

The Users' Satisfaction with Public Libraries in Thanjavur District

*S. Vinotha, **Dr. C. Velmurugan

Author's Affiliation:

*Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, Tamil University, Thanjavur-613010, Tamil Nadu, India

E-mail: vinothagnanam25@gmail.com

**Librarian and Head, Department of Library and Information Science, Tamil University, Thanjavur-613010, Tamil Nadu, India

E-mail: cvelmuruga72@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: S. Vinotha, Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, Tamil University, Thanjavur-613010, Tamil Nadu, India

E-mail: vinothagnanam25@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Public libraries play a vital role in the development of human resources. It is one of the services rendered by a public library. Human resources cannot be compared with the country's other natural resources, such as water resources, soil and mineral resources, because human resources are the nucleus of all other activities. Hence, the Government has to enrich human resources in all spheres. The present study is initiated to assess users' satisfaction with the resources, infrastructural facilities and services provided by the district central library. They constructed a questionnaire and distributed the same selected 150 public library users. The researcher received 129 fully completed responses from the respondents. The users of the district central library in Thanjavur are satisfied with the resources and services of the library. The location of the library does not favour them.

KEYWORDS: *Public libraries, Infrastructure Facilities, Resources available, Services provided, User Satisfaction*

INTRODUCTION

A public library serves the entire population of a community. Everyone in the community has a claim to its services regardless of nationality, race, colour, caste, age, sex, status, educational attainment, language, or any such consideration. It is generally established and maintained out of public funds under legislation's mandate. However, other libraries are supported by private agencies or registered societies, which extend their facilities to the public and would

qualify, to that extent, to be designated public libraries. Soon after its creation, Unesco recognised the potential of a public library and, in its public library manifesto (1949), called the public library a "living force for popular education". This manifesto echoed the role of a public library by emphasising, "the public library is a product of modern democracy and practical demonstration of democracy's faith in universal education as a life-long process. "public library" as understood in the west (meaning unfettered service to all, free of cost)

has an altogether different connotation in India. (Ramaiah, L. S. and Sankara Reddy 2010) The library permits its material to be used by the public with or without paying a fee. There are libraries set up and sponsored and supported by the Government, including local bodies, private individuals, and organisations that have established libraries, some of which may receive aid from the Government.

They are meant to provide free service or charge a nominal fee for their services without distinction of caste, creed, age, sex, language, nationality and status. Public libraries are established for the social development of our nation. Public library service is meant for education, information, recreation, aesthetic appreciation and research. Public libraries have a common objective to conserve and organise the resources of recorded thoughts and facts to make them available for present and future users. Therefore, the public libraries collect, preserve, organise, retrieve, disseminate and communicate information, ideas and creative product of the human imagination. (Gowda, Vasappa; and Shivalingaiah, D. 2009).

PROFILE OF SAMPLE UNIT

Thanjavur District is one of the 38 districts of the state of Tamil Nadu in southeastern India. Its headquarters is Thanjavur. The district is located in the delta of the Cauvery River and is primarily agricultural. As of 2011, Thanjavur

district had a population of 2,405,890 with a sex ratio of 1,035 females for every 1,000 males.

Public libraries are concerned with communicating ideas and information to the users for their indispensable utilisation in promoting the literacy development of education. The rise of the democratic value of the life of the people through a stable economy and their enthusiastic participation in the socio-economic and political development of the country. Thanjavur district library commission was formed on 20.07.1950. District central library began to function on 02.10.1952. This library is close to the famous Brihadeeswar temple constructed by the great Rajaraja Cholan, Sivagangai park, government hospital, bus stand and state bank of India. Also, the library is located in the centre of Tanjore district, called 'the rice bowl of Tamil Nadu'.

The foundation stone for the library building was laid by then home minister Mr M. Bakthavatchalam B.A, B.L, on 17.06.1961 and inaugurated on 22.09.1965 by the same person who had become chief minister then. The district central library includes 2,03,804 books, 37,900 members, 188 patrons. The functions of the library have been computerised. The photograph of members is clicked by a web camera and then stored. Books lending works are also computerised.

