

# Students and Research Scholar's Attitude towards Overdue Books and Overdue Fine in Tezpur University: A Case Study.

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## Abstract

*This paper intends to study the students and research scholar's attitude towards library overdue books and overdue fine of Tezpur University. The study also attempted to find out the reasons for keeping library books beyond due date for which students and research scholars pay overdue fine and suggest an effective mechanism to minimize overdue fine for overdue books. Data collected through the questionnaires was organized, analyzed, tabulated and interpreted by using simple statistical method. At present there are 2413 numbers of registered users in the Central Library, Tezpur University. Out of these, 1976 are students and research scholars and other registered users are approximately 437. Survey revealed that most of the students and research scholar's were in favour of overdue fine policy, since it compels to return borrowed books in time. Findings revealed that the borrowers borrowed library books mainly for examination preparation and for supplementary readings and pay overdue fine mainly because of forgetfulness and not finished with the books. The borrowers suggested that library can minimize the overdue fine by refusing further book loans, sending overdue notice to defaulters via e-mail or mobile alert and publishing defaulter's name on department or library notice board.*

**Keywords:** Overdue Fine, Late Fine, University Library, Borrowers, Overdue Book, Tezpur University

## 1. Introduction

A University library attached with the University plays a vital role to meet multidimensional demand of information and knowledge of students, teachers and research scholars. University library invests huge amount of money every years on the purchase, process and storage and dissemination of information resources to serve its users. In order to serve its users each university library follows a policy to give access to its resources to its users. Out of many housekeeping operations library circulation is one of the most important

services through which library provided borrowing facility of books and other resources to students, teachers and research scholars. But, it is observed that most of the users of the library don't return their borrowed library books in time. It is really very unethical for a library to allow users to keep library books for indefinite period and deprived others needy users. On the other hand it is also not possible to an individual library to acquire large number of multiple copies of all important library books to serve individual requirement of each users coming to the library. Financial constrains and rapid change in course curriculum also do not encourage in doing so. Therefore in order to get rid of this situation each library has to formulate an effective circulation policy which covers borrowing privilege, lending periods and penalty for overdue books. One of the most common practices in this regard is the imposition of overdue fine for overdue books on defaulting users. Overdue fine is an amount charged from the users for keeping the borrowed library books beyond the loan period. It aim is not to collect revenue. It is imposed to compelled borrowers to return books on or before due date and provide borrowing privilege to other users.

## **2. Literature survey**

Dambawinna (2013)<sup>1</sup> attempted to ascertain the present attribute of the overdue policy, the prominent subject areas and titles of overdue books in 2011 and the attitude of students towards the reasons for late return, measure taken by the library to minimize late return, overdue fine and further strategies to be implemented to reduce rate of late return. In the context of attitude towards the overdue fine, 95% agreed that fine is a punishment which compels the borrowers to return materials on due date. Respondents also viewed that increasing copies of all demand books would be helpful to reduce late return. Bhatt (2011)<sup>2</sup> examined student's perception of library fine in Islamic College of Science and Commerce Library in Jammu and Kashmir. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the borrowers were satisfied with the borrowing privilege, lending period and fine amount. About 77.33 percent respondents were aware of the fact that overdue fine is a disciplinary measure intended against library defaulters. Edewor (2010)<sup>3</sup> studied staff users and overdue fines in Delta State Polytechnic Library, Ozora and Delta State Polytechnic Library, Otefe-Oghara. Author found that 60 percent respondents agreed that fine is a punitive measure against library defaulters and about 22 percent respondents viewed that it compelled the users to return borrowed books in time. McMenemy (2010)<sup>4</sup> studied the positive and negative aspects

of a fine culture and its impact on library usage. Findings revealed that some library generate fund by collecting fine from overdue books. Udoumah and Olkoro (2007)<sup>5</sup> studied the effect of library policies on overdue materials in university libraries in the South- South Zone Nigeria. Authors found that library policies are one of the important factor that influence book overdue. 57 percent respondents strongly agreed that opening hours of the library affects book overdue. 71.4 percent agreed that policies on penalty for defaulters affects overdue. Only 60 percent respondents agreed that they kept borrowed books beyond the date due because fine is minimal. Barber (2005)<sup>6</sup> surveyed SCONUL libraries to find out fine policies that are being charging from users for overdue items. In this study author mentioned that in Southampton Solents University Library did not charge fine, but used different system to enforce borrowing regulations. Since 1994 Southampton Solent University Library has been using a penalty points system that charges to students for overdue books. Of course this penalty point charges varies for different categories of users. Once 200 penalty points are accused, students are banned from borrowing items for 30 days. Thus till the date of survey no decision has been made to introduce library fine at Southampton Solent Library. Adomi (2003)<sup>7</sup> studied user's attitudes towards overdue fine of University of Benin and Delta State University in Nigeria. Finding revealed that attitude towards overdue fine of both the university users were positive. Respondents felt that overdue fine compels the users to return borrowed books in time. Lyons (1981)<sup>8</sup> surveyed 148 Academic Health Science Libraries and a selected group of major Health Science Research Libraries in 1979 to understand why a circulation policy poses so many problems. This study clearly pointed out the problematic nature of circulation policy. Many insights into the complexities of determining circulation policy have also been highlighted. Shontz (1999)<sup>9</sup> discussed the effects of length of checkout and overdue fine in a medical library. Author discussed how effective are fines at modifying users behavior. Study revealed that besides many other factors, convenience of renewal and return are determining factor at work when users return materials.

