

LIBRARY FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED CATEGORY IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN MYSORE DISTRICT: A STUDY



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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the library facilities and services rendered to socially disadvantaged category by academic libraries at Mysore district. By accessing information needs of users, identifying various channels of information used by users to make use for academic purpose, the paper analyses the perception of users about the library services and also the paper examines the services provided by academic libraries to user ends. The study finds that the questionnaire method was used along with observation and interview schedule for data collection from the respondents. The researcher distributed 1072 questionnaires for the respondents.

Out of them 840 filled-questionnaires were received back with 78.35 percent response rate. The received data was organized in a tabular form and simple statistical analysis was employed to draw conclusion. That finds that the majority of respondents 607 (72.26%) belongs to Scheduled Caste (SC) followed by Scheduled Tribe scoring 233 (27.74%). the respondents from the rural area to visit the library were utmost as compared to urban area which represent 65.12% and 34.88% respectively. The "academic purpose" (86.31%) and "to enhance knowledge" (73.81%) are the primary purposes of the respondents to visit the library frequently. The highest number of respondents (Mean Score= 2.93) preferred the text book as major resource for academic activities followed by Newspapers/Magazine (Mean Score=2.65). The book borrowing facility (Mean Score= 0.956) and reference services (Mean Score=0.738) are two major kinds of the library services and facilities appreciated by the respondents.

KEYWORDS : Library Facilities; Library services; Academic libraries; Socially Disadvantaged; Economically weaker section.

1.INTRODUCTION :

Exploitation of information resources is very much essential for socio-economic development of every individual, community and society as a whole. Libraries and Information Centers play a vital role in facilitating access to these resources and in providing information services to users or society. There are communities lagging behind socially and economically because of lack of proximity to knowledge and information resources relevant to them. As reviews of literature reveals

there are some studies conducted on information needs of disadvantaged class and services provided by the libraries. However, no intensive and systematic study has been made to evaluate the rendering library facilities and services and information needs of socially disadvantaged category.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are few studies conducted on library facility and services for socially disadvantaged user and economic weaker of society. Karisiddappa, C. R. and Sangam S. L. (1989) made a study on library services to disadvantaged users in the city central public library and found that the public library services has been found to be more effective than any other institution for the disadvantaged users. Coleman, P. (1982) carried out a study on the development of library services to the disadvantaged and implications for the future of public library services. He concluded that the history of services to the disadvantaged has been one of response to external pressures rather than the result of initiatives by librarians. Arifa, K. (2002) traced the need to access information by the socially disadvantaged community in India and discussed the use of information communication technologies (ICTs) as a tool for their socioeconomic development. The study suggested that relevant local-centric information is most vital for socioeconomic growth of developed countries, and that policies and information infrastructure development at the national level will facilitate the use of ICTs. Lipsman, C. K. (1972) investigated that the services to the disadvantaged as an additional dimension of library services. Each stressed the need of the library profession to realize the responsibility to society. The librarians generally are votaries of statuesque and feel uncomfortable with suggestion for the extension of their services. He advised the librarians to rise to the occasion and serve the disadvantaged reader by crossing the barriers of the traditional and conservative library services. The disadvantaged people (mostly scheduled caste and scheduled tribe [SC/ST]) in India do not have economic resources for their educational development, even if our constitution has provided various special privileges for this since independence. Instead, they have to depend on academic libraries. The libraries and information centers in academic institutions in India are not able to cope with the growing demands of its user communities (Parida, B., & Seth, M. K. 2006). Arko-Cobbah, A. (2004) conducted a study on role of libraries in student-centred learning for students of the disadvantaged communities in South Africa. The study revealed that while the lecturer's time is "freed" for contact with students in student-centred learning (SCL), the librarian is bound to play a more active role in ensuring the learning success of the students. The librarian's role becomes more crucial when one considers students from disadvantaged backgrounds for whom most of these learning resources may be entirely new. Librarians are expected to give guidance and support in the use of the resources and to train the students on how to make effective use of them. The information professionals have to be educated in order to become change agents and consider this role as essential for their practice to be rewarding for themselves and more importantly for the people they serve. There are numerous examples of information services and information professionals who make a difference in the life of their communities against the most severe circumstances. This however requires a radical shift in their value system and operation (Menou, M. J., & Mchombu, K., 2007).

