

The Role of Public Library in Promotion of Informal Education with Special Reference to Rural Area

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ABSTRACT

A public library is a social organization. In which everyone can get information and informal education without discrimination of caste, religion, age, etc. Hence, it is known as “Common Man Universities”. In this research article, we described about the role of public libraries in promotion of informal education with special reference to rural area. The area of study is limited to the public libraries in the valsad district. The main objective of this study to know the role of public libraries in promotion of informal education. The survey research method used by the researcher for the present study. As well as a structured questionnaire was prepared as a tool for data collection. The present study investigated that male users were more than female users. The most of the respondents in the public libraries was 26-35 age groups and most of the users was students and unemployed. They visited to public libraries in daily basis and maximum number of users was time spent more than three hours. The majority respondents were using the public library for reading purpose and prepare competitive exams. They use of competitive exam books. Majority users gave opinion were excellent about the usefulness of public library in informal education and information resources and services available in the public libraries. But they faced many problems like that lack of time to read available material, lack of modern technology to acquire electronic information resources faced in getting informal education, lack of infrastructure facility, lack of relevant information content and insufficient copies of the required information material available in the public library.

KEYWORDS: Rural Area, Valsad District, Public library, Role of public library, Education, Informal education, Life-long learning.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of something learning, assimilating and self developing. It is a momentary process. Yet the ways to achieve it can be different. Education is the knowledge to acquire in a disciplined way from moment to moment. That's education cannot be given, education has to be earned. The acquiring education way can be different. Hence it is known in different forms. Its forms may be different but in the end it remains the process of developing the 'self' of the person. Different forms of education can generally be identified by three names:

1. Formal education
2. Non-formal education
3. Informal education (**shah, 2011**)

Formal and non-formal education has a significant impact on human beings, which strongly influences the growth and development of the country. Formal education is typically achieved through the learning system such as at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. While informal education is related to professional experience in the workplace. Informal education is an element of non-formal education. Informal education can be understood as contingent and experimental education. Informal education takes place where people need to learn, be inspired and have the opportunity. Human capital is considered to be the sum of knowledge, abilities and skills acquired by human beings through education, experience and training. Which can be used to increase the level of economic growth and development?

MEANING OF EDUCATION

The term "Education" has been derived from the Latin term "Educatum" which means the act of teaching or training. A group of educationists say that it has come from another Latin word "Educare" which means "to bring up" or "to raise" (**Portia**)

A few others interpret, the word "Education" has originated from another Latin term "Educere" which means "to lead forth" or "to come out". (**Portia**)

All these meanings indicate that education seeks to nourish the good qualities in man and draw out the best in every individual. Education seeks to develop the innate inner capacities of man. (**Portia**)

As an individual in the society, he has to think critically about various issues in life and take decisions about them being free from bias and prejudices, superstitions and blind beliefs. Thus, he has to learn all these qualities of head, hand and heart through the process of education. (**Portia**)

DEFINITIONS OF EDUCATION

"Education is the manifestation of the divine perfection, already existing in man" – Vivekananda

"Education is the capacity to feel pleasure and pain at the right moment. It develops in the body and in the soul of the pupil all the beauty and all the perfection which he is capable of" – Plato

"Education is the creation of a sound mind in a sound body. It develops man's faculty, especially his mind so that he may be able to enjoy the contemplation of supreme truth, goodness and beauty of which perfect happiness essentially consists" – Aristotle

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INFORMAL EDUCATION

Informal education is quite diverse from formal education and, particularly, from non-formal education, although in certain cases it is capable of maintaining a close relationship with both. It does not correspond to an organized and systematic view of education; informal education does not necessarily include the objectives and subjects usually encompassed by the traditional curricula. It is aimed at students as much as at the public at large and imposes no obligations whatever their nature. There generally being no control over the performed activities, informal education does not of necessity regard the providing of degrees or diplomas; it merely supplements both formal and non-formal education. **(Portia)**

