



An International Journal (AMIJ)  
Singaporean Journal of Scientific Research(SJSR)  
Vol.11.No.1 2019 Pp. 6-16  
available at:www.sjsronline.com  
Paper Received :30-09-2019  
Paper Accepted:15-10-2019  
Paper Reviewed by: 1. Dr. P. Surya Prakash 2. Basu Reddy  
Editor : Dr. Binod Kumar

## **Awareness of Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviour of Public Library Users in Thanjavur District: A Study**

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### **Abstract**

The present study aims at understanding the awareness of information needs and information seeking behaviour of Public library users in Thanjavur district. Out of 150 questionnaires randomly distributed to the respondents, 120 duly filled in questionnaires were received and taken to the analysis. The study reveals that: Majority of the respondents were male. The majority of users in the public libraries in Thanjavur district are the employees followed by the students. 26 (22%) respondents are students followed by 17 (14%) respondents who are the farmers. While 62 (52%) respondents are employees, 15 (12%) respondents are businessmen. 31 (26%) respondents expressed that their level of satisfaction on library services was excellent followed by 50 (42%) respondents rating the satisfaction level as good. While 30(25%) respondents are just satisfied with the level of library services being rendered, 09 (07%) respondents expressed their dissatisfaction on the library services.

**Keywords:** Information Seeking Behavior, Public library services, Frequency of library visits, Method of searching.

### **Introduction**

The Public library is a social institution which is based on the concept of democracy and it is an institution for the people, by the people and of the people. The public library, always strives to meet the

informational, educational and recreational needs of the community by providing collection and services. Maximum utilization of library resources and services by the users is the main motive of a public library. Libraries add value to our community and serve as cultural centers for the users. In a society of lifelong learning, whether on a formal or informal nature, public libraries will be nodes connecting the local learning setting with the global resources of information and knowledge. In this view public libraries play an essentially important role in the development of future systems of lifetime learning. The development of the information and communication technology has already set the basis for the creation of information networks, which gives users of public library access to the worldwide sources of information.

