Collection Development In Libraries With Special Reference To Visually Challenged Users

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Abstract:

The study explores the collection development of university level printed and electronic information resources for persons with visually challenged in Braille libraries, as well as how these resources affect users with visual impairments in a manner similar to that of blind users.

Persons with visually challenged desire access to pertinent material in the library in their preferred accessible format, just as blind persons can read newspapers, listen to CDs, or download electronic content from the Internet. The study comes to the conclusion that using collections, assistive technology, and ICT will enhance librarians' expertise and inclusive teaching. There must be a large growth in the number of books and materials that are accessible through commercial means if libraries are to serve those who cannot read print effectively or with an adequate library collection and services. All users, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, political stance, or handicap, have a right to access knowledge, and libraries have an ethical obligation to provide that access. These individuals had a small range of Braille books to choose from up to this stage, but many institutions are now learning the significance it is to make products for blind and visually challenged users accessible. With the help of this study, university libraries will have the fundamental information they need to address challenges with the visually impaired access to print and electronic resources. People who were long disregarded can now access services that are both user-friendly and pertinent thanks to the usage of assistive technology and ICT. In the digital age, excellent library collections and services for the blind can be provided by organizations that serve people with impairments. The study further explores the challenges

faced by users with visual impairments and their informational requirements, identifies unique library resources and services, and offers recommendations for enhancing library and information services for the visually impaired.

Keywords- Collection Development, Visually Challenged, Braille Library, Assistive Technology and Information & Communication Technology (ICT),

INTRODUCTION

The development of the Internet and electronic publication has changed how archives get established, managed, and accessed in the information age. Not all of the data or items in a collection need to be stored on shelves. Content can be remotely preserved in digital libraries and other online platforms. The collection of materials of a library serves as both the conceptual framework behind its operations and a manifestation of its goals. The racial, cultural, economic, and demographic variety of a community should be considered while creating a collection to satisfy its requirements. The reading demands of the wide clientele of people with disabilities who are unable to read print are the same as those of any other group. They require collections of widely read fiction, material to support continuing education or course work, tools for training at work, and literature for all ages, especially adolescents and young readers.

According to Jean L. Preer writes, "Every collection is a living organism that is always evolving and increasing. A carefully chosen item that is introduced to a collection improves the other objects in that collection. A work is never done in isolation; it is always connected to other works."

Collections developed for readers with limited access to print should place an emphasis on health and vision-related information and include national culture collections (books that would be challenging or impossible to find elsewhere because a nation is typically an authority on) in its own literature. Every library must establish standards for resource selection. A variety of topics, both informative and entertaining demands, widely read books, literary excellence, and useful resources are some of the factors that should be taken into consideration. They ought to take the requirements of people who are blind into consideration. All colleges and universities offer students and users with disabilities accessible facilities, staff, and services. People with disabilities can access the websites and portals of governmental organizations as well as those of institutions, enterprises, foundations, and libraries. People with disabilities received the highest level of

support possible through the enactment of special legislation, the implementation of the "National Policy for Persons with Disabilities," accommodations in employment, education, and other government schemes and programs, as well as the development of organizations and institutions. "National Institute of Visually Handicapped, Dehradun" is an illustration of the extensive infrastructure built in addition to the legal framework. There are three laws have been passed by the Indian government specifically for people with disabilities.

(i) The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act of 1995, which deals with social security, employment, education, and the development of barrier-free environments.

(ii) The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation, and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999, has provisions for legal guardianship of the four categories and developing an environment that is conducive to independent life, to ensure affordable.

(iii) According to MSJE (2009), the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992, addresses the training of personnel to deliver rehabilitation services.

