AN ASSESSMENT OF USER'S INFORMATION NEEDS IN DISTRICT CENTRAL LIBRARIES OF SOUTH TAMIL NADU: A STUDY
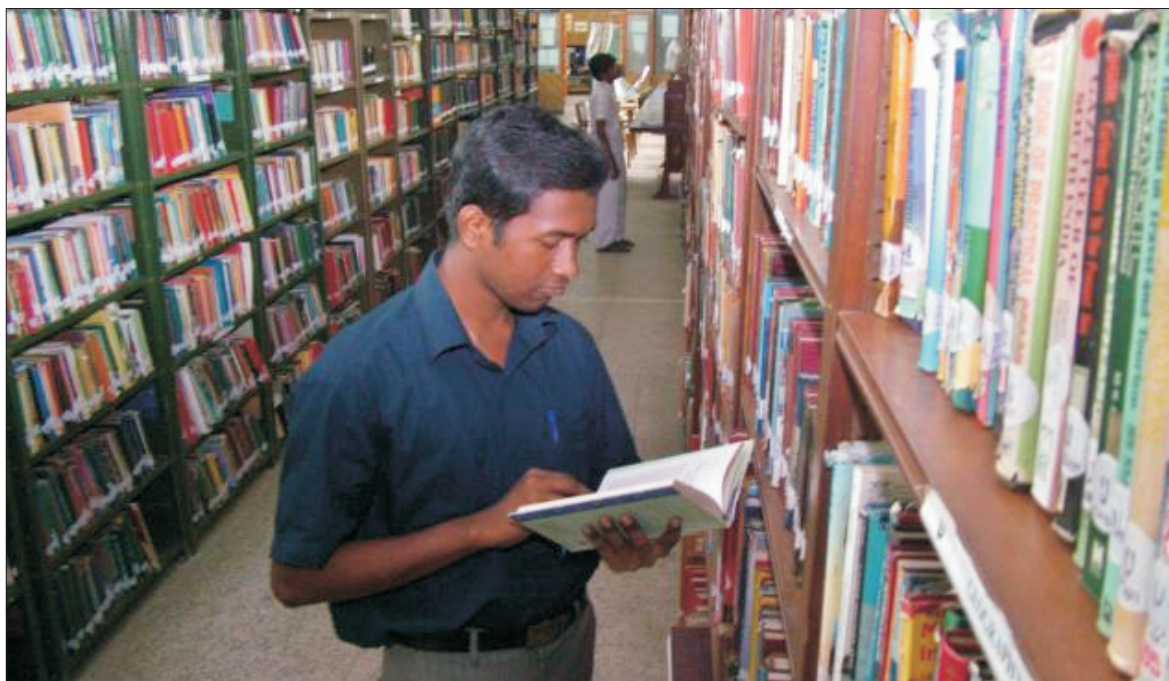
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ABSTRACT:

Public libraries are considered as democratic agencies that facilitate self-education of the citizen of at a global level. Public library is a vital societal force that shapes a human being. The purpose of this paper is to study the usage of the public libraries and the impact it has on the common man. Data was collected with the help of questionnaire in the survey. Findings of the survey revealed that the District Central Library of South Tamil Nadu is offering good quality of services for its users. Respondents were satisfied with different library services, facilities and the resources suchlike books, News papers, Magazines, reading room, the ambiance, library hours and the attitude of the library staff with the users.

KEYWORDS : Information need, Awareness, Public Library, South Tamil Nadu.

1.INTRODUCTION:

Libraries are the store house of knowledge and Public libraries are considered as the power house of information for the society. People in all walks of life use library resources for their daily needs. Dr.S.R.Ranganathan defined a Public library as a library owned and maintained by the public of its area for the socialization of its books and non book materials for free service to the people of the area. Wilson (Wilson, 1981) suggested that "information need" was not a fundamental need such as the need for shelter or the need for sustenance, but, rather a secondary order need which arose out of the desire to satisfy the primary needs.

For satisfying these needs the libraries should cope up with the facilities and services to enable the users to use the resources most effectively and efficiently in a fruitful way. A public library could play an important role in changing the unproductive mass of population into productive and contribution individuals in the overall development of the nation. As the public library is considered as the peoples university and it is the center for self learning, The users of public library vary for children to senior citizens , and the need for information of these users also vary. For satisfying the needs of users library should act as a local information center which make the information sources readily available to the public and stimulate the neo-literates , semi literate and non users to become a regular user. In this study we studied about the role of district central libraries in south Tamil Nadu in satisfying the information needs of the rural people.