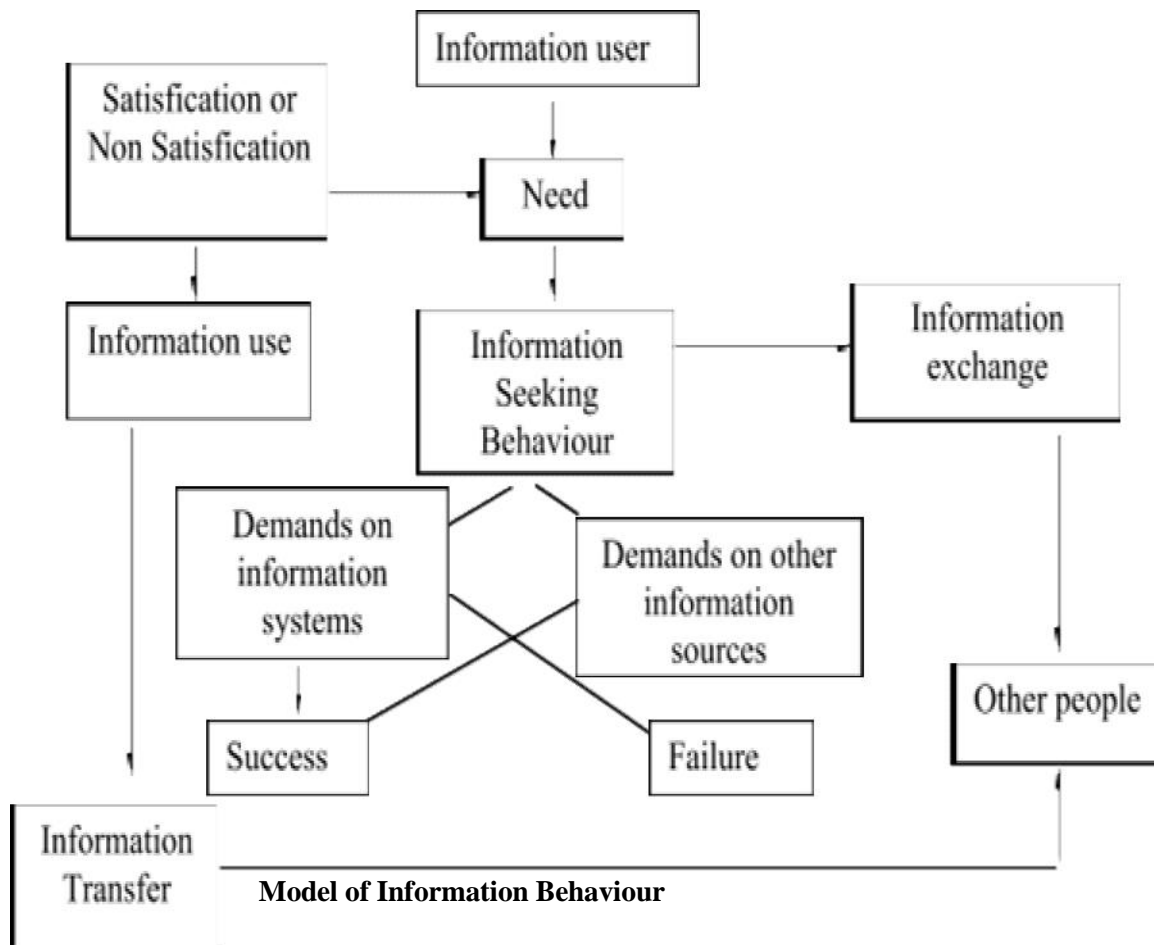
### **Information and User Need**

A gap in a person's knowledge, when knowledgeable at the conscious level as a question, gives rise to a search for an answer. But the need is urgent, the search may be pursued with diligence until the desire is satisfied. The present century is treated as an era of information revolution and libraries are slowly changing their face and migrating towards the use of electronic information sources. Acquiring these different forms of e-resources has a vast choice of selection and ways. Users are overloaded with the information explosion and they are in the need of pinpointed as well as accurate information.

### **Information in search of Behavior**

Information seeking behaviour is a broad term “surrounding the ways individuals clear their information needs, seek, evaluate, select, and use information”.

Information seeking behaviour refers to “any action of a person that is undertaken to identify a message that fulfilled a perceived need.” –Kirkels Wilson model hand provides the following model to explain the process.



### **Public Library in Thanjavur District**

The Public Library of Thanjavur was conventional during the year 1915 which is a century year old. It has a vast collection of books, including text, reference, fiction, novels, e-resources and also it has internet access facilities. It is like a knowledge hub for their clients. The Thanjavur District Library was started on 06.08.1953. The new building was followed the newly constructed two-storey building near the art Gallery in the year 1981. The district center is located in the center of Thanjavur City. Total books in this library are 140156. The most ancient texts are located in the district center. 64 branch libraries, 33 village library and one mobile library are located in the Thanjavur district.

### **Public Library Services**

#### **❖ Mobile Library Service**

The mobile libraries distribute a library service to rural communities that do not have access to our division library service. The mobile libraries carry a wide collection of adult and children's books, along with books on tape, free Internet access and a free request service for books not in stock. The mobile library brings the local influence service to the heart of the rural community. It is a service that places a high precedence on answering the needs of the individual resident in the rural community.

#### **❖ Library Services for Researchers and Students**

The researcher or research student (full and part time) you have access to a superlative collection of online resources. Then high quality and trusted resources will facilitate you to discover subjects or carrying out exhaustively research and include resources such as:

- academic journals
- newspapers
- Academic books.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- ❖ To provide gender-wise and Age wise distribution of the respondents
- ❖ To list the primary purpose of using the library by the respondents
- ❖ To identify the frequency of library usage by the respondents
- ❖ To identify the Category of the respondents
- ❖ To rate the Level of satisfaction of library services

### **Review of literature**

Parvathamma and Reddy (2009) existing a review on use of information resources and services in the public libraries of Bidar District, karnataka State, India which showed that a majority of the users were men between the age group of 11- 30 years and they included students, unemployed youth or employees in private sector, belonging to lower and middle income group. They spent less than one hour in the library and inconvenient timing was the main reason for not visiting the library more frequently books and magazines, friends/teacher and radio / television were the information channels most frequently used to satisfy their information needs.

