

READING HABITS OF PUBLIC LIBRARY USERS IN PATIALA IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ENVIRONMENT

Amritpal Kaur *

Dr. Payare Lal **

*** Research Scholar**

Desh Bhagat University,
Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab,
India

**** Professor**

Desh Bhagat University,
Mandi Gobindgarh,
Punjab, India

QR Code



Abstract: *Public library being a social institution always strives to meet the informational, educational and recreational needs of the community by providing collection and services. Maximum utilization of library resources and services by the users is the main motive of a public library. The present study is an attempt to know the reading habits of the M.M. Central State library Patiala users. A questionnaire was used to identify the impressions of users towards reading and awareness of library services, adequacy of library resources and their views on library services. This paper also examines the satisfaction levels of users about the library collection. Further an attempt has also been made to highlight the findings of the study and a few suggestions have been given based on the analysis of collected data.*

Key Word: - Reading Habits ,Users, Public Library, Information, Technology.

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 levels. Also a positive relationship is observed between public library and literacy level which in turn contributes to increase in economic productivity. Extensive studies were undertaken to study the role of public libraries in information society value offered and use of the resources.

The Public library is regarded in the people's institution. It is local gateway to knowledge that provides basic condition for life learning and facilitates cultural development of the individual and social groups. The public library provides services to all irrespective of age, sex, cast, religion, education and social studies; generally all users get the material relevant to their needs and requirements in the public library.

A Public library is a nonprofits library maintained for public use. Library movement is a saga of organized growth and development of

libraries giving the details of establishment; maintenance and functioning make a library a growing organization. No country in the world can progress without providing free public library services to the citizens. It is imperative on the part of the democratic country like India to establish the service institutions like public libraries in order to strengthen the democratization of information and to promote the social, cultural, historical and scientific and technical knowledge in the public at large. Public libraries are expected to provide people-oriented services, aiming at satisfying the general public 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. According to L.R. Macolvin “Public libraries are those which provider free services to the people of a particular region, from the adequate collection of usable books of their interests. These services are given without any discrimination of religion, political and other.”

Reading habits used to help in all-round development of those who indulge in it, right from their birth till they breathe their last. It bestows a better sight and new wisdom to the readers’ minds. The reading habits play an essential and important part in creating the literate and elite society throughout the world. With the advent of new technologies like the computer and the internet, a new challenge has raised head in the way of reading habits. Information and communication Technology, social media and

mass media have usurped a huge part of our time available for reading. Right from the childhood, the youth and adults, all are inclined towards new technology for information as well as for entertainment and pleasure. Thus, to bring equilibrium in the use of old and new technology, the libraries are required to attract new generations towards reading books.

A dynamic change has come in the reading habits of all the sects of readers including Public Library Users with the introduction of new technology, especially with the arrival of computers and the Information Technology. Information is an important and key resource for every organization and is an essential input for all types of organizations. Libraries are organized information centers as they have limited resources with which they have to satisfy the information needs of the users.

The Information and communication Technology is an electronic medium of storage. It has become a powerful tool in a networked society. There is a direct link between the Information Technology resources and reading habits of our society. In the present environment of society, reading is not only confined to printing sources. It has been vastly extended towards the online resources and this change has thoroughly affected the traditional reading culture of present readers. The researchers all over the world are continuously discussing the impact of internet and related technologies over the reading habits of the users. They strongly feel that the Internet has affected both the reading practices and reading

choices. Researchers also tend to depend more on computer based resources than print resources in the present era of IT.

MUSAFIR MEMORIAL CENTRAL STATE LIBRARY (MMCSL)

State and District Public library system came into existence with the establishment of Musafir Memorial Central State Library (MMCSL) at Patiala as a state library of Punjab. Its foundation stone was laid as the Central Public Library on Feb. 1, 1955 by the then Hon. Chief Minister of Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU). Sh. Brish Bhan and was opened on July 23, 1956 by Hon. Sh. C.P.N. Singh, the then Governor, Punjab. M.M. Central State library named after former chief minister and Sahitya Akademi Award winner Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafir, the library has more than 1,34,000 books including 15,00 Reference books, 3000 rare manuscripts and 100 CD-ROM/DVD-ROM. the state archives department donated many rarities to the library, these include 961 manuscripts in Persian, 784 in Sanskrit, 595 in Gurmukhi or Punjabi, 152 in Urdu, 126 in Hindi and 102 in Arabic. M.M. Central State library works as apex library in Punjab and 14 district libraries of the state are under the administrative control of this library. These Public libraries provides not only lending and reference services but also serves as community centre for educational and cultural activities. Presently, there is one State library and fourteen District Public libraries in Punjab. Presently there are twenty two districts in Punjab

but only fourteen districts have a district public library. The districts namely Ludhiana, Nawanshahar (S.B.S.Nagar), Muktsar, Moga, Taran Taran, Barnala, Pathankot and Fazilka have no district library.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marcella et al. (2002) investigated the impact of information and communication technologies (ICTs) on the communication of legislative information to the general public or citizen. In general, the Information and Communication Technology has made its presence in every walk of life.

