

Use of information resources and services in public libraries: a case of Bidar District, Karnataka State, India

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Survey on use of information resources and services in the public libraries of Bidar District, Karnataka State, India show that a majority of the users were men between the age group of 11 – 30 years and they included students, unemployed youth or employees in private sector, belonging to lower and middle income group. They spent less than one hour in the library and inconvenient timing was the main reason for not visiting the library more frequently. Books and magazines, friends/teachers and radio/television were the information channels most frequently used to satisfy their information needs. Newspapers and magazines were the most frequently read information sources and fictions were the most frequently borrowed documents. Reading room and book lending services were the most frequently used services. Concludes that since majority of the users are students and unemployed youth, public libraries need to enrich their information resource collection, provide access to internet and offer community-based services, including literacy programmes. Public libraries need to take proactive approach in motivating users to use these resources and services to enhance their competence level.

Introduction

Public libraries are essential since they improve literacy, stimulate imagination and expand personal horizons. They also inform and empower citizens, enable access to a common cultural heritage and support education at all levels¹. Also, a positive relationship is observed between public library and literacy level, which in turn, contributes to increase in economic productivity²⁻³. Extensive studies were undertaken to study the role of public libraries in information society, value of services offered and use of the resources⁴⁻¹⁰. Growth of public libraries in India has been traced by several authors¹¹⁻¹⁴. Great attention was received by public libraries in India during independence struggle, and their struggle for funds, space and trained staff at present to serve multilingual and multicultural needs of their community are discussed by Abraham¹⁵. Use of public libraries in different States in India has been studied extensively¹⁶⁻¹⁹.

Karnataka is one of the progressive States in India with growth rate of 7% for 2007-08 and is a hub of information technology industry and R & D institutions. With 67.4% literacy rate. The State is divided into 29 districts, 175 taluks and 745 revenue circles²⁰. Various aspects of public libraries in Karnataka State have already been studied²¹⁻²⁶.

Bidar district is located in the northern tip of Karnataka State comprising of Bidar, District headquarter and five taluks, namely, Aurad, Basavakalyan, Bidar, Bhalki, Chitaguppa and Humanabad. With male literacy rate of 58.97% and female literacy rate of 30.53%, and occupying 18th out of 20th position in the State as per the Human Development Report, it has earned the distinction of one of the most backward districts of Karnataka State²⁷. Monitoring and evaluation of information resources in public libraries and their services is identified as an essential activity by Knowledge Commission, in its report submitted to Prime Minister, India²⁸. Results of the study of use of information resources and services in District Central Library and its Branch Libraries in Bidar district, Karnataka State are presented in this paper.

The findings of the present study would help in understanding the use of information resources and services of the public libraries, particularly public libraries in Bidar District, which would help in framing appropriate policies related to collection development and improve the quality of library services.

Objectives of the study

- To find out the frequency of visit to library by users of various age groups;

Table 1 — A profile of the libraries under study

Particulars	DCLB	BLH	BLBH	BLA	BLBK	BLC
Response to Questionnaire	23 (46%)	26 (52%)	29 (58%)	23 (46%)	27 (54%)	24 (48%)
Year of Establishment	1977	1979	1980	1980	1979	1979
Registered Users	5000	1349	452	512	426	426
Average no. of visitors/day	500	55	85	100	150	150
Average No. of Books borrowed/day	100	10	12	15	30	30
Books collection	339551	8804	8593	12322	8281	8281
Reference books	1000	50	150	75	500	500
Magazines	36	3	5	7	5	5
Newspapers	28	9	8	10	6	6
Computer & Internet facility for users	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Photocopying facility for users	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Technical Staff (Qualification: Librarian – BLIS; Lib.Assistant-01 Year Certificate Course)	Librarian-1 Library Assistants – 04	Library Assistant - 01	Library Assistant - 01	Library Assistant – 01	Library Assistant – 01	Library Assistant - 01

Note: DCLB District Central Library, Bidar, BLH Branch Library Humanabad, BLBH Branch Library; Bhalk BLA Branch Library; Aurad, BLBK Branch Library; Basavakalyan, and BLC Branch Library Chitaguppa

Table 2 — Age Vs. frequency of visit to library

Age (in years)	Frequency of visit					Total	%
	Daily	Once in two days	At least once in a week	Once in a month	Rarely		
11-20	16	11	13	02	03	45	29.61
21-30	23	16	27	03	02	71	46.71
31-40	04	01	09	02	01	17	11.18
41-50	03	03	08	01	-	15	09.87
51-60	02	01	-	-	-	03	01.97
Above 60	1	-	-	-	-	01	00.66
Total	49	32	57	08	06	152	
%	32.23	21.05	37.5	05.26	3.94		99.98

- To know the economic and educational status of users;
- To explore the reasons for visiting the library and reasons for not visiting library more frequently;
- To understand the information channels used to gather information; and
- To know about the information resources most frequently consulted.

