

# Information Use Pattern of Connemara Public Library, Chennai, Tamil Nadu: A Case Study

K. Thavamani,  
Faculty in Regional Medical Library,  
The Tamilnadu Dr. M.G.R Medical University,  
Anna Salai, Guindy. Chennai,  
Tamil Nadu, India.  
kottithavam@gmail.com

## *Abstract*

*Public libraries are responsible for accruing books and periodicals for its reading community. It is necessary to find out the users really except from the library. It is hoped that the findings of the study will certainly help to improve he functioning and services of the library. The study focused on Information use pattern of Connemara public library, Chennai. The majority of 88.50% respondents are satisfied with availability of the information sources like newspapers and magazines section being situated separately in the library. The results of the study are also indicates that majority of the users 92 (46%) are colleges students. The users are good opinion about the reference sources.*

*Key words: Public Library system; Tamil nadu; Information use; Connemara Public Library*

## **I. Introduction**

Public libraries are named as a “Public University” to the society. In a developing country library plays a vital role in the area of educational, political, cultural and economic spheres; this is the centre for Cultural Heritage for promotion of National Integration, for promotion of Communal Harmony for promotion of Spiritual Unity between hearts etc. It creates in children a love for reading, which can lead to the formation of reading habit at an early age. It transmits the knowledge of the past and present and for generation of new knowledge. Library is self-education centre; it is centre for continuing education for people of all ages.

Public libraries are the only educational system that supports persons from infancy to old age. Available to everyone, they are essential to the achievement of the National Educational Goals. Public library system has a significant role in enhancing the literacy and continuing education at grass root level in developing socio-economic conditions of the society. It is of immense use for governmental and educational bodies to regularly monitor and assess the status of public libraries in providing educational and cultural services. The public libraries are the local gateway to knowledge; provide a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.

## **II. Public Library System in Tamil Nadu**

The Directorate of Public Libraries was formed in 1972 in order to improve library services. In Tamil nadu the Directorate of Public Libraries (DPL) functioning under the

control of Public Libraries Department is responsible to establishing and monitoring of public libraries which include branch libraries, village libraries, part - time libraries and mobile libraries of each district. It is functioning under the Tamil Nadu Public Libraries (TNPL) Act, 1948. Mission and Vision of the Directorate of Public Libraries is to promote public library movement in the state and to provide life-long self education to municipal, urban and rural people.

The Public Library in each District in Tamil nadu is functions under the Directorate of Public Libraries (DPL). It is performing with one Joint Director, District Officer, Additional Director and Office Staff. Local Library Authorities of DPL execute the duties of District Library Officer with support of technical and ministerial staff under the control of the Directorate of Public Libraries. At presently 4042 public libraries are functioning.

Pride of the state is the Connemara Public Library situated in the heart of the Chennai city. Apart from being the State Central Library, it is one among the four National Repository Libraries in India. Also, the State has three famous old libraries viz. Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji Sarasvati Mahal Library, Thanjavur, Dr.U.Ve. Swaminatha Iyer Library, Chennai and Maraimalai Adigal Library, Chennai.

There are different types of public libraries functioning in the State of Tamil nadu. At present 4042 Public Libraries in various categories as detailed bellow are functioning in the State.

**Table 1: Types of Public Libraries in Tamil nadu**

Sl. No	Libraries	Number
1	District Central Libraries	32
2	Branch Libraries	1664
3	Mobile Libraries	10
4	Village Libraries	1795
5	Part – Time Libraries	539
6	Connemara (State Central) Public Library	1
7	Anna Centenary Library	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>4042</b>

<http://www.tnschools.gov.in/DPL.html>

### III. Mission and Services of Public Libraries in Tamil Nadu

The key mission and services of public libraries in Tamil nadu are as follows <sup>14</sup>

- Creating and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age.
- Supporting both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education.
- Providing opportunities for personal creative development.
- Stimulating the imagination and creativity of young people and children.
- Promoting awareness of cultural heritage appreciation of arts scientific achievements and innovation.
- Providing access to cultural expression of all performing arts.