### **3. Objective of the study:**

- To investigate students and research scholar's attitude toward overdue books and overdue fine.
- To find out the reasons of borrowing library books for which library users pay overdue fines.
- To find out the reasons for keeping library books beyond due date.
- To down opinion and suggestions from students and research scholar's to minimize overdue fine for overdue books.

#### **4. Background of the study**

Tezpur University was established in 1994 and the central library was established along with the establishment of the university. The library holds 54022 volumes of print documents and subscribed 906 titles of current journals (print 139, online 767) and three databases through INDEST - AICTE consortium and other publishers. The UGC-Infonet consortia of INFLIBNET center is providing access facility to 8369 e-journals and eleven databases. The library also holds more than 1200 CDs/VCD scattering to different thought contents. Library users can access book database, thesis database, journal database, e-journals and other e-resources from any terminal within the university campus. At present there is 2413 number of register users in central library Tezpur University. Out of these, 1976 are students and research scholars and other registered users are approximately 437. Students, research scholars and project fellows are allowed to borrow 5 books and allowed to retain the books for a period of 15 days and if the borrowers failed to return the books on due date, overdue fine collected at the rate of Rs.1 for first 3 days and Rs.3 exceeding 7 days. Library also provides online reservation and online renewals facilities to its users. In fact, all users are allowed to renew only on those books which are not in reserved. Overdue fine is presently not applicable for faculty members in Tezpur University library. Faculty members are allowed to borrow 10 books at a time for one semester. Books purchased under project grant are allowed to issue only to the project coordinators until the project work is finished. It is true that library over due fine assist libraries in generating funds for the libraries, but the revenue collected through overdue fine is not regarded as a source of income. Here it is imposed to compelled borrowers to return books in time and provide borrowing privilege to other users.

#### **5. Scope of the study**

Bring back the overdue books from defaulters is one of the common problem of all types of libraries. Experience and literature search revealed that there has been a much discussion on overdue books and overdue fine, how and what policies are to be applied in libraries to bring back overdue books. One of the most common practices in this regard is the imposition of overdue fine on defaulting users. Overdue fine has a great impact on students and research scholars on use of library resources and user's satisfaction. Many users might not to issue

books from the library because of overdue fine. Therefore, there is a need to conduct periodic study to know users attitude toward overdue books and overdue fine policy, reasons of borrowing library books for which library users pay overdue fines and reasons for keeping library books beyond due date. . But till date no study is being done in Tezpur University to know users attitude toward overdue books and overdue fine. Therefore, this study carried out at central library, Tezpur University. The finding and suggestions of this study will help the libraries to know users reaction and also to revised the circulation policies and minimize the overdue fines for overdue books that have been practiced from age old.

## 6. Methodology

Keeping in view the objective of the study, a structure questionnaire was designed and distributed among the bachelor's degree, master degree students and research scholars in the university library who are liable for overdue fine. For this purpose the students and research scholars were also interviewed. The survey was conducted during Sep. 2012 to Dec. 2012 to collect the necessary primary data. Data collected through the questionnaires was organized, analyzed, tabulated and interpreted by using simple statistical method.

## 7. Limitation

At present there is 2413 numbers of registered users in the Central Library, Tezpur University. Out of these, 1976 are students and research scholars and other registered users are approximately 437. This study conducted among the students and research scholars, because they are liable for overdue fine for overdue books.

## 8. Finding and data analysis

**Table I: Percentage of questionnaire responded**

Sl.No.	Respondents	Questionnaire responded	Percentage
1	Bachelor degree students	33	28
2	Master degree students	47	40
3	Research Scholars	37	32
	Total	117	100

In order to conduct the survey total 200 questionnaires were prepared and served among the students and research scholars, who were liable for overdue fine as per the circulation policy of central library, Tezpur University. Out of 200 questionnaires total 117 respondents have responded to our questionnaires. Out of 117 responded 28 percent respond received from bachelor degree students, 40 percents respondents from master degree students and 32 percent respondents from research scholars.

