

PRISON LIBRARIES IN TAMIL NADU: A SURVEY OF LIBRARY STAFF

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ABSTRACT: This paper is a survey of library staff about the prison libraries in Tamil Nadu. Through Questionnaire methods, the data was collected from the Library staff. Based on the responses the collected data was analyzed. The study revealed the role of library staff in prison and their better understanding of their library. The survey revealed that the inmates also helping the library staff for the betterment of the library service to the inmates. It also revealed that the stock was maintained by the staff without having training in the library field. It is noted that there should be little more attention by the government & other sectors. The prison libraries are the place for the reformation and recreation centre for the inmates.

Index Terms: Prison, Prison Library, Tamil Nadu, Library staff, Inmates, Resources, Education, system, Services.

I. INTRODUCTION

The library is the place where an excess of information is available. The library staff plays a key role to select and provide the right information to the right user. The relationship between library staff and users are like mother and child. The mother knows for what purpose the child is crying based on that she takes care of her kid. The same way the library staff should know the information needs of the users based on that the library systems and services should be changed. These types of users are in school libraries, college libraries, public libraries, research libraries, university libraries. There are kids who will not cry for the requirements or some may be in the different world. For this type of kids the mother role is imperative, she should take extraordinary care. The same way there are libraries where the library staff role should be extraordinary for example prison libraries. In prison library the users need are vague or they are in the state of changes in their lifestyle but don't know how to overcome, the library staff also could not prejudice their information needs. By slow and steady observation the library staff should know what the information requirements. This paper discusses the library staff role in Tamil Nadu prison libraries.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To view the conditions of the Tamil Nadu prison libraries.
- To know the information needs of the inmates.
- To explore how the prison libraries staff support the inmates through library services.

III. DATABASE METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Tamil Nadu state of India. The questionnaire method was followed in data collection from the library staff. Due to permission issue and time constraint, out of 12 major prisons in Tamil Nadu, the data was collected from 9 prisons during the year 2014.

IV. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In Tamil Nadu, there are 9 central prisons and 3 women prisons. Chennai Puzhal I, Chennai - Puzhal II, Special Prison for Women-Puzhal, Central Prison-Cuddalore, Central Prison-Madurai, Central Prison-Palayamkottai, Central Prison-Tiruchirapalli, Central Prison-Vellore, Special Prison for Women-Tiruchirapalli, Special Prison for Women- Vellore, Central Prison-Salem, Central Prison-Coimbatore. Almost in all the prisons, the majority of inmates were lifers. The education status of the inmate shows that majority of them was literate.

The prison department conducts various job-oriented course like typewriting, Photoshop, four wheeler and two wheeler mechanisms, security training, hospitality, Carpentry, weaving, handloom and power loom, Binding industries, Bedside assistant, Jem cutting, Bakery making, pickles making, Soap making, Hollow block bricks making, AC mechanic, plumbing, Modular Employable Skills Course, sweets and snacks making, tailoring garments, readymade stitching etc. With the help of universities like Indira Gandhi National Open University, Tamil Nadu Open University, University of Madras, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Industrial Training Institute the inmate's education status were improved.

V. ABOUT LIBRARY

All the major prisons have the library. The central prison libraries are maintained by the male staff and women prison libraries are maintained by the female staff. The library should be maintained by the library profession, but the majority of the prison libraries are maintained by the non-library professionals. Out of 9 prison libraries, only one library is maintained by the library professional. The inmates not only coming and utilising the library, some of the inmates are helping the library. Out of 9 prison libraries except for one library, all other libraries have inmates who help the library staff in library work.

Table 1 - Library staff – Inmates Assisting

S.No	Inmates Assisting	No. of Libraries
1	No	1
2	Yes	8
Total		9

The analysis in table 1 shows that the majority 8 libraries says that inmates assisting the library and for only 1 library, the inmate was not assisting. In that 8 libraries, nearly 15 inmates are assisting, all of the assisting inmates' educational qualification is above or equal to 10th standard. It was observed from the figure 1 all the assisting inmates minimum qualification was 10th and maximum qualification was PG. i.e., 4 (26.7%) are 10th qualified, 3 (20.0%) are 12th qualified, 1 (6.6%) was diploma holder, 4 (26.7%) has completed UG and 3 (20.0%) are with PG degree.

