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Abstract

The paper attempt to study the use of public library by the visually Impaired (VI) users with special attention to Govt. Public library Kota Rajasthan. The main objective of the paper is to analyze their attitude and proffer possible solutions on means and ways public library can improve services for the use of VI. Interview method was used for data collection. Finally the paper highlights the various major findings of the study and offers some vital suggestions on how the overall system and services of government public library Kota can be improved.

Keywords: Visually Impaired (VI), Visual Acuity (VA), Government (Govt.), Govt. Divisional Public Library (GDPL), RU (Registered Users), NRU (Non- Registered Users),

1. INTRODUCTION

A public library is an organisation established, supported and funded by the community, either through national, regional, state, local government or some other form of community organisation. It provides free access to knowledge, information and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic, employment status and educational attainment. According to **Iwhiwhu** and **Patience** (2012) "People in all works of life use the public library resources, facilities and services. These users include pupils, students, teachers, scholars, scientists, business executives, government officials, physically challenged and even dropouts" [1].

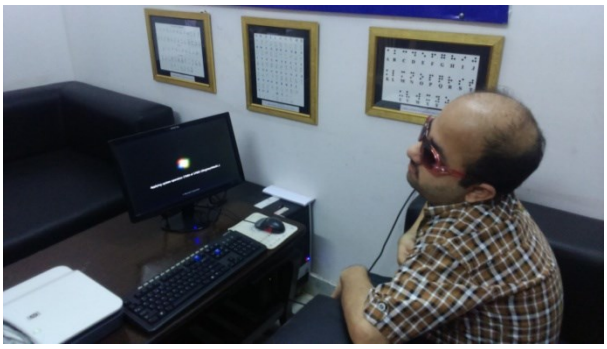


Photo 1: Visually Impaired Reader of Govt. Divisional Public Library, Kota in the Visually Impaired Library Service Section and hearing Audio Books

Visual impairment (VI) is defined as sight loss that cannot be fully corrected using glasses or contact lenses James Stewart (2014) [4]. Even if "blind" and "visually handicapped" can have slightly different meanings, here they are used to indicate the same thing. The term "visually impaired" applies both to people who can partially see and to those who cannot, i.e. who are totally blind. The information needs of VI people have been studied by Williamson et. al (2002), in an Australian research project, these researchers found that VI needed to consult the literature on aging to find out more and that most of the needs were similar to other people's needs, with some exceptions[7]. For this reason, VI seeks for information resources to satisfy these needs and Public library is one of the best avenues to provide them with current and relevant information they needed.

The **World Health Organisation (WHO)** defines visual impairment on the basis of distance visual acuity (VA) and this is the reporting standard for all internationally comparative epidemiological studies of visual impairment. A widely used clinical definition of visual impairment is in terms of measures of distance visual acuity using a Snellen chart, the chart familiar to anyone that has had an eye examination by an optometrist. Snellen tests measure the size of letters on a chart that can be read over a distance of six meters. A limitation of Snellen charts is that they are not reliable at lower levels of visual acuity and LogMAR tests have been developed to deal with this.

2. RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY LIBRARY FOUNDATION (RRRLF)

Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) is a central autonomous organisation established and fully financed by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. RRRLF is registered under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961. It is the nodal agency of the Government of India to support public library services and systems and promote public library movement in the country to commensurate with the objectives as embodied in its Memorandum of Association

3. GOVT. DIVISIONAL PUBLIC LIBRARY KOTA: BRIEF OVERVIEW

- Established in 1956
- Started serving to the library services to the Readers of Kota Region from the Dan Mal ji ki Haweli (Baphana Haweli), The Owner of The Building was Nagar Seth Kota

- Later, in 1968 the library was shifted in Chhatra Vilas Garden (Also Known as CV Garden) from Rampur (Dan mal Haweli)
- By Order the DM again in 1984 Library was shifted into the 2nd floor of UIT Building because of establishing Doordarshan Office.
- Again library was re shifted in 2001 on the Ground Floor of UIT Building because of they have need of wing.
- In 2013, with the Financial Assistance of Raja Ram Mohun Roy Library Foundation Kolkata (RRRLF), library shifted in New Building, which is situated in CAD Colony Campus, In front of Income Tax Residential Colony, Dadabari Kota (Raj.)
- Now New library Building serving to the Citizen of Kota Region
- But it's a long journey of shifting from one place to another place is really a cause of damage of Books.

