Research Paper

Library Services for the Visually Challenged People: A detail analysis of the service and opportunities for the depressed

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Abstract:
India is democratic a country which is not left far behind in facilitating its physically challenged peoples. India has provided all possible support to the persons with disabilities either by implementing a special Act, or by drawing a 'National Policy for Persons with Disabilities', or by way of executing reservations in education, employment, government schemes and programs or establishing associations and organizations. In addition to this, the legal framework, rapid infrastructure has been developed including the establishment of 'National Institute of Visually Handicapped, Dehradun'. The Government of India has implemented three legislations for persons with disabilities. As the sighted people who are hale and healthy with two bright eyes have the interest to gain information and news from around the world through newspapers, magazines, books, radio, television, and digital media, etc. Likewise, people who are visually impaired also have the same curiosity to learn and gain information from different sources. People who are visually impaired have the same knowledge requirements as sighted people. Hence, Libraries have a moral responsibility duty to make knowledge accessible to people of all genders, ages, races, political affiliations, and disabilities. This paper ascertains the library services provided to visually impaired people and challenges they face while acquiring new knowledge in India.
Keywords: *Visually Challenged, Blind, Library Services, Friendly Technology, Guidelines*

I.   Introduction:

Libraries play a crucial role in updating the knowledge of the society. The knowledge and services libraries offer create opportunities for learning, support literacy and education, and help shape the new ideas and standpoints that are central to a creative and state-of-the-art society. Libraries represent different things to different people – from a place where mothers can take toddlers to read their first stories and students can study, to a service allowing anyone to borrow a book, access the Internet or do research. Such a hurricane task is done by none other than Librarian. Quite simply, libraries offer a means by which we can gain access to knowledge. (Ben White, 2012 International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the Public Library Manifesto (1994) emphasize that; every library must provide proper services for those who do not have easy access to them, such as the mentally and physically disabled, the ill and the imprisoned convicts. The Government of India's Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education stated its objective as "Recognizing Education for all children as a Fundamental Right, to ensure the inclusion of children and youth with disabilities in all available mainstream educational settings, by providing them with the learning environment". Special Libraries Centre Provides Special Services to library Users Librarians also discuss the advantages of ICT in information centers and how libraries use ICT to expand global information. Any reader can read information in any format and access it from anywhere using the ICT Platform.

Definition of Physical Disability:
World Health Organization (2020) states that "Disability is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations."

What is Visually Impaired Disability?
Ministry of Social Welfare Department (2018) defines 'Visually impaired' is a general term used to describe people who are partially-sighted or completely blind'. Visually impaired people have the same information needs as sighted people.

Statistics of visually impaired people:
There are about 314 million visually impaired people globally with 45 million totally blind. India is home of 26,810,557 (26.8 millions) disabled persons which constitutes 2.21% of total population of the country. 5 million persons are visually impaired (disability in seeing) sharing 18.8% of total disabled persons in the country. (Census of India, 2011).
Organizingacompetent library service for print-disabled people is extremely important, because there are significantly fewer books available commercially in accessible formats compared to what is published in print for the general public. Libraries have a moral obligation to make information available to all categories of users regardless of their gender, age, race, political affiliation or disability. Till now library services for these persons were not adequate but the importance of making information available for visually impaired people is now realized by different sections. At present with the help of Information Technology it is possible to provide user friendly & adequate services for these people who are neglected for long time.

Statement of the Problem:
We human beings are social animals as we have a basic need of food, shelter, breath to live a life, the same way we need knowledge, information from different sources via books, newspapers, radio, television and magazines and internet, etc. But it is unfortunate to note that things are not easy for print disabled or visually challenged people in comparison to sighted people. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; An activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; While a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations." (World Health Organization). (Rayini, 2017). There are about 314 million visually impaired people globally with 45 million blind. India is home to 26,810,557 (26.8 million) disabled persons which constitutes 2.21% of the total population of the country. 5 million persons are visually impaired (disability in seeing) sharing 18.8% of total disabled persons in the country. (Census of India, 2011) (Rayini, 2017).

