



Branch Library Services in Urban and Rural Districts of Tamilnadu: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research paper is to study the perception of Librarians towards branch library services in urban (Chennai) and rural (Villupuram) districts of Tamil Nadu. A Survey method was conducted by structured questionnaire which were administered among Librarians of branch libraries. The results of the survey were analyzed in depth by applying statistical techniques to find out meaningful findings of the study. The study reveals that there is need to improve the internet facilities and reprographic facilities in the branch libraries. The extension service has to be given more importance and create awareness to the users.

KEYWORDS: Branch Library Services, Library Service – Usage, Comparative Study

1. Introduction

This research study has been done largely by an analysis of the statistical data relating to Branch libraries. At present there were 4042 Public Libraries are available in the State of Tamil Nadu, in this 1664 were Branch Libraries. To know about the present status of the Branch Library services, the data were collected through the questionnaire from Chennai (Urban) and Villupuram (Rural) Districts of Tamil Nadu. This study is an essential input in the future planning of Branch library services.

All together, 193 questionnaires (132 – Chennai and 61 – Villupuram) were circulated to the Librarians / in – charge of the Branch Libraries, out of which 159 responses were received, which constitutes 82.4% in total.

2. Objectives:

The Objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the present status of branch library services in Urban and Rural districts of Tamil Nadu
2. To know the perception of Utilization of Services by the User
3. To find out the usage of Reading Materials by the User
4. To trace the Extension Services offered by the Branch Libraries

3. Methodology:

Questionnaire based survey has been conducted with librarians of branch libraries in Urban (Chennai) and Rural (Villupuram) districts of Tamil Nadu. Questionnaire was framed to collect data from the Librarians / In-charge (Record Clerk) of the branch libraries, to know the services provided by the branch libraries and its utilization.

5. Data Collection:

Data collected from Branch Librarians of Chennai (Urban) and Villupuram (Rural) districts in Tamil Nadu. Overall 193 questionnaires (Chennai 132 and Villupuram 61) were circulated to the Librarians / in – charge of the Branch Libraries, out of which 159 responses were received, which constitutes 82.4% in total (Chennai and Villupuram district).

6. Data Analysis:

The data collected from the questionnaire has been analysed to fulfill the stated objectives. For this purpose, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software package has been used. Statistical analysis techniques such as Frequency Distribution, Percentage Analysis, WAM Test have been employed depending on the nature of the data collected from the respondents.

7. Classification of Respondents by Sex

The attitude of gender may be different in managing the library. The opinion of the respondents is also analyzed on the basis of gender, male and female. The gender may have different approach in managing the information in Branch libraries since these Libraries are established for the society irrespective of sex, religion, gender, caste, etc.

Table – 1
Respondents Vs Sex

Sno.	District	Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Chennai	60	46	106 66.67%
2	Villupuram	37	16	53 33.33%
Total		97 61.01%	62 38.99%	159 100%

The table 1 shows that respondent by sex. In total, 159 of 193 (82.4%) Branch Librarians / Village Librarians / Record Clerk were responded to this survey. Of those responding 97 (61.01%) of the respondents are male and 62 (38.99%) are female. It also shows that, branch libraries in Urban (Chennai) and Rural (Villupuram) districts are managed by Male in maximum number of libraries while compare to Female.

Table – 2
Library Services Vs Branch Libraries

Sno.	Services offered	Chennai	Villupuram	Total
1	Lending of Documents	106 100%	53 100%	159 100.00%
2	Reprographic Service	3 2.83%	4 7.55%	7 4.40%
3	ILL Service	100 94.34%	7 13.21%	107 67.30%
4	Information Retrieval Service	78 73.58%	34 64.15%	112 70.44%
5	Internet Browsing	8 7.55%	6 11.32%	14 8.81%

Service offered by the branch libraries were shown in the table 2. Lending of documents is offered by all 159(100%) branch libraries, which is a major service in all public libraries then Information Retrieval service in 112 (70.44%) branch libraries.

Inter Library Loan (ILL) service is offered in 107 (67.30%) libraries, only taluk branch libraries in Villupuram district has ILL service, Chennai district have ILL service in 100 (94.34%) branch libraries and then in 14 (8.81%) branch libraries were offering Internet browsing service to its users then 7 libraries offering Reprographic service to its users. It shows the authorities have to take consideration to provide Reprographic & Internet service to all the branch libraries.

