Chapter 3

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section offers a review of the relevant literature to establish a valid background for this study on the social, educational, cultural and economic impact of the British Library Thiruvananthapuram. It includes relevant literature from books, Journal articles, research studies and electronic sources.

Various research and evaluation methods used for evaluation are discussed and some of the “evaluative studies” in the area of Library and Information Science are listed. It also looks at some of the studies, which relate to a particular service in a particular library. Review of the performance measurement studies and ‘Impact studies’ touch upon impact in relation to its customers and other physical aspects like space etc.

The Library’s impact on the socio-cultural milieu is very important and the Public Library impact studies reveal this. As the British Council libraries are modelled on the UK public libraries, the present study is also based on Public library impact studies. So, almost all known Public library impact studies are reviewed here.

Finally, the review ends with the ‘Social Audit’ and the study by Bob Usherwood on the ‘Social Audit’ of Public libraries. This study basically led to the conceptualisation of this research.

The studies reviewed are valuable in the ‘History of Library Impact Study’ and they
represent ‘stages’ in the development to measure the quality of the relationship between libraries and its users.1

The review of Literature has been grouped under following four topics.

3.1. LIBRARY EVALUATION STUDIES

When public library services were planned for the community in countries like England, the architects of this popular movement envisaged a library service which was available to every one without any discrimination. As McColvin puts in his Report on the Public Library System of Great Britain, “the third and all important tenet is that libraries should be ‘free in every sense.’”

In modern times public libraries were established in UK, USA, and other European countries first. This was soon followed in the other continents of the world. Huge amounts of public revenue were spent for the purpose of establishment, development and providing of quality library service to every one. As Murison says in his book The Public Library, “the significance of the library to its user will greatly be demonstrated by the facilities it offers to him. It will be judged by the extent to which it fulfils what the reader demands of it.”3

To measure or assess whether a library fulfils its customer demands, various methods were followed and studies and recommendations were suggested based on the data collected.4

At first, the evaluation was conducted to assess the various functions of the library such as collection development-books, periodicals-reference services catalogue use, shelf maintenance, issue and return system (circulation) and also areas like inter-library loan and other related services like resource sharing.

When an assessment of a collection of a library in relation to its members is done, one need to think about the various purposes of a library collection. David Spiller5 elaborates on the factual, purposive, cultural, recreational and educational aspects of a library. He also talks

---

2 Mc Colvin, L.R (1942)- The Public Library System of Great Britain, pp 4-5
about different criteria for the evaluation of a book like subject, level, price, physical standards, readability and documentation. He goes on to suggest various sources for the collection development - like standard bibliographies, which the librarian can rely on. Comer\(^7\) for this purpose used checking bibliographies against collections and collections against bibliographies to evaluate collection development\(^7\). The above mentioned methods are useful for the quality development of the stock.

Another method suggested in the earlier days of the development of libraries and recommended even now is ‘expert judgement’, In this, evaluation by an expert and suggestions for improvement is sought. The main problem here is the difficulty in finding subject experts whose judgement is totally unbiased.

The quantity of stock determination is also an important area of evaluation of the collection development of a library. Books per member is one criteria used to determine the size of the stock. This method is very useful in the case of public libraries. These calculations may not be very relevant in the case of Academic and institutional libraries. McClellan\(^8\) in his book *The Logistics of Public Library Book Stock* and Betts,\(^9\) in his book *How Many Books* has mentioned elaborate procedures for this purpose.

In the academic library circulation, two books per student was suggested as a desirable number by Brophy based on the data from British polytechnique libraries.\(^10\)

An analysis of use (circulation statistics) is a major factor for evaluation of the stock. This is the reason that every library brings out its annual statistics showing the number of people who visited the library and number of books borrowed.

---


*British Journal Of Academic Librarianship*, 4, pp 99-110
Some libraries like the British Council count the number of books left on the shelf and relate it to the total stock and arrive at a percentage to assess the efficiency of the stock. This can be done on a subject basis to assess each collection.

Earlier, “sample method” was used as a collection sample and circulation sample to assess the efficiency of the stock. Jain\(^{12}\) as well as Fussier and Simon\(^{12}\) used this method. They also used the age of the material to assess obsolescence. The difference between holding percentage and collection percentage for each class is another method used for collection assessment. Trochim\(^{13}\) as well as Mills\(^{14}\) studies are related to this.

It is important to distinguish between evaluation and performance measurement. According to Abbot, “Performance indicators are simply management tools designed to assist library managers to determine how well their service is performing. They provide evidence on which to base judgement, but are not substitutes for that judgement, since performance data assessments can be made. In considering performance indicators we are rarely dealing with absolutes”\(^{15}\). Performance indicators contribute to the process of evaluation but the latter is a broader term for the assessment of performance.

There are different ideas regarding what evaluation is and why it should be done. In this connection, Blagden\(^{16}\) provides a useful summary of different arguments. In modern management, monitoring performance is an integral part of good management and it is undertaken for two reasons:

i. To convince the funders and the clients that the service is delivering the benefits that were expected when the investment was made.

ii. As an internal control mechanism to ensure that the resources are used efficiently and effectively.


\(^{14}\) Mills, T.R (1982) The University of Illinois Film Centre Collection Use Study.


When we think about the evaluation of library service to its members, the first methodology that comes to our mind is the "Five Laws of Library Science" enunciated by Ranganathan. These laws provide a fundamental statement of the goals that information services should strive for. The first law ‘Books are for use’ implies that one should evaluate the collections and services in terms of the needs of the users. It also tells about the cost effectiveness and the skills the librarian needs to have to increase the use of library materials. The second law ‘Every Reader His Book’ is an extension of the first law and it relates to collection and availability. It is not enough that an item sought by a user is owned by the library, but it must also be available for use when needed. The third law ‘Every Book it’s Reader’ is concerned with exposure and accessibility of the collection. The evaluation should be in relation to the success of the library in informing the users about the library materials. The fourth law ‘Save the time of the Reader’ not only deals with satisfying customer needs but also with how quickly it is done. The time of users is very valuable and it is taken into consideration while assessing the cost-effectiveness.

The fifth law ‘The Library is a Growing Organism’ indicates that the library must be willing to adapt to changing social conditions and technological developments. This means that the library should capitalize the capabilities provided by innovative technology as well as it should adapt itself to the changing needs of its users.

There are a good number of published sources in the area of evaluation. Blagden and Harrington deal with surveys and evaluations and also with the advantages and disadvantages of various methodologies.