- Fostering intercultural dialogue and favoring cultural diversity.
- Supporting the oral tradition.
- Ensuring access to all sorts of community information for citizens.
- Providing adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interest groups.
- Facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills and
- Supporting and participating in literacy activities and adult education programmes for all age groups and initiating such activities if necessary.

#### **IV. Connemara Public Library**

This library was named after the then Governor of Madras Lord Connemara. The Connemara Library houses a hall for periodicals, reference room, civil service study centre, books in Indian languages and a Braille library. Connemara Public Library at Chennai is one of the four National Depository Libraries which receive a copy of all books, newspapers and periodicals published in India. Established in 1890 the library is a repository of centuries-old publications, wherein lie some of the most respected works and collections in the country. It also serves as a depository library for the United Nations.

##### **a. State Central Library**

It rose to the State Central Library with effect from April 1, 1950 under the control of the Director of Public Instruction who is the ex-officio Director of Public Libraries under the provision of the Madras Public Libraries Act of 1948. From April 1, 1939, the library became as an independent institution presided over by the Librarian himself under the direct control of the Directorate of Public Libraries.

##### **b. Building**

The library was as part of a cultural complex that grew in the grounds of what was once called 'The Pantheon'. The entire complex now boasts buildings that reflect architectural unity, even while demonstrating the various stages of Indo-Saracenic development, from Gothic-Byzantine to Rajput Mughal and Southern Hindu Deccani.

The new building, which was added to the library in 1973, has a vast collection of books, a much sought after text-book section, a periodicals hall, a reference room, a video room, an entire floor for books from the Indian languages, a Braille Library and an IAS study centre.

##### **c. Finance**

The expenditure for maintaining the library is met by the Government of Tamil Nadu. However 50% of the recurring expenditure and 2/3 of the non-recurring expenditure in respect of maintaining the Delivery of Books Act section of this library is met by the Government of India.

#### **d. Collections**

The stock of volumes stood at 7, 22,000. At present it receives 3500 periodicals and 160 newspapers. It was made the state central library under the Madras Public Libraries Act, it began to receive four copies of publications published in the state and delivered to the Registrar of Books under the Press and Registration Act of 1867 as amended by the Madras Public Libraries Act. This increased the stock of library to some extent.

#### **e. Materials received under the Delivery of Books Act**

The Connemara Public Library as one of the Four libraries to receive all the books and other materials published in India with effect from September 10, 1955, the additions of the library grow very fast creating the problem of space to accommodate the materials.

#### **f. Materials from United Nations Organization and Asian Development Bank etc**

Apart from this, a good number of publications and periodicals of the U.N.O, its specialized agencies and Asian Development Bank were received. In addition to these collections, the library is able to get a good number of books by way of donations from individuals, institutions and governments. Apart from these materials got gratis, a good number of books are added every year by purchasing from the funds available by the Government. This library has got more than one Lakh of rare books and periodicals.

#### **g. Services**

The library provide following services:

- Reference section
- Text book section
- Lending section
- Periodical section
- Reprographic section
- Microfilm section
- Language books section
- Civil service study circle
- Educational video/ CD Rom section
- Home delivery service
- Bibliographic service
- Internet service
- Preservation section
- (Microfilm, Scanning, Mending and Binding)

#### **h. Working Hours and Days**

Connemara Public Library serves the public daily from 9.00 A.M. to 7.30 P.M. on weekdays and from 9.30 A.M. to 6.00 P.M. on Sundays with out any break. The library is closed on three National holidays and selected festival holidays a year i.e. Pongal, Tamil New Year, Pooja Holidays, Deepavali and Christmas

#### **i. Visitors and Members**

The increasing intellectual awareness among the people makes them to move towards the social institution like library. Any person above 17 years is eligible to use the free public library service. Accordingly 3, 39,592 readers have utilized the facilities during 2010-11.

Membership is open to any resident of Chennai and its surrounding area who is 17 years of age and above. Every member can borrow maximum of six books for a period of fourteen days by depositing Rs. 300/- An annual subscription of Rs.50/- per member is collected every financial year. At present this library had 1, 27,575 members on roll. 2, 16,813 volumes have been lent out to members for home reading during 2010-11.

