Chapter 15
Redefining Public Library Reach Through New Outreach Service Delivery Models

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ABSTRACT

In libraries, outreach is often described as services for those who are infrequent users or non-users, or as services for those who are traditionally underserved. Library outreach strives to provide equitable delivery of library services to all, through the development of programs, services, and policies that make the library available to everyone to engage with public and to offer specific targeted services. The aim of this chapter was to identify the current range and scope of public library outreach service models, including an overview of the development of these models to explore the strengths, weaknesses, costs, benefits, and opportunities of different outreach models that can be used within public libraries.

INTRODUCTION

Any activity that introduces the library to the community and which promotes library membership, services and programs to existing and potential customers. Outreach refers to services or programs offered outside of the library to reach new users, such as the unserved or underserved groups, as well as activities to the community about services and programs offered by the library. Outreach in libraries is not a newly built concept but it extends roots to more than 40 years. In 1984, W.J. Martin wrote "Outreach has had some influence upon library affairs during the past ten to fifteen years." "Service to the disadvantaged", "service to special groups", "extension activities", "service to the un-served", "community librarianship" and "beyond thetraditional library" are some phrases associated with this concept. Lipsman (1972) defined outreach as "activities or programmes undertaken in addition to or in

place of ordinary library services with the intention of reaching a disadvantaged population". Dennis (2012), defined outreach as "reaching out to non-traditional library users, extending beyond borders of a physical library and promoting under-utilized or new library resources". According to Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science (ODLIS) (Reitz, n.d.), outreach has been described as "library programs and services designed to meet the information needs of users who are un-served or underserved, for example, those who are visually impaired, homebound, institutionalized, not fluent in the national language, illiterate, or marginalized in some other ways."

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sunilkumar, M and Jayakumara (2015) has assessed the job oriented Information seeking behavior of public library users in Mysore. This study was conducted in 18 branch public libraries in Mysore city. The result of the study revealed that majority 166 (90.21 percentage) of respondents are male, about 76 (41.30 percentage) users are P.G Degree, nearly 58 (31.52 percentage) users mentioned U.G degree 'more number of users visit the library daily. Regarding searching of job related information, more number 88 (47.82 percentage) of users use newspaper. Nearly 64 (34.78 percentage) respondents use 'employment news'. Finally the study indicates that the users are satisfied with the job oriented information available in the library.

Thavamani, K (2014) studied on the Information use pattern of Connemara public library, Chennai. The majority of 88.50 percentage 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, also indicates that majority of the users 92 (46 percentages) are college students. The users have good opinion about the reference sources.

Padma P., Ramasamy K. and Chinna Ayyar (2014) state that the majority of respondents use the branch library at Usilampatti for preparing themselves for various competitive exams; 30 percentage respondents use the library once a week; Majority of users visit the library to read newspapers and reference books, 11 respondents (22 percentage) opined that lack of adequate library staff is their major problem. 37 respondents (74 percentage) opine that the quality of internet service offered by the library is good; 32 respondents (64 percentage) are highly satisfied with the information they access from magazines and journals; 24 respondents (48 percentage) rated the quality of overall library services as very good.

Kotti Thavamani (2014) studied on "User Behavior and Awareness among the Different Public libraries in Chennai District, Tamil Nadu" This paper aimed to know the performance of comparative study of user behavior and awareness among the two different public libraries in Chennai district, Tamil Nadu, from the study majority of the users of the libraries satisfied with the collection of the information resources, services and facilities offered by the different public libraries. The study focused on comparative study of user behavior and awareness among the two different public libraries in Chennai district, Tamil Nadu. A total number of 130 users and two different public libraries are taken into account for the study through a questionnaire based survey method. A well structured questionnaire is designed and distributed to the selected 130 readers. The collected data were classified, analyzed, and tabulated by using simple statistical methods. This study covers the impact of print resources on users in their libraries. The major findings are majority of the respondent are satisfied with availability of newspapers and magazines section being situated separately in the library. The results of the study also indicates that majority of the users are college students. The users are good opinion about the reference sources.

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