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LIBRARY AND INFORMATION NEEDS OF DIFFERENTLY-ABLED STUDENTS IN KERALA: A STUDY

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Abstract:

The study was conducted to investigate the information needs of differently-abled students in the school libraries of Kerala. The study was done among students belonging to the category of visually challenged (VC), hearing and speech impaired (HI), and physically challenged (PC) from special schools and schools under Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS). The study was based on a questionnaire survey, conducted in the three districts of Kerala state ie; Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam & Kozhikode. The analyses revealed that the information needs of differently-abled students have become complex and problematic due to the insufficiency of adequate information sources and services and there are quite a number of challenges faced by these students in accessing information from the libraries. The overall result of the study was that, though the library services provided in the school are useful for their studies, the respondents cannot make use of them because of barriers. The study comes out with some practical suggestions to improve the library services for differently-abled students.

Keywords: Differently-abled, Information Needs, Library and Information Needs, Kerala

Introduction:

The information-seeking behavior differs from person to person on the basis of the information need. Every user has a variety of needs for information. The primary purpose of a library is to provide its users with increased access to the knowledge base that is growing at an accelerated pace (Selvanayagi, 2014)¹. The information needs of the users have changed tremendously during the last decades. This change can also be seen in the types of information needs; sometimes need exhaustive information while sometimes needs pinpointed information. A broad spectrum of information needs exists and cannot be constrained to a water-tight compartment (Chakravarty & Mahajan, 2013)². Differently-abled people have the same information needs as everyone else, although they may require adaptations in the form of service.

Access to information is a major problem faced by differently-abled persons. The reason is that the production of formats readable and accessible to them is rather slow as well as expensive and thus only a

minute amount of published works has been made available in the adjusted formats. Libraries are an essential ingredient of education. It is more a school of self education where books and other kind of reading materials are collected and organised for use (Karisiddappa & Gangam, 1989)³.

The libraries need to be committed to ensure full access to their range of services and facilities to their user community. Differently-abled persons should get equal access as compared to their counterparts. But in reality they are ignored from the society. Required information for normal people can be accessible in different ways, from books, cassettes, CDs, institutions, persons etc. But for differently-abled, the information needs and the seeking behavior will be more complicated as they cannot access it directly from the sources like any other person. This situation needs to be changed and the present study is an attempt to show the information requirements of differently-abled students in schools.

The study comes out with some suggestions to develop the library services for differently-abled including the development of a Learning Resource Centre (LRC) or an inclusive library, which welcomes all types of users and provides services in their preferred format. Libraries have an important role in building an inclusive society and to achieve this it must be inclusive and barrier free (Midhula& Sudhier,2021)⁴. Now with the help of information and communication technologies, libraries can equip themselves with the latest technologies and collect, store and disseminate information to the differently-abled in their preferred format.

LRC develops a barrier-free environment that helps them to access the required information independently. The term barrier free indicates an environment where all users irrespective of their physical disadvantages can enter, use or access the resources as and when they require (Roy & Bandyopadhyay, 2009)⁵. Making the library inclusive will enable them to access the library resources and services without any hindrance irrespective of their disciplines. helps the differently-abled to access the required information in electronic format which would be converted to a medium readable by them using assistive technologies.

Objectives

The major objectives of the study are:

1. To study the existing school library provisions and facilities available for the differently-abled students in Kerala.
2. To determine whether the students are aware of the library services available for them.
3. To find out the use of library and information services by students.
4. To identify the information needs of differently-abled students.
5. To find out the attitude of students towards library services.
6. To find out the satisfaction level of students toward library services
7. To find out the barriers in accessing library services.

Methodology

The sample was selected from three regions of Kerala state, Kozhikode (north), Thiruvananthapuram (south), and Ernakulum (middle region). As per the Census of India 2011, the southern districts which have high disability rates are Thiruvananthapuram followed by Kollam; and in the Central region Thrissur is having the highest disability rate followed by Ernakulam. Kozhikode is the district in northern region with a high disability rate which is

followed by Malappuram. Among these six districts with the highest disability rates, random selection was made for the study.

In the present study, students belonging to the category of visually impaired, hearing and speech impaired, and physically challenged were taken from special schools and schools under IEDSS. 45 schools (15 schools from each district) were covered for collecting the data. 2154 students were studying in these schools and 1220 students were identified as the sample for the study by random sampling method. The students with mentally retarded and learning disabilities are not included in the study.

Relevance

The study is highly relevant in the present scenario. It is important to make a study to identify the information requirements and seeking approach of the differently-abled students. The study would be helpful in getting a fairly good idea of the present status of library services for the differently-abled and their information requirements. The study would be found useful to those who propose to launch special libraries and LRCs, as well as to those who are already in the area.