Esmail, Kavitha, and Mallika (2010) less than take a study of performance evaluation of information sources and services at the District central library, Thanjavur. The objectives were to find out the extent of professional visits, per capita time spent during visits, purposes, use of various collections and services by the respondents. The size of the sample was 280. The study adopted cluster sampling. The data were collected through a questionnaire. The summary of findings stated that a majority visited the library during evening hours. More than 72 percent were found to be satisfied with the various services offered by the District Central Public Library Thanjavur.

Deshpande (2000) calculated the significance of public libraries in developing countries and has pointed out the salient characteristics of a public library and grass root services. The services which can be offered to the public are detailed in the study, which are educating the illiterates, providing information services for women, giving children's service, conducting adult education classes, providing information on social evils, giving information service to the farmers, creating science temper, and providing information services to the disadvantaged.

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Kumaresan and Chitra (2003) discussed with reference to the role of agricultural information centers in providing information to the farmers about the crop, manure and other related details. However, villagers who are dependent on professions other than agriculture for livelihood have no such facility that fulfils their information requirements. Twenty five villages in the state of Tamil Nadu have been studied to evaluate the need for rural information centres.

### **Methodology**

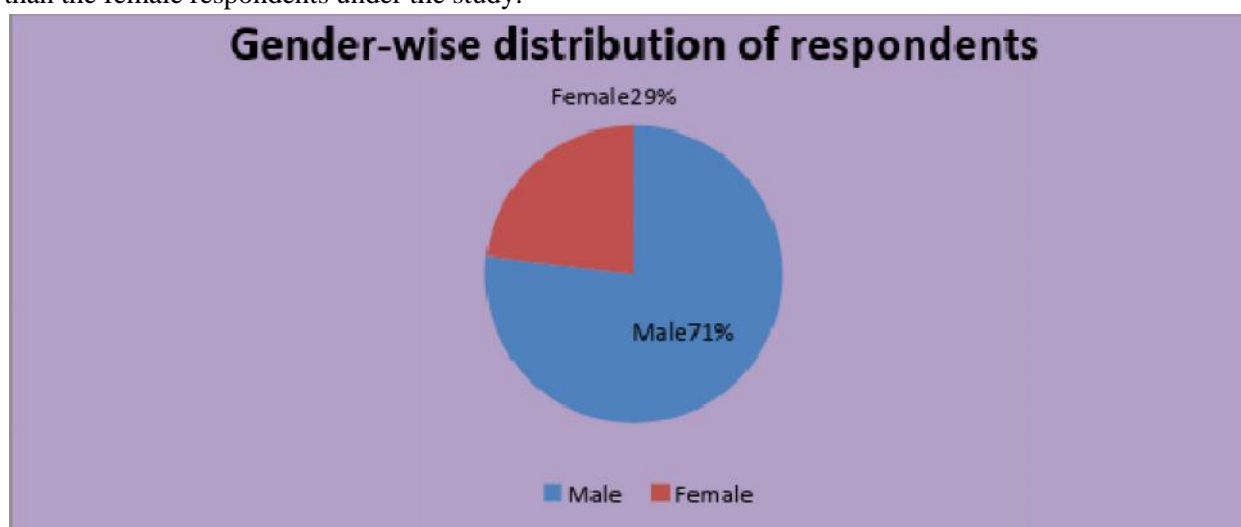
This study was based on stratified random sampling method adopted for Primary data collection. Accordingly a structured questionnaire was prepared keeping in mind the basic objectives of the study. A total number of 150 questionnaires were distributed among the public libraries users in Thanjavur district. Out of which, the author received 120 filled in questionnaires. They filled up schedules were collected from the respondents for data analysis and interpretations. The data collected will be tabulated and interpreted using simple statistical technique to arrive at the valid inferences and conclusions.

**Analysis of Data**

**Table 1: Gender-wise distribution of respondents**

S.No	Sex	No. of respondents	%
01	Male	85	71
02	Female	35	29
<b>Total</b>		<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

The above Table No 1 shows the gender –wise is distribution of the respondents. 71% are male respondents and. 29% are female respondents. The above table shows that male respondents are more than the female respondents under the study.