1.1. Public Libraries in Tamil Nadu

In the year of 1972 the Directorate of Public Libraries was formed for the improvement of library services. As per the "Tamil Nadu Public Libraries Act of 1948,the public libraries are opened in all the districts of Tamil Nadu with the purpose of providing best reading for the greatest number at the least cost. The Connemara Public Library is the State Central Library which is situated in the heart of the Chennai city. Moreover it is one of the four National Repository Libraries in India. Besides, the State has three famous old libraries namely Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji Sarasvati Mahal Library, Dr.U.Ve. Swaminatha Iyer Library, Chennai and Maraimalai Adigal Library, Chennai. There are 4042 libraries functioning in the State under the control of the Directorate of Public Libraries.

1.2.Area of the Research

The research has covered District Central Public Libraries of Madurai, Theni, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Dindugal, Thoothukudi, Viruthunagar, Thiruneveli, and Kanniyakumari.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Andersen (2000) noted that research on information seeking and characteristics of information seekers has looked at how individuals go about finding the materials that they need in order to satisfy their information needs. It was therefore noted on this basis that a number of models had been developed in this respect like Ellis' 1993 model, Eisenberg and Berkowitz's 1992 model, and Kuhlthau's 1992 model. These models have been applied in a number of instances to follow up the patterns used in seeking information or to explain how information could be sought systematically. Information seeking behavior refers to the way people search for and utilize information (Fairer–Wessels, 1990). Thanuskodi(2012) identified the information channels and information sources used by the Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University faculty members. It was found that the faculty members use various sources for acquiring the needed information and books were ranked as the most important sources for teaching and research purposes. The On-line Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), CD-ROM and internet-

based services and applications were the most frequently used by them.

Oyediran-Tiding (2004) reported that the justification for information seeking behaviour is tied to the need to understand what library users actually do when they are in need of and are searching for information. This is so important because it may be very different from what the librarians think the users do. According to Fiankor and Adam (2004) most individuals seek information from their friends, neighbours, colleagues, groups meetings, such as religious groups, cooperative societies, or associations According to him, when the information required by the user is so complex, he or she resorts to the libraries. Folorunsho and Haruna (2005) in their studies submitted that majority of information seekers seek for information through verbal discussion with their friends, colleagues or neighbors. This submission contradicts that of Serema (1999) who reported in his study that many of the users use library for their information needs. However, this contradiction could be attributed to environmental factors, facing the information seekers. For example, Serema study was conducted in Britain where information is accorded utmost importance. This was further buttressed by Ford (1993) who noted that one could hardly draw a line between individual and environment. The efficacy of the principle of information utilization therefore is anchored on its ability to satisfy the needs of seekers. According to Ikoja-Odongo (2001) the principle of use is based on four broad premises: Goal, Availability, Process and User satisfaction.

Rafiq and Ameen (2009) posited that demand for and utilization of information is a product of the following factors: research, job performance, examination, recreation, problem solving, awareness and education. Oyediran-Tiding (2004) noted that demand for and use of information may be made as a result of research activity being undertaken by an information user. The nature of the job a person performs dictates the quality and volume of information he requires. According to Akinwumi (1996) job performance also enables a librarian to know and 6 understand the characteristics of information users, so that he or she will be in a better position to provide the seeker with relevant information sources to satisfy his information need. Demand for and utilization of information is therefore a product of job performed by an individual or corporate organization. According to Adedibu and Adio (1997) examination requirement also leads to the demand and use of information. It is more difficult for the librarians of public libraries to know their users' needs but they must make efforts in conducting user studies in order to meet those needs. Thanuskodi (2012) conducted a study to find out the efficacy of the services of district central libraries of in Tamil Nadu. The study revealed that among 580 respondents 43.79% were partially satisfied with the information provided in the library, whereas, 10.68% were not all satisfied with the information provided in the library.

Oyediran-Tidings (2004) defined user studies as a scientific diagnose of the information needs of library users with the aim of effective service provision by libraries or officers. Mabawonku (2004) reported that there have been studies about the information needs of various interest groups and professionals portraying their peculiarities and sources consulted to meet the needs. There are numerous challenges that hinder information provision by public libraries in Nigeria. Opara (2008) found that the bane of public libraries in Nigeria is poor funding. According to him, every other problem confronting them emanates from that. According to Ebiwolate (2010) the major problems facing public libraries in Nigeria are: inadequate funding, poor infrastructure and inadequate human resources. Nearly all library materials are purchased from outside Nigeria, mostly from Europe and America, and due to a shortage of foreign currency and a high exchange rate, acquisitions have dropped sharply and in some states completely stopped. According to Iwhiwhu (2008) the major problems inhibit the provision of efficient library services in Nigeria include lack of physical infrastructure, lack of information and communication technologies (ICT), illiteracy, language barriers and poverty.

3. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1. Research Objective of the study:

The study was conducted based on the following objectives:

✦ To examine the purposes of public library user to visit the library
✦ To ascertain Users' Satisfaction Level about Library Services
✦ To know the frequency and purpose of visit to the library
✦ To identify the information channels used for seeking information
✦ To trace out the problems faced by the respondents in using library
✦ To find out the awareness and use of library resources

3.2. Hypothesis:

Hypothesis is a conjectural statement of the relation between two or more variables the following hypotheses were formulated in order to test the stated objectives.

1.There is no statistically significant difference in the usage of books and users.

2.There is no significant difference in the usage of news paper and users.

3.There is no statistically significant difference in the usage of magazines and users.

3.3. Data Collection

This study consists of both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire, which was distributed among the users of District Central Libraries of South Tamil Nadu. The secondary data were procured from some journals, articles and other records of the library. Thus, the collected data has been analyzed and percentage method has been employed as a statistical tool.

3.4. Sample Size

Survey method was used for data collection. A total of 250 questionnaires with open -ended questionnaire was returned by the users with an overall response rate of 80 % (200 filled in questionnaire were selected). 20% of the questionnaires were rejected due to incomplete information.

3.5. Research Tools.

Question wise analysis was carried out with the help of Excel, workbook and SPSS Software. The questionnaire was based on different variables, which were considered to be significant while using public library. Some analytical techniques like tables, percentage, and chi-square test were used to analyse the collected data.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Table- 4.1: Gender wise distribution

S. No	Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Statistics Analysis
1	Male	148	74%	Mean : 1.26
2	Female	52	26%	σ :0.43973
Total		200	100%	

Source: Primary Data

The table 4.1 indicates that gender-wise distribution of respondents. Of the total 200 respondents surveyed, 74% are male and about 26 % respondents are female. It can be inferred from the table that male respondents dominate over female respondents as admission for research are dominated by male.

Table 4.2: Age wise Distribution of Respondents

S. No	Age	Frequency		Percentage	Statistics Analysis
		Male	Female		
1.	Up to 25	82 (41%)	27 (13.5%)	109 (54.5%)	
2.	Between 31-44	42 (21%)	13 (6.5%)	55 (27.5%)	Mean: 1.655
3.	Between 45-49	21 (10.5%)	11 (5.5%)	32 (16%)	σ :0.8181
4.	60 and Above	3 (1.5%)	1 (0.5%)	4 (2%)	
	Total	148 (74%)	52 (26%)	200 (100%)	

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.2 shows the age wise distribution of the respondents of rural public library of south Tamil Nadu district. It has been observed that considerable number of respondents belonged to the age group of less than 25 years., with male 82 (41%) and Female 27 (13.5%). The respondents between the age group of 31-44 years has Male 42 (21%) and Female 13 (6.5%) are the second largest. About   21 (10.5%) of Male and 11 (5.5%)of female respondents of public library user fall into the age group of 45-49 years. A very few respondents representing Male 3 (1.5%) and Female 1 (0.5%) fall under age group of 60 and above. This brings us to a   conclusion that majority (54.5%) of public library user belonged to the age group of less than 25 years.

Table 4.3: Qualification and Gender-wise Distribution of respondents

S. No	Qualification	Frequency		Percentage	Statistics Analysis
		Male	Female		
1.	SSLC and below	41 (20.5%)	18 (9%)	59 (29.5%)	
2.	HSC	12 (6%)	5 (2.5%)	17 (8.5%)	
3.	UG	23 (11.5%)	12 (6%)	35 (17.5%)	Mean: 2.925
4.	PG	49 (24.5%)	9 (4.5%)	58 (29%)	σ :1.476
5.	Diploma / Others	23 (11.5%)	8 (4%)	31 (15.5%)	
	Total	148 (74%)	52 (26%)	200 (100%)	

Source: Primary Data

Table4.3 displays the education wise distribution of the respondents. Out of 200 respondents 41 (20.5%) Male and   18 (9%) Female respondents are SSLC and below.   12 (6%) male and 5 (2.5%) female respondents posses HSC. 23 (11.5%) male respondents and 12 (6%) female respondents are Graduates. The above table also shows that 58 (29%) of the respondents are post graduates with Male

49 (24.5%) and female 9 (4.5%). It is also seen that 23 (11.5%) Male and 8 (4%) female respondents are diploma holders and Others., Hence it is stated that majority of the male respondents are have PG qualification and female have SSLC and below., showing that men respondents are more qualified than the women respondents.