King Research Ltd Keys to success: Performance Indicators for Public libraries, is the first successful manual of performance indicators for public libraries. It lists 21 performance measures and 16 performance indicators with explanations about how they can be applied.

This is a very good practical manual and contains a useful section on survey techniques and statistical measures.

*Whats Good? Describing Your Public Library’s Effectiveness* by Childress and Van House[^22] probes the definition of effectiveness and provides guidelines for assessing the library’s stakeholders. It deals with ‘How do you tell a good library from a bad library, effectiveness and evaluations and advances on the goodness questions in libraries.

11 suggests ‘A Model for Public Library Effectiveness’ (AMPLE) and applying AMPLE. The appendices include a work sheet. Childers and Van House have done a number of studies on US Public Library System and published various research papers. The present study has also benefited from it.

Sumsion in his book *Practical Performance Indicators—1992* links library evaluation with the citizen’s charter and gives practical examples of surveys and performance indicators. It also deals with how data can be collected and presented. It also links performance indicators with *Audit Commission Report P*

British Standards Institution Information and Documentation: *Library Performance Indicators*, are an international standard, which is applicable to all libraries in all countries. It includes twenty-five definitions of standard terms used with performance indicators and the criteria, which a performance indicator should meet. About twenty-nine indicators are described[^21] in this.

Lancaster in his book, *If You Want To Evaluate Your Library*, deals with evaluating the various services of the library based on various studies. The author observes ‘A good way to focus on the evaluation of library service is through a generalized representation of the operations of a library as seen through the eyes of an evaluator. The long-term objective of


the library presumably is to produce certain outcomes in the community to be served. It deals with evaluation of collection, In-house use, periodicals use, weeding and the use of space, catalogue use, shelf availability, document delivery, reference services, resource sharing, cost-effectiveness etc. The need to evaluate the different services came in the context of customer’s orientation. The growth of consumer movement in the 1970’s encouraged consumers of goods and services to view much more critically the quality of service they received.

Public Library service or any library service now a days thinks very seriously about evaluation or measurement. As Lancaster observes: “Evaluation is a branch of research - the application of “the scientific method” to determine, for example, how well a program performs. Others stress its role in decision-making: the evaluation gathers data needed to determine which of several alternative strategies appears most likely to achieve a desired result.”

The central question is whether the Library or any organization, which is supposed to serve a section of the people/ or audience, has made any impact on those audiences. So various studies are undertaken to assess the impact. These studies are known as “Evaluative Research” and this type of research is distinguished from other kinds of Research. These studies are usually used for decision-making, the research questions are derived from a program, usually a service offered to a client group and the research provides a basis for making a judgment or assessment about the program or service.

Evaluative research seeks to discover casual sequences/or impact of a programme or service on its audience. It necessarily stresses determining a cause-effect relationship. Among the different research methodologies, the ideal one is a method suggested by Weiss, known as the ‘classic’ form. However, any other technique of research may be used for this purpose. Many of this Evaluative research studies go unpublished. Atkinson and others have developed a comparatively simple model and they have proposed: Systems resource management

---

Concerning inputs to the management system internal processes of management, and relationships with external governors and funders of the service program), Client utilization (Concerning client access to service, the quantities and quality of service delivery, and the consumption of service by clients), Outcome of intervention (Concerning effectiveness of service program from the individual client’s point of view, including satisfaction with the service used). Community Impact (Concerning the state of the target community both before and after service intervention). This methodology is also very relevant to the study.

Chelton has proposed only two levels - programs evaluation and process evaluation.\(^\text{29}\) Raizen and Rossi have developed another model in that they appear more or less in the order of tracking a program from conception to implementation. The evaluation is mainly used for education program evaluation.\(^\text{30}\) The data collected from various libraries like - issue/return, the population in the area, total numbers of books available etc are used for various studies to find out why a particular library is not doing well or for planning for the future.

For more than 40 years, “Special Sample Survey” have been used as a master tool of study to analyze the various problems of hypothetical nature. These studies are commonly known as “user studies” and used at various levels in assessing the Public Library services in various countries. The published sources about these studies fall into categories like ‘Study of perception of services, Uses of services, Users of Services, and also User satisfaction studies in public, School, Special and Academic libraries.\(^\text{31}\)

In the case of Individual needs assessment - there was a need to assess the reaction of an individual/shop to the existing services and also with regard to the proposed products

---


and services in the area of Library and Information science. Here comes a question of market research or market study.

Ongoing and regular evaluation of library programs and services is a key factor for effective planning and decision-making. Cyr Thomas has mentioned two fundamental criteria of excellence for evaluation: utility and feasibility. For optional utility, evaluation must clearly identify the institution’s values and for optional feasibility, evaluations must be economical. Regarding effectiveness and efficiency, the research questions simply revolve around the theme ‘user satisfaction’.

“Evaluation is any activity that throughout the planning and delivery of innovative programmes, enables those involved to learn and make judgments about the starting assumptions, implementation processes and outcomes of the innovation concerned.” Maureen’s study of the HYLiFe Project of the University of Northumbria discusses the reason why the project focused on hybrid libraries needed to be evaluated. He also discusses issues like who should be involved in the evaluation process, what should be evaluated and which method should be used.

In the book *Theories of Middle Range*, Poole deals with a brief and insightful history and development of library user studies he identified from early periods up to early 1970. Poole, after reviewing more than one thousand studies on “needs and uses”, has concluded that the most common characteristics of the study revealed “disparity of results, lack of synthesis, and questionable validity”. Fine, in his research article, has provided a clear and concise statement of the problem which says “in order to fulfil its mission, librarianship needs to be based on well-founded theoretical understandings about the nature of information,”

---


the nature and needs of human beings, the transfer process between people and information resources and the way people use information.”

Line’s study on college and research libraries is an important one and it says that ‘Collection development is a major responsibility of the library manager’. The questions that come before the manager are whether the present stock is satisfactory and able to meet customer expectation. How to plan for the future development of the stock? What are the subject areas where the library should concentrate?

Emery, in his study, has applied the consumer theory to the study of library use and his study reveals that there are significant similarities between the behavior of library borrowers and behavior identified in numerous consumer research studies of repeat buying.

Libraries spend a major share of their budget in the purchase of periodicals, and their use is vital in assessing the performance of the library. Whether the periodicals subscribed are the right ones for the customers of the library, whether the subject and level is in conformity with the user needs are the major questions, which agitate the mind of the librarian when he selects periodicals for his library. Many studies are conducted based on these questions.

Many libraries conduct annual studies to get feedback from the users about the periodical collection in the library. This is done either through a simple questionnaire or investigated through the date label of the periodicals or records of use.

