

A Study on the Sources and Services Rendered to Modern Society by the British Library

P. Balasubramanian

Deputy Librarian, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli - 627 012, TamilNadu, India

Email: kalil64@hotmail.com, jdom16@gmail.com

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Abstract – The British Library is the United Kingdom’s international organization of educational opportunities and cultural relations. In India the British council operates as a division of the British High commission and has offices in the four metro cities. The present Article studies mainly the sources and services rendered to modern society by the British library at Chennai. The other objective of the study is to collect information regarding the types of readers in British library, Chennai. The users include post graduate students, research scholars, faculty members, lawyers and common public; they formed the population of the study. A sample of 150 respondents has been selected on the basis of stratified random sampling method. There are different types of members such as silver, gold, gold plus, Diamond, Diamond plus and platinum. Apart from the finest Collection of books, the library has educational videos, periodicals and newspapers from the U.K. The British Library has extensive resources. The sources of information can be grouped under two categories (1) Documentary sources and (2) Non-documentary the secondary sources in the British library are Test books periodicals and reference sources. The British libraries provide various services to its users. They can be categorized as: Reference services, Reprographics Service, Clipping Service, Current awareness Services, online services, automated services and SMS alert services.

Keywords: Project, Seminar, Workshops, Encyclopedia, Clipping

I. INTRODUCTION

Prof. Dr. Ranganathan defined a public library as an institution maintained for and by the community, primarily for the social purpose of providing easy opportunity for self education through the life of every person of the community. “A Public library can be defined as the people’s University as it is an educational institution open to all irrespective of their economic status, age and educational background”.

The British Library is the U.K.’s international organization of educational opportunities and cultural relations. The British council is the United Kingdom’s leading cultural relations organization. In India the British council operates

as a division of the British High commission and has offices in the four metro cities (Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai and New Delhi). The British council has a network of libraries throughout India. The libraries are situated in the following cities Ahmadabad, Bangalore, Chandigarh, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, New Delhi, and Pune.

The British council operates in 110 countries around the world. The foreign and common Wealth Office (FCO) Provides the British council with a Core grant-in-aid. They also work with other government departments and agencies and increasingly with private sector. They also provide services such as project management; U.K. based training, English language courses and examination. The main goal of the British council is to build the U.K.’s role as a leading provider of educational and cultural opportunities by promoting teaching and learning of the English language while building relationship with people all around the world. They have issued about eight million books and videos, dealt with almost two million enquiries in their libraries and welcomed five and a half million visitors. They have employed more than 1900 teachers in 138 teaching centers around the world who have taught almost 1.2 million class hours. They have celebrated the 50th anniversary of their library network in India.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on the pattern of development of District Central Libraries in Tamil Nadu is significant in these days of “Operation flood light”. Aspects relating to different publications indicate a positive spectrum that reflects cultural progress of the region. The following reviews serve well to understand the facts and facets of modernization of central libraries.

Alphonse Treza and Albert Halci (1974) in their Article on “The Role of State and Local Government Library Trends have summarized, the relationship between local, state and federal government and public libraries. While the article focuses primarily on methods to improve library services,

its summary of state and local involvement was useful. They explain in general, local government fulfills three broad essential functions: 1) it creates the public library and provides for its government. 2) it provides it with a source of income from public revenues and 3) it provides a broad framework of regulations within which the local library must function.

Cronin Blaise (1984) in his article on “The Marketing of public Library services in the united Kingdom – The Rationale for a marketing Approach” in the European Journal of Marketing Vol. 18 No. 2, pp.33-44 has outlined the rationale for a marketing approach to the management of public library services. The article looks at the history of public library services and their social and technological changes. The article concludes that, after more than a century, the public library movement in the U.K. still does not have a coherent sense of purpose or a strong public image and that marketing could provide a basis for their improvement.

Sankaralingam and Ragavan (1998) in their article on, “Public Library Service in Tamil Nadu” in a seminar on public library services and information Networks organized by MALA et al, Chennai, Madras Library Association have presented an analysis of the data relating to growth of public libraries in Tamil Nadu with reference to the number of service units, nature and size of Collection, staff and expenditure. Finally they have made a few suggestions.

Spacey. R. Benstead . K and Goulding A. (2004) in their article on “Changing public library Service Delivery to Rural Communities in England” Published in the New Library World, discussed about alternatives to the Mobile Library service in providing a public library service to rural communities in England and the impacts of best value, public library standards and social inclusion policy on provision. This paper provides public library practitioners and researchers with a picture of public library service provision to rural area communities and shows the impact of Government – driven policy.

Jay. M and Webber . S (2005) in their article on, “Impact of the internet on Delivery of Reference Services in English Public Libraries” published by ASLIB, U.K., investigated the impact, of the internet reference in the public libraries in England. The results of this study were compared with two previous surveys. The paper concludes by identifying the need for public library managers to assess the changing role

of professions and Para professionals in delivering reference services and to provide appropriate training.

Srinivasan. K.M (2009) in his article on the “March of Library legislation in Madras” published in library science today, traced the origin and development of public library legislation.

III.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the major objectives of the present study.

1. To study the various sources of British library;
2. To study and understand the regular and specialized services provided in the British library;
3. To collect information regarding the types of readers in British library, Chennai.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A.Sources of Data

The required data for the study has been collected both from primary and secondary sources. The users of British library formed the primary sources and the records of the British library, the information pamphlet issued by them and the internet formed the secondary source of information. Informal talk with knowledgeable persons and interview techniques also formed part of primary source of information.