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study is being taken keeping in view of the following objectives:

1. To assess the information needs of users belonging to socially disadvantaged categories.
2. To identify the various channels of information the socially disadvantaged category users make use in

information seeking.

3.To analyze the perceptions of the socially disadvantaged category users about the library services rendered.

4.To examine the services provided by the academic libraries to the said category of users.

4.METHODOLOGY:

In the present study, survey research method was adopted to examine the library facilities and services provided for socially disadvantaged category (SDC) in academic libraries of Mysore district. The questionnaire was designed for the data collection. In addition the researcher conducted interview with select libraries and users to determine the validity of the data obtained. The geographical scope of the study limits to the Mysore district of Karnataka state. The investigator covers of library users socially disadvantaged categories. i. e. scheduled castes and scheduled tribes studying the researcher distributed 1072 questionnaires for the respondents. Out of them 840 filled-questionnaires were received back with 78.35 percent response rate.

5.DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The information collected from users with regard to various library resources, services and facilities has been analyzed and presented under the following heads.

5.1.Social Groups Wise Distribution of Respondents

Table - 1: Social Groups Wise Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Social Groups	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	SC	607	72.26%
2	ST	233	27.74%
	Total	840	100.00%

The table 1 depicts the distribution of the 'Social Groups' covered under the present study. It may be seen from the table that in all total 840 respondents, the majority of the respondents 607 (72.26%) belong to 'Scheduled Caste' (SC) group followed by 'Scheduled Tribe' group which represents 233 (27.74%).

5.2.Geographical Areas Wise Distribution of Respondents

Table - 2: Geographical Areas Wise Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Geographical Areas	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	From Village	547	65.12%
2	From Town	185	22.02%
3	From the City	108	12.86%
	Total	840	100.00%

Tables 2 demonstrate the geographical areas of distribution of the population obtained for the present study. The table shows that out of total 840 respondents, 547 respondents are from village i.e. they belong to rural area representing 65.12% whereas, 22.02% and 12.86% of the respondents are

from urban area and local area i.e. that from town and within city accounting for 185 and 108 respectively. This shows that population of more than 25% less than 50% are from town and city and more than 65% are from rural or village.

5.3. Income Group Wise Distribution of Respondents

Table - 3: Income Group Wise Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Income Groups	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Low Income Group (<1 Lakh)	768	91.43
2	Middle Income Group (1 Lakh to 4 Lakh)	66	07.86
3	High Income Group (>4 Lakh)	06	00.71
	TOTAL	840	100.00
	Mean	1.0929	
	Std. Deviation	.31407	

Table 3 states the income group of socially disadvantaged population. Table shows out of 840 total respondents 91.43%(768) of the respondents belongs to low income groups i.e. less than 1 lakh per annum, whereas only 07.86%(66) and 0.71%(06) belongs to middle income group and high income group 1-4 lakh and less than 4 lakh per annum respectively. Thus it can be observed that large number of socially disadvantaged group covered under present study belongs to low income group. The table shows total mean value of 1.0929 with the Standard Deviation .31407.

5.4. Library Membership Wise Distribution of Respondents

Table - 4: Library Membership Wise Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Library Membership	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Fee based	454	54.05
2	Free based	386	45.95
	Total	840	100.00

Tables 4 explain the details of fee based and free based of library membership. The table shows that out of total 840 responses more than 50% of the respondents accounting for 454 (54.05%) responses are fee based library membership holder as again, to this 386 (45.95%) responses are free based library membership holder.

