Challenges and Opportunities in Promoting Public Library Services in Mysore City, Karnataka

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Abstract - The marketing of library resources and services is a vital activity in any library, particularly public libraries. This activity is essential for enhancing the visibility of public library resources and services to users. The present study examines users' perceptions regarding the use and marketing of public library resources and services in Mysore City. The objectives of the study include identifying the format of public library collections, understanding the use of public libraries by various communities, determining the methods or modes used to learn about library resources and services, assessing users' satisfaction levels with the quality of services, and exploring reasons for the limited use of public library services. A survey research method was employed, and a questionnaire was administered to 830 users of 20 public libraries in Mysore City. The study achieved a response rate of 88%. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents were male (524, 63.1%). Approximately 81.9% of respondents reported visiting public libraries daily, and 99% of respondents stated they visit the library to prepare for competitive examinations. The highest number of respondents identified books as the primary format of library resources. "Reference Service" and "Periodical and Magazine Section" were the most preferred services, with mean scores of 4.76 and 4.35, respectively. "Word of Mouth" and "User Orientation Program" were the most frequently used methods by respondents to learn about public library resources and services, with mean scores of 3.93 and 3.84, respectively. The study concludes that public libraries should systematically classify and organize their resources to facilitate the intensive use of library resources.

Keywords: Public Libraries, Library Resources and Services, User Perceptions, Marketing Strategies, Mysore City

I. INTRODUCTION

Marketing is a key concept in the services of any library, particularly public libraries. A public library serves as a "university for the public," accessible to all regardless of educational qualifications, caste, creed, gender, or other distinctions. According to UNESCO, a public library is a "living force for popular education," and the Public Library Manifesto of 1949 emphasizes that the public library is a dynamic part of community life. Although several marketing strategies exist to promote the usage of library resources and services, the majority of public libraries do not maintain a marketing culture for these resources and services.

Therefore, the present study seeks to understand users' perceptions regarding the use and marketing of public library resources and services in Mysore City, with the aim of assisting library users in fulfilling their information needs.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review of previous studies on users' perceptions regarding the use and marketing of public library resources and services indicates that more than 90% of undergraduate and postgraduate students utilized public libraries during contact classes. Additionally, 54.4% of students spent 0–1 hour in the library, and 65.1% of students borrowed books from public libraries to seek information (Mahesh & Kumari, 2018). Egwuonwu, Obiekwe, and Ekpeha (2022) examined the literacy level of users of Kenneth Dike E. Central Library and found that services such as consultancy and exhibitions play a significant role in promoting literacy levels among public library users. Similarly, Salzano, Brazier, Hall, and Webster (2022) identified that public libraries provide various services to forced migrants, facilitating their integration into the host country.

Madu, Onyeneke, and Azubogu (2017) investigated ten public libraries and found that library services significantly contribute to community development efforts in Nigeria. Hider, Wakeling, Marshall, and Garner (2024) conducted a survey of 100 Australian outer regional and remote public library managers, focusing on the value, issues, and challenges associated with library users and their services. Enamudu, Akannam, Odunsi, and Olatunji (2021) explored the impact of public library services on educational transformation in Oyo State. They found that most users patronize the library occasionally, with lending, reference, and user education services being the major services provided. The study revealed that awareness of library services was limited to a few offerings, with the lack of information literacy skills emerging as a significant challenge.

Kumara and Nikam (2012) used a survey method to investigate young adults' perceptions of public library services. Their findings indicated that young adult users held positive views and were generally satisfied with public library services. Similarly, Mangla (2014) examined the present and future of public library services in the National

Capital Territory of Delhi, emphasizing the importance of public library legislation and the key feature of free public library services. Chukwusa (2022) identified the lack of funds and qualified librarians as major challenges faced by public libraries in Delta State, Nigeria. The study recommended that the government implement an effective library policy and appoint qualified librarians to enhance public library services. Kinya (2011) investigated the manpower in the public library system in Kenya.

The study found that users utilized both online resources and website services, with the role of public librarians evolving from information provision to information services. It also highlighted issues related to the qualifications, development, and distribution of manpower in Kenyan libraries. Obi (2023) evaluated network security measures for preserving resources in the public libraries of Rivers State.

The study, which collected data from 399 library professionals, identified firewall protection and secure logins as essential measures for ensuring library network security. The study recommended implementing additional training programs for library professionals on network security measures. Finally, Demekaa, Tyonum, and Demekaa (2015) evaluated users' satisfaction with circulation policies in public university libraries in the North Central Zone of Nigeria. The findings revealed no significant difference in satisfaction levels between federal and state-owned universities regarding loan periods, reservation policies, library holdings, fines, borrower cards, and library opening hours.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the extent of use of public library collections.
2. To examine the extent of public library usage by various communities.
3. To identify the methods or modes used to learn about library resources and services.
4. To assess the satisfaction level of users in terms of service quality.
5. To explore the reasons for the lack of intensive use of public library services.