Table 4.4: Occupation wise Distribution of Respondents

S. No	Category	Frequency		Percentage	Statistics Analysis
		Male	Female		
1.	Unemployed	57 (28.5%)	24 (12%)	81 (40.5%)	
2.	Farmers	24 (12%)	6 (3%)	30 (15%)	
3.	Teachers	39 (19.5%)	13 (6.5%)	52 (26%)	Mean:2.32
4.	Labour	13 (6.5%)	5 (2.5%)	18 (9%)	σ :1.3366
5	Business	15(7.5%)	4 (2%)	19 (9.5%)	
	Total	148(74%)	52 (26%)	200 (100%)	

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.4 displays the Occupation wise distribution of the respondents. Out of 200 respondents 81 (40.5%) percentages of the respondents are unemployed and followed by, 30 (15%) percentages of the respondents are farmers. 52 (26%) percentages of the respondents are teachers. 18 (9%) percentages of the respondents are labour., and remaining 19 (9.5%) percentages of the respondents are into business. It is concluded from the above table that unemployed are utilizing the public library facility.

Table 4. 5: Purpose of visiting the library

S. No	Purpose of visiting the library	Frequency		Percentage	Statistics Analysis
		Male	Female		
1.	Reading Newspaper	76 (38%)	24 (12%)	100 (50%)	
2.	To read magazines and journals	35 17.5%)	14 (7%)	49 (24.5%)	
3.	Employment News	16 (8%)	6 (3%)	22 (11%)	Mean: 1.99
4.	To read general and G.K books	11 (5.5%)	4 (2%)	15 (7.5%)	σ :1.299
5.	To develop the reading habits	7 (3.5%)	3 (1.5%)	10 (5%)	
6.	Others Purpose	3 (1.5%)	1 (0.5%)	4 (2%)	
	Total	148 74%)	52 (26%)	200 (100)	

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.5 shows the purpose of the users visiting the public libraries in South Tamil Nadu. From the table it is inferred that 100 (50%) of the users are coming to the public library for reading newspaper followed by 49 (24.5%)of the users using the library to read magazines and journals. It is observed from

the table that 22 (11%) of the users visit the public library to know about job opportunities through the Employment News. 15 (7.5%) of the users visit the public library to read general books and G.K books. A Very few users 10 (5%) visit the public library to develop the reading habits and some 4 (2%) visit the public library for Others purposes. It is concluded from the analysis that majority of the public library user visit the library to read newspapers.

Table 4.6: Respondent's Awareness of Information on Agriculture

S.No	Awareness	Always	Often	Sometime	Rarely	Never	Mean	SD, (σ)	Rank
1	Agriculture procedure	94 (47%)	67 (33.5%)	21 (10.5%)	13 (6.5%)	5 (2.5%)	4.16	1.020	1
2	Agriculture loan	78 (39%)	60 (30%)	33 (16.5%)	19 (9.5%)	10 (5%)	3.89	1.174	6
3	Horticulture	66 (33%)	80 (40%)	35 (17.5%)	11 (5.5%)	8 (4%)	3.93	1.042	3
4	Cash crops	98 (49%)	55 (27.5%)	20 (10%)	19 (9.5%)	8 (4%)	4.08	1.153	2
5	Agriculture concessions	68 (34%)	82 (41%)	19 (9.5%)	17 (8.5%)	14 (7%)	3.87	1.181	5

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.6 shows the awareness about information on agriculture. Out of 200 respondents 94 (47%) respondents always have awareness on agricultural procedures followed by 67 (33.5%), 21 (10.5%), 13 (6.5%) and 5 (2.5%) respondents who have Often, Sometimes, Rarely and remaining never respectively about agricultural procedures. About the awareness of Agriculture loan, 78 (39%) respondents have awareness always, followed by 60 (30%), 33 (16.5%), 19 (9.5%) and 10 (5%) respondents who have awareness often, Sometimes, Rarely and remaining never respectively.66 (33%) respondents have Horticulture awareness always, followed by 80 (40%) , 35 (17.5%), 11 (5.5%) and 8 (4%) respondents who have awareness often, sometimes, rarely and remaining never respectively.98 (49%) respondents have awareness always on Cash crops, followed by 55 (27.5%),20 (10%), 19 (9.5%) and 8 (4%) respondents who have awareness often, Sometimes, rarely and remaining never respectively.Awareness on Agriculture concessions is always known to 68 (34%) respondents followed by 82 (41%) , 19 (9.5%) , 17 (8.5%) and 14 (7%) respondents who have awareness often, sometimes, rarely and remaining never respectively.

