Public Libraries in India: A Case Study of Allahabad Public Library, Uttar Pradesh, India

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Abstract

Allahabad Public Library is a well known public library situated in India in the state of Uttar Pradesh. It is also known as Thornhill Mayne Memorial. It is a government public library situated at Chandra Shekhar Azad Park in Allahabad established in 1864. It is one of the oldest and largest public library in the state of Uttar Pradesh with thousands of books, manuscripts, newspapers, magazines, government gazettes, etc in its collections. It provides wide range of books, magazines, newspapers, gazettes and other reading materials in Hindi, English, Sanskrit, Urdu, Arabic, Persian, Bangla, French and other languages for everyone according to reading tastes. The library consists of 1.25 lac books on variety of subjects including books for competitive examinations. A unique collection of old newspapers and magazines are present in the library. Allahabad Public Library can be considered as one of the good Public Library for the library users. There is also scope of improving library facilities and developing well qualified staff to provide better services.

Introduction

Allahabad is a pilgrimeage as well a major tourist city of Uttar Pradesh. It is situated around beautiful three rivers named Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati which are considered as Holly Rivers according to Indian mytholgy. Allahabad is also known as Prayag with famous holy spot Triveni Sangam. Allahabad is also the largest city in Uttar Pradesh. According to Hindu mythology, Lord Brahma who is considered to be the "creator" on earth referred Allahabad as "Tirth Raj" or king of all pilgrimage centres. Indian former Prime Minister Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri said "Allahabad University, Allahabad Public Library and High Court are three sources of knowledge and justice of modern Trivedi."This paper describes the importance of Allahabad Public Library among the users.

Introduction to Allahabad Public Library

Allahabad Public Library is also popularly known as Thornhill Mayne Memorial. It is a government public library situated at Chandra Shekhar Azad Park in Allahabad established in 1864. It is one of the oldest and largest public library in the state of Uttar Pradesh with thousands of books, manuscripts, newspapers, magazines, government gazettes, etc in its collections. The library building was designed by Richard Roskell Bayne with a remarkable Scottish Baronial architecture. The monument of library also served as house of legislative assembly in British Era when Allahabad was capital of Uttar Pradesh. In 1879, the Public Library was shifted to premises at Alfred Park. The building contains sharp pillars and turrets of granite and sandstone. The building represents structural polychramy with

lofty flowers and acraded cloisters. In 1870, the construction of building cost approximately Rs.94, 222. The library was funded by Commissioner of Allahabad, Mr. Mayne and was opened as a memorial to Cuthbert Bensley Thornhill. The library was opened in the past as a memorial to the friendship of Lord Thornhill, the Commissioner of Allahabad and Mr. Mayne, the Collector that's why it is also called "Thornhill Mayne Memorial". It is an outstanding model of Gothic style of structural design[1-5].

Aims of Library

The library was opened with aim to serve all the members of the community by managing a collection of books and other materials. It put emphasis on promoting social, economic, academic, cultural, political and spiritual development of the people. The library tries to put an attempt to identify community needs for providing document materials to required information needs of library users with valuable information that may be required for research or any other enquiry that depends upon records rather than upon experience. The library also promotes reading habit among children, students and youth and support study needs of young people by developing individual's capacity to engage in lifelong learning. The library promotes and encourage reading across generation to generation with sustainability to community, identity and confidence[5-9].

Methods Used

A Sample Based Questionnaire Method applied to justify the qualities of the library

Core Values of Library

The library seeks to understand needs of the users. It demonstrate friendliness for user's and reliability for providing convenient and timely information to the users with accessibility. It plays unique role in our community so that learning can thrive from generation to generation. Library provides free and equal access to library resources and facilities to all its users equally. It supports the open exchange of information and ideas that represents multiple views with benefit of unity in diversity. It protects and respects every user's right to know and right to read without any discriminating issues in the society. The Library is considered to serve with integrity by operating library system efficiently and effectively.

Administration of Library

The library is under administrative control of the Higher Education Department, Government of Uttar Pradesh by the government vides notification number 623/15-95-45(52)/79 dated 06 April, 1995. The honourable Governor has constituted a Management Committee for the library with 1 Chairman, 9 Members including Memory/Secretary.

