ABSTRACT

IMPACT OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY THIRUVANANTHAPURUM ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE USERS.

T.K.S SUBRAMONI

The study examines the demographic characteristics of the users of the British Library, Thiruvananthapuram, assesses its impact on the social and public life of the users, their economic development and career opportunities, educational attainment, continuous learning and personality development of users. The study also probes into the role of the British Library in developing an international perspective among the users, assesses its cultural role and offers suggestions for maximising its impact on the society.

SAMPLE OF STUDY: The sample of study consists of 1022 users of the library who were selected at random. Of the total respondents, 952 are members and the rest are non-members. Further, data was also collected by a structured interviewing of 300 members and officials of the British Council and British Library. A period of three months was decided at random during the academic year (October-December) 2003 for collection of data thro’ questionnaires, distributed to the users visiting the library.

Demographic characteristics of the users show that majority of the members are in the age group of 15 to 25 and hence the library attracts the younger generation more. Seventy five percent of those studied are males and the Library has its effective impact on undergraduate students.

In respect of social and public impact, the library helps to increase the general awareness of users and plays a positive role in the social development and social
interaction of its users. The users are attracted by the library for its services. British Library membership is a social status and thus the library is able to retain the membership through its services. This Library is very relevant in Kerala since Kerala state does not have many good libraries.

Regarding its economic impact, the users feel that the information from the British Library is helpful in improving their economic position, quality of life and acquiring new skills. The users strongly opined to the fact that the services of the British Library helps in saving money and fetches higher economic returns for its users. However, there is limitation for the British Library regarding its accessibility to all sections of the population.

In terms of educational attainment, the British Library serves as a centre for improvement in the quality of education by providing standard books relevant to students. The library collection is more suitable for professional and master’s students and also includes books on many emerging subject areas. In respect of continuous learning, ‘the British Library is the only source for the various professional body examinations, but it is not much useful for the students of distance learning and vocational courses.’

The British Library is helpful in increasing the social awareness and the overall personality development of the users. It also helps to develop an international perspective and environment. The British Library is a cultural centre for UK and also a one stop shop for information regarding UK. However, it has limitations in its role as a cultural centre in Trivandrum.