Table 4.7: Respondent's Awareness of "Information on Social"

Awareness	Always	Often	Sometime	Rarely	Never	Mean	SD,(σ)	Rank
Untouchability / Racism	24 (12%)	42 (21%)	110 (55%)	9 (4.5%)	15 (7.5%)	3.27	0.98	4
Religion	128 (64%)	64 (32%)	8 (4%)	0	0	4.60	0.57	1
Rural development	53 (26.5%)	46 (23%)	75 (37.5%)	21 (10.5%)	5 (2.5%)	3.61	1.07	3
women development	51 (25.5%)	104 (52%)	32 (16%)	9 (4.5%)	4 (2%)	3.95	0.88	2

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.7 shows the awareness about information on social awareness out of 200 respondents.24 (12%) respondents always have awareness of Untouchability/Racism, followed by 42 (21%), 110(55%), 9 (4.5%) and15 (7.5%) respondents who have awareness often, sometimes, rarely and remaining never respectively.128 (64%) respondents always have awareness about religion, followed by 64 (32%) respondents who have awareness often on religion which is then followed by 8 (4%) respondents who sometimes have awareness on religion. 53 (26.5%) respondents always have awareness on Rural development ., followed by 46 (23%), 75 (37.5%), 21 (10.5%) and 5 (2.5%) respondents who have awareness often, sometimes, rarely and remaining never respectively.51 (25.5%) respondents always have awareness on Women Development., followed by 104 (52%), 32 (16%),9 (4.5%) and 4 (2%) respondents who have awareness often, sometimes, rarely and remaining never respectively on the development of women.

Table -4. 8. User opinions

S.No	Opinions	Gender	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Mean	SD, (σ)	Rank
1	Library facilities are adequate	M	49(24.5%)	71(35.5%)	28 (14 %)	2.15	0.66	4
		F	12(6 %)	37(18.5%)	3(1.5 %)			
2	Books and News Papers are adequate	M	78(39%)	31(15.5%)	39(19.5 %)	2.37	0.82	3
		F	39(19.5%)	9(4.5%)	4(2%)			
3	Library Timing is adequate	M	87(43.5%)	34(17%)	27(13.5%)	2.42	0.76	2
		F	29(14.5 %)	17(8.5%)	6(3 %)			
4	Infrastructures	M	81(40.5 %)	47(23.5%)	20(10 %)	2.50	0.68	1
		F	39(19.5 %)	12(6%)	1(0.5 %)			

Source: Primary Data (M: Male F: Female)

Table 4.8 shows the result of overall opinion about the District Central Library users about central library facilities of 200 respondents. 61 (30.5%) users have responded very good followed by 108 (54%) and 31 (15.5%) respondents who have opinions of good, satisfactory respectively for adequate library facilities. About the adequacy of books and Newspapers 117 (58.5%) respondents have Very good opinion followed by 40 (20%) and 43 (21.5%) respondents who have opinions of good, Satisfactory respectively.About the adequacy of Library timing 116 (58%) respondents have responded very good followed by 51 (25.5%) and 33 (16.5%) who have opinions of good, satisfactory respectively.About the Infrastructures 120 (60%) respondents have very good opinion followed by 59 (29.5%) and 21(10.5%)respondents who have opinions of good, satisfactory respectively.Hence it is concluded that majority of the library users are satisfied with the library and its functioning.