Library Timings: 8:00AM-6:00PM
Weekly Holiday: Thursday
Other Holiday: Second Saturday of every month, Holidays declared by U.P Government, Gazetted Holidays by Central Government.

Staff of Library

The number of staff present in the library is as follows in table-1.

Library Collection

The library collection is precious treasure of the library. The collection of library is one of the most important basic resource upon which the utility of library depends. Allahabad Public Library provides wide range of books, magazines, newspapers, gazettes and other reading materials in Hindi, English, Sanskrit, Urdu, Arabic, Persian, Bangla, French and other languages for everyone according to reading tastes. The library consists of 1.25 lac books on variety of subjects including books for competitive examinations. A unique collection of old newspapers and magazines are present in the library[10-15].

The collection of following newspapers is available in the library which is as follows in table-2:

Main Features of Library

The library has some salient features for the readers which are as follows: Oriental Hall, New Hall, Newspaper Room, Research Hall, Computer Hall, Reprography Hall

Table-1
Number of staff present in the library

Designation	Quantity	Category
Librarian	1	A
Deputy Librarian	1	B
Assistant Librarian	2	C
Office Superintendent	1	C
Cataloguer	3	C
Senior Clerk	2	C
Clerical Cataloguer	2	C
Junior Clerk	1	C
Lending Assistant	2	C
Reprographic Assistant	1	C
Daftari/ Typist	1	C
Booklifter	5	C
Gateman/Genetor	2	C
Peon	1	C
Guard	1	C
Sweeper	1	C
Mali	1	C

Table-2
Newspapers available in the library

Name of Newspaper	Time Period
Pioneer	May 1868 -continuous
Amar Ujala	August 2001 - continuous
Dainik Jagran	August 2001- continuous
Navbharat Times	April 1976- continuous
Northern India Magazine	January 1965- continuous
Times of India	April 1965-continuous
Patriot	4 March 1854-last edition
National Herald	1945-continuous
The Statesman	1875-continuous
Leader	1854-last edition
Time	1945-last edition
Aaj(Hindi)	5 September 1920-last edition
Navbharat Times	April 1976-continuous
The Hindu	20 September 1878-last edition
Amrit Prabhat	1984-last edition
Hindustan Times	1924-continue

Major Library Services Provided to Readers

Lending/ Circulation of Books: Issuing books, magazines and other reading materials to readers.

Reference Services

The reference services of library assist the readers to find information and to use library resources in effective manner.

Reprographic Services

Xerox machine installed in reprographic section where readers can get material photostated on nominal rates i.e. Rs.1 per page.

Classification and Cataloguing System of Library

DDC Classification and AACR-2 Cataloguing is used in the library for collection.

Other Activities of Library

The Library also organize different activities as Lecture, Conference, Seminar, Discussions, etc. The library and its professional staff welcomes suggestions and recommendations from the library users to improve the library facilities and services. The library staff also recommend various new suggestions to the state government and administration to improve the library facilities for future.

Daily Visitors in Library

There are nearly 250 visitors daily in the library which shows good reputation of the library among the readers. The facilities provided to the daily library users (250) can be shown by the data given below in table-3.

The features of Table-3 can also be justified through Figures-1-12 which helps in making conclusion about the status of library among the library users.

