



## Evaluation of Extension Activities and Their Influence on User Satisfaction in Rural Public Libraries: A Study

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### Abstract

Public libraries are playing a key vital role in the social transformation by extending information, educational, and career-oriented services to the community developments. The present study examines the extension activities of the Thookanaiyakan Palayam Full-Time Branch Public Library in Erode District, Tamil Nadu, and evaluates users' satisfaction with these services. The library, managed by two qualified Library and Information Science (MLISc) professionals, and provides a range of extension activities in addition to routine library services like circulation, newspapers, and magazine display services. Extension activities include special coaching lectures for competitive examinations such as TNPSC, banking and railway recruitment, motivational programmes for job seekers, invited talks by subject experts, assistance in filling online application forms, employment information dissemination through notice boards and WhatsApp, and systematic organization of competitive examination resources.

A simple random sampling technique was employed, and data were collected from 144 respondents of the total respondents, 61.81% were male and 38.19% were female. Based on the Occupational analysis of the respondents revealed that 27.08% were students, 33.33% were employed, 18.75% were job seekers, 11.11% were self-employed, and 9.72% were farmers. The study highlights the effectiveness of WhatsApp-based job alert services, with 60 registered job seekers actively utilizing the facility. User satisfaction analysis shows that 78% of respondents were highly satisfied and 22% were satisfied with the job alert services.

The findings further indicate that the library's extension activities have contributed positively to employment outcomes, with several users securing positions in government and banking sectors during the period June 2020–May 2021. Currently, 80 users are registered and continuously benefiting from the job alert services. The study concludes that extension activities, particularly employment information and career guidance services offered by rural public libraries, significantly enhance users' socio-economic development and contribute to sustainable national development.

**Keywords:** Public Libraries, Extension Activities, Job Alert Services, User Satisfaction, Rural Development, National Development.

### 1. Introduction

Public libraries function as democratic institutions that provide free and unbiased access to information for all. In rural areas, public libraries play an important role in bridging the information divide by offering educational support, employment guidance, and community-oriented services to the user's community. In recent years public libraries extension activities such as readers' forum, storytelling, career guidance programmes, job alert services, and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools have expanded the scope of public library services beyond traditional lending functions. These initiatives give significantly to human resource development and social empowerment.

### 2. Review of Related Literature

Several studies have emphasized the importance of public library extension activities in promoting literacy, lifelong learning, and community development. Research indicates that employment information services and career guidance programmes offered by public libraries enhance users' employability and socio-economic status. However, empirical studies focusing specifically on rural branch libraries and user satisfaction with job alert services remain limited, particularly

in the Indian context. This study attempts to fill this gap by examining the effectiveness of extension activities in a rural public library setting.

Sathivelmurugan (2018) conducted a descriptive research survey on the personal details of Tiruppur District Central Library users. Primary data were collected using a survey method with a questionnaire tool. The findings reveal that the respondents' employability in the textile industry includes private company employees, self-employed individuals, daily-wage workers, job-seekers, students, and the unemployed. The study comprehensively describes users' educational qualifications, library memberships, job descriptions, and library visit patterns, offering a complete demographic profile of the Tiruppur District Central Public Library users.

Public libraries have long been recognized as essential institutions for social development, lifelong learning, and information dissemination. Ranganathan (1961) emphasized that libraries are social institutions meant to serve society dynamically, a concept that forms the foundation for modern public library extension activities. In rural contexts, public libraries act as knowledge hubs by supporting education, employment, and community empowerment.

Several studies have highlighted the role of public libraries in community development. Kranich (2001) examined that

public libraries strengthen democratic participation by providing access to information and skill-building opportunities, especially for marginalized populations. Similarly, Aabo (2005) noted that public libraries contribute significantly to social capital formation by facilitating learning, interaction, and access to public information.

In the Indian context, public libraries play a vital role in rural development. Kumar and Mahajan (2016) found that rural public libraries support literacy, career guidance, and employment information dissemination, thereby improving users' socio-economic conditions. Their study emphasized that extension activities such as competitive examination coaching, career counseling, and awareness programmes enhance the relevance of libraries in rural areas.

