



A Study on Public Library Resources and Services for Job Seekers at District Central Library, Salem

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1306000137>

Received: 05 June 2026; Accepted: 10 June 2026; Published: 27 June 2026

ABSTRACT

Public libraries play a vital role in promoting education, knowledge, and career development, especially for job seekers preparing for competitive examinations. This study focuses on the resources and services provided by the District Central Library, Salem, and their usefulness for competitive exam aspirants. The library offers a wide range of materials such as competitive examination books, newspapers, magazines, reference sources, and internet facilities to support users. The study aims to analyze the level of utilization of these resources, identify the needs and problems faced by job seekers, and evaluate user satisfaction with library services. A survey method was adopted, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 100 respondents. The findings of the study help in understanding the effectiveness of library services and suggest improvements to enhance support for job seekers.

Keywords: Public Library, Competitive Examinations, Library Resources, Job Seekers, Information Services

INTRODUCTION

The District Central Library, Salem, is an important public institution that supports education, literacy, and career development. Established on 6th August 1953, it functions under the Local Library Authority of the Government of Tamil Nadu and provides services to students, job seekers, and general readers. The library offers a wide range of books in Tamil and English, including materials for competitive examinations such as UPSC, TNPSC, SSC, and banking exams. It also manages a network of branch and village libraries, ensuring access to knowledge in rural areas. With modern facilities like computerized cataloguing and internet services, the library continues to play a vital role in promoting learning and supporting job aspirants.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gomathi, P (2012) this survey presents on user satisfaction of public library in Chidambaram. A simple random sampling method was used to collect the data and the questionnaire was randomly distributed to two hundred users. The overall response rate was 90%. The study indicated that the users, library services and users satisfaction of the Public Library in Chidambaram.

Udhayakumar, K. and Sarathy (2025) investigate students' perceptions of library services in arts and science colleges in Western Tamil Nadu. The research aims to assess how effectively library services meet students' needs and expectations, with a focus on service quality. Data were collected from students using a structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions based on a five-point Likert scale. The collected data were analyzed using simple percentage and Chi-square techniques. The findings indicate that the libraries provide good quality services and are successful in satisfying users. Overall, students show a positive perception towards the availability, usefulness, and effectiveness of library services in supporting their academic activities.

Dhimmar, H. N., & Bhavina, J. N. (2024) India's educational system is rapidly evolving, and in order to choose the best applicants, educational institutions and different government agencies administer a variety of

tests. Each year, millions of students take these tests in hopes of landing a job. In order to study for competitive exams, candidates must access key information resources. In recent years, public libraries have emerged as the main resource for students, job seekers, and the general public. Therefore, by a thorough assessment of scholarly research papers, the current study investigates the usage of public libraries in the preparation for competitive exams.

Sermarajan, A. V., & Balasubramanian, P. (2024) the study examined how Tamil Nadu university libraries' e-books and library services help students get ready for competitive exams. Students reported satisfaction with the resources offered by the libraries, according to studies done at Madurai Kamaraj University and Manonmaniam Sundaranar University. This suggests that students believe these resources will help them succeed academically and professionally. 200 students were given a survey that was created using Google Forms.

Need of the Study

Public libraries play an important role in supporting education and employment opportunities. Many unemployed youth depend on libraries to prepare for competitive examinations such as TNPSC, UPSC, banking, and railway exams. The District Central Library provides essential resources like books, newspapers, magazines, and internet facilities. This study is conducted to evaluate how effectively these resources meet the needs of job seekers, to understand their usage level, and to identify the problems faced by users. The findings will help improve library services and facilities.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the demographic profile of respondents
- To study the frequency and duration of library visit the participant.
- To identify the level of competitive examinations prepared by the respondents.
- To analyze the types of resources used for competitive exam preparation.
- To evaluate the level of satisfaction of users with library resources and service.
- To suggest suitable improvements for enhancing public library services for competitive exam aspirants.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a survey method using a structured questionnaire to collect primary data from job seekers at the District Central Library, Salem. It follows a descriptive and analytical approach to understand the usage of library resources and services. The collected data are analyzed using simple statistical tools such as percentage analysis.