Table-3

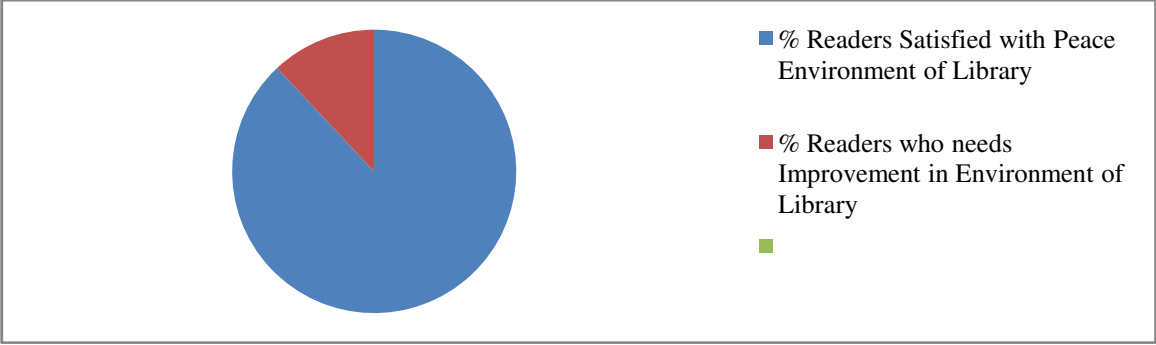| Facilities Provided by Library	Number of Satisfied Visitors with Library Facilities	Percentage (%) of Satisfied Visitors with Library Facilities	Number of Visitors who needs Improvement	Percentage (%) of Visitors who needs Improvement
Peace Environment	220	88%	30	12%
Air and Light Conditions	215	86%	35	14%
Drinking Water Facilities	200	80%	50	20%
Services according to Requirement of Readers	200	80%	50	20%
Photocopy Services	210	84%	40	16%
Parking Facilities	200	80%	50	20%
Competitive Magazines	200	80%	50	20%
Female Magazines	180	72%	70	28%
Child Literature	180	72%	70	28%
Different Literature in Different Languages	200	80%	50	20%
Well Qualified Staff for Readers	220	88%	30	12%
Computer and Internet Services	125	50%	125	25%

Figure-1
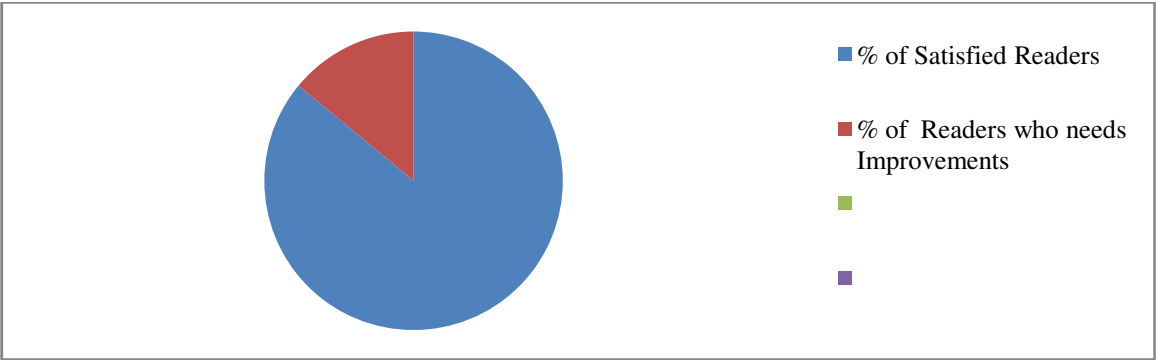**Peace Environment of Library**

Figure-2
Air and Light Conditions in Library
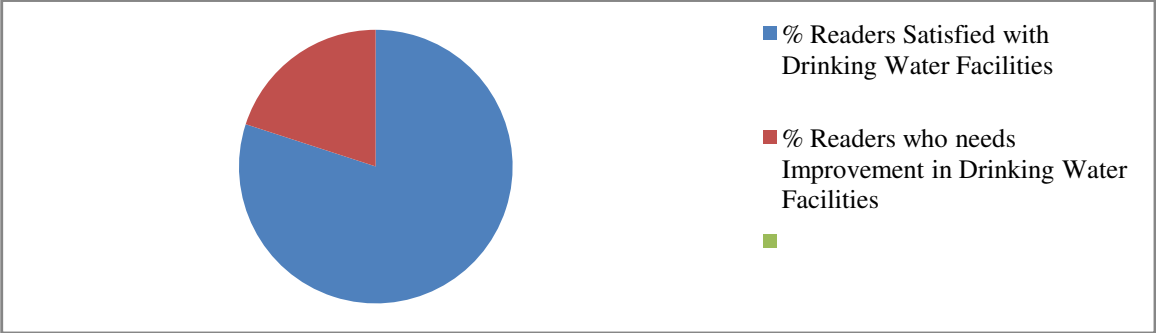

