social groups. They play a role of a critical agent for fostering peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women.

## **2. Profile of sample unit:**

The District Central Library, Tirunelveli is established on 5-2-1952; it was controlled and managed by District Central Library Affiliation. It shields Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli Thatchanallur, and Melapalayam with a populace of 12,24,319 men and 12,68,870 ladies. During 2020-2021, the absolute number of individuals utilised in the library was 1,94,421. It has 60577 members, 79,607 books, 439 patrons, 152 journals and 12 dailies. The district central library, Tirunelveli, has a reference section, lending section, browsing section, children & women section, new book section, binding section, mobile library, a separate reading section for the physically challenged person and a periodical section. It works at 2/32, North High Ground Street, Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli - 627 002. Phone No: 0462-2561712, E-mail: dcltnvopac@gmail.com. The working hours of the library are Morning 8.00 am to Night 8.00 pm and occasions on Friday, second Saturday, and Government Occasions.

## **3. Review of Literature:**

**Balasubramanian (2020)<sup>1</sup>** researched the level of User Satisfaction with Resources and Services and the problems faced by the public library users of Public Libraries Tenkasi. Survey methods

and structured questionnaires were designed to collect data. They used a convenience sampling technique for sample selection. The findings showed that the majority of the respondents tended to visit the public library daily and were satisfied with the circulation service. However, they were dissatisfied with the internet-based services and lack of a library-user relationship. This study results also highlight the need for government policies to devise a benchmark for quality service delivery in public libraries in India.

**Baada (2019)<sup>2</sup>** attempted to assess the user perception of the quality of public library services in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana using the LibQUAL+ model. A survey method was adopted for this research. 180 visitors are used for this work by convenience sampling technique. The results showed that patrons were dissatisfied with the library environment for learning, internet connectivity and computers and current library print and electronic resources. The absence of internet connectivity and digital collections are significant issues. The researcher recommends that public librarians market their services to the general public and relevant stakeholders.

**Bomman Sathivelmurugan (2018)<sup>3</sup>** analysed Tiruppur District Central Library users' descriptive details. He used the survey method and questionnaire tool for the collection of Primary data. From the survey, the Employability of the respondents is mainly Private company employees, Self-employees, Daily-wage workers, Job-seekers, Students and Unemployed people. The researcher clearly describes the users' Educational qualifications, Membership details, Occupation, and frequency of library. It gives a complete picture of the demographical information of the Public Library users.

**Mahipal (2017)<sup>4</sup>** the survey on reading habits of district public Library users with particular reference to Bastar Region Chhattisgarh. The study used the questionnaire method with 100 samples collected in 2017 for seven months. The primary purpose of this study was to examine the reading habit of the user community. The result indicated that the majority of the users, 44 per cent of the age between 31 to 40 years, majority of the respondent 85 per cent of the students, 30 per cent of the users read newspapers, 42 per cent of the respondents read Dramas / Novels /Story Books, and 28 per cent responds were reading magazines in the library.

#### **4. Statement of Problem:**

The public library performs a significant task in a developing country like India. The progress of a nation depends mainly on education, which provides to its citizens either through formal or non-formal means. The expected mass's active and informed participation in the country's affairs is needed for a genuine democratic setup. It provides service to modern society "(i) as self-educational centres; (ii) as a source of materials for researchers; (iii) as information centres for the community; and (iv) as cultural centres. The researcher analyses the impact of the public library on society. Hence the researcher is willing to evaluate the impact of public library services on the people of Tirunelveli district.

#### **5. Objectives of the study:**

- To analyse the influence of public library services in the selected study area.
- To measure the users' satisfaction level about the sources and services of the public library.

#### **6. Null and Alternative Hypotheses:**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The sources and services of the public library, Tirunelveli, do not significantly influence its users.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The sources and services of the public library, Tirunelveli, significantly influences its users.

#### **7. Scope of the study**

The present study focuses on the influence of the district central library on its users by resources available in the library, approaches of staff and literacy attitude of respondents. The researcher tries to analyse the library's resources, the staff's practice, and the respondents' philosophy. The researcher considers the respondents' reading habits, resources available, infrastructure, frequency and purpose of visit, time spent in the library, and staff service of the library.

