Library Services to Blind users in Digital Environment: Their Fundamental Right in the Information, Age.
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- ## Abstract

Discusses the need of Digital Library for blind users, present condition of blind libraries in India, legal aspects of equal rights to information access by these users in the scenario of library and information, the role of LIS organizations and professionals, guidelines and basics of developing a digital library for visually impaired after understanding the appropriate approaches in respect of utilization of latest technologies.

- ## Introduction

To day in the technological age, libraries are exploiting latest techniques to facilitate their users and capable to provide access all information to their nearest end. Through the internet, any user can access any information from any corner of the world. The internet have made the world so small, users may acquire and share the knowledge each other even those are who totally unknown to each other. Information Technology have given the opportunity to provide equal library facility to all including visually impaired users, we the LIS professionals should not ignore the needs of the blind user and should have fare attitude towards these special users, it is we who just only have to understand the technology and users. These users should be able to use the libraries as a platform of source or gateway to national and international information, knowledge and leisure.

- ## Indian scenario

There is no country in the world to-day where the affliction of blindness is so widespread as in India , nor where the ratio of blindness to population (350 millions) is so high. It is estimated that at least 200,000 children in India have severe visual impairment or blindness and approximately 15,000 are in schools for the blind. Although this represents a small percentage of the estimated 5 million blind in India , it is significant in terms of 'blind-years'. Conditions in India are therefore almost exactly the opposite of those prevailing in Great Britain , which in the last hundred and fifty years has done more for the blind than any country in the world. We have been slow to realize the justice of the blind man's claim to education and knowledge,

employment, and all that goes to make "the good life". Less than a century and a half has elapsed since the first school for the blind in England opened its doors. In India, so far as can be ascertained, the earliest school for the blind was founded rather more than fifty years ago at Amritsar by English missionaries, while schools at Calcutta and Ranchi followed some ten years later. Even to-day there are only about twenty organizations for the blind in the whole of India, and of these, few have adequate library and information resources to provide the services for more than a dozen or two of the thousands of blind children in that great country. In regard of public libraries for blind users in India , it is not on the priority of any organization and government itself.

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Library Services to the blind users

All the significant literary, artistic, and scientific works of mankind can be digitally preserved and made freely available to all blind users in every corner of the world, for education, study, and appreciation and that of all our future generations. Visually impaired people have the same information needs as sighted people. Just as sighted people might read a newspaper, listen to a CD or download electronic information from the Internet; visually impaired people also want access to relevant information in their chosen accessible format. Digital technology can make the works of man permanently accessible to the billions of people all over the world. The technological advances today make it possible to think in terms of storing all the knowledge of the human race in digital form. Developing an efficient 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. The need to build collections in alternative formats and make them available for readers who are unable to browse shelves makes it necessary to develop special services.

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Public Libraries

Public library is a focal point for the general public to access required information on any subject or day to day use. The roles of these communities based library services should be developed with the cooperation of local, national, and international agencies. All public libraries should insure that their collection and services complement and integrate with international, national and local agencies to provide access to as wide a range of materials and services as possible. A policy in this respect should be clearly written to provide the library services to the visually impaired users. The users of this category should also be included when the policy is framed for them. This will influence the design and development of library portal, collection formats, use of technology and peripherals, services and feed back. Certainly public libraries have the wider role instead of academic or special libraries in respect of collection development, and services to different variety of users. The public libraries should always keep in mind that they have to provide the library facility on local needs in a global scenario. Cooperation and networking in between the public libraries make it easy to under stand the needs of the users and can serve accordingly. Information services increasingly rely on electronic mode of collection. For the blind users, direction to accessible websites is major, and provision should be made of tools to enable a right out put format. Public libraries should fallow the favorite slogan that is input once, access more any time any where. The library should clear and ensure the mode of acceptance of request and dissemination or delivery of information to the users. The out put of the collection is more important from the angle of users, for blind users it should be in the form of speech or Braille and allied tools for the purpose should be made available to them. Out put i.e. CD-Write, Braille print should be provided on minimum cost or free of cost to these users.