Table 1: Statistics about the Public Libraries in the Thanjavur District

Sl. No	Particulars	Total
1.	Total Number of Books	25,58,758
2.	Total Number of Members	2,87,301
3.	Total Number of Readers	16,97,890
4.	Number of Members as on 31.03.2021	2,58,117
5.	Members joined during the year 2021-to 22	7,266
6.	Number of Members as on 31.03.2022	2,65,383
7.	Total number of books referred by the users	6,52,680
8.	Total number of books lent to the users	5,54,878
9.	Total number of books referred and lent	12,07,559
10.	Number of patrons as on 31.03.2021	3,523
11.	Patrons joined during the year 2021- to 22	84
12.	Number of Patrons as on 31.03.2022	3,607

13.	Number of prominent patrons as on 31.03.2021	22
14.	Prominent Patrons joined during the year 2021-22	2
15.	Number of prominent Patrons as on 31.03.2022	24

(Source: Annual Report of District Central Library 2021-22)

Table 1 reveals the critical statistics about the public libraries in the Thanjavur district. It is observed that the district's public libraries have a total of 25,58,758, followed by 16,97,890 readers and 2,65,383 members as of 31.03.2022. The library has 3,607 patrons and 24 prominent patrons as of date.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ramalakshmi. N. (2019). carried out a study on user satisfaction of Sources and Services: Special Reference to Public Library in Chidambaram. The study's main objective was to determine how users rate the sources and services of the Public Library in Chidambaram. A total of 200 questionnaires were randomly distributed to the users of the Chidambaram public library, out of which 195 questionnaires were received. The study revealed the total number of members of this public library as 13115. It was observed that the majority of the respondents, i.e. 49.23% visited the library daily, and 43.08% visited the library weekly; 40% of the respondents visited the library for Newspaper Reading, 21.03% for Government Examinations, 20% for Subject Information and 18.97% for entertainment. Concerning satisfaction with the customised services, the majority of the respondents were satisfied with all the benefits, i.e. library hours (52.31%), library staff (48.21%), library facilities (49.23%), and availability of books (53.33%). The study concluded that user satisfaction depends to a large extent on the ability of the library to integrate the user needs into the development of the library. The study suggested conducting regular surveys to improve the library's services and increase the long-run participation of the users in the library with high-level satisfaction.

M. Mohammad Yasir, Dr. P. Balasubramanian, (2020) The Public Libraries are the pillars of social development and changing tools for economic background and below literate peoples in India. It is one of the parts in resource providers of political, economic and technological changing growths for the people

of India. The work has endeavoured to study the profile of the public libraries, factors touching frequency of visiting public libraries, level of satisfaction with the services, and overall service quality. The visitors' register provided the framework of the respondents to be covered. Users of the public library of Tirunelveli city constituted the sampling frame.

Balasubramanian Subramanian and P, Shahnaz (2021) University libraries have played a significant role in societal, political, and economic cultural developments. University Libraries have been clear with the old mission of maintaining documents with a new vision of updating e-resources. University libraries are the apex of the university's educational processes and the affiliated colleges' academic recitals. Its mission is to support all the learning and research activities of students, staff, researchers and academicians by procuring and making the best possible print and electronic resources available. Developments in ICT have changed the mode of publications, the information landscape, education models, and demographics. The present study is concerned with the significant aspects of universities in Tamil Nadu. An attempt is made to throw light on the availability of e-resources in the university libraries in Tamil Nadu.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Public libraries are supposed to be the pillars of a society that help maintain the civility and humanity of the community's people. That is why governments worldwide are willing to spend a lot of money on establishing and maintaining a public library so that the people can benefit from it. Tamilnadu Government has spent a lot of money on maintaining the public libraries in the state. But are these public libraries satisfying their purpose in society. Does the Infrastructure of these shared libraries meet the needs of the respondents? Does it increase the reading habit of the respondents? Is there a positive impact on the literacy attitude of the

respondents? These are some pertinent questions that need to be answered, and this is the focus of the present study. The Thanjavur district central library has been chosen as the context for the present study. The persons who use the library facilities are the respondents of the current research.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The researcher framed the following objectives for the study.