Table – 3
Utilization of Reading Materials Vs Branch Libraries

Sno	Utilization of Reading Materials	District	Not Used	Rarely Used	Occasionally Used	Frequently Used	Regularly	WAM	Rank
1	Books	Chennai	0	1	3	33	69	32.53	3
		Villupuram	0	0	0	18	35	16.47	3
2	Popular Magazines	Chennai	0	0	0	7	99	34.87	1
		Villupuram	0	1	0	4	48	17.20	1

3	News Papers	Chennai	0	0	2	14	90	34.13	2
		Villupuram	0	1	1	5	46	17.00	2
4	Children Literature	Chennai	25	34	14	23	10	18.47	4
		Villupuram	12	23	7	10	1	8.27	4

The table 3 shows that, Utilization of Reading Materials by the User. The 5-point scaling technique used to analyses the findings namely, Not used, Rarely Used, Occasionally Used, Frequently Used and Rarely Used. The Magazines were regularly used in 99 (34.87) branch libraries in Urban (Chennai) District and 48 (17.20) branch libraries in rural (Villupuram) district by the users according to the WAM values it ranked 1 followed by Newspaper in 90 (34.13) branch libraries in Urban (Chennai) District and 46 (17.00) branch libraries in rural (Villupuram) district.

Books are used frequently and regularly used in 102 (32.53) urban (Chennai) branch libraries and 53 (16.47) rural (Villupuram) branch libraries. Children Literature is used rarely and not used in both the urban and rural districts; according to the WAM values it ranked 4.

Table – 4
Utilization of Services Vs Branch Libraries

Sno	Utilization of Services	District	Not Used	Rarely Used	Occasionally Used	Frequently Used	Regularly	WAM	Rank
1	Lending of Documents	Chennai	0	2	2	30	72	32.67	1
		Villupuram	0	0	0	16	37	16.60	1
2	Consultation of Documents in the library	Chennai	5	20	22	34	25	24.80	2
		Villupuram	0	10	15	22	6	12.20	2
3	ILL Service	Chennai	19	29	16	29	13	20.40	3
		Villupuram	47	2	2	2	0	4.33	4
4	Internet Browsing	Chennai	94	2	3	5	2	9.13	4
		Villupuram	41	1	7	4	0	5.33	3

From the table 4 shows that the following services in the order of preference are used based on the WAM values. Lending of documents utilized regularly by both the urban (Chennai) and rural (Villupuram) users, according to the WAM values it ranked 1, followed by consultation of documents in the branch libraries. ILL service is ranked 3 in urban district but in rural district ILL service is ranked 4, this is due to non

availability of ILL service most of the branch libraries. Internet service is ranked last in Urban district but it ranked 3 in rural district.

Table – 5
Extension Services offered by the Branch Libraries

Sno.	Extension Services	Chennai	Villupuram	Total
1	Organizing Seminars	19 17.92%	16 30.19%	35 24.06%
2	Group Discussion	40 37.74%	24 45.28%	64 41.51%
3	Book exhibitions	48 45.28%	28 52.83%	76 49.06%
4	Cultural Meetings	25 23.58%	10 18.87%	35 21.23%
5	Celebration of Library Week	75 70.75%	49 92.45%	124 81.60%
6	Celebration of Important Days	48 45.28%	47 88.68%	95 66.98%
Average		37 40.09%	29 54.72%	66 47.41%

The table 5 shows the extension services offered by the branch libraries. In 124 (81.60%) of the branch libraries were celebrating library week, followed by Celebration of Important days such as Independence Day; Republic Day and birthdays of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Pandit Jawarharlal Nehru, Dr. S.R. Ranganathan, Barathiyar and other illumaniaries of social life and in 76 (49.06%) branch libraries conducting book exhibition in 95 (66.98%) branch libraries celebrate important days.

In 64 (41.51%) branch libraries, were conducting group discussions on current topics then 35 (21.23%) branch libraries were conducting cultural meeting. It shows that, the branch libraries were mostly concentrating on Celebration of Library week and important days.

8. Suggestions

It is emphasized that the state of Tamil Nadu needs a restructuring of branch libraries and their development at all levels. To achieve this, the governments should take up the task of revitalization of and coordination of existing public library system in the state on one hand and the creation of Network of Branch Libraries on the other hand. In view of the literature available on applying marketing techniques to libraries it is suggested the branch libraries are made aware of the importance of marketing library services to the public. Further it is suggested that the apprehension of treating the concept of marketing applicable only to business concerns and not to libraries shall be eradicate among the public librarians. Once librarians become convinced of the need for marketing, they can begin the search for marketing techniques. The extension service has to be given more importance and create awareness to the users.

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