Ibid.


There are innumerable studies, which have taken place and are still being conducted. It ranges from studies like, catalogue use in a library, information seeking behavior of different professionals, use of CD-ROM, use of Internet, Quality of Information in the internet, use of on-line resources.

Alema’s recent article in *Aslib* proceedings provides a review of various types and levels of library evaluation. It attempts to stimulate a debate on the pros and cons of evaluation and also discusses the criteria for evaluation and the problems in evaluation.

In the research article ‘The use of Public Reference Libraries’, Payne has conducted a telephone test study of 15 libraries and interviews with 455 users. This article deals with the need for proper marketing and systematic evaluation and also the importance of standards to be maintained.

*JUBILEE EASE, FI* and *Virtual Gallery* are the three projects on which AcDowell, Banwell and Marples are involved. The paper aims to present some points and issues around qualitative evaluation regarding access to sites and individuals. These studies have got relevance for the whole area of performance measurement in library and information studies.

In 1991, Onwubiko conducted a study of the resources and services of the Federal Polytechnic Library, Bauchi with a view to understand better the problems of polytechnic libraries in a developing country like Nigeria. The study uses a very simple Questionnaire administered to library users and the result is presented with recommendation for improvement of both resources and services.

---

3.2. TECHNOLOGICAL IMPACT ON LIBRARIES

The Report of the British Library working party on Electronic Publishing edited by Peter Vickers and John Martyn is about the impact of electronic publishing on library services and resources in the UK. It provides a summary of the present state of development of electronic publishing and its impact on libraries and information services, with particular reference to management, professional and operational implications. Various areas like networking, information and library strategies, access to information, legal deposit, copyright and contracts, education and training standards, economic modeling and future developments such as system integration are dealt with and their problems identified and recommendations suggested. Recommendations are incorporated in guidelines regarding license agreements between suppliers and users of electronic publications.

Bravy and Feather in their study, *The Impact of Electronic Access on Basic Library Services: one Academic Law Library's Experience*, present quantitative data that indicate the impact of such products on use pattern in libraries. The authors present a case study of traditional library use data over ten years in one law library and discuss the implication of these statistics. The statistics presented in this article about changes in circulation, photocopying and shelving operations at the Georgetown University Law Library show some very interesting and perhaps even dramatic trends. The conclusion is that a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the increased availability of electronic resources and the decline in traditional use statistics is difficult to prove. However, the statistics presented in this article illustrated in graphic terms the change in print collection use pattern in one library over the past decade.

Ian Murray’s article in - ‘Public Access to the Internet in Public Libraries’ is about provision of public access to the Internet in UK public libraries, which is gradually introduced...
in all public libraries. It examines issues surrounding the provision of public access basing on research conducted in UK and USA. Reference is made to data obtained from a survey conducted at Loughborough Public Library, which seeks to understand how the public uses an Internet service and what they require of this service. The conclusion is that in addition to providing access point, the authorities should seriously think of developing the system with more facilities. In this way, they can recoup the investment required in setting up the service.

The study to investigate the impact of the internet on reference services, in public libraries in England is another study in this area.54

Kaba Abdoulye55 and Shahcen Majid have done a study on the use of the Internet for reference services in Malaysian academic libraries. The integration of Internet into the library service has affected the total functions of the library especially the reference service since new tools and methods are used for information location, retrieval and delivery. The objective of the study was to find out how the information professionals and services are affected by this. A total of 40 library professionals working in the nine Malaysian academic libraries participated in the study. Respondents felt that Internet has helped to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of library reference service and agreed that library professionals should improve their skills in computing and internet use. However the majority disagreed with the idea that Internet should completely replace traditional reference tools.

‘Emerging Trends in Information Communication Technology and their Impact on Higher Education System in India’56 is a study paper by Manoj Kumar Sinha, Biswas, Kishore and Jayaswal. The authors examine the latest developments in the various facets of ICT- Personal computers, Multimedia, Telecommunication technology, Computer and communication networks, library and information systems and networks and the services of Internet and their

role in higher education system. The emerging trends in higher education both formal and distance education systems caused by the impact of the ICT are also presented in detail. It concludes that the world of technology is growing at a very rapid rate and it is impossible to measure the impact since there is continuous and growing interaction between learning process and application technology.

A study done in 1997 also relates to the influence of technology on library service. Weber’s study relates to Regional accreditation standards for library services and the actual student use. The data of actual student borrowing/browsing behavior suggest a wide discrepancy between meeting needs via the conventional on-site library collection and the significant efforts to maintain and increase collection regardless of the behaviors.57

3.3. LIBRARY IMPACT STUDIES

A recent study on user-orientation by the University of Patras, Greece on the impact of Information Technology and development of the electronic media is worth mentioning. This study deals with, who these electronic Journal users are, how often they use these service, why they prefer electronic media in relation to print media. It also tries to find out where their access points for use arc, and which search method and services they use.58

‘Counting on making a difference: assessing our impact, deals with a study on ten libraries in UK to assess the impact of higher education Libraries on learning, teaching and research.59

The Third Northumbria International Conference on performance Measurement in Libraries and Information Services 1999 was a milestone in the area of performance measurement. The proceedings of the meeting carried an article ‘The use of an impact survey as a measure of special library performance’. “Two years of impact assessments” is an updated paper on that by Thornton. It describes an electronic survey of authors at a major research

agency and presents an analysis of their assessments of the impact a special library's services has on their ability to carry out and report on scientific research/70.

The Public Library service is the major Library service in UK and naturally a large number of Library evaluation studies is from this field. The full-time employed are one of the largest segments in the Public Library market and as failure to provide an effective service to client group is direct contravention of the statutory duties of Public libraries. This particular study assesses and evaluates current service provision to this large market segment using the marketing mix as an analytical framework. It also identifies the discrepancies between the needs and wants of this client group and the services provided for them. It looks at the barriers for their use of Public Library services/71. This is the focal point in Wadley’s study.

‘Focus group’ methodology has been applied to research Questions in library and information science. Of the various qualitative methods available, the focus group is the one that has attracted greater attention. They are called focus group because the discussions start out broadly and gradually narrow down to the focus of the research. Focus groups are used in a variety of situations. Studies relating to user satisfaction with library service became very prominent during the 1990s. Beryl Glitz in the book ‘Focus Groups for Libraries and Librarians’ provides a good general introduction to focus group research in libraries and its strength and weakness, question development and preparation of the moderator.62 Young63 in his article ‘Focus or Focus Groups’ claims many advantages for focus groups over other forms of research. Focus groups are extremely helpful in generating useful information to assess how patrons will respond to new idea, service or products.