- To identify the demographic constructs of the users of the public libraries in the Thanjavur District.
- To evaluate the Respondents' satisfaction with infrastructure facilities, resources and services of the public libraries in the study area.
- To offer suitable suggestions to public library authorities to enhance users' satisfaction.

HYPOTHESES

H₀: The infrastructure facilities, resources available, and services provided by the district central library, Thanjavur, is not influenced their users' satisfaction.

H₁: The infrastructure facilities, resources available, and services provided by the district central library, Thanjavur, influence users' satisfaction.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study defines the area in which the research is being directed. For this research,

Thanjavur District central library has been selected because it is considered one of the essential and ancient districts of the state. The target population of the research is users of the district central library, Thanjavur. The study also analyses critical variables such as reasons for coming to the public library and their satisfaction with the sources and services of the sample unit selected.

METHODOLOGY

Members and users of the district central library Thanjavur constituted the sampling frame. The visitors' index and membership register provided the framework for the respondents to be covered. They constructed a vital questionnaire after considering the previous studies and presenting objectives framed for the study. A sample of 150 public library users was selected using a simple random sampling technique and distributing the questionnaire. Then the researcher received 129 fully completed responses from the respondents. The response rate was 86 per cent.

LIMITATIONS

The study has the following limitations.

- The study area is limited to the Thanjavur district central library only.
- The study results depend on the truthfulness of the responses from the respondents.
- The sample size is restricted to 87 respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 2: Gender of the Respondents

Sl. No	Gender of the Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Male	72	55.81
2.	Female	57	44.19
Total		129	100

(Source: Primary Data)