#### **8. Methodology**

Registered members and users of district central library Palayamkottai instituted the sampling frame. The visitors' index and membership register provided the framework of the

respondents to be covered. A sample of 200 respondents using the public library was selected by adopting a simple random sampling technique. The researcher personally distributed the structured questionnaires to the designated persons and 172 fully completed questionnaires from the respondents. The response rate is 86 per cent.

### 9. Limitations:

Every research study would have some specific limitations. These limitations cemented the way for further enrichment in future research studies. This study has been conducted only with the district central library, Palayamkottai. The respondents are also selected from the in and around the city.

### 10. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

**Table 1**  
**Purpose of Visiting Library**

Purpose of Visit	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
For light reading	22	12.79
To enrich knowledge	33	19.19
To develop the regular reading habit	49	28.49
To read newspapers only	57	33.14
For time pass	11	6.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary data)

**Fig 1**

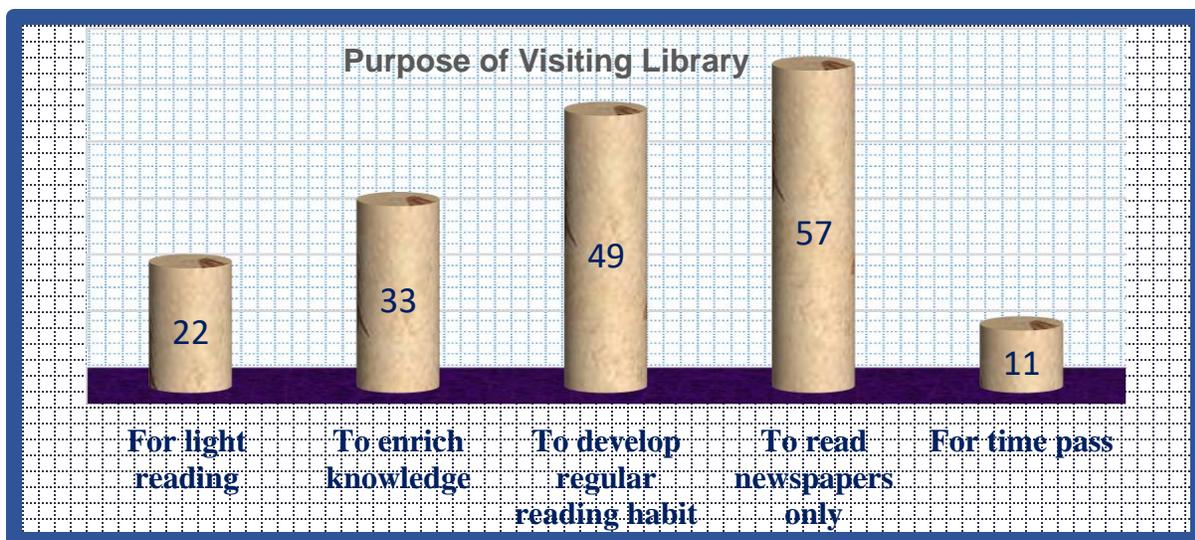


Table 1 shows the respondents' purpose of visiting the library. It is found that a maximum of 33.14 per cent of respondents go to the library for reading the daily newspapers, followed by to develop reading habits 28.49 per cent and to enrich knowledge 19.19 per cent. Besides, 12.79 per cent of the respondents go to the library for light reading and only 6.40 per cent for time pass.