A focus group study at Texas A&M University relating to user perceptions on the library’s web pages is very relevant in this area.64 This university has a student population of

---

over 43,000 and spend over a million and half dollars annually on electronic resources. The library has produced a Public Access Menu (PAM). After implementation it was noticed that patrons were having difficulty in using the search form and in understanding what the form was acutely searching. A decision was taken to involve patrons by asking them to evaluate the library’s web site and focus group methodology was used. Feed back from focus group enabled researchers to identify and bring into the spot light problems patrons faced using PAM. It was very helpful for the design group to re-design the web pages.

Impact studies are also dealing with evaluation of Library services. Patricia Lokey’s study on the impact of on-line information on traditional library services and the distance user belongs to this category. It is very interesting for librarians to study how students obtain the resource to complete assignments whether it is through the use of institution library, public library or on-line resources. Graduates in master or doctoral programs are the targeted populations for this study. Data collections consist of survey, interview, and evaluation of students’ bibliographies.

The ‘Best Value’ review and inspection was another method used in UK in the late nineties to try and shake up the performance of local authorities including the libraries.

The impact of Digital resources on British Library reading rooms is a study carried out by the British Library research wing. The objective of this study was to determine the likely impact of digital resources on the future demand for British Library reading room seats in library’s new building at St. Pancras. It examines the effects which Internet resources and CD-ROMs may have on demand for seating space in British Library reading rooms. Use of digital media both within the library and outside was considered. The study was conducted in

1996 and the report records work done during this study and brings together the data and the conclusions arrived.68

There is also another study on The Impact of Electronic Publishing on Library Services and Resources in the UK.’ It deals with professional and operational implications.69

Yet another study, which was funded by the American Library Association is on “The impact of outsourcing and privatization on library services and management”. This was carried on by the Texas Women’s University School of library and information studies. The team examined in detail outsourcing of cataloging selection and management of library operations. The findings of the study revealed that there is no evidence of negative impact on library services and management. On the other hand, the evidence supports the conclusion that outsourcing has been an effective managerial tool and when used carefully and indecorously, it has resulted in enhanced library services and improved library management.70

‘The political perception of the Public Library: the Australian view’71 is a research

UK to evaluate - the national policy maker’s attitude to, and perceptions, of the role, value and impact of public library services.

Alan Barney’s research on ‘The Impact of Technology on Library Space Requirements’ is another significant study, which concludes that use of new technologies is not relieving the need for more space in libraries. The author concludes that it would be unwise to count on technology to save the library space.72

‘An Impact 2002 on the Catholic Central Library’ is another interesting study of the libraries impact on the community it serves.\textsuperscript{73}

A great deal of effort has been invested in promoting high quality web pages in general. Helge Clausen deals with a Danish study aimed at developing new methods of user-oriented evaluation of library and information center web pages. It is a user oriented evaluation study using qualitative methods dealing specifically with web sites of libraries and information centers. Main areas investigated are: Design and structure; information quality lings and navigation; visual quality and updating.\textsuperscript{74} The findings from some theoretical considerations and a pilot study are presented. It also discusses a preliminary evaluation method.

Statistical methods have been used recently in library evaluation and management. A study at the University of Calabar is done using quantitative analysis to determine in library book use. It was formed that many people use the library for various reasons, especially during examination periods, other than for reading library books.\textsuperscript{75}

A recently completed project study by the Department of International Studies, Sheffield University is about the direct impact on the community with regard to the closure of public Libraries. It clearly brings out how children are affected in preparing for the classes. Mr. Richard proctor is the project leader of the study.\textsuperscript{76}

“Libraiy evaluation and public policy: a French view” is a study conducted by Giappiconi which has selected Social function of the Library management and public policy, Public interest, library arrangement and democracy and the definition and choice of indicators and objectives.\textsuperscript{77} This is another interesting study with regard to evaluation study.

A pilot project in measuring the impact of health Libraries in the West Midlands Health Libraries network is another important study in the area of impact assessment. This

\textsuperscript{73} http://www.catholic-library-v.org.ulc/impact
\textsuperscript{76} http://www.ac.uk/pr/press_releases/press
study is a step forward from performance assessment to measure the impact it has on the users of the Library service. This is a project, which will support a group of librarians in implementing ‘impact’ assessment as a tool to improve the preference of library services.

All these studies have contributed towards the development of Impact Studies but the back home for these studies is provided by a study conducted by Griffith and King and over the years they have developed a framework to measure impact which include: Inputs: (Resources) including amount of resources and costs.

Outputs: (Products/Services) Amount of output and attributes such as quality, timeliness, availability, and accessibility and Usage: Amount of use and nonuse as well as factors affecting use/non-use outcomes for the community organization: (consequences of use and non-use), saved, improved productivity, improved quality of work, achieving organizational/community goals and value derived. Nation/Society (Environmental characteristic), target population, user/non-user population, and user/non-user information needs.

Another important technique developed is known as the “Priority and Preference Evaluation” (PAPE), which has been developed in Australia by Broadbent. Here criteria are developed for the library/information unit, which are desirable; for example, access to data bases, competence of staff, understanding of user needs, efficiency of the inter-loans service etc.

Dr. Joanne Marshall carried out three studies in the early 1990’s to assess the impact of particular pieces of information on a decision taken. The methodology that she developed has been used by many researchers around the world. The study conducted by

---

* www.wish.uk.org/library/linkfiles


Nicola Bald and Christine Reid is also worth mentioning here. This study is known as the DIY study.  

Performance measurement in Public libraries is a major concern of the day. Train and Elkin in ‘Measuring the unmeasurable’ investigate the potential to measure the impact on staff and users of reader development. They use examples as best value inspection process as used by Branching out an on-going national reader development. They conclude that the qualitative, person-centered evaluation methodologies developed via projects such as branching out could support any local authority preparing its study own service evaluation.

The Public Library Effectiveness Study by Childers and Van House was undertaken to define effectiveness for the U S Public library to answer the question “What are the characteristics of an effective public library?” Its purpose was not to identify effective libraries, but to identify the features that people look for in assessing a library’s effectiveness - the indicators of effectiveness. The study employed a series of interviews with selected library stake-holders followed by a national survey of about 2500 people belonging to library stakeholder’s group, library managers, library service staff, members of friends groups, trustees, users, local government officials and community leaders. Each respondent was asked to identify the indicators before he or she states the effectiveness. The study generated a comprehensive list of indicators ranked and classified under eight dimensions like - Traditional counts of library activity, Internal processes, Community fit, Access to materials, Physical facilities, Boundary spanning, Service offerings and Service to Special Groups etc.