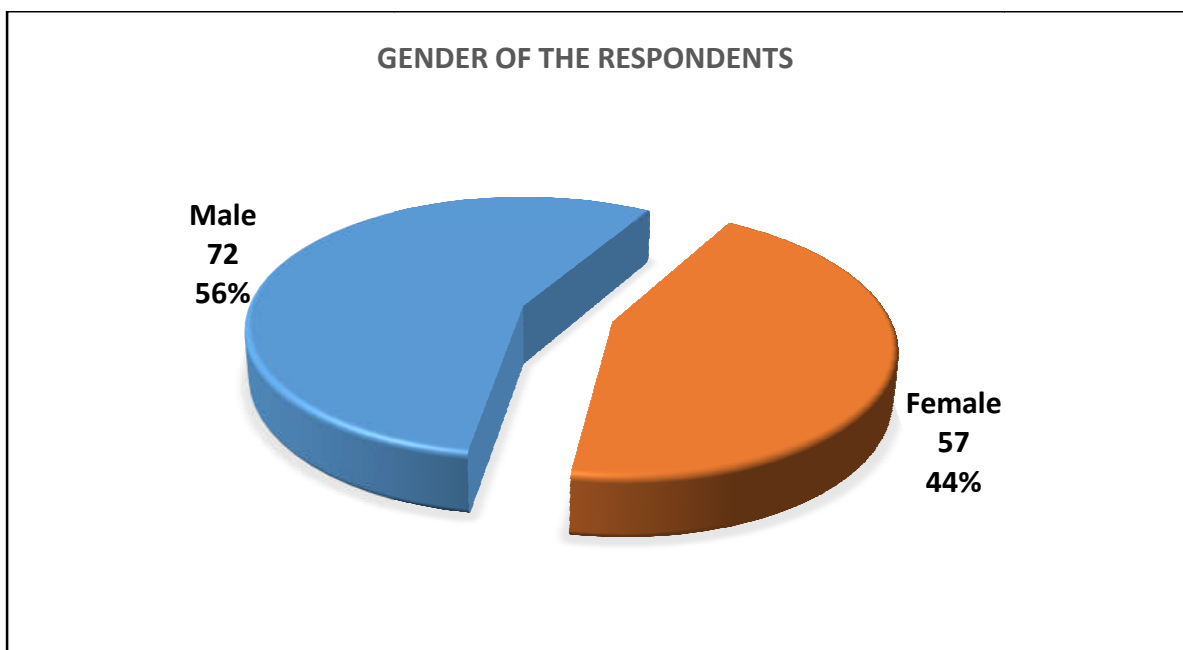


Figure 1: Gender of the Respondents

Table 2 divulges the gender-wise classification of respondents selected for the study. It is perceived that a maximum of 72 respondents

(55.81 per cent) were male and 57 (44.19 per cent) were female.

Table 3: Age of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Age of the Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 30 Years	29	22.48
2.	30 - 40 Years	34	26.36
3.	40 - 50 Years	41	31.78
4.	Above 50 Years	25	19.38
Total		129	100

(Source: Primary Data)

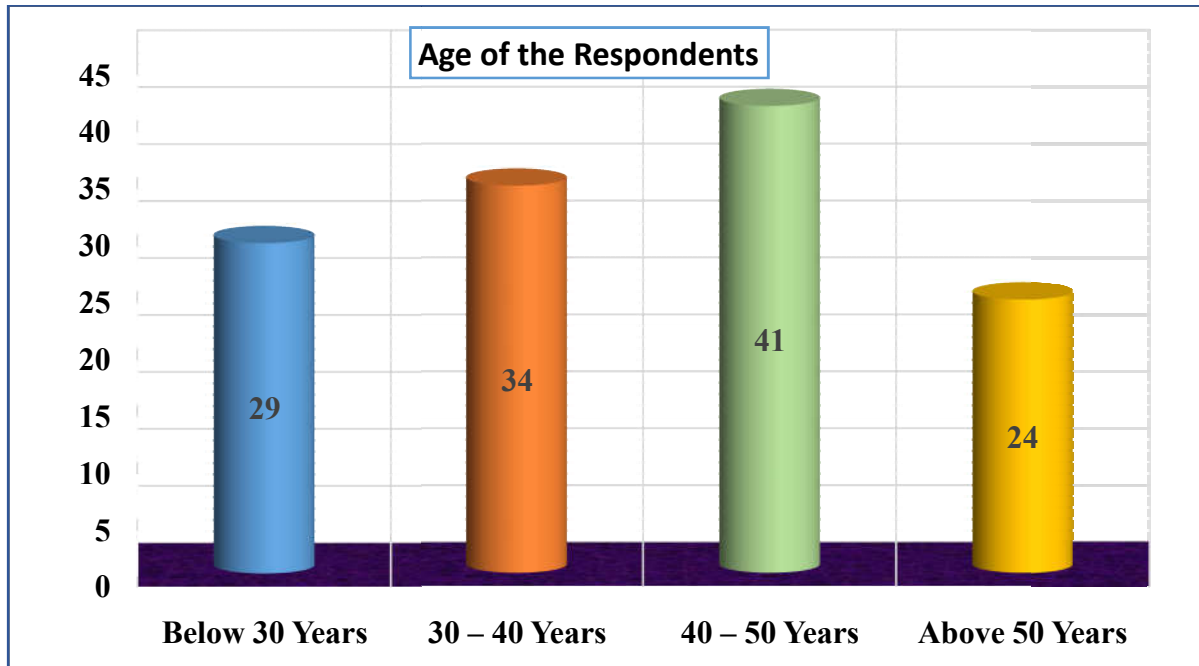


Figure 2: Age of the Respondents

Table 3 reveals the age-wise classification of respondents selected for the study. It is clear that a maximum of 41 respondents (31.78 per cent) belonged to the age group of 40 - 50 years, followed by 34 respondents (26.36 per cent) 30 -

40 years, 25 respondents (19.38 per cent), above 50 years and only 29 respondents (22.48 per cent) belonged to the age group of below 30 years.

