

# **Enhancing Library Services for Individuals with Special Needs: A Study**

A Dissertation for

Course code and Course Title: LIS 651 & Dissertation

Credits: 16

Submitted in partial fulfilments of Master

Degree in M.L.I.Sc. by

**Bhavani Kallappa Rabinal**

Seat

Number

22P0010005

PRN

201912272

Under the Supervision of

**Dr. Shamin Pereira**

D.D. Kosambi School of Social

Science and Behavioural

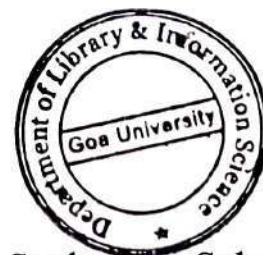
Studies Library and Information

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Goa University

April 2024



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## **DECLARATION BY STUDENT**

I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation report entitled, “Enhancing Library Services for Individuals with Special Needs: A Study” is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the Library and Information Science at the D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University under the Supervision of Dr. Shamin Pereira and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities will be not be responsible for the correctness of observations / experimental or other findings given the dissertation.

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## **COMPLETION CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the dissertation report “**Enhancing Library Services for Individuals with Special Needs: A Study**” is a bonafide work carried out by **Bhavani Kallappa Rabinal** under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **M.L.I.Sc.** In the Discipline Library and Information Science at the D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University.

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Signature of Dean of the School

School Stamp

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Place: Goa University

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Bhavani Kallappa Rabinal

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SR. NO.	ABBREVIATIONS
1.	ADA – The Americans with Disabilities Act
2.	APA - American Psychological Association
3.	ARL- Association of Research Libraries
4.	BARD – Braille and Audio Reading Download
5.	BCPL – Baltimore County Public Library
6.	DAISY – Digital Accessible Information System
7.	DPL – Delhi public library
8.	ICT – Information and Communications Technology
9.	IFLA – The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
10.	IITs- Indian Institutes of Technology
11.	JAWS - Job Access With Speech
12.	LIS – Library and information science
13.	NDL – The National Diet Library
14.	NGO - Non-Governmental Organization
15.	NIEPVD – The National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities
16.	NLS – the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
17.	OBR – Optical Braille Recognition Scanning Software
18.	OPAC- Online Public Access Catalog.
19.	PEEPs – Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans
20.	PES – The Patron Engagement Section
21.	RNIB – Royal National Institute of Blind People
22.	SAFA – Screen Access for All
23.	TCS – Tata Consultancy Services
24.	UGC – University Grants Commission
25.	UNESCO - The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

There was no public library in Goa prior to the nineteenth century. In the year 1832, the concept of a public library made its grand entry in Goa. In the same year, The Publica Livraria (public library) was established, which marked the beginning of the public library. (Maru & Tadasad, 2021)

Libraries are considered a warehouse of wisdom and a repository of human knowledge. According to Ranganathan's second law of library science, i.e., "Every Reader his/ her book," this principle emphasizes the idea that libraries should strive to meet the diverse needs, preferences, interests, and requirements of every single patron who steps into the library, including people with special needs. They frequently use public libraries for reading, leisure, education, research, and accessing information and online databases. The public library is considered a layman's university and is expected to make available information resources and services for people with special needs that will make easy for them to use and fulfil their satisfaction. (Obuezie et al., 2022)

The accessibility of library resources and services for individuals with special needs is a critical issue that requires continuous attention and improvement. While conventional library resources may not cater to their specific requirements, it's also important not to forget that everyone has the right to learn and get information.

This study will examine how public libraries in Goa are currently catering to the needs of individuals with special requirements. It will identify the challenges faced by libraries in providing resources and services. And finally, it will suggest ways to improve library services for those with special needs. This research focuses on the need to have better physical infrastructure and technology and also on the training of library staff to address the unique requirements of disabled patrons. Creating an inclusive environment in libraries ensures equal access to resources, services, and opportunities for all, regardless of abilities or special needs, and makes libraries more accessible and welcoming for everyone.

## **1.2 Definition**

- 1) According to Merriam-Webster, special needs means “any of various difficulties (such as a physical, emotional, behavioral, or learning disability or impairment) that causes an individual to require additional or specialized services or accommodations (such as in education or recreation)” (Merriam–Webster, n.d.)
- 2) Special needs means “the particular things needed by or provided to help people who have an illness or condition that makes it difficult for them to do the things that other people do” (Cambridge University Press, n.d.).

## **1.3 Research Questions**

1. Are library staff in Goa trained to assist individuals with special needs?
2. What improvements can be made to library facilities and resources to cater to the needs of individuals with special needs?
3. What types of library resources and services are currently available in the public libraries of Goa for disabled users?

## **1.4 Scope**

Goa has a well-knit network of public libraries. Krishnadas Shama Goa State Central Library is the apex library. After that, Dr. Francisco Luis Gomes District Library situated at Navelim comes into the picture, followed by 7 taluka libraries, municipal libraries, village libraries which are around 130, and also 3 town Libraries. Besides these there are also private libraries and the libraries run by NGO's.

The scope of this study is limited to the librarians who are working in public libraries in Goa. Due to time restrictions, 7 taluka libraries, 3 town libraries, a central library, and a district library were selected for the study. The study focuses mainly on the disabled population.

## **1.5 Objectives**

- 1) To identify the library resources and services available for people with special needs

- 2) Identify challenges that hinder the availability of information resources and services for people with disabilities in the public libraries of Goa.
- 3) To find out whether library staff is trained to address unique needs and empower individuals with special needs
- 4) To find out best practices and new innovative strategies implemented by public libraries across Goa

## **1.6 Hypotheses**

1. Most of the public libraries in Goa provide facilities for individuals with special needs.
2. The library staff is not well trained to help individuals with disabilities.
3. There is a greater need for library services in the public libraries of Goa for the disabled population.

## **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

- 1) Only 12 major public libraries are included in the study whereas other small libraries such as municipal and NGO libraries are excluded from the study population.
- 2) The study has considered library services provided only for the visually impaired, hearing impaired, physically challenged, mentally retarded, and learning disabilities.