The literature search led to another interesting and unique impact study by Rodger, D’Eliva and Woelfel titled ‘The Impact of the Internet on Public Library Use: an Analysis of

the Current Consumer Market for Library and Internet services. The study project was supported by a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library services, USA.

In the context of the possible threat to the future of public libraries as a result of the potential impact of the Internet, the above study is very significant. The purpose of this study is to investigate the characteristics of the current consumer market for Public Library Services and internet services, to identify which provider is useful for which reason, to identify the decision criteria that people use when choosing one provider over the other, and to assess how the market place evaluates the performance of the library and the Internet on these decision criteria. This study reports about the baseline data concerning the relationship between the use of the Public Library and use of the Internet. The authors developed a segmentation model of the American Market for information services and resources based on the market’s use in the Public Library and its use of the Internet.

The study employed a national Random Digit Dialing (RDD) telephone Survey of adults 18 years or older, to describe and analyze the current consumer market for library services and Internet services. The research team developed an extensive questionnaire to capture the data that were necessary to describe the behavior of the six segments identified above. The data were formatted into an SPSS data file and analyzed. The data obtained from this survey suggests that use of the Internet and use of the library are complementary. The data tend to support scenario where the library and the Internet will coexist in the marketplace complementing each other’s services.

3.4. PUBLIC LIBRARY SOCIAL IMPACT STUDIES

The service of public library in the UK and other countries came under review due to the enormous changes that are taking place in the social, demographic and political life of the people. The right to information, lifelong learning principle etc contributed to the idea of whether the money spent on the public library system is bringing the desired results. Library managers

have become more and more accountable for the money spent on their libraries and it has become mandatory for them to prove the value of their library services. As a result, many studies were done in UK, USA, Canada etc on the public library services.

‘Social impact’ studies are qualitative outcome indicators and are often a more meaningful way of assessing the value and impact of a service and its achievements. This more qualitative approach has been used in a number of recent studies of social impact. Bob Usherwood, in his paper ‘value and impact studies’, presented at the sixty fifth IFLA council and general conference in Bangkok has mentioned “ at a time when so much emphasis is being placed on quality, standards and accountability, it should not come as a surprise that research work is directed at assessing the value and impact of organizations. Serious difficulties arise however when researchers try to deal with these issue using inappropriate tools. Tools that can be used to assess outputs may not be the same as those we use to evaluate outcomes. Value and impact studies are much more than mere measurement. Statistics is just a small part of the reality of a library. It is argued “performance can seldom be expressed in a meaningful way by quantitative data only. To a great extent, analysis of performance has to be based on qualitative descriptions and statements”.

White describes various measures suitable for application in public libraries, based on Bow. The proportion of the population served registered with the library, librarians per borrower (to give some indications of level of service), circulation per registered reader, volumes held per capita of population served to give an indication of a library’s ability to serve its users. Bow suggests that an over all measure can be computed by multiplying the ratios together.

References

An independent research consultancy known as Comedia specializing in cultural and urban policy issues had conducted many studies. A study of the ‘economic, social and cultural life’ of twelve town centres in Britain, undertaken between 1989 and 1991 was published in 1991 as the *out of hours* report. It received wide coverage and considerable interest, particularly within the planning and urban policy professions and networks. The study also identified public libraries that are thriving, despite the pressure from outside and a critical appreciation of public libraries was done to improve the network of public libraries. Comedia studies were first independent study of public libraries in Britain since the Second World War.

A study by Darren Topping to investigate the extent to which public libraries in Belfast were affected by the Northern Ireland Troubles between 1969 and 1994 is worth referring here.

*Borrowed time* is the result of a study based on a large scale national research project involving detailed research throughout the UK, as well as on interviews with more than a thousand people-library providers, library-users, policy analysts, social forecasters, information and technology experts. This study is very important since the findings that emerged from this research made the beginning for the public library impact. A preliminary report of *borrowed time*, which was published in June 1993 led to considerable international interest in the area of public library service. The following are some of the critical issues:

- While book issues have been slowly declining, other uses of the library are increasing - for information, for study, as homework centres, for literary events and other community activities. Unfortunately, librarians often fail to articulate, monitor or even promote these other uses to the wider world.

- Public libraries have suffered a loss of visibility in the political realm through having no national body to represent their interests. As a result they have

---

often been on the receiving end of policy developments such as local management of schools or care in the community - which have had major impact on them but with little or no advance consultation.

While other cultural institutions - theatres, opera houses, and concert halls - were regarded as key elements in programmes of urban regeneration in the 1980s, public libraries (usually responsible for generating more city centre activity than all the others) were excluded.

The above mentioned are institutional issues - sometimes of great success, sometimes of significant failure. But what is important here is that many urgent decisions have to be made if the public library is to adapt to the new demands of the new millennium.

Another interesting study by Esther Stone on “The impact of Public Library Use in the Educational Attainment of Primary School Children” is very relevant in the area of impact study on library’s role on the society. Early access to books and stories is known to be influential in improving children’s attainment of literacy during the early school years. Yet the impact that the Public Library has in this area has undergone little investigation. Several factors were found to be influential in the area of children’s development and it is very difficult to isolate the Public Library factor from this. Thus, a qualitative approach to the problem was adopted, although quantitative methods are also used.97

‘Importance of early learning is a preparation for effective education to promote social welfare and social order, and to develop a world class work force’.98 ‘All children are individuals and need to be perceived as such and helped to reach their full potential, whatever that may be ... only through wide access to books and other learning materials that every child is empowered to achieve its potential and the library is the most significant point of access’.1,9


17. Ball, C. - Start Right, the Importance of Early Learning, London, RSA 1994, p.6

1. Ibid.

The research methodology included a study of students from class 1 -5 from a sample selected from six primary schools both library users and non-library users and investigate the attitude of both the group’s education and learning and also investigate the quality and range of materials available for both the groups. The research method was qualitative\(^1\) although quantitative methods were available.

Interviews with Parents/Carers, children’s librarians and teachers were obtained on the matter. The school libraries were also investigated to examine the influence that they were having on children’s reading, especially since for some children the library was the only source of books. It was decided to follow Questionnaire method than the interview method since ‘it allows a wider range and distribution of the sample than the interview method’.\(^2\)

The result of the study revealed that the parents/carers and teachers decided on the extent of the impact that the Public Library has on children’s educational attainment.

