

Opinion of Branch Librarians towards Information Technology Applications in Urban and Rural Districts of Tamil Nadu: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Information Technology in libraries comprises all the electronic infrastructure and facilities employed by libraries to improve and provide efficient services. This survey conducted to collect the opinion of branch librarians towards implication of Information Technology in branch libraries. A questionnaire was framed to collect the data. The collected data were analysed by statistical tools.

Keywords: Branch Library, Information Technology, Comparative Study

Introduction

Tamil Nadu has one of the most advanced systems of public libraries in the country. In an operation that is the first of its kind in India, all the 32 District Central Libraries (DCL) and the Connemara Library in Chennai have been automated, networked and brought on-line using the state-of-the-art Integrated Library Management Software (ILMS) called Koha.

As per Tamil Nadu Public Libraries Act, 1948, Branch Libraries can be opened where the population is more than 5000. The Branch Libraries are functioning under the guidance of the District Library Officer. Most of the library personnel working in branch libraries are qualified (degree or certified) in LIS at the basic level. They are not mentally prepared to accept any change in library routine works, may be due to lack of knowledge of the

latest trends in the field. Unless librarians with initiative, in the handling and dissemination of information come forward, many opportunities to gain from the benefits of Information Technology will be lost.

Objective:

The Objective of this study is:

1. To know the Librarians opinions towards Information Technology applications in branch library activities.
2. To know about the Attitude towards Information Technology Applications.
3. To know the reasons for Poor and Non utilization of Information Technology.
4. To know the constraints encountered in the application of the devices in the library.

Methodology:

The survey has been conducted with librarians of branch libraries in Urban (Chennai) and Rural (Villupuram) districts of Tamil Nadu. Questionnaire was framed to collect data from the Librarians / In-charge (Record Clerk) of the branch libraries, to know the attitude of Librarians' towards Information Technology Applications, and reasons for Poor utilization of Information Technology.

Data Collection:

The data collected from the librarians of branch libraries have been analysed to get meaningful findings. Overall 193 questionnaires (Chennai 132 and Villupuram 61) were circulated to the Librarians / in – charge of the Branch Libraries, out of which 159 responses were received, which constitutes 82.4% in total (Chennai and Villupuram district).

Data Analysis:

The data collected from the questionnaire has been analysed to fulfill the stated objectives. For this purpose, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software package has been used. Statistical analysis techniques such as Frequency Distribution, Percentage Analysis, WAM Test, have been employed depending on the nature of the data collected from the respondents.

Table No. 1 Respondents Vs Sex

Sno.	District	Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Chennai	60	46	106 (66.67%)

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2	Villupuram	37	16	53 (33.33%)
Total		97 (61.01%)	62 (38.99%)	159 (100%)

The table 1 shows that respondent by sex. In total, 159 of 193 (82.4%) Branch Librarians / Record Clerk were responded to this survey. Of those responding 97 (61.01%) of the respondents are male and 62 (38.99%) are female. It also shows that, branch libraries in Urban (Chennai) and Rural (Villupuram) districts are managed by Male in maximum number of libraries while compare to Female.