Figure-1
Drinking Water Facility in Library
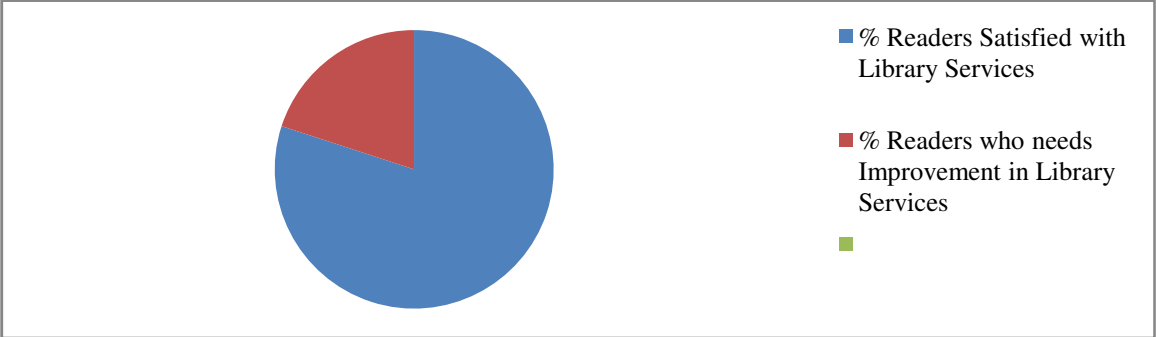

Figure-2
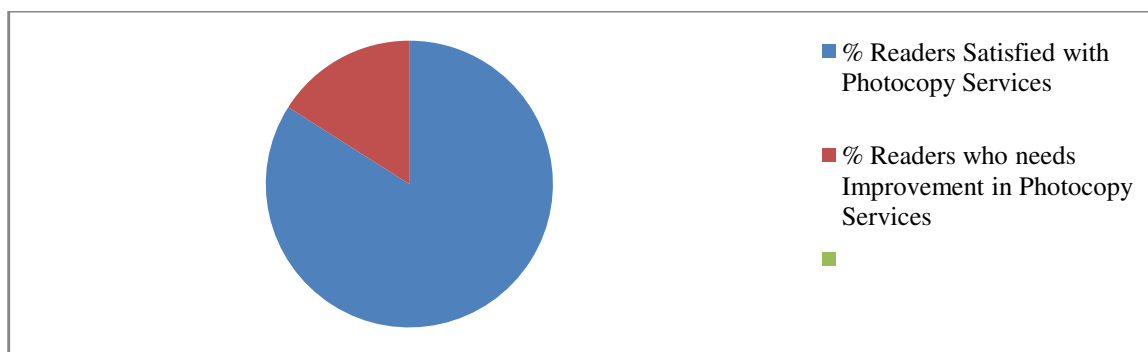**Library Services According to Requirement of Readers**
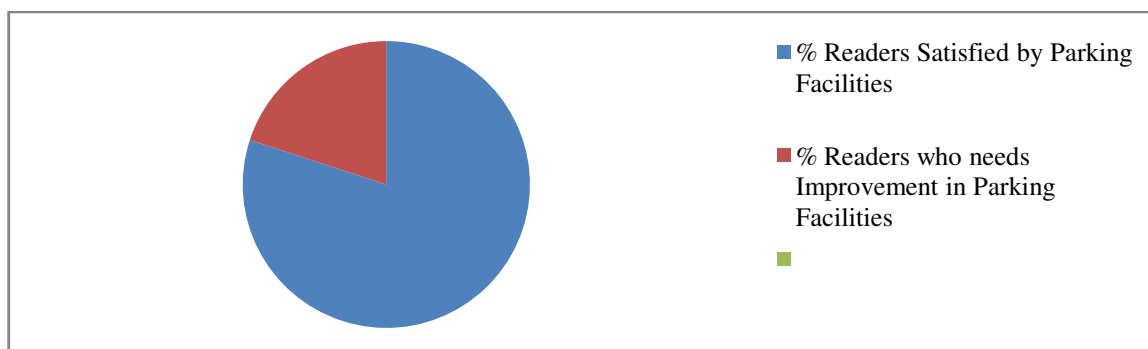
Figure-3
Photocopy services
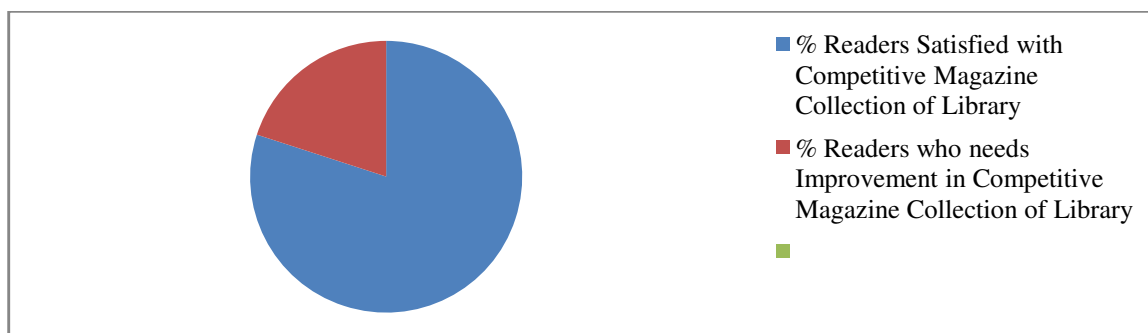