Arabito (2003) has made a case study on user information seeking on library web how the users seek and gather information for their papers and dissertations and how the library web site is becoming more and more stuffed with resources and with instructions on how to use such resources.

GursharanKaur (2008) carried out research for doctorate degree on the topic "District libraries in Punjab and Haryana: A comparative study". She assessed the existing situation and status of district libraries of Punjab and Haryana States. Besides using questionnaires, interviews were also conducted to collect data. Various facets of libraries, library staff, its building, collection, membership, its budget and library services have been examined. The various studies discussed above which were undertaken in different times and set-ups by different scholars clearly indicate

the insufficient infrastructure, finances, IT support and other attributes which support a strong public library system.

Sewa Singh (1996) has surveyed the district libraries in Punjab with an aim to identify the problems and development of these libraries. The survey shows an inadequate infrastructure, shortage of staff and paucity of funds in the district libraries of Punjab.

Handa (2011) Public libraries provide information and knowledge freely to its users. Public libraries accessible for all, regardless of age, race, sex, relation, nationality, language or social status,

Deswal,A.R. (2010) conducted a study on use of information sources and services by the research scholars of CDRI library, Lucknow and found that 38.94% of research scholars were using the library daily, 45.26% devoted one to two hour in the library, 75.78% visited the library for borrowing books/ journals, 68.42% of research scholars' purpose of seeking information was to solve immediate practical problems related to their research work, 66.31% of research scholars were using online databases/ journals on the basis of top priority, Borrowing service has been given top priority.

Biradar et.al. (2009) studied the use of information sources and services by the students in the Library of Agriculture Science College, Shimoga. The findings of the study reveal that 77.22% of respondents visited the library every

day. About 88% of the students visited library to read journals and magazines followed by visits to borrow books 87.12%. It was also found that large numbers of users preferred to use books. As far as usefulness of periodicals was concerned users opined that the Indian Journal of Agriculture Science 62.92% and Karnataka Journal of Agriculture Science 60.67% were the most useful journals.

Kumar et.al. (2009) carried out a user study on information resources and services of National Science Library (NSL). The findings reveals that 27.91% of the users visited the library several times in a week, 61.79% users spent two to three hours in the library, and 63.88% users' purpose of library visit was to consult reference material. 69.95% of the users opined about the reading material satisfactory.

Meenakshi (2007) studied the use and usage of information resources in government college libraries of Chandigarh. Majority of respondents visited the library with the study/research purpose and to locate information, to borrow books and to access the Internet. Most of the users were not satisfied with the library services and available information resources.

Verma et.al. (2007) studied the use of collection and services of Technical Information and Resource Centre of Defense Research and Development Establishment, Gwalior. They determined the need and purpose of using collection and services offered by the Library. They have also suggested some suitable

recommendations to improve the collection and services for the benefit of users.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the information needs of the public library users.
- To determine the preferences of the Public Library Users regarding different access options.
- To identify how the library meets the information needs of their users and their preferred sources of information.
- To investigate as to how long Public Library Users stay in the library for reading books or to use IT resources.
- To determine the reading culture of the Public Library Users with the advent of Technology.
- To determine the effect of Information and communication Technology on reading habits of the Public Library Users.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of the study, survey method of research was adopted. A structured questionnaire was designed and used for collecting data from the users of the M.M. Central State library, Patiala. 60 questionnaires were personally distributed among the users of the library on random basis, out of which 54 users responded to the questionnaire. Most of the users were mainly representing Patiala city. The encouraging responses received from the users.

SCOPE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The scope of the present study is confined only to the library users visiting M.M. Central State library personally, which comprises students, govt. employees, non- govt. employees, unemployed and senior citizens etc. The study population is limited to 56 users of the M.M. Central State library.

DATA PRESENTATION & ANALYSIS

The views of the users were elicited through questionnaires. Questionnaires were analysed and their results have been presented in the following tables and figures:

Table 1: Gender wise Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Respondents	Percentage
Male	34	60.71
Female	22	39.29
Total	56	100

Gender wise analysis of the data shows that among 56 respondents, there were 34 male users against 22 female users. They represent 60.71% and 39.29% respectively. Thus it is observed that male users were more than female users.

