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User Satisfaction towards Public Libraries: A Study with Special Reference to National Library of India

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to understand and study about the purpose of visiting, perception level, user satisfaction level, use of resources etc. of the users in the Main Reading Room of the National Library, Kolkata, from August 2023 to March 2024 (i.e. a span of 8 months). A total of 320 (three hundred and twenty) duly filled questionnaires were received back making 80% response rate. According to the study, some users were satisfied with the collection of newspapers/magazines (36.7%), the ease of access to libraries (31.2%), and the stock of resources on local history (22.5%). Maximum users are fully satisfied with Circulation Services, Reference Service, Membership Service, Reading Room Service, while there is partial satisfaction among the users towards the services for OPAC and Reprography. Overall 66.3% users are satisfied by all the features of National Library including services, resources, staff, building, physical and social environment. Almost all the users (93.3%) responded positively that they will encourage the people to visit and use the services of the Library.

Keywords: Library Services, National Library, Public Library, User Satisfaction

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1. Introduction

National Library may be called the edifice of national knowledge. National Library collects, preserves

and makes accessible the information published in a particular nation as its first and foremost task before the people of its country. National Library is a living depository of past culture and sustainer of the intellectual activities that anticipate future developments. It is one kind of public library and therefore it is free and open to all of the country. Information need is essentially a secondary need to be met by the library and information centre. Beside this National Library as the national node of information processing and dissemination it is of primary importance to fulfill the information requirements of each and every citizen of the country.

The success of any library is based on the satisfaction of the information demands of its users. Satisfying users' information requirements has been the main aim of all types of libraries and librarians and it is a basic approach towards the users (**Adeniran, 2011**). Not only libraries but any other institution is not out of this purview. And if the issue of users' satisfaction relates to the National Library, naturally a diverse and varied type of services and information users come to our mind. Being a public library it is open to all irrespective of any differences – socio-cultural, linguistic, nationality, religion, sex, age etc. The public libraries serve different categories of users such as children, students, neo-literates, domestic workers, laymen, farmer, laborer, research scholars, teaching/non-teaching staff, administrators etc. and they are with varied information demands(**Gilbert, 2015**). Therefore, the purpose of these libraries is to acquire a variety of information sources and provide a multiplicity of services to accomplish the user's information needs. The National Library has to cover the whole nation as its potential users and naturally the decision makers are to be more practical and dynamic in designing library and information services to the nation. The **motivation of this study** lies in understanding and analyzing the **user satisfaction and utilization patterns** of the resources and services offered by the Main Reading Room (Bhasha Bhawan) of the National Library of India.

2. Statement of the problem

The study has been conducted on the basis of to understand and study about the purpose of visiting, perception level, user satisfaction level, use of resources etc. of the users in Main Reading Room of the National Library.

3. Objective of the study

This study will be based on the utilization and user satisfaction of the users in the Main Reading Room (Bhasha Bhawan) of the National Library from August 2023 to March 2024 (i.e. a span of 8 months).

The study consists of certain objectives:

- a) To find out the purpose of visiting National Library (Main Reading Room).
- b) To identify the major sources of information of National Library.
- c) To enquire into the utilization of National Library (Main Reading Room) services.
- d) To assess the user satisfaction on National Library (Main Reading Room) services.
- e) To find out the time preferred to visit the National Library.
- f) To know the attitude of users towards the National Library system.
- g) To know the satisfaction level of users regarding the resources and services provided by the National Library (Main reading Room).
- h) To find out the perception of users towards the National Library building and environment.

4. Scope and limitations

The present study includes in its scope the analysis of various aspects of user satisfaction on information services of National Library of India of this study. The scope of the research entitled **“User Satisfaction Towards Public Libraries: A Study with Special Reference to National Library of India”** is limited to only the main reading room of the National Library of India. It is well-established, well recognized and well reputed library in India as well as abroad.

It is impossible to cover all readers for the purpose of study in such a short time. Therefore, it requires opting for sampling method to know the characteristics of the readers. Further it is to be mentioned here that in the National Library there are several reading rooms. But the present study has been kept confined within the readers of the Main Reading Room (Bhasha Bhawan) only. It is certainly a limitation in this study.

5. Research methodology

The study is based on the utilization and user satisfaction of users in the Main Reading Room of the National library, where books, journals/magazines and e-resources are available. The present study was conducted using survey method. A total of 400 (four hundred) questionnaires were distributed to the users in National Library, Kolkata. 320 (three hundred and twenty) duly filled questionnaires were received back making 80% response rate. Calculating percentage values allowed for the tabulation and interpretation of the data. For analyzing the data Excel software package is used.