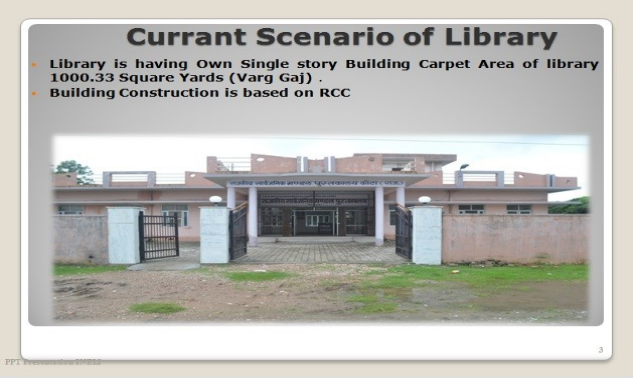


Photo 2: Front view of Govt. Divisional Public Library, Kota

3. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Visually impaired people have the same information needs as sighted people. Just as sighted people might read a newspaper, listen to a CD or download electronic information from the Internet visually impaired people also want access to relevant information in their chosen accessible format. Developing an efficient library service for print-disabled people is extremely important, because there are significantly fewer books available commercially in accessible formats compared to what is published in print for the general public. Therefore there is The Need to build collections in alternative formats and make them available for readers who are unable to browse shelves which makes it necessary to study use of public library by visually impaired with special reference to government public library Kota Rajasthan.

4. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to investigate the use of public library information resources by visually impaired users. Furthermore, the following are other objectives

1. To study the attitude of visually impaired users towards public library information resources;
2. To know the frequency of visit to the public library by the visually impaired users;

3. To study the various purpose of using public library by visually impaired users
4. To offer possible suggestions on way and means of improving the public library, its collection and services to the visually impaired users.

5. SCOPE OF STUDY

The scope of the study covers Visually Impaired users of Government Divisional Public Library Kota, Rajasthan which include both registered and non-registered regular users.


Kota gets book-reading gadget for blind

HI-TECH The advance technology allows the visually impaired, without Braille knowledge, to listen to books and also write

ON THE PLATTER

News Paper Clipping 1: Hindustan Times Covering New facilities introduction for Braille section in Government Divisional Public Library Kota

6. METHODOLOGY

The research method adopted for the study is interview method. There are three fundamental types of research interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. For this study structured interview was adopted and conducted among visually impaired users of government public library Kota because structured interviews are, essentially, verbally administered questionnaires, in which a list of predetermined questions are asked, with little or no variation and with no scope for follow-up questions to responses that warrant further elaboration. Consequently, they are relatively quick and easy to administer and may be of particular use if clarification of certain questions are required or if there are likely to be literacy or numeracy problems with the respondents. Structured interviews are easy to replicate as a fixed set of closed questions are used, which are easy to quantify – this means it is easy to test for reliability and also Structured interviews are fairly quick to conduct which means that many interviews can take place within a short amount of time. This means a large sample can be obtained resulting in the findings being representative and having the ability to be generalized to a large population. The study is limited to Government Public Library in Kota Rajasthan. Data analysis and interpretation is based on a sample population of 28 users of Government Public Library Kota Rajasthan which were randomly picked.

Table 1: **Population sample distribution of GDPL**

S.No	Users category	Number of users	%
1	Registered Users	8	29
2	Non Registered users	20	71
	Total	28	100

