

A Study on Information Seeking Behaviour of Public Library Users in Belagavi District

Tayappa B. Adin¹; Dr. V.M. Bankapur²; Mallikarju Kumbar³

Research Scholar and Librarian, Bharatesh College of computer Application, Belagavi¹;
Research Guide, Professor, Department of Library Information Science, Rani Channamma University, Belagavi²; Research Scholar and Librarian (SG), Government First Grade College, Nesargi, Karnataka, India³

tayappaadin123@gmail.com, bankapur@rcub.ac.in, mckumbar19781@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The present study assesses the Information Seeking Behavior among the Public Library Users in Belagavi District. Users received 150 surveys that were dispersed at random. There were 126 completed surveys among them. The chi-square test was used to analyze the questionnaire's responses statistically. The majority of library patrons read every day, according to the research. According to the survey, 41.27% of respondents have a bachelor's degree, and 73.80% of users are men. Reading in the library is done to keep one's knowledge current. The main conclusion is that most respondents are satisfied that magazines and newspapers are available and are kept separate in the library. The study's findings also show that the majority of users are college students. The public library is the finest place for users to learn new things and spend worthwhile time, according to their positive opinions of the reference materials.

KEYWORDS: Information, Information Seeking Behavior, Public library, Users. User Satisfaction, User Behavior, Library Resources, Library Use, City Central Public Library Belagavi.

1. INTRODUCTION

The most crucial area of study in information management and library science is information-seeking behavior. Without first comprehending and appreciating the library users' information-seeking practices, no one could provide better service to the library's patrons. This information is crucial for creating and delivering software and information systems with the user in mind. The fact that it examines information needs, information search, and the use of information resources makes a significant contribution to the field of library and information science studies. Information is vital for life in today's linked society. (ATHUKORALA, 2021)

Public libraries are organizations that provide services to the general population as a whole, regardless of their age, gender, occupation, or socioeconomic background. Public libraries in Punjab include those operated by the Department of Higher Education, Punjab at various district headquarters known as District Libraries, as well as

those run by municipal committees, municipal corporations, village panchayats, rural youth clubs, and other social organizations. Public libraries are described by UNESCO as "the local gateway to knowledge, provides a fundamental opportunity for lifelong learning, independent judgment, and the cultural growth of the individual and social groups." (Kaur & Lal, 2016)

There are various terms, which are employed to refer to those who use a library. These include terms like client, patron, Reader, user, customer, inquirer, member, etc. Throughout the term user has been most preferred because it indicates the use of the library and its resources. Those who do not use a library would be considered non-users. (Prabha, 2013)

The neighborhood information hub, the public library offers its patrons easy access to all forms of knowledge and information. Regardless of age, color, sex, religion, nationality, language, or social class, everyone has equal access to the public library's services. For those users who cannot, for any reason, utilize the standard services and materials, such as linguistic minorities, individuals with impairments, or those in hospitals or prisons, specific services and materials must be made available. (IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994)

S.R. Ranganathan, with his five renowned laws of library science, the father of library science, established the public library. Every reader has a book, every book has a reader, saving the reader's time is important, and books are for use. A library is a living, evolving thing. (BHARTI, 2023)

According to Harrod's Librarians Glossary "A public library is a library provided wholly or partly from public funds, and the use of which is not restricted to any class of persons in the community but is freely available to all. The public library 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 city public library of Belagavi district, located in the heart of the city was established in the year 1989 under the jurisdiction of Belagavi city corporation. This library has 92,000 books, more than 120 magazines and journals, children's section, internet browsing centre, reprography and printout facility. This library has 25,600 members. The public library due to its nature is charged with the responsibility of catering to the diverse and ever-changing information needs of the entire members of its community in which it is situated. However, it is generally believed that public libraries suffer the most negligence in terms of funding. Meanwhile, the provision of needed information at the right time and format to its users is central to its existence. This study, however, intends to find out the study on the information-seeking behaviour of public library users in the Belagavi district.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are:

- ✓ To determine the information needs of users at all levels
- ✓ To look into how users use formal and informal sources of information;
- ✓ To look into user awareness of library services.