Sampling Method

A random sampling technique is used in this study to select respondents. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed to library users, out of which 100 completed questionnaires were received. The remaining 20 were either incomplete or not returned, and thus the final sample size is 100 respondents. Thus, **100 valid responses (83.3%)** were used for data analysis.

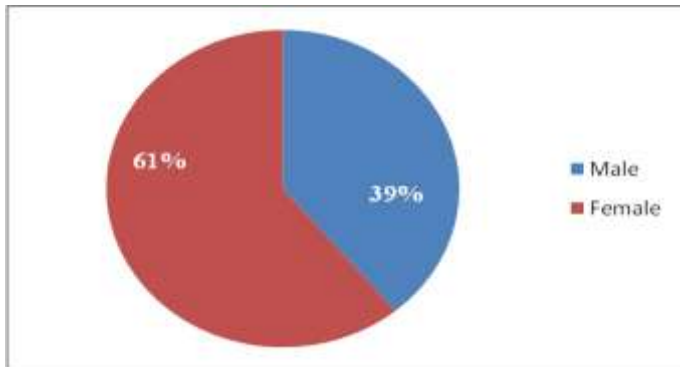
Methods Of Data Collection

The data is collected using different methods such as questionnaire distribution, direct interaction with respondents, and observation of user behavior within the library. These methods help in gathering accurate and reliable information for the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table:1- Gender wise study participants

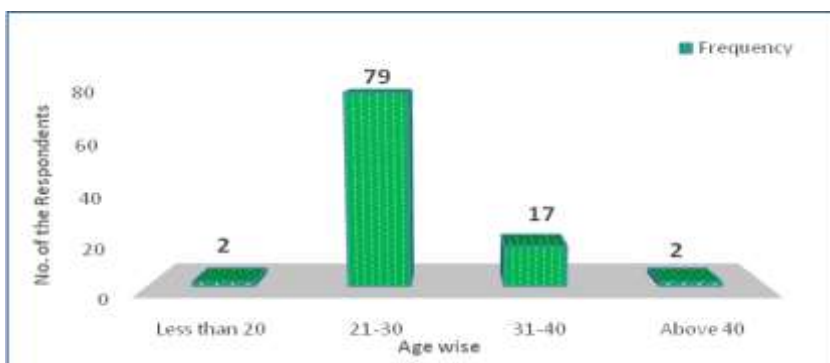
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	39	39.0
Female	61	61.0
Total	100	100.0



The above table shows the gender-wise distribution of the respondents in the study on public library resources and services for competitive examinations with special reference to District Central Library, Salem. Out of the total 100 respondents, 39 (39.0%) are male and 61 (61.0%) are female. This indicates that female respondents constitute the majority of the study sample. The higher participation of female users suggests that women are actively utilizing public library resources and services for competitive examination preparation in the study area. It also reflects a growing interest among female aspirants in pursuing competitive exams through library support.

Table:2- Age wise study participants

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 20	2	2.0
21-30	79	79.0
31-40	17	17.0
Above 40	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0



Out of the total 100 respondents, the majority 79 (79.0%) belong to the age group of 21–30 years, indicating that young adults form the dominant group utilizing public library resources for competitive examination preparation. Further, 17 (17.0%) respondents fall under the age group of 31–40 years, showing a moderate level of participation from middle-aged individuals. Only 2 (2.0%) respondents are below 20 years, and similarly, 2 (2.0%) are above 40 years, which indicates very minimal participation from these age groups. This distribution clearly reveals that public library services for competitive examinations are predominantly used by individuals in the 21–30 age group, who are typically in the prime stage of career building and actively preparing for various competitive exams.

