

Users' Perceptions of Library Services in Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

Anand M. Dodamani* and Tularam Brahma**

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai - 400 088
E-mail: *anand.dodamani@tiss.edu; **tulabrahma@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The results obtained through a survey conducted at Sir Dorabji Tata Memorial Library (SDTM Library), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai are discussed to understand the perception of students, staff and faculty members of TISS about the library and its services. The SDTM Library. It hosts a large number of collection both in print and non-print formats related to social science and associated disciplines. It has designed and implemented its own digital repository; created and implemented 24X7 cyber library and has established a state the art computer lab for the people with visual impairment. In short, the library has made available all those facilities and services to its patrons to enable them take their academic endeavours to new heights. The results obtained from the study validate the above mentioned claims and at the same time point out some areas that need improvement.

Keywords: Library user study, library usage study, TISS library, SDTM library

1. INTRODUCTION

A library plays a very important role in promoting the progress of knowledge. In academic setup, it is considered as a 'heart' that pumps and supplies information to various academic departments to ensure the overall health of the education system. Sir Dorabji Tata Memorial Library, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) is making all possible efforts to live upto the expectations of its user community by introducing, utilising and implementing all cutting edge technologies in the management of library operations. Established in 1936, the library has achieved many milestones in the last eight decades of its untiring support to the academic programmes offered at the institute. Its balanced collection of books, availability of a wide range of journals, convenient library timings, uninterrupted in-house and online information services, use of cutting edge technology to manage error free library operations have made this library popular among the social scientists in the country¹.

Although the library has maximum to offer in terms of collection, service, and facilities, it is not foolproof like any other service entity. It has to deal requests for books not available in the collection; issues concerned to the working of electronic gadgets installed in the library and sometimes with its unhappy library users. Considering these points was undertaken a study using a survey method to understand the perception of its user community (students, staff and faculty) about the library and its services. The study has brought forth important points which are presented in the present paper.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An attempt is made to review some of the important studies conducted in the similar areas of the present

research. These reviews have helped the researchers to identify the gap in the research and eventually formulate their own research questions and design their study to fill that gap.

A study about users' satisfaction with library information resources and services was conducted at the College of Health Sciences (CHS) library Niger Delta University, Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to examine the service satisfaction of library users. The study adopted a survey method, using a population of 687 registered users in the College of Health Sciences Library. The sample size of 180 was selected through random sampling technique. The finding revealed that the users were satisfied with the book lending services of library, renewal of library materials, and longer hours of internet services in the library, but the users were not happy with the number of reference materials and academic journals in various areas².

Academic libraries that serve the users from virtual platforms should keep a tab on the changing preferences and search behaviours of their users to adjust and offer the library services accordingly. A study conducted at University of West Florida with an intention to understand the user satisfaction revealed that most of the users were satisfied with the online services offered by the library. The responses for the open-ended questions used in the survey questionnaire generated a number of suggestions. Of them, the need for the improvement in navigation was highlighted by most of the users³.

A study conducted at California State University, USA to understand the users' perception about the library and its services revealed that the students were unaware of the importance of librarians and the possible help that they would seek from the librarians in their study.

Some of the respondents were even unaware of the term 'librarian'. The users were not in a position to make distinction between the librarians and paraprofessional staff. It was felt that the academic libraries are not doing their job properly. The study suggested that the users need to be oriented about the library resources and services and they be provided with hand on experience in searching and utilising the information resources in the library⁴.

A study conducted in Africa to understand the needs of students with regard to study the spaces and environment revealed that there was mismatch between the students needs and the library services available in Africa. The study found that despite a great dissatisfaction with library services, a majority of the respondents preferred to study in the library. The authors felt that the lack of conducive study environment in the homes of the respondents could be one of the reasons for their preference to library. The authors suggested that the implementation of many virtual characteristics of the library must be based on the local requirements⁵.

The academic libraries, if they open for community members, could make a lot difference in the society. A study conducted to understand the current practices of the urban and metropolitan universities found that these universities provide library services to the unaffiliated members at free of cost or at nominal fee basis without any financial burden on the part of their parent institutions. Library Deans and Directors perceive these services as an opportunity to serve the community members⁶.