**Table 2**  
**Frequency of Visiting Library**

Frequency of Visiting Library	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
Daily	61	35.47
Three times a week	47	27.33
Twice a week	34	19.77
Once a week	21	12.21
As and when required	9	5.23
<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary data)

**Fig 2**

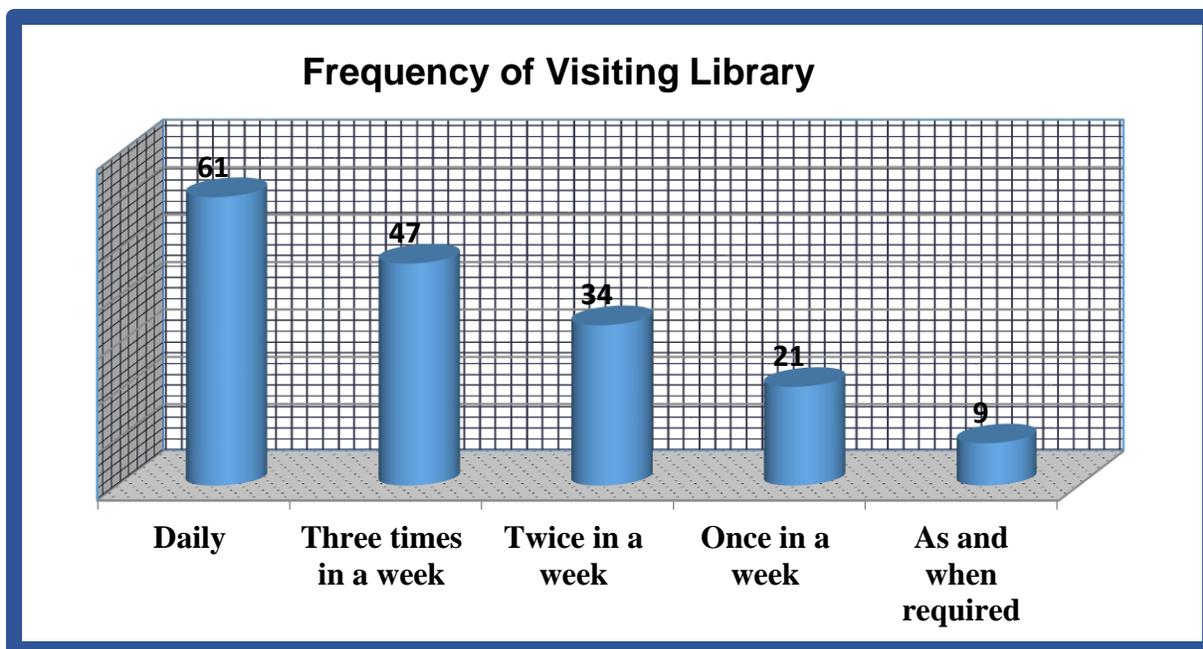


Table 2 discloses the respondents' frequency of visiting the library. It is observed that a maximum of 35.47 per cent of respondents daily visited followed by three times in a week 27.33 per cent, and 19.77 per cent of the respondents visited once a week. Further, 12.12 per cent of the respondents saw once a week, and only 5.23 per cent of the respondents went to the library as and when required.

**Table 3**  
**Impact of Public Library on the Users in Tirunelveli District**

Statements	Yes	No Opinion	No	WAM	Rank
Working hours of the library	99	38	35	3.744	<b>VI</b>
Location of library	104	35	33	3.826	<b>II</b>
Sufficient reading materials are available in the library	105	39	28	3.895	<b>I</b>
Sufficient reference books collection in the library	87	45	40	3.547	<b>XI</b>
Developed its collection by procuring necessary reading materials	94	39	39	3.640	<b>X</b>

Back volumes are appropriately maintained	102	38	32	3.814	<b>III</b>
Adequate infrastructural facilities	99	39	34	3.756	<b>V</b>
Working as a community information centre	97	45	30	3.779	<b>IV</b>
Proper arrangement of books on the shelves	78	42	52	3.302	<b>XIII</b>
Proper assistance of library staff	98	39	35	3.733	<b>VIII</b>
Easy to find out the location of books.	91	57	24	3.779	<b>VII</b>
An online public access catalogue is instrumental	88	59	25	3.732	<b>IX</b>
Availability of latest publication of journals	89	54	29	3.698	<b>XII</b>

Table 3 indicates the ranking of the sources and services of the Central Library, Tirunelveli. The first rank given to the statement "Sufficient reading materials is available in the library" with the weighted average score of 3.895, the second rank allotted to the variable "Location of the library" with the score of 3.826 and third rank assigned to the statement "Back volumes are properly maintained". Moreover, the fourth rank allotted to the variable "Working as a community information centre', the fifth rank assigned to the variable "Adequate infrastructural facilities are available in the library", and the last position for the statement "Proper arrangement of books on the shelves".