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Educational and special Libraries

The academic and special libraries have to serve at all educational levels, from primary school to research level students. It is very disgusting situation for visually impaired users that there are a few commercial publishers who are publishing their text books. So that it is the duty of the institutional libraries to fulfill their demands and provide the out put facility in a required form. Networking in between these libraries can play a vital role to full fill their demands, because they are very much dependent on an effective library services with links to other libraries that can provide the better resources and inter library loans. To provide the digital library facility to these users, a sufficient work stations / computer terminals should be installed with appropriate adaptive technology. These libraries should also provide guidance to use of library resources, associated peripherals, adaptive technologies and use of portals linked each other.The users of higher academic, research and special libraries are mission oriented people and accordingly library professionals should develop the collection and accordingly provide the services to these users as per their higher or specialized need and formats.

Role of Library Professionals

Dr S. R. Ranganathan, in past centuries has recognized the great need of special libraries to improve the quality of life and provide equal opportunities these users. It should also be insured that the library have a designated staff member and/or committee who coordinates services for users of visually impaired, monitors adaptive technology developments, and responds to requests for accommodation.

- A library staff should aware of disability issues.
- A library staff should be trained in policies and procedures for providing services to users with disabilities.
- A library staff should have knowledgeable of other organizations, such as talking books, Braille libraries, and commercial vendors of services and products etc.
- A library services staffs should wear large print name badges.
- When a library staff is working with someone who has a disability, should keep in mind that he is dealing with a person first. Other than this, there are no strict rules when it comes to relating to people with disabilities.
- Location of the work stations should be fixed at one place for visually impaired users, that may help them to find there sitting point in the library.
- Large print key labels can assist users with low vision.
- Large monitors of at least 17 inches can assist users with low vision and learning disabilities.
- Treat people with disabilities with the same respect and consideration that we give others.
- Ask a person with a disability if he/she needs help before helping.
- Talk directly to the person with a disability, not through the person's companion.
- Refer to a person's disability only if it is relevant to the conversation.
- Avoid negative descriptions of a person's disability.
- Refer to the person first and then the disability. "A man who is blind" is better than "a blind man" because it emphasizes the person first.

Satisfaction of Users Need

Libraries for the visually impaired users must fulfill the requisitions of this diverse community and provide services in all kinds

of different institutions such schools, colleges and homes for elderly. The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto recognizes diversity as part of its service, and Libraries for the blind should adopt an equally inclusive approach: "the services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language, or social status". The library should select a group of interested and computer literate users to test the system. Train them thoroughly in all aspects of the new service and note their feedback carefully. It is important to correct problems that they identify. If possible, try to phase in the users – first test with a small group, then a larger group, and then the entire community. Users access the features offered within the digital library that are of interest to them and which meet their information needs. For some, emphasis is placed on accessing online materials immediately. Some use the digital library service to stay informed about national and local current news events, or to read about library news and announcements. For others, emphasis is placed on using the online library catalogue to search for and place holds on physical items, such as braille books.

Literacy Training Programme for LIS Professionals and Users

Library staff working in the blind library will require basic computer competency. Print-disabled employees must be able to learn how to access computers with adaptive technology. For example, the production of DAISY-books, Braille books, and e-texts is highly computerized and a new production control system will follow new production workflows, which will be computer-based. It is important to develop a training plan and budget to ensure that employees are given the training they require for working effectively in the library and the related production technologies used in a digital environment. Institutions should provide training for library, IT staff and users that will be responsible for support after implementation

The Training and Support Plan aims to:

- Establish a plan and timeline for training of users, staff and volunteer trainers.
- •Develop a marketing plan to promote the benefits of the digital library to users.
- Identify existing training materials and the need for further development of training materials.
- Create a stand-alone interactive digital library tutorial that can be used by instructors working with users, or by users independently.
- •Provide live demonstrations with a hands-on component to key staff. These staff will be trained to be able to provide training and support to users and other staff.
- •Equip staff with how-to training kits, for the purpose of setting up user training sessions within their local communities.
- •Identify computer-training programs already in existence and coordinate the inclusion of a demonstration of the digital library service.
- Contract with access technology experts to provide support on how to use the digital library with various access technologies and/or create support materials specific to accessing the digital library using various access technologies.
- Provide on-site and remote group training sessions to users and or family/friends of users. Invite guest speakers, such as access technology experts, vendors of digital playback devices and software vendors to speak abouthow users can utilize access technology in conjunction with digital library services.
- •Provide one-on-one demonstrations to users who make an appointment to visit the library. The training and support of users and staff are both crucial to the successful deployment of an Digital Library System. Emphasis should be placed on the development of a comprehensive but easy-to-use manual and the development of a training project management plan (PMP). The PMP should clearly outline the scope of training to be carried out. It is important to let the users know about the service benefits. These could include ease of use and handling, better audio quality, faster service delivery, self

service options, user customization and so on. Use a variety of communication tools to get the news of the new services to library users for example, face-to-face user group meetings, newsletters, online messaging, the library's own website, exhibitions etc.