IV. METHODOLOGY

In the present study, a survey research method was employed to investigate users' perceptions regarding the use and marketing of public library resources and services in Mysore City. A structured questionnaire was designed for data collection, and 940 questionnaires were distributed to users of the 20 public libraries located in Mysore City.

A total of 830 completed questionnaires were returned, resulting in an overall response rate of 88.29%. The study covered one main branch of the city central public library

and 19 sub-branches of city central libraries. The researcher personally visited all 20 city central libraries to distribute the questionnaires and collect the responses directly from the users. The data collected were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques and are interpreted in the succeeding sections of the paper.

V. RESULT AND DATA ANALYSIS

A. Gender Wise Distribution

TABLE I GENDER WISE DISTRIBUTION

Sl. No.	Gender	Frequency (N=830)	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
1	Male	524	63.1	63.1
2	Female	306	36.9	100
	Total	830	100	

The gender-wise distribution of public library users is presented in Table I. As shown in the table, the majority of respondents were male, comprising 524 (63.1%), followed by 306 (36.9%) respondents in the female category.

B. Frequency of Visit to Public Library

TABLE II FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Sl. No.	Frequency of Visit	Frequency (N=830)	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
1	Daily	680	81.9	81.9
2	At least once in a week	96	11.6	93.5
3	Once in a month	22	2.7	96.1
4	Rarely	32	3.9	100
	Total	830	100	

Table II shows the frequency of visits to public libraries by the respondents. The table indicates that the majority of respondents (81.9%) visit public libraries daily. Additionally, 11.6% of respondents visit the libraries at least once a week, followed by 3.9% who visit rarely and 2.7% who visit once a month.

C. Reason for Visit to Public Libraries

Table III presents the reasons for visiting public libraries. The table indicates that "to prepare for competitive examinations" (99%) and "to improve general knowledge" (95.5%) were the primary reasons for library visits. Additionally, 84.1% of respondents visited libraries to find information about employment, while 49.2% visited to spend leisure time.

The table also shows that only 32.5% of respondents visited libraries to access the Internet, followed by 24.1% who visited "to find information for research."

TABLE III REASON FOR VISIT TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Sl. No.	Reason for Visit	Frequency (N=830)		Percentage (%)	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1	To prepare for competitive examinations	822	8	99	1
2	To improve general knowledge	790	40	95.2	4.8
3	To read newspapers & magazines	776	54	93.5	6.5
4	To find information about employment	698	132	84.1	15.9
5	To spend leisurely time	408	422	49.2	50.8
6	To access Internet	270	560	32.5	67.5
7	To find information for research	200	630	24.1	75.9

D. Extent of Use of Format of Public Library Collections

The extent of use of the formats of public library collections is presented in Table IV. The table indicates that the majority of respondents (mean = 4.1) preferred books as the primary format of the library collection. Newspapers, periodicals, and popular magazines were the next most preferred formats, with a mean score of 3.90, followed by electronic books (mean = 3.56), online databases (mean = 2.24), digital information through the Internet (mean = 2.23), and digital libraries (mean = 2.11). Other formats included large print materials/resources (mean = 2.07), compact discs and digital versatile discs (CDs & DVDs) and Blu-rays (mean = 2.06). The table also reveals that audiobooks (mean = 1.51) and videocassettes (mean = 1.47) were used by the fewest respondents. Additionally, microforms and Braille materials were not used by any respondents.

TABLE IV EXTENT OF USE OF FORMAT OF PUBLIC LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

