

Information Seeking Behaviour of Users of T.S. Central State Library, Chandigarh

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ABSTRACT

Public libraries are the manifestation of Democracy. They are the store house of intellectual works of our forefathers. They are charged with the responsibility to connect the society with education. The current study was undertaken to determine the Information Seeking Behaviour of T.S. Central State Library, Chandigarh. "The Information Seeking behavior is mainly concerned with who needs what type of information for what reason; how information is found, evaluated and used" (Kumar, 1990). The motive was to understand their information requirements and the problems they faced, so that the library may serve their needs in a better way. The study was carried out with the help of structured questionnaires to analyze the information seeking behavior of different types of users and indiscriminately selected 118 users of the library. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which include frequency count percentages and tables.

1. Introduction

Information enables the individuals to adjust herself / himself in changing environment. In the era of Information explosion and information overload, it is very difficult to have access to all the information resources. Libraries help us to tackle with this situation. Out of the different types of libraries develop by the society; Public Libraries are the most popular because of the functions performed and services they offered. Public libraries are the social organizations which provide services based upon books and information to the general public.

To serve the needs of the users of the libraries, it is very much required to study the information seeking behavior of their patrons, as the public libraries serves the whole community irrespective of their age, gender, socio-economic class, language, disabilities and profession.

2. Concepts and Definitions of Public Libraries

Public Libraries in general are those service organizations which serves the general public as a whole. They perform a very important role in upgrading the society by keeping them connected with the education. Public Libraries exist everywhere with a social mission of development of the community. They are the source of knowledge and information which is readily accessible to all the members of the community. Their purpose is to serve the general public and disseminate the information needed generally along with providing the CDs, light reading books, etc. for entertainment and leisure purpose.

The public library has been defined differently by different authors depending upon the importance they give to its objectives:

UNESCO defines Public Library as "the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision making and culture development of the individual and social groups"

The National Knowledge Commission (NKC), of India illustrated Public Libraries as gateways of knowledge and continued that a "Library is not a building stacked with books – it is a repository and source of information and ideas, a place for learning and enquiry, and for the generation of thought and the creation of new knowledge. Public libraries in particular have the potential to bridge the gap between the information poor and information rich by ensuring that people from all sectors and settings of society and the community across India have easy access to knowledge seeking".

3. T.S. Central State Library, Chandigarh: An Overview

The T.S. Central State Library is a well renowned Public Library of the City Beautiful Chandigarh. It is named as "Tirlok Singh Central State Library". The library was established in 1955, under the scheme of Government of India for the promotion of Art and Culture. After reorganization of the Punjab, it came under the control of Chandigarh Administration. The liberal grants from the Chandigarh Administration have helped the library grow rapidly to fulfill the diverse needs of the users. The library is beehive of intellectual activities. The library has visitors from different walks of lives. Students, professionals, Housewives, Children, senior citizens flock to the library as it affords a wide range of books covering a large number of topics. Latest books are the earliest to reach this library.

The T.S. Central State Library has given a positive thrust to book culture and connected activities. The library accommodates the demands of northern sectors and villages of the Chandigarh with a set-up of two (2) branches and a mobile van. People have free access to the ideal reading material at their doorstep. It has a State Library Planning Committee under the Chairmanship of Home and Education Secretary and Special Secretary Finance Cum Director Higher Education is the Vice Chairman. Distinguished educationists and nominee of Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation are the members. The Committee meets at the regular intervals to

discuss and suggest policies for the development of library system. (<http://csllchd.gov.in/abt.htm>).

Just like other libraries, this library too organized in various sections; i.e. Acquisition Section, Circulation Section, Reference Section, Children Section, Periodical Section, Newspaper Section, Binding Section, Administrative Section and Rare Book Section. The library has a rich collection of nearly 3, 00,000 books and 2500 CD-ROMs. 50 Newspapers are received daily and 120 magazines annually. 45000 users are registered with the library. The main aim of the library is to facilitate the users to make effective use of the services and resources. The library is fully automated with LibSys Software. The library remains open to public from 10:00am to 6pm and reading room remains open from 8am to 8pm. The library closed only on Gazette holidays.