Informal education is a general term for education outside of a standard school setting. Informal education is the wise, respectful and spontaneous process of cultivating learning. It works through conversation and the exploration and improvement of experience. On the other hand, Informal learning is the unofficial, unscheduled, impromptu way most of us learn to do our jobs. Informal learning is like riding a bicycle: the rider chooses the destination and the route. The cyclist can take a detour at a moment's notice to admire the scenery or help a fellow rider. It can refer to various forms of alternative education: i. Home schooling ii. Self- teaching iii. Youth work. Informal education refers even too emotions, feelings, believe, superstitions, etc. Gained knowledge as a result of formal, non-formal educations sooner or later if passed through prism of informal education and takes the form of values, believes traditions, etc. Informal education may be viewed as the learning that comes as a part of being involved in youth and community organizations. In these settings there are specialist workers or educated whose job is to encourage people to think about experiences and situations. This education is a spontaneous process helping people to learn. **(Tholappan)**

DEFINITION OF INFORMAL EDUCATION

The perspective of informal education includes all the indirect effects of home, family and society. Informal education includes the press, libraries, movies and other such media or agencies. Their effects are implicit and invisible, despite being very important and meaningful. **(Shah, 2011)**

In short, informal education is a lifelong process. It is an ongoing process from inception to death. It is a process of acquiring education from moment to moment. Instinct and awareness to get education is an essential factor. Informal education can be said the instinct to know, learn, assimilate, develop and be aware of everything at every stage of life, from walking, eating, drinking, sitting, getting up, hanging out with friends, talking, interacting with the media. **(Shah, 2011)**

Informal education is a truly lifelong process where a person acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge based on his or her daily experiences and educational implications from environmental sources such as family and neighbors, work and sports, markets, libraries and the mass media. **(Shah, 2011)**

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dib (1987) wrote an article on formal, non-formal and informal education: concept / applicability. In this article, he proposes the classification of educational methods, analyzes the concepts of formal, non-formal and informal education and define their features, advantages, limitations and interrelations. As well as the information given to

the transition from formal to non-formal, the need for non-formal education, formal versus non-formal education, the creation of non-formal models and perspectives of non-formal education.

Popescu and Diaconu (2009) wrote an article on informal education and productivity. He analyzed romanian informal education from two points of view. Which introduced how formal education as work-based learning is accomplished by informal. Where a partnership between universities and companies and a study process were involved. As well as this article underlined the relevance between informal learning and productivity. It is clear from this article that romania made several attempts at the formal level to shape the modern trend for education. But the lack of consistency and the insufficiency of the resources allocated, the reform seems like more experiments or efforts that were unsuccessful and damaging for many young generations. The companies, therefore, took a keen interest in partnering with education, formal education centers, especially universities and vocational high schools, to stimulate the work-based learning process by which young people acquire important practical knowledge for rapid vocational adaptation.

Farahani, Mirzamohamadi and Noroozi (2014) wrote an article on the study on features of informal education in postmodernism with the aim of examining aspects such as objectives, educational contents, techniques, ways and methods of evaluation of informal education in post modernism. Which placed special emphasis on the curriculum? For which a descriptive-analytical method was used. From this article it is clear that the goal of informal education was to improve living conditions. The content of education varied according to individual needs and was largely oriented towards environmental issues. A vast types of methods were used, including observation and communication methods. As well as self- evaluation and other people assessment was the only one way of evaluation in informal education. Post-modern education is seen to be moving towards informal education. Modern and post-modern, informal and formal education had its own place. According to the researcher, the education accepted by post-modernity was an informal education based on the general philosophy of each age.

Cunningham and Walton (2016) wrote an article on the informal learning spaces in university libraries and their campuses with regard to the Loughborough University case study. The purpose of this paper was to explore how informal learning spaces are used by students in the library and elsewhere on campus. The focus includes learning activities undertaken by students, reasons of informal learning spaces chosen, suggestions on how they can be improved and how technologies are used. There was also a comparison between students use of libraries informal learning spaces and other informal learning spaces.

Huded, Shridhar and Shetter (2016) wrote an article on the role of public libraries in the promotion of informal education with special reference to City Central Library, Hubli-Dharwad, Karnataka. This article's main objective of to know the role of City Central Library in promotion of informal education. An optional objective of this article were to know the usefulness, effectiveness, usefulness of resources and services, users opinion, use and adequacy of reading materials and suggest ways and means for improving the existing services or facilities for the effective promotion of informal education. The survey research design used for this study and tools used for data collection was a questionnaire. A total number of 200 questionnaires were distributed to library users and 152 completed questionnaires were received back.