Table 4: Frequency of Visits to the Public Library

Sl. No.	Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
	Frequency of Visit		
1.	Daily	33	25.58
2.	Two or Three times a week	31	24.03
3.	Weekly	25	19.38
4.	Monthly	22	17.05
5.	Occasionally	18	13.95
Total		129	100

(Source: Primary Data)

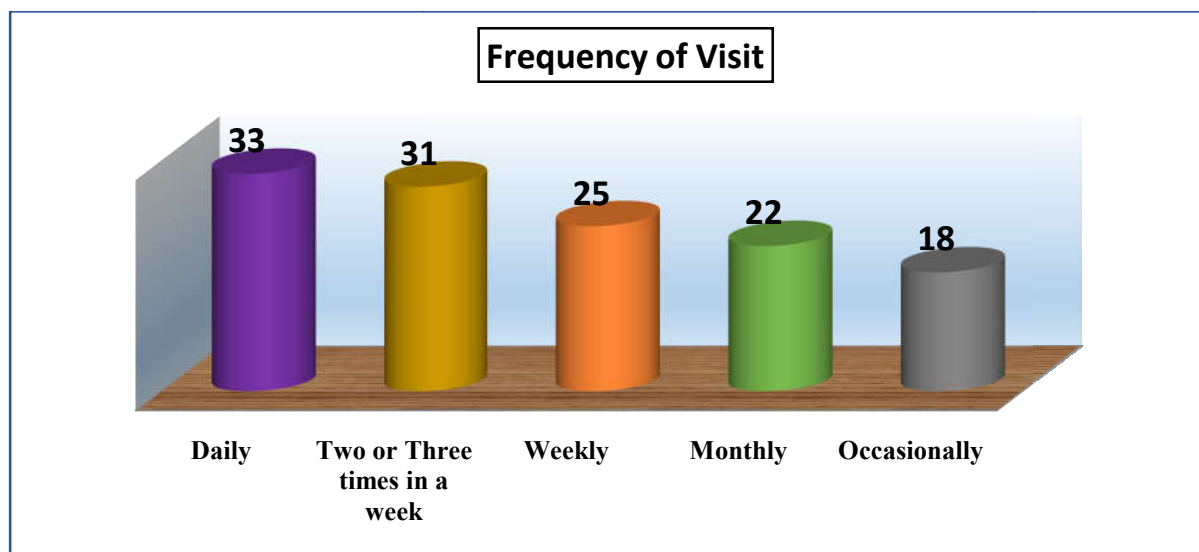


Figure 3: Frequency of Visits to the Public Library

The above table discloses respondents' frequency of visits to the public library. It is observed that a maximum of 33 respondents (25.58 per cent) daily go to the library, 24.03 per cent of respondents Two or Three times a week, and 19.38 per cent of respondents go to the

library once a week. Besides, 17.05 per cent of the respondents monthly go to the library. Only 18 respondents (13.95 per cent) occasionally go to the library, so most of the respondents go daily to the library to consult the reading materials.

Table 5: Respondents' Opinions about the infrastructural facilities, resources and services of the District Central Library in Thanjavur

Sl. No.	Variable	Mean	S.D	Co-Variation	"t" value	Rank
1.	Satisfied with the services and facilities of the library	3.843	0.825	21.468	55.133	I
2.	Appropriate institutions to provide services to the deprived	3.579	0.997	27.860	42.474	X
3.	Adequate infrastructural amenities	3.693	0.905	24.506	48.292	II
4.	Running as public information centre	3.743	1.020	27.252	43.399	VIII
5.	Proper support of library staff	3.714	0.977	26.304	45.001	IV
6.	Easy to find out the position of books.	3.657	0.927	25.348	46.661	III
7.	Online public access catalogue is very convenient	3.579	0.960	26.826	44.101	VII
8.	Help of computer counter facility	3.579	1.032	28.838	41.016	XII
9.	Proper certification services in the library	3.525	1.063	30.156	39.224	XIII
10.	Proper bibliographical facilities in the library	3.607	0.987	27.363	43.245	IX
11.	Obtainability of inter library loan	3.736	0.994	26.608	44.487	VI
12.	Readiness of latest publication of journals	3.543	1.013	28.592	41.366	XI
13.	Adequate reference books collection in	3.586	0.944	26.327	44.925	V