5.5. Frequency of library visit

Table - 5: Frequency of library visit

S/N	Frequency of visit	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Daily	336	40.00
2	Twice in a week	232	27.62
3	Once in a week	192	22.86
4	Once in 15 days	36	04.29
5	Monthly	42	05.00
6	Occasionally	02	00.24
	Total	840	100.00

Table 5 exhibits data relating to frequency of visit to library. The table display that out of total 840 responses 336, 232 and 192 respondents visit library daily, twice in a week and once in a week representing 40.00%, 27.62% and 22.86% respectively. Remaining 80 responses visit library once in 15 days, monthly and occasionally accounting for 36(04.29%), 42(05.00%) and 2(0.24%) respectively.

5.6. Purpose of Visit

Table 6 contends the use purpose of the library. The table states that out of total 840 respondents 86.31% (725), 73.81% (620) and 61.19% (514) of the respondents says they visit library for academic purpose to enhance knowledge and to improve creative capacity respectively. As again to this 410(48.81%) and 367 (43.69%) of the respondents says “no” for the parameter “to develop social network” and “to get awareness” of current events respectively. On whole we can conclude the students visit the library mainly for academic purpose and secondly to enhance knowledge.

Table - 6: Purpose of Visit

S/N	Purpose of Visit	RESPONSE				Mean	Std. Deviation
		YES		NO			
		F	%	F	%		
1	For academic purpose	725	86.31	115	13.69	0.8631	0.34395
2	To improve creative capacity	514	61.19	326	38.81	0.6119	0.48761
3	To develop social network	430	51.19	410	48.81	0.5119	0.50016
4	To enhance knowledge	620	73.81	220	26.19	0.7381	0.43993
5	To get awareness	473	56.31	367	43.69	0.5631	0.4963
6	To read self-help books to gain confidence	406	48.33	434	51.67	0.4833	0.50002
	N=840						

5.7. Type of resources used for academic activities?

Table 7: What type of the following resources do you use for academic activities?

Types of resources in academic activities		RESPONSE					Mean	Std. Deviation
		Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Most Frequently		
Text books	F	35	100	114	228	363	2.9333	1.19008
	%	4.17	11.90	13.57	27.14	43.21		
Reference books	F	196	108	165	218	153	2.0286	1.43235
	%	23.33	12.86	19.64	25.95	18.21		
Journals	F	312	137	159	135	97	1.4857	1.41751
	%	37.14	16.31	18.93	16.07	11.55		
Newspapers/ Magazines	F	127	83	108	160	362	2.6512	1.48203
	%	15.12	9.88	12.86	19.05	43.10		
Question bank / Old question papers	F	195	112	116	174	243	2.1881	1.54715
	%	23.21	13.33	13.81	20.71	28.93		
E-Resources (N-LIST)	F	556	101	93	44	46	0.7179	1.18197
	%	66.19	12.02	11.07	5.24	5.48		
N=840								

Tables 7 evaluate the details on type of resources used for academic activities by socially disadvantaged group covered in the present study. The table shows that out of total 840 responses 363 respondents (43.21%), 218 (25.95%) respondents use text books most frequently and frequent use of reference books respectively. At the same time 362 (43.10%) and 243 (28.93%) use

newspaper/magazines and question bank/old question papers most frequently. Whereas 312 and 556 respondents says they never use journals and E-resources (N-List) representing 37.14% and 66.19% respectively for academic activities.

5.8. Facilities and Services does your library provide.

Table - 8: Facilities and Services provided by the library.