3. OBJECTIVES

User studies and surveys occupy a prominent place in the process of enhancing and improving the user satisfaction and increase the usage of library resources and facilities⁷. It is through such studies that the libraries can plan for the introduction of any new services, assess the existing services decide whether to continue or discontinue them. Thus, present study understands the needs and requirements of the users of SDTM Library, TISS. The study was carried out with the following research objectives.

- (a) To understand the effectiveness of the services offered by SDTM Library, TISS.
- (b) To identify the problems faced by the users in availing the library services and facilities.

The findings of the study will help and guide the managers and the administrators of the library to take informed decisions on the matters concerned to the library.

4. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a survey method to investigate the problem. An online questionnaire designed using 'Google Forms' was utilised for the study⁸. The questionnaires were mailed to around 200 participants comprising the

students, staff, and faculty members at TISS, Mumbai Campus. A deadline was set to submit the questionnaires online. As a result, 112 responses were collected. The collected data was analysed with the help of MS-Excel and presented in a tabular form for interpretation and understanding.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

A majority of the respondents 98 (88 %) belong to the student category, while a small portion 9 (8 %) belong to the category of faculty and 5 (4 %) belong to the category of staff. It becomes very clear from these findings that the student community is more responsive for academic surveys compared to these staff and faculty members.

A majority of the respondents 51 (46 %) respondents belong to the age group of between 20-25, while 26 (23 %) of the respondents belong to the age group of 26-30, 18 (16 %) of the respondents belong to 31-35 and small chunk of respondents 16 (14 %) belong to the age group of 36 and above. A majority of the respondents who participated in the survey are under the age of 30. It again shows the spirit of younger people to participate in academic surveys.

5.1 Frequency of Users Visiting the Library

Table 1 describes the frequency of users visiting the library at TISS campus. A majority of respondents (52 %) said that they visited library daily, 17 % respondents said that they visited library once or twice in a week while 13 % said that they visited the library only once or twice

Table 1. Frequency of library visit

Response type	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	58	52
Once or twice in a week	19	17
Once or twice in a month	15	13
Occasionally	17	15
Not answer	3	3
Total	112	100

in a month. From these findings, it becomes clear that library is considered as one of the most favourite places among the TISS community. A very small portion (15 %) respondents said that they visit the library occasionally. This may be due to the facilities such as remote access to e-resources, provided by the library.

The opinion of users with regard to different services offered by the library were asked. The collected responses are presented.

5.2 Opinion About the 'Book Lending Service'

The respondents were asked to register their opinion about the 'Book Lending Service' offered by the library. Table 2 show that majority of the responents 42 % rated this service as 'Good', 35 % rated it as 'Very Good' and 20 % rated the service as 'Excellent'. A negligible

portion of the respondents (2 %) rated this as 'Poor'. The findings indicate that overall quality of this service in the eyes of users is good.

5.3 Opinion About 'Reference Service'

A majority of the respondents (38 %) rated this service as 'Good', 27 % rated it as 'Very Good' and 13 % rated the service as 'Excellent'. A small portion of the respondents (14 %) felt that this service of the library is poor. 9 % of the respondent did not answer the question. The findings indicate that the users are satisfied with this service (Table 2).

5.4 Opinion About 'Inter Library Loan Service'

The respondents were asked for their opinion about the 'Inter Library Loan Service' offered by the TISS library. Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents (36 %) rated this service as 'Good', 19 % rated it as 'Very Good' and 9 % rated the service as 'Excellent'. A very small portion of the respondents (15 %) rated this as 'Poor'. 21 % of the respondent chose to skip this question. The findings indicate that the users are happy with this service.

5.5 Perception on 'Document Delivery Service'

Regarding respondents perception on DDS and intrating majority of the respondents (36 %) rated this service as 'Good', 19 % rated it as 'Very Good' and 9 % rated the service as 'Excellent'. A very small portion of the respondents (15 %) rated this as 'Poor'. 26 % of the respondents skipped this question. Table 2 the reason could be their unawareness about this service. Even though the findings indicate that overall quality of this service in the eyes of users is 'good', this service needs necessary publicity among the users.