6. Review of related literature

The review of literature helps the researcher to know other research studies and projects on a similar

subject and to relate the present study in hand in the context of larger panorama. In order to understand and review the existing literature on the study in hand, the researcher consulted a number of sources of information such as articles, monographs, books, conference proceedings, and electronic sources from the Internet, etc. and had gone through the content to know the related studies.

Only the selected studies have been reviewed here on user satisfaction on information services of public libraries. These studies presented and reviewed in this Chapter cannot be comprehensive.

The study "User satisfaction towards public libraries: a study with special reference to Udumalpet" was conducted by Lakshmi and Kavitha (**Lakshmi et al., 2016**). The study reveals that 48% of the respondents obtained membership for light reading. 48% of the respondents they go to the library everyday. 64% of the respondents they go to the library to read newspapers. 90% of the respondents visit public libraries due to self-motivation. According to this survey 81% of the respondents they go to the library themselves. 38% of the respondents used the library one to two hours.

Nnadozie, Okeke and Onyekweodiriare conducted a study under the title 'user satisfaction in public libraries in South-East Zone of Nigeria' (**Nnadozie et al., 2015**). According to the study, some users were satisfied with the collection of newspapers/magazines (36.7%), the ease of access to libraries (31.2%), and the stock of resources on local history (i.e. Nigeriana (22.5%). On the other hand, many others were dissatisfied with the outdated (30%) and deteriorating (25%) nature of the available titles, as well as the unavailability of desired information sources, including ICTs (21.2%). In general, 74.1% of users expressed dissatisfaction with the resources, facilities, and services that were provided, while just 15.4% expressed satisfaction.

Narsh Kumar and Ashu Shokeon are identified that, 61% of the respondents were very much satisfied with the collection of newspapers and 37% were very much satisfied with the collection of current magazines.

Joy and Idowu are conducted a study under the title 'Utilization and User Satisfaction of Public Library Services in South-West, Nigeria in the 21st Century: A Survey'. The study showed that there is an improvement in the use of these libraries. Users of Nigerian public libraries have identified a number of issues that significantly impact their satisfaction with the services provided in this information and communication technology age of the 21st century, including inadequate facilities, insufficient information resources, and internet and ICT services (**Joy et al., 2014**).

Winneba and Owusu-Acheaw Mare study of 454 undergraduate students revealed satisfaction of overall services as the library was playing an important role to achieve University's objectives.

An analysis of 640 respondents by Sriram B. and Rajev M. K. G. (2014) results showed that 11% were employees. Of them, 58% were in the 30- to 40-year age range. 24 % came in several times in a day for different purposes.

Nirinimesh Pandiya and Mukut Sammahare study of 900 respondents adopting simple random sampling found that, user satisfaction was the most important factor and reason for quality improvements of a library(Nirinimesh et al., 2014).

Saini P K, Raj Kumar Bhakar and Bhoop Singhare identified that 100 respondents visited once in a week. 19% used Internet facilities. 29% spent one hour. The user's need for online resources, including textbooks, reference books, newspapers, printouts, photocopiers, and scanning facilities, all highly utilized in the library.

Isebella Mary A and Dhanavandan S are study in public libraries revealed that, 50% represented the age group of 20-30 years, 40% of women spent 30 minutes-one hour. 13 % visited library daily. 30% of the rural women came to read the newspapers. 21% respondents used it to find information about careers and jobs. The availability of library materials had an effect on the satisfaction of 220 users in a 2013 study by Sivathaasam N.

Onuoha and Omokoje are conducted a study under the title 'Assessing service effectiveness and satisfaction with library services at Babcock University, Nigeria'. According to the study we were conclusions that the most frequently used library services were photocopying and reference. Also considers as effective services were photocopying, reference, and circulation. The majority of user said they were satisfied with the services provided by the library(Onuoha et al., 2013).

7. Data analysis and interpretation

In users studies immediately after the data collection the next task is data analysis and interpretation of results. Analysing means to categorizing ordering, manipulation and summarizing of data to obtain answer to research problems. The purpose of analysis is to reduce data to intelligible and interpretable form so that the relations of research problems can be studies and tested.

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	188	58.75 %
Female	132	41.25 %
Total	320	100 %

Table 1: Gender wise distribution of Respondents

Out of 320 respondents, 188 (58.75 %) were male and 132 (41.25 %) were female. Thus it is observed that male users were more than female users.

Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Daily	174	54.37 %
Weekly	66	20.63 %
When Information Need	42	13.12 %
Monthly	10	3.13 %
During Holiday	28	8.75 %

Table 2: Frequency of visit in National Library

The frequency of user's visits to the library has been classified in to five times gaps as shown in Table 2. From above table we can interpret that maximum users 174 (54.37%) go to the library daily, around 66 (20.63%) users go to the library weekly, 42 (13.12%) users go to the library when information needed, 10 (3.13%) users go to the library monthly and followed by 28 (8.75%) users who go to the library during holiday.