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This study shows that the majority user's always visit the library for reading magazines, newspapers and books only. Their use of library resources to improve their general knowledge. The highest number of the library users are satisfied with available collection, services rendered by the staff and their helpfulness. It has been found that majority of users 78 (51.32 %) also visit other libraries and only 74 (48.68 %) users visits in City Central Library. The researcher suggested the majority users are graduates and students, hence library should also provide internet facility, digital content and information desk to help its users to inform competitive exams, job opportunity and government schemes etc. for their betterment. The library adds more number of references and textbook, provide advanced library services, proper reading atmosphere and some of the users are facing disturbance from the co-users. Therefore, proper rules and instructions should be made and implemented in the library for their use. Also require authorities of the City Central Library should subscribe more number of newspapers as well as magazines for the benefit of the users.

Johnson, C. (2017) wrote an article on the impact of informal education on formal education in science a symbiotic relationship. The purpose of this capstone was to research the impact of information science education on formal science education. It focused on how formal and informal science educators can work together to increase students' participation in science and the environment. Science professionals were interviewed about science careers and interviewed to learn about the needs of classroom science teachers, focusing on how to support informal science educators. The Researcher used mixed methods, which included both open-ended, closed-ended questions and graphical interpretation. In addition, he used both qualitative and quantitative approaches in research design. The researcher collected data from twenty formal science teachers using the Survey Monkey with questions about the effectiveness of the educator workshop in collaboration with formal and defense. This article reveals that most of the teachers of science subjects in formal classrooms at the primary grade level were hired to teach in schools in texas schools. They were stronger in both language arts and mathematics. But mixed classroom teachers were held responsible for their students' progress in science.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Public libraries play an important role in providing free and open access knowledge to people of all ages, regardless of race, religion, etc. Which can play a significant role in the development of information society in any country? In order to ensure that libraries meet the diverse information needs of their users in order to provide effective information services, the quality of library services needs to be measured from the point of view of library users. As well as for know purpose of use of public libraries by users, know they contribute to their informal learning, know problems face by users. So researcher has therefore studied the role of public library in promotion of informal education with special reference to rural area.

OBJECTIVE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The main objective of this study to know the role of public libraries in promotion of informal education with special reference to rural area, with the following objectives:

1. To know the purpose of use of public library.
2. To understand the types of users visit to public library
3. To examine the types of reading materials used by the library users.
4. To know the usefulness of public library

5. To study the users opinions towards the available information resources and services.
6. To examine the problems faced by the users in informal education.
7. To suggest the ways and means for solving the problems

SCOPE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Five public libraries in Valsad district have been considered for the present study. These include the Government Public Library, Dharampur, Shrimant Maharana Shri Narandevji Library, Dharampur, Shri Mahatma Gandhi Public Library, Valsad, Government District Library, Valsad, Shri Vidyamrut Varshini Pathshala Public Library, Valsad. In this study included are all types' users of public libraries.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey research method used by the researcher for the present study. As well as a structured questionnaire were prepared as a tool for primary data collection to satisfy the objectives of the study. Published and unpublished sources used for secondary information collection. After visiting five public libraries in valsad district and getting permission from the librarian. The users were randomly selected and given a questionnaire. A total of 85 questionnaires was received from all the public libraries. After that, the information obtained is arranged in the table and analyzed.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The results obtained from the 85 copies of the research questionnaire were analyzed using percentages and frequency tables. The data are analyzed as follows:

Note the key to tables: (GPL Dharampur = Government Public Library, Dharampur; SMSNL Dharampur = Shrimant Maharana Shri Narandevji Library, Dharampur; SMGPL Valsad = Shri Mahatma Gandhi Public Library, Valsad; GDL Valsad = Government District Library, Valsad; SVVPPL Valsad = Shri Vidyamrut Varshini Pathshala Public Library, Valsad)

Table - 1 Gender wise Distribution of Respondents

Gender	GPL Dharampur	SMSNL Dharampur	SMGPL Valsad	GDL Valsad	SVVPPL Valsad	No. of Respondents (N=85)	Percentage (%)
Male	4	14	8	8	20	54	63.53 %
Female	6	6	0	7	12	31	36.47 %
Total	10	20	8	15	32	85	100 %

Above table-1 describe the gender wise distribution of respondents. The data show that the overall 85 respondents from selected five public libraries. There were 54 male users against 31 female users. They represent 63.53 % and 36.47 % respectively. Thus we observed that male users were more than female users. As well as Shri Vidyamrut Varshini Pathshala Public Library, Valsad had more users. In addition, in all the libraries mentioned above, male visited the library more than female.