## **1.8 Research Methodology**

The researcher has adopted a mixed method approach wherein both quantitative data from questionnaire and qualitative data from interview was used. A well-developed and structured questionnaire was distributed among the public librarians of Goa, which includes the central, district, town, and taluka libraries. Further interview was conducted. The APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition was used for in-text citation and references. Both primary and secondary sources, secondary data like Goa Disability Census 2011 and Educational Statistics at a Glance are utilized to supplement the analysis. By combining survey data,

interviews, and secondary sources, a comprehensive understanding is achieved. And finally, collected data is systematically analyzed and organized using tables, figures, charts, and graphs.

### **1.9 Population of the study**

The study is conducted on 12 public libraries in Goa which includes:

- 1) Krishnadas Shama Goa State Central Library
- 2) Dr. Francisco Luis Gomes District Library
- 3) Government Taluka Library, Bicholim, Goa
- 4) Government Taluka Library, Canacona, Goa
- 5) Government Taluka Library, Curchorem, Goa
- 6) Government Taluka Library, Pernem, Goa
- 7) Government Taluka Library, Ponda, Goa
- 8) Government Taluka Library, Sanguem, Goa
- 9) Government Taluka Library, Valpoi, Goa
- 10) Government Town Library, Cuncolim, Goa
- 11) Government Town Library, Quepem, Goa
- 12) Government Town Library, Sakhali, Goa

### **1.10 Findings**

- The study revealed that out of the 12 public libraries in Goa selected for the study, only 5 libraries (41.7%) are providing resources and services for individuals with special needs. The remaining 7 libraries (58.3%) do not currently offer resources or services to cater to individuals with special needs due to a lack of demand and infrequent visits from such individuals. However, librarians have expressed a willingness to provide services if there is demand.
- The study shows that out of 5 libraries that provide services to individuals with special needs, cater to physically challenged individuals, whereas only 2 libraries (40%) offer services to visually impaired and mentally retarded individuals. 1 library (20%) serves those with hearing impairments.



- The study found that those libraries that provide services to people with special needs, they have accessible toilets, 4 libraries (80%) have adequate space and entrances for wheelchair users. 3 libraries (60%) provide ramps, while 2 libraries (40%) have tactile flooring for the visually impaired. However, provisions such as sensory rooms, communication boards, and adjustable furniture are lacking.
- All 12 libraries surveyed offer basic resources such as printed materials and services like reference, interlibrary loans, and OPAC services. While 4 libraries out of 5 (80%) provide toys and games, while 3 libraries (60%) offer selective dissemination of information, large print materials, picture books, and user education. Only 1 library (20%) has specialized resources such as magnification tools, e-resources, easy-to-read books, posters, film strips, television, audio and visual materials, and ergonomic keyboards.
- A major issue identified is the lack of accessible materials such as braille, large print, and audiobooks, as reported by 3 libraries (60%). Additionally, 2 libraries (40%) struggle due to a shortage of specialized staff and inadequate infrastructure
- It was found that out of 12 public libraries in Goa, staff at 8 libraries do not receive any training on how to effectively assist individuals with special needs, while 4 libraries provide training to staff as needed or upon request.
- Out of the five surveyed libraries, 3 (60%) have implemented accessibility policies and programmes, while 1 library (20%) has not, and another 1 library (20%) is unsure. The remaining seven libraries focus their policies and programs solely on general users of the library.
- The study found that best practices implemented by libraries by offering books and magazines in Braille for people who can't see well. They have individual and group study rooms for different ways people like to study. They provide equipment like automatic wheelchairs and magnifying glasses for those with disabilities. Libraries also have audio books, CDs, and DVDs, and teach people how to use special tools and software. Mobile libraries visit special schools to share resources, and libraries use WhatsApp to give information online. They bring special school students to the library to learn how to use resources and deliver books to bus stops or common areas for people who have trouble with transportation.

## 1.11 Chapterization

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Review of Literature
- Chapter 3: Explanation of Concepts
- Chapter 4: Library Services for Individuals with Special Needs at the National and International Level
- Chapter 5: Data Interpretation and Analysis
- Chapter 6: Findings, Suggestions, and Conclusion

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## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

A literature review is an essential requirement for conducting any type of research. The main aim of this literature review is to point out the various publications that have made significant contributions to this particular field of research. It provides a comprehensive overview and summary of the available information on a specific topic. It also provides a theoretical base for the research. The literature consulted and briefly reviewed in the following sections. This literature review aims to explore the evolving landscape of library services tailored to the unique needs of individuals with special needs

- 1) In this study, the researchers found that the only electronic resources available in south-eastern Nigeria are taped books and OPAC, neither of which is used properly and efficiently. Mobility-impaired users are not generally benefiting from new technology. Access to technological resources can disadvantage people with disabilities as it could widen the gap between those with disabilities and those without. ( Khan & Singh, 2023)
- 2) This article describes how academic libraries are changing their physical and virtual settings to prioritize accessibility for disabled users. To better serve all users, they have updated websites, added new technology, and modified teaching materials. The survey, which was carried out in October 2020 among Association of Research Libraries (ARL) institutions, looks at the services provided, improvements made in response to campus or state requirements, roles played, and reasons for providing these services. The survey results help university libraries enhance and expand their support for people with disabilities, making their services more inclusive and accessible to a diverse range of users. (Longmeier & Foster, 2022)
- 3) The study points out that most law universities have disabled patrons. The paper emphasizes various efforts carried out by law University libraries in India. The

analysis assumes that law libraries in India serve persons with disabilities and abide by well-established guidelines and principles in conformity with the existing laws to the optimum level. Law Universities of India are well equipped with assistive technologies, but there is much more scope for Law University. (Singh, 2022)