Time Spend	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Less than 2 hours	--	--
2-4 hours	74	23.12 %
4-6 hours	134	41.88 %
6-8 hours	98	30.62 %
Above 8 hours	12	4.38 %

Table 3: Average Time spend in the library

The above table shows a positive sign that none of the readers spend less than 2 hours in the library. Among the Respondents 74 (23.12%) spend 2-4 hours, 134 (41.88%) spend 4-6 hours, 98

(30.62%) spend 6-8 hours and followed by 12 (4.38%) spend above 8 hours/day.

Assistance	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Always	108	33.75 %
Often	140	43.75 %
Sometimes	58	18.13 %
Rarely	14	4.37 %

Table 4: Assistance from library staff

The Table 4 reveals that 108 (33.75%) users always get assistance from library the staff, 140 (43.75%) often take help from library staff, 58 (18.13%) sometimes take their help and 14 (4.37%) rarely seek assistance from the library staff.

Purpose for visit to the Library	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Educational Purpose	166	51.88 %
Accessing Internet	12	3.75 %
Improving General knowledge	24	7.50 %
Preparing Competitive Exam	114	35.62 %
Spending or Passing time/Hobby	4	1.25 %
Entertainment Purpose	0	0 %

Table 5: Purpose for Visit to the Library

Out of the various purposes listed in the Table 5, maximum users numbering 166 (51.88%) visit library for educational purpose, 12 (3.75%) users go to the library for accessing internet, 24 (7.50%) users visit library for improving general knowledge, 114 (35.62%) users visit library to prepare for competitive exams. Least user visits this library as a time pass and no one visit for entertainment purpose.

Benefits	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Obtain all the Information required	216	67.50 %
Obtain Particular Information	98	30.63 %
Obtain no Information	06	1.87 %

Table 6: Benefits of visiting the library

Table 6 shows that 216 (67.50%) users obtain all the information needed by them on their visit to the library, 98 (30.63%) users obtain particular information by them on their visit to the library. While only 06 (1.87%) said that they were not able to get the required information.

Source of Information	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Newspaper/Magazine	28	8.75 %
Journals/Periodicals	38	11.88 %
Reference Sources	06	1.87 %
Textbook/General Books	122	38.12 %
Competitive exam books	114	35.63 %
Story books/Novels	12	3.75 %

Table 7:Source of Information to fulfill the Information Needs

The table 7 shows that 28 (8.75%) users use newspaper and magazine, 38 (11.88%) users use journals and periodicals, 06 (1.87%) users use reference sources. Maximum users 122 (38.12%) use textbook and general books,114 (35.63%) users use competitive exam books to fulfill their information needs on visiting the library while 12 (3.75%) use story books and novels available in the library.

Method for Searching	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Consult library catalogue	94	29.38 %
Consult library staff	172	53.75 %
Take the help of friends	42	13.12 %
Any other means	12	3.75 %

Table 8:Methods used for searching documents

Table 8 reveal that 94 (29.38%) users search documents with the help of library catalogue, 172

(53.75%) take help of library staff, 42 (13.12%) take help of their friends, while only 12 (3.75%) used any others means.

Opinion of Respondents	No of Respondents	Percentage(%)
Fully Satisfied	188	58.75%
Partially Satisfied	110	34.36%
Not Satisfied	22	6.87%

Table 9: A Gateway for Study, Learning and Research

The table 9 furnishes the opinion of the respondents about the gateway for study, learning and research of National Library. Out of 320 respondents 188 (58.75%) are fully satisfied about the National Library and 110 (34.36%) respondents are partly satisfied and the remaining 22 (6.87%) respondents are not satisfied with the National Library.

Opinion of Respondents	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Fully Satisfied	120	37.5%
Partially Satisfied	186	58.12%
Not Satisfied	14	4.37%

Table 10: Community Space for Group Learning & Group Study

The table 10 furnishes the opinion of the respondents about the community space of library. Out of 320 respondents 120 (37.5%) are fully satisfied about the National Library and 186 (58.12%) respondents are partly satisfied and the remaining 14 (4.37%) respondents are not satisfied with the National Library.