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Table -2 Age wise Distribution of the Respondents

Age Range	No. of Respondents (N=85)	Percentage (%)
18-25	28	32.94 %
26-35	38	44.71 %
36-45	5	5.88 %
46-above	14	16.47 %
Total	85	100 %

Above table - 2 indicate the age wise distribution of the respondents mentions five public libraries. It is clear from the table that out of 85 respondents, 28 (32.94 %) were between the age group of 18-25, 38 respondents (44.71 %) were between the age group of 26-35, 5 respondents (5.88 %) were between the age group of 36-45, while 14 (16.47 %) respondents were 46 or above. This indicates that the majority of the respondents using the libraries were 26-35 age group. A very few 5 (5.88 %) respondents representing were under the age group of 36-45 years.

Table - 3 Occupation wise Distribution of Respondents

Occupation	No. of Respondents (N=85)	Percentage (%)
Students	30	35.29 %
House Wife	1	1.18 %
Unemployee	29	34.12 %
Professional	4	4.71%
Private employee	5	5.88 %
Researcher	3	3.53 %
Senior Citizen	12	14.12 %
Government employee	1	1.18 %
Total	85	100 %

Above table - 3 depicts the occupation of respondents. Results showed that different types of users were visiting the public library, in which including students, housewife, unemployed, professional, private employee, researchers, senior citizen and government employee. Whenever out of 85 users, 30 (35.29%) were students, 29 (34.12 %) were unemployed and 12 (14.12 %) were senior citizen, which was the majority in the library. While housewife, government employee, researcher, professional and private employees were very few visited to the public library.

Table - 4 Frequency of Library Visit by the Respondents

Frequency	No. of Respondents (N=85)	Percentage (%)
Daily	66	77.65 %
Once a week	4	4.71 %
Twice a week	12	14.12 %
Once a month	1	1.18 %
Occasionally	2	2.35 %
Total	85	100 %

Table - 4 indicate the frequency of library visits by the respondents. It can be seen that out of 85 respondents, the majority of 66 (77.65 %) respondents were visiting the library daily basis. Whereas 4 (4.71 %) once a week, 12 (14.12 %) twice a week, 1 (1.18%) once a month and 2 (2.35 %) respondents were visiting the libraries occasionally.

Table - 5 Time Spent in the Public Library by the Respondents

Time Spent Hours	No. of Respondents (N=85)	Percentage (%)
One hour	10	11.76 %
Two hour	13	15.29 %
Three hours	5	5.88 %
More than three hours	57	67.06 %
Total	85	100 %

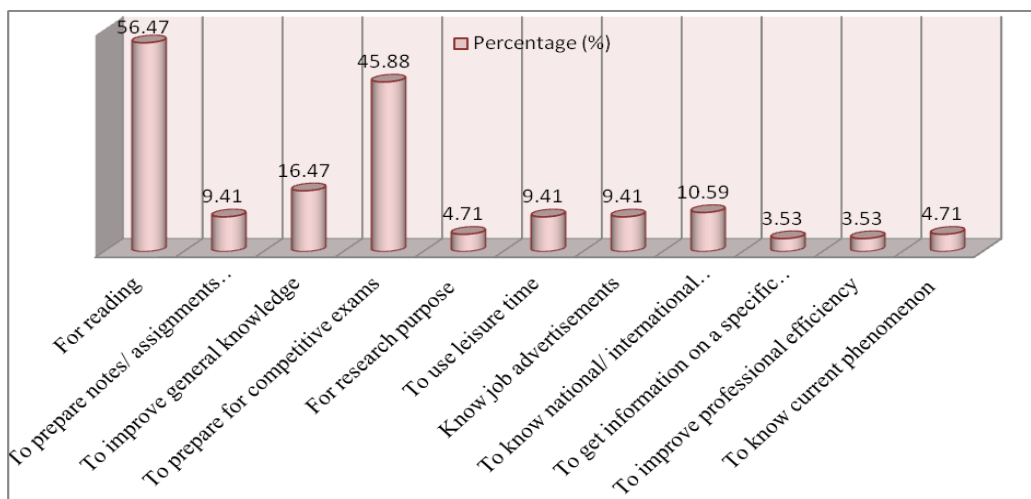
Table - 5 indicates the time spent in public libraries among respondents. Out of 85 respondents, 10 (11.76 %) users were time spent one hour, 13 (15.29 %) users were time spent two hours, 5 (5.88 %) users were time spent three hours and 57 (67.06 %) respondents were time spent in the library more than three hours. It is concluded that the maximum number of 57 users was time spent more than three hours in public libraries for various purposes.

