

# E-reading Habits of Public Library Users in Erode Corporation, Tamilnadu, India: A Survey

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**Abstract** The paper explores the result of a study based on public libraries in Erode Corporation, Tamilnadu, India. Totally 200 readers were surveyed with the help of a structured questionnaire to know if the public library users of Erode Corporation, Tamilnadu, India have the habit of reading or not. The results of this study which aimed to find out the reasons for reading books and how the electronic media like TV, CDs and DVDs have influenced reading habits of people has enabled us to reveal some interesting findings given in results and discussions part of this paper. The finds are worth sharing with the professionals.

**Keywords** Public Library, User Study, E-reading Habits, Structured Questionnaire

## 1. Introduction

Book reading is an art. It is a pleasure to read books. Books are friends and companions. Reading helps us to de-stress ourselves. It is an aid for relaxation. It enriches our knowledge, improves our vocabulary. It helps to think and create new knowledge. Person who reads most can speak more and can be an interesting conversationalist[1]. When TV became popular in Indian households most of us thought that it is the end of the print media and people are going to read less and less. But after conducting this study, the authors found that books still rule. People still find books more convenient to read, as they are table and need minimum reading aids. We also found that friends, teachers and the parents have a great influence on readers by introducing them to books. Sometimes viewing TV has lead to reading of books and vice-versa.

Reading is possible only when people are literate. We can instil reading habits only if illiteracy is eradicated. Public libraries can be effective agencies of promoting reading habits among the literate public. Public libraries are the hub of reading newspapers and magazines by the public. They are the most suitable places to carry out studies of this kind.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- To examine the working pattern of the public libraries

under study

- To assess the reading habits of public library users
- To find out the reasons for reading books, which are the languages user prefer for reading and who are their favourite authors
- Finally to examine the influence of electronic media on the reading habits of public library users

## 3. Hypotheses

The hypotheses on which this study is based are:

- With the emergence of electronic media the reading habits of people are winding
- People find it difficult to access all books, so they prefer to visit the nearest public library to read books
- Whatever the different types of reading materials that have emerged over the years, books have always ruled reading
- There is no relation between reading and the electronic media

## 4. Scope and Limitation of the Study

Only public users of rural and district level public libraries of Erode Corporation, Tamilnadu were considered for the study. Only 200 active readers are covered on day to day basis for a period of two months. Users of all age groups visiting the public libraries are surveyed.

## 5. Methodology

The methodology used for his study is questionnaire

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method. The investigator personally distributed the questionnaire and collected the responses on the spot. This facilitated in having hundred percent responses. Some questions were open-ended and some were choice questions.

## 6. Results and Discussion

The results of the study is grouped in to four sections as shown below:

1. General information
2. Library related information
3. Reading habits of users and
4. Electronic media and reading habits

### 6.1. General information

#### 6.1.1. Age Wise Distribution Public Library Users

It may be observed from the Table 1 that majority of the public library users are between 16-25 years age group representing 47.50% of the total users. The second highest majority of the public library users are in 26-35 years age group scoring 24.50%, 36-45 years age group of users make 16%, 46-55 years age group users make 7% and above 55 years age group from the least in number representing 5% each.

**Table 1.** Age wise distribution public library users

| S. No. | Age          | No. of the response | %             |
|--------|--------------|---------------------|---------------|
| 1      | 16-25        | 95                  | 47.50         |
| 2      | 26-35        | 49                  | 24.50         |
| 3      | 36-45        | 32                  | 16.00         |
| 4      | 46-55        | 14                  | 07.00         |
| 5      | 56 and above | 10                  | 05.00         |
|        | <b>Total</b> | <b>200</b>          | <b>100.00</b> |

#### 6.1.2. Sex Wise Distribution of Public Library Users

The data regarding the sex wise break up of public library users is shown in Table 2. It may be seen from the table that most of the user are male users representing 79% and only 21% of them are female users.