A Study on Information Seeking Behaviour of Public Library Users in Belagavi District

- ✓ To determine users' opinions regarding the suitability and usefulness of the available resources and services, as well as their attitudes and behaviors toward the library's services and collection.
- ✓ Investigate how information technology affects information access and information-seeking behavior.
- ✓ To determine how often people utilize the Internet and digital documents Knowing the difficulties customers have utilizing the library and understanding their opinions

3. METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design:

This study will employ a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. This will allow for a comprehensive understanding of the information-seeking behavior of public library users.

2. Data Collection:

Quantitative Data: Survey Questionnaire: A structured survey will be administered to library users. The questionnaire will include closed-ended questions to collect data on demographics, information-seeking behavior, and user satisfaction.

Qualitative Data: In-depth Interviews Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a sample of library users to gain deeper insights into their information-seeking behavior, needs, and challenges.

3. Sampling:

Quantitative Sample: A systematic random sampling technique will be used to select a representative sample of library users. A minimum of 150 respondents will be targeted.

Qualitative Sample: Purposive sampling will be employed to select a diverse group of participants for in-depth interviews. This may include library users from various age groups, educational backgrounds, and information needs.

4. Data Analysis:

Quantitative Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze demographic data. Statistical software (e.g., SPSS) will be employed to analyze survey responses to extract patterns and correlations. Cross-tabulations and regression analysis may be used to identify relationships between variables.

Qualitative Data Analysis: Interviews will be transcribed and coded. Thematic analysis will be employed to identify common themes and patterns related to information-seeking behavior.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Raja, Selvam, and Poondi (2019) have researched the perception of information needs and information-seeking behavior of public library users. This research aimed to understand the knowledge of information needs and information-seeking behavior of users of public libraries in the district of Thanjavur.

Researchers have used 43 A. W. V. Athukorala, /Information-seeking behavior among questionnaires for data collection and 120 properly completed questionnaires were obtained and analyzed. The study found that the majority of respondents were male. The workers followed by the students are the majority of users in the public libraries in

Thanjavur district. It is concluded that most users depend on the public library for their needs in terms of local knowledge. It regarded libraries as centers of their formal and non-formal education and information repository (Raja et al., 2019). Audunson et al. (2019) conjectured that users extensively use public libraries to access citizenship information and highlight their role as democratic institutions for public discourse and in building communities.

Nengomasha & Shuumbili (2020) posits the role of public libraries in national development and harbinger in delivering e-government services to the citizens of Namibia. The study conceives that public libraries help in accessing e-government services for employment information and tax filing. Raja, Selvam, and Poondi (2019) have researched the perception of information needs and information-seeking behavior of public library users. This research aimed to understand the knowledge of information needs and information-seeking behavior of users of public libraries in the district of Thanjavur.

Researchers have used questionnaires for data collection and 120 properly completed questionnaires were obtained and analyzed. The study found that the majority of respondents were male. The workers followed by the students are the majority of users in the public libraries in Thanjavur district. It is concluded that most users depend on the public library for their needs in terms of local knowledge. It regarded libraries as centers of their formal and non-formal education and information repositories (Raja et al., 2019). Pandeewaran and Chellappandi (2018) the purpose of the present study deals with the information use pattern regarding the users of the district central library Madurai. It indicates the purpose of regarding, preference of language, form of library collection, assistance from the library staff in the use of resources and services necessary to help users meet their information requirements.

The findings are that people are unable to visit the library regularly due to lack or shortage of time, and literature is mostly read by serious users and magazines and newspapers are the most common forms preferred by the readers. The study found that the majority (61.8%) of users are male category using the central library, 33 (30%) of the respondents frequency of using visits twice a week, 24.5% of the respondents are in of their undergraduate students, 24.5 percent belong to the occupation and majority of users' purpose of visiting the library is to read newspapers. Mahesh (2018) investigates the distance students' use of public libraries for their academic purposes and converse the public library as an alternate for instructive or University libraries.