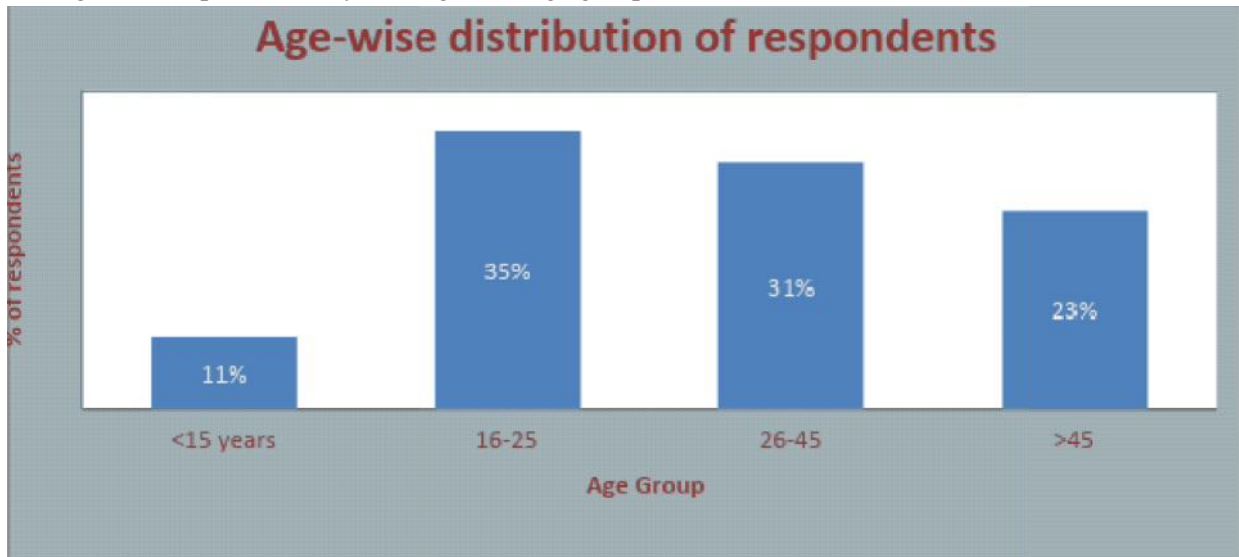


**Figure 1: Gender-wise distribution of respondents**

**Table 2: Age-wise distribution of respondents**

S.No	Age ( in Ranges)	No. of respondents	%
01	<15 years	13	11
02	16-25	42	35
03	26-45	37	31
04	>45	28	23
<b>Total</b>		<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table 2 represents the age- wise distribution of the respondents. 11% of the respondents belong to <15 age group, 35% respondents are in 16-25 age group followed 31 % respondents in 26-45 age group and 23% respondents are > 45 age group. Thus, most of the respondents, visiting the rural public library, belong to the age group 16-25.