Sl. No.	Formats	Freq.	Too Little Extent	Little Extent	To Moderate Extent	To a Great Extent	To a very Great Extent	Mean	SD
1	Books	F	26	12	22	34	736	4.74	0.84
		%	3.1	1.4	2.7	4.1	88.7		
2	Newspapers and periodicals and Popular Magazines	F	98	58	80	190	404	3.90	1.38
		%	11.8	7	9.6	22.9	48.7		
3	Electronic books	F	122	116	110	136	346	3.56	1.50
		%	14.7	14	13.3	16.4	41.7		
4	Digital Library	F	204	442	108	40	36	2.11	0.97
		%	24.6	53.3	13	4.8	4.3		
5	Digital information through the Internet	F	172	456	90	60	52	2.23	1.06
		%	20.7	54.9	10.8	7.2	6.3		
6	Online Databases	F	172	446	96	76	40	2.24	1.03
		%	20.7	53.7	11.6	9.2	4.8		
7	Compact Discs & Digital Versatile Discs (CDs & DVDs) &Blu-Rays	F	252	396	94	56	32	2.06	1.02
		%	30.4	47.7	11.3	6.7	3.9		
8	Microforms	F	830	0	0	0	0	1	0
		%	100	0	0	0	0		
9	Videocassettes	F	636	78	54	46	16	1.47	0.97
		%	76.6	9.4	6.5	5.5	1.9		
10	Braille materials	F	830	0	0	0	0	1	0
		%	100	0	0	0	0		
11	Audio books	F	602	122	44	36	26	1.51	1
		%	72.5	14.7	5.3	4.3	3.1		
12	Large Print Materials/Resources	F	280	366	60	92	32	2.07	1.09
		%	33.7	44.1	7.2	11.1	3.9		

TABLE V EXTENT OF USE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES SERVICES

Sl. No.	Services	Freq.	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Most Frequently	Mean	SD
1	Reference Service	F	20	16	30	14	750	4.76	0.81
		%	2.4	1.9	3.6	1.7	90.4		
2	Periodical and Magazine Section	F	0	108	80	58	584	4.35	1.10
		%	0	13	9.6	7	70.4		
3	Newspaper Clipping	F	116	48	76	118	472	3.94	1.47
		%	14	5.8	9.2	14.2	56.9		
4	Library OPAC or Web Search Facilities	F	128	68	102	110	422	3.76	1.51
		%	15.4	8.2	12.3	13.3	50.8		
5	Career Guidance	F	0	82	70	574	104	3.84	0.76
		%	0	9.9	8.4	69.2	12.5		
6	Library Web Service (OPAC/lending and renewal/ reference service/chat box etc)	F	154	58	94	90	434	3.71	1.58
		%	18.6	7	11.3	10.8	52.3		
7	Internet Access for general public	F	130	92	98	124	386	3.66	1.52
		%	15.7	11.1	11.8	14.9	46.5		
8	Open Reference Section	F	156	70	94	98	412	3.65	1.59
		%	18.8	8.4	11.3	11.8	49.6		
9	Referral Service (Guide to nearby library or other information Centres)	F	134	82	128	128	358	3.60	1.51
		%	16.1	9.9	15.4	15.4	43.1		
10	Community Development Related Service	F	178	72	102	82	396	3.54	1.63
		%	21.4	8.7	12.3	9.9	47.7		
11	Reading Room Facilities	F	0	70	548	82	130	3.33	0.84
		%	0	8.4	66.0	9.9	15.7		
12	Circulation (Book Lending Service) Desk	F	230	70	74	366	90	3.02	1.44
		%	27.7	8.4	8.9	44.1	10.8		
13	New Arrival Display	F	0	388	254	60	128	2.91	1.07
		%	0	46.7	30.6	7.2	15.4		
14	Adult Education program	F	238	86	506	0	0	2.32	0.89
		%	28.7	10.4	61	0	0		
15	Public Digital Library Access	F	552	110	60	58	50	1.73	1.22
		%	66.5	13.3	7.2	7	6		
16	Children's Section	F	354	384	92	0	0	1.68	0.66
		%	42.7	46.3	11.1	0	0		
17	Braille Facilities for visually impaired	F	752	42	20	10	6	1.16	0.59
		%	90.6	5.1	2.4	1.2	0.7		
18	Inter-library loan	F	830	0	0	0	0	1	0
		%	100	0	0	0	0		
19	Book Bank facilities	F	830	0	0	0	0	1	0
		%	100	0	0	0	0		

E. Extent of Use of Public Libraries Services

The extent of use of public library services by users is presented in Table V. The parameters selected to assess the extent of use of public library services are arranged in rank order based on their mean values. As shown in the table, "Reference Service, "Periodical and Magazine Section," and "Newspaper Clipping" are the most preferred services by users, with mean values of 4.76, 4.35, and 3.94, respectively. Users also indicated that "Library OPAC or Web Search Facilities," "Career Guidance," and "Library Web Service" are the next most preferred services, with

mean values of 3.76, 3.84, and 3.71, respectively. Other services included "Internet Access for the General Public" (mean = 3.66), "Open Reference Section" (mean = 3.60), "Referral Service" (mean = 3.54), "Community Development-Related Service" (mean = 3.33). "Reading Room Facilities" (mean= 3.02), "Circulation (Book Lending Service) Desk" (mean = 2.91), "New Arrival Display" (mean = 2.91), and "Adult Education Program"

(mean = 2.32The table also shows that "Public Digital Library Access" (mean = 1.73), the "Children's Section" (mean = 1.68), and "Braille Facilities for the Visually Impaired" (mean = 1.16) are the least used public library services. Furthermore, no respondents reported using certain public library services, such as "Internet Library Loan" and "Book Bank Facilities."