Table 2: Category Wise Distribution

Category	Respondents	Percentage
Students	20	35.71
Govt. Employee	09	16.07
Non-Govt.	07	12.05
Unemployed	9	16.07
Senior Citizen	11	19.64
Total	56	100

Above table depicts the occupation of respondents. Among 56 users, 20(35.71%) were students, 09(16.07%) were employed in government departments, 07(12.05%) were employed in non-government departments, 9(16.07%) were unemployed and 11(19.64%) were senior citizens

Table 3: Frequency of Library Visit

Frequency	Respondents	Percentage(%)
Daily	13	23.21
Once a week	09	17.04
Twice a week	10	16.07
Fortnightly	11	17.85
Once a month	07	12.05
Occasionally	06	10.71
Total	56	100

Table 3 reveals that out of total 56 users, 13(23.21%) visited the library daily, 09(17.04%) users visited library once in a week, 10(16.07%) users visited the library twice in a week, 11(17.85%) fortnightly and 07(12.05%) users visited the library occasionally, whereas only 06(10.71%) users visited the library once in a month.

Table 4: Time Spend in Library

Hours	Respondents	Percentage(%)
Less than one hour	10	16.07
One hour	07	12.05
Two hours	09	17.04
Three hours	11	17.85
More than three	12	21.42
More than six	07	12.05
Others	05	08.92
Total	56	100

Table 4 demonstrates that out of 56 respondents, 12(21.42%) spent more than three hours in the library, 07(12.05%) spent more than six hours and 09(17.04%) users spent two hours, 11(17.85%) spent three hours, 7(12.05%) users spent one hour while 10(16.07%) spent less than one hour and only 05(08.92%) users spent whole day in the library.

Table 5: Purpose of Visiting the Library

Purpose	Respondents	Percentage(%)
Borrow/Return	39	69.64
Read Books	23	41.07
Read Newspapers	37	66.07
Consult Reference	16	28.57
Read Magazines	24	42.85
Get Some	08	14.28

Table 5 exhibits that majority of users i.e. 39(69.64%) visited the library for borrow/return books, 37(66.07%) users for reading newspapers. 24(42.85%) users visited the library for reading magazines while 23(41.07%) users visited the library for reading books, 16(28.57%) for consulting reference sources and only 08(14.28%) for getting some information.

Table 6: Frequently Consulted Information Sources

Information Sources	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Reference	33	58.92
Non Fiction	36	64.28
Fiction	38	67.85
Magazines	35	62.50
Newspapers	40	71.42
Govt.	11	19.64
Audio visual	02	03.57

Table 6 shows that majority of the users i.e. 40(71.42%) frequently used Newspapers, 38(67.85), 36(64.28%), 35(62.50%) and 36(41.8%) users frequently used Fiction, Non-fiction, Magazines, and reference sources respectively. 11(19.64%) users frequently used government publications while only 02(03.57%) users frequently used audio visual material.

Table 7: Users' Satisfaction Level and Library Collection

Library Collection	Satisfaction Level			Not Used	Total
	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied		
Reference	22	16	10	08	56
Non Fiction	26	20	10	--	56
Fiction	21	19	09	07	56
Magazines	28	21	04	03	56
Newspapers	31	19	03	03	56
Govt.	11	18	08	19	56
CD-ROMs/	02	14	22	18	56

Table 7 depicts that maximum number of users i.e. 31(55.35) were fully satisfied with the Newspapers. 28(50%), 26(46.42.3%), 22(39.28%)and 21(37.50%), were fully satisfied with the Magazines, Newspapers , Non Fiction and Reference Sources respectively. 11(19.64%) were fully satisfied with Government publications available in the library. Only 02(03.57%) were satisfied with the Audio Visual material i.e. CD-ROMs/DVDs available in the library.

Table 8: Frequently used Library Services

Library	Respondents	Percentage(%)
Circulation	47	83.92
Book	22	39.28
Reference	38	67.85
Reprography	21	37.50

Table 8 shows that majority of the users i.e. 47(83.92%) frequently used Circulation Service, 38(67.85%)users Reference Service, 22(39.28%) users frequently used Books Reservation Service and 21(37.50%) Reprography Service respectively.

CONCLUSION

A majority of users visit the library daily with the study purpose, to borrow books, to read newspapers, to prepare for competitive examination. It is, therefore suggested that more and latest books, periodicals/magazines and other printed and non printed material should be added in the library so as to meet the requirements of the

users. Most of the users are not aware of services provided in the library. Thus, it is being suggested that proper user education or library orientation programmes should be provided to the users. From time to time user studies may also be carried out in order to know the needs of users, the existing status and strength & weakness of library services with the intention to improve the existing situation and to provide the better services to users. All segments of the society are more inclined towards new technology and the Public Library Users are not an exception. The challenge before the libraries is to keep the balance between the old and the new technology. The librarians have to play a major role in this development. The Public Libraries should infiltrate the social media and provide linkages through Face-book and social networking sites as the users are available there most of the time. It will easily provide the information about the services and sources available for them in the libraries. It will also create their interest in their subject. New materials should always keep coming in the libraries and it should also be informed to the users well in time. Internet facility should also be compulsorily available in the library as it is now an indispensable feature of reading habits. Hence, libraries have to build their collections and services to meet user's satisfaction.

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