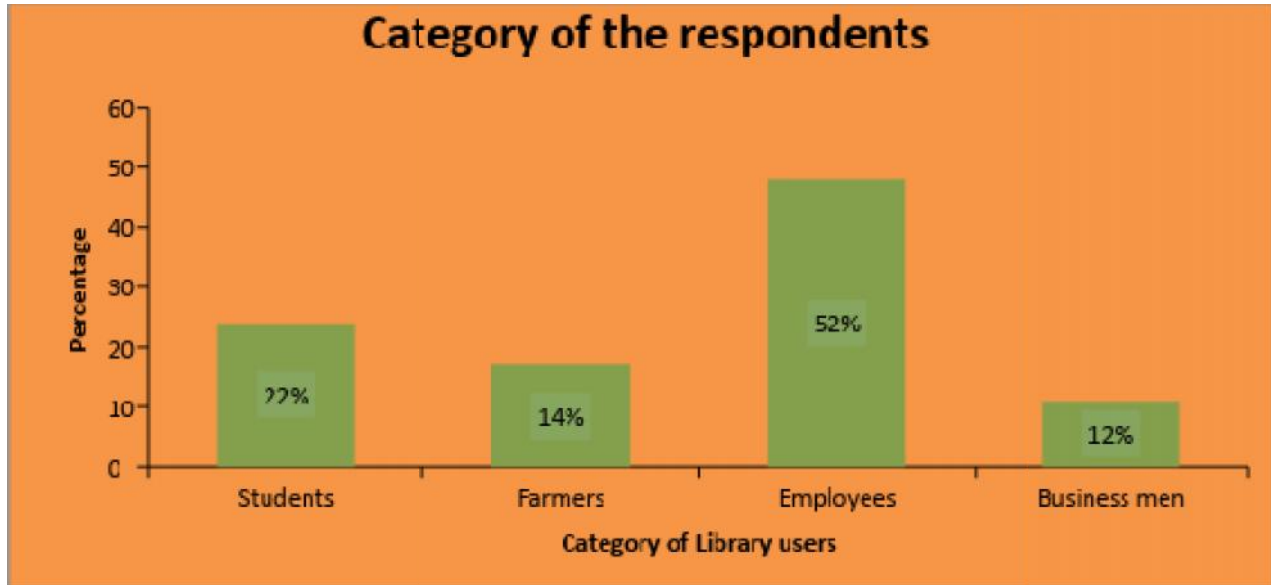


**Figure 2: Age-wise distribution of respondents**

**Table 3: Category of the respondents**

S.No	Category of the users	No. of respondents	%
01	Students	26	22
02	Farmers	17	14
03	Employees	62	52
04	Business men	15	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

The Table -5 indicates that 26 (22%) respondents are students followed by 17 (14%) respondents who are the farmers. While 62 (52%) respondents are employees, 15 (12%) respondents are businessmen. The majority of users in the public libraries in Thanjavur district are the employees followed by the students.

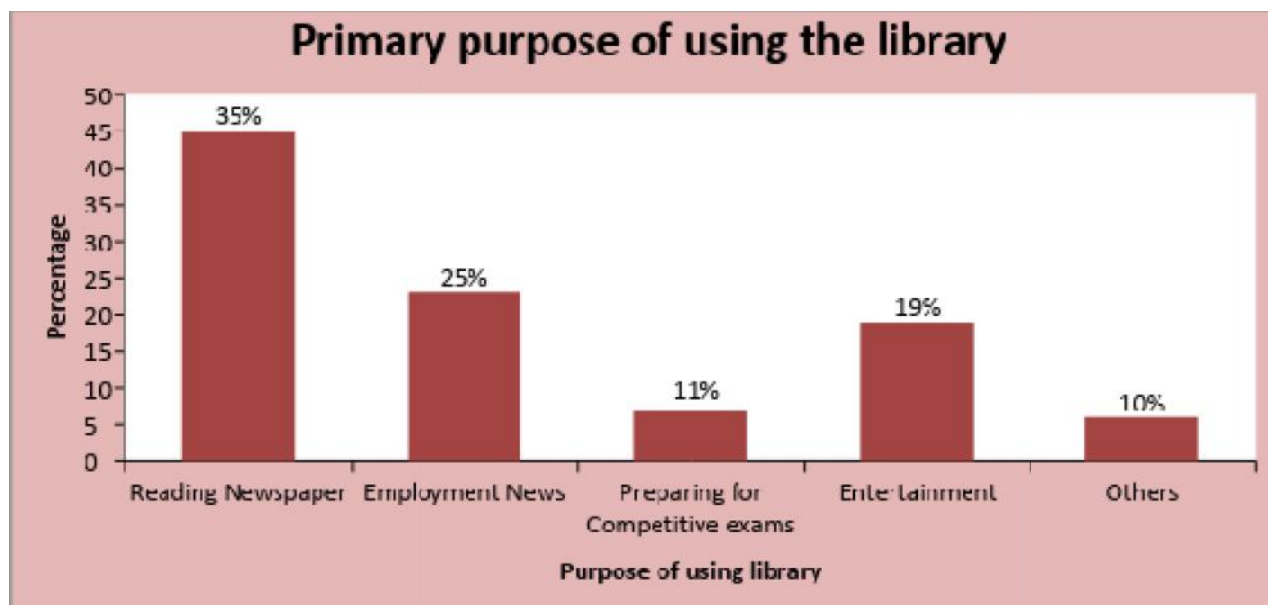


**Figure 3: Category of the respondents**

**Table 4: Primary purpose of using the library**

S.No	Purpose of using library	No. of responses	%
01	Reading Newspaper	42	35
02	Employment News	30	25
03	Preparing for Competitive exams	13	11
04	Entertainment	23	19
05	Others	12	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