5.6 Current Awareness Services

35% respondents rated the CAS as the 'good' service, 13 % felt it as 'Very Good' and 4 % rated it as 'Excellent'. However, 21 % rated this service as 'poor'. 27 % respondents did not answer this question. The reason could be their unawareness about this service. The findings indicate that the users are not really happy with this service and there is a need to revive and publicise this service among the users.

5.7 Disability Library Service

Table 2 shows that 38 % respondents rated disability library service as 'Good'. 17 % felt it as 'Very Good' and 8 % rated it as 'Excellent'. A small portion (11 %) of the respondents rated this service as 'poor'. The findings suggest that the overall experience of the users about the Disability Services offered by the library is good.

5.8 Reprographic/Photocopy Service

A majority of the respondents (64 %) skipped the question about reprography services. The reason may be the investigator's use of the word 'reprography' in the questionnaire. If the word 'photocopy' was used, the investigator would have received more responses. Of the total, 14 % felt that the photocopy service is good and 13 % felt it as 'Very Good' and 5 % rated this as 'Excellent'. Only 4 % rated this service as 'poor'. The findings reveal that the overall satisfaction of the users about this service is good.

5.9 Users Perception about Library Collection

A question was asked that whether the library has sufficient number of books in their subject area. Majority of the respondents 58 (52 %) said 'yes' while a near equal portion of the respondents 54 (48 %) said 'no'. The findings reveal that there is a need to improve the collection of the library based on the feedback received from the users.

5.10 Ways Chosen During Non-availability of Books

A question was posed to the respondents on how they manage their studies when sometimes the required books are not available in the library collection. The results are shown in Table 3. 37 % said that they depend on 'Faculty Notes' when they do not find books on the given topic. 26 % said that they request such books though ILL service provided by the library. 23 % said that they buy the books from market if they are not available in the library. 12 % respondents said that they borrow such books from their classmates Table 3. The findings reveal that the users explore all the ways to get the books when they are not available in the collection.

5.11 Awareness of E-journals Subscribed in Library

A majority of the respondents 105 (94 %) were

Table 2. Users' response for various services

	Poor (per cent)	Good (per cent)	Very good (per cent)	Excellent (percent)	Not answer (per cent)	Total (per cent)
Book lending service	2 (2)	47 (42)	40 (35)	22 (20)	1 (1)	112 (100)
Reference service	14 (13)	42 (38)	30 (27)	14 (13)	12 (9)	112 (100)
Inter library loan service	17 (15)	40 (35)	21 (19)	10 (9)	24 (21)	112 (100)
Document delivery service	21 (19)	42 (38)	13 (12)	6 (5)	30 (26)	112 (100)
Current awareness services	23 (21)	39 (35)	15 (13)	5 (4)	30 (27)	112 (100)
Disability library service	12 (11)	42 (38)	19 (17)	9 (8)	30 (26)	112 (100)

Table 3. Ways to get books not available in the library

Response type	Frequency	Percent
Request through (IIL) inter library loan	29	26
Buy from market	26	23
Depend on faculty notes	41	37
Borrow from classmate/friend	14	12
Not answer	2	2
Total	112	100

aware of the electronic journals subscribed by the library while only negligible number of respondents 7 (6 %) said they are not aware. The findings reveal that there is a wide awareness about the e-journals among the library users.

5.12 Frequency of Access of E-journals

Table 4 shows that about 32 % use this service 'daily', 31 % use it 'once or twice in a week', 8 % use it 'once in a month' and 29 % use it occasionally. The findings reveal that the respondents depend on all varieties of information resources including the e-journals.

