



## Performance and users' evaluation of central library, Chipata, Republic of Zambia

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### ABSTRACT

*Library service is the active part of communication, place of mind- refresh and education in any community. It is distinguished in case of Chiapta, Republic of Zambia. When we peep in to the district library it has got more role in changing the society. But the case is reverse in this study area. To analyze this fact samples of 50 readers have taken for the study. The questionnaire is served to the members (Visitors/Readers) of this library using stratified random sampling method. The questionnaire was converted into numerical data state in order to analyze the Evaluation of performance of library and users. This was analyzed with reference to Frequency of reader, Purpose of reader, Sources of information for the readers, Adequacy of library stock, Readers Satisfaction and Library facilities. The appropriate results were drawn and suggestions made to improve the library performance and also attract the new readers in order to develop the society so as to become good citizens of the nation.*

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### Introduction

The emergence of learning society demands information for all aspects of life. Timely information is needed for decision making for social scientists and politicians. But the present library system is not capable of meeting such needs. The great majority of our people are illiterate.

Nation-wide public library system is to be developed all over India so that those people who quench the intellectual hunger will have access to information sources. Information will be valued in future whatever nomenclature is given whether it be 'Information Age', 'Paperless society' or 'Post Industrial society'.

The users form an integral part of the library system. They are the final link in the information transfer chain. All professional activities in a library, and every bit of money spent for these activities are all for the users of information. If the users cannot find the information they need, or does not know how to find relevant information available to them, the library system falls short of its ultimate goal. Thus, the users occupy the central place in every library.

Any library, irrespective of its type, should be user-oriented. All the services provided by the library intend to benefit users. It is imperative to conduct user studies in order to improve the existing library services, plan for new services, adjust the allocation of limited financial resources, evaluate the performance of the library, and enhance the user satisfaction. Such studies will help library administration know the satisfaction of users with existing library services and facilities, the type of new services desired, and the amount of financial resources required for their implementation.

Every library, whether it may be Public Library, College Library or University Library, provides basic library services to their users. Basic services includes enrollment of members, circulation of reading material, reading room facility, home

lending service, inter-library service, document delivery service, consultation of catalogues/OPACs, etc. While providing these services, the role of the librarian is most crucial and important. His approach must be always of positive nature and of giving helping hand to the users.

These basic services are discussed here in detail with the help of the data collected through the questionnaire administered to librarians and also the information collected from, annual reports and personally visiting these libraries.

According to Ronald R. Powell (1988) user variables related to library performance include: 1. user needs 2. User use 3. User satisfaction 4. Patron's expectations 5. Efficiency 6. Process 7. demographic-type data 8. Community satisfaction with its library services 9. Information - seeking behavior 10. Purposes for seeking information 11. user's personality 12. user's interests 13. User's attitudes 14. User's "total-life situation" 15. User demands 16. User "factors" and 17. citizen awareness of library services.

User-related techniques used to measure library performance include:

1. Mathematical models describing library use
2. proxy goals- e.g., substituting exposure time for value of documents to users
3. Systems approach
4. Community analysis
5. Library response time
6. Document delivery
7. Provision of citations
8. Total library contact time per potential user
9. "Item-use-day,"
10. Extent of reader self-service
11. cost/benefit ratio
12. Library effort (input)
13. Library performance (output)
14. Search success rate
15. total library use
16. Percentage of total population being served by the library
17. Percentage of materials used according to type of user
18. Ratio of a given service to the total number of library users
19. Ratio of the number of documents circulated to types of users
20. Ratio of total use to total holdings
21. user access
22. Return visits
23. use log, and
24. Program attendance log.

### **Aims and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of the study is to know the information seeking of public of Chipata, Republic Zambia and its efficiency to response.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

To identify the various information resources of public need;

1. To study their information need
2. To explore their information use pattern
3. To know the extent of satisfaction of public with regard to library collection, services, and facilities;
4. To suggest some remedies which may help public to use the library in a more effective way.
5. To identify the most useful sources of information.
6. To know the extent of government support with reference to the library development.

### **Statement of the problem**

The case study of central library of Chipata, Zambia is peculiar in its service and users service too. Library service is suppose to be from the basic information to till academic purpose. But the case of central library of Chipata is failed to do so in some extend. Besides these the developmental aspect to the library so behind and progress is too slow in compare with south South Africa, Tanzania and Kenyan libraries. So it is better if adequate measures have taken to eradicate this issue to develop the information among the Zambians, better education and awareness of government regulations and policy to lead our society.

Hence having peep in all these corner the researcher decided take up the study on **"Performance and user evaluation of central library, Chipata, Republic of Zambia"**.

### **Review of Literature**

The researcher has reviewed the following references in order to attempt the better result and appropriate method which is suitable for the study area.