- 4) Efforts were made to find different information resources and services available for the person with special needs in Professor Kenneth Dike State Central e-library, Awka. The usage of public libraries is high among the masses. There is a lack of information resources and services for people with special needs only because of poor funding. There is a need for adequate financial support, library resources, skilled librarians, and good maintenance. (Obuezie et al., 2022)
- 5) As there is not enough communication with students with disabilities, especially with "invisible" disabilities, they might experience barriers, as suspected by the researcher in this study. Students of the University of Georgia report barriers related to physical aspects of spaces and auditory and social aspects. Some students have issues navigating an array of online resources. Libraries still have far to go to meet the needs and requests of particular students. (Roberson et al., 2022)
- 6) Considering the information needs of differently abled users, this research sought to identify tools and services available for 10 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). The study shows that ICT has become necessary to students' lives. The data analysis found that a sufficient number of assistive technology tools and services are available for people with disabilities, but they need proper training and orientation in operating those available tools. (Yadav & Singh, 2022)
- 7) This paper tries to determine how well Saudi Arabian institutions' libraries serve disabled students, with a focus on Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University. A survey was carried out to find out about the use and satisfaction of library resources among 35 students with disabilities. High levels of satisfaction were identified with services that include large print, audiobooks, returns, book

borrowing, and Braille books. However, they were dissatisfied with certain aspects, like the compatibility of signs, the availability of tools, and specific library services for disabled students. The study identified obstacles, including issues with toilets, elevators, entrances, corridors, and photocopiers, impacting library services for students with disabilities. (Smadi, 2022)

- 8) This study examines the library services and facilities provided to students with disabilities at all colleges that are affiliated with Shivaji University in Kolhapur, India. They focused on those with visual, hearing, and physical impairments. Most libraries offer electronic resources, but some are not easily accessible. Many have websites, but almost half are not accessible. Some libraries provide assistive technologies like screen readers and adaptive keyboards. About 60% of libraries have facilities for people with disabilities, including wheelchairs, ramps, and designated seating. However, less than half of disabled students use these facilities. The study suggests improvements for services catering to individuals with visual, hearing, and physical disabilities. (Khot et al., 2022)
- 9) People with disabilities are a large and vibrant part of society. They should neither be underestimated nor ignored. The role of a library in providing equitable library services is slowly developing. The researcher suggests that librarians should offer special services to help them use the library independently and easily. The text explains Equitable Library Service, discussing various disabilities such as physical, visual, and hidden ones. It also talks about tools and software that can assist users with disabilities in accessing library resources. The context mentions laws related to disability rights in different countries and covers aspects like making library spaces easy to use, providing materials in accessible formats, and offering orientation programs for users. (Nandi, 2021)
- 10) The paper talks about the barriers that students with disabilities face in accessing library services. It highlights three key barriers: Inaccessible formats refer to materials not being available in accessible forms like Braille or audio, while library

structure issues involve inadequate accessibility features. The lack of trained staff pertains to employees not being equipped to assist students with disabilities. The document recommends solutions such as ensuring accessible formats, modifying library structures, training staff, and adhering to disability guidelines to create inclusive and welcoming library environments for all. (Farooq & Manzoor, 2021)

- 11)** This study is intended to look at how librarians in Nigeria feel about users with learning disabilities. They wanted to know librarians with positive or negative attitudes, check if attitudes varied by gender, and see if experience influenced attitudes. They surveyed 451 librarians and found that 64% had a positive attitude, while 36% had a negative one. Male librarians were more positive than females, but attitudes didn't change with experience. The study suggests that librarians generally have a positive attitude, but there's room for improvement, especially for female librarians who could use nurturing qualities with all users. There's also a need to increase awareness of learning disabilities among educators and the public. (Chidiadi, 2021)
- 12)** Mohammad Nazim found that at Jawaharlal Nehru University Library, signs indicating the location of toilets were missing; he saw the circulation and reference desk challenging to reach as they were a little high. The library featured appropriate chairs for users to wait. The library has a separate unit called Helen Keller, which provides specialized services with assistive technologies to disabled researchers and students. Advanced assistive devices, including hardware and software, are available. (Nazim, 2021)
- 13)** The researchers aimed at examining the accessibility and usability of library websites. The study is about how helpful library websites were for students with disabilities and the obstacles encountered while accessing websites. The study also aimed to provide solutions to improve accessibility. Study results found that almost all libraries of Universities in Kenya have websites; however, they did not have a

disability services page, and a majority of them are not aware of the existence of library websites and e-resources. (Kiruki & Mutula, 2021)

- 14)** This study looks at the challenges that academic libraries face in using assistive technologies for disabled users. They asked people from 186 universities and identified 51 issues like knowledge gaps, technical issues, organizational and financial constraints. About 40% of challenges were linked to bureaucracy, culture, policies, and partnerships. The study proposes 15 solutions at the end to fix and solve these problems to some extent, with an emphasis on the need for more user centric services. (Potnis & Mallary, 2021)
- 15)** This article examines insufficient library services as a challenge to 21<sup>st</sup> century education in Nigeria. The 21<sup>st</sup> century library is expected to have a wide range of digital and print resources. However, most Nigerian libraries face issues like outdated materials, lack of funding, technological literacy among staff, and irregular power supply. This makes library services not good enough, which affects how well students do in school and the goals of education. It suggests solutions like staff training, acquiring relevant materials, collaboration among libraries, and ensuring stable power to improve educational outcomes. (Okwu & Oporum, 2021)
- 16)** This article examined the provision of library resources and services for hearing-impaired students in special school libraries in South-South, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Data were collected using a questionnaire from 60 hearing-impaired students across 12 special schools. The study found a shortage of information resources in alternative formats and a lack of skilled teacher librarians to provide suitable library services. It was concluded that hearing-impaired special school libraries should be equipped with the required resources and services to support and help the students have easy access. (Igwela & Opara, 2020)