Table 4.9: Gender wise analysis of library collections

S.No	Library Collection	Gender	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Average	Mean	SD, (σ)	Rank
1.	Book	M	57 (28.5%)	69(34.5%)	22(11%)	2.27	0.66	3
		F	21(10.5%)	29(14.5%)	2(1%)			
2.	News paper	M	123(61.5%)	17(8.5%)	8(4%)	2.77	0.51	1
		F	39(19.5%)	13(6.5%)	0			
3.	Magazines	M	61(30.5%)	39(19.5%)	48(24%)	2.58	1.114	2
		F	31(15.5%)	19(9.5%)	2(1%)			

Source: Primary Data (M: Male F: Female)

Table 4.9 shows the gender wise analysis of library collections. 78(39%) respondents are highly satisfied with the library collections., followed by 98 (49%) respondents who are satisfied and the remaining 24 (12%) respondents are satisfied to an average level.On the collection of books 162(81%) respondents are highly satisfied, followed by 30 (15%) respondents just satisfied and the remaining 8 (4%) respondents are satisfied on an average level.92 (46%) respondents are highly satisfied with the collection of Magazines, followed by 58 (29%) respondents who just feel good and the remaining 50 (25%) respondents are satisfied on an average level. Hence it concluded that majority of respondents are highly satisfied with the news paper collections.

5. Chi-Square analysis

Table 5.1:
Chi-Square test between Gender wise qualification and Books

	Test	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Book * Educational Qualification	Pearson Chi-Square	165.157[a]	8	.000
	Likelihood Ratio	200.646	8	.000
	Fisher's Exact Test	.[b]		
	Linear-by-Linear Association	46.408[c]	1	.000
	N of Valid Cases	200		

Chi-Square Summary Result

χ2 Calculated Value	Degrees of Freedom	Chi-Square Table Value(0.05)	P- Value
165.157[a]	8	15.507	0.000

H_o: There is no statistically significant difference in the usage of book and users.

The table value of χ2 for 3 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance is 15.507. The calculated value of χ2 is 165.157a. It is higher than the calculated value and hence the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. Hence the hypothesis is statistically significant (If p O . O 5 statistically significant, If p > 0.05 not statistically significant,)

Table 5.2:
Chi-Square test between Gender wise qualification and News Paper

News Paper * Educational Qualification	Test	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
	Pearson Chi-Square	205.163[a]	8	0
	Likelihood Ratio	145.712	8	.000
	Fisher's Exact Test	129.829		
	Linear-by-Linear Association	3.069[b]	1	.080
	N of Valid Cases	200		

Chi-Square Summary Result

χ2Calculated Value	Degrees of Freedom	Chi-Square Table Value(0.05)	P- Value
205.163[a]	8	15.507	0.000

H_o: There is no significant difference in the usage of news paper and users.

The table value of 2 for 3 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance is 15.507. The calculated value of 2 is 205.163a. It is higher than the calculated value and hence the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected .Hence the hypothesis is statistically significant (If p O . Ostatistically significant, If p > 0.05 not statistically significant,)

Table 5.3:
Chi-Square test between Gender wise qualification and Magazines

Magazines * Qualification	Test	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
	Pearson Chi-Square	273.621[a]	12	.000
	Likelihood Ratio	289.062	12	.000
	Fisher's Exact Test	.[b]		
	Linear-by-Linear Association	25.161	1	.000
	N of Valid Cases	200		

Chi-Square Summary Result

$\chi 2$Calculated Value	Degrees of Freedom	Chi-Square Table Value(0.05)	P- Value
273.621[a]	12	21.026	0.000

H_o: There is no statistically significant difference in the usage of magazines and users.

The table value of $\chi 2$ for 3 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance is 15.507. The calculated value of $\chi 2$ is 273.621a. It is higher than the Calculated value and hence the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected .Hence the hypothesis is statistically significant (If p $0 . 05$ statistically significant,)

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The major findings of the study are listed below.
1.The studies found that majority of the respondents (74%) are dominated by male.
2.The studies found that majority of the respondents (54.5%) belong to age 25years and below.
3.It is found that the majority of the users are unemployed followed by the Farmers.
4.The studies shows that half of the users visit the library to read the dailies.
5.According to the gender wise analysis of library collections, it is understood that both the male and female users are highly satisfied with the collections of Newspaper followed by magazines and then the books.

7. CONCLUSION

The public libraries are the basic information unit of the rural India. It is necessary for both State and Central government to give importance to these libraries. But it is unfortunate, that these libraries are considered as neglected aspects. Many public libraries except the District Central Library in the country are maintained by the nonprofessionals. In the event of India about to become a information society, It is highly ridiculous and heart breaking aspects that the governments are considering the public library systems as liabilities. This trend must be removed and both the public and government should know the values and importance of the public libraries. This study probably is an instrument to get an idea about what the user especially the rural folks expect from the public library system of the country.

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