Jones, and Arthur (1970 stated that: "It is often convenient to attempt to assess the adequacy of a library service in relation to the population served," 164 though he seemed to take a basically input-oriented approach in his study.

An information exchange between libraries, sources and end users expanded the demand for standards for communication of bibliographic information and easier ways to accomplish these tasks increased (Francher Beeler, 1974). As costs for computer hardware and peripherals came down, it became financially feasible for even smaller academic libraries to think of automating their library functions.

The purpose of in-house surveys of users received attention in the Public Library Association's *A Planning Process for Public Libraries*. Its authors stated: "The primary purpose of an in-library or user survey is to determine who uses the library, how much, and for what, and to ask users about their attitudes toward and perceptions of the library." ( Palmour, V.E., et al,1980).

In a study reported in 1980, Detweiler investigated the relationship between library effectiveness and the availability of materials sought by the library patron. Howard and Norman designed their Complete Service Statistics to inventory all library output reflecting user contact including: lending services, facilities services, information services, production services, and staff services.

Many operating systems, utility programs, a variety of display, storage and communication devices have emerged and begun to integrate around the desktop platform. CD- ROM, video-discs, graphic display interfaces, integration of text, multimedia, scanning devices, non-key board input devices etc.,

appeared on the desktop. In 1990s smaller academic libraries can automate at least some of their library functions (Guide, 1984).

From early 1990s, the concept of networking emerged as a strong support for information communication and exchange. Optical and digital technology (Gupta Anuradha,1987) made it possible to produce digitized materials of local origin. This trend complemented the ever growing e-publishing industry in production and delivery of e-resources. Now the concept of 'hybrid library' is well received and practiced.

Two decades ago, experts in the information field had forecasted that, "towards the end of the last century we may be able to browse information electronically in a remote library offering electronic browsing and "tele-delivery". But today, it has become reality.

Currently our libraries are equipped with all hardware, software and related accessories with respect to ICT ( Ikeuchi, 1999) applications for library and its use. The academic libraries are holding materials in digitized form and its users communicate with it over a telephone link or a co-axial or fiber optic cable. Its purpose is to supply its users with copies of textual, audio or video material on request. In libraries, several ICT based services are developed to help users search for their information. Book lending through computer terminals, catalogue search via OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) terminals, book reservation, books on CDs are some of the computer based information services offered. Online search of abstracts and indexes, CD search etc., are some other services the academic libraries are offering today.

There is an open challenge for libraries to learn and use expert systems and work with ICT environment. When useful material is found, that researcher will want, through expert system, electronic word processing, to download, to cut it out, move it over, and paste that information into a personal file (Vijayalaxmi & Maheswarappa, 2001).

End-users need librarians (Spink et al., 2002) to show them concepts that relate to the efficiency of the research; industry and academia need librarians to disseminate knowledge; administrators need librarians to interpret technology.

The prototype of yesterday's academic librarian is today's endangered species.

As end users become more and more proficient in researching their own answers, the librarian is transformed in to an information technician who propels that user towards the discovery of information sources. The librarian must serve as the specialist, the promoter, the interpreter, the disseminator, and the trainer (Ashu Shokeen & Sanjay K. Kausrila, 2002).

### **Research Design**

A questionnaire is prepared to collect data from readers of central library, Chipata, Zambia. At present, the population is 160,179 according to 2011 census. A sample of 50 readers have been selected by a simple random method. The samples are from Chipata city library readers, Zambia is taken for the study.

The questionnaire consist of 18 questions consist of 6 sections of *Frequency of reader, Purpose of reader, Sources of information for the readers, Adequacy of library stock, Readers Satisfaction and Library facilities*.

Each section 3 questions which was constructed and validated by the investigator. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample with reference to the variables taken for the study. Statements were converted in to simple statistical tables.

## Analysis of the data

### Frequency of reader

The distribution of readers according to the frequency of using the library is shown in Table 1.

### Purpose of reader

The distribution of readers according to the purpose of using the library is shown in Table 2.

It is clear from the table ( 2) that readers mainly using the library for the purpose of to read or borrow books is 44 %. The next purpose is to consult/ read the weekly which is about 42 %. Besides these to read the daily news papers about 14 % readers are coming to the library.

### Identification of Sources of information for the readers

Information is a basic resource for any kind of professional activity. Specific information is an objective of users need. The information needs may vary among users depending upon their nature of work and the nature of readers.

The distribution of readers according to the various types of sources for locating information needed is shown in Table 3.

It is quit visible from the table (3) that readers depend highly on library catalogue is 46% to locate the documents they need. They also depended on the assistant from the library staff is 34% for locating the documents. Besides these they browsing shelves is 14% and finally teachers and parents is 6% also guide them and help them to locate the required source which they seek.

