Customer Satisfaction of Akshaya Centre:
A Study in Azhikode Grama Panchayath
Kannur District, kerala.

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Abstract

Customer satisfaction occurs when the experience obtained from transaction match the expectation. Satisfaction of customer is essential for retention of customers and for the continuous sale of the products and services of the company to the customer. This establishes the need for and importance of customer satisfaction. Akshaya , an innovative project implemented in the state of Kerala aimed at bridging the digital divide, addresses the issues of ICT (Information Communication Technology) access, the basic skill sets and availability of relevant content. The study is conducted in AzhikodeGramaPanchayath in Kannur District of Kerala state. The present study is an attempt to analyze the services offered by the Akhayacentres and find out the satisfaction of customers. The study is designed as an empirical one based on the survey method. To gather primary data convenience sampling technique is used. An interview and questionnaire was prepared to collect information regarding , services of akshayacentre, sources of information about Akshaya Centre, opinion about services provided by them, ranking of satisfaction of customers etc. By analyzing services provided by Akshaya Centre and the satisfaction level of customers in Azhikode-GramaPanchayath in Kannur District of Kerala state , the researcher adopt some suggestive measures for the improvement of the services of AkshayaCentres.

1.INTRODUCTION

Satisfying the customers occupies a most important position in business management. A customer is the king and has the right to choose from a large variety of offerings.Today market is more customer oriented in the sense of all the business operations revolve around satisfying the customer by meeting their needs through effective service. So, inorder to attain growth, stability and market share in the market , every business enterprises should satisfy their customers in an efficient and effective way.

The previous half decade has witnessed a rapidly increasing of Information Communication Technology (ICT) centered development projects in several developing countries with the intentions of spurring rapid social and economic growth through an attempt to bridge the digital divide. Several innovative projects have taken emerged in India over this period; either initiated solely by the government or as part of a CSR initiative by large companies or research organizations. Both these stand alone models were handicapped by their respective drawbacks, and newer models of partnerships such as Public – Private Partnerships (PPP) and Multi Stakeholder Initiatives have since emerged. The Akshaya project is one such instance of a PPP with the two main actors involved being the State and the private entrepreneur.

The Akshaya project initiated in November 2002 in Trivandrum, Kerala was officially started with the introduction of rural e kiosks or technology centres in the districts of Thiruvanthapuram and Malappuram in May, 2003. This public private initiative was undertaken keeping four ambitious targets in mind:

- To provide basic functional skills (e – literacy) to at least one member of every family in the state

- To ensure universal access to various ICT tools and other technologies

- To provide relevant content to the local population in the native language

- To establish community access centres, which could be eventually developed as centres to provide integrated e – governance services.

At a macro level, one could delineate an attempt to integrate two larger goals through the project, namely mass socio – economic development through increased computer and internet access while simultaneously ensuring financial viability via market driven entrepreneurship.

The pilot project was started in Malappuram which has an area of 3.372 square kilometers and a population of 3.7 million. The district is divided into 137 villages, 14 blocks and 6 taluks, with approximately 600,000 families spread over this region. They are the intended beneficiaries of this programme. There were two primary factors why the Kerala State IT Mission chose Malappuram as the pilot site. First, Malappuram has one of the lowest rates across the state with reference to education and health reform. Secondly, this district also has the highest population of Muslims (over 70% of the population here are Muslims) as well as NRI's, most of whom work as labourers in the Middle East and Gulf countries. The rationale therefore was, that this project could help not only promote the local economy but also assist enterprising individuals to attain jobs abroad.

The project offers lots of services like: E-Pay (electronic payment of utility bills like electricity, land phone, drinking water, university fees etc.);

E -Krishi (for farmers to provide online agriculture trading and information portal, A to Z Solution) E -Vidya (advanced IT learning for e-literates and others); E-Ticketing (online train, flight, bus ticket reservations); PMRY online registration; online passport registration; a village kiosk for transparent collectorate program, online communication providers for expatriate Indians; an online medical transcription course, with extension programs for all the above-mentioned services.