**Table 2.** Sex wise distribution of public library users

| S. No. | Sex          | No. of users | %          |
|--------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 1      | Male         | 150          | 75         |
| 2      | Female       | 50           | 25         |
|        | <b>Total</b> | <b>200</b>   | <b>100</b> |

#### 6.1.3. Educational Qualification of the Respondents

The data regarding the qualification wise break up of users is presented in Table 3. It can be interpreted from the table that the maximum users in this category are mainly bachelor degree holders 50%, master degree holders scoring 19.5% from the next highest group followed by those who have below ssc scoring 1.5%

**Table 3.** Educational qualification of the respondents

| S. No. | Qualification       | No. of responses | %          |
|--------|---------------------|------------------|------------|
| 1      | SSC                 | 3                | 1.50       |
| 2      | ITI/Diploma         | 16               | 8.00       |
| 3      | Intermediate        | 10               | 5.00       |
| 4      | Degree              | 100              | 50.00      |
| 5      | Professional Degree | 10               | 5.00       |
| 6      | Master degree       | 39               | 19.50      |
| 7      | Not answered        | 2                | 1.00       |
|        | <b>Total</b>        | <b>200</b>       | <b>100</b> |

#### 6.1.4. Status of Public Library Users

The breakup of the status of the public library users is shown in Table 4. It may be observed from the table that 90% of the users mainly students. About 15.5% of them are officers and professionals, business community score 11% and others are 28.5%.

**Table 4.** Status of public library users

| S. No. | Status                   | No. of responses | %          |
|--------|--------------------------|------------------|------------|
| 1      | Students                 | 90               | 45.00      |
| 2      | Officers / Professionals | 31               | 15.50      |
| 3      | Business                 | 22               | 11.00      |
| 4      | Others                   | 57               | 28.50      |
|        | <b>Total</b>             | <b>200</b>       | <b>100</b> |

#### 6.1.5. Mother Tongue of Public Library Users

The data regarding the mother tongue of the public library users is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Mother tongue of public library users

| S. No. | Language     | No. of responses | %          |
|--------|--------------|------------------|------------|
| 1      | Tamil        | 185              | 92.5       |
| 2      | Malayalam    | 9                | 4.50       |
| 3      | Telugu       | 5                | 2.50       |
| 4      | English      | 1                | 0.50       |
|        | <b>Total</b> | <b>200</b>       | <b>100</b> |

## 6.2. Library Related Information

This section gives brief library related information such as, the number of users visiting the neighbourhood public library, purpose of visit the frequency of library visit. This gives a time period of interaction of users with the library also.

#### 6.2.1. Visit to the Neighborhood Public Library

**Table 6.** Visit to neighborhood public library

| S. No. | Response type | No. of responses | %          |
|--------|---------------|------------------|------------|
| 1      | Yes           | 180              | 90         |
| 2      | No            | 20               | 0          |
|        | <b>Total</b>  | <b>200</b>       | <b>100</b> |

It is observed from the responses given in Table 6 that majority of the users visit neighbourhood library

representing 90% and other 10% do not visit their neighbourhood library.

### 6.2.2. Purpose of Visit to Public Library

The data regarding the purpose of visits to the public library users is shown in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Purpose of visit to public library

| S. No. | Purpose of visit  | No. of responses | %  |
|--------|-------------------|------------------|----|
| 1      | Reading           | 150              | 75 |
| 2      | General knowledge | 114              | 57 |
| 3      | Entertainment     | 60               | 30 |
| 4      | Others            | 36               | 18 |

### 6.2.3. Frequency of Library Visit by the Public Library Users

The breakup of frequency of library users by the public library users is as shown in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Frequency of library visit by the public library users

| S. No. | Frequency of visit | No. of responses | %          |
|--------|--------------------|------------------|------------|
| 1      | Everyday           | 51               | 25.5       |
| 2      | Once in two days   | 28               | 14.0       |
| 3      | Twice in a week    | 14               | 7.0        |
| 4      | Once in a week     | 28               | 14.0       |
| 5      | Occasionally       | 79               | 39.5       |
|        | <b>Total</b>       | <b>200</b>       | <b>100</b> |

## 6.3. E-reading Habits' of USERS

This section deals with e-reading habits of users i.e. number of hours spent at home, preference of reading materials, their favourite authors etc.