It is clear from the above the table depicting the purpose of using library, 35% of the respondents visits the library for reading the newspaper followed by 25% of the respondents for getting information on Employment opportunities. While 11% of the respondents use the library for preparing themselves for various competitive exams, 19% of the respondents come to library to gather some entertainment news. Thus, primary purpose of the respondents in visiting the library is to read newspaper – thus seeking information in current affairs has been the main motive behind the visits.



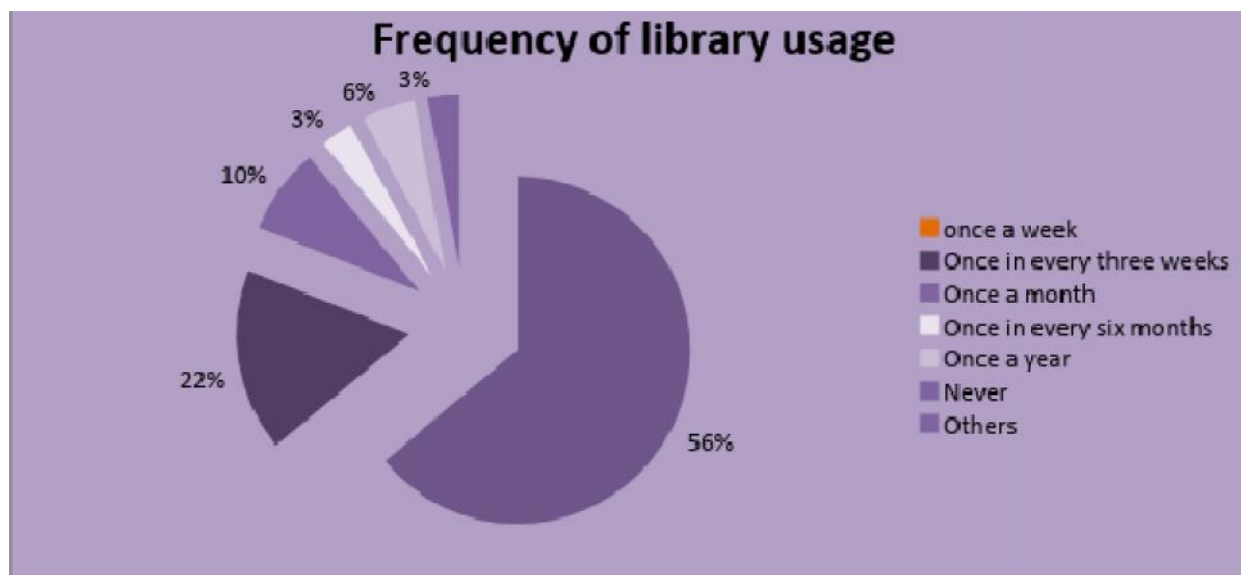
**Figure 4: Primary purpose of using the library**

**Table 5: Frequency of library usage**

S.No	Frequency	No. of respondents	%
01	once a week	66	56
02	Once in every three weeks	27	22
03	Once a month	12	10
04	Once in every six months	04	03
05	Once a year	07	06
06	Never	04	03
<b>Total</b>		<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above table, it is evident that 66 (56%) respondents visit the library once a week followed by 27 (22%) respondents who visit the library every three weeks. 12 (10%) respondents visit the library only once a month. Thus, the majority of users of public libraries in Thanjavur district visit the library once a week.