Furthermore, the University Grants Commission (UGC) sponsors special education endeavours at colleges and universities beyond the nation to empower individuals with disabilities. The University Grants Commission (UGC) formulated the Higher Education for Persons with Special Needs (Differently Abled Persons) (HEPSN) initiative to assist universities and institutions. Many individual techniques of seeking information have changed as a result of the development of electronic resources made accessible by the emergence of the digital age. Nevertheless, there are still difficulties with accessing electronic resources that are specially designed for the needs of people with vision impairment (VI), and these need to get fixed. A collection development policy acts as a librarian's guide for obtaining library resources; therefore, it should include information on resource access. These policies provide users with a broad understanding of the collection's scope, how it carries out the library's mission, a maintenance schedule, and a look into the patron base. It is obvious that there are still problems with how resources can be distributed fairly for those with visual impairments, notwithstanding our success in increasing access. It is evident that there are still challenges that need to be fixed regarding how resources can be distributed

effectively to users with visual impairments, notwithstanding the progress we have achieved in our efforts to increase accessibility. As we work to provide a pathway to completely accessible resources, libraries must take into account all alternatives to ensure that the collections they comprise are as widely accessible as feasible.

Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules 2nd Edition (AACR2)," All content that can be accessed directly (locally) or remotely (via a network) is referred to as an electronic collection. Direct access refers to physical resources that are introduced into a computer, such as discs, tapes, and cartridges. Remote access to materials is defined as being possible via input-output devices, networked computer systems, hard drives, or other storage devices (AACR, 2005)".

The various types of electronic collections include e-books, e-journals, full-text databases, indexing and abstracting databases, reference databases, statistical and numerical databases, e-images, and e-audio and visual resources.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ambali, Usman, and Adesina (2018) examined the materials and assistance provided to library users with disabilities at the Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo and the University of Ilorin. The research approach for the study was qualitative. This study covered all patrons with disabilities who used the libraries at the Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo and the University of Ilorin. A sample was chosen with this study's objectives in mind. Interviews, observations, and questionnaires were three of the data-collection methods employed in this study. Data analysis methods included frequency and percentages. The results of the survey showed that some of the materials shared between the two university libraries included talking books, subtitled DVDs and videos, audiobooks, and other materials.

Chaputula and Mapulanga (2016) investigated how accessible libraries are for people with disabilities in Malawi. The research methodology used a mixed approach. In order to conduct the study, 65 of the participating libraries were sampled, and 14 students with disabilities were hand-picked to participate in the interviews. Data collection methods included surveys and interviews. Using Microsoft Excel, the data were examined. According to the study, several items, notices, and signage were available in large print. In addition, the libraries do not promote services that are catered toward people with disabilities or provide

specialized training like induction sessions. The key information resources were missing from the libraries, and those that were present were not well used due to poor management and maintenance practices. The study, among other things, suggested that Braille books and other equipment deemed necessary for people with impairments be bought.

According to Kiambati (2021), the majority of visually impaired students found it challenging to learn how to use digital libraries and did not generally regard these resources to be effective. More than half of students with visual impairments said that digital libraries are effective, but they did not find them to be accessible to persons with disabilities. The study concludes that students with visual impairments benefit more generally from using digital libraries if they have prior training in assistive technologies. The study therefore recommends institutionalizing assistive technology training as a strategy to enhance the use of digital library resources by users with visual impairment, as well as the participation of people with visual impairment in information retrieval (IR) systems like the digital library's usability testing to facilitate the design of friendly, effective, easy to use, easy to learn, and accessible systems.

Eskay and Chima (2013) pointed out that there is a gap in the quality of services provided to visually impaired students in higher education, which can be caused by a lack of information resources for these students. The availability of information resources for visually impaired users is a question that the researcher is studying while analysing the extent to which university libraries have made information resources accessible to users with impairments.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATIONS FOR VISUALLY CHALLENGED

People with visually challenged will have varied educational demands. The precise information services required depend on the student’s level of vision loss and the level of personal trouble they are experiencing. Libraries and information centres must carry out a number of responsibilities to effectively serve the valuable visually impaired library patrons as important enablers to address their access to information needs:

- The cooperation between libraries and other stakeholders in improving talking book collections, providing digital talking books, increasing Braille literacy, and creating a national strategy for the teaching of Braille teachers and Braille users.
- Access to resources needs to be increased in order to meet the demands of users for materials that are ample, diverse, and of

good quality. This would lead to an increase in alternative usage rates.