The data collection was carried out by personally distributing the questionnaire to the randomly selected students and the sample consists of students from both undergraduate and postgraduate. It is found from the study that 1309 (90.60 %) distance learners who used public libraries during contact classes. The study by Raghavaiah (2017) focuses on the library services, resources, and problems existing in the District Central Libraries of the Rayalseema region of Andhra Pradesh.

The study reveals that lack of staff, ICT facilities, and lack of sufficient budget are the main problems faced by these libraries. Sasikumar & Levinya (2022) this study was undertaken using a survey method through well-structured questionnaires distributed to 51 users of District Central Library, Tirunelveli. The responses were collected from the

A Study on Information Seeking Behaviour of Public Library Users in Belagavi District

51 filled-in questionnaires and analyzed in this study. About 90.2% user population claim to visit the library every day. The resources acquired should be in resonance with the needs and requirements of the library users.

A.W.V, (2021) in this study behavior of information seeking is the product of the need perceived by the information user, who makes demands for either formal or non-formal information sources or services, leading to attainment or failure. In this study, the survey method was used to select the participants, and the non-probability sampling method of the convenience sampling method was used. The response rate was 87 percent (n = 348). the current study found that the public library administrations would establish mechanisms for upgrading reading services, updating books, increasing existing capacity, attracting new service members, and offering e-learning resources to improve users' ability to access information more efficiently.

5. Analysis of Data

The study adopted a survey method of research the data collection tool is a questionnaire. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed to users randomly, among them 126 filled questionnaires were received.

5.1. Demographic Features of Respondents

Data summarized in Table 1 indicates the number of characteristics of respondents. It shows that 73.80% of respondents are male and only 26.20% respondents are female. The marital status of the respondents. It is clear from the table that the majority of the users are unmarried 87.30%. and remaining 12.70% users are married. Table I also shows that 95.83% of respondents are from rural areas and 4.16% of them are from urban. Out of 126 samples, 34.92% of respondents are members of the respective library, whereas the remaining 65.08% are not members of the respective library. Surprisingly 89.67% of respondents fall under the age group of 22 to 23 years and 6.34% of respondents come under the age group of below 19 years. Table 1 reveals that 89(70.63%) of the respondents were students, distantly followed this was Unemployed, (18.25%) Farmers (3.18%) and Teachers, Govt. employed, and Private Employed users (2.39%). and other category users 1(0.77%) This indicates that the student category of users formed the Majority of the library users. The educational qualification of respondents. Out of 126 respondents majority (41.27%) users are UG Students about (28.58%) of users mention PUC Students.

Table 1: Demographic Feature of Respondents

Gender	Number of respondents	Percentage
Male	93	73.80
Female	33	26.20
Marital status	Number of respondents	Percentage
Married	16	12.70
Unmarried	110	87.30
Residing	Number of respondents	Percentage
Rural	81	64.28
Urban	45	35.72
Library Member	Number of respondents	Percentage

Status		
Yes	44	34.92
No	82	65.08
Age	Number of respondents	Percentage
Below 19 years	8	6.34
20 – 30 years	113	89.67
31 - 40 years	3	2.38
41 – 50 years	2	1.61
Occupation	Number of respondents	Percentage
Teacher	3	2.39
Govt. employed	3	2.39
Private Employed	3	2.38
Farmer	4	3.18
Unemployed	23	18.25
Student	89	70.63
Others	1	0.77
Qualification	Number of respondents	Percentage
SSLC	8	6.35
PUC	36	28.58
UG	52	41.27
PG	14	11.12
PhD	1	0.77
Diploma	10	7.94
Others	5	3.97

5.2 Frequency of Visit of Library

Table 5 shows the frequency of library visits. The data shows that more respondents 105 (83.34%) visit the library every day, whereas only 13 (10.32%) respondents do so on a weekly basis. 4 (3.18%) users visit the library monthly, while 2 (1.58%) respondents attend once a week.

Table 2: Frequency of Visit of Library

Frequency of Visit Library	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	105	83.34
Weekly	13	10.32
Twice a week	2	1.58
Monthly	4	3.18

A Study on Information Seeking Behaviour of Public Library Users in Belagavi District

Rarely	2	1.58
Total	126	100

5.3 Average Time Spent in Library

Below table reveals the average time spent in the Library in every visit. It is inferred that most of the respondents spend maximum 3 hours which contributes 96(76.19%) and up to 2 hours were spent by 12(9.53%) followed by below 1-2 hour spent by 10(7.93%). At least 8(6.35%) respondents spent more than 3 hours in the library.