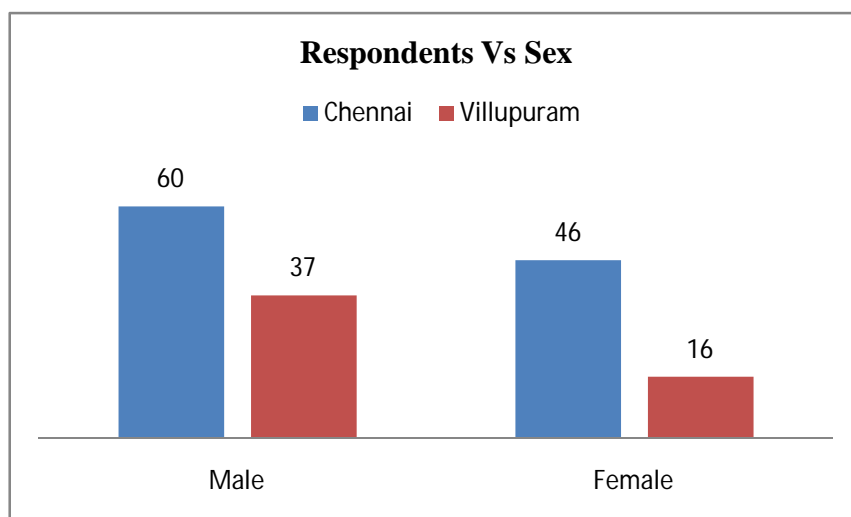


Figure 1 Respondents Vs Sex

Table No. 3 Respondents Vs Designation

Sno.	Designation	Chennai n = 106			Villupuram n = 53			Total n = 159		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Librarian - Grade II	8	6	14 (13.21%)	1	1	2 (3.77%)	9	7	16 (10.06%)
2	Librarian - Grade III	38	29	67 (63.21%)	30	12	42 (79.25%)	68	41	109 (68.55%)
3	Village Librarian	0	0	0	5	3	8 (15.09%)	5	3	8 (5.03%)
4	Record Clerk	14	11	25 (23.58%)	1	0	1 (1.89%)	15	11	26 (16.35%)
Total		60	46	106 (100%)	37	16	53 (100%)	97	62	159 (100%)

The table 3 reveals that, respondents Vs designation. A large percentage of respondents 109 (68.55%) were Grade- III Librarian, followed by 26 (16.35%) of the respondents were Record Clerk, The educational qualification of Record Clerks is only school level or graduate without any Professional qualification in Library and Information Science. 16 (10.06%) of the respondents hold designation as Grade-II Librarian. By virtue of experience and combined with departmental promotion, Village Librarian can become Grade III Librarian, Grade – III Librarian can become as Grade – II Librarian and Grade – II Librarian can attain higher position like District Library Officer.

5.1. ATTITUDE OF BRANCH LIBRARIANS / IN CHARGE TOWARD INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS

The attitude of Branch Librarians / In-charge towards Information Technology in branch libraries have been analysed by Weighted Average Mean (WAM) Test.

5.1.1. WAM Test for Attitude of Branch Librarians / In-charge towards Information Technology Applications

The summarised opinions of Branch Librarians / In-charges' attitude towards Information Technology applications are given in Table 5 with WAM value and Rank order. It is seen from the Table 5 that the variables with higher WAM value in the order of preference are as follows in Chennai District:

1. IT applications are to improve the quality of the Services (52)
2. IT improves the efficiency of the Library (52)
3. IT makes an integration within the organization (51.67)
4. The uses of IT applications are essential to improve the communication facilities (51.67)
5. IT applications are helpful to obtain the right information in right time in the right place and at the right cost (51.67)

WAM values in the order of preference are as follows in Villupuram District:

1. IT improves the efficiency of the Library (25.50)
2. The uses of IT applications are essential to improve the communication facilities (25.50)
3. IT applications are used to improve the quality of the Services (25.17)
4. IT applications enhances the Knowledge and expertise (25.17)
5. IT applications improves the status of library (25.17)

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Table No. 5 WAM Test for Attitude of Librarians / In-charge towards Information Technology Applications

Sno	Description	District	Agree	Disagree	No Idea	Total	WAM	Rank
1	Improve the quality of Service	Chennai	101	4	1	106	52.00	1
		Villupuram	49	0	4	53	25.17	2
2	Improve the efficiency of Library	Chennai	101	4	1	106	52.00	1
		Villupuram	50	0	3	53	25.50	1
3	Enhance the knowledge & expertise	Chennai	100	3	3	106	51.50	4
		Villupuram	49	0	4	53	25.17	2
4	Integration within the organization	Chennai	101	2	3	106	51.67	2
		Villupuram	46	2	5	53	24.50	4
5	Improve the communication facilities	Chennai	101	2	3	106	51.67	2
		Villupuram	50	0	3	53	25.50	1
6	Helpful to obtain the right inf. in the right place and at the right cost	Chennai	101	2	3	106	51.67	2
		Villupuram	48	1	4	53	25.00	3
7	Improve the status of the Library	Chennai	94	7	5	106	50.17	5
		Villupuram	48	2	3	53	25.17	2
8	Reduces the work Load	Chennai	91	12	3	106	50.00	6
		Villupuram	45	4	4	53	24.50	4
9	Takes over the traditional way	Chennai	94	11	1	106	50.83	3
		Villupuram	38	10	5	53	23.17	5
10	Spoils the image of Library	Chennai	14	91	1	106	37.50	7
		Villupuram	6	43	4	53	18.00	7
11	Often disturb the routine work	Chennai	13	90	3	106	37.00	8
		Villupuram	6	42	5	53	17.83	6

