

A Study on Modernization Programmes in Public Libraries with Reference to Tamil Nadu

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Abstract – The present article deals on modernization with programmes in public libraries with reference to Tamil Nadu. Modernization is a course that a library constantly applies to new technology by taking the computer as the core to replace manual operations so that it can meet the needs of society and serve better. Mechanization of library activities like acquisition, classification, cataloging circulation, maintenance and information retrieval which are labour intensive could be operated through computers. This study covers all the 30 district central libraries. Data has been collected both from primary and secondary sources. A sample of 300 users has been selected at the rate of 10 from each library on the basis of random sampling method. A structured, close-ended questionnaire was used in addition to interview technique and informal talk with users of library for the collection of first hand information. Simple statistical tools such as average, percentages, table's diagrams, trend and compound growth rate and chi-square test are used for analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

Keywords: Dissemination, Integration, Mechanization, Rationalization, Video Satellite

I. INTRODUCTION

The wheels of human civilization have been accelerated by man epoch- making inventions and dynamic discoveries over the years. Normally, a person's growth and development depends on his or her physical fitness, mental makeup, psychological attitudes and environmental conditions.

The present article deals with a study on modernization in public libraries with reference to Tamil Nadu. It is well said that a library preserves the past, serves the present and builds up the future and ensures a congenial continuity. A public library is a cultural centre and serves as a centre for self-education. UNESCO manifesto proclaims public library as a living for education, culture and informs as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and understanding between people and between nations. Public libraries serve the public, parent institutions in four ways; firstly, libraries

meet society's information needs by acquiring a wide variety of materials. Secondly, they provide a central location and proper environment for storing and preserving of those items. Thirdly, libraries and value to the item acquired for organizing them for easy access. Fourthly, the library staff improves access providing assistance to individuals in locating the needed information.

The principal factor in the modern attitude towards libraries and books has been what was known in England and America as, "Public libraries". This term today, has quite a different meaning from what it had before 1850. The modern public library is a municipal institution supported by towns for the free use of the citizen without discrimination. Anderson defines a public library as one which is open to any member of the public and is usually free of any charge paid as so much service. It is usually supported by a local rate and a grant from government.

II. MODERNIZATION

Modernization is a course that a library constantly applies to new technology by taking the computer as the core to replace manual operations and to extent its functions so that it can meet the needs of society and do better to serve the society. Mechanization of library activities like acquisition, classification, cataloguing, circulation, maintenance and information retrieval known as house-keeping operations which are labour intensive and could be operated using computers.

Modernization requires planning, designing and implementing. Planning involves identification of the activities to be automated, assessment of the volume of information to be handled, selection of the software, selection of hardware systems, training and retraining of the library staff and educating the users in modern techniques.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The impact of information technology towards the end of 20th and the beginning of 21st century is felt in all spheres of

the society especially in the library sector. It has created an excellent process of acquiring, organizing and domination. Because of the importance of modernization of libraries, the researcher has decided to undertake a special study on the modernization of libraries.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the main objectives of the study :

1. To trace the origin and infrastructure facilities available at the district central libraries in Tamil Nadu.
2. To study the collection and development pattern pertaining to both the print and non-printing documents among the libraries under study and to focus on the different types of services offered by them.
3. To identify the modernization profiles such as hardware and software of the libraries.
4. To study the extent of modernization activities, found in different types of house keeping operations as well as information dissemination.
5. To assess the views and suggestions of users of District Central libraries in Tamil Nadu.
6. To explore some of the difficulties encountered by District Central Libraries while automating their functions and services, and
7. To offer suggestions for greater modernization of District Central Libraries in Tamil Nadu.

V. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This study covers all the 30 District Central Libraries in Tamil Nadu for investigation. The study has been undertaken during a period of three months.

The required data was collected both from primary and secondary sources. Primary source consists of the selected respondents and secondary source consists of the records of the libraries. A sample of 300 users of library has been chosen at the rate of 10 from each library on the basis of stratified random sampling method.

For collection of first hand information two structured, close ended questionnaire have been used. One was little as, "A study of District central libraries in Tamil Nadu with reference to modernization programmes". The second questionnaire was titled as, "Information requirements of the users". In addition, interview technique, informal talk with knowledgeable persons and observation methods have also been followed for collection of primary data.

For analysis and interpretation of the data collected, simple statistical tools such as averages, percentages, ratios, tables and diagram are used. In addition, the trend and compound growth rates, non-parametric test, wilcoxon signed rank test and chi-square test are computed for certain key variables using the statistical package for social science (SPSS).

VI. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A few previous studies on modernization programme in public libraries and other studies connected with the title are reviewed below.

Parthasarathi, S. (1998) in his article on features of a public library network for Tamil Nadu has emphasized the need for introducing library automation for the public library system in Tamil Nadu. The measures to be taken for developing a modernized and integrated system, additional library and information services for using microcomputers for house-keeping operations.

Midwinter and Mcvillar Murray (1990) in their "public libraries and performance indicators: origins, developments and issues" have explained the political background in the united kingdom leading to the developing of performance indicators for public libraries. Corporate planning and value for money models are examined.

Desh Pande K. and Hungund, B.B (1998) in their, "What ails our public library system" traced the need and development of public libraries in India. The draw books of the Library Acts and the growth of Public Libraries in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra have been compared with Indian Federation of library association's standards. They have put forward a case for modernization of library also.

