

## Chapter 15

# User Opinion on Library Collections and Services: A Case Study of Branch Library in Karaikudi

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Public library provides recreation. It preserves the literary remains of humanity for posterity, as a vehicle of culture and as source material for antiquarian research. It works for continued social wellbeing, as the agency in charge of all socialized recorded thought. Public library discharges educational, informational, political, economic, industrial, cultural, and antiquarian functions. Thus, the true function of the library is to permit and encourage men to grow up and achieve maturity in an atmosphere of freedom that they may feel that life has something to give them and them something to give it. A world well provided with free libraries would be a world of happy, sensible, peaceful, constructive men, and also a world of immense variety, excitement, and adventure. A public library provides an opportunity for reading books which foster a full and good life. It enables a person to utilize his innate abilities for the benefit of the society. To sum up, it acts as a living force for education, culture, and information as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and understanding between people and nations. This chapter explores, through a case study of a branch library in Karaikudi, user opinion on library collections and services.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Library is a social institution. Library and society are inter-linked and inter-dependent. Society without libraries has no significance, and libraries without society have no origin. Thus “library is a product of our cultural maturation” knowledge has been growing fast. It is impossible for individual memory to store information generated. So, the individual memory is replaced by corporate memory. Library represents corporate memory storing information in the form of books, journals, pamphlets, audio-visual materials making them useful to the readers as and when necessary. Public library plays a multifaceted role.

The library is a public institution being run for the people, of the people and by the people. The library is also analogous to a temple whose internal atmosphere is in no way less than a religious place, be it a church or a mosque or a temple or a gurudwara. The libraries are not mere storehouses of knowledge but institutions which safeguard the knowledge and give knowledge through books. Thus, the library is the building, the institution, the agency which preserves and makes useful the knowledge of the world in the book form. The public library is unique only as it strives to make the knowledge of the public as it opens its doors to all public alike. Thus, public libraries have helped in carrying the civilization forward and have served as beacons or wheels for education and culture. In the past, the main aim of the library was to merely store information and not allow the general public to use it. The major change between the libraries of the past and the library of the present is that now the doors have been opened for the public in general a true public library in the real sense of the world. In a public library, the librarian is not the sole authority, but it is for the public use. Hence the people should try and make the best possible use of it. To initiate the villagers to use the libraries more educational institutions have to be developed. Awareness has to be created in the general public to know the uses of education. This definitely requires time, but we may not have it, unless we start campaigning and creating an interest among the general masses to take education and then make use of the public libraries. The success of the library cannot be rated although it mainly depends on its usage. The purpose, for which the public uses, varies from person to person. The person may just use a library to read the important headlines in the newspaper, another person may read the religious texts and yet another person may use it for collecting material for doing research or preparing for competitive examinations.

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