S/N	Library facilities and services	RESPONSE				Mean	Std. Deviation
		YES		NO			
		F	%	F	%		
1	Book borrowing facility	803	95.6	37	4.4	0.956	0.20532
2	Reference services	620	73.81	220	26.19	0.738	0.43993
3	Book loan facility for social disadvantage	604	71.9	236	28.1	0.719	0.44973
4	Reading room facility	524	62.38	316	37.62	0.623	0.48472
5	Newspaper clipping services	497	59.17	343	40.83	0.591	0.49182
6	Guidance for competitive examination	457	54.4	383	45.6	0.544	0.49835
7	Extension services (Library orientation programme)	309	36.79	531	63.21	0.367	0.48251
8	E-resources accessing facility (N-LIST)	262	31.19	578	68.81	0.311	0.46355
9	Internet browsing facility	246	29.29	594	70.71	0.292	0.45534
10	Referral services	245	29.17	595	70.83	0.291	0.4548
11	Reprography[Xerox] facility	239	28.45	601	71.55	0.284	0.45146
	N=840						

Table 8 evaluates the facilities and services provided by the library to the students. The majority of users appreciate the book borrowing facility, reference services, book loan facility for social disadvantaged and reading room facility representing (95.60% with standard deviation 0.20), (73.81% with standard deviation 0.43), (71.90% with standard deviation 0.44) and (62.38% with standard deviation 0.48) respectively. Followed by 497 (59.17%), 457 (54.40%), 309 (36.79%) and 262 (31.19%) of respondents appreciate newspaper clipping services, guided to competitive exam, extension services (library orientation programme) and E-resources access facility (N-LIST) respectively. It can be observed from the table that least number of respondents that is 29.29% and 28.45% appreciates internet borrowing facility and reprography service respectively.

6.FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Major findings of the study are:

- 1.Respondents of 607 belongs to scheduled caste (SC), 233 belong to scheduled tribes (ST) representing 72.26% and 27.74% respectively.
- 2.Respondents of 547 are from village i.e. they belong to rural area representing 65.12%. Whereas 22.02% and 12.86% of the respondents are from nearby urban area and local area.
- 3.The respondent of 91.43 % (768) belongs to low income groups i.e. less than 1 lakh per annum, whereas only 7.86 % (66) and 0.71 % (06) belongs to middle income group and high income group 1-4 lakh and less than 4 lakh per annum respectively.
- 4.50% above of the respondents accounting for 454 (54.05%) respondents are fee based library membership holder. As against to this 386 (45.95%) respondents are free based library membership holder.
- 5.Respondents of 336, 232 and 192 visit library daily, twice in a week and once in a week representing 40.00%, 27.62% and 22.86% respectively. Remaining 80 responses once in 15 days, monthly and occasionally accounting for 36(4.29%), 42(5.00%) and 2(0.24%) respectively.

6. Respondents of 86.31% (725), 73.81 % (620) and 61.19 % (514) says they visit library for academic purpose to enhance knowledge and to improve creative capacity respectively. As against to this 410 (48.81%) and 367 (43.69%) of the respondents says “no” for the “parameter” to develop social network and to get awareness of current events respectively.

7. Respondents of 363 (43.21%), 218 (25.95%) use text books most frequently and reference books frequently respectively. At the same time 362 (43.10%) and 243 (28.93%) use newspaper/magazines and question bank/old question papers most frequently. Whereas 312 and 556 respondents says they never use journals and E-resources (N-List) representing 37.14% and 66.19% respectively for academic activities.

7. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

1. The students belonging to the lower stratum of the society, economically poor, living in rural areas are surpassingly a head in number accordingly there should be free based library facilities and service for socially disadvantaged category.

2. Less than 50% of students (Socially disadvantaged) are in number for frequency of visit to library for academic purpose so suggestions have been put-forth to conduct user education programme, training programmes or user awareness programme or orientation programme on library facilities and services and use and also for free access to IT-based services in the university libraries.

In the age of Information explosion it is very vital to make to exploit the information available in different format. Libraries and Information Centers play a vital role in facilitating access these resources and in providing information services to users or society especially there should be special attention to be given for socially disadvantaged. The provision of accessing the information resources and conducting training for how to access these resources should be organized at free of cost especially for disabled and socially disadvantaged communities.

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