#### **j. Computerization**

The last decade of the 20th century i.e. in the early 1990's Connemara Public Library started the path of computerization with a single PC/XT running on dbase software. However it was in 1998 that a giant leap was taken with the purchase of two servers and twelve nodes with a budget of Rs. 8/- lakhs. These computers were put in good use by the highly efficient staff that helped to input an amazing 3.5 lakhs records.

In April 2003, the budget increased to 18 lakhs and two more servers with six nodes with latest configuration were acquired reflecting one more step towards total computerization. The next important event is started in June 2003 with the introduction of OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue). Also a Web Site for library information is added as a part of total computerization.

#### **k. Digitization**

Scanning services introduced in the year 2006 by which rare and old documents are scanned and preserved for posterity.

#### **l. Reader's Forum**

A well established Reader's Forum is functioning in the library. The forum is in charge of providing Xerox facilities to the readers. Apart from this the forum organizes literary meetings and book releasing functions in the library for the benefit of the readers.

### **V. Review of Literature**

The importance of non-formal education and a brief history of public library movement in Kerala. The initiatives taken by governmental non-governmental agencies and various other organizations in propagating non-formal education among rural masses are briefly discussed.<sup>1</sup> the historical development of the rural library services in Africa and

modern rural village libraries in Ghana and Burkina Faso within this context. It builds on previous studies of rural village libraries in Uganda and provides more support for the village community library concept as being a potentially powerful solution for provision of reading materials in rural areas. Literacy continues to be a major factor in terms of economic and personal development in underdeveloped nations, and all libraries but perhaps these small village libraries even more so, have the potential to play an important role in the eradication of illiteracy, development of a reading culture and provision of services for the newly literate.<sup>2</sup> The public library is often considered a community learning center with the ability to effectively respond to the growth of adult and continuing education has created greater needs for learning opportunities in rural areas.<sup>3</sup> The recent education policy reforms in Sri Lanka, which emphasizes the expansion of literacy and lifelong learning, and describes the role of the public libraries in this task and discusses the status of the Sri Lankan public libraries. It gives reasons for the unresponsiveness of public libraries to the changing educational requirements.<sup>4</sup> The role of UK public libraries in adult literacy provides support for promoting the pleasure of reading to adults with poor literacy. The re-branding of adult literacy collections was recognized as the ideal starting point for the rejuvenation of adult literacy work and identifying adults with poor literacy was acknowledged as part of multi-agency work.<sup>5</sup>

## **VI. Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study are as follows.

- ❖ To find out the Age, Gender, Occupation, Academic Background, Frequency, Reading Hours and Convenience of Library Timings of the users.
- ❖ To find out the user satisfaction of library services of the library.
- ❖ To know the extent of satisfaction of users with the information sources available in the library.

## **VII. Methodology**

The present study is based on survey method. The survey is a non-experimental, descriptive research method. The data has been collected through questionnaire method. For the purpose of this study, responses were collected from Connemara Public Library users total of 200 respondents have been selected in the present study. The two hundred respondents have been selected according to their regular utilization of the library. These data were organized, calculated, tabulated, analyzed and presented by using simple arithmetic and statistical methods in order to arrive at its results. Realizing the importance of the library, the utilization of the library by the user has been evaluated.