- Producing and distributing up-to-date, excellent Braille newspapers, journals, brochures, and textbooks for the blind and visually impaired communities.

Above all, information specialists should act in a way that enables persons who are blind or visually impaired to demonstrate their expertise in the same way as others. Libraries are the source of knowledge, as is now generally accepted. Despite the fact that ICT has fundamentally altered how those with visual impairments access the assistance and information they require. The following collections should be present in every university's Braille library.

1. **Braille books** - Braille is a system of reading and writing that uses raised dots to represent letters that are read by touch. For readers who have both hearing and visual problems, braille books are suitable.
2. **Talking books** are audio versions of novels that can be downloaded as e-books from the internet, CDROM, or cassettes. Most visually handicapped people prefer talking books.
3. **Talking newspapers**—Audio Versions of news stories from daily publications.
4. **Large Printed Materials**- Documents with large print that are intended for people who are partially sighted.
5. **Electronic Texts**—These are computer text files. Users who are visually impaired can load an electronic text onto a computer, read it from the screen using screen magnifying software, and print the text in large print so they can read it on paper, read the text using a braille reader that is attached to the computer, or have the computer read the text aloud using a screen reader.

ROLE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND ICT

Assistive technology has been used by people with impairments to enhance function and as a tool for community life and engagement. In reality, assistive technology is any device, tool, or system—whether created, modified, or otherwise—that is used to maintain, improve, or expand a person's functional abilities that have developmental disabilities. This comprises technologies for seating and mobility, speaking, being accessible, controlling the environment, and everyday living. Assistive technologies must be made accessible in order for all persons with disabilities to participate fully in social, economic, and educational life. The fact that we are all capable of being transient as humans is one of the most important things to remember. The term "assistive

technology" refers to a broad range of assistive gadgets, ranging from "low-tech" to "high-tech" ones.

- **Low-tech** items like pencil grips, highlighters, paper stabilizers, etc. that don't require electricity or batteries.
- The term **"high-tech"** describes cutting-edge technology. Instances include computers, software, voice synthesizers, Braille readers, etc.

There are now multiple options for assistive technology available to enable people with disabilities. In today's world, information is a valuable commodity, and ICT is the main channel for delivering it. Making sure that no one is denied access to these services due to a handicap or a lack of equipment is essential for closing the information gap. This will allow for the resolution of such issues at the point of access to ICT services. ICT advancements are also being used by braille libraries to improve the accessibility of information for those who are blind or visually impaired. Access to electronic databases and information on the Internet is now made possible through a wide variety of ICTs, often known as adaptive or assistive technologies, offering blind users the same chances as sighted users. These innovative developments include:

- **Screen Magnifier**, software that enables text or graphics on a computer screen to be enlarged up to sixteen times the original size.
- **Screen Reader:** A piece of software that reads a document's contents to the user.
- **Voice recognition software**, such as JAWS Talking Software (Turn Computer into Talking PC), enables the user to speak data into the computer.

Any library cannot choose, install and maintain one or more of the most well-liked auxiliary software products while planning for the needs of every single user. The study thus emphasizes the following software choices for libraries that can be used to provide service to the users who are visually impaired, including:

- 'JAWS for Windows' from Freedom Scientific,
- 'Window-Eyes' screen-reading program with portable applications,
- 'ZoomText' magnifier/reader and 'ZoomText' keyboard,
- 'Dragon Naturally Speaking' is a speech-to-text engine that enables users to dictate in Windows-compatible programs such as Microsoft Word and Outlook, and
- 'Text Aloud' is a text-to-speech (TTS) program are the other options.

Several other important software programs available for library patrons with blindness or visual impairments includes:

- **Duxbury Braille Translator** (DBT), the well-known Braille translation program;
- **Keck talking**, a computer music and sound creation program compatible with Sonar; and
- **Connect Outloud** is a program that enables visually impaired users to access the Internet, browse the web, send and receive e-mail, and create documents using the Freedom Scientific word processor;
- **Reading Bar** is a text-to-speech toolbar for Internet Explorer that is multilingual and has the ability to translate web pages; doctor," a talking word pattern.
- **Kurzweil 1000** text reading software that can read both electronic and printed text that has been scanned into a computer. Text can also be modified, saved, signed or printed by the user. The software includes a calendar application, dictionary, and thesaurus and spell checker.