In this backdrop, an integrated project called the Akshaya has been conceived by the Kerala state IT mission, which is the nodal agency for the development of Information Technology in the state of Kerala for bridging the digital divide. The business is often dynamic, challenging and rewarding. It can also be frustrating and even disappointing that never dull. The topic "Consumer Satisfaction of AkshayaCentres in AzhikodePanchayath" is chosen to study about the services provided by AkshayaCentres. This project deals with how Akshayacentres defines its customer and uses its resources in the best way to attract and satisfy their needs and wants.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1. Present study was conducted about customers of Akshaya with the following objectives.

2. To know the Akshaya services seekers age wise classifications and their computer literacy.

3. To know which are the services preferred by the respondents.

4. To identify the customer satisfaction of Akshayacentres.

5. To analyze sources of information about Akshaya to reaching among the people.

6. To provide suggestion for performance improvement.

3.METHODOLOGY
The study is designed as an empirical one based on the survey method. The samples under the study are taken from the customers of Akshayacentre at AzhikodePunchayath in Kannur District of Kerala state. The study conducted during the

month ofseptember 2016. The total samples are taken 60 customers. The study is primarily based on the primary data collected from the respondent .To gather primary data convenience sampling technique is used. The direct interrogation and questionnaire was prepared to collect information regarding classification of customers, service preference, computer literacy and services provided by Akshaya. The secondary data has been collected from various publications, journals and periodical and articles related with the study. Random sampling method is used for selecting the customers. The collected data statistically analyzed and presented here.

4.FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Table 1: Age wise classification of respondents

Sl. No	Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 20	12	20
2	21 to 30 years	18	30
3	31 to 40 years	15	25
4	41 to 50 years	9	15
5	Above 50 years	6	10

The table 1 indicates that out of the total number of respondents, 55% of respondents were in between 21 to 40 years of age. The figure shows the interest of younger generation to be a part of modern technology. It is clear that compared to younger generation, the older generation are having minimal representationin this kind of newer initiatives.

Table 2: Computer literacy of the respondents

Computer literacy	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Literate	42	70
Illiterate	18	30

The study reveals that a high majority of respondents are computer literate about computer usage. Only about 30% of respondents are illiterate.

Table 3: Sources of information about Akshaya

Sources	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Media	16	27
Friends	8	13
Family	6	10
Government employees	12	20
Local bodies	18	30

From the table 3, it is clear that most of the respondents are known about Akshaya from local bodies(30%) and media(27%). It can be concluded that Local bodies, Government employees and Medias have been important role in popularizing the Akshaya Project.

Table 4: Service preference of customers

Services	No. of Respondents	Percentage
E- Payment	12	20
E- grant	4	7
Aadhar	3	5
Kiosk banking	4	7
Birth & Death certificate	8	13
E –Vidya	5	8
E –ticket	6	10
Ration card	2	3
Passport	7	12
E –Manal	9	15

Table 4 shows that about 20% of respondents prefer Akshaya for E pay facility. From the table it is clear that Akshaya center is preferred by the customers mainly for e pay facility, e manal, birth and death certificates, passport, e ticket etc. E vidya, kiosk banking etc are preferred by only few respondents.
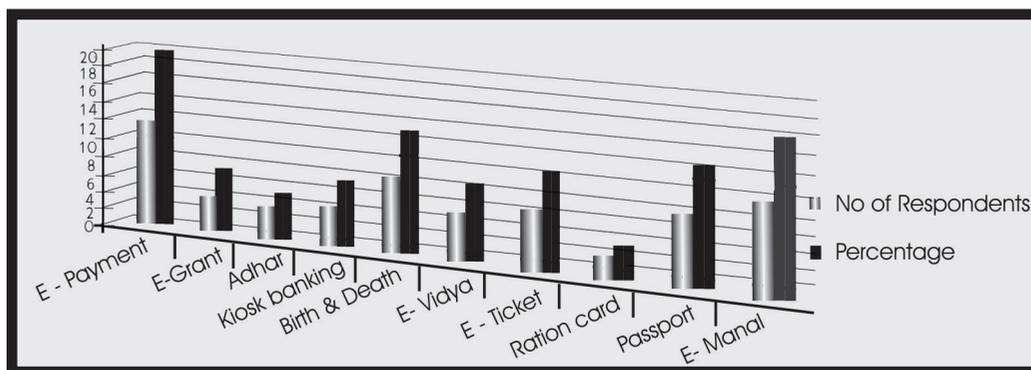
Figure 1:Service preference of respondents