TABLE VI FREQUENCY OF USE OF METHODS OR MODE TO KNOW THE LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Sl. No.	Tools and Techniques	Freq.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Mean	SD
1	Word of mouth	F	26	14	20	700	70	3.93	0.67
		%	3.1	1.7	2.4	84.3	8.4		
2	User orientation program	F	32	32	18	702	46	3.84	0.74
		%	3.9	3.9	2.2	84.6	5.5		
3	Poster/Signage Display	F	102	76	172	90	390	3.71	1.44
		%	12.3	9.2	20.7	10.8	47		
4	Through Exhibitions/Book fairs	F	100	94	156	98	382	3.68	1.45
		%	12	11.3	18.8	11.8	46		
5	Department/Library website	F	124	66	166	96	378	3.65	1.48
		%	14.9	8	20	11.6	45.5		
6	Conference/seminars/public meetings	F	140	94	138	88	370	3.55	1.54
		%	16.9	11.3	16.6	10.6	44.6		
7	Annual Reports/Newsletter	F	118	120	114	398	80	3.24	1.23
		%	14.2	14.5	13.7	48	9.6		
8	Notice board/bulletin boards	F	12	20	722	18	58	3.11	0.61
		%	1.4	2.4	87	2.2	7		
9	Publicity Materials Brochures/pamphlets	F	30	18	706	12	64	3.07	0.70
		%	3.6	2.2	85.1	1.4	7.7		
10	Advertisement in newspapers/magazines	F	20	18	712	56	24	3.06	0.55
		%	2.4	2.2	85.8	6.7	2.9		
11	Through SMS (Mobile Phone)	F	174	0	506	58	92	2.87	1.16
		%	21	0	61	7	11.1		
12	E-mail notifications	F	150	62	484	94	40	2.77	1.03
		%	18.1	7.5	58.3	11.3	4.8		
13	Through TV Channels: Govt. run public broadcast service (DD Chandana) Private TV channels	F	136	102	506	56	30	2.69	0.95
		%	16.4	12.3	61	6.7	3.6		
14	Public Lectures in school/ colleges/universities/general public	F	150	104	480	56	40	2.68	1
		%	18.1	12.5	57.8	6.7	4.8		
15	Through Reading clubs	F	128	170	428	68	36	2.66	0.98
		%	15.4	20.5	51.6	8.2	4.3		
16	Through Radio channels FM Radio Akashavani	F	156	108	498	38	30	2.61	0.96
		%	18.8	13.0	60	4.6	3.6		
17	Information Literacy Programs	F	162	420	170	40	38	2.24	0.97
		%	19.5	50.6	20.5	4.8	4.6		

F. Frequency of Use of Methods or Mode to Know the Library Resources and Services

Table VI presents the frequency of use of methods or modes for learning about library resources and services. As shown in the table, "Word of Mouth," "User Orientation Program,"

and "Poster/Signage Display" are the most frequently used methods by respondents to learn about public library resources and services, with mean values of 3.93, 3.84, and 3.71, respectively. The next most preferred methods are "Through Exhibitions/Book Fairs" (mean = 3.68), "Department/Library Website" (mean = 3.65),

"Conference/Seminars/Public Meetings" (mean = 3.55), and "Annual Reports/Newsletters" (mean = 3.24), followed by "Notice Board/Bulletin Boards" (mean = 3.11), "Publicity Materials (Brochures/Pamphlets)" (mean = 3.07), and "Advertisement in Newspapers/Magazines" (mean = 3.06). The table also shows that, in addition to traditional methods,

respondents also use various alternative methods to learn about library resources and services, such as SMS (Mobile Phone) (mean = 2.87), email notifications (mean = 2.77), TV Channels (mean = 2.69), public lectures (mean = 2.68), reading clubs (mean = 2.66), radio channels (mean = 2.61), and information literacy programs (mean = 2.24).