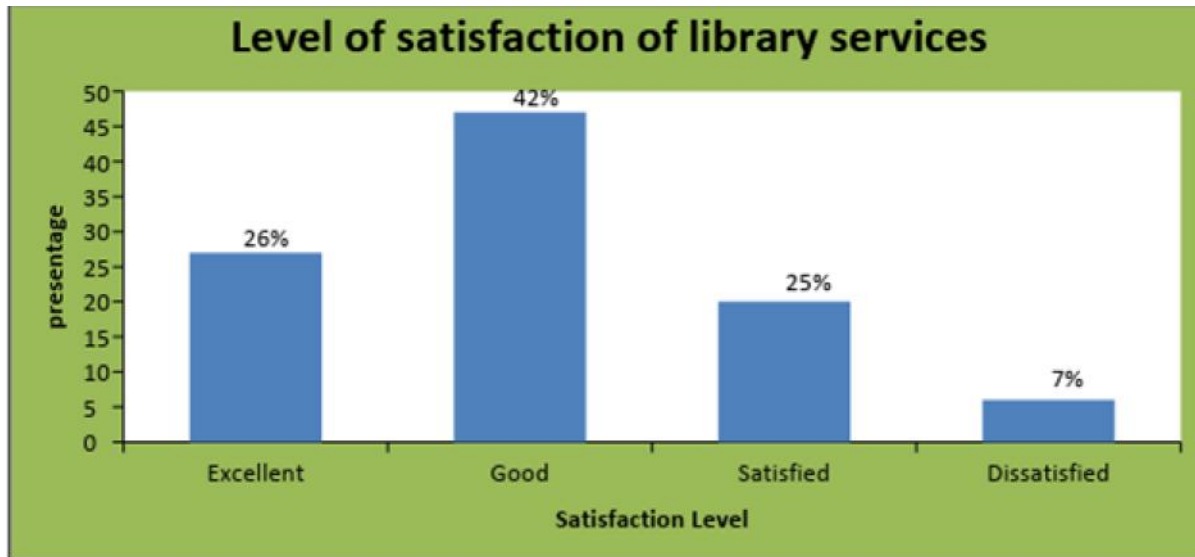


**Figure: 5 Frequency of library usage**

**Table 6: Level of satisfaction of library services**

S.No	Satisfaction Level	No. of respondents	%
01	Excellent	31	26
02	Good	50	42
03	Satisfied	30	25
04	Dissatisfied	09	07
<b>Total</b>		<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

It makes it clear from Table 6: that 31 (26%) respondents expressed that their level of satisfaction on library services was excellent followed by 50 (42%) respondents rating the satisfaction level as good. While 30(25%) respondents are just satisfied with the level of library services being rendered, 09 (07%) respondents expressed their dissatisfaction on the library services.



**Figure 6: Level of satisfaction of library services**

### **Findings**

- ❖ (71%) Most of the respondents belong to the male in Gender wise category.
- ❖ (35%) Majority of the respondents are in years age group.
- ❖ (52%) Majority of the respondents employees are in primary purpose of using the library.
- ❖ (35%) Most of the respondents visits the library for reading the newspaper.
- ❖ (56%) Majority of the respondents are in library once a week.
- ❖ (42%) of the respondents belong to the Satisfaction level of library services of Good

### **Conclusion**

Public libraries are expected to provide people-oriented services, aiming at satisfying the general public through the provision of appropriate information resources and services, such as advisory services, strategic leadership, and information on local content that incorporates indigenous knowledge system into it. The Study “Information needs and information seeking behavior of public library users in Thanjavur district” has covered overall opinion of the users about reading habits, resources, facilities and services in the library.

From this study, the frequency of library visits of the users shows that majority of the students and unemployment people are regular visitors. The purpose of library visits indicates that the majority of the users visit the library to borrow books and gathering job opportunities. So, it is important to note that books are the major information sources of the public library users. The study has justified its objectives looking at identifying the information needs of the

users of public. Library user preferred source of information and find out the problems faced by public libraries and the satisfaction of public library users. It is also found that the satisfaction users approach the library for getting educational information and books are the main sources of information. From this study, it is concluded that the majority of the users depend on the public library for their local information needs. It considered the libraries as centers for their formal and non-formal education and repository of the knowledge.

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