**Table 4**  
**Satisfaction level of Respondents**

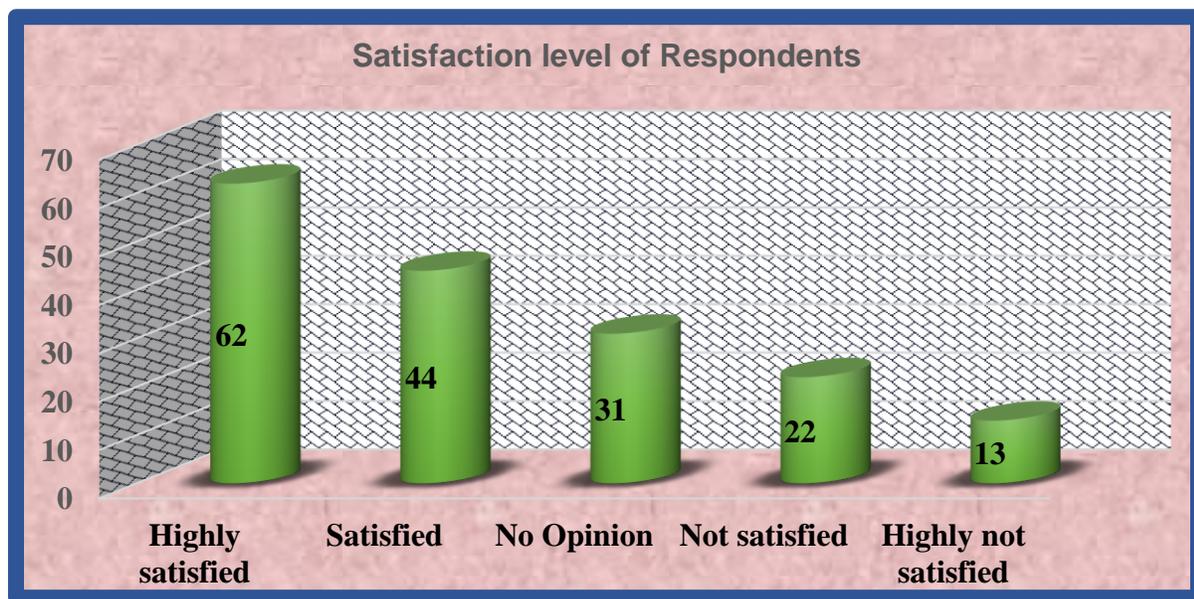
<b>Satisfaction level of Respondents</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage to Total</b>
Highly satisfied	62	36.05
Satisfied	44	25.58
No Opinion	31	18.02

Not satisfied	22	12.79
Highly not satisfied	13	7.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary data)

Table 4 and fig 3 reveal the satisfaction level of the selected respondents about the resources, services, and approaches of the staff in the Tirunelveli public library. It is found that a maximum of 36.05 per cent of the selected respondents are highly satisfied with the sources and services of the public library, 25.58 per cent of the respondents satisfied and 18.02 per cent of the, not any response to the question. Further, it is noted that 12.79 per cent of the respondents are not happy, and only 7.56 per cent of the respondents are highly dissatisfied with the sources and services of the public library.

**Fig 3**



**Table 5**

<b>Model Summary</b>
----------------------

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.785 <sup>a</sup>	.616	.607	.69756
a. Predictors: (Constant), Resources and services of the public library.				

The multiple R-value signifies the correlation between the dependent variable "Users opinion About the Public Library" and independent variables Resources and services of public Library." R-value more than 0.6 is taken for further analysis. In this instance, the value is 0.785, which is good. R-square shows the total variation for the dependent variable that the independent variables might explain. A value larger than 0.5 shows that the model is effective enough to determine the relationship. In this case, the value is .616, which is also good. Adjusted R-square simplifies the results, i.e. the difference of the sample results from the population in multiple regression. It is essential to distinguish between R-square, and Adjusted R-square should be minimum. In this case, the value is .607, which is not far from .616, so it is good. Therefore, the model summary table is acceptable to proceed with the next step.