Table 3: Average Time Spent in Library

Time Duration	Number of respondents	Percentage
Below 1 hour	8	6.35
1-2 hour	10	7.93
2-3 hour	12	9.53
Above 3 hour	96	76.19
Total	126	100

5.4 Readers Preferences or Reasons for Visiting Library

From the above analysis is evident that reader's preferences or reasons for visiting the library are significant as chi-square and p-value are significant at 5% level. Prepare for competitive examination as a reason for visiting library has got the highest satisfaction level with chi-square value of 75.587 and a p-value is less than 5% level [0.001<0.

Table 4: Readers Preferences or Reasons for Visiting Library (to read and refer the following) information category

Reasons for visiting library	HS	S	Neutral	DS	HDS	Chi Square	p-value
	N%	N%	N%	N%	N%		
Reading newspaper	70 (55.56)	35 (27.78)	10 (7.94)	6 (4.76)	5 (3.96)	123.44	0.001
General knowledge	59 (46.83)	39 (30.96)	17 (13.49)	5 (3.96)	6 (4.76)	86.381	0.001
Borrow / return books	51 (40.49)	40 (31.74)	21 (16.66)	7 (5.55)	7 (5.55)	27.587	0.001
Research purpose	46 (36.50)	41 (32.56)	25 (19.84)	9 (7.14)	5 (3.96)	53.683	0.001
Academic Improvement	47 (37.31)	34 (26.98)	32 (25.39)	8 (6.34)	5 (3.96)	51.698	0.001
Entertainment	41 (32.56)	35 (27.77)	31 (24.60)	10 (7.93)	9 (7.14)	34.653	0.001
Prepare competitive examination	72 (57.16)	29 (23.02)	15 (11.90)	5 (3.96)	5 (3.96)	75.587	0.001

E-resources	48 (38.11)	43 (34.12)	20 (15.87)	9 (7.14)	6 (4.76)	59.317	0.001
Periodicals	46 (36.50)	37 (29.39)	32 (25.39)	6 (4.76)	5 (3.96)	55.394	0.001
Other purposes	42 (33.36)	34 (26.98)	32 (25.39)	10 (7.93)	8 (6.34)	37.016	0.001

P-value(probability value) is less than 5% level [0.001<0.05].

5.5 Please State the need for a Public Library.

Table 7 revealed that the information needs relating to respondents to gain more general and subject knowledge 93(73.80%) to get an easy access to any news or information 85(25.8%) to acquire knowledge or education 82(65.07%) to spend leisure time usefully and to ensure more civilized society 69 (54.76%) to utilize the internet or computer facilities 66(52.38%)to preserve cultural heritage of the country 62(49.20).

Table 5: Please State the need for a Public Library. (Answer as many as you like)

Need for a public library	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To spend my leisure time usefully	69	54.76
To read comics or literature	56	44.45
To utilize the internet or computer facilities	66	52.38
To acquire knowledge or education	82	65.07
To know about my kingdom and the world	55	43.65
To get an easy access to any news or information	85	67.46
To gain more general and subject knowledge	93	73.80
To preserve cultural heritage of the country	62	49.20
To ensure more civilized society	69	54.76
Many other reasons as I know (please mention)	52	41.26

5.6 Opinion about the Satisfaction of Public Library Resources

Above table results shows that more number 58(46.05%) of respondents says highly satisfied it is followed by satisfied 52(41.27%), Neutral 28(15.21%) Dissatisfied 1(0.77%), Highly Dissatisfied 2(1.58%).

Table 6: Opinion about the Satisfaction of Public Library Resources

Opinion of Public Library	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	58	46.05
Satisfied	52	41.27
Neutral	13	10.32
Dissatisfied	1	0.77
Highly Dissatisfied	2	1.58
Total	126	100

5.7 Satisfaction of Users with the Available Information Resources

From this table analysis is it evident that satisfaction of users with the available information resources are significant as chi-square and p-value are significant at 5% level. Textbooks as a reason for Information resources have got highest satisfaction level with chi-square value of 60.741 and the p-value is less than 5% level [0.001<0.05].