**Table II: Percentage of school wise distribution of respondents**

Sl.No	Respondents	Questionnaire responded	Percentage
1	Business Administration	9	8
2	Engineering	26	22
4	Humanities & Social Science	38	32
3	Science	44	38
	Total	117	100

Table II shows the percentage of school wise distribution of respondents. It is to be mentioned that though questionnaires was distributed randomly even than table shows that the response of science stream library users is the largest in number responded with 38 percent respondents, followed by humanities and social science with 32 percent respondents

**Table III: Gender wise distribution of respondents**

Sl.No	Gender	Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	38	32
2	Female	79	68
	Total	117	100

Table III shows gender wise distribution of respondents. The numbers of female respondents were about 68 percent than the male counterpart with 32 percent respondents.

**Table: IV: Attitude of library users towards overdue fine**

Sl.No	Attitude	Yes %	No %	Undecided %	Total respondents
1	Library fines compel me to return borrowed books on time.	106 (91%)	9 (8%)	2 (1%)	117
2	I prefer to keep useful book beyond due date & to pay fine	40 (34%)	70 (60%)	7 (6%)	117
3	Library fines should be scrapped.	80 (68%)	36 (31%)	1 (1%)	117
4	Library should reduce fine when fine is very high.	44 (38%)	73 (62%)	0	117
5	The number of books that library allows me to borrow is adequate	74 (63%)	43 (37%)	0	117
6	The lending periods of 15 days after which the fine is due is adequate	65 (56%)	50 (43%)	2 (1%)	117
7	Fine is a measure imposed against library defaulter	70 (60%)	47 (40%)	0	117

Data in the table IV revealed that 91 percent respondents were highly satisfied with the overdue fine policy for overdue books, because it compelled users to return the borrowed library books on time. Findings also revealed that 63 percent respondents highly satisfied with the number of books that library allows them to borrow. 56 percent respondents highly satisfied with lending period 15 day after which the fine is due is adequate. Of course 43 percent respondents felt otherwise. Interestingly 34 percent respondents prefer to keep important books beyond due date and pay fine. On the other hand 60 percent respondents indicated that they don't like to keep important book beyond date and pay fine. Findings also revealed that 68 percent respondents felt that library overdue fine should be scrapped. Only 31 percent respondents felt that it should be continued in order to compel library users to return the borrowed books in time. 60 percent respondents were aware of the fact that overdue fine is a measure imposed against library defaulters. It is worthy to note that 38 percent respondents viewed that the amount to defaulters should be reduced when overdue

fine is high. Out of 117 respondents 62 percent respondents felt that reduction of overdue fine encourage the borrower to keep beyond due date.

**Table V: Reasons of borrowing books for which library users pay overdue fines**

Sl.No	Reasons	Agree %	Disagree %	Undecided %	Total respondents
1	Supplementary reading(i.e. follow up to lecture reading)	71 (61%)	41 (35%)	5 (4%)	117
2	Examination preparation	86 (74%)	28 (24%)	3 (2%)	117
3	Seminar/ Project or Assignment	27 (23%)	80 (68%)	10 (9%)	117

Supplementary reading, examination preparation, seminar, project or assignments etc. are the reasons of borrowing books for which library users pay overdue fines. Table V revealed that 74 percent respondents borrow library books and preferred to keep important books beyond the due date and pay overdue fine because of examinations preparation, followed by supplementary reading with 61 percent respondents.

**Table VI: Reasons for keeping library books beyond due date**

Sl.No	Reasons	Agree %	Disagree %	Undecided %
1	Forgetfulness	61 (52%)	50 (43%)	6 (5%)
2	Urge to keep it for more days	29 (24.79%)	70 (59.83%)	18 (15.38%)
3	Not finished with the book	44 (37.61%)	60 (51.28%)	13 (11.11%)

Table VI revealed that there are many reasons for keeping library books beyond due date. Forgetfulness, urge to keep it for more days, not finished with the book were the reasons that most of the library users cited as reasons for which they keep library books beyond due date. 52 percent respondents agreed that they used to keep library books beyond due date due to forgetfulness. 37.61 percent respondents viewed that they keep library book beyond due date due to not finished with the books and 24.79 percent respondents mentioned that they keep library books beyond due that due to urge to keep it for more days.