	the library					
14.	Enough reading materials are available in the library	3.479	1.128	32.427	36.481	XIV
15.	Proper prearrangement of books on the shelves	3.443	1.165	33.838	34.977	XV

Table 5 reveals the ranking of the respondents' responses about the infrastructural facilities, resources available and services provided by the district central library in Thanjavur. The first rank is given to the variable "Satisfied with the services and facilities of the library" with the "t"

value of 55.133, followed by the second rank given to the variable "Adequate infrastructural amenities" are available in the district central library and the third rank allotted to the variable "Easy to find out the position of books" with the "t" value of 46.661.

Table 6: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	384.683 ^a	47	8.185	15.760	.000
Intercept	228.531	1	228.531	440.039	.000
Age	22.256	4	5.564	10.714	.000
Education	7.137	4	1.784	3.436	.009
Religion	26.983	4	6.746	12.989	.000
Social Status	19.538	3	6.513	12.541	.000
Marital Status	11.111	4	2.778	5.349	.000
Family type	41.949	4	10.487	20.193	.000
Number of Depend	41.191	4	10.298	19.828	.000
Occupation	23.970	4	5.992	11.538	.000
Monthly Income	18.203	4	4.551	8.762	.000
Error	304.335	46	.519		
Total	5339.000	129			
Corrected Total	689.017	128			

a. R Squared = .558 (Adjusted R Squared = .523)

Dependent Variable: Respondents' Opinions about the infrastructural facilities, resources and services of the District Central Library in Thanjavur.

Table 6 divulges the two-way Annova results between the profile variables of the Respondents and their responses about the infrastructural facilities, resources and services of the District Central Library in Thanjavur. The "F" value for all the cases is more than the threshold level of 3, and the corresponding significance value is

less than 0.01 at a 99 per cent level of confidence. Hence it is concluded that there is a significant association between the profile variables of the Respondents and their responses about the infrastructural facilities, resources and services of the District Central Library in Thanjavur.

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.780 ^a	0.609	0.603	0.70349

a. Predictors: (Constant), Infrastructure of the library, Location, Staff cooperation, Resources of the library, Services offered

From the above table, R-value reveals the multiple correlations between the dependent variable satisfaction of users with the resources and services of district central library Thanjavur and the independent variable, their opinion about the infrastructural facilities, resources and benefits of the library. "R" value more than 0.4 is occupied for further analysis. In this case, the value is 0.780, which is good; R-square sights the total variation for the dependent variable that the independent variables could explain. A value greater than 0.5 shows that the model is

effective enough to regulate the relationship. In this case, the value is .609, which is also good. Adjusted R-square displays the simplification of the results, i.e. the variation of the sample results from the population in multiple regression. It is a prerequisite to have a difference between R-square and Adjusted R-square should be minimum. The value is 0.609, which is not far from 0.601, so it is good. Therefore, the model summary is okay to continue with the next step.

Table 8: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	478.396	12	39.866	70.566	0.000 ^b
	Residual	307.328	621	.495		
	Total	785.724	633			

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction of the Respondents.
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Infrastructure of the library, Location, Staff cooperation, Resources of the library, Services offered

F-ratio indicates perfection in the forecast of the variable by fitting the model after seeing the inexactness present in the model. A value greater than 3 for the F-ratio yield is capable of the model. In the above table, the value is 70.566,

which is good. These results estimate that as the p-value of the ANOVA table is below the tolerable significance level, thus there is a possibility of rejecting the null hypothesis in further analysis