4. Statement of the Problem

Public Libraries have different users from different walks of lives. To cater the diverse and ever changing needs of its users, it is the responsibility of the library to understand their users to serve them better. They have to provide right information to right user at right time in right format. However, it is a general belief that public libraries are neglected in terms of funds. This study aims to find out the information requirements and characteristics of the clientele of T.S. Central State Library of Chandigarh. What are the different information requirements of the users, and what services and resources are there in the library to serve their requirements? What are the problems faced by the users? These are the questions which this study aims to answer.

5. Objectives

- To know how frequently users visiting the library.
- To identify the information requirements of the users of T.S. Central State Library of Chandigarh.
- To know the aim of seeking information.
- To identify how the library fulfill the information requirements of their users and their ideal sources of information
- To know the problems faced by the users to search their required information.

6. Methodology

The present study has been conducted on T.S. Central State Library of Chandigarh and the primary data has been collected by using the survey instrument method. The structured questionnaire was designed to suits the objectives of the present study. The questionnaire was distributed amongst the users and data has been worked out with statistical tools like average, percentage, etc. The data collected was represented with the help of tables.

7. Scope

The present study has its scope of investigating the Information Seeking Behaviour of the users of T.S. Central State Library, Chandigarh.

8. Review of Related Literature

The survey of literature reveals that the large numbers of literatures are published in this field and are scattered. It was not at all possible to review the whole related literature. So keeping it in mind, few related studies have been observed before taking up the present study with the aim that these studies would help the researcher in conducting the present study to understand the concept, current and past situations on the given area of research study.

Navalani and Katyal (1994) determined the existing position of the public libraries in Punjab. Authors described in detail the progress of the public libraries in Punjab. They explained the meager conditions of public library network in Punjab State and express their opinion for plenty of work to be undertaken for the upliftment of these libraries.

Bilal (2002) in his study concludes that Web is the key factor in the information seeking behavior and success. The students are more comfortable in using web based resources and they demand more resources through the web enabled technology. The student information seeking behavior and success were match up in his study. The study discloses that the use of search engine and the level of research ability are directly proportional to their success.

Emojoroh (2005) carried out a study and found that Nigeria public libraries are performing badly in most facets due to appalling resources. Library must not make available only resources but also make sure the effective use of the resources by its users.

Gursharan Kaur (2008) conducted her research and evaluated that the existing situation and status of district libraries of Punjab and Haryana States. She used questionnaire and interviews methods for collecting data. Various aspects of libraries i.e. library staff, building, collection, membership, budget and library services have been studied.

Wonder (2010) carried out a project for San Francisco Public Library with collaboration of Webjunction. The study suggested that the barriers should be removed to access-instructional tools, so that it becomes easy for users to access the homepage of the Library and link of tools should be available through OPAC computers. And tutorials should also be available in multiple languages.

Kumar (2012) executed a survey and reveals that there is a necessity to improve the basic amenities in the Public Library like drinking water, clean toilet facility, etc. along with this, the library should take vital steps to provide Internet facility, Xerox, audio-visual materials, and separate young adult section to attract more patrons.

Joy (2014) conducted a survey and proposed that funding should be increased by the government, so that the library may acquire the sufficient information resources and ICT facilities. Besides this they should be stocked with up-to-date information resources to encourage the users. Weed out the unserviceable/obsolete/outdated resources on regular basis. Electronic resources should also be the part of the library collection.

Kumar and Shokeen (2015) in his study, finds that the students have highest perception score as compare to the housewives. They recommend that few new services like OPAC, Scanner, printing and photocopy should be added. Along with this, there is a dire need to improve the facilities of seating arrangement and drinking water.

9. Analysis of the Study

Total 150 copies of questionnaires were distributed amongst the users of the T.S. Central State Library, Chandigarh. 118 were returned after completing the questionnaire. Data were presented for analysis by using descriptive statistics. It includes; frequency count percentages and tables.