Analysis & Discussion

Demographic Information of the Respondents

Table 1 outlines the background information of the students covered in the study. It includes the district, gender, age, etc and are categorized on the basis of their types of disability.

Table 1. Demographic Information

Demographic Information		Visually Challenged (VC)		Physically Challenged (PC)		Hearing Impaired (HI)	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
District	TVPM	74	22.3	45	40.5	166	21.6
	EKLM	73	22.0	28	25.2	152	19.7
	KKD	185	55.7	38	34.2	452	58.7
Gender	Male	200	60.2	55	49.5	462	60.0
	Female	132	39.8	56	50.5	308	40.0
Age	13 - 15	272	81.9	66	59.5	444	57.7
	16 - 18	60	18.1	45	40.5	326	42.3

Table 1 reveals that among the 1213 respondents, 717 (59%) are boys and 496 (41%) are female students. While considering the age group of the students, the majority of them belong to the age group of 13-15 (782), those who are studying in high school section and 431 students are from higher secondary section, which belongs of the age group 16-18. The analysis demonstrates that among the 3 districts taken for the study, Kozhikode is having the largest number of respondents, 675 students of which 185 students are visually challenged (27 %), 452 hearing impaired (67%) and 38 (6%) physically challenged students.

Thiruvananthapuram stands the second place with 285 respondents of which there are 74 visually challenged students (26%), 166 hearing impaired students (58%) and 45 physically

challenged students (16%). While comparing with the other two districts Ernakulam is having the least number of respondents (253) which includes 73 visually challenged (29%), 152 hearing impaired (60%) and 28 physically challenged students (11%).

Distribution of Respondents Based on Types of Schools

The selection of students from special schools and schools with inclusive education are to find out the differences in the educational facilities. Special schools are mainly focusing only on a particular category of disability whereas schools with inclusive education have to incorporate all types of students in their institutions.

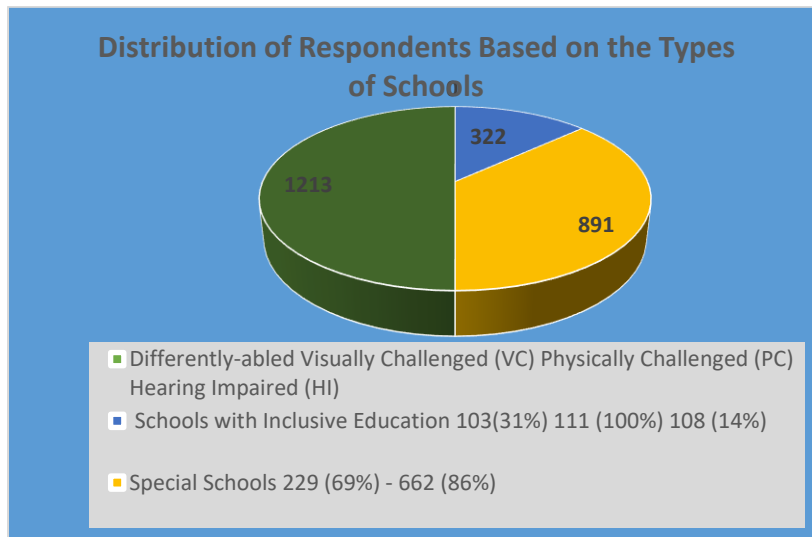


Figure1. Distribution of Respondents Based on the Types of Schools

Data depicted in Figure 1 provides information about the distribution of students based on the types of schools. Among the 1213 differently-abled students who participated in the study, 891(73%) students are from special schools and 322 (27%) students are from schools with inclusive education. Majority of visually challenged (69%) and hearing impaired students (86%) are from special schools whereas all the physically challenged students are from schools with inclusive education. Study found that there are less special schools for physically challenged students in the state, while majority of special schools are for hearing impaired and mentally challenged students.

Library Provisions and Facilities for the Differently-abled Students

To find out the existing library provisions for the differently-abled in the state and to find out their awareness level of the available facilities, a detailed analysis is made. The study aims to find out the present scenario of library facilities and the awareness level of respondents, and analysis is made to find out whether the present facilities are sufficient to meet the information needs.

Awareness of Library Provisions

To investigate the awareness level about the library facilities, an attempt has been made to collect information from the differently-abled students and the data collected is analyzed and presented in the Table.2

Table 2 Awareness of Library Provisions

Library Facilities	VC	PC	HI
	Response (%)	Response (%)	Response (%)
Do you have a library in your school	332 (100%)	105 (94.6%)	770 (100%)
Library location easily accessible	285 (85.8%)	54 (48.6%)	573 (74.4%)
Do you have library hour/ period in your school time table	0	0	134 (17.4%)
Library staff for giving assistance in using the library	129 (38.9%)	3 (2.7%)	292 (37.9%)

Study shows that almost all the students are aware of libraries in their school. Analysis reveals that among the 332 visually challenged students who participated in the study, 285 students (85.8%) responded that the library location is easily accessible. All the visually challenged students are aware of the library facility in their school. Even though every school has a library for academic purposes, the number of students who responded about the availability of library staff for providing assistance is very low (38.9%).