Table - 6 Purpose of Library Use by the Respondents

Purpose	No. of Respondents (N=85)	Percentage (%)
For reading	48	56.47 %
To prepare notes/ assignments for examination	8	9.41 %
To improve general knowledge	14	16.47 %
To prepare competitive exams	39	45.88 %
For research purpose	4	4.71 %
To use leisure time	8	9.41 %
To know job advertisements	8	9.41 %
To know national/ international information	9	10.59 %
To get information on a specific issue	3	3.53 %
To improve professional efficiency	3	3.53 %
To know current phenomenon	4	4.71 %

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Chart - 1 Purpose of Library Use by the Respondents

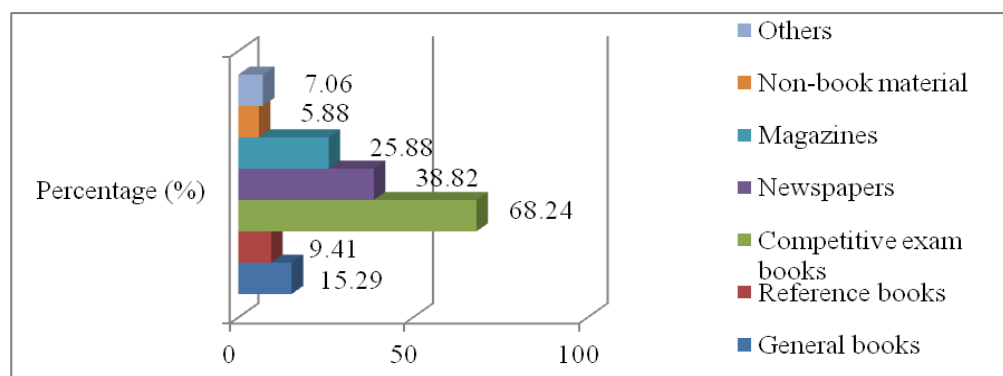


From table - 6 and chart - 1 revealed that the users were visiting the public library for different purposes. The majority respondents 48 (56.47 %) indicate they were used the public library for reading purpose. Followed by 39 (45.88 %) respondents to prepare competitive exams, 14 (16.47 %) to improve general knowledge, 9 (10.59 %) to know national/ international information, 8 (9.41 %) to prepare notes/ assignments for examination, use of leisure time and know job advertisements, 4 (4.71 %) for research purpose and know current phenomenon, 3 (3.53 %) to get information on a specific issue and improve professional efficiency purpose were using the public library by the respondents.

Table - 7 Types of Reading Material Used by the Respondents

Reading material	No. of Respondents (N=85)	Percentage (%)
General books	13	15.29
Reference books	8	9.41
Competitive exam books	58	68.24
Newspapers	33	38.82
Magazines	22	25.88
Non-book material	5	5.88
Others	6	7.06

Chart - 2 Types of Reading Material Used by the Respondents



Above table -7 and chart -2 indicates that out of 85 respondents majority 58 (68.24 %) of the users was going to the public library and use of competitive exam books. Followed by 33 (38.82%) newspaper, 22 (25.88 %) magazines, 13 (15.29%) general books, 8 (9.41%) reference books, 6 (7.06%) other material, 5 (5.88%) non-book material used in the public library by respondents.