- Auto speaking guide for users and visual guide for staff should be designed in such a friendly manner which cover all related aspects and can help them to use the library and provide the services independently.

Standards for Information Management

The government should set up organization for national information standards which will identify, develop, maintain and publish technical standards to manage specialized information for special users in the changing and ever more digital environment. These standards should be designed in such a way to apply both traditional and new technologies to full range of information-related needs, including acquisition, processing, retrieval, metadata and preservation. We may also follow the exiting standards which have been framed in advanced countries in the global scenario such as National Information Standards Organization (NISO) USA , Digital Audio Information System (DAISY).

The government should accept the policy for equal service standards to all borrowers. By setting up the formal Commission or Committee, it should be emphasized, that committee has a responsibility of serving all visually handicapped people, and it is emphasized as well, that this task can only be solved in close cooperation with the users themselves. This provides a very good basis for the work still to be done.

Plan for Collection Development and Services

Before planning to develop the digital library, we must consult some exiting international digital libraries and based on their collections, services and experience, we should move towards designing the digital library for the blind users. There are some international libraries which have been development in the advanced countries supported by their government is providing the online library services. A brief details of their collection formats, delivery methods of materials, standards for metadata and cot cat are given below table.

Brazil – Service to Blind Central Library Universidad Federal of the Paraiba (UFPB)

Canada – Canadian National Institute for the Blind Library (CNIB)

Finland – Celia Library for the Visually Impaired (Celia)

Netherlands - FNB Netherlands (FNB)

South Africa - South African Library for the Blind (SALB)

Sweden – Swedish Library of Talking Books and Braille (TPB)

United Kingdom – National Library for the Blind (NLB

Information about services offered

Sr	Library	Type of formats offered	Delivery methods of materials	Metadata Standard	Cat Standard
1.	NLB	-Braille	-Hard copy circulation	Dublin core	MARC 21
		-Audio:	-E-mail delivery - magazine		
		DAISY (pilot 2004)	-Online reference resources		
		-E-books:			
		DAISY (pilot 2004)			
		Text file			
		-Tactile			
		-Large print			
		-Moon			
2.	CNIB	-Braille	-Hard copy circulation	Dublin core	MARC 21
		-Audio:	-CD on demand university students		
		DAISY/NISO	-Online digital audio / download		
		MP3			
		Audio Cassette			
		-E-books:			
		Text file			
		Braille file			
		-Tactile			

3.	Celia	-Others -Braille	-Hard copy circulation	Dublin core	Finmarc, FRBR
		-Audio:	-Other – E-books downloaded, password protected access to server		
		DAISY/NISO			
		Audio cassette			
		-E-books:			
		Text file			
4.	TBP	-Tactile -Braille	-Hard copy circulation	No	Marc 21
		-Audio:	-CD on demand university students		
		DAISY/NISO	-Online digital audio / download (university libraries can download)		
		Audio cassette			
		-E-books:			
		DAISY			
		Text file (special format,e-text "textview")			
		-Tactile			
		-Others			

5.	FNB	-Braille	-CD on demand	ICA 3	Geac
		-Audio:	-Braille on demand		
		DAISY2.02	-E-mail delivery		
		Audio CD	-On-line digital text / download		
		-E-books:	-print on demand (large print , tactile)		
		DAISY 3.0			
		(w.e.f. 2005)			
		XML (fnb format)			
		Text file			
		(WP,Word")			
		-Tactile			
		_Large print			
		-Enlargements			
6.	SALB	-Braille	-Hard copy circulation	-	-
		-Audio:	-CD on demand		
		DAISY			
		Audio cassette			
		-E-books:			
		DAISY			

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Information Technology and Services to Blind Users

Latest developments in science and information technology made it easy to share the resources under the umbrella of digital library. The major benefits of digital library are Desktop accessibility; Simultaneous access; Timeless accessibility; saving of funds etc. The library won't have special equipment on hand for every type of disability. But we can anticipate the most commonly requested adaptive technology and have that available. Start with a few items at first, and add new technology as users request it. As far as concern with digital library portal for library, basically there is no difference in between the common users or special users like visually impaired people. There is a difference in approach that how to exploit the facility, differences among the approaches are given below.