### 6.3.1. Time Spent for E-reading everyday by the Public Library Users

The amount of time spent in reading at home every day by the public library users is shown in Table 9.

**Table 9.** Time spent for e-reading everyday by the public library users

| S. No. | Time spent        | No. of responses | %          |
|--------|-------------------|------------------|------------|
| 1      | ½ an hour         | 26               | 13         |
| 2      | 1 hour            | 70               | 35         |
| 3      | 2 hours           | 40               | 20         |
| 4      | More than 2 hours | 64               | 32         |
|        | <b>Total</b>      | <b>200</b>       | <b>100</b> |

### 6.3.2. Reading of different Kind of Material by the Public Library Users

A brief list of various types of reading material preferred by public library users is shown in Table 10.

**Table 10.** Reading of different kind of material by the public library users

| S. No. | Type of reading material | No. of responses | %    |
|--------|--------------------------|------------------|------|
| 1      | Magazines                | 126              | 63   |
| 2      | Newspapers               | 50               | 25   |
| 3      | General knowledge books  | 92               | 46   |
| 4      | Fiction                  | 65               | 32.5 |
| 5      | Biographies              | 18               | 9    |
| 6      | Religious books          | 28               | 14   |
| 7      | Others                   | 19               | 9.5  |

## 6.4. Electronic Media and Reading Habits

This section presents the analysis of impact of electronic media and reading habits of public library users.

### 6.4.1. Advantage of using the Electronic Source Over Books

The responses of public library users of using electronic format in comparison with printed format user are shown in Table 11.

**Table 11.** Advantage of using the electronic source over books

| S. No. | Type of responses                           | No. of responses | %          |
|--------|---|------------------|------------|
| 1      | Print media is better                       | 26               | 26 (134)   |
| 2      | Electronic source is better                 | 30               | 22.39(134) |
| 3      | Electronic source is faster and easy search | 18               | 13.43(134) |
| 4      | Electronic source is time saving            | 29               | 21.64(134) |
| 5      | Electronic source contains more information | 15               | 11.20(134) |
| 6      | Not compared                                | 16               | 11.94(134) |

### 6.4.2. Use of CDs by the Public Library Users

It was observed from Table 12 that majority of the users use music CDs representing 62% and only 24% of the user community use education CDs.

**Table 12.** Use of CDs by the public library users

| S. No. | Type of CDs   | No. of responses | %           |
|--------|---------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1      | Education CDs | 48 (24.00)       | 139 (69.50) |
| 2      | Music CDs     | 124(62.00)       | 76 (38.00)  |

### 6.4.3. Relationship between use of CD and Reading Habits

It is clear from Table 13 that 63% of the users are of the view that CDs have not helped them in using books where as only 29% said that CD viewing lead to book use has

**Table 13.** Relationship between use of CD and reading habits

| S. No. | Response type  | No. of responses | %          |
|--------|----------------|------------------|------------|
| 1      | Yes            | 60               | 30         |
| 2      | No             | 130              | 65         |
| 3      | Did not answer | 10               | 5          |
|        | <b>Total</b>   | <b>200</b>       | <b>100</b> |

#### 6.4.4. Supplementing CD Search with Book use

It is seen from Table 14 that most of the users representing 77% say that CD search was not supplemented with book use where as 22% of the users say that there is relationship between CD search and book use.

**Table 14.** Book use versus CD use

| S. No. | Response type  | No. of responses | %          |
|--------|----------------|------------------|------------|
| 1      | Yes            | 40               | 20         |
| 2      | No             | 134              | 67         |
| 3      | Did not answer | 26               | 13         |
|        | <b>Total</b>   | <b>200</b>       | <b>100</b> |

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