Ramesh Babu B and Parameswaran R (1998) in their article on "Automation of public libraries and information services in the context of electronic information era" in the public library opinion survey, have surveyed the attitude of the public library staff towards automation of public libraries. The results of these studies are financial implication to be major bottle neck for information technology applications. Public library staff is not interested in learning or implementing IT in the library due to the poor scale of pay paid for them.

VII. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Modernisation had already become an indispensable move all over the world. Almost all the organizations are much influenced by the manner and mechanics of modernization. Modernization, essentially, implies mechanization, integration, reationalisation and innovation. Libraries at several levels international, national, religional, even local have been systematically making serious attempts to get them modernized. The following are the key components of modernization.

1. Public access catalogues, circulation system.
2. Internet access for the users.
3. Access to commercial databases.
4. Net access to the libraries, and online catalogues.
5. Broadcast of television channels for the benefit of users.
6. Desktop video conferencing.

7. Video satellite downlink.
8. Video relay to multiple sites.
9. Video programming production that can be broad cast via satellite cable, or the internet.

The details about the availability of binding section in the district central libraries are shown in Table I.

TABLE I AVAILABILITY OF BINDING SECTIONS

S.No.	Opinion	No. of DCLS	Percentage
1	Available	16	53
2	Not available	14	47
Total		30	100

The table shows that binding section is available in more than 50% of the district central libraries.

Table II gives the details of the extension services available in the District Central Libraries.

TABLE II EXTENSION SERVICES AVAILABLE IN DCLS

S.No.	Type of Ext. Service	Available	Percentage	Not Available	Percentage
1	Book Mobile Service	8	27	22	73
2	Book Exhibition	28	93	02	07
3	Arranging seminar	22	73	08	27
4	Group Discussion	12	40	18	60
5	Cultural Meeting	30	100	-	-
6	Celebrating Library Week	30	100	-	-
7	Celebrating important days	21	70	09	30

Source : Computed from Primary data

TABLE III TYPES OF PROBLEMS AFFECTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF DCLS

S.No.	Type of Ext Service	Available	Percentage	Not Available	Percentage
1	Inadequate fund	22	73	8	27
2	Lack of planning	26	87	4	13
3	Shortage of staff	30	100	0	0
4	Lack of adequate physical facilities	30	100	0	0
5	Inadequate training	30	100	0	0
6	Improper salary structure of staff	30	100	0	0
7	Lack of co-operation between the staff and office	22	73	8	27
8	Administrative delay	25	83	5	17

It is observed from Table II that among the 30 district central libraries surveyed in Tamil Nadu all of them are providing extension services like cultural meeting and celebrating library weeks. Mobile library services are offered by eight DCLs. Book exhibition are regularly conducted by 28 DCLs. Seminars and groups discussions are conducted by 22 DCLs and 12 DCLs respectively.

The study has revealed that computer facilities are available among all the selected district central libraries. From a minimum of 3 and or maximum of 12 computers are available in the DCLs internet facility is available in all the 30 libraries chosen for study. In all the 30 DCLs, computer services through LAN, WAN and MAN are available.

It is evident from Table III that all the district central libraries have met with the problems like shortage of staff, lack of adequate physical facilities and inadequate training and improper salary structure of staff. It is followed by lack of planning, a administrative delay, inadequate funds and lack of co-operation between the staff and officers who constitute 87%, 73% and 73% respectively.

In order to examine the relationship between the level of satisfaction and the profile variables of the users such as sex and age, the chi-square test has been used. It is calculated by applying the formula.

Chi-square = $\sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$ with (r-1) (c-1) degree of freedom. The level of satisfaction of the users has been shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV LEVEL OF SATISFACTION OF THE USERS

S.No.	Opinion	No. of DCLS	Percentage
1	High	78	26.00
2	Medium	158	52.67
3	Low	64	21.33
Total		300	100

Source : Primary data

It is evident from Table IV that out of the 300 users. 78 (26 %) respondents come under the category of high level satisfaction group, 158 respondents covering 52.67% come under the category of medium level satisfaction and only 21% fall under the category of low level satisfaction group.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

The following are the major recommendations, wherever possible suggestions have been offered for solution of the problems.

1. Library should have air-condition facility to enable the users to sit long hours in library and use the facilities available.
2. Library staff themselves should do binding of periodicals. It would reduce the library expenditure.
3. Periodicals should be kept in DCLs hostels for students.
4. Some of the DCLs introduced computerization of library, e-journals, e-mail facility in their DCLs of this facility is provided in all the DCLs communications will be faster and easier. There will be opportunities for resource sharing and networking.
5. Good canteen facility, protected drinking water and toilet facility must be provided.
6. Current e-book, to open online terminals for reading and sending the required data are to be provided.
7. Visual materials like encyclopedia CDs and DVD which would be useful should be provided.

IX. CONCLUSION

The present study reveals that a large number of people, research guides and scholars have been using the district central libraries. There seems to be greater scope for further improvements in terms of equipment, technology and other facilities like internet. The style and system of functioning of the district central libraries are to be enhanced still both qualitatively and quantitatively. A few advanced level academic exercises like workshops, refresher courses, seminars and guest lecturers are necessary fro updating knowledge and know how. The recent developments in the field of modernization should be made known to innovate the public and has become essentially imperative in this dynamic branch of exploration of truth.

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