

## Use of Public Library Services by the Distance Learners of Bangalore University

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### ABSTRACT

The present paper investigates the distance students' use of public libraries for their academic purposes and converse the public library as a alternate for instructive or University libraries. The current research study is based on a comprehensive survey of distance education students from Bangalore University. The data collection was carried out by personally distributing the questionnaire to the randomly selected students and the sample consists of students from both undergraduate and post graduate. It is found from the study that 1309 (90.60 %) distance learners who used public libraries during contact classes and 786 (54.4 %) of the respondents spent 0-1 h in the library. Majority of the distance learners i.e. 941 (65.10 %) responded effective for book borrowing services from the public libraries in seeking information, 1220 (84.40 %) opined effective for reference services. It is observed from the study that distance students have a tendency to look at libraries as a complete and do not make apparent difference between different types of libraries, expecting the entire system to be flawless. The paper lifts the significant executive inquiry and apprehension in relation to both the operation of public libraries and the service level given to diverse section of learning students. It is strongly recommended that library instruction programme should be organized by the public libraries for distance learners that create the responsiveness and use of library and information services effectively.

**Keywords:** Public libraries; Information services; Distance learning; Distance learners; Higher education

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Public libraries have a positive impact on achievement of distance learning students by providing them with abundant information. Generally distance students of all ages may lack exposure to reading, writing, and learning opportunities without attending conventional educational system, that are required to overcome knowledge gaps. Public libraries have been very much considered as information providers for all the information seekers and all community members who can utilise to their benefit, in spite of the demographic background and socio-economic status.

Public libraries are the community transformers and intellectual heritage centres of scholarly inheritance of knowledge persons and also the guiding light in fostering resourceful leisure time activities. At present Karnataka State has one state central library, 30 district center libraries and 26 urban center libraries and 490 branches that are open to the public community. Also small libraries have been started at 5766 Gram Panchayat Centers for rural people. As well as the elderly, 14 catalog libraries are working to provide books on the doorstep for women. The State / District and Urban Council Authorities are functioning in order to organize and implement their action plans and supervise their implementation. These libraries provide important services. They provide access to a wide range of information resources such as books, periodicals, reference materials etc.<sup>1</sup>.

Public Library is a free public organization. It is significant that the Public Library is called the University of Common Man. The Government of Karnataka established the Karnataka Public Library Act in 1965 and laid the foundation for the development of network of public libraries in the state in the year 1965. Our state has gained the dominant status of the public library system in the country<sup>1</sup>.

National Knowledge Commission<sup>2</sup> of India strongly emphasises the significance of developing Indian higher education. It focuses on the substance of escalating the number of higher education institutes and become accustomed to new instructive methods such as distance learning and e-learning programmes. Public libraries information services have an imperative role to play in this inventiveness to support distance learning activities. The current research study has reported here recommends that the current support for distance learning, in terms of knowledge resources, education and consultation, is inadequate.

A very significant component in any educational system is an apparent understanding of teachers and their learner's needs. India is among those countries that are interested in humanizing their higher education systems and institutions in order to make them correspondent to the most well known educational institutes around the world and to make them available to all populace who need them. It is observed in IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, the public library is the local centre of information, making available all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its clients. The

public library services are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Particular services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Barsun<sup>4</sup> opines that it is the natural tendency of distance education students to expect their local public library to meet their academic needs. She also stressed on the fact that distance learners access public library because of its easy accessibility, adequate parking facility, fast web access, and inter-library loan services. She also notes that they are frequently frustrated by their unrealistic expectations of the local library's resources and services. She presents the examples of public libraries which, through grants and other funding sources have successfully added programmes and services to support community distance learners. Her study also has some constructive appendices which include suggestions on effective functioning of the librarian and public library when they have to meet the requirement of distance learners.