- 17)** The study is about funding for library service delivery in schools with special needs students in North Central Nigeria. The findings showed that the significant funding sources for special needs schools under study are subvention from state government, NGOs, and religious groups. The primary services offered by these libraries are circulation, document delivery, and reference services. The analysis revealed that the lack of funds to procure library resources is a significant problem. (Madu et al., 2020)
- 18)** In this paper, the researcher investigates if academic libraries in the upper East region of Ghana have made provisions for persons with disabilities. Most libraries are inaccessible to disabled persons. Diverse media information is absent for persons with visual and hearing impairments. The study also reveals that library staff lack adequate knowledge. There should be increased investment and allocation of funds to libraries to satisfy the needs of disabled people. (Ayoung et al., 2020)
- 19)** The paper's primary objective is to assess the current scenario of public library services for differently-abled persons worldwide. The literature of two decades is presented here. When we think of the current system of library services for disabled people, it is not very encouraging, especially in developing and underdeveloped countries. However, public libraries are slowly realizing the need to include differently abled in the future. (Patil & Kumbar, 2020)
- 20)** The paper's findings revealed that the library staff are poorly trained in special needs. There is a lack of assistive equipment, information resources, and awareness among NELSON that the courses for meeting special needs be made compulsory for LIS professionals and even in engineering and technology so that universally accessible buildings are built, suitable websites are designed, and librarians select and acquire proper information resources and assistive equipment. (Majinge & Msonge, 2020)



- 21)** This research aimed to evaluate the status of East Azerbaijan public libraries' services to users with disabilities. The present study showed that they don't have proper and up-to-date library services and resources to provide for the person with disabilities. Tools and technologies are also inadequate, unavailable, and limited. The worst thing is that users are unaware of these tools. There are no established policy services for users with disabilities, and library buildings don't have favourable conditions to serve people with disabilities. (Khasseh et al., 2020)
- 22)** This case study focused on how visually impaired students access library facilities and resources at the University of Education, Winneba. While accessing the physical infrastructure of the libraries, some students face difficulties. Some learning materials are not in accessible formats. Braille Library was not that satisfying. There is a need for more assistive or technological devices. (Acheampong et al., 2020)
- 23)** The study discovered that none of the libraries had things like ramps or working elevators for wheelchair users. Also, basic things like catalogues, desks, shelves, and bathrooms weren't set up for wheelchair users either. Further it recommends that it should be made mandatory for libraries to have facilities that disabled people can use including those with wheelchairs. (Nkiko et al., 2020)
- 24)** The researcher provides an overview of various facilities available in the Universities of Karnataka for disabled people. Some University Libraries have taken steps to give suitable exclusive alternatives so that this population can avail of the services. In some libraries, physical access in the form of parking slots, unobstructed pedestrian routes, accessible furniture, and toilets are available. The study concluded that Mysore University provides the maximum number of facilities. (HG & Reddy, 2019)
- 25)** This article highlights various library services that are provided especially for people with intellectual disabilities. It also explores a case study of an adult book

club for intellectual disabilities at an academic library and then compares it with 30 similar type book clubs in public libraries. The study revealed that these clubs aim to provide social and educational opportunities, and they were successful based on attendance and member engagement. No doubt there are some differences in activities between public and academic libraries, both types of clubs serve inclusive purposes for their members. (Conner & Plocharczyk, 2019)

**26)** The research was carried out in two university libraries in Tanzania. Findings bring to our notice that the environment does not favour users in wheelchairs to easily access information in these specific libraries. Users of university libraries in Tanzania have to move from one place to another as there are no proper technological aids. There is a lack of trained and dedicated staff in libraries. The study concluded that library services were unsuitable for people in wheelchairs. (kavishe & Isibika, 2018)

**27)** The study was done on the libraries of public and private sector universities of Lahore, Punjab province. The study's findings revealed that ramps and elevators were available, directional signs in large print, book call numbers converted into Braille for blind students, and telecommunication devices had not been provided to deaf persons. (Bashir et al., 2017)

**28)** In Malawi, while using libraries, challenges occur because of a lack of equipment to support their accessibility to library and information resources. Further, the researcher pointed out that most libraries do not offer specialized services even though there is great demand—this lack negatively impacts the utilization of services by people with disabilities. (Chaputula & Mapulanga, 2017)

**29)** The article is about how libraries can help people who are blind or visually impaired. This group of people have similar information needs as others but also have specific needs related to their disability. It also discusses various services that libraries offer for them that includes Braille books, talking books, large print

materials, electronic texts, and special technologies to assist them. It highlights challenges faced by this community and provides guidelines for improving library services in India, including collection development and staff training. (Rayini, 2017)

- 30)** This study analysed how public libraries serve children with disabilities, based on interviews with 18 librarians. They proposed "inclusive library model" that highlights six important areas libraries should focus on collections, physical space/equipment, partnerships, programs, training, and marketing. The study aims to understand the difficulties librarians have in helping children with disabilities, the problems they face, and how they can improve their support for these kids and their families. (Kaeding et al., 2017)
- 31)** The study assessment of accessibility has been conducted in Istanbul public libraries within the scope of the general area. The purpose is to provide suggestions for the accessibility problem in public libraries. Ramp regulations and access to the library building should be considered. (Yucel, 2016)
- 32)** In this paper, the researcher mainly focuses on the present state of library services for differently abled students in the few Indian universities. Findings of the study reveal inadequate academic library support for such users, but some institutions are making an effort to improve these services. Guidelines from UNESCO, IFLA, the Indian government, and the UGC emphasize more on providing equal and better services to all, including people with special needs or disabilities. This study highlights the special equipment, infrastructure, and services that libraries should offer to support students with disabilities. (Suresh & Mandaliya, 2016)
- 33)** This study examined library services for visually impaired students at the University of Khartoum in Sudan. Interview taken both from the library staff and 20 visually impaired students revealed that the current services are insufficient. To

make things better, they recommended better training for students and staff on assistive technologies and improving access to materials. (Abdelrahman, 2016)

**34)** This article evaluates how well the library services at the University of Limpopo in South Africa cater to students with disabilities. It examines different types of services provided, how these students access the library and study materials, and also how satisfactory the services are. The study found out that although there's a specific library unit for students with disabilities, they weren't happy with the services mainly because there weren't enough materials available in formats they could use, and there was only one librarian which is not enough. Recommendations include increasing staff, enhancing training, and providing more materials in accessible formats. (Phukubje & Ngoepe, 2016)