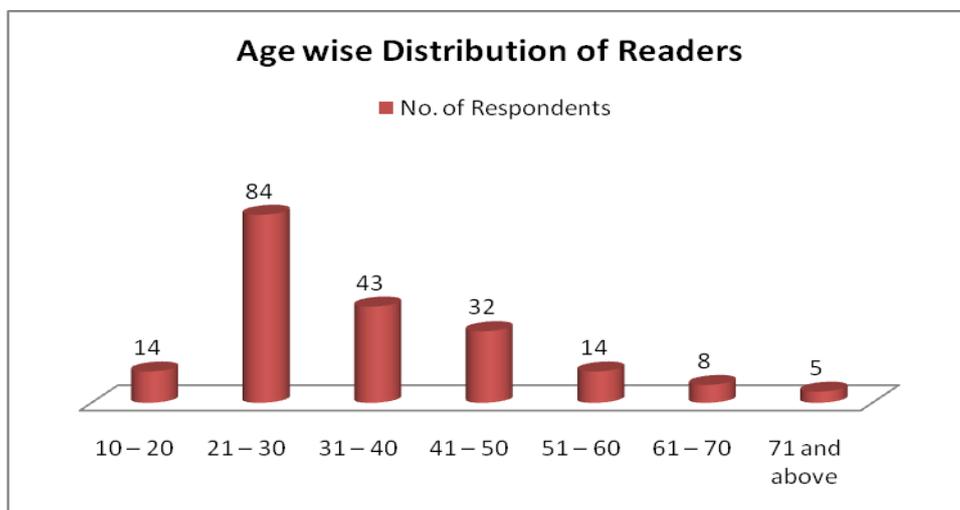
## **VIII. Data Analysis and Findings**

Analysis of data collected through survey methods using questionnaire was resorted to elicit information from the users of Connemara Public Library. A structured questionnaire was prepared and administered among the samples drawn for the study.

**Table 2: Age wise Distribution of Readers**

Sl. No.	Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	10 – 20	14	7.00
2	21 – 30	84	42.00
3	31 – 40	43	21.50
4	41 – 50	32	16.00
5	51 – 60	14	7.00
6	61 – 70	8	4.00
7	71 and above	5	2.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Graph 1 Age wise Distribution**

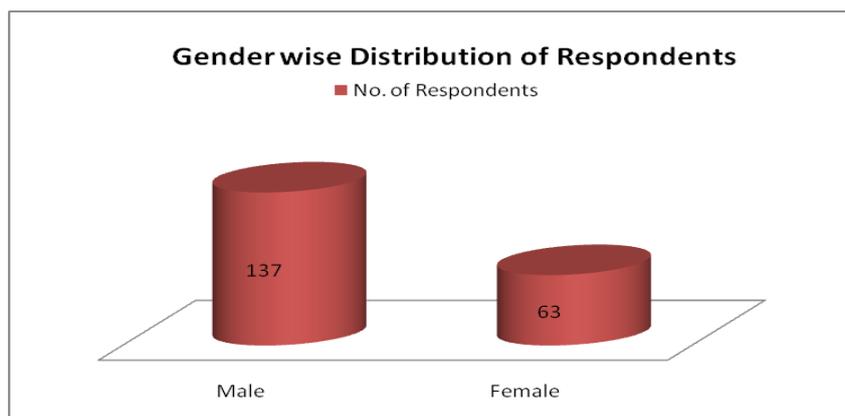


The table and graph shows age wise distribution of various categories of respondents is given. Out of 200 respondents majority of 84 (42%) respondent belongs to the age group of 21-30 is the highest no. of users using library. The age groups of 71 and above respondents being 5 (2.50%) are fewer users.

**Table 3: Gender wise Distribution of Respondents**

Sl. No.	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	137	68.50
2	Female	63	31.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Graph 2 Gender wise Distribution**

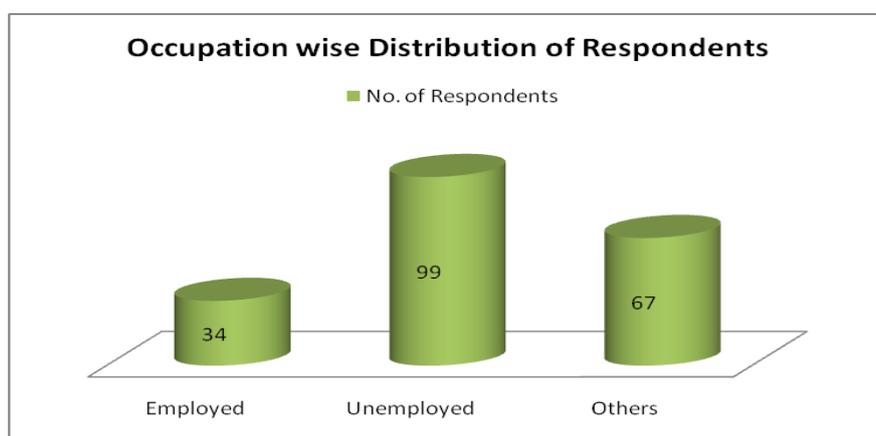


The table and graph represents the gender wise distribution of respondents. Out of 200 respondents, majority of 137 (68.50%) users belongs to male community. There are 63 female respondents i.e. (31.50%) are less user's gender wise.