Universities should also make sure that their websites are easy for those with visual impairments to utilize.

Center for Virgin Islands' Digital Information Resources

1. University of Delhi, India: for users who lack access to print, the Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC) and Braille Library at DULS (Delhi University Library System) are collaborating to replicate the materials in an accessible format. Due to recent modifications in copyright rules, the entire collection of audio books and electronic texts is currently accessible online to visually impaired people via the DUCC IP range. With the help of the handy platform Accessible Libraries, authors of online-only publications may collectively make their works accessible to those who have print limitations. DAISY Forum of India (DFI) is the organization that established this online library. The largest collection of books in accessible formats is about to emerge from it. The users who are unable to read normal print due to blindness, low vision, or any other impairment have a one-stop resource for all of their reading needs. SOL (School of Open Learning, University of Delhi) has joined the DFI's Accessible Library as an associate member. Users have access to more than 2,30,000 books, can manage their personal reading lists online, and can download books in a few different formats. These books are available in a variety of languages, fusing Indian and foreign libraries to create the biggest accessible international library for the blind. DFI will check with the SOL Library to confirm approval before notifying the user by email or SMS. To search,

browse, see, read, and download full text anywhere, the user must log in, 24 hours a day.

2. University of Jawahar Lal Nehru, New Delhi: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Library that houses all official government publications has taken steps to offer facilities to visually impaired pupils, as have some significant international organizations including the WHO, the European Union, the United Nations, and its partner agencies. In the Reading Hall, a separate division known as the Helen Keller Unit has been created. There are twenty screens, reading and speaking software-equipped PCs and scanners. Students who are blind will not experience a lack of study materials thanks to the establishment of this particular unit. The users currently have access to 22 worldwide online databases with 10,000 full-text journals. In addition, 4,500 scholarly electronic journals with full text are available from 25 different publishers worldwide.

3. University of Punjab has also made progress in this area. It has created a specific area of the library for the visually challenged. Similar to other locations, this one contains software that can turn books' contents into audio recordings.

4. University of Calcutta and National Association of the Blind (NAB) collectively have developed a magnificent 'Digital Braille Library and Audio Recording Workstation' where the visually challenged users would be able to utilize all current learning tools.

5. University of Lucknow has the Dr. Manohar Lohia Library was built specifically for visually impaired students. There can be fifty pupils seated there at once and use their materials with a huge collections of braille print and e-collections with various software. The amount of work that still has to be done is enormous.

BRAILLE COLLECTIONS FORMATS AND PRODUCTS

New technologies have provided libraries the chance to provide users with resources in electronic formats including e-books, audio books, and electronic journal databases. Users of libraries all across the world now have access to material more conveniently because to these formats. The efforts to make information environments more accessible are getting stronger as a result of technology improvements. These media frequently take the form of audio, although they can frequently be converted to braille and large print.

- **DAISY:** Books that follow the DAISY format have sophisticated navigation features that make it easier for VI users to find specific chapters and pages, access the index, and save passages for later reference. But in order to read these books,

VI users also need to have access to devices that can read the format.