Table 7: Satisfaction of Users with the Available Information Resources

Satisfaction of users	HS	S	Neutral	DS	HDS	Chi Square	p-value
	N%	N%	N%	N%	N%		
Fiction books	42 (33.36)	48 (38.09)	23 (18.25)	7 (5.55)	6 (2.38)	59.749	0.001
Non-fiction books	42 (33.36)	47 (37.29)	22 (17.46)	9 (7.14)	6 (4.76)	59.649	0.001
Text books	44 (34.93)	48 (38.09)	20 (15.87)	8 (6.34)	7 (5.55)	60.741	0.001
Journals	39 (30.95)	43 (34.85)	31 (24.30)	8 (6.34)	5 (3.96)	57.149	0.001
Magazines and newspapers	66 (52.39)	38 (30.17)	12 (9.52)	5 (3.96)	5 (3.96)	39.174	0.001
Reference books	50 (39.68)	51 (40.49)	15 (11.90)	5 (3.96)	5 (3.96)	49.043	0.001
Pictures and reference materials	48 (38.11)	42 (33.35)	21 (16.65)	9 (7.14)	6 (4.76)	45.179	0.001
Records and tapes materials	43 (34.75)	38 (30.05)	31 (24.40)	6 (4.76)	8 (6.34)	44.047	0.001
Audio Visual material	46 (36.50)	35 (27.07)	23 (18.15)	13 (10.31)	9 (7.34)	45.009	0.001
CD-ROMs	39 (30.95)	36 (28.57)	28 (22.22)	13 (10.31)	10 (7.93)	43.149	0.001

P-value (probability value) is less than 5% level [0.001<0.05].

5.8 Perception on Infrastructure Available in the Library.

From this above analysis makes it evident that perceptions of infrastructure available in the library are significant as chi-square and p-value are significant at 5% level. Lighting Facilities as a reason for infrastructure available in the library has got highest satisfaction level with chi-square value of 51.239 and p-value is less than 5% level [0.001<0.05].

Table 8: Perception on Infrastructure Available in the Library.

Infrastructure	HS	S	Neutral	DS	HDS	Chi Square	P-value
	N%	N%	N%	N%	N%		

Spacious Rooms	46 (36.50)	42 (33.35)	24 (19.05)	5 (3.96)	9 (7.14)	45.209	0.001
Lighting Facilities	55 (43.65)	41 (32.55)	19 (15.09)	5 (3.96)	6 (4.76)	51.239	0.001
Drinking Water	60 (47.64)	38 (30.15)	18 (14.28)	5 (3.96)	5 (3.96)	41.003	0.001
Reprography (Copying)	43 (34.12)	37 (29.36)	32 (25.39)	9 (7.14)	5 (3.96)	47.231	0.001
Reading Tables	54 (42.85)	34 (26.28)	26 (20.63)	7 (5.55)	5 (3.96)	45.100	0.001
Ventilation	45 (35.73)	43 (34.12)	22 (17.46)	10 (7.93)	6 (4.76)	43.071	0.001
Book stocking Facilities	48 (38.09)	45 (35.73)	20 (15.87)	8 (6.34)	5 (3.96)	46.911	0.001

P-value (probability value) is less than 5% level [0.001<0.05].