105 (94.6%) physically challenged students are aware of the library facilities in their school. Accessibility to the library is a major problem faced by physically challenged students. 54 (48.6 %) students opined that the school library location is easily accessible. To provide proper library service to the students, assistance from staff is essential. But as teachers are having the charge of school libraries, only 2.7 % students responded positively about the assistance they are getting from library staff. All the hearing impaired students are aware of the library in their school and 74.4% students responded the location of library easily accessible. 292 (37.9%) students responded that they are getting assistance from library staff for using school library.

The visually and physically challenged students opined that there is no provision of library period in their school time table, whereas 134 (17.4%) hearing impaired students responded that the school authorities included library hours in their school time table. The response rate for availability of library staff for giving assistance in using the library is also comparatively high among hearing impaired students than the other categories of differently-abled students.

Infrastructure Facility of Libraries

Table 3. Infrastructure Facility of Libraries

Infrastructure facility of libraries	VC	PC	HI
	Response (%)	Response (%)	Response (%)
Widened entrance	295 (88.9%)	28 (25.2%)	559 (72.6%)
Wheelchair access	231 (69.6%)	11 (9.9%)	299 (38.8%)
Ramps in the library entrance	139 (41.9%)	22 (19.8%)	299 (38.8%)
Signals near entrance	0	0	159 (20.6%)
Sign (direction boards)	0	0	283 (36.8%)
Good lighting inside library	0	73 (65.8%)	730 (94.8%)

As shown in the table, 295 (88.9 %) visually challenged students responded that their school library is providing widened entrance. Even though the government has recommended, all educational institutions to provide barrier-free infrastructural facilities only 231 (69.6 %) students who are visually impaired responded positively for the accessibility with wheelchairs and 41.9% visually challenged students responded that their library provides ramps near the entrance. Sign boards and direction boards are essential for every individual who access the library independently, but 30.7 % visually impaired responded that their library is equipped with sign boards

Physical access of the buildings is a major problems faced by the students with physical impairments. 28 students (25.2%) are of the opinion that their school library are having widened entrance and 11 (9.9 %) students who are physically impaired can access their school library using wheel chairs. 22 (19.8%) physically challenged students responded that their library provides ramps near the entrance and this clearly indicates the negligence towards the access to information for differently abled students. A good number of physically challenged students (65.8 %) responded that their school library is equipped with proper lighting facility in their school library.

72.6 % hearing impaired students opined that their school library is providing widened entrance and only 38.8% hearing impaired students opined that their library provides ramps near the entrance and the accessibility with wheel chairs. While comparing with other two categories of differently-abled, the response rate for the availability of sign and direction boards are high among hearing impaired students (36.8%). Majority of hearing impaired students (94.8 %) are aware of the lighting facilities in the school library.

Awareness of library services

Table 4 Awareness of the Library Services

Awareness of library services		VC	PC	HI
		Count (%)	Count (%)	Count (%)
Any Assistive Technologies are available in your library?	Yes	256 (77.1%)	0	160 (20.8%)
	No	76 (22.9%)	0	610 (79.2%)
Do you have a recording studio in your school?	Yes	256 (77.1%)	0	434 (56.4%)
	No	76(22.9%)	0	336 (43.6%)
Opinion about seating facilities in the library	Comfortable	314(94.6 %)	63 (56.8%)	677 (87.9%)
	Uncomfortable	18(5.4%)	48 (43.2%)	93 (12.1%)
Book shelves in the library can be easily accessible	Yes	297(89.5 %)	15 (13.5%)	728 (94.5%)
	No	35(10.5%)	96 (86.5%)	42 (5.5%)
Infrastructure facilities are helpful for free moving of all categories of students	Yes	287(86.4 %)	17 (15.3%)	677 (87.9%)
	No	45(13.6%)	94 (84.7%)	93 (12.1%)
Library is providing information in your preferred format	Yes	256(77.1 %)	100 (90.1%)	616 (80.0%)
	No	76(22.9%)	11 (9.9%)	154 (20.0%)
School library helpful in meeting your academic needs	Yes	313(94.3 %)	57 (51.4%)	743 (96.5%)
	No	19(5.7%)	54 (48.6%)	27 (3.5%)
How many times you have been given library instruction on how to use e -resources and library resources?	Once	18(5.4%)	0	156 (20.3%)
	Twice	38(11.4%)	0	179 (23.2%)
	More than 2	213(64.2 %)	0	254 (33.0%)
	Never	63(19.0%)	111 (100%)	181 (23.5%)

The services required for the differently-abled students differs according to their types of disability. Analysis has been made to study whether the available services are adequate to meet their information requirements, and the results are presented in Table 4.