Employment information services have emerged as a crucial extension activity of public libraries. IFLA (2015) stated that public libraries should actively support job seekers by providing access to employment information, digital resources, and training opportunities. A study by Gouling (2008) revealed that public libraries offering job alert services and ICT-based employment support significantly improve employability skills among youth and unemployed adults. In a study conducted by Thanuskodi (2012), it was found that extension activities and personalized services significantly influence users' satisfaction levels in public libraries. Assessing the Efficacy of Library Services of District Central Libraries in Tamil Nadu from Users Perception the future of libraries is bright. Public libraries have always been the door to learning for a great majority of the populations that they serve. They are knowledge centres and contribute to life-long learning. This study found that public libraries are lagging behind particularly in providing user specific information. It is imperative thus that they must redesign their approach. This study reemphasised that fact that the collection development alone would not result in attracting publics to libraries.

Despite these contributions, there is a notable research gap in empirical studies that assess user satisfaction with job alert services provided by rural branch public libraries, particularly in Tamil Nadu. Most existing studies focus either on urban libraries or on general extension activities without evaluating their direct impact on employment generation. The present study addresses this gap by examining the effectiveness of job alert services and users' satisfaction in a rural public library setting.

### 3. Objectives of the Study

The aim of the present research study is to examine the various extension activities carried out by the Full-Time Branch Public Library (FPBL) located in Thookanaickenpalayam, Erode District, Tamil Nadu, India. The study focuses exclusively on this particular public library and its services to the local community. The research adopts the case study method to analyze the nature of the extension activities and their impact on the users of the library.

### 4. Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey method. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 144 respondents from among the regular users of the Thookanaiyakan Palayam Branch Public Library. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and supplemented by informal interviews. The collected data were analyzed using percentage analysis to interpret user demographics, satisfaction levels, and service effectiveness.

### 5. Library Collection and Facilities

The Full-Time Branch Public Library (FPBL) at Thookanaickenpalayam possesses a significant collection of information resources (Collection of story books, fiction, discoveries, history, subject books, collection of competitive books) and basic digital facilities for the benefit of its users. The library holds a total of 31,942 books, covering various subjects that support education, competitive examinations, and general reading. In addition, the library subscribes to 88 magazines that provide current information on literature, science, technology, and general knowledge.

It also receives 11 newspapers, including 8 Tamil newspapers and 3 English newspapers, enabling users to stay updated with current events. For students and job aspirants, the library maintains a special collection of 1,250 competitive examination books related to government job examinations and other competitive tests.

Regarding digital infrastructure, the library provides 6 computer systems for user access and 1 printer to support printing needs. These facilities help users access digital information and improve their learning opportunities.

### 6. Library Extension Services

The Full-Time Branch Public Library (FPBL) at Thookanaickenpalayam provides several extension services to support the information needs of the local community. These include press clipping services, which help users access important news and information on various topics. The library also maintains information bulletin boards to display announcements, educational opportunities, and government notifications. A job alert service through digital gazettes is provided to inform users about employment opportunities and recruitment notifications. In addition, the library organizes invited talks and guidance programmes for competitive examinations to assist job aspirants in their preparation. The library also conducts regular placement training programmes to enhance the employability skills of young users. Furthermore, the library staff assist rural users in filling out application forms for competitive examinations, thereby helping them overcome technological and procedural barriers. The library organizes special lectures and coaching sessions for Tamil Nadu State Government competitive examinations, such as Group I, Group II, Group IIA, Group IIIA, and Group IV examinations conducted by the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission. In addition, the library also provides guidance for Central Government competitive examinations, including those conducted by the Union Public Service Commission, Indian Railways, and various banking sector and public sector undertaking (PSU) recruitment examinations. Furthermore, the library regularly arranges invited talks by subject experts, training programmes, and motivational lectures to guide and encourage job seekers. These programmes aim to enhance the knowledge, confidence, and career readiness of library users, particularly students and unemployed youth in rural areas.