- **Input devices** used by the common user's are helpful to the blind users up to some extend i.e key board, mouse, barcode reader, etc.
- **Presentation techniques** are differing for blind users; they need audio facility for listen their request. Audio guide for the system use and library facility will be very much helpful for them.
- **Output** facility is totally different for these users, they need print out in Braille language, English to Braille converter and Braille printer will be required, for the soft copy they need the compatible software for listening at home.

Here is a list of **adaptive technology** for computers and computer workstations to get we started.

- **Braille display** used by the blind people that is placed under the normal keyboard. When the user mark text on the screen the Braille display shows, in Braille (tactile signs, point script), what's on the screen. When the person type something on the keyboard it also shows what is being written.
- A **voice synthesizer** that translates the digital text on the screen into a synthesized voice is also required for blind users. They mark the text on the screen and a voice is reading out loud what is written. To read the information on the screen and forward it to the Braille display or the voice synthesizer they need a software product called a **screen reader**.
- **Braille printers** is required for print out.
- **Trackballs** can assist those who have difficulty controlling a mouse.
- **A Braille computer is** also available which have braille display, a Braille keyboard and no screen, voice synthesizer can also use with these computers.
- **Screen enlarger** help the low vision users to see what is written on the screen. To be able to read well it is important that the web pages are designed so that text and background have a good contrast. Different kinds of light solutions around the computer are sometimes needed so that the person doesn't get tired in his/her eyes or dazzled by the screen. To read printed information people with a low vision use a **read-TV** that can enlarge the text up to 25 times. There are so many software's available to facilitate these users i.e. Enlarge text, listen their e-mail messages ,guide the user through new places, magnifies everything on the screen, speech reading program, English to Braille converters and HTML reading etc.
- **Wrist rests and key guards** can assist some users with mobility impairments

Design and Development of Library Portal

A question arises when we talk about the design and development of digital library portal for blind users; basically there is no difference in between the digital library for the blind users and a normal user; it is only difference in the approach of use. The difference is in the approach of input, presentation and out put. A blind user have to use some different devices for input, the

Braille key board, reading optical reader, voice recorder etc, Many people may think that digital library portal for blind users should be developed separately specially according to there needs, capabilities, knowledge of technologies because these people are the special users and they require a special type of services. This may be a matter of debate, but as per my personal views "a national integrated digital library system" can be designed and developed to cater the needs of all citizens of the nation. Some advanced technologies and equipment will be used to provide the extended features for these users.

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Features of the Digital Library Portal

There are some common features and facilities which should be included in the library portal.

- **Users** access the features offered within the digital library service that are of interest to them and which meet their information needs.
- Library's **web pages** and other electronic resources should be designed to be accessible to these users. Consider these items in ensuring accessible electronic resources. Web page style guidelines require that pages be designed in user friendly accessible format.
- **Navigation paths** should be clear for accessing electronic resources with images and sound provide text alternatives to these formats.
- The library's electronic resources including online catalogs, indexes, and full-text databases and CD-ROMs should be accessed with a variety of **adaptive computer technologies** such as screen readers and speech synthesis.
- **Collection development policy** statements specifically state that electronic products should be evaluated for accessibility as part of the purchasing process.
- **Instant access to books and information Users** listen to online digital audio books, read electronic text and braille books, and browse online newspapers and magazines.
- **Advanced searching** With thousands of items to choose from in a wide variety of formats, it is important to provide the option to create specific types of searches. **Users** will utilize the "Advanced Search" option to limit a search to a specific format (such as braille), an age level, and even "date added to the collection", among other search options.
- **Online research Users** access the various online information databases subscribed to by the library such as online encyclopedias or online dictionaries to conduct personal research.
- **Library news Users** visit the library's "News and Events" section to read about new services and programs.
- **News clippings** may provide them the latest every day.
- **Ordering multiple books at once** When searching the catalogue, each time a user finds a book they would like to read, they can add it to their "shopping basket". Once finished they select their shopping basket and have the option of submitting all requests at once.
- **Users** can also specify on which books they would like to place a "priority" hold.
- **Personal profile** Using their own personal profile and preferences page, users select time savers such as limiting the formats they would like to search, page layout preferences, such as placing the navigation bar at the bottom of each page, and a "saving your searches" feature.
- **New Arrival update** may consult a systemgenerated newly added list of books.
- **A Children's Area** young users can take part in an accessible and safely moderated Chat area for children, interactive features such as online polls, or information about events for younger users.
- **Online Help Users** independently access help pages offered for every section within the digital library service, or they may use the various "Contact Us" links to send messages to library staff.