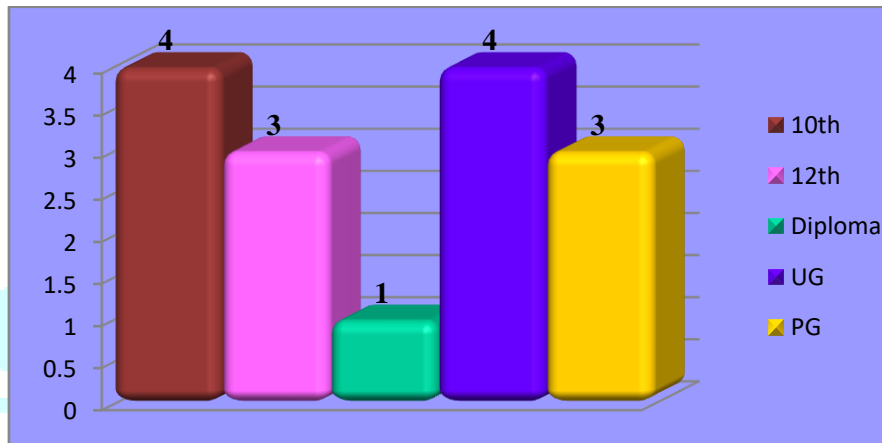


Figure 1 Library – Assisting inmate's educational qualification

5.1. LIBRARY SYSTEM

Library details were collected from the library in-charge. Library working hours is 8 hours a day.

(i) Area of Library

Table 2 - Library Area

S.No	Library Area	No. of libraries
1	500 sqft and below	5
2	Between 501 and 1000 sqft	2
3	1000 sqft and above	2
Total		9

Table 2 shows that out of 9 libraries, 5 libraries size in terms of the area was less than 500 sqft, 2 libraries size was 501-1000 sqft and 2 libraries size was 1000 and above sqft.

(ii) Collection

All the prisons under study have library collections in different areas – books and periodicals like English books, Tamil books, other books, journals, magazines, and newspapers. For the last 5 years (2010-14) the collection of books details are 5 libraries have less than 500 books of the collection, 3 have 501 to 1000 books and 1 has 1001 and above books collection. The researcher noticed during the data collection that by Gratis - Puzhal 2 prison library received 36,400 books from foreign; all of them are in English languages books with different subjects and with more volumes. The library in-charge during discussion pointed out that these books are going too distributed to all other prison libraries in Tamil Nadu.

Table 3 - Collections - English books

S.No	English books	No. of Libraries
1	100 and below	4
2	Between 101 and 500	3
3	Between 501 and 1000	1
4	1000 and above	1
Total		9

The data presented in table 3 shows that 4 libraries have less than or equal to 100 English books in their library, 3 libraries have 101 to 500 English books, 1 library have 501 to 1000 English books and 1 library have more than 1000 English books.

The data presented in table 4 shows that 1 library have less than or equal to 1000 Tamil books, 5 libraries have 1001 to 2000 Tamil books, 2 libraries have 2001 to 3000 Tamil books and 1 library have more than 3000 Tamil books.

Table 4 - Collections - Tamil books

S.No	Tamil books	No. of Libraries
1	1000 and below	1
2	Between 1001 and 2000	5
3	Between 2001 and 3000	2
4	3000 and above	1
Total		9

Apart from English and Tamil books, the majority of the libraries (8) do not have other language books. Only 1 library has other languages with the volume of 20 books.

All the prison libraries are getting newspapers and regional language magazines by prison act. Almost all the Prison libraries have the following magazines Anadha Vikatan, Kalki, Kumdhum, Sree Ramakrishna Jeyam, and Ullolli (published by the Prison Department of Tamil Nadu). The above mentioned are local regional language magazines. Tiruchirapalli women prison library getting Tamil magazines from the public library through ILL service. The magazines borrowed are Vikatan, Snegthi. Almost all the Prison libraries are getting both English and Tamil newspaper. English newspapers like The Hindu and The New Indian Express and Tamil newspapers: like Dinathanthi, Dinakaran, Dinamalar

Table 5 - Reading materials

S.No	Reading materials	No. of Libraries
1	Reference materials	5
2	Fiction	8

Table 5 shows the reading materials details, 5 libraries have reference materials and the majority of the libraries 8 have fiction collection but not a single library has audio-visual related materials.

Table 6 indicates the special needs material details, 5 libraries have study materials, 5 have materials related to basic education, 5 have materials for legal reference but all the libraries lack in materials for the physical disabilities inmates. The same is shown in the graphically in figure 2.