Methodology

A survey of user community in District Central Library and its five branch libraries in Bidar district was undertaken with the help of a questionnaire in regional language, Kannada. Questionnaire consisted of three headings: (i) Use of information resources, (ii) Use of library services, and (iii) Personal information. All these libraries are kept open between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. on all working days, except on Monday being a weekly holiday and on government declared holidays. Simple random

Table 3 — Income Vs. frequency of visit

Monthly family income (in Rupees)	Frequency of visit					Total	%
	Daily	Once in two days	Atleast once in a week	Atleast once in a month	Rarely		
1000-3000	32	16	17	03	03	71	46.71
3001-5000	07	08	24	03	01	43	28.29
5001-7000	02	03	08	-	01	14	09.21
7001-9000	03	04	05	02	01	15	09.87
Above 9000	05	01	03	-	-	09	05.92

sampling was adopted to collect the data. In each library under study, first 25 visitors in the morning and 25 visitors in the evening were requested to fill the questionnaire. Care was taken not to collect data from the same user more than once. Out of 300 questionnaires distributed, 152 users responded positively with the response rate being 43.6%. Among the 152 users, 140 are men (92.1%) and 12 are women (7.9%). A brief profile of libraries is presented in Table 1.

Analysis

Frequency of visits

Tables 2 and 3 show the frequency of visit of users to the library based on age and income respectively. It is found that 46.7% of the users are between the age group of 21-30 years and 29.6% are between the age group of 11-20 years. That is, 76.3% of the users are between the age group of 11 – 30 years (Table 2). It is also clear that 90.78% of the users visit library at least once in a week.

The frequency of visit based on income distribution shows that 75% and 19.1% of the visitors to public library are with monthly income of less than Rs.5000 and between Rs.5001-9000 respectively. Only 5.9% of the users are with monthly income of more than Rs.9000, which indicates that public library is used to the maximum extent by users belonging to lower and middle income groups (Table 3).

Table 4 shows that 61.8% of the users spent less than an hour in the library during each visit. Only 17 users (11.2%) spent more than two hours.

Qualifications and occupation of users

It is seen from Table 5 that 75% of the users have completed either Pre-University (2 years after 10 years

Table 4 — Time spent during each visit

Time spent during each visit	No. of users	Percentage
15 minutes	19	12.5
30 minutes	57	37.5
Less than an hour	18	11.8
Between one and two hours	41	27.0
More than two hours	17	11.2
Total	152	100.0

Table 5 — Educational qualification of users

Educational level	No. of users	Percentage
Primary	01	00.7
10 Standard	19	12.5
Pre-University	53	34.87
Bachelor's Degree	61	40.1
Post Graduate Degree	11	07.23
Technical Degree	07	04.6
Total	152	

Table 6 — Distribution by occupation

Occupation	No. of users	Percentage
Student	58	38.2
Unemployed youth	37	24.3
Employee in private sector	37	24.3
Employee in government sector	15	10.0
Retired person	05	03.3

of schooling) or Bachelors' degree. Only 04.6% of the users are with technical degree.

It is seen from Table 6 that students, unemployed youth and employees working in private sector are the major users of the public library (86.8%).

Reasons for visiting library

Table 7 shows that majority of the users (61.18%) visit library to read newspapers and magazines. 12.5% of

Table 7 — Reasons for visiting library

Reasons for visit	No. of users	Percentage
To read newspapers & magazines	93	61.18
To borrow and return non-fiction	08	05.26
To borrow fiction	11	07.24
To find information about employment	19	12.5
To prepare for competitive examinations	10	06.58
To improve general knowledge	08	05.26
For serious reading	01	00.66
For reading personal reading material	01	00.66
To find information for research	01	00.66

Table 8 — Reasons for not visiting library frequently

Reasons for not visiting library more frequently	No. of Users	Percent
Library working hours are inconvenient	93	61.2
I don't need library	07	04.6
Library is far away from my home	08	05.3
Lack of transportation facility	04	02.6
I am not a member of the library	01	00.7
Lack of adequate collection of books	10	06.6
I use school / college library	08	05.3
I collect required information from other sources	01	00.7
Services are not satisfactory	19	12.5
Lack of time	01	00.7
Total	152	100.0