All the hearing impaired students responded that they like to visit the school library. Almost all the students (99.7%) responded that there is no computer and internet facility in their library. 743 students (96.5%) says that their school library is helpful in meeting their academic needs, whereas 728 students (94.5%) found the book shelves easily accessible and only a minority (5.5%) found difficulty in accessing the book shelves. 87.9% students opined the library seating facilities are comfortable and also the infrastructure facilities in the library barrier free.

From the response of 636 students (82.6%), it is revealed that the institutions are providing to these students for daily life skill activities. As a hearing impaired students can access printed documents, and 80% favoured for getting information in their preferred format from their libraries. The response rate for the availability of recording studio in schools is also comparatively less (56.4%).

All the physically challenged students who participated in the study opined that they didn't get any instruction on using the library services and e-resources. 90.1% students are getting information in the preferred formats from the library, where as 86.5% says that they can't access the library shelves easily.

It is evident that 85.6% students likes to visit their school library, while 84.7% says that the infrastructural facilities in the library is not barrier free, and 57 (51.4%) students found school library helpful in meeting their academic needs. While 94 students responded that they are getting training for daily life skill activities from the institution.

From the analysis shown in the Table it can be observed that there exists significant difference in the gender and the barriers in accessing of book shelves. It is found that the barriers in accessing of book shelves among male students is significantly higher than that of female students.

From the table it is clear that 77.1 % students responded positively that their school provides Braille print outs and it is also noted that majority of students are from special schools and students studying in schools with inclusive education responded comparatively less i.e. 22.9%.

Also 77.1% students opined that their library is equipped with assistive technologies and they are having recording studio in their school; with all these their library is providing information in their preferred format. 94.6% students found the seating facilities in the library as comfortable and 89.5% students indicated that they can easily access the book shelves in the library.

The library should be kept clear from all protruding objects or they have to be removed or minimized for the safety of users with visual impairments. The response rate (86.4%) shows a positive sign as the students found the infrastructure facilities helpful and barrier free for all categories of students. Most of the students (97.3%) like to visit their school library as they found school library helpful for meeting their academic needs.

Every school are equipped with resource rooms as part of inclusive education, most of the institutions (99.7%) are providing training for daily life skill activities. The major drawback found through the study is that, response rate of institutions providing training to use library and its

resources is comparatively less. Some institutions (19%) had never conduct training about the use

The availability of assistive technologies in the library is significantly high among visually challenged students. Similarly, the response for the comfortability of seating facilities and the availability of a recording studio are high among visually challenged students. The library should be made barrier free for the free movement of physically challenged students, but the response of the physically challenged about the accessibility of bookshelves in the library and the facilities of infrastructure facilities for free movement are very less, when compared with visually and hearing impaired students.

Frequency of Library Visit

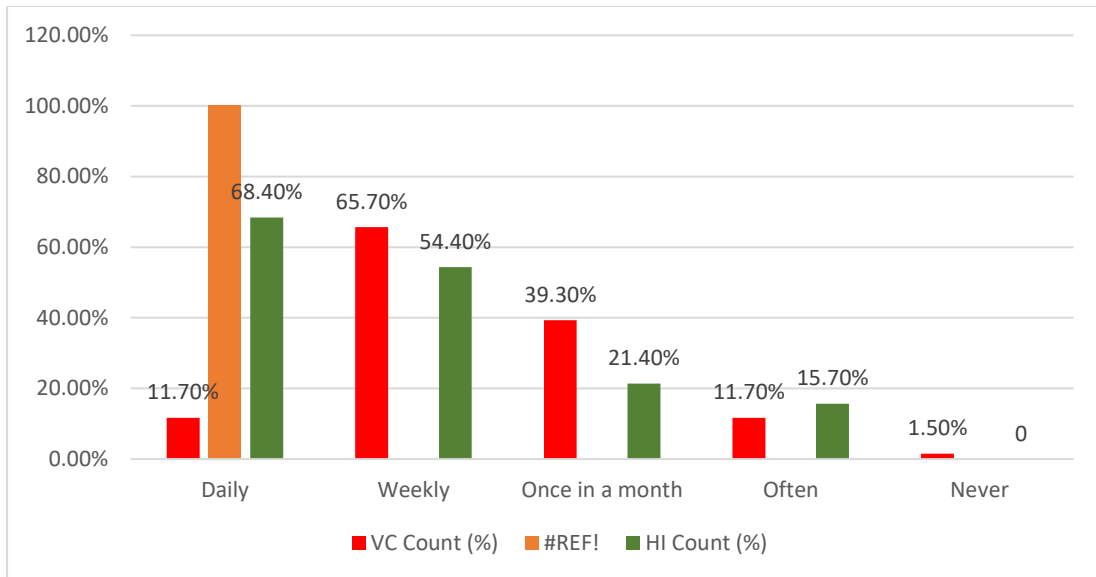


Figure 2 Frequency of Library Visit

Analysis reveals that 218(65.7%) visually challenged students visiting the library weekly followed by daily visitors, 39 (11.7%). Students using the library once in a month are comparatively less in numbers (9.3%).