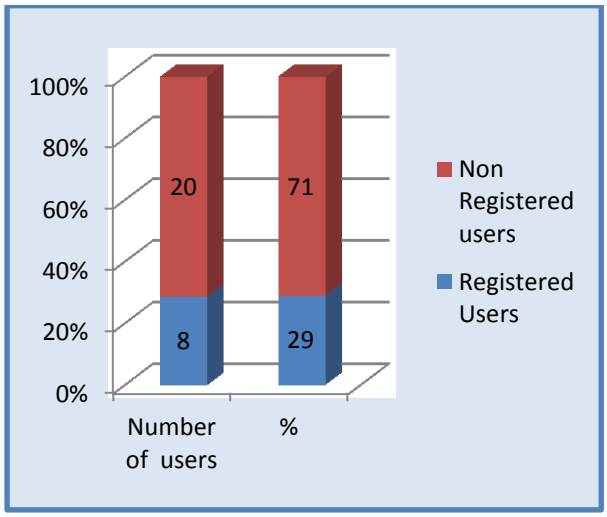


Figure 1: Demonstrating the population sample distribution of GDPL Kota

7. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANYLYSIS

A total number of 28 questionnaires were distributed to various users of Government Public Library Kota Rajasthan but 24 were fully filled and returned which means 86% responded. The analysis is based on simple frequency count and percentages.

7.1Age distribution of respondents

***Table 2*: Age of respondents**

Age	Number of users	%
10-15	0	0
16-20	4	17
21-29	7	29
30 and above	13	54
Total	24	100

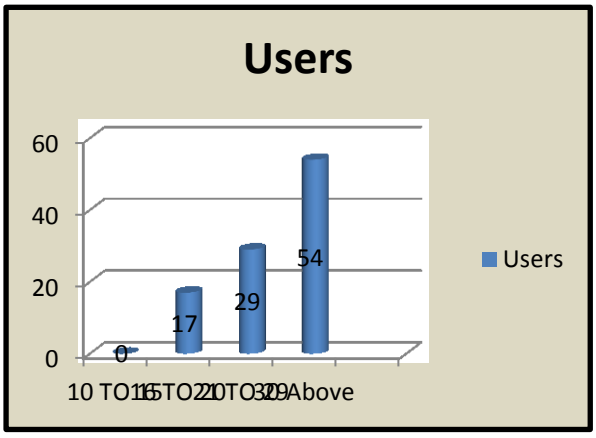


Figure 2: Demonstrating the age of respondents

Table 2 above shows that 54% of the respondents are between the ages of 30 and above, 29% are between the ages of 21 to 29 and 17% are of the range of 16 to 20 while none was between the ranges of 10 to 15.

7.2 Frequency of visit to public library by respondents

***Table 3*: Frequency of visit**

Frequency	Number of users	%
Once a day	0	0
Once in two days	2	8
Once a week	10	42
Occasionally	12	50
Total	24	100

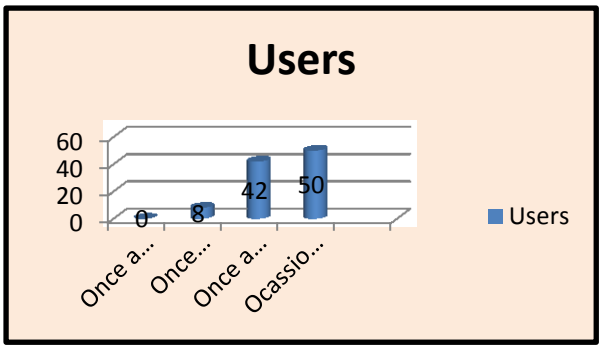


Figure 3: Demonstrating the frequency of visit

From table 3 above, 50% of the total respondents visit the public library occasionally, 42% visit once a week and 8% go to the library once in two days while none of the respondents visit the library every day.