TABLE VII LIBRARY-USER RELATIONSHIP

Sl. No.	Statements		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
1	This library is trying to make available new Information resources and services to its users	F	122	88	78	106	436	3.78	1.52
		%	14.7	10.6	9.4	12.8	52.5		
2	Library staff encourages the users to use library independently	F	102	58	492	128	50	2.96	0.98
		%	12.3	7	59.3	15.4	6		
3	Library staff gives individual attention to the users	F	104	100	434	110	82	2.96	1.07
		%	12.5	12	52.3	13.3	9.9		
4	Library staff has knowledge to answer users' questions	F	116	58	514	92	50	2.88	0.98
		%	14	7	61.9	11.1	6		

G. Library-User Relationship

Table VII presents the library-user relationship in public libraries. As shown in the table, the majority of respondents (mean = 3.78) stated, "This library is trying to make available new information resources and services to its users."

The next largest group of respondents opined that "Library staff encourages users to use the library independently" and "Library staff gives individual attention to users," both with a mean value of 2.96. This was followed by "Library staff has knowledge to answer users' questions" (mean = 2.88).

H. Satisfaction Level of the Users in Terms of Quality Service

The satisfaction level of users in terms of the quality of public library services is presented in Table VIII. As shown in the table, about 88.43% of respondents are fairly satisfied (60–80%) with the quality of services provided by the public libraries, followed by those who are highly satisfied (80% and above) at 7.47%. The table also shows that only 1.20% of respondents are unsatisfied with the quality of library services, and no respondents reported being very dissatisfied with the quality of library services.

TABLE VIII SATISFACTION LEVEL OF THE USERS IN TERMS OF QUALITY SERVICE

Sl. No.	Level of Satisfaction	Frequency (N=830)	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
1	Highly Satisfied (80% >)	62	7.47	7.47
2	Fairly Satisfied (60-80%)	734	88.43	95.9
3	Satisfied (50-60%)	24	2.89	98.79
4	Unsatisfied (40-50%)	10	1.20	100
5	Very dissatisfied (<40%)	0	0	100
	Total	830	100	

I. Reasons for the Lack of Intensive Use of Public Library Resources and Services

Table IX reveals the reasons for the lack of intensive use of public library resources and services. As shown in the table, "Information scattered," "Lack of time," and "Lack of marketing of library services" are major reasons for the limited use of public library resources and services, representing 84.3%, 71.8%, and 70.4%, respectively. This is followed by "Lack of knowledge and training" (70.4%) and

"Lack of internet and ICT infrastructure" (69.87%). The table also notes that "Lack of current materials" and "non-availability of modern services and facilities" are additional reasons for the limited use of library resources and services, with scores of 23.6% and 21.7%, respectively. It is further observed that "Library working hours are inconvenient" (12.3%), "Lack of trained personnel" (4.8%), and "Disturbing and noisy environment" (2.4%) are not major reasons for the lack of use of public library resources and services.

TABLE IX REASONS FOR THE LACK OF INTENSIVE USE OF PUBLIC LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Sl. No.	Problem Faced	Frequency (N=830)		Percentage (%)	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Information scattered	700	130	84.3	15.7
2	Lack of Time	596	234	71.8	28.2
3	Lack of marketing of library services	584	246	70.4	29.6
4	Lack of knowledge & training	580	250	69.87	30.13
5	Lack of internet and ICT infrastructure	322	508	38.8	61.2
6	Lack of current materials	196	634	23.6	76.4
7	Non-availability of modern services and facilities	180	650	21.7	78.3
8	Library working hours are inconvenient	102	728	12.3	87.7
9	Lack of trained personnel	40	790	4.8	95.2
10	Disturbing and noisy environment	20	810	2.4	97.6

VI. CONCLUSION

The present study attempts to identify users' perceptions regarding the use and marketing of public library resources and services in Mysore City. The survey findings show that the majority of respondents were male (524, 63.1%), followed by female respondents (306, 36.9%). The highest number of respondents (81.9%) visit public libraries daily. The results reveal that the majority of public library users visit the libraries for the purpose of preparing for competitive examinations, accounting for 99%. The majority of respondents (mean = 4.1) preferred books as the primary format of library collections. "Reference Service" and the "Periodical and Magazine Section" were the most preferred services by users, with mean values of 4.76 and 4.35, respectively. "Word of Mouth" and the "User Orientation Program" were the most frequently used methods by respondents for learning about public library resources and services, with mean values of 3.93 and 3.84, respectively. The majority of respondents (mean = 3.78) stated, "This library is trying to make available new information resources and services to its users". Finally, it can be concluded that the resources and services provided by the public library are fulfilling users' needs, and the library is employing various methods for marketing its resources and services. The results identified that information scattering is a major reason for the lack of intensive use of public library resources and services. Therefore, public libraries should classify and arrange their resources systematically to encourage more intensive use.

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