Figure shows that daily visitors of physically challenged students in the school library are very less (2.7%). Students visiting the library often are more than that of visiting once in a month and weekly. The study revealed that 13 (11.7%) students never visited the library.

The study found that, among the three categories of differently-abled students, visually challenged students are using the library daily (11.7%), followed by hearing impaired students (8.4%.) Similarly the response rate for weekly visitors of the library are also high among visually challenged students (65.7%), followed by hearing impaired students (54.4%).The response rate of library visit is often more among physically challenged students than the hearing impaired students (15.7%). The inconsistency in student’s visiting the library may be due to the lack of library hours in the school time table.

Purpose of Library Visit

Table 5 Purpose of Library Visit

Library visit	VC		PC		HI	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Academic	313	94.3%	54	48.6%	580	75.3%
For seminars, projects, assignments etc	287	86.4%	22	19.8%	303	39.4%
For general reading	269	81.0%	77	69.4%	643	83.5%
To obtain course related information	266	80.1%	3	2.7%	17	2.2%
To prepare for exams	284	85.5%	6	5.4%	183	23.8%
Others	265	79.8%	2	1.8%	129	16.8%

It is evident from the table that majority of the visually challenged students (94.3%) are using the library for their academic purposes, whereas it is comparatively less among hearing impaired (75.3%) and physically challenged (48.6%) students. Similarly using the library for the preparation of seminars, projects, assignments etc., also show higher response among visually challenged (86.4%). The response by hearing impaired (39.4%) and physically challenged (19.8%) are very low. Visiting library for general reading is indicated by 83.5% hearing impaired students followed by visually challenged students (81%). Least priority is given by hearing impaired (2.2%) and physically challenged (2.7%) for obtaining course related information from the libraries.

The study found that, even though the sources of information are not available in their preferred formats, visually challenged students are using the library more than the other two categories of students

Source of Awareness about the Library Services

Library services are valuable services but are undervalued because of lack of visibility among the users. As the school library is an important part of the educational system, students are supposed to utilize its resources and achieve maximum benefit from it. The source of awareness about library services plays a major role in developing the usage of library services among children. Students were asked to indicate their source of awareness on library services and are presented in the following figure.

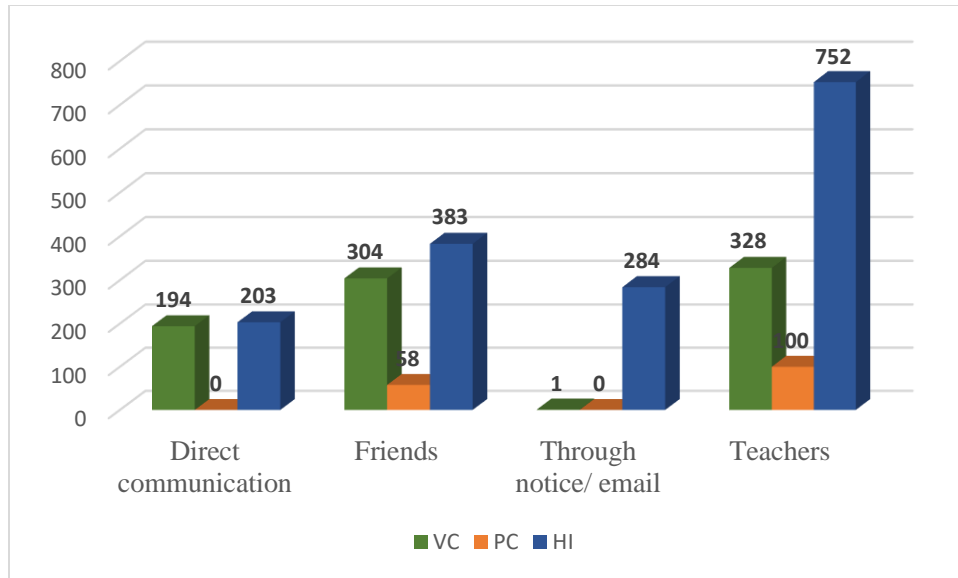


Figure 3 Source of Awareness about Library Services- Comparison

From the figure, it can be seen that 328 (98.8%) responded that teachers are their source of information. Teachers are the main source of information on library services for the hearing impaired (97.7%) and physically challenged students (90.1%). The response rate for getting information through notice/email is very less among the three categories of differently-abled students.