### Adequacy of library stock

An important function of the library is to cater to the needs of the society where the library is located and around. The users need information on the nation and regional level The sources like General awareness, reference books, government reports, newspapers or magazines, census and economic reports, etc.

The distribution of readers according to the adequacy of various information resources is shown in Table 4.

It is evident from table (4) that the readers is 44% are satisfied with availability of novels and story books. While 46% are satisfied with regard to the general awareness books. It is also evident that 10 % are satisfied with available of news papers for the circulation.

### Readers Satisfaction

The primary objective of collecting, storing and organizing information in a public library is to facilitate the community in their development. Good services enable a library to deliver the information at the right user in the correct form. Modern libraries adopt modern information techniques to serve more effectively.

The distribution of readers according to the satisfaction of different library services is shown in Table 5.

The table (5) reveals that readers of 34% are satisfied in the circulation service while with 56% are satisfied with reference service. It is also evident that only 10 % are satisfied in the part of Reprographic service .

### Library facilities

The library has to maintain cleanliness, ventilation , furniture , appropriate space for reading , drinking water, toilet and other facilities. A good environment in the library is more attractive and conducive for users to use library resources more effectively and efficiently.

The distribution of readers according the satisfaction of different facilities is shown in Table 6.

It is evident from table (6) that readers of 44% are satisfied for adequate space while 24% are satisfied with cleanliness. It is also evident that 14% are satisfied for furniture and while lighting and water is satisfied with 10 % and 8% respect.

## Findings, Recommendation and Conclusion

### Findings

- 1) Only 10% of readers from the samples use daily library which may be for the daily news readers.
- 2) About 44% readers use the library for reading and borrowing the books which shows that the academic importance or the importance of stock maintenance of the library.
- 3) The library catalogue is utilized by the readers is 46% and browsing shelves is only 14% which reveals the shelves are not updated or the readers are not skillful.
- 4)The novels and story book together forms about 90% readers attention and satisfaction.
- 5) The satisfaction of the reference service carries about 56% and Reprographic service remains in the least least with only 10% which means the inadequate equipments of the library.
- 6) The library has not maintain cleanliness, ventilation, furniture , appropriate space for reading , drinking water, toilet and other facilities. Only 44% readers reported that they satisfied of space provided for the readers in the library..

### Recommendations

- 1) The technological infrastructure need to input in the library in order to use to skill full manner.
- 2) Only 14% of the readers used browsing shelves to locate the needed source , It symbolically Hence the authorities should arrange the documents on shelves according to the classification orders and also shelf rectification is to be carried out regularly.
- 3) The library serves in the part of General awareness only to full fill the readers need and other aspect of the library service is lacking specially those students who are depending on the public library for the academic source for their studies to be focused , so that it could become a full pledged unique library. Therefore the government should take necessary steps for allotting more funds for the purchase of academic books and periodicals to full fill the need of the students community.
- 4)The library is located in the capital of east province, so the headquarters should maintain its status and to sustain the basic amenities to be improved, otherwise it will not carry the meaning of central library.
- 5)The user studies to be carried out once in a month to rectify drawbacks , to improve, to maintain the standard, to continue to serve and to become a active part of society which may be become a nations pride in future..

### Conclusion

The Library becomes good media centre especially in the regions like Chipata ( grade –II city ) as this is the major source of communication for the rural as well as urban too. The Chipata is surrounded with many villages and they are economically backward who are mainly from rural economic structure whose children are mainly depend on the public library for their academic studies. Most of the schools and University of Zambia students too expect the academic needs from the public library. But unfortunately this could not serve the basic needs of society effectively. Hence its left out the government focus to show adequate attention to improvement of public libraries.

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**Table 1: Frequency of using the library**

Frequency	No. of readers	Percentage
Daily	5	10
Twice in a week	23	46
Once in a week	22	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table (1) shows that 10 percent of the readers use the library daily, 46 percent twice in a week and 44 percent once in a week.

**Table 2: Purpose of using the library**

Purpose	No. of readers	Percentage
To read/borrow books	22	44
To consult weeklies	21	42
To read newspapers	7	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3: Sources to locate information needed**

Sources	No. of readers	Percentage
The library catalogue	23	46
Library staff	17	34
Teachers/parents	3	6
Browsing shelves	7	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4: Adequacy of library resources**

Library resources	No. of readers	Percentage
Novels/Story books	22	44
General awareness	23	46
Newspapers	5	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5: Satisfaction of library services**

Library Services	Level of satisfaction	
	No. of readers	Percentage
Circulation service	17	34
Reference service	28	56
Reprographic service	05	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6: Satisfaction of library facilities**

Library Facilities	Level of satisfaction	
	No. of readers	Percentage
Adequate space	22	44
Cleanliness	12	24
Lighting	5	10
Furniture	7	14
water	4	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>