Figure-4
Parking Facilities

Figure-5
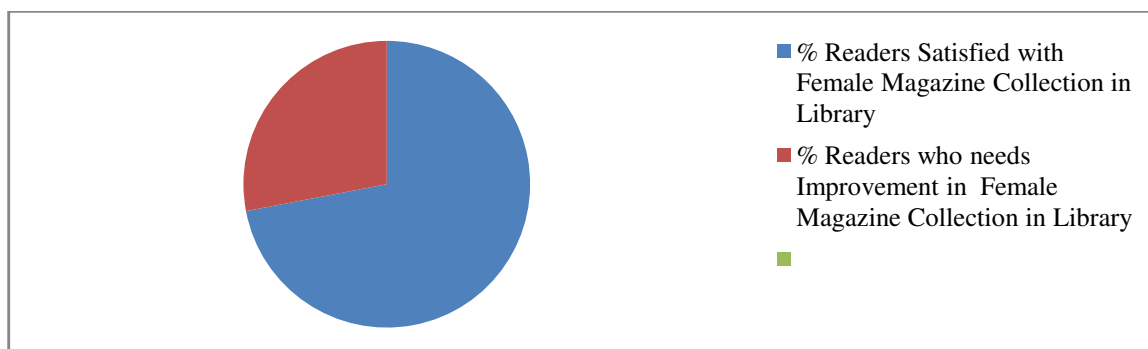**Competitive Magazine Collection**

Figure-6
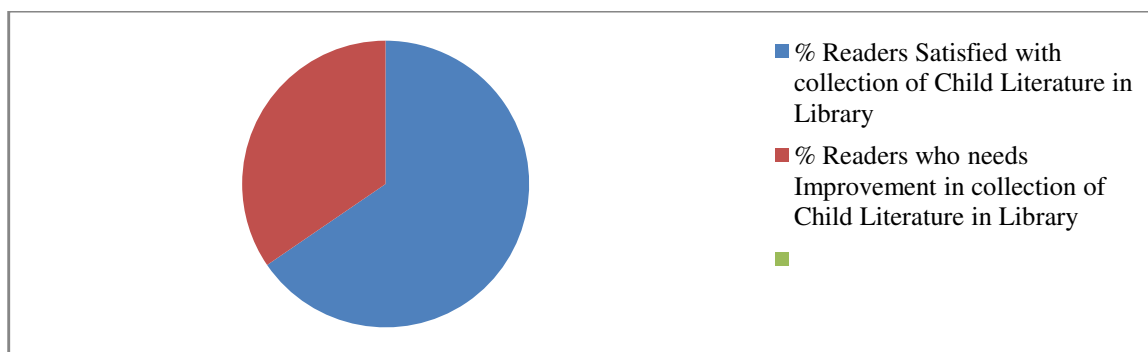**Female Magazine Collection in Library**

