

# Perception and Information Seeking Behaviour of Users of Selected Village Libraries in Sathyamangalam Taluk, Tamil Nadu

G. Ramesh Kumar<sup>1</sup> and J. Dominic<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Library & Information Sciences,  
Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

<sup>2</sup>Chief Librarian, Karunya University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India  
Email: grameshkumar1000@gmail.com

(Received 9 September 2017; Revised 23 September 2017; Accepted 12 October 2017; Available online 19 October 2017)

**Abstract** - Village libraries are the standing evidences of social equality. They are the social transformers and cultural protectors. They are the stockrooms of intellectual heredity of our forefathers. They are the drivers of creative leisure activities. This study was conducted with the help of structured questionnaires to analyze the information seeking behavior of different types of the users and randomly selected 140 users of 6 Village Libraries in Taluk. The data was entered and analyzed using simple average and percentage methods.

**Keywords:** Village Libraries, Information Behaviour, Users

## I. INTRODUCTION

In a broader sense, village libraries are those service agencies which serve the general village as a whole irrespective of their age, gender, profession and social-economic background. The village library due to its nature is charged with the responsibility of catering for the diverse and ever-changing information needs of the entire members of its community in which it is situated. However, it is generally believed that village libraries suffer the most neglect in terms of funding. Meanwhile, provision of needed information at the right time and format to its users is central to its existence.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study intends to find out the information needs and characteristics of users of village libraries of Sathyamangalam Taluk and investigates information needs and characteristics of users of village libraries of Sathyamangalam Taluk, which constitutes the information needs of the library users, services and resources are available in village libraries for meeting these needs, how do the users meet such needs and what constraints are they faced with? These are the questions to which this study intends to answer.

## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the information needs of the users of village libraries of Sathyamangalam Taluk.
2. To identify how the libraries meet the information needs of their users and their preferred sources of information.
3. To identify the characteristics of the users village libraries of Sathyamangalam Taluk.
4. To study the current status of automation of village libraries.

5. To ascertain the adequacy and relevance of the library resources in meeting users needs.
6. To establish the constraints militating against meeting these needs.

## IV. METHODOLOGY

The study has been conducted on village library system in Sathyamangalam Taluk and primary data has been collected by using the survey instrument. A structured questionnaire was designed to satisfy the objectives of the study which was distributed among the users of village libraries of Bhavanisagar, Puliampatti and Sathyamangalam. The data has been worked out with statistical tools like percentage and average etc. The collected data was represented in the form of tables.

## V. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The village library system in Sathyamangalam Taluk comprises of village libraries, and branch libraries including village youth clubs. The present study has its scope of investigation limited to the selected village libraries of Sathyamangalam Taluk.

## VI. DATA PRESENTATION & ANALYSIS

Out of 150 copies of the questionnaire administered, 140 (93.3%) were completed and returned. Data were presented for analysis using the descriptive statistics which include; frequency count percentages and tables.

TABLE 1 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY GENDER

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	108	76.78
Female	32	23.21
Total	140	100

Table 1 reveals that 108 respondents were males, representing 76.78% of the sample population, while 32 respondents 23.21% were the female library users. This finding infers that the females are not using the library as much as the males. The disparity in information literacy known to exist between adult male and female population in Sathyamangalam Taluk is replicating itself again among the youths.

TABLE 2 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE

Age Group in Years	Frequency	Percentage
16-20	18	12.5
21-30	72	51.7
31-50	24	16.9
Above 50	26	18.7
Total	140	100

Table 2 shows the age range of respondents. 18 respondents (12.5%) were between the age group of 16-20, 72 respondents (51.7%) were between the age group of 21-30, 24 respondents (16.9%) were between the age group of 31-50, while 26 (18.7%) were 50 years and above which infers that the majority of the people using the libraries are youths.

TABLE 3 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY MARITAL STATUS

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	54	20.5
Single	77	73.2
Divorced	4	2.6
Widow	5	3.5
Total	140	100

Table 3 shows that the majority 77 (73.2%) of the respondents were found unmarried, implying the predominance of the young singles as constituting majority of the library users. 54 (20.5%) of the respondents were found married while 4 (2.6%) and 5 (3.5%) were divorced and widow respectively.