**35)** This paper looks at how public libraries in the U.S. provide services for children with special needs. The survey was sent to 185 public libraries and followed up with interviews, but only 22% response received. The survey asked about the types of disabilities they help, the activities they organize, the equipment they have, and the problems they face. The following findings of the paper show that libraries try to put in every effort they can to help children with disabilities by organizing different activities. The study findings suggest libraries are actively serving this population, when possible, but more coordination could help expand services. (Adkins & Bushman, 2015)

**36)** This article talks about the Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) project to make their services more accessible to people who are blind or have low vision. This includes improving website and digital database accessibility, making physical library spaces more user-friendly, staff training, and enhancing marketing efforts. The goal is to better serve a population that has been neglected for a long period of time. With the goal of ensuring for a long-time accessibility enhancements BCPL aims to take these findings into account in developing future plans. (Lazar & Briggs, 2015)

- 37)** This study found that differently-abled males are much more interested in higher education than females. Results indicate a lack of infrastructure that discourages them from visiting the library regularly. Users are unsatisfied, and library staff lack sufficient knowledge of disability support services. Most are aware of disability issues in library services but are not sincere in implementing them. (Dhara, 2015)
- 38)** The paper talks about making accessible libraries and inclusive librarians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It outlines current situation of accessibility in libraries and challenges such as limited resources, lack of awareness among people and unskilled staff. Further it suggests some solutions which include seeking funding, improving communication and providing training to library staff. It highlights initiatives like Project ENABLE, Project PALS, and Targeting Autism that aim to enhance library accessibility and services for all. (Small et al., 2015)
- 39)** The results discussed in the paper were obtained from a case study conducted at the Sir Dorabji Tata Memorial Library, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. In this modern era, there is a change in the attitude and behaviour of people with disabilities toward libraries and their services. The expectations have increased, and the library does not reflect the best in the eyes of those populations. The library should make the building disabled-friendly. With the help of assistive technologies, libraries can provide easy access to libraries. (Dodamani, 2014)
- 40)** The study looks into how well libraries in the National Capital Region of India support to help individuals with disabilities through technology. It found that libraries for blind users offer the most assistance, while those for deaf and physically impaired users have fewer resources. The study also evaluated the digital infrastructure of the libraries with most saying they're excellent but some people were not much satisfied. Overall, the paper aims to make people aware about assistive technology that are available and suggest ideas for further research. (Sanaman & Kumar, 2014)

- 41)** This paper investigates the evolution of library services for the blind and physically challenged in Nigeria, Nsukka. They are meeting the needs of visually impaired persons through assistive technologies, such as screen readers, braille translation, and many software. Strategies to improve library services for the visually impaired are suggested in this study. (Eskay & Chima, 2013)
- 42)** The study examines library services for disabled students in Nigerian universities, particularly in the digital age. It was discovered that visually impaired students have minimal electronic resources, limited to taped books and online catalogues. Mobility-impaired students, however, had no electronic resources at their disposal. Respondents suggested that making electronic resources more accessible is crucial. Barriers to usage included expensive equipment, resources not designed for disabled users, and a lack of awareness in libraries regarding disabled needs. The study recommends improvements in infrastructure, technology, training, and involving disabled users in the design process to ensure equal access to information. (Ekwelem, 2013)
- 43)** The paper examines how easy it is for disabled people to use public and university libraries in Iran. It begins by reviewing existing literature on the subject. The research involved 150 disabled individuals and 14 architects to rate library accessibility based on criteria like parking, ramps, and special areas. They used checklists from ADA and IFLA for assessment. The study found that both disabled users and architects were not so happy when it comes to accessibility. Architects highlighted issues with ramps and spaces for disabled people. However, disabled individuals who visited the library on more often rated accessibility better, suggesting might need more improvements. (Bodaghi & Zainab, 2013)
- 44)** When evaluating the promotion of disability services in Korea, the library's public relations for disabled service is inferior. The policy department for library disability service has to develop a variety of promotional strategies for each type of disability. And make use of effective methods. (Noh et al., 2011)

- 45)** This paper explores the nature, challenges, and strategies of library services for the physically challenged. This paper is based on an extensive literature review. The study found that library services exist in the form of oral reading services and the provision of reading material in varied formats. Barriers faced by this population include architectural barriers, funds to procure equipment, and a lack of skilled human resources. (Echezona,2011)
- 46)** The paper investigates the condition of library services for people with disabilities in the USA. It aims to provide equal access and also explore the impact of new technologies using social capital theory. A national library survey that was focused on the blind and physically disabled focuses mainly on the challenges in terms of human resources and information access. The results of the study show that if libraries focus on using helpful technologies like the internet and assistive tools, they can help bridge gaps. Finally, the study addresses new technologies which help to make services better and also improve our understanding. (Bonnici et al., 2009)
- 47)** In this study a survey was done with over 5,000 households where someone had a physical, mental, or emotional condition that makes it hard to take part in activities. They were asked about their views on what stops them from using public libraries and how well libraries cater to people with disabilities. The results revealed that those who had used the library recently had slightly better views on things like how easy it is to access, the variety of materials available, and whether the library has helpful devices for people with disabilities. The data for the survey taken from a federal survey done by the U.S. Census Bureau in October 2002. (Burke, 2009)
- 48)** The article discusses the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) in the United States, which was established in 1931 to assist individuals who are unable to read normal books. At first, they started providing braille books and recordings on phonographs for such users. But now they have included magazines, music, and digital formats. They've also shifted from vinyl to cassette tapes and soon to digital systems. NLS works with many libraries across

the country to lend out books and equipment. Their aim is to give people with visual or physical challenges the ability to read by themselves.( Cylke et al., 2007)

**49)** According to Carter, libraries are paying more attention to making their services accessible because more students with disabilities are going to college. Academic librarians can make improvements in three main areas: teaching students how to find and use information (bibliographic instruction), designing library websites to be more user-friendly, and training library staff to better assist students with disabilities. These changes not only benefit students with disabilities but also make library services better for everyone by increasing understanding of various learning styles, improving research skills, and making information easier to access. (Carter, 2004)