**Table 6**

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	211.516	5	42.303	89.487	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	239.203	506	.473		
	Total	450.719	511			
a. Dependent Variable: Users opinion About the Public Library						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Resources and services of the public library.						

In above table 6, the "F" value is 89.487, which is good. These results indicate that the p-value of the ANOVA table is less than the tolerable one per cent level significance. Hence there is a possibility of rejecting the null hypothesis in further analysis.

**Table 7**

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.989	.545		9.155	.000
Sufficient reading materials are available in the library	-.215	.045	-.343	-4.789	.000
Location of the Library	.181	.033	.346	5.513	.000
Back volumes are properly maintained	-.176	.041	-.383	-4.316	.000
Working as a community information centre	.169	.044	.243	3.803	.000
Adequate infrastructural facilities	.817	.157	.334	5.200	.000
Working hours of the library	.485	.114	.237	4.257	.000

Table 7 reveals how the independent variable "Resources and services of public Library" influences the dependent variable "Users opinion About the Public Library". Since the "t" value of the independent variables are more than the critical value of 1.96, and the corresponding "p" value is less than 0.01 at 99 per cent level of the confidence. Hence it is concluded that the independent variable "Resources and services of public Library' influence the dependent variable "Users opinion About the Public Library".

### 11. Findings:

→ The researcher found that a maximum of 33.14 per cent of respondents go to the library to read the daily newspapers, followed by developing reading habits 28.49 per cent and enriching knowledge 19.19 per cent. Besides, 12.79 per cent of the respondents go to the library for light reading and only 6.40 per cent for time pass.

- It is observed that a maximum of 35.47 per cent of respondents daily visited followed by three times in a week 27.33 per cent and 19.77 per cent of the respondents visited once a week. Further, 12.12 per cent of the respondents saw once a week, and only 5.23 per cent of the respondents went to the library as and when required.
- The ranking of variables influences the respondents, the first rank given to the statement "Sufficient reading materials are available in the library" with the weighted average score of 3.895. the second rank allotted to the variable "Location of the library" with the score of 3.826 and the third rank assigned to the statement "Back volumes is properly maintained".
- It is found that a maximum of 36.05 per cent of the selected respondents are highly satisfied with the sources and services of the public library. 25.58 per cent of the respondents were satisfied, and 18.02 per cent of the, not any response to the question. Further, it is noted that 12.79 per cent of the respondents are not happy, and only 7.56 per cent of the respondents are highly dissatisfied with the sources and services of the public library.
- The independent variable "Resources and services of public Library" influences the dependent variable "Users opinion About the Public Library". Since the "t" value of the independent variables are more than the critical value of 1.96, and the corresponding "p" value is less than 0.01 at 99 per cent level of the confidence. Hence it is concluded that the independent variable "Resources and services of public Library' influence the dependent variable "Users opinion About the Public Library".
- The sources and services of the public library, Tirunelveli, significantly influences its users.

## **12. Suggestions:**

- The print and e-resources of the public library should be updated regularly.
- Locating the book should be accessible to the library's user.
- The staff should provide adequate services to the users of the library.
- Books and other print materials should be arranged on the shelves.
- They develop their collections by procuring necessary reading materials.
- The latest publication of journals should be available in the library.

→ The library authorities take necessary steps to improve people's reading habits.

### **13. Conclusion:**

Public Library is the only reading sanctuary for all categories of people. As the name implies, the Public Library system is user-friendly as anybody can use this system. Public Library has been considered a social institution based on the democratic principle "of the people, by the people and for the people". Its motto is "free book services for all". From the olden days' traditional libraries have changed into public libraries and become an indispensable tool for developing good qualities and literate sections of the society in modern times. Public libraries are the living force and source of the world in different walks of life. Library serves as a 'learning and resource centre'.

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