The library’s impact on the socio cultural aspect of the public is brought out by a study in South Africa. The Department of Library and Information Science of the University of South Africa conducted the study on the role of reading matter and the Public Library on the lives of the urban black population of Pretoria. This study has implications for the formulation of policy for the provision of services to developing communities.\(^3\)

Many of the evaluation studies done assess the functioning of the library and its impact on the customers, and find out how effective the resource sharing is by a particular library or a group of libraries. Lancaster in his book “If you want to evaluate your library..........”\(^4\) has dealt with various ways by which the different functions of the library can be evaluated. The need to evaluate the different services came in the context of customer’s orientation. The


growth of consumer movement in the 1970’s encouraged consumers of goods and services to view much more critically the quality of service they received.\textsuperscript{104}

A study conducted to review the Public Library service in England and Wales revealed that there is significant under use by certain section of the population. A book by Roach and Morrission also reflects this.\textsuperscript{105}

*The New Library: The People’s Network*\textsuperscript{106} is a report commissioned from the Library and Information Commission by the Department for Cultural, Media and Sport, Government of United Kingdom. “This research is carried out to gain a qualitative understanding of user needs and motivations, and to investigate reactions to potential developments of new technology and networked libraries.

The main findings were very useful for the department to assess what the citizen (*consumer*) expected from the Public Library in the new century, what (*content*) is actually going to be delivered, Re-skilling (*training*) the workforce for the new age. The Government’s attitude to this report was very encouraging and it was announced in 1998 that it “believes.............Public libraries play a vital, social, economic and educational role in the daily life of the nation.”\textsuperscript{107} Batt described *The People’s Network* as “the most important document ever to be prepared on the UK Public Library service”.

There are also many important and interesting studies on the public library impact in UK, USA, Europe and other parts of the world.

McClure and Bertot’s report on *Public Library use in Pennsylvania: Identifying uses, Benefits and Impacts* \textsuperscript{108} is worth mentioning here. The purpose of this study is to

\textsuperscript{105} Roach, P and Morrission, M (1998) - ‘Public libraries ethnic diversity and citizenship, centre for research in ethnic relations and centre for educational development appraisal and research’, University Of Warwick (British Library Research Innovation Report 76).
\textsuperscript{106} Available in http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/services/lic/newlibrary/fLill.html
\textsuperscript{108} Batt,C.( 1997)’The Cutting Edge33:Before You Read This, Eat It’. Public Library Journal, 12.6 p. 121.
identify users of Pennsylvania Public Libraries and determine their reasons for using the library. In addition, the study provides information describing the impacts and benefits resulting to those users as a result of their contact with the Public Library. Data for this study was obtained as a result of statewide survey of public library users, site visits to ten libraries in the state and logs of critical incidents of significant impacts and focus group meetings were also used.

This study found that there are substantial agreements that many Pennsylvania Public Libraries contribute directly to the economic productivity of the local community in the areas by encouraging the establishment of business, helping residents find jobs, attracting new business to locate in a community, and providing information and programmes on being a successful entrepreneur, providing services and programs to children, adults and seniors that simply are not available elsewhere or if available, would be too expensive for many residents; enhance the overall quality of life and promote the cultural environment in the communities these libraries serve; contribute directly to the success of local social service agencies, literacy groups, home scholars, writers, and others and provide individuals with customized information services tailored to their unique needs - service that often compromise a critical incident that made these individuals successful or otherwise helped them accomplish their personal goals. These are but a few of the key impacts that respondents identified as critical to the success and importance of their communities. During the study it came to light that library users often did not know or understand the range of impacts and benefits that the library provided the community.

The Florida State University’s Information use management and Policy Institute’s study on the Economic Benefits and Impacts from Public Libraries in the state of Florida is a study to obtain information describing the economic impacts and benefits resulting to users and organizations as a result of their use of the Public Library. McClure, Fraser, Nelson and Robbins of the institute conducted the study. The patrons of the library believe that the libraries contribute to their financial well being, provide economic benefits to

---


66
local business and support the prosperity of the community. The following quote is very relevant here ‘For library services that benefit the direct user, focus groups comprising specific user groups can assist in constructing the matrix and in designing and field testing instruments to collect necessary data’,\textsuperscript{112}

The study team found that the economic impacts and benefits received from Florida’s Public libraries are numerous, varied and complex. The most commonly cited economic benefits are - access to financial information, availability of Internet, job and career support on every level, books and other formats, children’s programmes and other services. Some interesting and useful outcome of this study are that the study developed and tested a methodology to describe taxpayers ROI (Return-on-In vestment)\textsuperscript{1} it tries to define the concept of ‘Public Goods’ to understand the concept of valuing the benefits and impacts of public libraries\textsuperscript{4}, the study also tries to measure the ‘Indirect Benefits of Public Library usage’.\textsuperscript{15} This study is definitely an improvement on earlier studies in the area of assessing Public Library Impact Assessment and this can be used for further studying by developing it more comprehensive and more detailed.\textsuperscript{16}

\textit{St. Louis Public Library study} conducted by Holt, Elliott and Moore ‘\textit{Placing A Value On Public Library Services}\textsuperscript{117}’ is a study to apply economic measurements to value public investment in library services. The investigators used the economic-impact analysis and cost-benefit analysis. This kind of analysis estimates two different benefits, ie, direct benefits to measure the ‘direct value’ to those who use or who have access to the services being measured and indirect (third-party or societal) benefits. When the users get help, which they


\textsuperscript{1} ROI for the rest of us,( 1997) Available at \url{http://ue adel.iic.utolecelo.edu/troidef.html}


\textsuperscript{16} Available in \url{http://www.ii.fsu.edu/projects.html}

\textsuperscript{117} Holt, Glen., Elliot, Donald and Moore,Amomia (2003) - \textit{Placing a Value on Public Library Services}. http://www.slpl.lib.mo.us/lbsrc/rescons.htm accessed on 21/02/2003
need from the library, it is direct benefit and these benefits have an indirect benefit on the society as well. So, individuals as users of public library derive direct benefits and because good things happen to others in the community because citizens use the library’s services, the whole society benefits indirectly from the library’s operations.

Although the study is a successful application of his previous work, certain important evaluations have been omitted. Due to the difficulty in measuring the indirect benefits of public library services, the researchers have omitted this portion of the study and similarly, have not focused on community business benefits and impacts.

*The Economic and Job Creation Benefits of Ontario Public Libraries* is another interesting economic impact study by Rod Sawyer, a Public Library consultant for the Ontario Ministry of citizenship, culture and recreation.