- **Material Delivery service** may be in hard copy in Braille, By E-mail, CD-on demand, On-Line digital audio down load.
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Maintenance and Preservation of Collection

Similar to the document management system, a specialized digital asset management system are designed to manage these storage – intensive resources. In recent years, the technologies of document management and digital asset management have converged rapidly as organizations combine traditional written documents with rich media. A number of companies now integrate both functionalities in their products, either through the acquisition and integration of other products or through the development of their own applications. This movement is of considerable benefit to libraries, and especially libraries for the blind, which require the management both of documents (e.g., text, braille) as well as rich media (e.g. digital talking books). There are some significant activities which can be monitor by the administrator of the library.

Audit trail : The logging of every activity in the digital repository such as who is working on the digital asset, who last updated it.

User rights administration : Creating, modifying and deleting users or partner applications from the lists that control access to digital assets.

Security management : Controlling access to assets through a matrix of permissions and rights pertaining to user roles and groups as well as by asset grouping or by individual asset.

Metadata management : The metadata of an asset may include digital rights. In this scenario, the digital repository must perform the management of those digital rights as defined for each asset. In addition, there are optional functionalities that can serve to enhance the digital repository depending on the positioning of the repository within the library. The most significant is the "workflow engine." A workflow engine is the system that manages the movement of an asset through a library process. The workflow engine can fulfill several roles. If a library has a separate mandate for the preservation of digital assets, a workflow could be created to generate copies of the asset in a separate format or location strictly for that purpose. The investment in creating digital assets is significant. Therefore it is crucial to develop strong back-up procedures to protect this investment. Consider the impact of the loss of different types of data when determining the frequency and formats of back-ups.

Back-up systems should allow for growth in the amount of data the library can back-up. They must be regularly monitored to ensure their ability to effectively restore data as required.

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National Strategy

India is a developing country and at this stage many people will think that it is very illogical to talk about the digital library services to the blind users; but if we are claiming that very soon India will become a developed country; then is the duty of the government and people those who are in the position of making policies and decisions to take the entire citizen together.

A national commission or committee may be set to carry out the plan of "National Knowledge Centre and Digital Library for Blind Users". The committee may draft the policies for financial support, recruitment of professionals, recourses for the library, selections of vendors, acquisition policies and negotiations, setting up the consortia for networking and co-operation among national and international organizations, standards for information management, design and development of portal for the library, requisition of hardware and software, designing the training syllabus for competency of professional and plan for training, nation wide network of libraries as access point, system installation, configuration and testing, plan for communication, problem and risk management, ensuring the reach of service at the bottom level with satisfaction.

In the initial stage, a National Digital Library for Blind Users (NDLB) should be set up independently, which should build the database of traditionally available documents. Further this library with the advancement of technology and awareness among the blind users and professionals it can be merged with the Integrated National Digital Library of India for providing the access of whole resources to the blind user as well. Authority of the National Digital Library for Blind Users should be responsible for the development of nation wide networks with the collaboration of other library networks. Committees for drafting the library policies, development of digital collection, procurement of collection and coordination committee for collaboration with national and international organizations, consortia's, institutions, associations etc. should be set up.

Amendment should be made in Copyright Act for benefits of blind users to produce and lend Braille and audio materials to these people who because of a physical handicap are unable to read ordinary print.

Cooperation and Networking

Partnerships and consortia of libraries serving similar communities can be beneficial in developing an NDLB particularly in helping to share the cost burden and ongoing upgrades and customizations. One option is to co-develop the requirements and have a joint project team. Vendors will be more interested in working with two or more libraries wanting the same solution. Another option is to purchase a functioning system from another library. In this context it is important to know the purchase options; for example, can the system be purchased outright, including the source code so that it can be locally supported, or will the library supplying it provide support and upgrade for their software in years to come. Network among the libraries can avoid the duplicity in collection development and enhance the usage. Collection should be developed, subscribed at one site/place on various required formats and further it should be distributed to all branches. In the advanced countries there are so many developed libraries for blind users exiting can be made partner or we may refer their vendors who have –developed the solution and can be contacted to purchase of their products. This solution will be less costly than if the library assumes the initial cost of development and customizing on its own. Partner libraries using the same systems can work together in user groups to plan for changes they will need in years to come. It is important to have contracts with all vendors involved in providing the solution and to ensure that the expectations of the parties are clearly articulated. The involvement of legal counsel with knowledge and experience of IT systems would be prudent in ensuring that the library's interests are protected ongoing.