**50)** The study aims to determine what academic health sciences libraries are doing to fulfil the information needs of persons with special needs. The responses of 131 members of the Association of Academic Health Sciences Library Directors were taken into consideration. The most common services provided are retrieval of materials from stacks and photocopy assistance. Adaptive technologies were ignored, though they could help users to search a library's online catalogue and databases. Very few libraries have assigned responsibility for disability services. (Nelson, 1996)

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

A library is like a home for books filled with knowledge waiting to be discovered. Libraries provide something special that the internet can't match. A place where people enter hoping to find exactly what they're looking for. The library serves as a hub for information, with a broad spectrum of resources and materials offered to cater to the different information needs of its patrons who step into the library. The library, which is considered a social institution, opens its door to every single user. However, there are some users who require special resources and attention. This group of people is recognised as individuals with special needs. They must be provided with special services based on their information requirements. Long ago, William A. Katz rightly said, "If the users will not come to the library, the library must go to the users." If people aren't coming to the library, then the library needs to find ways to reach out to them, i.e., by making library services accessible outside of the physical library building, so that people can still benefit from them even if they can't visit in person. There are different types of libraries like academic libraries that includes school, college and university library: public libraries supported by government and special libraries having a specific collection serving a particular group of people. (Shrivastava, 2018)

#### **3.2 Public library**

Public libraries as those that are established by society for the society itself and provide every citizen of the society with a favourable opportunity to get education itself. Public libraries serve the general public and are funded by the central and state governments. All these public libraries work for the development of society and operate at different levels, which include:



**3.2.1 National library:** A national library is like a big library typically serve a broader purpose often acting as repositories for a country's cultural heritage, preserving important documents, and providing resources for research and education on a national scale

**3.2.2 State central library:** The state central library is generally located in the centre of the state, so anyone from various regions can easily reach the library without any inconvenience. It offers a comprehensive collection across all subjects for the overall development of society.

**3.2.2 District library:** The district library works for a particular district. It is maintained by the state government through public funds and is situated in the middle of the district. It has a substantial collection to meet local educational and informational needs.

**3.2.3 Taluka library:** Taluka libraries are run by the state government for the overall development of the people. They have fewer resources compared to the district library, but they also contribute to the development of citizens.

**3.2.4 Town library:** A town library is a public library serving the residents of a specific town, offering various resources and services like books, internet access, and educational programs

**3.2.5 Village library:** Most of the village have their own small library with limited collections in it that cater particularly the information needs of people living in that village. (Velip, 2019)

### **3.3 Individuals with special needs**

Individuals with special needs are those who require special assistance and extra care and support while handling such people due to challenges with their emotions, social interaction, physical disabilities, and mental or developmental disorders. People with special needs might have conditions from birth like syndromes, terminal illnesses, or

severe cognitive or psychiatric issues; others may have learning disabilities, food allergies, or panic attacks. Special needs also include those in hospitals, nursing homes, homeless individuals, people with physical disabilities, hearing impairments, dyslexia, and cognitive or mental disabilities. When we talk about people with special needs, we're often talking about individuals who have a sensory impairment such as vision or hearing mobility impairment or a child who has challenges learning in school. Special needs can also include when a person is having difficulties communicating and interacting with others, not able to take care of themselves, or thinks properly. (Ediyanto et al., 2022)

### **3.4 Types of individuals with special needs**

“All fingers are not the same,” a Persian expression that highlights the diversity and uniqueness present in individuals or situations, emphasises that variations and differences are inherent and should be acknowledged. In the same way, there will be people who have one form of deformity or another. Some of them were born with it, while others developed later in life as a result of one challenge or another. They are considered people with special needs. They hold a special place in society and are considered special users of the library. They have certain qualities that make them stand out and deserve special attention. They can do everything like others, but they do it in their own way.

#### **3.4.1 Visually impaired**

The visually impaired are people with vision defects. People who have never been able to see anything. Such as those who had normal vision for some years but gradually or suddenly became partially or totally blind. Visual impairment means having reduced vision that can't be fixed with regular glasses or lenses.

#### **3.4.2 Hearing impaired:**

Hearing impairment covers all levels of difficulty in hearing, from mild to severe. ‘Deaf’ refers specifically to those who can't understand any audible sound. There are different levels of hearing impairment: those who are hard of hearing can understand speech to some

extent; those who are born deaf; and those who are adventitiously deaf lose hearing late. Completely deaf people may need special library services, while others can use libraries normally.

### **3.4.3 Mentally retarded**

Mentally retarded people who used to be called “feeble-minded” or “idiots” were often ignored or used for entertainment. They have conditions like autism and schizophrenia. In the past, they weren’t educated much, but now they go to regular schools and libraries. They are thought of based on their mental age, not their age in years. Their learning materials are chosen to be meaningful and relevant to them.

### **3.4.4 Physically disabled:**

Physically disabled people are those who are paralysed or have impaired limbs and face difficulty controlling their bodies. They need ongoing care and support due to congenital or acquired conditions. Most of them rely on wheelchairs for mobility. They also need library services like everyone else, but libraries need to make sure they can access information easily. (Anyanwu & Joy, 2022)

## **3.5 Concepts of library and information services**

Back in the day, when we thought about libraries, it was mostly about books. It’s like repositories of human knowledge that store a wide range of resources. As technology advanced, libraries started offering more than just printed materials that allowed people to find information not just from printed sources but also from online databases, e-books, and multimedia materials. In today's digital era, libraries have transformed into dynamic centres, embracing technology to enhance information access.

The concept of Library and Information Services revolves around how libraries fulfil the varied information needs of their users. It's not just about storing books and other materials; it's about managing and sharing information effectively. Libraries serve as hubs of knowledge, offering access to diverse resources like books, digital media, and databases. Libraries exist to provide services, following the first law of library science, i.e., “Books

are for use.” They believe books are meant to be read and used rather than merely stored or collected. They focus on delivering various services to meet the needs of different users.