Table 5: Opinion about services provided by Akshaya

Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Helpful	12	20
Useful	19	32
Convenient	22	37
Complicated	7	11

Table 5 shows that about 37% of respondents feels that services provided by Akshaya are convenient, 32% of respondents feel that the services are useful, but 11% of respondents feel that the services are complicated than old system.

Table 6: System found to be more useful

System	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Old	22	37
Akshaya	38	63

Table 6 shows that about 63% of respondents feels that Akshaya system is more useful and only 37 % of respondents feels that old system is useful. It can be concluded that Akshaya is more useful to the society than old system.

Table 7: Adequacy of the amount charged

Adequacy	No. Of respondents	Percentage
Adequate	44	73
In adequate	16	27

Table 7 shows that about 73% of respondents answered that the amount charged by the Akshaya centers for their services is adequate and 27% of respondents says that the amount charged for the services is inadequate. It can be concluded that the amount charged by the Akshaya for their services is reasonable.

Table 8:Opinion about staff of Akshaya

Opinion	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Friendly	19	32
Co-operative	21	35
Unfriendly	13	22
Rude	7	11

Table 8 shows that the majority of respondents feels that the staff of Akshaya is co- operative and friendly. But a few respondents says that the Akshaya staff deal with the customers unfriendly. Only 7% of respondents says that the Akshaya staff is rude. From this, it can be concluded that Akshaya staffs are co -operative with the customers.

Table 9: Local progress received after launching Akshaya

Local progress	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Computer literacy	31	51
E-Pay	19	32
E-Transaction	10	17

From the table 9 it is clear that major progress after the implementation of Akshaya projects the attainment of computer literacy. There was totally enthusiastic of the low cost computer literacy programme. Another set of respondents opined that e-pay facility is the major advantage of Akshayaprogramme.

Table 10: Provision of information about document

Yes/ No	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	39	65
No	21	35

Table 10 showing, as per the experience of respondents, the provision of information regarding the documents required for the purpose concerned at a time by the Akshaya staff. 65% of respondents says that the staff of Akshaya provide clear cut information about documents required.

Table 11:Satisfaction of respondents

Opinion	No. of respondent	Percentage
Satisfied	49	82
Dissatisfied	11	18

Table 11 shows that a huge majority of respondents satisfied with the Akshaya project. It can be concluded that Akshaya provide various services which are convenient and helpful to the society. Respondents accept Akshaya system. They are satisfied in Akshaya project.

Table 12: Rating by respondents

Rank in 1-10 scale	No. of respondents	Percentage
0-6	15	25
7-8	36	60
9-10	9	15
Total	60	100

Table 7 shows that a huge percentage of respondents rate Akshaya centers 7-8 and about 15% of respondent's rate 9-10.

SUGGESTIONS

- The staff of Akshaya should be more co-operative and friendly to their customers.

- Should be conducted awareness program among the people to provide information about objectives of Akshaya project and make use of Akshaya services.

- The staff should provide clear cut information regarding the documents required for the purpose concerned, at a time to avoid delay in services.

- Akshaya centers should popularize Malayalam medium or fonts for reaching out to all cate gories of people.

- Government should take necessary initiative to popularize the Akshaya Project.

CONCLUSION

The Akshaya offers wide variety of services which satisfies most of its customers. Providing services at reasonable prices is another advantage. Now a day's most of the government services are provided through the online and e-filing. Akshaya services are capable of fulfilling the urgent needs of customers and computer literacy is the main reason of its popularity.

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