Table 4. Frequency of access of online information services

Response Type	Frequency	Per cent
Daily	36	32
Once in a week	35	31
Once in a month	9	8
Occasionally	32	29
Total	112	100

5.13 Use of Remote Access Facility

A question on whether the users use the 'Remote Log-in' facility was asked and following are the results: As per Table 5, a majority of the respondents 63 (56 %) said that they have subscribed to this service. 41 (37 %) respondents said they have not subscribed to this service 8 (7 %) have not answered. The reason could be that they are staying on the campus and this facility is not required to access e-resources within the campus.

5.14 Users Perception About Infrastructure Facility

Table 5 shows that 37 % respondents rated the

library furniture as 'good', 29 % as 'very good', 13 % as 'excellent'. 18 % of the respondents said that the furniture is of 'average' quality while small portion of the respondents (4 %) said that the furniture in TISS library is of 'poor quality'. The overall satisfaction of the users with regard to furniture in library is 'good'.

5.15 Opinion About 'Reading Room' Facility

38 % respondents rated the 'Reading Room' facility as 'good', 23 % as 'very good', 15 % as 'excellent'. 13 % respondents felt that the Reading Room facility is of 'average quality' while 10 %. The management of the library should concentrate on improving the facility with regard to its cleanliness, quietness, etc (Table 5).

5.16 Opinion About Quality of Computer Lab (Cyber Library) Facility in TISS Library

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of Computer Lab (Cyber Library) facility in TISS library. 37 % rated it as 'good', 29 % as 'very good', and 15 % as 'excellent'. 16 % respondents said that the Cyber Library facility is of 'average' quality while 4 % felt that it is of 'poor' quality. Overall satisfaction of the users with regard to the Computer Lab (Cyber Library) is good (Table 5).

5.17 Perception About 'Printing Facility'

The respondents rated the Printing Facility offered by the library in the following manner Table 5. As indicated in Table 6, 36 % felt respondents that the facility is 'good', 22 % felt it as 'very good' and 10 % as excellent'. 18 % of the respondents felt that the Printing facility offered in TISS Library is of 'average' quality while 13 % felt it as 'poor'. The finding stresses the point to have a relook on this service to improve it.

5.18 Opinion About 'Baggage Counter'

34 % respondents felt that the Baggage Counter in TISS library is of 'average quality' while 31 % of the respondents rated it as 'poor' service. Only a small portion (21 %) rated it as 'good', 9 % as 'very good' and 4 % as 'excellent'. Table 5 from the findings it becomes clear that around 65 % users are not satisfied

Table 5. Users' response for various services

Services and staff	Poor (per cent)	Average (per cent)	Good (per cent)	Very good (per cent)	Excellent (per cent)	No answer (per cent)	Total (per cent)
Furniture in library (infrastructure facility)	4 (4)	20 (18)	41 (37)	32 (29)	15 (13)	-	112 (100)
Reading areas	11 (10)	14 (13)	43 (38)	26 (23)	17 (15)	1 (1)	112 (100)
Computer lab (cyber library)	4 (4)	18 (16)	41 (37)	32 (29)	17 (15)	-	112 (100)
Printing facility	15 (13)	20 (18)	40 (36)	25 (22)	11 (10)	1 (1)	112 (100)
Baggage counter	34 (31)	38 (34)	24 (21)	10 (9)	5 (4)	1 (1)	112 (100)
Centre for the visually challenged	4 (4)	10 (9)	44 (39)	32 (29)	17 (15)	5 (4)	112 (100)
Library staff	2 (2)	20 (18)	52 (46)	25 (22)	13 (12)	-	112 (100)

with the Baggage Counter and there is need to improve service.

5.19 Opinion About ‘Centre for Visually Challenged in TISS Library

Table 5 highlights that about 39 % respondents felt that Centre for Visually Challenged in TISS library is of ‘good quality’ while 29 % felt it as ‘very good’ 15 % as ‘excellent’ 9 % of the respondents said that the infrastructure is of ‘average’ quality while small portion 4 % of the respondent rated it as ‘poor’. The overall perception of the respondents about this service is good.