7.3 Reading facilities available in the public library

Table 4: Reading room facilities

Facilities	Number of users	%
Satisfied	18	75
Not satisfied	6	25
Total	24	100

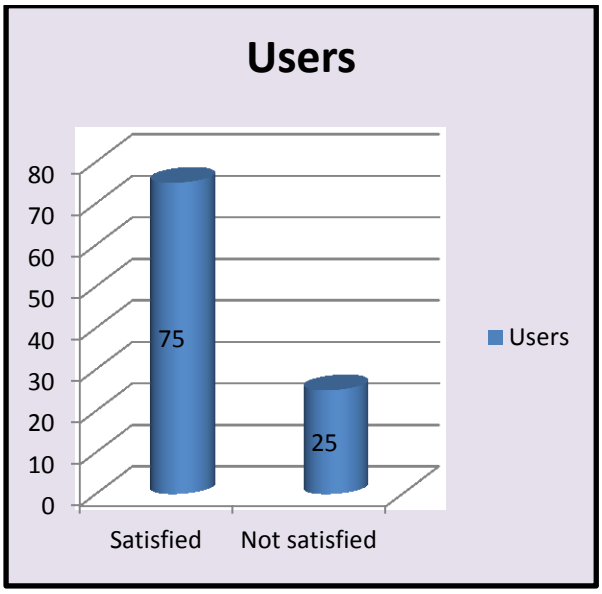


Figure 4: Demonstrating the reading room facilities

Table 4 above reveals that majority of the respondents, i.e. 75% are of the view that they are satisfied with the reading facilities available for them to use while 25% are of them are not satisfied.

7.4 Public library working hours

5: Working hours of the library

Working hours	Number of users	%
Satisfied	20	83
Not satisfied	4	17
Total	24	100

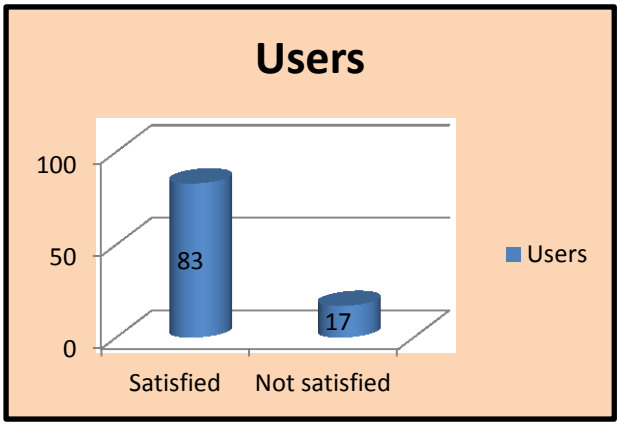


Figure 5: Demonstrating the working hours of the library

In table 5 above, 83% of the respondents are very much satisfied with the working ours of the public library while 17% are not satisfied at all with library's working hours.

7.5 Reading materials available in the public library.

Table 6: Reading materials

Reading materials	Number of users	%
Braille Books	10	41
Large Print	7	29
Recorded	4	17
Talking Book	0	0
Online Electronic Audio Books	3	13
Total	24	100

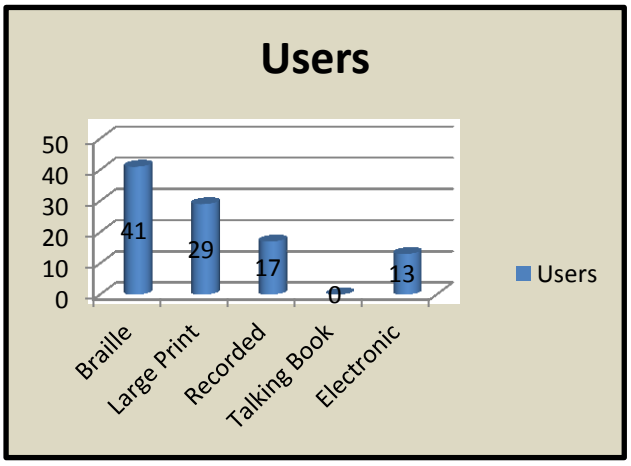


Figure 6: Demonstrating the reading materials

Table 6 above shows that 41% of the respondents agreed that their reading material is Braille, 29% go for large print and 13% says electronic while none was for talking book.

7.6 Purpose of using the public library

***Table 7*: Purpose of using the library**

Purpose	Number of users	%
Academic	4	17
Improve knowledge	8	33
Recreation	5	21
Current awareness	7	29
Total	24	100

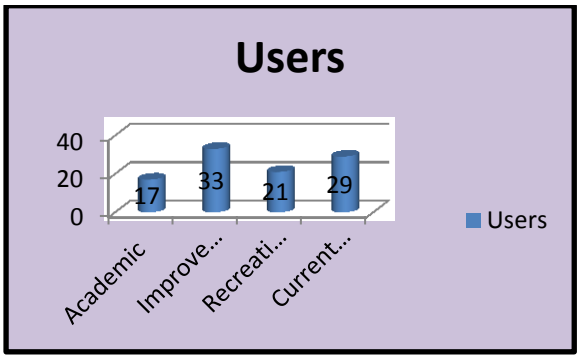


Figure 7: Demonstrating the Purpose of using the library

As shown in table 7 above, 33% of the respondents visit the public library for the purpose of improving their knowledge, 29% go for current awareness, 21% visit for recreation purpose while 17% go for academic purpose.