Dority<sup>5</sup> conducted a study of the same issue with respect to distance students from the Open University of Tanzania to examine the use of public library. This particular study revealed that inadequate library resources, insufficient reading space, fee to utilise the library, lack of professional staff and distance between the place of their residence and the library acted as limited factors. These negative factors prompted the author to raise her concern regarding lack of coordination and commitment of the staff to meet the needs of distance learners. She argued that resources must be mobilised and awareness must be created among the staff to address the shortcomings in the administration of the programme.

Mutambo<sup>6</sup> studied the use of public libraries in Makerere University and the findings of the study revealed that 74 per cent of the distance students very much used the public libraries. The study observed the role of public libraries in supporting distance learners in Makerere University, exploring the factors which affect utilisation of their services. The study had adopted a survey design with 300 education students, collecting data through focus group discussions, structured questionnaires and individual interviews. The study results showed that some of the distance students have been utilising the services and facilities offered by the public libraries, especially 74 per cent of the students used the Internet and online databases. 73 per cent of them also benefited from technical staff, 63 per cent utilised the reading space and study materials by about 42 per cent. However, a large percentage of about 58 per cent said there are no study materials and supplementary reading materials by 63 per cent. 74 per cent of the students who had visited the library confirmed that they had access to Internet and other IT facilities.

Kishorekumar<sup>7</sup> have collected the attitude from the Citizens of Tumkur city as the users of District Public Library, Tumkur, Karnataka. They used Questionnaire based survey method to identify the feelings of public towards the

adequacy of library resources and services utilised by the city public. The study results shows that the users are completely satisfied with the current location of the library, collection of the newspapers and books are adequate with respect to magazines and general reference materials.

## 3. OBJECTIVES

- i. To know the use of public libraries by the distance learners
- ii. To identify the time spent in the public library in information gathering activities by the distance learners
- iii. To identify the purpose and extent of public library use in meeting information needs
- iv. To know the importance of public library

## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study collected the primary data by using the survey instrument. A structured questionnaire was designed to achieve the objectives of the research study which was distributed among the distance learners of Bangalore University. The data collected among 1445 distance learners was then entered in excel and analysed under the light of set objectives finding the frequencies and percentage using SPSS software, a statistical package for social sciences. The collected and analysed data was represented in the form of tables. The data was collected during July-November 2016, when the contact classes were held in the study centres and University post graduate departments. 1550 respondents were randomly selected from the study centres and post graduate departments of Bangalore University out of which 1445 completely filled questionnaires were received.

## 5. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Out of 1550 copies of the survey questionnaire administered, 1445 (93.22 %) were completed and returned. Data were presented for analysis using the descriptive statistics which include frequency count percentages and tables. The distance students included for research study belong to undergraduate (BA, BCom and BBM) and postgraduate (MA, MSc and MCom)

Table 1 revealed that 73.7 per cent of the respondents aged between 20-30 years, 19.1 per cent of them were in the age group of 31-40 years, 6.3 per cent were in the age group of 41-50 years and remaining 0.9 per cent of them were above 50 years of age. As far as the educational status (qualification) is concerned 39.4 per cent were undergraduate (BA, BCom and BBM) students and 60.6 per cent (MA, MSc, and MCom) were postgraduate students.

Table 2 reveals that 829 respondents were males representing 57.40 per cent of the sample population, while 616 respondents were the female respondents making the remaining 42.60 per cent of the sample population.

**Table 2. Distribution of respondents by gender**

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	829	57.40
Female	616	42.60
Total	1445	100

**Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents**

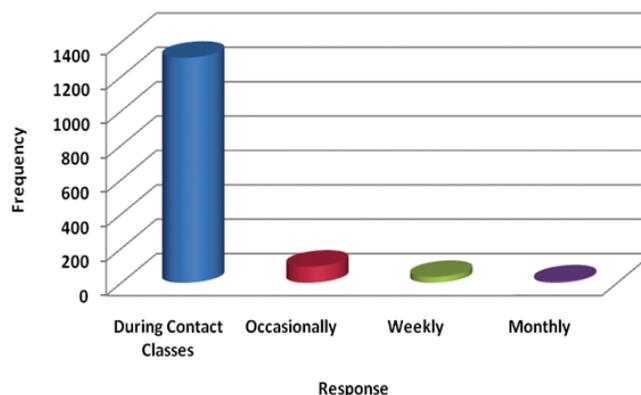
Variables	Description	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Age groups	20 - 30 years	623 (75.2)	442 (71.8)	1065 (73.7)
	31 - 40 years	146 (17.6)	130 (21.1)	276 (19.1)
	41 - 50 years	53 (6.4)	38 (6.2)	91 (6.3)
	More than 50 years	7 (0.8)	6 (1.0)	13 (0.9)
Educational qualification	(BA, BCom and BBM)	309 (37.3)	261 (42.4)	570 (39.4)
	(MA, MSc, and MCom)	520 (62.7)	355 (57.6)	875 (60.6)

Table 3 and Fig. 1 exhibits the data relating to use of Public libraries by the distance learners. There are 1309 (90.60 %) distance learners used it during contact classes, 94 (6.50 %) used occasionally, 34 (2.40 %) weekly, 8 (0.60 %) used monthly. Chi-square test revealed a significant value ( $X^2=3326.037$ ;  $p=.000$ ), confirming that the frequency of visits was very high for public library during contact classes. Further, associations between the responses and gender, area and course revealed there were no significant associations observed for responses and area, indicating that the pattern of responses is statistically same.

Table 4 and Fig. 2 indicates the time spent at public library, it was seen that more than half of the respondents i.e. 786 (54.40 %) indicated 0-1 h, followed by 372 (25.70 %) who spent 1-2 h, 2-3 h being spent shown by some respondents 273 (18.90 %) and just only 14 (1 %) percent of the respondents shown 3-4 hours being spent in public library. Chi-square test value revealed a significant difference ( $X^2=855.083$ ;

$p=.000$ ), further conforming that the time spent in public library is on lower side. Associations between the responses and gender, area and course revealed that gender and course are showing significant associations ( $CV=.284$ ;  $p=.000$  and  $CV=.092$ ;  $p=.006$ , respectively). Gender-wise comparisons indicated that male respondents spent more time in library than their female counterparts. It was also found that PG students spend more time in the public library compared to UG students, and there is no significant association being observed for area of the students indicating that the pattern of responses is statistically same.

Table 5 indicates the effectiveness of book borrowing service in public library. Majority of the respondents i.e 941 (65.10 %) found borrowing service effective, followed by 238 (16.50 %) respondents found ineffective, 164 (11.30 %) found somewhat effective, 60 (4.20



**Figure 1. Use of public libraries.**

**Table 3. Distance learners' use of public libraries**

Responses	Gender		Area		Course		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
During contact classes	747 (90.10)	562 (91.20)	1054 (90.40)	255 (91.40)	508 (89.10)	801 (91.50)	1309 (90.60)
Occasionally	57 (6.90)	37 (6.00)	76 (6.50)	18 (6.50)	40 (7.00)	54 (6.20)	94 (6.50)
Weekly	21 (2.50)	13 (2.10)	28 (2.40)	6 (2.20)	20 (3.50)	14 (1.60)	34 (2.40)
Monthly	4 (0.50)	4 (0.60)	8 (0.70)	0	2 (0.40)	6 (0.70)	8 (0.60)
Total	829 (100)	616 (100)	1166 (100)	279 (100)	570 (100)	875 (100)	1445 (100)
Test statistics	CV=.025; p=.824		CV=.037; p=.572		CV=.068; p=.084		$X^2= 3326.037$ ; p=.000