5.20 Users’ Perception About Library Staff

A question was asked to the respondents about the service quality of the library staff and they were asked to rate it accordingly and response is indicated in Table 6. About 46 % respondents rated the quality of service provided by library staff as ‘good’, 22 % rated it as ‘very good’ and 12 % termed the service quality as ‘excellent’ (Table 5). A very small portion of the respondents (2 %) rated this as ‘poor’. The findings indicate that overall service quality of library staff is satisfactory to users.

5.21 Overall Impression of Users About the Library

The popularity of any library depends on the quality of its collection and services. As per Table 6 shows that a majority of the respondents (61 %) said that TISS

Table 6. Overall impression of library

Response type	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent both in collection and services	68	61
Excellent in collection but poor in service	24	21
Poor in collection but excellent in service	14	13
Poor both in collection and service	3	3
Not answer	3	2
Total	112	100

Library is ‘excellent both in collection and service’, 21 % said that the library ‘excellent in collection but poor in service’ while 13 % of the respondents said the library ‘poor in collection but excellent in service’ and a very small portion of the respondents (3 %) said that ‘poor both in collection and service’. From these finding it becomes evident that the library is rich both in collection and service and the users are happy with it.

7. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

- (a) 52 % commonly that they use the library services daily.
- (b) 97 % respondents (42 % good, 35 % very good, 20

% excellent) are satisfied with the Book Lending Service provided by the library.

- (c) 78 % respondents (38 % good, 27 % very good, 13 % excellent) expressed their satisfaction with the Reference Service.
- (d) 64 % respondents (36 % good, 19 % very good, 9 % excellent) are happy with the Inter Library Loan Service offered by the library.
- (e) 55 % respondents (38 % good, 12 % very good, 5 % excellent) expressed positive opinion about the Document Delivery Service.
- (f) 21 % respondents opined that the Current Awareness Service provided by the library is not up to the mark.
- (g) 18 % respondents rated the Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) Service offered by the library as poor while 29 % of the respondents preferred not to comment on it.
- (h) 31 % users have expressed their unhappiness about the Baggage Counter at the library's entrance gate.
- (i) 63 % respondents rated the Disability Information Services offered by the library as good service.
- (j) 95 % respondents found the 'Institutional Repository' established by the library as useful.
- (k) 56 % respondents regularly use the 'Remote Access to E-Resources' facility initiated by the library.
- (l) 80 % respondents are happy with the services and assistance of library staff. They have expressed this opinion by rating the service as good.
- (m) 61 % respondents termed the SDTM Library, TISS as 'Excellent both in Collection and Services’.

The findings of the study reflect and reconfirm the fact that SDTM Library, TISS is one of the few social science libraries in the country that are rich in collection and best in services. As Leonard Cohen says, “there is crack in everything, that's how the light gets in”, there are few areas in the library on which it needs to work further for improvement. Following are some suggestions based on the findings of the present study.

- (a) In the last few years, the number of students studying in the campus has been increased 3 folds. As a results, the facility created for students' baggage a long ago has become insufficient to accommodate all bags. Hence, there is an urgent need to plan for new Baggage Counter with the capacity of accommodating at least 350-400 bags.
- (b) There is a need to review the process of providing both the CAS and SDI services as a considerable chunk of the respondents either expressed their unhappiness or preferred not to comment on the quality of these services.

8. CONCLUSIONS

In the last 80 years of its existence, SDTM Library, TISS has helped many students, research scholars, faculty, and visiting academicians in their quest for information and knowledge. Through its balanced collection, personalised services, cutting edge technology and a passion to deliver, it has become a sought after place for the social scientists in the country.

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Contributors

Mr Anand Dodamani is working as Assistant Librarian (Senior scale) in Sir Dorabji Tata Memorial Library, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai. He was also the teaching staff at the centre for Library and Information Management Studies in the same institute. Prior to joining TISS, he served as librarian at Dept. of Collegiate Education, Government of Karnataka and at Hashu Advani College of Special Education, Mumbai, Maharashtra. He has published research articles in academic journals and has contributed a number of papers in conference proceedings at national and international level. He is the recipient of the 2012 Emerald South Asia LIS Research Fund Award.

Mr Tularam Brahma is pursuing in MLIS at the Centre for Library and Information Management Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.