Use of Braille Documents by Visually Challenged

While conducting the study, it is found that schools in Kerala are facing problems while providing information to visually challenged students. Government schools are not equipped with braille books, but it is sufficiently available in special schools. Due to the unavailability of books in preferred formats, students are facing problems while accessing the required information. Special schools are focusing more to provide course materials, story books, etc., in braille formats, even if in limited copies.

Figure 4 shows the use of braille documents by the visually impaired students. Analysis shows that students mostly prefer text books in braille format (99.1%). Even though magazines in braille format are not available, the responses from students indicate that they prefer to read magazines in braille format. To read other materials like story books, newspapers etc., in Braille format are indicated by 22% students.

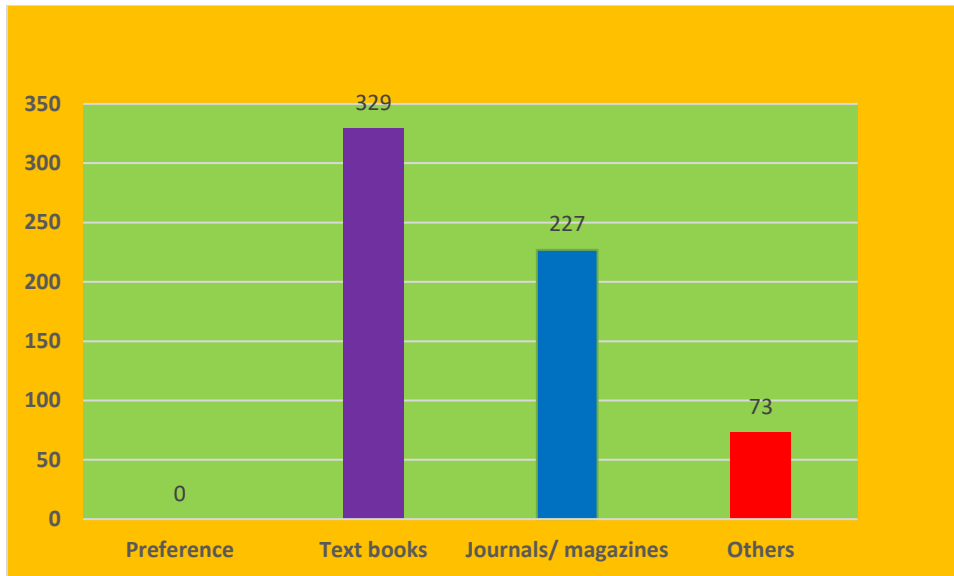


Figure 4 Use of Braille Documents by Visually Challenged

Frequency of Using Braille documents

It is clear from the Figure that 234 (70.5%) students using braille books daily and 74 (22.3%) use it weekly. Age-wise analysis found that 73.2% of the students in the age of 13-15 are daily users while 58.3% of the students in the age of 16-18 are weekly users. Gender-wise analysis shows that 79.5% male students are daily users while only 56.8% female are daily users. It is also noted that 31.8% female students are weekly users while 16% females are weekly users.

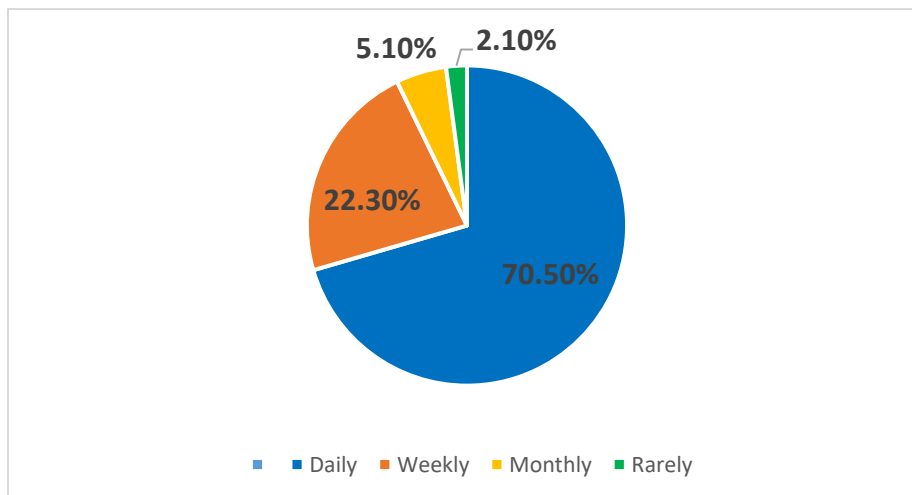


Figure 5: Frequency of using Braille Documents

Level of Attitude on Library Collection

The attitude of students towards library collection was analyzed and presented in the following tables. The student's responses are potentially useful in bridging the gap between the kind of information sources needed and the kind of sources in existence.