Based on the World Health Organization principle of "Health Education for All," the Full-Time Branch Public Library (FPBL) at Thookanaickenpalayam organizes various community health initiatives. With the support of allopathic and Siddha medical practitioners, the library has been conducting health education programmes, health awareness campaigns, and free medical camps since 2009. These programmes aim to educate the public about preventive healthcare, hygiene, and healthy living. During the medical camps, free medical consultations and medicines are provided

to poor and needy people, thereby contributing to the overall well-being of the rural community.

The library operates from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., providing extended hours for students, job seekers, and general readers. The library is managed by two professionally qualified librarians who oversee the administration and delivery of services. The library is housed in a separate building, which

ensures a dedicated and comfortable environment for learning and reading. It also provides essential facilities such as reading sections, book circulation services, a computer section for digital access, and toilet facilities for the convenience of users. These facilities help create a supportive and user-friendly learning environment for the community.

## 7. Data Analysis and Interpretation

**Table 1:** Demographic Profile

Gender	Students	Job-goers	Self-Employed	Agriculturalists (Including Farmers)	Job Seekers	Total
Male	20(22.47%)	32(35.96%)	9(10.11%)	10(11.24%)	18(20.22%)	89(61.81%)
Female	19(34.55%)	16(29.09%)	7(12.73%)	4(7.27%)	9(16.36%)	55(38.19%)
Total	39(27.08%)	48(33.33%)	16(11.11%)	14(9.72%)	27(18.75)	100

The distribution of respondents based on gender and occupation shows that among males, 20 (22.47%) are students, 32 (35.96%) are job-goers, 9 (10.11%) are self-employed, 10 (11.24%) are agriculturalists (including farmers), and 18 (20.22%) are job seekers. Among females, 19 (34.55%) are students, 16 (29.09%) are job-goers, 7 (12.73%) are self-employed, 4 (7.27%) are agriculturalists, and 9 (16.36%) are job seekers. Overall, out of the total respondents, 39 (27.08%) are students, 48 (33.33%) are job-goers, 16 (11.11%) are self-employed, 14 (9.72%) are agriculturalists, and 27 (18.75%) are job seekers, indicating that job-goers constitute the largest group followed by students and job seekers.

**Table 2:** Job Alert Services and User Satisfaction

Sl. No.	Level of Satisfaction	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Highly Satisfied	47	78.00
2	Satisfied	13	22.00
3	Neutral	0	0.00
4	Dissatisfied	0	0.00
5	Highly Dissatisfied	0	0.00
Total		60	100.00

The above table reveals that a majority of respondents (78%) are highly satisfied with the job alert services provided by the rural public library, while the remaining 22% reported being satisfied. Notably, no respondents expressed neutral or negative opinions. This indicates a very high level of acceptance and effectiveness of the library's job alert and extension services, particularly in meeting the employment information needs of rural users.

## Employment Outcomes

The findings reveal a positive impact of library extension activities on employment outcomes. Between June 2020 and May 2021, several users secured employment in government departments and banking sectors. Currently, 80 users are actively registered and regularly utilizing the job alert services.

## 8. Findings

- Rural public libraries play a significant role in providing employment-oriented extension activities.
- Job alert services delivered through WhatsApp are highly effective and widely accepted by users.

- A high level of user satisfaction reflects the relevance of library extension programmes.
- Library-based career guidance contributes positively to employment generation and socio-economic development.

## 9. Conclusion

The study establishes that extension activities offered by rural public libraries, particularly job alert and career guidance services, are essential for empowering rural communities. By facilitating access to employment information and competitive examination resources, public libraries contribute significantly to individual career development, family welfare, and societal progress. Sustainable employment leads to community development, which ultimately strengthens national development. The extension activities of the Thookanaiyakan Palayam Branch Public Library are therefore commendable and serve as a model for other rural public libraries.

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