Table 6 - Special need material

S.No	Special need material	No. of Libraries
1	Study materials	5
2	Basic education materials	5
3	Legal references	5

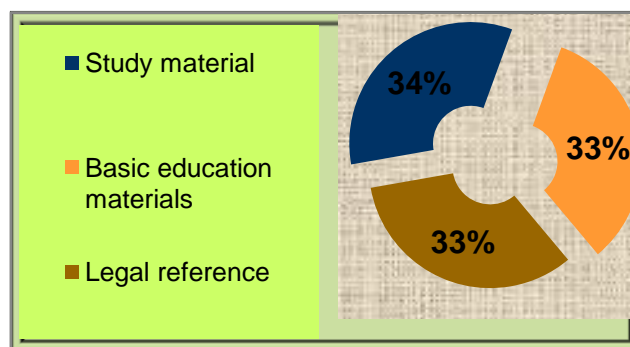


Figure 2 Special need materials

(iii) *Classification of books**Table 7 - Books classified*

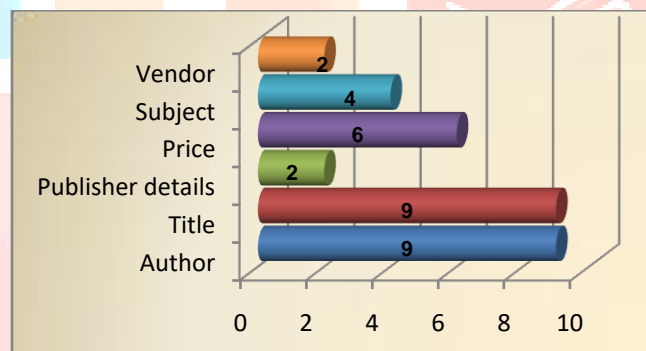
S.No	Books classified	No. of Libraries
1	No	7
2	Partial	1
3	Yes	1
Total		9

It is clear from the table 7 that the most of libraries (7) have not classified the books, 1 has partially classified and only 1 library has classified the library books.

All the libraries are maintaining the register to enter their new books. And it is clear from the study that all the 9 libraries are entering the author and title details in accession register, apart from that 6 (66.7%) are entering the price details, 4 (44.4%) were entering subject details, 2 (22.2%) are entering the publisher details and vendor details. The table 8 depicts that the details like the number of pages, bill number and call number was not entered by any of the libraries. Graphical representation of accession register maintained is given in figure 3.

Table 8 - Accession register

S.No	Accession register	No. of Libraries	Percentage
1	Author	9	100
2	Title	9	100
3	Publisher details	2	22.2
4	Price	6	66.7
5	Subject	4	44.4
6	Vendor	2	22.2

*Figure 3 Accession register*(iv) *Catalogue*

All the 9 libraries are maintaining the catalogue for the received books.

Table 9 - Catalogue

S.No	Catalogue	No. of Libraries
1	Register Note	8
2	Printout excel	1
Total		9

The Table 9 shows that the majority libraries (8) are maintaining the catalogue for their books in register form and 1 library is maintaining the book's details in the printed form.

The details of the books entered in register form or in printout are only subject wise and title wise. The table 10 indicates that more than half of the libraries, 5 have indexed the books subject wise. And almost half of them entered books title wise.

Table 10 - Books accessioned

S.No	Books	No. of Libraries
1	Title-wise	4
2	Subjects wise	5
Total		9

Not a single library was entering the book's details in author wise, classification wise, etc.; the same is shown graphically in figure 4.

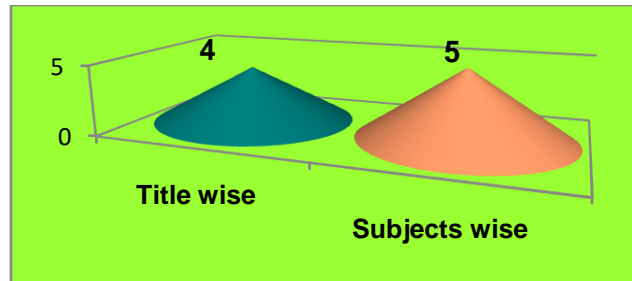


Figure 4 Books accessioned

(v) Circulation

In this section the membership details; books borrow criteria for inmates and for staff, the system followed to issue books, issue and return details, collection details etc., are discussed.

a. Membership

Table 11 - Membership

S.No	Membership	No. of Libraries
1	Only for inmates	1
2	Only for staff in Prison	0
3	For Both	8
TOTAL		9

The study observes that in the majority of the libraries (8) memberships are open for both the inmates and the staff of prison. From the above table 11, it is clear that only 1 library have the membership only for inmates.