Figure-7
Collection of Child Literature in Library
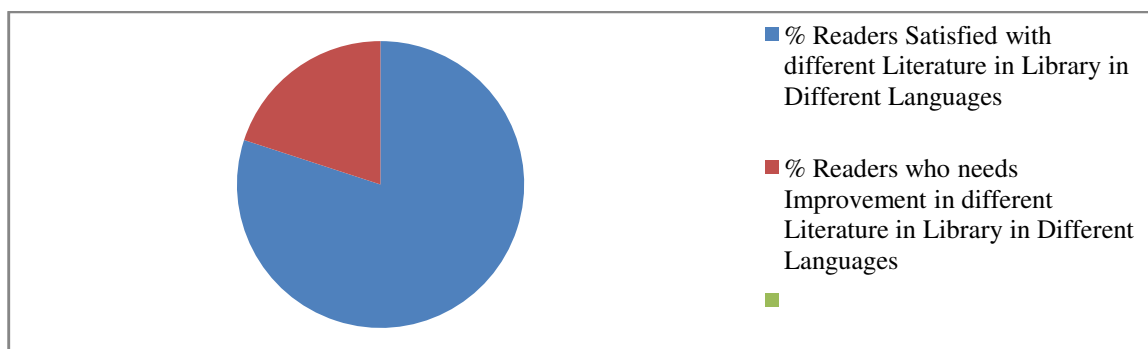
Figure-8
Different Literature in Library in Different Languages
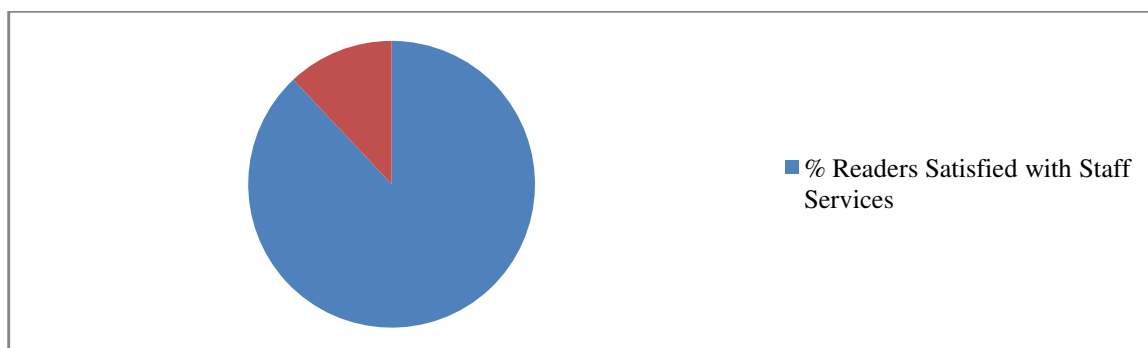
Figure-9
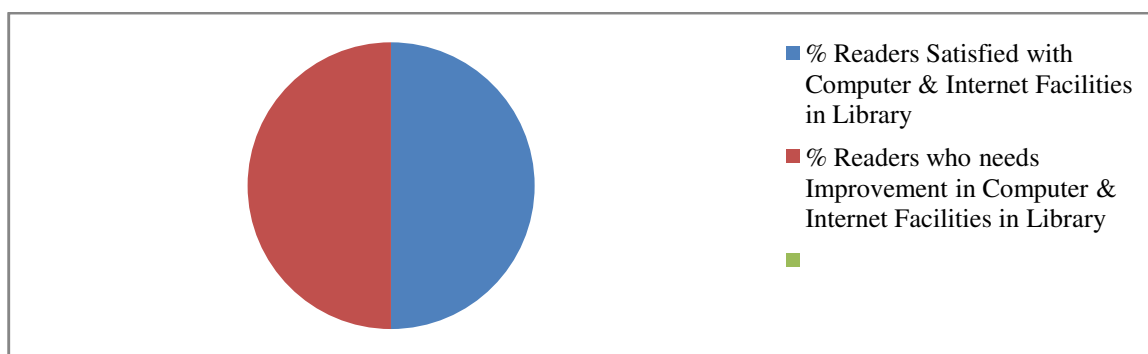**Staff Services to Readers by Library**

Figure-10
Computer and Internet Facilities in Library

Conclusion

The data based on daily 250 visitors and figure1-11 shows that above 70% of the visitors/readers are satisfied with library facilities and Allahabad Public Library can be considered as one of the good Public Library for the library users. There is also scope of improving library facilities and developing well qualified staff to provide better services. Its time to have Digital India in future so better Computer and Internet facilities for the readers should be given attention for better library services in Public Libraries. Uttar Pradesh Library Act put emphasis on maintaining better library services to their users. Public Libraries across the country will benefit if modern technical equipment bring to the libraries.

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