Attitude of Visually Challenged Students

The level of attitude of visually challenged students towards the library collection shows that, the printed documents which are available in the library are rated as good by 81.6% students. Only 52 (15.7%) students consider the printed collection as excellent.

Audiobooks, which are the most preferred medium by visually challenged, are rated as good collection by 255 (76.8%), students whereas no student indicated it as excellent. Braille is the most common source which visually challenged use mainly for their educational purposes. 130 (39.2%) students responded that the braille collection is good; whereas 76 (22.9%) students opined it as poor. 254 (76.5%) found the newspaper collection is good.

Table 6 Attitude of Library Collection- Visually Challenged

Library collection	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Mean value	Rank
Printed documents	52 (15.7%)	271 (81.6%)	8 (2.4%)	1 (0.3%)	3.1	3
Braille books	126 (38%)	130 (39.2%)	0 (0)	76 (22.9%)	2.9	4
Audio books	0 (0)	255 (76.8%)	0 (0)	77 (23.2%)	3.3	1
E-books	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	332 (100%)	1.0	7
CDs	0 (0)	26 (7.8)	232 (69.9%)	74 (22.3%)	1.9	6
Computers with Internet	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	332 (100%)	1.0	8
Newspapers	65 (19.6%)	254 (76.5%)	12 (3.6%)	1 (0.3%)	3.2	2
Other collections	25 (7.5%)	127 (38.3%)	175 (52.7%)	5 (1.5%)	2.5	5

The ranking of the mean value of the attitude of library collection shows that audio books (mean value=3.3) is rated first followed by newspapers (mean value=3.2) and printed documents (mean value=3.1).

Attitude of Physically Challenged Students

The study revealed that, the collection of books in the library is found as average collection by majority of students (38.7%), Among the 111 physically challenged students, 109 (98.2%) responded the journal collection as poor, whereas 108 students indicated ebooks collection as poor. All the students responded that the computer collection is poor. Newspapers are available in all the libraries and are found as excellent by 15.3%, while 48.6% responded to it as an average collection

Table 7 Attitude of Library Collection- Physically Challenged

Library collection	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Mean value	Rank
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Books	34 (30.6%)	34 (30.6%)	43 (38.7%)	0 (0)	2.9	1
Study materials	20 (18%)	23 (20.7%)	38 (34.2%)	30 (27%)	2.3	3
Journals	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1.8%)	109 (98.2%)	1.0	7
Magazines	6 (5.4%)	18 (16.2%)	58 (52.3%)	29 (26.1%)	2.0	5
E-books	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (2.7%)	108 (97.3%)	1.0	6
CDs	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0.9%)	110 (99.1%)	1.0	8
Computers	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	111 (100%)	1.0	9
Newspapers	17 (15.3%)	36 (32.4%)	54 (48.6%)	4 (3.6%)	2.6	2
Other collections	8 (7.2%)	30 (27%)	55 (49.5%)	18 (16.2%)	2.3	4

The ranking of the mean value shows that the books collection in the library is in the first rank (2.9) followed by newspapers (2.6) and study materials (2.3).

Attitude of Hearing Impaired

Table 8 Attitude of Library Collection - Hearing Impaired

Library collection	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Mean value	Rank
Books	322 (41.8)	446 (57.9)	1 (0.1)	1 (0.1)	3.4	1
Study materials	212 (27.5)	551 (71.6)	6 (0.8)	1 (0.1)	3.3	2
Journals	9 (1.2)	284 (36.9)	1 (0.1)	476 (61.8)	1.8	6
Magazines	24 (3.1)	460 (59.7)	267 (34.7)	19 (2.5)	2.6	4
E-books	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0.1)	769 (99.9)	1.0	8
CDs	0 (0)	174 (22.6)	126 (16.4)	470 (61)	1.6	7
Computers	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	770 (100)	1.0	9
Newspapers	40 (5.2)	503 (65.3)	129 (16.8)	98 (12.7)	2.6	5
Other collections	36 (4.7)	626 (81.3)	82 (10.6)	26 (3.4)	2.9	3

It is revealed that the book collection in the library is found as good by the majority of students and excellent by 41.8% of students. 476 (61.8) responded that the journal collection was poor, and 769 (99.9%) students indicated eBooks collection as poor. Since there is no computer in most of the libraries, all the respondents commented it as poor.

The ranking of the attitude of library collection indicates that books occupy the top position (mean value=3.4) followed by study materials (mean value=3.3) and other collections in the library (mean value=2.9). Analysis reveals that the library collection is rated as good or as average by most of the students. The response rate for excellent is comparatively low, which shows the lack of proper sources and services in the library.