(vi) Categories of books

Table 12 - Categories of books

S.No	Categories of books	No. of Libraries
1	Tamil	9
2	Storybooks	8
3	History	5
4	Motivational	3
5	General	2
6	Religious	2
7	English	1
8	Self-learning	1

Table 12 presents the categories of the books in prisons library's collection. It is observed from the study that in all the 9 libraries Tamil collection is stronger with 9, and then followed by storybooks 8, history books 5, motivational books 3, general and religious books 2 and English and self-learning books 1.

(vii) Category of books received utmost attention/demand

Table 13 - Demand for book

S.No	Demand book	No. of Libraries
1	Story-books	8
2	Tamil	6
3	General	5
4	History	3
5	Religious	2
6	Motivational	1
7	Self-learning	1

Table 13 interpret which type of books received utmost attention/demand. It is observed from the study that 8 libraries are having utmost attention /demand of storybooks, and then followed by Tamil books 6, general books 5, history books 3, and religious books 2, motivational and self-learning books only 1.

5.2. LIBRARY SERVICES

(i) Response of library in-charge on library services

The most important area in each and every library, the services rendered to their patrons and the services which got utmost attention, awareness about the services, etc., are included in this section.

Services

Table 14 - Library services

S.No	Services	Out of 9 Prisons
1	Classes conducted for illiterate inmates	9
2	The library supports the prison's mission- Habituating***	9
3	Ask a librarian	8
4	Reading and skills for life development programs	8
5	Self-employment resources and programs	8
6	Information, advice and guidance and resettlement programs	7
7	Job help centre	7
8	Book Discussion	7
9	ILL**	7
10	Legal reference service	7
11	Film showing	7
12	Indoor games club	7
13	Language learning	6
14	Cultural performance	6
15	Library orientation program for new inmates	5
16	Storytime	4
17	Authors or artist share their work	2
18	Prison library to Prison library book delivery*	1

*Puzhal 1, ** 6 public libraries and 1 special library, *** List of possible job 3 (33.3%), List of certain training centre 2 (22.2%) and Social service agency referrals 6 (66.7%).

Table 14 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the services render by the library. It shows that all the libraries 9 rendering the services of classes conducted for illiterates and the library supports the prison's mission- Habituating. 8 libraries rendering the following services, Ask a librarian, Reading and skills for life development programs, Self-employment resources and programs. 7 libraries rendering the services of Information, advice and guidance and resettlement programs, Job help centre, Book Discussion, ILL, Legal reference service, Film showing, Indoor games club. 6 libraries rendering the following services: Language learning, Cultural performance. 5 libraries are rendering, library-oriented program to the new inmates. 4 story time services, 2 rendering the services of authors or artist share their work. Only 1 library was rendering the Prison library to Prison library book deliver (this was carried out by Puzhal 1 central prison).

(ii) Work satisfaction level

Table 15 - Work satisfaction level

S.No	Satisfaction level	No. of Libraries
1	Very much satisfied	2
2	Satisfied	7
3	Somewhat satisfied	0
4	Dissatisfied	0

Table 15 presents the library staff work satisfaction level. It can be seen from the analysis that 7 of the library staff are satisfied with their work and remaining 2 of them are very satisfied.

(iii) *Library staff training*Table 16 - *Library staff training*

S.No	Professional training	No. of Libraries
1	No	8
2	Yes	1
Total		9

The analysis in table 16 shows that the majority 8 library staffs have not attended any training programme. Only 1 library staff has attended the training programme.

VI. SUGGESTION GIVEN BY LIBRARY STAFF

- ❖ Inmates are in need of more books.
- ❖ The books especially, law-oriented books collection should be increased; the inmates are eagerly interested to know the laws which will help them to overcome imprisonment.
- ❖ The collections related to entertainment and recreation should also be increased. The books like novel, story books, historical books etc.,
- ❖ Almost all the library suggested implementing the counselling session in the library. Since most of the inmates are in need of counselling.

VII. CONCLUSION

The library is the place where the user comes to know the unknown or to the better understanding of the known. The prison is the place where the inmates are kept not only as punishment, it is the place to overcome their mistake that is not as a punishment centre it is a correctional centre. The role of library and librarian plays a very important in the prison. It is the centre for the reformation and recreation. If the library is made well utilised for the inmates or well utilised by the inmates means there will be no prison in the country. And majority of the fund spend for the prison will be well utilised for the growth of the country, if there is awareness of the library and by the library.

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