Alternatively, partner libraries that have experience in IT implementations may have a contract template that can be modified. The contract should specify exactly what the vendor is providing in terms of the NDLB software, hardware (if it is included), customizations and the cost of professional services to develop them, a project plan with timelines, a clearly articulated change process, and the support and maintenance for the product. The contract may also include, at a high-level, the acceptance criteria, which will be further defined during the project's implementation phase. We should take time to ensure a clear and all-inclusive contract; the project budget should include all aspects including legal fees for the negotiations.

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Implementation

How we implements the digital library depends on the library structure, employees and the vendors with whom the library has partnered. If the library decides to close for a period of time, the impact on users must be well-understood and alternative arrangements made. With a good plan that users know in advance, the library may be able to start with a "big bang" approach. The project team and library departments must work closely together in developing the "go live" implementation plan. Staff acceptance is essential for the success of this major change. An effective plan allows staff the opportunity for input to its development and to its change management strategy. The implementation plan describes what has to be done, when and by whom and the dependencies between tasks

Implementation plan elements

- Timetable
- Financial management plan
- •Resources
- •Vendor negotiations
- •Hardware and software purchase agreements
- •Site preparation
- •Systems installation and configuration
- •Systems testing
- •Training plan
- •Communications plan
- •Risk management
- •Change control
- •Problem management
- •Quality assurance plan
- •Acceptance and sign-off plans

Before implementing the plan we must ensure the following factors.

- Are people with disabilities included in the library's board of trustees and committees? Are people with disabilities included in the library's access planning process? A person with a disability if he/she needs help before helping.
- Does the library have a written description of services for users with disabilities, including procedures and information on how to request special accommodations? These policies and procedures should be advertised in the library and library publications.
- Are reference and circulation services available by phone, and electronic mail?
- Are resource delivery services available for users confined to their homes, retirement facilities, or hospitals?
- Is large print and Braille versions of library handouts and guides available?
- Are applications for the nationwide network of Talking Book and Braille Libraries available for print disabled users?
- Are reader and research assistants available to users with vision impairments?
- Are sign language interpretation services available by request for library sponsored events?

- Are large magnifying glasses available for users with low vision?

Conclusion

In this paper we have tried to illustrate the need for development of a national strategy and its effect on the course of the history of the library services for the blind and print handicapped in India . In retrospect it is very clear that the development at national level should be initiated so that this special category of users can not be hold deprived out of library services in this information age. There are some basic facts which should be considered and applicable so that the motto can be achieved.

- Decentralization of information services up to local level;
- Social and cultural services should be public services;
- Equality opportunities and services regardless of age, race, sex, religion, language, social status;
- with national integration; and
- Coordination, collaboration and networking.

At the digital library for the Blind these policies should be incorporated in the strategy of the library.

- Library services to blind and print handicapped people shall be of the same quality as that to common people, and special format materials shall be treated on equal terms with all other materials.

As described in this paper we have tried to achieve the goals of the strategy, and the positive consequences are obvious. Less obvious are some of the drawbacks. We have mention below some out of them:

- The integrated library will be very expensive to run.
- By broadening the definition of the user group, it becomes quite difficult to maintain the privileges of the old library service for the easily defined group of the blind, such as copyright exemptions and free matter for the blind.
- The integrated library system is a complicating factor when introducing new technologies.

It is likely that the development initiated will lead to the public libraries doing most of the talking book lending, while we will concentrate on its role as a consultant, developer of new facilities, and as a producer. But if we look even further ahead the development of "The digital Library" may reverse the roles again and call for a change of strategy. Time will tell, but one thing is certain, if we are honest with our mission and affirm to provide equal opportunity of library services to visually impaired people in the information age, we must develop a nation wide network of digital libraries with clear strategies and implement them faithfully; otherwise we will be called the blind professionals.

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