FINDING OF THE STUDY

1. Majority of the respondents belong to males than female.
2. The educational qualification of respondents. Out of 126 respondents majority (41.27%) users are UG Students. Majority of users are reading competitive exams preparation.
3. Mostly 20-30 age group response the Public Library in (89.67%).
4. Most of the users Occupation respondents (70.63%) are students in the Public Library.
5. Prepare competitive examination as a reason for visiting library has got highest satisfaction level with chi-square value of 75.587
6. The satisfaction of public library resources of respondents says highly (46.05%) satisfied.
7. Lighting Facilities as a reason for infrastructure available in the library have got highest satisfaction level with chi-square value of 51.239
8. Magazines and newspapers as a reason for Information resources have got highest satisfaction level with chi-square value of 60.741

CONCLUSION

Several research works have been conducted in the field of public libraries. The present study focused on the information-seeking behaviour of public library users in Belagavi district. The study brought out that the majority of public library users depend upon public libraries for their competitive exams and newspaper information. In this regard, public libraries play a vital role. It is also important to know whether the resources and services that are being provided in the libraries are meeting the needs of users. Public libraries require much more textbooks and journal facilities as well as good infrastructure facilities to attract users. It would be better to get more number of copies of competitive books and magazines to attract user community for better utilization of resources and services of public libraries.

REFERENCES

- [1] Amaravathi, V. (2022). Information seeking behavior and reading interest of education college library: A study. *International Journal of Physical and Social Science*, 12, 5, 1-12.
- [2] Winberry J and Potnis D (2021) Social Innovations in public libraries: Types and challenges. *The Library Quarterly* 91, 3, 337–365.
- [3] Public Library Association (2020).How public libraries are responding to pandemic: Results of broad PLA survey show libraries continue to launch services, expand access. *American Libraries*, 9th April. www.americanlibrariesmagazine.org.
- [4] Winata, Arda Putri et al. (2020). New normal and library services in Indonesia. *Digital Library Perspective*, October, Ahead of print.
- [5] Pandeewaran, C., &Chellappandi, P. (2018). A Case Study on Information Use Pattern by the Users of District Central Library, Madurai, Tamilnadu. Paper presented at the National Conference Innovative Librarianship: Challenges and Opportunities, Thiruvavur, India.
- [6] Jegan, P., & Jayaprakash, M. (2018). Online information seeking behaviour of faculty members working in arts and science colleges in Madurai District: A Study. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 5, 7, 1-20.
- [7] Kosciejew M (2019) Information's importance for Refugees:Information Technologies, public libraries, and the currentrefugee crisis. *The Library Quarterly* 89, 2, 79–98.
- [8] Mahesh, G. T. & Kumari, H. Adithya. (2018). Use of public library services by the distance learners of Bangalore University. *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology*, 38, 2, 117-124.
- [9] Sorakananda Rao, P., & Chandraiah, I. (2017). Information Use Pattern and Resources of District Central Public Library, Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh: A study. *International Journal of Library and Information Studies*, 7, 2, 32-42.
- [10] Raghavaiah, Parvathaneni & Babu, K. Surendra.(2017 Jul). Access and use of public library services in Nigeria. *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology*, 37, 4, 270-273.
- [11] Abumandour, E.-S. T. (2020, April 3). Public libraries' role in supporting e-learning and spreading lifelong education: a case study. *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning*.
- [12] Athukorala, A. W. (2021, June 15). Information seeking behavior among public library users: Understandingnature of information searching. *Journal of Advanced Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*.
- [13] Bharti, M. K. (2023, September 14). [thesouthfirst.com](https://thesouthfirst.com/tamilnadu/sr-ranganathan-father-of-library-science-and-a-workaholic/#:~:text=Shiyali%20Ramamrita%20Ranganathan%20or%20SR%20Ranganathan%20was%20a,as%20the%20E2%80%9CFather%20of%20Library%20Science%20E2%80%9D%20in%20India). Retrieved from SOUTH FIRST:
- <https://thesouthfirst.com/tamilnadu/sr-ranganathan-father-of-library-science-and-a-workaholic/#:~:text=Shiyali%20Ramamrita%20Ranganathan%20or%20SR%20Ranganathan%20was%20a,as%20the%20E2%80%9CFather%20of%20Library%20Science%20E2%80%9D%20in%20India>.
- [14] IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994. (n.d.).
- [15] Kaur, A., & Lal, D. P. (2016, December). Information Seeking Behaviour of Different Types of Users of Public Libraries of Southern Punjab. *International Journal of Digital Library Services*.
- [16] Prabha, K. (2013, June). Information seeking behaviour of different types of users in selected libraries of Delhi. *Journal of Library & Information Science*.