**Table 4: Occupation wise Distribution of Respondents**

Sl. No.	Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Employed	34	17.00
2	Unemployed	99	49.50
3	Others	67	33.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Graph 3 Occupation wise Distribution**

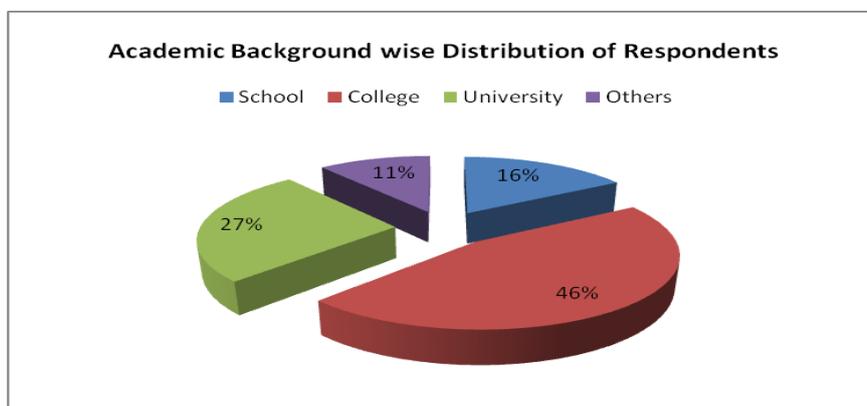


The table and graph shows that the occupation wise distribution three categories of the library users are employed, unemployed and others. Out of 200 respondents, 99 (49.50%) are unemployed persons. Only 34 (17%) users are employed persons.

**Table 5: Academic Background wise Distribution of Respondents**

Sl. No.	Academic Background	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	School	33	16.50
2	College	92	46.00
3	University	53	26.50
4	Others	22	11.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Graph 4 Academic Background**

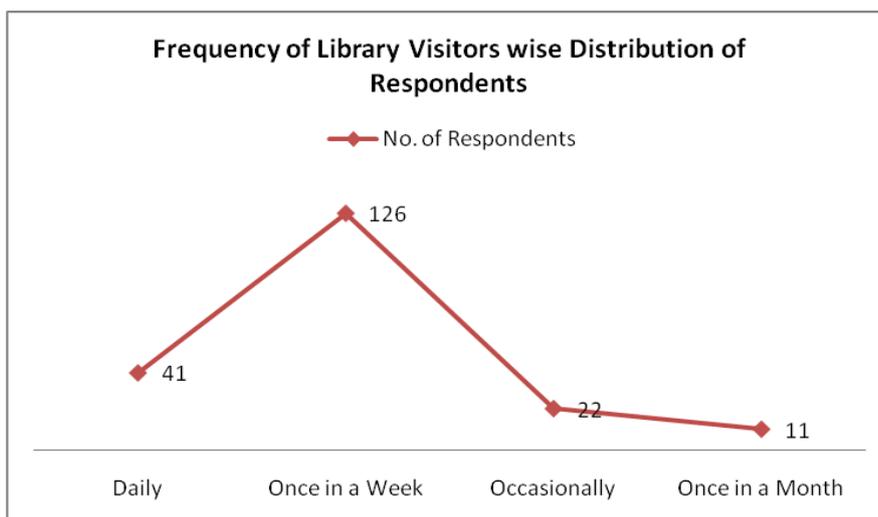


The table represents the academic background wise distribution of respondents. Out of 200 respondents, 92 (46%) are belongs to college students which are the highest. And minimum no. of respondents i. e 22 (11%) are others (Govt. and Private Organization employers) the lowest user of library.