Table - 8 User’s Opinion about the Usefulness of Public Library in Informal Education

Opinion	No. of Respondents (N=85)	Percentage (%)
Excellent	45	52.94 %
Good	32	37.65 %
Average	8	9.41 %
Not satisfactory	0	0.00
Total	85	100 %

Chart - 3 User’s Opinion about the Usefulness of Public Library in Informal Education

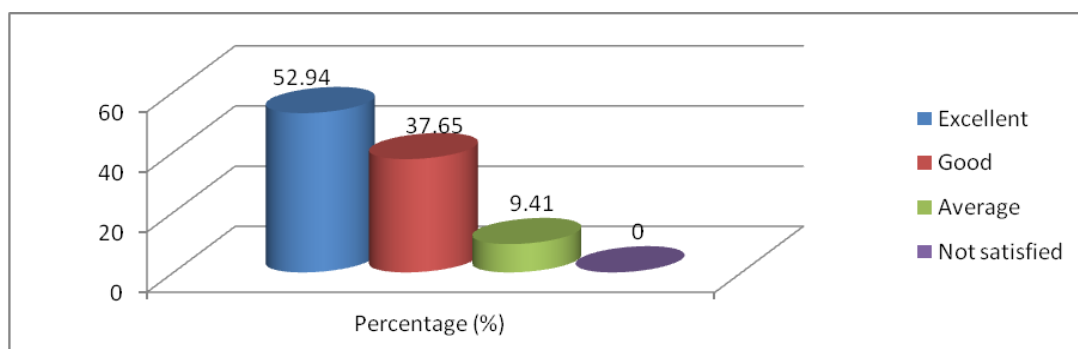


Table - 8 and chart - 3 shows the user’s opinion about the usefulness of public libraries in informal education. It is clear that out of 85 respondents, the majority of the users 45 (52.94 %) opinion is excellent, 32 (37.65 %) respondents are good, only 8 (9.41 %) of respondent are average regarding the usefulness of public libraries in informal education.

Table - 9 User’s Opinion on the Information Resources and Services Available in the Library

Opinion	No. of Respondents (N=85)	Percentage (%)
Excellent	55	64.71 %
Good	23	27.06 %
Average	7	8.24 %
Not satisfactory	0	0.00 %
Total	85	100 %

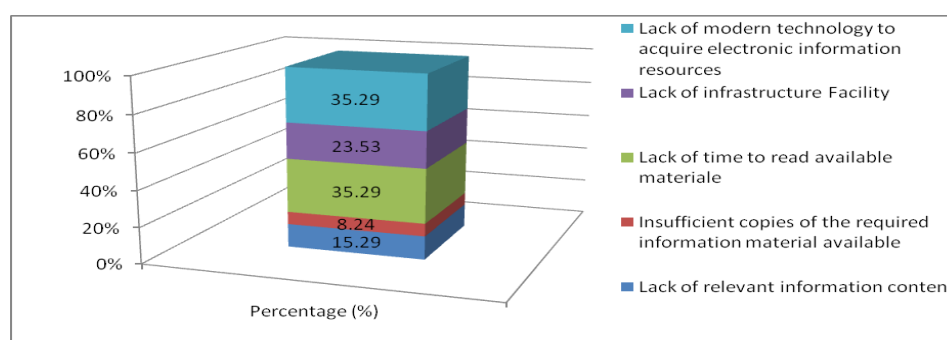
Table - 9 shows the user’s opinion on the information resources and services available in the public library. It is clear that out of 85 respondents, the majority of the users 55 (64.71%) opinion is excellent, followed by 23 (27.06 %) good and only 7 (8.24 %) users opinion are average.

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Table - 10 Problems Faced in Getting Informal Education by Respondents

Problems	No. of Respondents (N=85)	Percentage (%)
Lack of relevant information content	13	15.29 %
Insufficient copies of the required information material available	7	8.24 %
Lack of time to read available material	30	35.29 %
Lack of infrastructure Facility	20	23.53 %
Lack of modern technology to acquire electronic information resources	30	35.29 %

Chart - 4 Problems Faced in Getting Informal Education by Respondents



Above table – 10 and chart - 4 indicates the problems faced in getting an informal education by respondents in the public library. A majority of the respondents 30 (35.29%) were faced problems as lack of time to read available material and lack of modern technology to acquire electronic information resources. Followed by 20 (23.53 %) lack of infrastructure facility, 13 (15.29) lack of relevant information content and 7 (8.24 %) insufficient copies of the required information material available in the public library.