Services	Fully Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	No Response
Circulation Services	116 (36.25%)	158 (49.38%)	0	46 (14.37%)
Reference Service	140 (43.75%)	126 (39.38%)	10 (3.12%)	44 (13.75%)

Membership Service	170 (53.12%)	112 (35.00%)	4 (1.25%)	34 (10.63%)
Reading Room Service	110 (34.38%)	62 (19.37%)	40 (12.50%)	108 (33.75%)
OPAC	40 (12.50%)	50 (15.62%)	34 (10.63%)	196 (61.25%)
Reprography	46 (14.37%)	62 (19.38%)	56 (17.50%)	156 (48.75%)

Table 11: Satisfaction Level of Users in Services

Table 11 indicates the satisfaction levels of users towards different services offered by the library. Maximum users 158 (49.38%) are satisfied with circulation services while none is dissatisfied. Majority of users 140 (43.75%) are fully satisfied with the reference services provided by the library staff. Almost all users 170 (53.12%) are fully satisfied with the membership services; fee and renewal etc. less than half 112 (35.00%) users are fully satisfied while 40 (12.50%) are not fully satisfied with the reading room service provided to them. Also majority of users did not respond towards OPAC and reprography service. Maximum users 62 (19.38%) are satisfied with reprography services.

Facets	Fully Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	No Response
Services	62(19.38%)	196(61.25%)	56(17.50%)	06(1.87%)
Resources	54(16.87%)	214(66.88%)	42(13.12%)	10(3.13%)
Staff	60(18.75%)	206(64.38%)	46(14.37%)	08(2.50%)
Building	72(22.50%)	222(69.38%)	22(6.87%)	04(1.25%)
Physical Environment	42(13.12%)	216(67.50%)	48(15.00%)	14(4.37%)
Social Environment	54(16.88%)	216(67.50%)	42(13.12%)	08(2.50%)

Table 12: Overall Satisfaction towards National Library, Kolkata

Table 12 shows the levels of satisfaction towards various facets. Overall 66.3% users are

satisfied by all the features of National Library, Kolkata. 196(61.25%) are satisfied by the services provided by the library and 214(66.88%) by the resources. 216(67.50%) users consider physical and social environment to be satisfactory enough. Majority of the users 222(69.38%) users say that building of the library is satisfactory while 206(64.38%) are favorable towards the staff of the library.

8. Findings, suggestion and conclusion

On the basis of data analysis and interpretation, certain findings and conclusion are drawn and recommendations have been made for providing quality bases services in the libraries under study. The major findings/observations emerged during the study have been given as follows.

Findings

The following are major findings that are generated from this Study:

1. Most of the respondents were students and there were more males than females.
2. Maximum users 174 (54.37%) go to the library daily, around 66 (20.63%) users go to the library weekly and 42 (13.12%) users go to the library when information needed.
3. Maximum users 134 (41.88%) spend 4-6 hours and 98 (30.62%) users spend 6-8 hours.
4. Maximum users 140 (43.75%) often take their help from library staff and 108 (33.75%) users always get assistance from library staff to fulfill their information needs.
5. Maximum users (51.88%) visit library for educational purpose and 35.62% users go to the library to prepare for competitive exams.
6. 67.50% users obtain all the information needed by them on their visit to the library.
7. Maximum users are fully satisfied with Circulation Services, Reference Service, Membership Service, Reading Room Service, while there is partial satisfaction among the users towards the services for OPAC and Reprography.
8. Facilities provided by the library are good enough as responded by the maximum users.
9. Maximum users (58.75%) are fully satisfied with the opinion of library is a gateway for study, learning and research and 34.36% users are partially satisfied.
10. Maximum users (58.12%) are partially satisfied with the opinion of National Library provides community space for group learning and group study and 37.5% users are fully satisfied.
11. Overall 66.3% users are satisfied by all the features of National Library including services, resources, staff, building, physical and social environment.

12. Almost all the users (93.3%) responded positively that they will encourage the people to visit and use the services of the National Library.

Suggestions

1. National Library needs to take positive measures to reach its potential users.
2. Continuous user study to be conducted.
3. Feedback mechanism to gather data from users on their information need to be constituted.
4. Library personnel orientation programmed to be executed to deal with newer and changed users' behavior.
5. National library readers' club or forum may be constituted to regularly upgrade users' satisfaction level.
6. Existing service patterns to be regularly checked and reviewed to upgrade users' satisfaction level.

Conclusion

According to the study majority of users are happy with the services offered by the National Library. The physical and social environment is found to be good and the building is also good. According to user's reports the users are very much satisfied with the library's holdings. Now we are living in digital environment and obviously it is changing the nature of all the three elements of library i.e. collection, users and staff in every library. Users' information need is always changed. Newer type of media and information accelerates this process. National Library is not out of this purview. Not only to cope up with the individual information need but also the national information needs to be fulfilled by the apex library. Naturally to stress on the satisfaction of information is of immense importance. Satisfaction of user needs by national library at present is of satisfactory level to the readers. But the study shows that it is to be gradually updated.

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