- **EPUB:** Microsoft Word document files and Electronic Publication (EPUB), which is frequently used for Amazon Kindle and Barnes & Noble Nook readers, are additional formats to take into account for reader tools. Even though Word document files aren't the most common format for talking books, many scholarly texts are produced in this manner. Libraries do provide actual books in this format, which VI users looking for large print books will discover. To ensure proper viewing, many e-books allow readers to zoom in or change the text size.
- **Bookshare:** The world's greatest collection of easily accessible books is available on Bookshare. The collection, which has more than 755,000 titles, caters to the interests of VI users like students, working professionals, and leisure readers by offering a wide range of topic matter. This large library also provides books in over 34 other languages.
- **Gale In Context:** The Gale In Context suite is linked to a number of subject databases created to fulfil the demands of a wide range of users. The text-to-speech functionality of this device, which offers "on-demand text and translation into 12 languages," is made to work with users of all vision levels, from low vision to total blindness. When deciding whether to add this item to the collection, collections librarians should ask the seller about any available alternative formats for the visually impaired customers they hope to serve.
- **Overdrive , Mackin, and Hoopl:** Libraries have purchased a variety of items, including Overdrive, Mackin, and Hoopla. By using the Adobe Digital Editions program and the appropriate screen readers, VI users can read Overdrive books with improved accommodations.

FINDINGS

- The provision of information services to visually impaired individuals is further complicated by stringent copyright regulations and license agreements for buying or converting content across formats. Accessing printed and electronic materials can be difficult for university libraries due to licensing and copyright limitations as well as system design concerns. Some of these obstacles can be solved with the aid of assistive technologies (AT), enabling regulations, a competent workforce, and flexible copyright regimes. (1) Relevance to daily life; (2) Relevance to society (3) Uniqueness/Value

- The results indicate that ICT improves the lives of persons with disabilities because it enables them to work freely and boosts their self-confidence. Most people who are blind or visually handicapped prefer the internet as their primary source of information but the 'complexity of content available on the net' is discovered to be a significant obstacle faced by blind users of NCR libraries while attempting to access the Internet. The majority of blind and visually impaired users prefer "Audio Books on CD/DVD and Daisy Books" above other electronic alternatives.

- As distinct individuals, those who are visually impaired have unique needs. They must, however, never be kept apart and must always be handled differently. Like the blind and physically able, they have needs.

- Libraries must comprehend the information requirements of each of its user groups in order to address those demands. They should make sure that the necessary resources are available, including space, services, and ICT infrastructure.

- Inadequate funding for upkeep, irregular power supplies, and users with limited abilities all pose obstacles to the accessibility of information resources for visually impaired pupils. This essay's focus is on the effects of copyright on the accessibility of print and electronic information resources for people with visual impairments in university libraries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the study's findings, the following suggestions are made:

- In order to further the cause of inclusive education for students with normal or visual impairments, university libraries should make sure that their information resources are accessible.
- The university should take more initiative to establish customized learning programs so that visually impaired students can engage in lessons alongside their visually impaired colleagues.
- The National University Commission need to promote colleges and universities to offer special education programs.
- Libraries, institution administrations, and governments should all have access to the most recent information resources for people who are blind or visually impaired.

- Libraries must create and implement policies and procedures for staff training as well as safeguard information resources for people with disabilities.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the study is that assistive technology and ICT are crucial to the growth of library collections and the lives of individuals with disabilities since they enable them to operate freely, comprehend with resources, and have greater self-assurance Most visually impaired persons prefer the internet as their information source since it is readily available (available 24/7) and accessible (with the aid of assistive technology for them). The most popular Internet services/applications among users are "e-mail, Internet browsing, and downloading of informational material," demonstrating that persons with disabilities are well aware of the latest innovations accessible today. Users of the University's Braille Libraries can access publications called "Audio Books on CD/DVD and Daisy" from the collection, which is primarily electronic. Customers who are blind or visually impaired encounter a variety of obstacles when trying to access the internet, but the "complexity of the content available on the net" is considered to be the main one. This is followed by "adequate ICT and basic infrastructure" in the institution/library. The results show that the majority of blind and visually impaired people use information services, formats, and Braille collection products from many institutions/libraries to satisfy their information needs and requirements. In the present digital age, access to knowledge and information is more crucial than ever. Additionally, access to facilities and assistive technology for the blind and visually challenged should be made available in braille libraries, along with training to help them become more effective researchers. Decision-makers, educational administrators, policy makers, school administrators, parents, librarians, and information specialists need to adopt a consistent approach to ensure equal access for blind and visually impaired people despite differences in the educational backgrounds and daily lives of people with visual impairments. collaborate is necessary.

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