TABLE 4 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY OCCUPATION

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Civil Servant	15	10.71
Private company employee	3	1.79
Trader	5	3.57
Businessman	9	6.25
Student	59	41.96
Farmer	3	1.79
Politician	3	1.79
Teacher/lecturer	9	6.25
Retired Persons	24	16.96
Others	13	8.93
Total	140	100

Table 4 reveals that 41.96% of the respondents were students, who were in higher institutions of learning and secondary schools. Distantly followed this were Retired Persons, 16.96%, Civil Servant, 10.71% and other category users 8.93%. Other than these categories of users were found very few as indicated in the table above. Teachers/lecturer and Businessman were 6.25% each, Traders were 3.57%, Private company employee, Farmers and Politician were each 1.78%. This infers that the

student category of users formed the majority of the library users.

TABLE 5 INFORMATION NEEDS OF THE RESPONDENTS IN THE LIBRARY

Information Needs	Frequency	Percentage
General information	36	25.89
Information concerning academics	58	41.07
Information on sports	4	2.68
Information on personal development	3	1.79
Information on health	3	1.79
Information on politics	9	6.25
Information on security	6	4.46
Information on agriculture	6	4.46
Information on government policies/ programmes	5	3.57
Information on international politics	4	2.68
Information on provision of social amenities	8	5.36
Total	140	100

Table 5 revealed that the information needs relating to respondents 'academic programmes 41%, general information 25.8% and politics 6.2%, agriculture and security 4.6%, sports 2.6%, health 1.7% and personal development 1.7% each. This further infers that the students who were the majority of the library users needed information to support their academic programmes and to pass their various examinations.

TABLE 6 FREQUENCY OF LIBRARY USE BY THE RESPONDENTS

Use of Library by the Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	89	63.3
Once in two days	24	16.9
1-3 times a week	15	10.7
Occasionally	13	8.9
Total	140	100

Table 6 shows that for respondents to fulfill their varying information needs, 71% representing the respondents visit the library every day. This could be due to the fact that most of them were students and retired persons. 16.9% visit the library once in two days, 10.7% visit the library about three times in a week and 8.9% visit the library occasionally.

According to Table 7, respondents were asked to indicate the activities they undertake when visit the library. The analysis revealed that most respondents (41.9%), (31.2%), (14.2%), (8.9%), (5.3%), (4.4%) and (2.6%), visited the library to obtain materials for private studies, study using own materials, studying in peaceful environment, reading newspaper, for other purpose, reading for relaxation and general knowledge acquisition. This also indicated that most users) while they visited the library. In this regard, the library has provided a conducive environment for

reading and studying more than providing for needed materials (information). This explains why majority of the respondents see library as reading centre. The various kinds of resources sought by the respondents were presented in library.

TABLE 7 ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY RESPONDENTS IN THE LIBRARY

Activities During Library Visit	Frequency	Percentage
Obtaining materials for private study	46	33.4
Studying using own resources (textbooks)	44	31.2
Reading for general knowledge acquisition	4	2.6
Studying in peaceful environment	20	14.2
Relaxation	6	4.4
Reading newspaper	13	8.9
Others	8	5.3
Total	140	100

TABLE 8 LIBRARY RESOURCES OFTEN USED

Library Resources often Used	Frequency	Percentage
Newspapers/magazines	35	25.4
Novels	30	21.4
poems	16	11.6
Reference materials	21	15.1
Textbooks	19	13.3
Government reports	9	6.1
Others	10	7.1
Total	140	100

Table 8 infers that the most consulted resources in the library were Newspapers/magazines 25%, this was followed distantly by Novels 21.4%, reference materials 15.1%, textbooks 13.3%, several other kinds of resources were 7.1%, and Government reports 6.1% were the least consulted materials in the library. This further showed that other categories of users were very few in the library such as visually impaired, deaf, handicapped, specialists, farmers, neo-literates, etc. who would have preferred other library resources.