**Table 6: Frequency of Library Visitors wise Distribution of Respondents**

Sl. No.	Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Daily	41	20.50
2	Once in a Week	126	63.00
3	Occasionally	22	11.00
4	Once in a Month	11	5.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Graph 5 Frequency of Library Visitors**

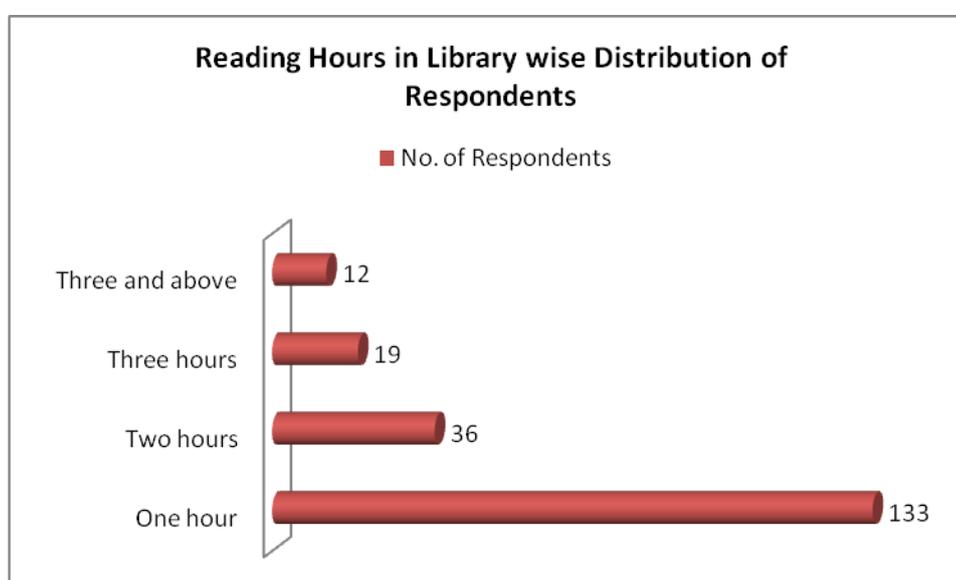


The above table and graph represents the frequency of library visitor's wise distribution of respondents. The higher no. of 126 (63%) respondents are visiting library once in a week. And minimum of 11 (5.50%) respondents are visiting library once in a month. The second highest no. i.e. 41 respondents (20.50%) are visiting the library in daily.

**Table 7: Reading Hours in Library wise Distribution of Respondents**

Sl. No.	Reading Hours	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	One hour	133	66.50
2	Two hours	36	18.00
3	Three hours	19	9.50
4	Three and above	12	6.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Graph 6: Reading Hours in Library wise Distribution**

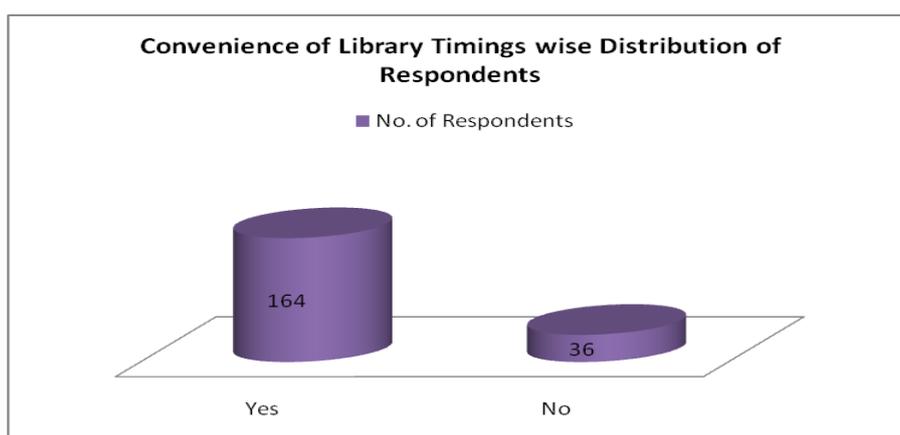


The table and graph represents the highest i.e. 133 (66.50%) are reading one hour daily. The least percentage i.e. 12 (6.00%) of respondents are reading 3 hours and above in a day in the library.