**Table 4. Time spent in public library**

Responses	Gender		Area		Course		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
0-1 h	423 (51.00)	363 (58.90)	634 (54.40)	152 (54.50)	401 (70.40)	385 (44.00)	786 (54.40)
1-2 h	238 (28.70)	134 (21.80)	299 (25.60)	73 (26.20)	123 (21.60)	249 (28.50)	372 (25.70)
2-3 h	162 (19.50)	111 (18.00)	221 (19.00)	52 (18.60)	43 (7.50)	230 (26.30)	273 (18.90)
3-4 h	6 (0.70)	8 (1.30)	12 (1.00)	2 (0.70)	3 (0.50)	11 (1.30)	14 (1.00)
Total	829 (100)	616 (100)	1166 (100)	279 (100)	570 (100)	875 (100)	1445 (100)
Test statistics	CV=.092; p=.006		CV=.013; p=.967		CV=.284; p=.000		$X^2=855.083$ ; p=.000

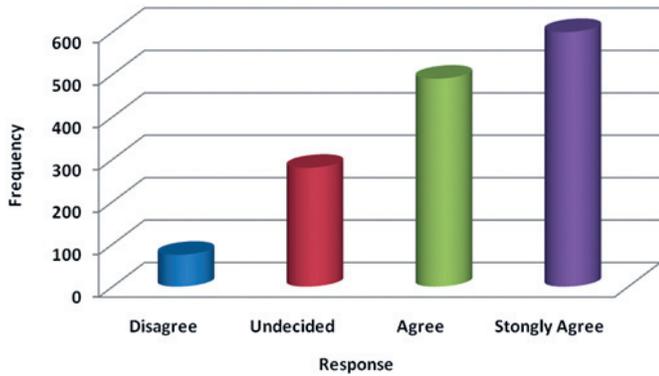


Figure 2. Time spent in the public library.

%) were undecided and 42 (2.90 %) found very effective. Further, a significant Chi-square ( $X^2=1926.574$ ;  $p=.000$ ) value confirms that public library services for book borrowing is very effective. Associations between the responses with gender, area and course revealed that gender and course have significance of associations (at  $CV=.098$ ;  $p=.007$  and  $CV=.128$ ;  $p=.000$

respectively). Gender wise female respondents indicated more effectiveness than male respondents, and course wise UG students expressed more effectiveness than PG students.

Table 6 depicts the data about the effectiveness of reference services in Public library and it is observed that, majority of respondents i.e. 1220 (84.40 %) find it effective, 202 (14%) indicated very effective and remaining 23 (1.60 %) felt it somewhat effective. A significant Chi-square test ( $X^2=1730.916$ ;  $p=.000$ ) further supports that reference service is effective. Study of associations between the responses with gender, area and course revealed that gender and course have significance of associations (at  $CV=.079$ ;  $p=.012$  and  $CV=.157$ ;  $p=.000$ , respectively). Gender-wise female respondents indicated more effectiveness than male respondents and course wise it was found that more of the PG students find it more very effective than UG students.

Table 7 depicts the data about the employment information service in public library and it is observed that 926 (64.10%) of the respondents find it effective, 260 (18.0 %) expressed ineffective, 170 (11.80 %) indicated somewhat effective, 51

Table 5. Public library book borrowing services

Responses	Gender		Area		Course		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
Effective	509 (61.40)	432 (70.10)	753 (64.60)	188 (67.40)	405 (71.10)	536 (61.30)	941 (65.10)
Very effective	26 (3.10)	16 (2.60)	35 (3.00)	7 (2.50)	16 (2.80)	26 (3.00)	42 (2.90)
Somewhat effective	97 (11.70)	67 (10.90)	137 (11.70)	27 (9.70)	39 (6.80)	125 (14.30)	164 (11.30)
Ineffective	157 (18.90)	81 (13.10)	192 (16.50)	46 (16.50)	91 (16.00)	147 (16.80)	238 (16.50)
Undecided	40 (4.80)	20 (3.20)	49 (4.20)	11 (3.90)	19 (3.30)	41 (4.70)	60 (4.20)
Total	829 (100)	616 (100)	1166 (100)	279 (100)	570 (100)	875 (100)	1445 (100)
Test statistics	CV=.098; p=.007		CV=.031; p=.853		CV=.128; p=.000		$X^2=1926.574$ ; p=.000