Table 9 — Use of information resources

Sl. no	Information resource	MF %	F %	LF %	Least F%	N %	Mean
01	General encyclopedia	-	05	51	85	11	2.329
02	Subject encyclopedia	-	3.3	33.6	55.9	7.2	2.908
03	General dictionaries	-	4	47	92	9	2.566
04	Subject dictionaries	-	2.6	30.9	60.5	5.9	2.566
05	Yearbooks	-	3	42	100	7	2.566
06	Almanacs	-	2.0	27.6	65.8	4.6	2.566
07	Biographical sources	-	4	34	107	7	3.145
08	Newspapers	-	2.6	22.4	70.4	4.6	2.559
09	Magazines	-	6	37	102	7	2.559
10	Geographical sources, incl. maps and atlas	-	3.9	24.3	67.1	4.6	2.559
11	Internet resources	-	7	31	108	6	2.303
12	Manuals	-	4.6	20.4	71.1	3.9	2.553
13	Directory	-	6	36	104	6	2.553
14	Fictions	-	3.9	23.7	68.4	3.9	2.553
15	Non fictions	-	112	35	2	-	4.690
		73.7	23.0	2.0	1.3	-	4.105
		46	84	14	8	-	4.105
		30.3	55.3	9.2	5.3	-	4.105
		-	13	67	67	5	2.579
		-	8.6	44.1	44.1	3.3	2.579
		1	4	45	96	6	2.395
		0.7	2.6	29.6	63.2	3.9	2.395
		-	6	40	101	5	2.309
		-	3.9	26.3	66.4	3.3	2.309
		-	7	52	89	4	2.395
		-	4.6	34.2	58.6	2.6	2.395
		32	90	18	12	-	3.934
		21.1	59.2	11.8	7.9	-	3.934
		-	38	94	20	-	3.118
		-	25.0	61.8	13.2	-	3.118

Note: MF = Most Frequently, F = Frequently, LF = Less Frequently, Least F = Least Frequently and N = Never

Table 10 — Frequency of use of library services

Sl. No	Library service	MF %	F %	LF %	Leas t F %	N %	Mean
01	Book lending service	33 21.7	101 66.4	13 08.6	04 02.6	01 00.7	4.0592
02	Reference service	30 19.7	67 41.1	27 17.8	28 18.4	-	3.6513
03	Reading room service	97 63.8	33 21.7	18 11.8	04 02.6	-	4.4408
04	Photocopying service	-	-	-	-	152 100. 0	0.000
05	Book reservation service	-	05 03.3	40 26.3	73 48.0	34 22.4	2.3289

them visit library to find information about employment opportunities. Borrowing non-fiction and fiction (13.5%) are the other reasons for visiting the library. Even though majority of the users are students and unemployed youth, use of library for preparation for competitive examinations and for improving general knowledge or for serious reading is very less (12.6%). Low literacy rate indicates that the parents of most of the users are illiterates. Hence, lack of motivation or knowledge about competitive examinations or lack of competitive spirit among students and youth may be some of the reasons for lesser use of other information resources.

The users were also asked to give the reasons for not visiting the library more frequently. Majority of the respondents (61%) stated that since all the educational institutions and other offices function between 10 a.m. and 5.30 p.m., majority of the users find that library timings are inconvenient. 12.5% of the users do not visit more frequently since the library services are unsatisfactory (Table 8).

Use of information resources

Among the many information sources in the library, newspapers, magazines and fictions are the most frequently used information resources. Internet was used most frequently by only one user (Table 9).

Reading Room and Book Lending Services are the most frequently used services in the public libraries (Table 10).

Even though, one library is offering photocopying service (District Central Library, Bidar), none of them have used it.

Conclusion

Majority of the users of public libraries under study are men within age group of 11 – 30 years, and visit library at least once in a week. Majority of them are students, unemployed youth and employees in private sector belonging to lower and middle income group. They spend less than an hour in the library. Inconvenient timing is the main reason for not visiting the library more frequently. Books and Magazines, Friends/Teachers and Radio / Television are the information channels used most frequently to satisfy their information needs. Newspapers and Magazines are the most frequently read information sources. Reading Room and Book Lending Services are the most frequently used services in the public libraries. Since majority of the users are students and unemployed youth, public libraries needs to enrich their information resource collection, provide access to Internet and offer community-based services, including literacy programmes. Public libraries need to take proactive approach in motivating users to use these resources and services to enhance their competence.

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