Table:3- Education wise study participants

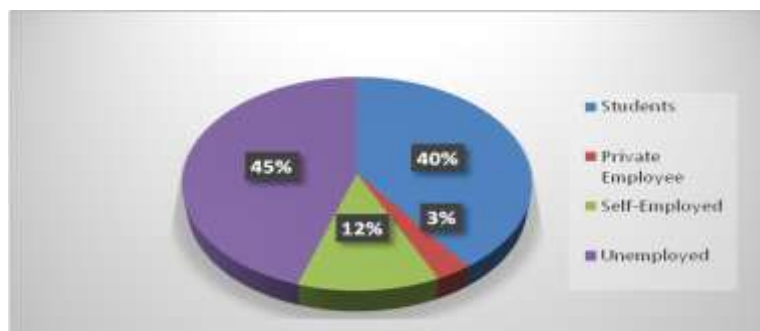
Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
School level	1	1.0
Under Graduates	67	67.0
Post Graduates	31	31.0
Research Scholar	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

Out of the total 100 respondents, the majority 67 (67.0%) are Under Graduates, indicating that most of the library users preparing for competitive examinations are currently pursuing their bachelor’s degree. This is followed by 31 (31.0%) Post Graduates, showing a considerable proportion of respondents who have completed higher education and are still actively using library resources for exam preparation. Only 1 (1.0%) respondent belongs to the school level, and similarly, 1 (1.0%) is a research scholar, indicating very minimal participation from these categories.

The findings clearly reveal that undergraduate students form the major user group of public library resources and services for competitive examinations, followed by postgraduates, highlighting the importance of libraries in supporting higher education students in their career advancement.

Table:4- Occupation wise study participants

Occupations	Frequency	Percentage
Students	40	40.0
Private Employee	3	3.0
Self-Employed	12	12.0
Unemployed	45	45.0
Total	100	100.0



Out of the total 100 respondents, 45 (45.0%) are unemployed, constituting the largest group. This indicates that a significant number of individuals preparing for competitive examinations are not currently employed and are likely dedicating their time fully to exam preparation. This is followed by 40 (40.0%) students, showing that a substantial proportion of respondents are still pursuing their education while simultaneously preparing for competitive exams.

Further, 12 (12.0%) respondents are self-employed, indicating moderate participation from individuals engaged in their own occupations. Only 3 (3.0%) respondents are private employees, representing a very small proportion of working professionals utilizing the library services. The findings reveal that unemployed individuals and students are the primary users of public library resources for competitive examination preparation, highlighting the crucial role of libraries in supporting job seekers and academic learners.

Table -5 Membership in the library of study participants

Membership	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	65	65.0
No	35	35.0
Total	100	100.0

The above table presents the distribution of study participants based on their membership in the library. It is observed that a majority of the respondents, 65 (65.0%), have library membership, while 35 (35.0%) do not hold membership. This indicates that a significant proportion of the participants are formally registered users of the library. The higher percentage of members suggests that the library plays an important role in supporting the academic and informational needs of the respondents. Library membership may facilitate better access to books, journals, and other learning resources, thereby enhancing their study and research activities.

Table – 6 Frequency of library visit

Frequency of Library Visit	Gender wise		Total
	Male	Female	
Daily	37 (45.1)	46 (54.9)	82 (100.0)
Twice a Week	2 (16.7)	10 (83.3)	12 (100.0)
Once a Week	0 (0.0)	5 (100.0)	5 (100.0)
Once a Month	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	1 (100.0)
Total	39 (39.0)	61 (61.0)	100 (100.0)

The table shows that female respondents (61%) are higher than male respondents (39%). A majority of users (82%) visit the library daily, indicating frequent usage. Female respondents visit the library more regularly than males across all categories. Overall, daily visits are the most common pattern among the respondents.

Table -7 Duration of each visit

Duration	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	0	00



1-2hours	4	4.0
2-3hours	13	13.0
More than 3hours	83	83.0
Total	100	100.0

The table shows the amount of time spent by respondents on a particular activity. Out of 100 respondents, a majority of 83% spend more than 3 hours, indicating a very high level of engagement. Only 13% of respondents spend 2–3 hours, while a very small proportion of 4% spend just 1–2 hours. This clearly indicates that most respondents prefer to spend longer durations, suggesting that the activity is highly important or engaging to them. Overall, the data reveals that extended time usage (more than 3 hours).