The research is in the socio-economic benefits and it suggests a framework that can be used elsewhere by public libraries, government or other funding agencies. INFO (Information Network for Ontario) based resource sharing provides information to rural as well as urban communities. The library is the ‘one place to look’ that provides community residents with access to information. The study was spread under the following areas like Ontario Public libraries and their local business impact, the library as community amenity, entrepreneurial market oriented Ontario Public libraries, career information for the public, education, literacy, lifelong learning, and Ontario public libraries.

University of Sheffield’s unique study, *New Measures for the New Library: A Social Audit of Public Libraries* by Rebecca Linley and Bob Usherwood of Department of

---


120. Ontario Public Library Strategic Planning Group (1990), *One Place To Look*. The Ontario Public Library Strategic Plan, Ontario Ministry Of Culture and Communication, Toronto, 1990.


Information Studies deals with the use of a ‘social process audit’ to evaluate the social impact of libraries in the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and the county of Somerset.

The objective of the study is to develop a tool for measuring the social impact of library activities, to investigate the social economic impact of Public libraries and to investigate how far a library’s activities, in practice, contribute towards the achievement of its social objectives.

The basic research premise was to use a ‘Social Process Audit’ to evaluate the Social impact of libraries. The research therefore sought to analyse the goals (aims), inputs (resources), output (the programme or service) and outcomes (actual experience) of the Public Library and information service.

What is ‘Social Audit’? There are many definitions. ‘Social Audit’ according to Gerald Vinton is ‘a review to ensure that an organization gives due consideration to its wider and social responsibilities to those both directly and indirectly affected by its decisions, and that a balance is achieved in its corporate planning between these aspects and the more traditional business-related objectives.’ Buchholz defines ‘The social audit is an attempt by an individual corporation to measure its performance in an area where it is making a social impact... An attempt to identify, measure, evaluate, report and monitor the effects a corporation is having on society that are not covered in the traditional financial reports’.

The objective of the two library authorities against which the social audit was done and the stakeholders considered for the study are elected members, library staff and groups of library users and non-users. Stakeholders are defined as including, “all individuals and groups who are affected by, or who can affect, the organization”.

As part of the social auditing the following research methods were undertaken. They are Literature search, Pilot study, Interviews with stakeholders, Focus groups, and workshops. The data show that the library’s established roles Culture, Education, Reading and literacy, Leisure, information, Social and Caring roles and economic impact have an enduring relevance.\(^1\),\(^10\)

The study identified that the concept of *equity*\(^ {131}\) is present in the delivery of services and also it identified a number of managerial and other related issues which can affect the services of the library which include resources, marketing and awareness of the service, library rules and culture, structure, staff attitudes and the location of the library. The report concludes that the qualitative data properly gathered offer valid evidence and should be used as such by policy makers and professionals. The report concludes with a framework for understanding the social impact of the library. This can be used as a practical tool by managers to identify the factors that can help and hinder the library achieve its social objective.

The study concludes that ‘on the basis of the data presented in this report it is reasonable to claim that public libraries help individuals and communities ‘get started’ and ‘keep going’ on a wide range of activities... in short, libraries enrich the lives of many people. The social audit technique makes that enriching process visible.............Today, it is recognised that we need rather more sophisticated approaches to assessing the value of public libraries than simply counting book issues’.\(^ {132}\) The researchers believe that the findings are valid and that it is possible to apply them to other situations under similar, but not identical conditions.\(^ {133}\) The researchers are also resistant to claim that they have developed a model for the evaluation of public library services.


Jackie Toyne and Bob Usherwood have used in their study *Checking the books: the value and impact of public library book reading* the methodology developed in the ‘Social Audit’ work conducted by Usherwood and Linley with the ‘Uses and Gratifications’ techniques used by researchers in mass media and the ‘Reader-response’ approach which is now seen as critical to an understanding of literature.

The study showed that there is persuasive evidence that, through reading a person’s life is transformed for the better. It also suggests that reading identities are not fixed but change according to time and personal development. The non-readers included in the research process acknowledged the potential benefit for those who choose to spend their time reading. The public library book lending is perceived as a major function and providing free access to reading material and a wide range of stock were shown as being imperative for establishing and maintaining the reading habit. A crucial aspect of the public library’s role was seen as it’s work in reader development and fiction promotion and also the increasing expectation of users about the library staff to act as intermediaries in reading experience. Finally the data suggest that social impact revealed is that the public library enriches the lives of many people and has the potential to influence many more. The combined methodological approach, Social Audit, Use and Gratification and Reader-response, used in this study is very relevant and effective.

Hunter’s study of the ‘Uses and Gratifications of project Agora’ is an important study in the area of U&G. The purpose of this study is to find out how Boston College faculty, staff and students use the Internet, what gratification they received from this use, and how comfortable they have become with Internet applications.

There are three main variables present in this study and they are uses variable, gratification variable, adaption/comfort level variable. A random sample of 1584 students and 602 faculty

---

134 Toyne, Jackie and Usherwood, Bob (2001) *Checking The Books: The Value and Impact of Public Library Book Reading*. Centre For The Public Library And Information In Society, Department of Information Studies, The University of Sheffield.


and staff were selected as sample. The result showed that both students, faculty and staff relied upon the electronic mail as the most important Internet application. The college community used e-mail daily to help them communicate with friends, family and associates and they were very comfortable with this use. The finding is interesting because 60% of faculty and staff expected the Web to have entertainment purposes. Another important finding has been the inability of the Web to replace traditional forms of media. Large percentage of the students and faculty/staff reported, not expecting the Web to provide an alternative to newspapers and magazines. It is also interesting to find that web is being used by many for academic purposes. Browsing function of the web is also seen as an extension of the two main functions research and entertainment. By surfing the web, users seem to be experiencing the thrill and excitement of exploring a new world, which is part of the entertainment function. In these travels, users are able to find pages that are of interest to them and thus also satisfy the research function. This study is also very relevant since it deals with use and satisfaction or gratification.

Ambrozic\(^{137}\) in his paper presented at the IFLA conference (Glasgow, UK) discusses about theoretical and practical approaches to the problems of assessing performance and especially of measuring the impact and value of the library services for their users and the society as a whole. Poll\(^{138}\) in one of his papers presented at “Northimbria Lite” a workshop in the same IFLA Conference (22 Aug 2002) examines ways of assessing an economic value of library services and the social value imputed by users and non-users of libraries.