Table 6. Effectiveness of reference services in public library

Responses	Gender		Area		Course		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
Effective	684 (82.50)	536 (87.00)	979 (84.00)	241 (86.40)	518 (90.90)	702 (80.20)	1220 (84.40)
Very effective	126 (15.20)	76 (12.30)	166 (14.20)	36 (12.90)	52 (9.10)	150 (17.10)	202 (14.00)
Somewhat effective	19 (2.30)	4 (0.60)	21 (1.80)	2 (0.70)	0	23 (2.60)	23 (1.60)
Total	829 (100)	616 (100)	1166 (100)	279 (100)	570 (100)	875 (100)	1445 (100)
Test Statistics	CV=.079; p=.012		CV=.038; p=.349		CV=.157; p=.000		$X^2=1730.916$ ; p=.000

Table 7. Public library employment information service

Responses	Gender		Area		Course		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
Effective	503 (60.70)	423 (68.70)	743 (63.70)	183 (65.60)	403 (70.70)	523 (59.80)	926 (64.10)
Very effective	30 (3.60)	21 (3.40)	38 (3.30)	13 (4.70)	15 (2.60)	36 (4.10)	51 (3.50)
Somewhat effective	108 (13.00)	62 (10.10)	142 (12.20)	28 (10.00)	30 (5.30)	140 (16.00)	170 (11.80)
Ineffective	166 (20.00)	94 (15.30)	215 (18.40)	45 (16.10)	118 (20.70)	142 (16.20)	260 (18.00)
Undecided	22 (2.70)	16 (2.60)	28 (2.40)	10 (3.60)	4 (0.70)	34 (3.90)	38 (2.60)
Total	829 (100)	616 (100)	1166 (100)	279 (100)	570 (100)	875 (100)	1445 (100)
Test statistics	CV=.086; p=.031		CV=.053; p=.390		CV=.203; p=.000		$X^2=1869.952$ ; p=.000

(3.50 %) indicated very effective and remaining 38 (2.60%) were undecided. Chi-square ( $X^2 = 1869.952$ ;  $p=.000$ ) test revealed a significant difference, and confirms that public library provides employment information services effective. Further, associations between the responses with gender, area and course revealed that gender and course have significance of associations (at  $CV=.086$ ;  $p=.031$  and  $CV=.203$ ;  $p=.000$  respectively). Gender wise analysis revealed that female respondents indicated higher effectiveness than their male counterparts and course wise UG students indicated higher performance than PG students.

Table 8 depicts the data about the public library services for competitive examinations information and it is found that a large majority i.e. 1245 (86.20 %), of the respondents opined effective followed by 173 (12.0 %) expressed ineffective, 22 (1.50 %) felt it somewhat effective and 5 (0.30 %) were undecided. Chi-square test ( $X^2 = 2929.984$ ;  $p=.000$ ) revealed a significant difference between frequency groups and confirms that public library service to be used as competitive examinations information service provider which is also effective. The study of associations between the responses with gender, area and course revealed that gender and course have significance of associations (at  $CV=.077$ ;  $p=.034$  and  $CV=.168$ ;  $p=.000$  respectively). When gender was compared, more of female respondents indicated higher effectiveness and in the case of course, it is observed that more of PG students feel this service is ineffective.

**6. PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES**

Table 9 shows the data relating to distance learners opinion on whether the public library is serving its educational purpose.

Majority of the respondents i.e. 913 (63.20%) agreed that it is serving its education purpose followed by 169 (11.70%) strongly agreed, 155 (10.70%) were undecided, 150 (10.40%) strongly disagreed and remaining 58 (4.00%) disagreed that public library is serving its educational purpose. Chi-square revealed a significant difference between groups of frequencies ( $X^2=1710.775$ ;  $p=.000$ ) confirming that public library service serving for the education purpose is effective. Associations between the responses with gender, area and course revealed that course alone has significance of associations (at  $CV=.272$ ;  $p=.000$ ) where we can see that PG students (78.80%) show of more agreement compared to UG students showing (24.6%) disagreement. Gender and area of the students do not show any associations for this agreement and are statistically same.