**Table 8: Convenience of Library Timings wise Distribution of Respondents**

Sl. No.	Convenience of Library Timings	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	164	82.00
2	No	36	18.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Graph 7: Convenience of Library Timings wise Distribution**

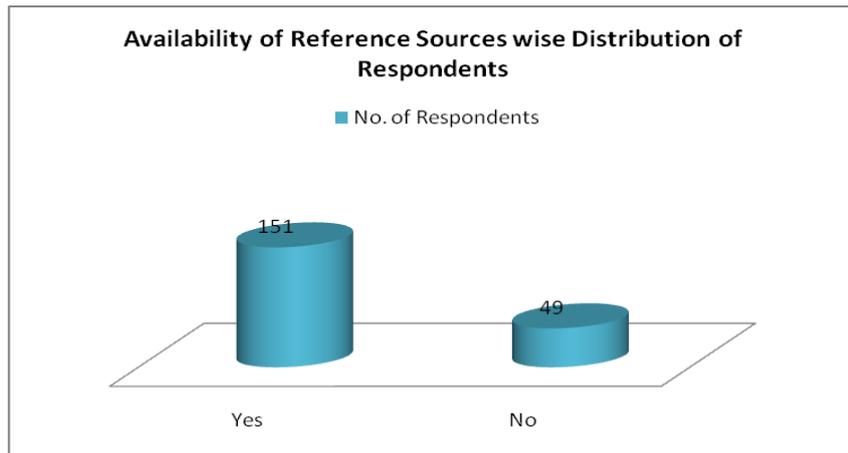


The table and graph shows convenience of library timings wise distribution of respondents. Maximum of 164 (82%) respondents of library users are satisfied with library timings. The least percentage i.e. 36 (18%) respondents are not satisfied.

**Table 9: Availability of Reference Sources wise Distribution of Respondents**

Sl. No.	Reference Sources	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	151	80.50
2	No	49	19.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Graph 8: Availability of Reference Sources**

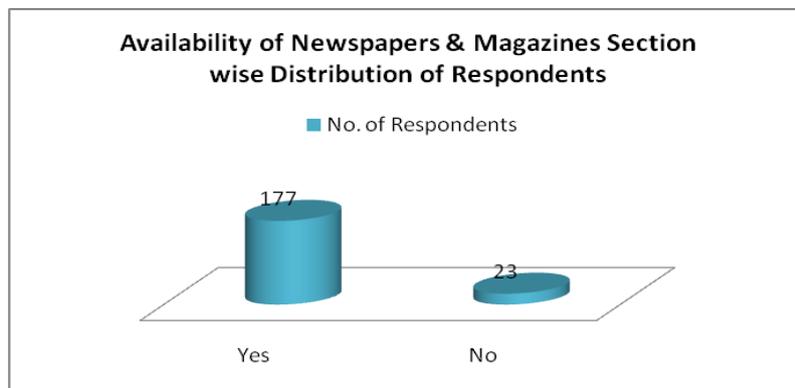


The table and graph shows that the majority of the respondents 151 (80.50%) of library users are satisfied with availability of reference sources. Only 49 (19.50%) respondents are not satisfied with reference sources in the library.