Suaiden\(^{139}\) in one of his papers analyses the divide between the information professional and the community. It also discusses about the financial impact of public libraries and the role of information specialist in a developing society.

The following documents were cited after the finalisation of the thesis in March 2005. These references are very useful for this study especially for further research.

\(^{137}\) Ambrozic, Melita (2003) -’A few countries measure impact and outcomes - most would like to measure at least something’. *Performance Measurement and Metrics*. Vol.4 (2). pp.64-78.


The study by Darren Topping\textsuperscript{140} investigating the extent to which public libraries in Belfast were affected by the Northern Ireland troubles between 1969 and 1994 is worth referring here. As regards methodology content analysis was conducted through reading and interpreting the literature. This was supplemented by qualitative data which gave an insight to direct personal and perspectives on the topic under investigation. The main research instrument used to obtain qualitative data was personal interview. Same methodology is also adapted in this study to collect certain qualitative data.

Usherwood in his article ‘Demonstrating impact through qualitative research’ discusses the assessment of the value and impact of public libraries using ‘social audit’ as a methodology. The study was sponsored by the Seattle Public Library Foundation and the city of Seattle’s office of Economic Development. The study concludes that the library is responsible for a higher economic activity and create a visible impact on Seattle’s economy. Seattle’s New Central Library is a community asset with multiple benefits. The Library shall be further developed to increase the economic impact. He stresses that qualitative assessments are often a more meaningful way of demonstrating the value and impact of a service.

In a recent article Roxanne Missingham discusses the studies using contingent valuation for the British Library. South Carolina Public Libraries, Florida are summarised both in terms of methodology and findings. Studies into two national bibliographic services(Canada and New Zealand) are reviewed to demonstrate the application of value studies to specific services. The finding concludes that ‘at the most basic level it is not yet clear whether any particular numerical result represents the best return on investment for an individual library. This article clearly relates to library impact study.

Bill MaCnau\textsuperscript{t1} Head of Cultural Development at Gateshead Council, UK, in one of his papers talks about impact and performance in public library services.

Aabo’s paper based on his PhD project is also about the value of public library services and it is a useful reference for this study The public library’s role and purpose as a meeting-

\textsuperscript{141} Missingham, Roxanne(2005). ‘Libraries and economic value : a review ofrecent studies. Performance measurement and metrics. Vol,6(3) pp 142-158

73
place is highlighted by its users in many impact studies. Audunson in one of his articles developed an improved conceptual framework for researching and discussing this particular role.

In UK the Museums Libraries and Archives (MLA) public Library Services Impact measures - proposals for 2005-2006 is another source which is very useful for this study.

The Seattle Public Library Central Library: Economic benefits Assessment is a recent (2005) study to assess the transformative power of a library to redefine learning, community, and economic development. A three-parts framework was used to assess the economic benefits examining the Seattle’s new central library’s contributions to business growth and economic activity, community character and livability, and community image and identity.' This is also a study relating to public library’s impact on society.

David Bavvn m one of his articles does a comparison of methods for evaluating the performance of library services in three European countries. The article ‘impact evaluation, professional practice, and policy making by Ian M. Johnson etc examines the relationship between research into the evaluation of the impact of library and information services, policy making in the field and professional practice and education.

Wanda Monroe’s article ‘Libraries return on investment study is also related to economic impact of libraries’. This article presents the findings of a comprehensive study released by the Florida Department of State regarding the return on investment of libraries. The study shows that public libraries are not only cost effective in providing access to information, they also reap an impressive return on investment and create significant economic impacts for their communities in terms of business, job creation, gross regional product and wages.

---


146 http://www.berkandosassociates.com accessed on 28/01/2006


74
According to Rhea Rubin, Library Consultant ‘outcome measurement is user-centered approach to the planning and assessment of programs or services that are provided to address particular user needs and designed to achieve change for the user’. Rubin also mentions in the forthcoming ‘Demonstrating results: using outcome measures in your library encourages librarians to look beyond standard evaluation models to answer the question, “what difference has our work made to those we serve?”

“The value and impact of information provided through library services for patient care: a systematic review’ deals with an updated systematic review carried out of research studies looking at the value and impact of library services on health outcomes for patients and time saved by health professionals. The study concludes that professionally led library services have an impact on health outcomes for patients and may led to time savings for health-care professionals.

A recent study on the economic impact of public libraries of South Carolina is very relevant to this study. The purpose of the study was to determine economic benefit of public libraries for South Carolinians and to what extent they feel the public library contributes to their overall economic well-being. The study consisted of two phases. The first phase was to gather and analyze data directly from users to determine their perceived value of the South Carolina public libraries in the areas of General use, Use for Business, Use for personal investment and use for job seeking. The second phase of the project, the study team used existing data from the libraries to demonstrate a monetary equivalent of the services provided by South Carolina libraries.

The Illinois study, Powerful libraries make powerful learners is about a voluntary survey of 657 schools. The survey gathered data on hours of operation, staff and their activities,
the library’s collection and educational technology, total library expenditures, and several types of library usage. Statistical analyses identified numerous positive and statistically significant relationships between various dimensions of school libraries and appropriate indicators of academic achievement. The evidence produced by this study indicates that Illinois school libraries contribute measurably to the academic achievement of students.

It is worth to refer here Roswitha Poll’s paper presented at the 71 IFLA conference ‘Measuring the impact of new library services’. Libraries today introduce many new services, either by converting existing services into e-services, or by developing and implementing entirely new services for search, delivery and use of information. The paper shows methods for assessing the impact of new services like user and staff surveys, focus groups, time measurement, analysis of use data or observation studies. Examples are given for illustrating the usefulness and problems of each method.

In a recent article published in January 2006 Edwin S Clay and Patricia Bangs talk about ‘outcome measurement’ a tool to assess the impact of libraries. Collect data manipulate numbers to reflect the return on investment. Librarians crunch numbers and try to quantify the value of services provided by libraries to the customers. The is of the opinion that it is critical for libraries to establish measures that show the impact of services and programmes.’

Scott Nicholson in ‘Proof in the pattern’ talk about the use of data in taking decisions. He touches areas like - gathering data, data warehousing, data farm, decision support system, Visualizing data and pattern through bibliomining. These data are needed since librarians need to decide on what services to stay and what go. He is of the opinion that librarians follow the corporate sector toward more data-driven management. Collection of data and analysis is important for impact studies.

Bob Usherwood’s two studies mentioned above are actually helpful in conceptualising the present study of Impact Assessment of the British Library, Thiruvananthapuram on the social, educational, cultural and economic aspect of its Members.