Table 10 shows that data relating to the public library services serving for the entertainment purpose and it is observed that 831 (57.50%) distance students agreed followed by 247 (17.10%) were undecided, 174 (12.00%) strongly agreed, 101 (7.00%) strongly disagreed remaining 92 (6.40%) disagreed. Chi-square test ( $X^2=1324.934$ ;  $p=.000$ ) revealed a significant difference, and confirms that public library service, serving for the entertainment purpose is effective. Further associations between the responses with gender, area and course revealed that course alone has significance of associations (at  $CV=.226$ ;  $p=.000$ ) where it is found that PG students (71.10%) show of more agreement compared to UG students showing (19.50%) disagreement. Gender and area of the students do not show any associations for this agreement and are statistically same.

Table 11 when information on local/national news as a public library service is being a part of library resources and its services is observed majority of respondents i.e. 906 (62.70 %)

**Table 8. Competitive examinations information services by the public library**

Responses	Gender		Area		Course		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
Effective	711 (85.80)	534 (86.70)	1000 (85.80)	245 (87.80)	531 (93.20)	714 (81.60)	1245 (86.20)
Somewhat effective	11 (1.30)	11 (1.80)	20 (1.70)	2 (0.70)	2 (0.40)	20 (2.30)	22 (1.50)
Ineffective	107 (12.90)	66 (10.70)	141 (12.10)	32 (11.50)	37 (6.50)	136 (15.50)	173 (12.00)
Undecided	0	5 (0.80)	5 (0.40)	0	0	5 (0.60)	0.30)
Total	829 (100)	616 (100)	1166 (100)	279 (100)	570 (100)	875 (100)	1445 (100)
Test statistics	CV=.077 ; p=.034		CV=.044; p=.415		CV=.168 ; p=.000		$X^2=2929.984$ ; p=.000

**Table 9. Public library serving for educational purpose**

Responses	Gender		Area		Course		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
Strongly disagree	78 (9.40)	72 (11.70)	113 (9.70)	37 (13.30)	115 (20.20)	35 (4.00)	150 (10.40)
Disagree	35 (4.20)	23 (3.70)	44 (3.80)	14 (5.00)	24 (4.20)	34 (3.90)	58 (4.00)
Undecided	84 (10.10)	71 (11.50)	128 (11.00)	27 (9.70)	39 (6.80)	116 (13.30)	155 (10.70)
Agree	529 (63.80)	384 (62.30)	744 (63.80)	169 (60.60)	323 (56.70)	590 (67.40)	913 (63.20)
Strongly agree	103 (12.40)	66 (10.70)	137 (11.70)	32 (11.50)	69 (12.10)	100 (11.40)	169 (11.70)
Total	829 (100)	616 (100)	1166 (100)	279 (100)	570 (100)	875 (100)	1445 (100)
Test statistics	CV=.050; p=.459		CV=.055; p=.358		CV=.272; p=.000		$X^2=1710.775$ ; p=.000

agreed, 173 (12.00 %) were undecided, 169 (11.70 %) strongly agreed, 154 (10.70 %) strongly disagreed and remaining 43 (3.00 %) disagreed. The Chi-square test ( $X^2=1686.111$ ;  $p=.000$ ) revealed a significant difference and confirms that public library service for information on local/national news is agreed to the maximum. Associations between the responses with gender, area and course reveal that course alone has significance of associations (at  $CV=.284$ ;  $p=.000$ ) where we can see that PG students (7.40%) show agreement compared to UG students showing (21.60%) disagreement. Gender and area of the students do not show any associations for this agreement and are statistically same.