Objectives of the Study
The objective of this paper is to:
- To examine the several issues that affect visually challenged readers.
- To investigate the difficulties that visually impaired people face.
- To gauge the various resources available for the visually impaired people.
- To highlight the Indian state's contribution towards the visually impaired persons.
- To evaluate the suggestions made to improve the reading conditions of visually challenged people.

Methodology of the Study:
The present paper is based on the secondary data. Data collected from the newspaper, magazines, journals, publications are used to collect information on the working women. In the month of February 2023 the author of this paper visited University of Mysore Library and collected information on the status of the Visually Challenged persons and the available resources.

Hypothesis of the Study
1. There are very limited resources available for the visually challenged readers.
2. The Government is not taking extra attention for the visually challenged readers.

Louis Braille – Father of Braille Writing System
But things become easier when the invention of the braille writing system has taken place. Louis Braille invented the Braille tactile writing system for visually impaired people, western visually impaired people were benefited earlier but in developing countries, these techniques were not available for a long time but after long decades Braille writing system was adopted by many countries later on. UNESCO also played a crucial

role to benefit the visually impaired section of the world. The government from the different countries provided different technologies to make their life comparatively easy in developing countries; Eye Seeing dogslike German Shepard and Labradors is kind of an example which helps the visually impaired people to help in their daily routine. Many technologies like Braille, enlarged prints, web Braille, Braille embosser, talking books, text reader software, etc. these new technologies are adopted by many people. Braille presses are also working for the productions of textbooks, newspapers, magazines, etc. But in developing countries, they have to suffer for their basic needs. Many countries around the world have already enacted many laws related to the visually impaired to make their participation in education with different services.

Role of Indian Government for the Service of Physically Challenged Persons:
The Indian government implemented special laws for promotion of people with disabilities, they are
1. Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, which provides for education, employment, creation of the barrier-free environment, social security, etc.
2. National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation, and Multiple Disability Act, 1999 has provisions for legal guardianship of the four categories and creation of an enabling environment for as much independent living as possible.
3. Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 deals with the development of manpower for providing rehabilitation services (MSJE 2009).'' (Rayini, 2017) In 2005 'Action Plan for Inclusive Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities,'

Library Resources for visually impaired people:
Visually impaired readers similarly needed resources to gain their updated knowledge for their particular work. But apart from this technology has given much needed software which is used worldwide by the visually impaired. Even though, librarians play a vital role to provide and direct them to the best access of resources.
1. **Brielle Books** -Brielle books anmagnificent arrangement of writing and reading books for visually challenged users in which the words and numbers are arranged in dots form by touching and they are identified each and every meaning of words.
2. **Talking Books** - these are audio versions of books that could be recorded on cassettes, CDROM,DVD and on the internet as e-books. Talking books are preferred by the majority of the visually impaired (Getz,2003).
3. **Talking Newspaper** - Similar as talking books but one difference on the daily basis news recorded in cassettes, CD-ROM,DVD through network as electronic formats.
4. **Large Printed Materials**- This is a special service; documents are printed in enlarge size for visually impaired users to read documents easily.
5. **Screen Magnifier**- This software is actually for text and graphics that display enlarge on the computer monitor.
6. **Screen reader**: In this, visually impaired users read the text of content of the particular documents.
7. Voice recognition software: This application allows the visually challanged users to data in the electronic device through voice. There are different types of libraries which are national libraries, academic libraries, public libraries, and special libraries but in every library, they have separate Bareilly libraries.

Challenges for visually challenged readers:
All over the world people with visual impairments has to face numerous difficulties they are as follows:
1. People with disabilities are often excluded from social activities and are not treated in the same way as their able-bodied equals. The fact is that, in one way or another, their physical state means that they live a life that is perceived to be different from that of able-bodied people (Ochoggia 2003).
2. Mandesi (2007) adds that people with disabilities face numerous challenges to access opportunities equal to those enjoyed by their friends in day-to-day life.
3. Environmental, physical, legal and institutional barriers are found throughout society, and negative attitudes to persons with disabilities often cause social exclusion and are the hardest to overcome. Mandesi further insists that, for people with disabilities to be treated equally, physical barriers to accessing resources need to be removed and attitudes to be changed.