TABLE 9 RELEVANCE OF LIBRARY RESOURCES TO THE RESPONDENTS' INFORMATION NEEDS

Library Resources	Frequency	Percentage
Newspaper/magazine	30	21.4
Novels	13	8.9
poems	16	11.6
Reference materials	21	15.1
Textbooks	31	22.32
Government reports	14	9.7
Others	15	10
Total	140	100

Table 9 reveals that textbooks 22.32% were the prominent resources used by the majority of the respondents because of the relevancy to the respondents 'information needs. 21.4% were newspaper/magazine, 15.1% reference materials, 11.6% poems, other general materials were 10%, and government reports were 9.7%. The majority of the respondents who indicated textbooks could be as a result of students dominating in the library users following general awareness.

TABLE 10 CONSTRAINTS TO MEETING RESPONDENTS' INFORMATION NEEDS

Constraints	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of information retrieval tools in the library	36	25.89
Inadequate relevant materials	34	24.11
Inadequate time to seek needed information	25	17.86
Library proximity problem	20	14.29
Ignorance of where and how to obtain needed materials	15	10.71
Hardly conducive state of the library	8	5.36
Uncooperative attitude of the library staff	3	1.79
Total	140	100.00

Table 10 infers that the major constraints that hindered meeting users' information needs include lack of information retrieval tools in the library 25.8% inadequate relevant materials 24.1% the former response may be may be connected with lack of knowledge of available retrieval tools in the library by respondents whereas the latter response against the backdrop of the general state of neglect of village libraries.

Other constraints indicated were: Inadequate time to seek needed information 17.8%, Library proximity problem 14.2%, Ignorance of where to obtain needed materials 10.7%, hardly conducive state of the library 5.3% and Uncooperative attitude of the library staff 1.7%. Others specified constraints were: erratic power supply, inadequate toilet facilities and internet facility in the library for the users also.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Village libraries are expected to provide people-oriented services, aiming at satisfying the general village through the provision of appropriate information resources and services, such as advisory services, strategic leadership, and information on local content that incorporates indigenous knowledge system into it. However, the current state of village libraries of Sathyamangalam Taluk is far from what it should be. Having highlighted the situation of the library, there is need for both the state government to provide all the necessary funds required for the smooth operation and provision of necessary services to the users.

### VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on conclusion drawn above, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. The State Government Authorities must ensure that the minimum standard required for village libraries to provide effective and efficient services. The recommendation cuts across staff in the library, nature of collection of resources, services, structure, policy and management of the library.
2. The library must as a matter of policy periodically re-assess the information needs of their community. This is even more imperative now that the users have developed sophisticated needs which are constantly changing.
3. The State and Local Governments must be committed towards village library development. Adequate and timely release of funds is essential and necessary for the libraries to be comfortable in discharging their responsibilities to the society. Adequate budgetary allocation is needed to stock library building with current and relevant materials and for staff capacity building.
4. The Library Management should develop a good village relation and advocacy programmes in order to boost positive image of the library and to attract funds from sources other than government.
5. The Library Management should see lobbying and pressurizing as vital tools of attracting more funds into the library.

### REFERENCES

- [1] Shaw, R. R., "*Pilot study on the use of scientific literature by scientists*", Washington, DC: National Science Foundation, 1956.
- [2] Kawatra, P.S., "*Library User Studies: A Manual for Librarians and Information Scientists*", Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1992.
- [3] Ellis, D., "Modeling the information seeking patterns of academic researchers: a grounded theory approach", *Library Quarterly*, vol. 63, No. 4, pp. 469-86, 1993.
- [4] Cromer, D. and M. Johnson., "The impact of the Internet on communication among librarians", *Reference Librarian*, vol. 41/42, pp. 139-57, 1994.
- [5] Devarajan, G., "*Library, Information User and User Studies*", New Delhi: Beacon Books. Delhi: INSDOC, 1995.
- [6] Fiankor, D. K and Adam M., "Information seeking behaviour and information use by students of the Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana, Legon", *Ghana Library Journal*, vol.16, pp. 45-49, 2004.