Libraries need to provide services that people actually wants because users are the main reason libraries exist. Information and library services include mobile library services, circulation services, reference services, library services for children and special groups, ICT services, extension services, selective dissemination of information, current awareness services, reprographic services, referral services, document delivery services, translation services, interlibrary loan services, and research support services. (Ashikuzzaman, 2023)

### **3.6 Historical background of library services for individuals with special needs**

In the nineteenth century, there were no library services for blind people. However, in 1868, the Boston Public Library started offering books in embossed formats, marking the beginning of library services for people with disabilities. This initiative spread, with libraries like the Chicago Public Library (1894), the New York State Library (1895), the Library of Congress (1897), and the Philadelphia Free Library (1899) also providing similar services.

By the early 1930s, federal laws allowed the Library of Congress to offer free library services to blind and physically disabled individuals across the United States and even to U.S. citizens abroad. Over time, technological advancements have greatly improved these services. For example, braille can now be accessed online using special keyboards, and audio books have evolved from rigid shellac discs to flexible discs and analog cassettes, with plans for digital flash-memory cartridges on portable devices. The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is continually updating its technology, with a new digital system planned for 2008. (Shrivastava, 2018)

Some of the library and information services that are provided for individuals with special needs are as follows:

- **Personal reading services:** Personal reading services provide essential support for individuals with visual impairments or reading difficulties by reading books aloud, ensuring access to information not available in alternative formats.
- **User education:** It means giving them special help and training so they can use the library easily.
- **Transcription services:** Converting print materials into accessible formats such as Braille, large print, or audio formats.
- **Loan services:** Libraries offer loan services so individuals can borrow resources like talking books and cassette players if they need more time to access information.
- **Interlibrary loan:** Libraries share books and resources with each other so that users can access what they need, even if their local library doesn't have it.
- **Internet service:** Providing internet access to users of library.
- **Group activities according to mental age:** organizing activities for people based on how they think and understand things, especially for those with developmental disabilities.
- **Organising exhibitions, cultural shows, and film shows:** Displaying a diverse range of materials in accessible formats to ensure inclusivity.
- **Speech drills:** Speech drills help people with communication difficulties, like those with intellectual disabilities, practice speaking and pronouncing words to improve their reading skills.
- **Story hours:** Conducting storytelling sessions for special library users.
- **Use of sign language to communicate:** Providing sign language interpretation or resources for people who are deaf or have trouble hearing.
- **Accessible online databases:** Online databases are made easy to use for people with disabilities
- **Extended operating hours:** Offering flexible hours to make sure people with special needs have enough time to use the library when it suits them best. (Anyanwu & Joy, 2022)

### **3.7 Information needs of people with special needs**

Information need means the desire to search for and get information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need. Information needs of a person depend on why they need it and how useful it is. How urgently they need it determines how they will try to find it. The information needs of users can be categorised based on their purpose and nature. Individual information needs may be for research, leisure, or education, Problem solving, etc. Apart from these general information needs, people with special needs have their own specific needs, which include:

- Learning to use the internet effectively and find information easily is important for visually impaired people.
- They rely on special materials like Braille, audiobooks, and large print, and they want to know how to use libraries well. They also get information from TV, radio, and newspapers.
- They need help with everyday tasks and communicating with sighted people.
- Access to computers with special tools is crucial for them to learn alongside others.
- They need information on lots of topics like health, money, fun activities, government, housing, education, travel, and work.
- They also need to understand their rights and responsibilities in society.
- Spiritual matters are important to them too.
- Learning job skills is helpful for them to earn a living
- Some people with intellectual disabilities need information to help them learn better.
- They need to know about school events, exams, scholarships, and relaxation activities.
- They want to stay informed about politics, like parties, candidates, elections, and who's in charge.
- Health info is vital, including how to manage their conditions, prevent diseases, and where to get treatment.
- Coping with challenges like sensory issues or trouble communicating is important, so they need strategies for that.

- Mental health support, self-care tips, and therapy resources help them feel better overall.
- Accessible hobbies and activities that match their interests make them happy and engaged. (Anyanwu & Joy, 2022)

### **3.8 Challenges faced by library professionals in serving individuals with special needs**

Making libraries inclusive is tough, but it's not impossible. What matters most is creating a space where everyone feels welcome and supported. Libraries are facing a lot of problems, and this has affected the way they discharge their duties to the users, impacting their performance in meeting user needs and objectives. The challenges include:

- 3.8.1 Inadequate funding of libraries:** Insufficient funding for libraries restricts their capacity to offer accessible resources, services, and programs necessary for creating inclusive library spaces. Additionally, Buying equipment and materials for people with disabilities costs a lot of money, which libraries often can't afford.
- 3.8.2 Lack of motivation:** Rendering library services to people with disability requires extra efforts and patience. This motivation can come from extra pay and training opportunities. However, these incentives are often lacking due to insufficient funding. Without proper motivation, staff can't perform their best.
- 3.8.3 Inadequate information materials:** When librarians don't have sufficient materials for people with special needs, it's tough to give them the right resources and help. This makes it harder for them to learn and use the library, affecting their overall experience.
- 3.8.4 Discouragement:** Library staff may feel discouraged when he cannot handle the cases of the special users. Helping people with special needs can be tough, and encountering aggressive behaviour can make it even harder. Sometimes, no matter

how much help is provided, it may not be appreciated, which can be discouraging for staff.

**3.8.5 Architectural Barriers:** Older library buildings were not designed with accessibility in mind, hindering use by individuals with disabilities. High shelves, narrow doorways, and lack of elevators and ramps make access difficult and frustrate both users and staff impacting the overall experience at the library. (Echezona, 2011)

**3.8.6 Lack of professional or insufficient staff:** When libraries don't have enough trained staff, it's hard for them to help people with special needs properly. This means they might struggle to make the library accessible, offer specialized programs, or communicate well with these patrons. Without proper training, staff may unintentionally treat people with special needs unfairly. Training programs are crucial for raising awareness and making sure everyone feels welcome and supported at the library. Staff can learn by experiencing what it's like to have disabilities, which helps them understand how to improve access to library resources. (Farooq & Manzoor, 2021)

### **3.9: Assistive or adaptive technologies in libraries for individuals with special needs**

Individuals with special needs often struggle to access information in print like others do. To help them, special tools called assistive technology are created to access library resources. These tools use new technology to make it easier for them to get the information they need. They can be software or physical devices that enhance their abilities, making everyday activities more manageable the various types of assistive technology include:

#### **3.9.1 For Visually Impaired**

- **Talking Typing Teacher:** A program that helps visually impaired users learn typing through clear speech feedback.