5.2. WAM Test for Reasons for Poor and Non Utilisation of Information Technology (IT)

The opinions collected from the respondents were summarised in the Table 6 with WAM value and Rank order. It is seen from the Table 9 that the variables with higher value in the order of preference are as follows:

Chennai District

Insufficient funds	(42)
Inability to absorb recurring costs	(41.33)
Lack of adequate trained staff in the IT application	(40.00)
Lack of scope for Library professionals due to IT	(38.17)
Lack of professionals recognition by the authorities	(36.67)

Villupuram District

Insufficient funds	(20)
Lack of adequate trained staff in the IT application	(19.67)
Inability to absorb recurring costs	(19.17)
Lack of coordination among Staff	(18)
Staff are not interest	(17.67)

Table No. 6 Reason for Non / Poor utilization of IT

Sno	Description	District	Agree	Dis agree	No Idea	Total	WAM	Rank
1	Insufficient funds	Chennai	50	46	10	106	42.00	1
		Villupuram	19	29	5	53	20.00	1
2	Inability to absorb recurring costs	Chennai	46	50	10	106	41.33	2
		Villupuram	14	34	5	53	19.17	3
3	Staff are not interest	Chennai	15	80	11	106	36.00	7
		Villupuram	5	43	5	53	17.67	5
4	Lack of adequate trained Staff	Chennai	39	56	11	106	40.00	3
		Villupuram	18	29	6	53	19.67	2
5	Lack of coordination among Staff	Chennai	11	84	11	106	35.33	8
		Villupuram	7	41	5	53	18.00	4
6	Lack of initiative on the part of Lib. Professionals	Chennai	17	77	12	106	36.17	6
		Villupuram	2	45	6	53	17.00	9
7	No support from the it authorities	Chennai	11	84	11	106	35.33	8
		Villupuram	3	44	6	53	17.17	8
8	Lack of scope for Library professionals due to IT	Chennai	29	65	12	106	38.17	4
		Villupuram	5	42	6	53	17.50	6
9	Lack of professionals recognition by the authorities	Chennai	20	74	12	106	36.67	5
		Villupuram	5	42	6	53	17.50	6
10	Fear of Modern Information Technology	Chennai	6	89	11	106	34.50	9
		Villupuram	4	43	6	53	17.33	7

6 Findings

The Librarians / In-charge of branch libraries in urban (Chennai) and rural (Villupuram) districts have shown positive attitude towards Information Technology applications, since most of the variables associated with information technology applications have been accepted with different degrees of ranking. These variables show positive correlation among the Librarians / In-charge of branch libraries, which has been proved through WAM test. There has been a higher degree of positive attitude among the Librarians / In-charge of branch libraries of urban and rural districts in Tamil Nadu, which reveals the progressive and dynamic views (Tables 5).

It is found that there is a collective opinion among the Librarians / In-charge of branch libraries with regard to poor and non utilisation of information technology in branch libraries. The acceptance over the variables among the Librarians / In-charge of branch libraries has been proved through WAM test, which reveals that there is a correlation among the respondents (Table 6).

7 Suggestions

Librarians / In-charge of branch libraries need to be trained because nearly 40% of them have completed only school education with certified course. The application of information Technology has a greater potential and impact in the services of branch libraries in the state. The system has to be strengthened and revitalised with the new innovations in the field of information technology. The introduction of computers and automation of library operations, the use of electronic media gadgets, better reprographic, and so on would pave the way for a functional and sound public library system in Tamil Nadu.

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