**Table 10: Availability of Newspapers & Magazines Section wise Distribution of Respondents**

Sl. No.	Availability of Newspapers & Magazines	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	177	88.50
2	No	23	11.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Graph 9: Availability of Newspapers & Magazines Section**

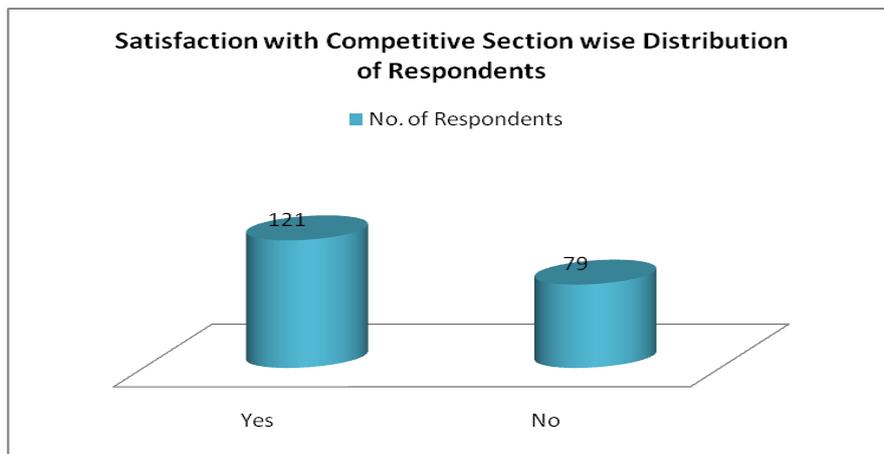


The above table and graph shows availability of newspapers and magazines section. Majority of the respondent i.e. 177 (88.50%) are satisfied. Only 23 (11%) respondents are not satisfied.

**Table 11: Satisfaction with Competitive Section wise Distribution of Respondents**

Sl. No.	Satisfaction with Competitive Section	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	121	60.50
2	No	79	39.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Graph 10: Satisfaction with Competitive Section wise Distribution**

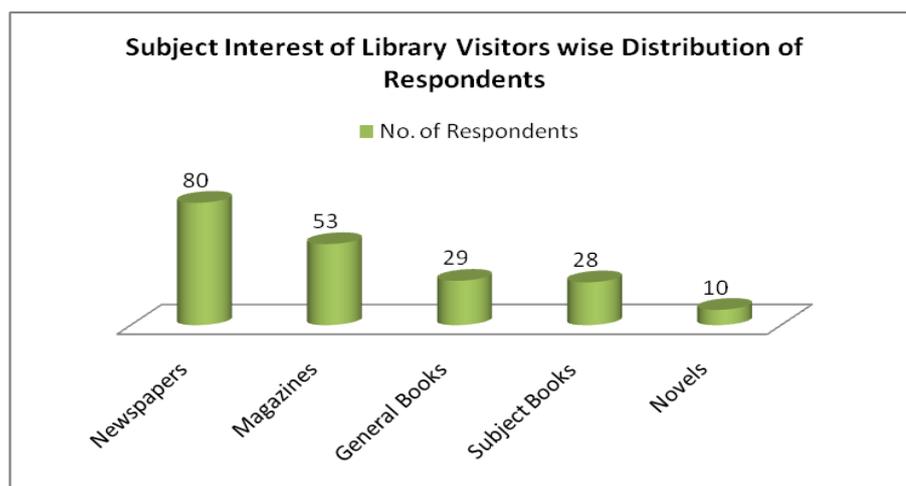


The table and graph shows that the maximum no. i.e. 121 (60.50%) respondents of library users are satisfied with competitive section. The minimum of 79 (39.50%) respondents are not satisfied with competitive section in the library.

**Table 12: Subject Interest of Library Visitors wise Distribution of Respondents**

Sl. No.	Subject Interest	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Newspapers	80	40.00
2	Magazines	53	26.50
3	General Books	29	14.50
4	Subject Books	28	14.00
5	Novels	10	5.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Graph 11: Subject Interest of Library Visitors**



Among library users the maximum no. of visitors i.e. 80 (40%) who are interested to read Newspapers. Only 10 (5.00%) respondents are interested to read novels in library. It is seen in the above table and graph.

## **IX. Conclusion**

Public libraries are playing a vital role in uplifting the social status of the user in all aspects. They are knowledge centers and contribute to lifelong learning. The public library system in our country plays a major role to achieve this goal it is necessary that all the public libraries and users should be well trained in handling of information in the modern era using Information Communication Technologies (ICTs). The Government will allocate more funds for creation and development of library for the effective services to the general public.

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