B. Population of the Study

All the users of the British library formed the population for the present study. The users include post graduate students, research scholars, faculty members, lawyers and common public. From the different categories of users, post graduate students, research scholars and teaching staff formed the major Jung of the population. Hence, the respondents have been selected mainly from this group.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A sample of 150 respondents has been selected on the basis of stratified random sampling method. The sample comprised users of all age groups, both sexes, different qualifications as can be seen from Table I.

TABLE I AGE WISE OF RESPONDENTS

Age group in years	No	Percentage
18-22	36	24
23-27	87	58
28-32	15	10
33-37	06	04
38-42	06	04
Total	150	100

Source: Primary

Table I reveals that 58% of the respondents belong to the age group of 23-27. Majority of the respondents who visited the British library are post graduate students and research scholars. The age groups of 33-37 and 38-42 years were having same percentage of respondents.

TABLE II RESPONDENTS SEX – WISE

Gender	No	Percentage
Males	66	44
Females	84	56
Total	150	100

Source: Primary

Out of 150 respondents, males formed 44% and females formed 56%.

TABLE III CATEGORIES OF USERS

Qualification	Number	Percentage
Post Graduate	84	56
Research Scholars	54	36
Faculty Members	12	08
Total	150	100

Source: Primary Data

The table shows that the majority of the users are Post graduate students followed by research scholars.

TABLE IV PURPOSE OF USING BRITISH LIBRARY

Purpose	No. of Users	Percentage
For writing term papers	30	20
For writing Project Reports	36	24
For Preparing Notes	21	14
To Prepare Seminar Articles	36	24
To collect data for Research work	90	60
For any other purpose	09	06

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Since multiple choice questions have been asked the respondents have given more than one purpose, hence, the total responses are more than the sample. The Table IV shows that the majority of the users visit the library either for writing project report or to prepare for a seminar paper

The various purposes for which the British Library is used are depicted in Table IV. It is seen from the diagram that the majority (90) of the respondents covering 60%, use library mainly for the purpose of collection of data in connection with their research work. Next about 24% (36) of the respondents use library for writing project reports or for collection of data to write article for a seminar.

VI. BRITISH COUNCIL IN INDIA AND ITS FUNCTIONS

In India the British council operates as a division of the British High commission and has offices in the four metros as well as a network of 9 libraries.

The British library is the United Kingdom’s international organization of educational opportunities and cultural relations. These libraries are registered in England as a charity. The British library in Chennai is located in the heart of Chennai. The library holds a collection of over 2, 05,000 books covering all subjects. The Library is managed by 15 staff including trainees. The British library also offers books on Economics, engineering, Information technology, law, management, medicine and science and technology.

Apart from the finest collection of books, the library has educational videos, periodicals and news papers from the U.K. The library offers a combination of online and offline products designed to provide the reader with a holistic and comprehensive information service for their recreational, professional reference needs. The library also provides the users with access to contemporary British ‘e’ ideas and expertise.

VII. FACILITIES AVAILABLE AT CHENNAI

The premises of the British library at Chennai have more books. They have the following other facilities.

1. They have introduced easy to use technology that takes the stress out of borrowing and returning books, CDs and DVDs;
2. Visitors can surf the internet, listen to the best of contemporary British music and a coffee shops so visitors can make them self at home when they visit the library;

3. About 25,000 latest books in a variety of subjects 400 reference books, 2500 DVD's include best of British Cinema and television. About 600 CD's on English Language soft skills and audio books;
4. About 70 periodicals;
5. British News Papers;
6. The English zone offers teachers and students of British council English courses a range of the best U.K. English Language materials including graded readers, self study material, CD ROMs and online resources to help the users achieve professional goals;
7. There are over 6000 books to attract and satisfy young children.

A. Resources

The British library has extensive resources specifically designed to help people improve their English, prepare for a range of different examinations and for those people who wish to improve their prospects at work. They offer many self development opportunities. The sources of information can be grouped under two categories (1) Documentary sources (2) Non-Documentary Sources. Documentary sources can be categorized into three types viz., primary, secondary and Tertiary sources. In British Library, primary sources are less in collection. The secondary sources in the British Library are Text books, periodicals and reference sources.

Text books that concentrate on demonstrating principles rather than recounting details. Total collection of books in this library is more than 2, 05,000 covering the subjects such as science and Technology, Medicine, English, Management, Literature, Children's Books, Reference books and languages. The periodicals provided in the library are concerned with library science, Engineering, Science, Medicine, Management, Language and Literature, Information Technology, politics, Advertising, Architecture, Food Technology, music, News, Arts, Journalism and education. In addition there are reference sources such as Encyclopedia, Dictionaries, yearbooks, Hand books and Directories.

B. Services Rendered

The following are the summary of the various services renders by the British Library located at Chennai.

Lending Service (Book Lending);
Reference Service;
Service for Career;
Higher Education Service;

Current Awareness Service;
Industrial Information Service;
E-Journal (Full text Access);
E-books Access;
Internet Service;
Information Retrieval;
Teaching Aids;
Information Desk – Any Information Working hours;
New Books Alert Service;
Reprography Service;
SDI Service;
Inter-Library Loan Service;
User Orientations;
News Papers Clippings;
Alter Service;
Online Catalogue Services.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The sources and services are carried out in a perfect way in the British library located at Chennai. Many works are carried out in the library with the intension of serving the public. Large collections of sources are provided in the library helps the public to understand the subject in a broader sense. The mobile service is also functioning excellently. The online are used in a wider sense in this library. The wonderland helps the children in most suitable way. We may conclude that the public library is performing its role in the society effectively and efficiently and also produce a very good result among the reading community.

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