Table – 8 Competitive Exams Prepared by Study Participants

Competitive exam	Frequency	Percentage	Mean Scores	Rank
UPSC/ SCC	6	6.0	0.06	4
TNPSC / State PSC	60	60.0	2.40	1
Banking / Railway	8	8.0	0.16	3
Others	26	26.0	0.78	2
Total	100	100.0	3.40	-

The table shows that the majority of respondents (60%) are preparing for TNPSC/State PSC examinations, indicating a strong preference for state-level jobs. This is followed by 26% in the “Others” category, 8% preparing for Banking/Railway exams, and only 6% for UPSC/SSC. The weighted mean score (3.40) confirms that TNPSC/State PSC is the most preferred, highlighting that participants mainly focus on state-level competitive examinations.

Table -9 Newspapers & magazines by Study Participants

Newspapers & magazines	Frequency	Percentage	Mean Scores	Rank
Sometimes	26	26.0	0.78	2
Always	37	37.0	1.48	1
Rarely	13	13.0	0.26	3
Never	24	24.0	0.24	4
Total	100	100.0	2.76	-

The table shows that 37% of respondents always read newspapers and magazines, while 26% read them sometimes. A notable proportion of participants rarely (13%) or never (24%) engage in reading these resources. The weighted mean score (2.76) indicates a moderate level of usage, suggesting that although many users read regularly, there is still scope to improve awareness and usage.

Table -10 Satisfaction of competitive exam material

Satisfaction level	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfied	62	62.0
Highly satisfied	7	7.0
Neutral	25	25.0
Dissatisfied	6	6
Total	100	100.0

The above table shows the satisfaction level of respondents regarding competitive exam materials available in the library. Out of 100 respondents, a majority of 62% are satisfied, while 7% are highly satisfied. Meanwhile, 25% of respondents expressed a neutral opinion, and only 6% are dissatisfied. This indicates that most users are generally satisfied with the availability and quality of competitive exam materials, though there is still scope for improvement to convert neutral and dissatisfied users into satisfied ones.

Table -11 Use of digital/online resources for exam preparation and Satisfaction with Library Environment

Use of digital/online resources for exam preparation	Satisfaction with Library Environment				Total
	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	
Frequently	21 (56.8)	9 (24.3)	7 (18.9)	0 (0.0)	37 (100.0)
Occasionally	17 (77.3)	1 (4.5)	4 (18.2)	0 (0.0)	22 (100.0)
Never	16 (55.2)	3 (10.3)	9 (31.0)	1 (3.4)	29 (100.0)
No pinion	10 (83.3)	2 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	12 (100.0)
Total	64 (64.0)	15 (15.0)	20 (20.0)	1 (1.0)	100 (100.0)

The table shows that among respondents who use digital resources frequently, 56.8% are satisfied and 24.3% are highly satisfied, while 18.9% remain neutral. Among occasional users, higher proportions (77.3%) are satisfied, with 4.5% highly satisfied and 18.2% neutral. In contrast, respondents who never use digital resources show lower satisfaction, with 55.2% satisfied, 10.3% highly satisfied, 31.0% neutral, and 3.4% dissatisfied. Overall, the results indicate that higher usage of digital resources is associated with greater satisfaction with the library environment.

CONCLUSION

Public libraries play a vital role in supporting the academic and career development of competitive exam aspirants. The study shows that most users are young adults, especially unemployed graduates from rural areas, highlighting the importance of libraries in reducing the urban–rural knowledge gap. The majority of respondents use the library mainly for competitive exam preparation, particularly for TNPSC and other state-level exams. Traditional resources like guide books are widely used, while digital resources are gradually increasing. Factors such as age, membership, staff support, and quality of materials influence user satisfaction. Overall, the study concludes that public libraries are essential knowledge centers, and improving their services can better support job seekers.



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