Table 12 and Fig. 3 shows data relating to importance of public library as an essential centre for distance learners. There are 600 (41.50 %) strongly agree that it is essential followed by 490 (33.90 %) of the respondents just agreed, 280 (19.40 %) undecided and 75 (5.20%) disagreed that it is important in meeting information needs of distance learners. Chi-square

test ( $X^2=448.772$ ;  $p=.000$ ) showed a significant difference confirming that a public library is essential. Associations between the responses with gender, area and course revealed that course alone has significance of associations (at  $CV=.242$ ;  $p=.000$ ), where we can see that UG students (85.70 %) expressed higher agreement than PG students. Gender and area of the students do not show any associations for this agreement and are statistically the patterns of responses are the same.

**7. BARRIERS IN ACCESSING LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES**

It is observed from the study that there are some confronts appear to obstruct distance learners in accessing library and information resources and services. And it is evident from the earlier studies that the challenges recognized includes geographical distance barriers, lack of information literacy, technical barriers, financial and human resource restraints<sup>8-10</sup>, lack of awareness for library resources and its

**Table 10. Public library serving for entertainment purpose**

Responses	Gender		Area		Course		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
Strongly disagree	51 (6.20)	50 (8.10)	72 (6.20)	29 (10.40)	78 (13.70)	23 (2.60)	101 (7.00)
Disagree	52 (6.30)	40 (6.50)	80 (6.90)	12 (4.30)	33 (5.80)	59 (6.70)	92 (6.40)
Undecided	144 (17.40)	103 (16.70)	197 (16.90)	50 (17.90)	76 (13.30)	171 (19.50)	247 (17.10)
Agree	479 (57.80)	352 (57.10)	675 (57.90)	156 (55.90)	304 (53.30)	527 (60.20)	831 (57.50)
Strongly agree	103 (12.40)	71 (11.50)	142 (12.20)	32 (11.50)	79 (13.90)	95 (10.90)	174 (12.00)
Total	829 (100)	616 (100)	1166 (100)	279 (100)	570 (100)	875 (100)	1445 (100)
Test statistics	CV=.040; p=.676		CV=.076; p=.077		CV=.226; p=.000		$X^2=1324.934$ ; p=.000

**Table 11. Public library providing local/national news**

Responses	Gender		Area		Course		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
Strongly disagree	81 (9.80)	73 (11.90)	115 (9.90)	39 (14.00)	118 (20.70)	36 (4.10)	154 (10.70)
Disagree	27 (3.30)	16 (2.60)	36 (3.10)	7 (2.50)	5 (0.90)	38 (4.30)	43 (3.00)
Undecided	98 (11.80)	75 (12.20)	142 (12.20)	31 (11.10)	49 (8.60)	124 (14.20)	173 (12.00)
Agree	530 (63.90)	376 (61.00)	740 (63.50)	166 (59.50)	328 (57.50)	578 (66.10)	906 (62.70)
Strongly Agree	93 (11.20)	76 (12.30)	133 (11.40)	36 (12.90)	70 (12.30)	99 (11.30)	169 (11.70)
Total	829 (100)	616 (100)	1166 (100)	279 (100)	570 (100)	875 (100)	1445 (100)
Test statistics	CV=.044; p=.585		CV=.059; p=.283		CV=.284; p=.000		$X^2=1686.111$ ; p=.000

**Table 12. Importance of public library**

Responses	Gender		Area		Course		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
Disagree	35 (4.20)	40 (6.50)	61 (5.20)	14 (5.00)	0	75 (8.60)	75 (5.20)
Undecided	167 (20.10)	113 (18.30)	235 (20.20)	45 (16.10)	82 (14.40)	198 (22.60)	280 (19.40)
Agree	277 (33.40)	213 (34.60)	387 (33.20)	103 (36.90)	193 (33.90)	297 (33.90)	490 (33.90)
Strongly Agree	350 (42.20)	250 (40.60)	483 (41.40)	117 (41.90)	295 (51.80)	305 (34.90)	600 (41.50)
Total	829 (100)	616 (100)	1166 (100)	279 (100)	570 (100)	875 (100)	1445 (100)
Test statistics	CV=.056; p=.215		CV=.044; p=.417		CV=.242; p=.000		$X^2=448.772$ ; p=.000