Table 1: Frequency of visiting the library by respondents

Visiting the Library	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily	69	58.47
Once a Week	20	16.94
Twice a Week	06	5.08
Fortnightly	11	9.32
Monthly	04	3.38
Occasionally	08	6.77
Total	118	100

Table 1 indicates that to satisfy their varying requirements, 58.47% respondents visit the library daily in which most of the respondents were students and retired persons. 16.94% and 5.08% respondents visit the library once a week and twice a week respectively.

Table 2: Information Requirements of the Respondents

Information Requirements	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Information concerning academics	62	52.54
General Information/Current Affairs	21	17.79
Recreational/Entertainment	5	4.23
On Sports	7	5.93
On Health	4	3.38
On Politics	13	11.01
For Personal Development	6	5.08
On Government Policies/Programmes	5	4.23

Table 2 shows that the 62 respondents (52.54%) required the information for academic purposes. Majority of the students consult the resources for various competition examinations. Only 3.38% of respondents consult the library for Health purposes.

Table 3: Activities undertaken by the respondents during the visit to Library

Activities During the Visit	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Consulting Material for Private Study	69	58.47
Studying using own resources	18	15.25
For general knowledge	25	21.18
Studying in peaceful environment	55	46.61
Relaxation	12	10.16

Consulting Newspapers/Magazines	36	30.50
Others	06	5.08

Table 3 reveals that most of the users visit the library to consult the resources for their study purposes. And 46.61% of users like to visit the library to study in the peaceful environment.

Table 4: Library resources frequently used

Library resources frequently used	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Textbooks	58	49.15
Reference Resources	29	24.57
Newspaper/Magazines	41	34.74
Fiction	39	33.05
Government Publications	12	10.16
Government Reports	02	1.69
Others	18	15.25

According to the Table 4 the respondents were asked the resources they frequently used in the library. 49.15% of the respondents reveal that the textbooks were prominent resources used by them because of the relevance of their information requirements. Only 1.69% of respondents consult the Government reports, where Newspapers and Magazines were consulted by 34.74% of respondents.

Table 5: Problems faced by respondents in meeting their information requirements

Problems Faced	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of Information retrieval tools in library	36	30.50
Inadequate Relevant Material	31	26.27
Lack of Orientation in using Library Services and facilities	21	17.79
Ignorance of how and from where to obtain the required materials	17	14.40
Hardly conducive state of the library	09	7.62
Uncooperative approach of the library staff	04	3.38

Table 5 indicates that the major problem faced by the users includes the lack of Information retrieval tools in library. 26.27% inadequate relevant material. The former response may be associated with lack of knowledge of available relevant tools in library by the users where as the latter response against the backdrop of the general state of neglect of public libraries. Other problems faced were: Lack of Orientation in using Library Services and facilities 17.79%, Ignorance of how and from where to obtain the required materials 14.40%, hardly conducive state of the library 7.62%, Uncooperative approaches of the library staff 3.38%.

10. Conclusion

Keeping in mind the main objective behind the Public Libraries, they are expected to provide people-oriented services and act as an information centre without any distinction on the basis of age, sex, color, caste and status. Usually Public Libraries satisfy the informational, educational and recreational requirements of the Community in which it

exists. Currently we are living in the information era, where information is growing at very fast pace and in different forms and formats. It is very tough for an individual to find and select the requisite and exact information from the ocean of information. Libraries will only be in position to help the users to have their requisite information, if they understand their users and their requirements. The present study on the Information seeking behavior of T.S. Central State Library, Chandigarh attempts to understand how frequently the users visits the

library, what are their information requirements, for what purpose they visit the library, what kind of material they refer and what are the major problems they faced in library. 58.47% of the respondents visit the library daily that includes students and the retired persons. Major number of respondents visits the library for academic purposes. They consult mainly textbooks. The Library needs to take steps forward to orientate the users about what tools and services are they providing so that they may get full advantage of the same.

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