Level of Satisfaction of Library Services

Satisfaction level of the library services are analyzed and are presented in the following tables.

Visually Challenged Students

Table 9 Satisfaction of Library Services- Visually Challenged

Library Services	Satisfied	Average	Unsatisfied
Library location	259 (78)	15 (4.5)	58 (17.5)
Circulation service	59 (17.8)	234 (70.5)	39 (11.7)
Library training services	1 (0.3)	261 (78.6)	70 (21.1)
Reference service	3 (0.9)	169 (50.9)	160 (48.2)
Other services	2 (0.6)	285 (85.8)	45 (13.6)

The majority (78%) of the students are satisfied with the library location, while 58 students (17.5 %) expressed that they are unsatisfied with the present library location. Most of the students (70.5%) found the circulation section of the library as average, which needs improvement. To get familiar with the source and services of the library, students need proper awareness services and training programs. But it is revealed that only one student responded to the training service as excellent, while 261 (78.6%) students indicated it as an average service. Reference service is the backbone of any library, but 48.2% responded that they are not satisfied with the library reference service. Other services from the library are considered average by most of the students (85.8%).

Physically Challenged

Table 10 Satisfaction of Library Services- Physically Challenged

Library Services	Satisfied	Average	Unsatisfied	Mean value
Library location	22 (19.8)	14 (12.6)	75 (67.6)	1.5
Circulation service	1 (0.9)	38 (34.2)	72 (64.9)	1.4
Library training services	3 (2.7)	11 (9.9)	97 (87.4)	1.2
Reference service	0 (0)	48 (43.2)	63 (56.8)	1.4
Other services	0 (0)	45 (40.5)	66 (59.5)	1.4

Physical access to the library building is the major barrier faced by physically challenged students. Among the 111 physically challenged students in the study, 75 students (67.6%) responded that they are not satisfied with the library location, and only 22 students (19.8%) says that they are satisfied with the location of the library. It is revealed from the responses of physically challenged students that they are not satisfied with the present library services.

Hearing Impaired

Table 11 Satisfaction of Library Services -Hearing Impaired

Library Services	Satisfied	Average	Unsatisfied	Mean value
Library location	375 (48.7)	373 (48.4)	22 (2.9)	2.5
Circulation service	484 (62.9)	220 (28.6)	66 (8.6)	2.5
Library training services	293 (38.1)	176 (22.9)	301 (39.1)	2.0
Reference service	485 (63)	126 (16.4)	159 (20.6)	2.4
Other services	560 (72.7)	67 (8.7)	143 (18.6)	2.5

Majority (48.7%) of the hearing impaired students are satisfied with the library location and 48.4% are moderately satisfied. 62.9% of the total students are satisfied with library circulation, whereas 28.6% found it as average .301 (39.1) students are unsatisfied with the library training services and 63% students are satisfied with the reference service. From the analysis it is evident that the hearing impaired students are generally satisfied with the most of the library services.

Suggestions to improve library services

- a. Schools providing inclusive education should take initiative in catering the information needs of the differently-abled students by equipping them with proper assistive devices. Make the library a barrier-free environment for the differently-abled. Libraries should provide inclusive services to differently-abled students.
- b. Include library hours in the school timetable and allow students to use libraries to the maximum.
- c. Seating facilities of the library should be made comfortable for all the student
- d. The students should be trained in using the library services. Orientation programs shall be provided so that differently-abled can become aware of the wide scope of library resources
- e. Computer services should be included in the library, as the students will find it helpful to access the required information from the internet. Include more electronic resources in the library collection.
- f. Library should provide alternative methods for the delivery of services to differently-abled persons who would otherwise be unable to use the library services independently.
- g. In order to ensure proper use of assistive technologies, the schools should not just concentrate on training programs in resource rooms but also make students aware of its need, usage, and advantages in day to day life.
- h. Training of librarians is necessary to provide optimum performance. Library professionals should be specially trained to provide proper services to the differently-abled.
- i. Include services to differently-abled in the syllabus of library science courses, as many of the library staff are not aware of the additional services to be provided.
- j. LRC's can ensure the access to information and can thus bridge the gap between information rich and information disadvantaged. So libraries need to be adapted the provide inclusive services and to transform itself into an LRC.

Conclusion

The study revealed that the present library facilities are not adequate to meet the information needs of differently-abled students in the state. Even though acts and guidelines are established in our country for making barrier-free environment to the differently-abled, study

found that it is not fully practiced. Today, in this digital age, latest technologies can explore the library services and provide information to the required user in the required format. It is found that majority of students are aware of computer and internet, but frequency of using it and assistive devices are comparatively low. Libraries should enable them to use the library as a gateway of information by providing adequate resources and services.

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