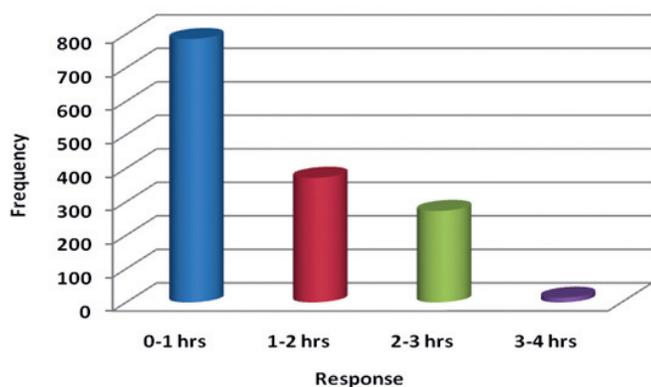


Figure 3. Public library as an essential service centre.

services, difficulty of interlibrary loan and document delivery services.

### 7.1 Geographical Barriers

It is observed from the study that the distance education learners are isolated along the distance across the state. The study examined significant findings such as the inability of distance learners to access library and information resources. The study however strongly recommends closing these distance gap, University need to provide equitable library and information access to distance learners as close as par with regular on campus students. In addition to this by developing strong active library networks with affiliated colleges and public libraries and also discuss with information providers to smack better learner and user friendly authoritative and information access models.

Another major barrier among the distance learners is the lack of awareness for library and information resources and its services. The study revealed that the distance learners at Bangalore University had reasons for not using the library and information resources, among them are lack of awareness of the services offered by the library.

## 8. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The study was carried out to examine the use of public library services by the Bangalore University distance learners in facilitating their education and the findings of the study shows that the majority of the students were using it during the contact class and it is observed that more number of students spent less than one hour in the library and only a 25.70 per cent of them used between 1 h to 2 h.

Public library book borrowing services is effective as most of the distance learners were depending on these resources; effectiveness of reference services is also effective as 84.40 per cent of the students were happy with the services offered by the public library. Employment and Competitive Examinations Information Services was also found effective during the study.

In addition, respondents agreed that Public library is serving for educational and entertainment purposes and providing local, national news to its patrons. And when the importance of the public library was asked 41.50 per cent of the distance learners strongly agreed followed by 33.90 per

cent agreed that is important in serving the academic and non academic needs of the distance learners. It was observed from the study that these students are facing few challenges such as location of the library and lack of information literacy programme.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

Public libraries are expected to provide people-oriented services<sup>11</sup>. These public libraries are aiming at satisfying the general public through the provision of appropriate information resources and services, such as advisory services, planned leadership, and information on local content that incorporates indigenous knowledge system into it<sup>12</sup>.

Library instruction programme should be organised by the Bangalore University Library and public libraries for distance learners that create the awareness and use of library and information services. The outcome of challenge is that distance learners who register on distance learning program may under-utilised the library resources. Moreover, geographical isolation was recognized as a major barrier to distance students. In addition to this, lack of time and library operating timings, fear of using the library were some of the barriers faced by distance students. This has lead to the feelings of insufficiency and uncertainty and lack of confidence on the part of distance learners. And in this background that the researcher explored the intensity of accessibility of public library services to distance learners. To conclude, it is customary that geographical separation is actually leading to feelings of inadequacy and insecurity of library and information resources to the distance learners.

In reality the current situation create an implication for University and public libraries, librarians and the state administration as a whole<sup>13</sup>. For instance, to any educational institutions, library and information services must be accessible to distance learning students, as this services helps in bringing out excellence among them. Since the distance students are distantly located and geographically detached with uneven ICT facilities<sup>13-14</sup>, the challenge lies with the University and Public libraries and students using suitable technological tool which appears exceptionally accessible and uneconomical. It is significant to observe that despite the fact that this cannot completely sustain information literacy training, but to some extent, get rid of the sense of isolation felt by distance learners.

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