Table 9: Inferential Statistics

Variables	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-1.041	0.182		-5.714	0.000
Infrastructure of the library	0.432	0.040	0.367	10.784	0.000***
Location	-0.061	0.045	-0.044	-1.354	0.176*
Staff cooperation	-0.016	0.037	-0.013	-0.418	0.676*
Resources of the library	0.270	0.029	0.269	9.166	0.000***
Services offered	0.238	0.037	0.217	6.380	0.000***

*** Significant at 1 per cent level, ** Significant at 5 per cent level, * Not Significant

Table 9 discloses how the independent variables "respondents' opinion about the infrastructural facilities, resources and services offered" influence the dependent variable satisfaction of respondents about the District central library, Thanjavur. Out of five variables selected for the study under this head, three variables affect the dependent variable "overall satisfaction of the respondents" since the "t" value of the independent variables is more than the precarious value of 1.96, and the equivalent significance value is less than 0.01 at 99 per cent level of the confidence level. Besides the location of the library and "staff cooperation, its "t" value is less than 1.96. The corresponding significance value is more than 0.05. Hence, this variable did not influence respondents' satisfaction with the resources and services of the district central library in Thanjavur.

FINDINGS

- The study revealed that a maximum of 72 respondents (55.81 per cent) were male and 57 (44.19 per cent) were female.
- It is clear that a maximum of 41 respondents (31.78 per cent) belonged to the age group of 40 - 50 years, followed by 34 respondents (26.36 per cent) 30 - 40 years, 25 respondents (19.38 per cent), above 50 years and only 29 respondents (22.48 per cent) belonged to the age group of below 30 years.
- It is observed that a maximum of 33 respondents (25.58 per cent) daily go to the library, 24.03 per cent of respondents Two or Three times a week, and 19.38 per cent of respondents go to the library once a week. Besides, 17.05 per cent of the respondents monthly go to the library. Only 18 respondents (13.95 per cent) occasionally go to the library, so most of the respondents go daily to the library to consult the reading materials.
- The first rank is given to the variable "Satisfied with the services and facilities of the library" with the "t" value of 55.133, followed by the second rank given to the variable "Adequate infrastructural amenities" are available in the district central library and the third rank allotted to

the variable "Easy to find out the position of books" with the "t" value of 46.661.

- The two-way Annova results between the profile variables of the Respondents and their responses about the infrastructural facilities, resources and services of the District Central Library in Thanjavur. The "F" value for all the cases is more than the threshold level of 3, and the corresponding significance value is less than 0.01 at a 99 per cent level of confidence. Hence it is concluded that there is a significant association between the profile variables of the Respondents and their responses about the infrastructural facilities, resources and services of the District Central Library in Thanjavur.
- Out of five variables selected for the study under this head, three variables influence the dependent variable "overall satisfaction of the respondents" since the "t" value of the independent variables is more than the precarious value of 1.96, and the equivalent significance value is less than 0.01 at 99 per cent level of the confidence level. Besides the location of the library and "staff cooperation, its "t" value is less than 1.96. The corresponding significance value is more than 0.05. Hence, this variable did not influence respondents' satisfaction with the resources and services of the district central library in Thanjavur.

SUGGESTIONS

- The location of the district central library should be accessible to all the sections of the people.
- A good reference book collection should be maintained in the library.
- Enough reading materials would be available in the library.
- The library professionals should assist the users in accessing their needed information.
- Proper prearrangement of books on the shelves.

CONCLUSION

Public libraries play a vital role in the development of human resources. It is one of the

services rendered by a public library. Human resources cannot be compared with the country's other natural resources, such as water, soil and mineral resources, because human resources are the nucleus of all other activities. Hence, the Government has to enrich human resources in all spheres. The part played by public libraries in enhancing human beings cannot be much emphasised. The primary purposes of the Public Library are to provide free service without any discrimination of Caste, Creed, Age, Gender, Language, Nationality and Status. Public Library service is meant for education, information, recreation, aesthetic appreciation and research.

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