7.7 Assistance by the public library staff

***Table 8*: Assistance by library staff**

Assistance	Number of users	%
Satisfied	19	80
Not satisfied	5	20
Total	24	100

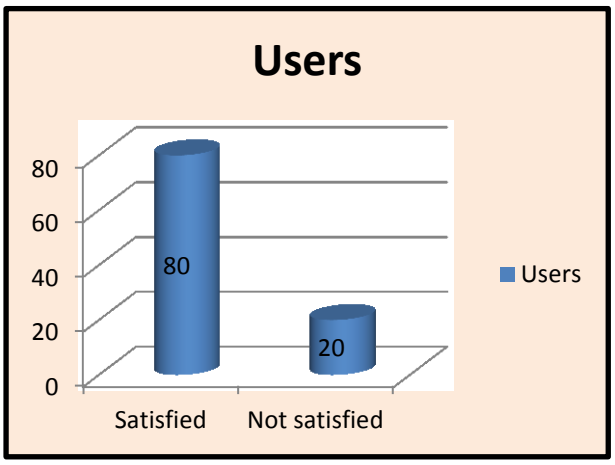


Figure 8: Demonstrating Assistance by library staff

Table 8 above revealed that 80% of the respondents are satisfied with the assistance offered by the public library staff while 20% says they are not satisfied.

7.8 Adequacy of reading materials

Table 9: **Adequacy of reading materials**

Adequacy	Number of users	%
Adequate	11	45
Inadequate	13	55
Total	24	100

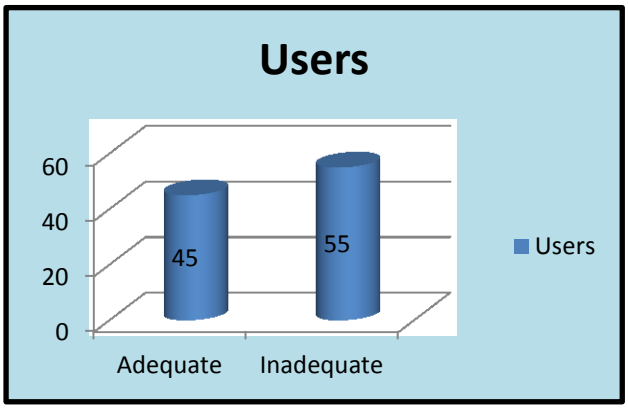


Figure 9: Demonstrating the Adequacy of reading materials

In table 9 above, it shows that about 55% of the total respondents agreed that reading materials are inadequate in the library while 45% are of the view that reading materials are adequate.

8. SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

After systematic data collection and analysis, the following are the major findings of the study:

1. Majority of the respondents are between the age bracket of 30 years and above

2. About half of the respondents visit the public library occasionally

3. The study reveals that majority of the respondents are satisfied with the reading facilities available in the public library

4. Most of the respondents agreed that Braille is their reading material

5. The study shows that a lot of the respondents visit the public library for the purpose of improving their knowledge

6. A greater part of the respondents are of the view that they are very much satisfied with assistance being offered by the public library staff.

7. Finally, majority of the respondents says that reading materials are inadequate in the public library.



Photo 3: Visually Impaired Reader of Govt. Divisional Public Library, Kota in the Visually Impaired Library Service Section

9. SUGGESTIONS

The study, after analyzing the views of the respondents, offers the following suggestions:

1. That enough reading materials should be provided so that users can maximize the use of the public library.

2. Effort should be made to encourage the users to visit the public library more often by providing additional services in the library.

3. Younger users should also be encouraged to regularly visit the public library.

10. CONCLUSION

The public library is often one of the first places a person goes when he or she is in need of information in a community. Therefore, the library should be a welcoming place for all users, especially the blind and visually impaired community members. Strong effort should be made by the government to improve the collection of reading materials as well as reading facilities for the VI so that they can be encouraged to use government public library Kota the more their information needs.

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