Suggestive guidelines for improving library and information services to the visually impaired
Access to information is major problem for the Visually Impaired in India. The purpose of these suggestive guidelines is to provide libraries, governments, and other stakeholders with a framework for developing library services for people who are Visually Impaired. These suggestive guidelines are based on the guidelines for development of library services to visually impaired prepared by IFLA,International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions the key association for the visually challenged persons.

1.   **Government to Establish Assignment:**As a first step, governments or non-government organizations should establish the mission of their library service for those who are print disabled. Government must establish library in each and every taluk a special library for the visually challenged people.

2.   ActiveLibrary Legislation to be introduced: Legislation should identify the roles and responsibilities of levels of governments or appropriate authorities in the creation, acquisition, and distribution of accessible content and the integration of the service through mainstream library networks

3.   National Strategy to be recognized: It is recommended that each country establish a national agency with the mandate to set standards and define, develop, and coordinate a national strategy for library services for people who are print disabled.

4.   Needs Assessment for reader friendly program:This will influence the design and layout of buildings and signs, stock levels and a development plan for alternative formats, the provision of adaptive equipment, and a promotional and reader development program.

5.   Satisfying theUser Needs: Visually challenged users are a diverse community. Some are retired seniors; others are students or people employed in many different professions.

6.   Collaboration and Networking system to be enhanced: Information and documents are located all over the world, good libraries have always functioned as part of national and international networks. All libraries should be aware of collections held in other libraries and borrow less popular items from these sources.

7.   Work through Blindness Agencies: Since many people who are blind use both a library service and the services of these agencies, there are substantial opportunities for partnership in supporting adaptive technologies and understanding consumer needs. Libraries should leverage these partnerships rather than duplicating services that are often quite costly to begin with.

8.   CollectiveDevelopment: People unable to read print due to a disability are a diverse clientele with the same reading needs as any other group. They require collections that include popular materials, information to support lifelong learning or course work, on-the-job educational resources, and books for all ages, including for children and youth Content can be housed remotely on Internet websites and in other digital libraries.

Tools that are helpful for visually impaired students which web based software:

1.   **Job Access with Speech (JAWS**): The most popular and cheapest application design for visually impaired users to operate independently and to read digital resources i.e. JAWS. It is helpful for low economy users to take an opportunity to read many books, journal reports, etc. in libraries.

2.   **Non-Visual Desktop Access (NVDA**): It is free source software and text display on screen reader. In this tool, a visually impaired person can read the text in a computerized voice.

3.   **Voice Over:**It is a screen reader device. It provides readers who are visually impaired students navigate text documents available on-screen in the audible form which speaks in a loud voice even display everything such as message, calling, battery level wi-fi connected just like a smartwatch.

4. **ORCA**: This software is a free and open-source scriptable screen reader which gives access to many application tools. It has main extensible, flexible technology and supports AT-SPI for Linux operating systems. It enables access to a graphical desktop through speech and braille.

5.**Web Anywhere** This software is defined as a network-based enabled screen display reader and is available free. it runs directly to the web browser even no need to spend time in installation. It works nicely after the installation of recent versions of Adobe Flash and embedded sound players like Windows Media Player and QuickTime.

6. **Spoken Web:** This is a system for the creation of and access to 'VoiceSites', 'VioLinks' to create a 'spoken' network of information. By this Virtue, it enables the illiterate and the underprivileged visual impaired person with the power to access information.

II.   Conclusion:

Technology has advanced in the twenty-first century, allowing visually challenged persons to explore their thoughts and ideas in the modern world with greater versatility and direction. Many libraries and information centers provide a free forum to those who want to access information and assistive technology resources, both proprietary and non-proprietary so that people with visually impaired can maintain their knowledge on the tip of their finger independently. Those visually impaired people who are economically disadvantaged can easily reap the benefits of library services while also maintaining management services such as free access to electronic resources, also known as braille books and devices. Before this, the management librarian made ramps and seating arrangements available for accessing e-resources, as well as helping visually impaired students develop their communication skills, which are also based on technology and support for screen reader audio-video low vision devices.

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