FINDINGS

- This study shows that the public library in Valsad district, male users were more than female users. As well as, Shri Vidyamrut Varshini Pathshala Public Library, Valsad had a more users. In all public libraries, male users visited the library more than females.
- The majority of the 44.71 % respondents were under the 26-35 age group and very few 5.88 % respondents were under the age group of 36-45 years.
- The different types of users were visiting the public library. In which including students, housewives, unemployed, professionals, private employees, researchers, senior citizens and government employees. Most of the library users were students and unemployed. While housewives, government employees, researchers, professionals and private employees very few visited to the public library.
- The frequency of library visits by the respondents, most of the users 66 (77.65 %) visited the public library in daily basis and the maximum number of 57 (67.06 %) users was time spent more than three hours in public libraries for various purposes.
- The majority of respondents were used the public libraries for reading purposes and to prepare for competitive exams. Other respondents used public libraries to improving general knowledge, know national/ international information, prepare notes and assignments for examination, use of leisure time, know job advertisements, for research purposes, know current phenomenon, get information on a specific issue and improve professional efficiency.

- The majority of users 58 (68.24 %) in public libraries were used competitive exam books. While 33 (38.82%) newspaper, 22 (25.88 %) magazines, 13 (15.29%) general books, 8 (9.41%) reference books, 6 (7.06%) other material, 5 (5.88%) non-book material were used.
- In the opinion about the usefulness of public libraries in informal education, most of the users 45 (52.94 %) were given excellent, 32 (37.65 %) good and only 8 (9.41 %) average opinion.
- The user's opinion on the information resources and services available in the public library, the majority of the users 55 (64.71) % gave excellent, 23 (27.06 %) good and only 7 (8.24 %) average opinion.
- The majority of the respondents 30 (35.29%) who had problems in getting informal education in public libraries lack of time to read available material and lack of modern technology to acquire electronic information resources, 20 (23.53 %) lack of infrastructure facility, 13 (15.29 %) lack of relevant information content and 7 (8.24 %) insufficient copies of the required information material in the public library.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- On the basis of finding, the following suggestions are made from the study:
- Shri Vidyamrut Varshini Pathshala Public Library, Valsad had more users. But the other four public libraries did not have more users. So librarian should conduct user awareness program and promote reading habit through various activities like book fairs, book exhibition, library week, book talk, quiz competitions, book day etc., at least once a year for 2-3 days.
- Most of the users were students and unemployed who came to the library for the purpose of preparing for competitive exams and reading. So multiple copies of competitive books, reference books, textbooks and heavily demanded books should be acquired for their use. As well as new editions of books should be added.
- The majority of the users visited to the public libraries on a daily basis and the maximum number of users spent more than three hours in public libraries for various purposes. Therefore, the time of libraries should be increased for the facilitating for users and provide a proper reading atmosphere at the library.
- Public library users face many problems in getting non-formal education. Such as, there is a lack of time to read the available material so the librarian should be guided to properly plan the time to use the library. Due to lack of modern technology to acquire electronic information resources, efforts should be made to get this facility from an authorized person and government authority. The library should have internet facility along with computer and digital content for its users.
- Government must raise the amount of funds for the public library in the interest of rendering better services to the readers and promoting informal education.

CONCLUSION

Library and society are depends on to each other in terms of mutual relations. They are key actors for establishment of educated and the knowledgeable societies. Public libraries make an important role to establishment a learning society. Public library is a local gateway to knowledge that provides lifelong learning of the individual and social group. We have concluded the based on finding the public library in Valsad district, male users were more than female users. The majority of the respondents were under the 26-35 age group and different types of users like this student, housewives, unemployed, professionals, private employees, researchers, senior citizens and government employees were visiting the public library for various purposes. The majority of respondents was using the public

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libraries for reading purposes and prepare for competitive exams. They mostly used of competitive exam books. Most of the users gave an excellent opinion about the usefulness and availability of information resources and services of public libraries in informal education.

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