**Table VII Measures against overdue books**

Sl.No.	Reasons	Agree %	Disagree %	Undecided &	Total respondents
1	Sending overdue notice to defaulters via e-mail or mobile alert	77 65.81	29 24.79	11 9.40	117
2	Charging overdue fines	45 (39%)	38 (32%)	34 (29%)	117
3	Refusing further book loans	90 (77%)	27 (23%)	0	117
4	Publishing defaulter's name on department or library notice board	63 (54%)	20 (17%)	34 (29%)	117
5	Withholding pass certificate	50 (43%)	27 (23%)	40 (34%)	117

Table VII revealed that 77 percent respondents viewed that keeping library books beyond the due date can be stopped by refusing further book loans. 65.81 percent respondents viewed that overdue fine for overdue book can be stopped by sending overdue notice via e-mail or mobile alert to defaulters. 54 percent respondents viewed that over due fine for overdue books can be minimized by publishing defaulter's name on department or library notice board and followed by withholding pass certificate with 43 percent respondents. 39

percent respondents viewed that charging overdue fine for overdue books is a measure against overdue book, because it compels users to return books in time

## 9. Summary of Finding

The findings of the study are as follows:

- Findings revealed that most of the library students and research scholar's of Tezpur University were in favour of overdue fine policy, since it compels to return borrowed books in time. 91 percent respondents viewed that overdue fine compelled user to return the borrowed library books on time.
- In this study it is observed that borrowers borrowed library books mainly for examination preparation, and for supplementary readings. 74 percent respondents borrow library books and preferred to keep beyond the due date and pay overdue fine because of examinations preparation. This is followed by supplementary reading with 61 percent respondents.
- 68 percent respondents viewed that library overdue fine should be scrapped. In fact, 31 percent respondents felt that it should be continued in order to compel library users to return the borrowed books in time.
- 60 percent respondents were aware of the fact that overdue fine is an effective measure imposed against library defaulters.
- Finding revealed that 63 percent respondents were highly satisfied with the number of books that library allows to borrows is adequate. 56 percent respondents felt that lending period 15 day after which the fine is due is adequate.
- 38 percent respondents revealed that amount to defaulters should be reduced when overdue fine is high. In fact 62 percent respondents viewed against it and viewed that reduction of overdue fine encourage the borrower to keep beyond due date.
- It is observed from the data that 52 percent of the respondents used to keep library books beyond due date due to forgetfulness, followed by due to not finished with the books with 37.61 percent respondents.
- In regard to measure against overdue fine for overdue books the borrowers suggested that library can minimize the overdue fine by refusing further book loans, sending overdue notice via e-mail or mobile alert to defaulters and publishing defaulter's name on department or library notice board and withholding pass certificate of defaulters. 77 percent respondents viewed that keeping library books beyond the due

date can be stopped by refusing further book loans. 65.81 percent respondents viewed that overdue fine for overdue book can be stopped by sending overdue notice via e-mail or mobile alert to defaulters. 54 percent respondents viewed that over due fine for overdue books can be minimized by publishing defaulter's name on department or library notice board and followed by withholding pass certificate with 43 percent respondents.

## 10. Suggestion

The present study conducted to examine the "students and research scholar's attitude towards overdue books and overdue fine in Tezpur University". On the basis of finding of the survey, following recommendations are made:

- In order to minimize overdue fine into a certain level first of all university library should take initiative to make aware all registered members about the lending period, borrowing privilege, and the penalty imposed against overdue books. This could be possible through library orientation programme to newly registered members in the beginning of each academic year and uploading the circulation policy in library webpage in details
- It is also true that research work, seminar, project works, assignment are some of the important activities in a university academic environment. Due to involvement in these activities some time research workers, project workers and students failed to return borrowed book in time. Privilege of online renewal provision and online reservation facilities can help to a great extent to minimize overdue books. A user may not finished a borrowed books with the stimulate time. In this case a user may renew the borrowed for further 15 days without visiting library through online. Provision of online reservation is also another way to minimize over due fine. These facilities provide privilege to users to reserve the borrowed books which are being used by other users.
- Refusing further book loans and sending overdue notice to defaulters via e-mail or mobile alert, publishing defaulter's name on departments or library notice board and withholding passed certificate could be the measures to minimize overdue books.
- Library must give importance in collection development policy. Library collection should be according to the need and demand of the users. Special attention should be paid to identify the most used title and should procure more copies if possible from

the fine collected. The authority should authorized library to purchase multiple copies of highly demand books in order to minimize overdue fine.

## 11. Conclusion

Overdue fine for overdue books is one of the most widely used measures imposed against overdue borrowers to compel to return the borrowed library books. It doesn't aim to collect fine and to generate revenue. Survey conducted for this study revealed that students and research scholars of Tezpur University were in favour of it. They felt that some of the borrowers intentionally keep books with their custody beyond due date. In order to compel these categories of user's overdue fine is an effective measure for overdue book.

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