- **JAWS Pro screen reader:** A software aiding blind or low vision users in computer navigation with features like speech synthesis and Braille support.
- **ZoomText magnifier/reader:** Helpful for those with low vision, enlarging and reading content on the computer screen.
- **Optical Braille Recognition Scanning Software (OBR):** Converts Braille documents into standard text on the computer screen.
- **Kurzweil 1000:** Assists blind users in reading printed books without assistance through OCR technology.
- **Kurzweil 3000:** Converts digital or scanned printed material into audio files for visually impaired users.
- **Screen Access for All (SAFA):** Free software that converts on-screen text into audio for visually impaired users.
- **Braille Translating Software:** Converts typed text into Braille format for hard copy production.
- **Braille Embossers:** Similar to Braille translating software, these devices produce hard copies of Braille text.
- **Shruti Drishti (C-DAC):** An integrated text-to-braille and text-to-speech system for visually impaired users, facilitating internet browsing with minimal key inputs.
- **Screen reader:** A screen reader is software that reads text aloud from a computer screen, helping visually impaired individuals access digital content independently.
- **Braille writing equipment:** It is used for the creation of paper braille materials and can be manual or electronic. This is used by blinds, which consist of arrangements of dots representing letters, numbers, and punctuation marks.
- **Talking calculator:** A talking calculator is a calculator that speaks out loud each number, symbol, or math operation key when you press it. It also tells you the result of your calculations

### 3.9.2 For Hearing Impaired

- **Dragon Speech Recognition (Dragon Dictate):** Software that converts spoken words into text, designed for Windows computers.

- **ICommunicator:** Real-time translation service offering conversion of speech or audio into text, sign language, or computer-generated sound.
- **Infrared Listening Device:** An auxiliary audio device that helps communication with the hearing impaired, consisting of a transmitter and receiver using infrared technology.
- **ShrutLekhan Rajbhasha:** Hindi speech recognition software developed by C-DAC and IBM, which can understand spoken Hindi and provide text output in Hindi Unicode (Devanagari).
- **Closed captioning:** DVD and video equipment should offer closed-captioning so that people with hearing difficulties can still enjoy videos by reading the text on the screen. This feature is commonly available on TVs and combo devices with DVD or VCR players.

### 3.9.3 For Physically Challenged

- **Madentec TrackerPro Computer Input Device:** This device acts as a replacement for a traditional mouse for people who have limited or no movement in their hands. It features a high-resolution camera mounted in a sturdy aluminium frame, allowing precise and easy control of the computer cursor.
- **SofType:** This software transforms a regular keyboard into a fully functional on-screen keyboard, enabling individuals with physical disabilities to type using alternative methods.
- **Pencil grips:** They are the attachments for pencils that help people who struggle to hold them properly.
- **Handrails:** Handrails are bars installed along stairs and pathways to assist people with poor balance in walking safely.
- **Trackballs and touchpads:** are easier-to-use computer controllers for people with disabilities or wrist issues. They're gentler on the hands and wrists and make computer tasks more comfortable.
- **Ramps:** sloping surfaces instead of stairs, making it easier for people with wheelchairs or mobility issues to get into buildings.

- **Automatic doors:** These doors open automatically when someone approaches, using sensors.
- Specific input devices like joysticks, switches, and enhanced keyboards are also beneficial for people with physical challenges, providing alternative means of interacting with computers.

#### **3.9.4 For Mentally Retarded**

- Providing information in Audio/Video format, CD/DVD, and DAISY format: This allows users to access information through audio or video recordings, CDs/DVDs, and DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) format, which is specifically designed for people with print disabilities.
- E-Saadhya (Saral Anukulaney Adhyayan): An e-learning platform designed for children with mild intellectual disabilities and autism. It offers a flexible and accessible e-learning environment based on behavioural analysis to meet the educational needs of these children.
- This initiative is implemented by C-DAC Hyderabad and Bangalore in collaboration with the National Institute of Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad.
- Information provided through library websites: Libraries offer online resources and information accessible through their websites, which can be beneficial for individuals with cognitive disabilities to access materials and services. (Chaurasia & Singh, 2022)

#### **3.10: Digital library platforms designed for individuals with special needs**

In India, individuals with special needs often struggle to access digital resources and libraries. To address this, different digital library platforms were created, offering content in formats like audio, braille, and large print. Some of the digital library platforms include:

1. **Book share:** Bookshare (<https://www.bookshare.org/cms/>) is an e-book library for people with reading barriers like visual impairments or dyslexia. It offers over 1.2 million titles in multiple languages for educational, career, and leisure reading.

In the U.S., it's free for eligible students and schools; Bookshare is free due to government support, while others pay a modest fee.

## **2. Sugamya Pustakalaya:**

Sugamya Pustakalaya (<https://library.daisyindia.org/welcomeLink.action>) is an online library for people with print disabilities, offering books in various languages and topics. It provides accessible formats like screen readers and Braille, created by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in partnership with Daisy Forum of India and TCS Access.

## **3. Learning Ally:**

Learning Ally (<https://wp.learningally.org/>) offers audiobooks for people with disabilities like dyslexia and blindness. Their online library provides access to a wide range of books read aloud. They support families and offer tools for teachers. Volunteers create the audiobooks, and users can join through memberships or school support. Funding comes from memberships, donations, and grants, ensuring accessibility for all.

## **4. RNIB Bookshare:**

RNIB Bookshare (<https://www.rnibbookshare.org/cms/>) this platform, provided by the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) in the UK, offers accessible books for people with print disabilities. It provides a wide range of titles in formats such as audio, Braille, and accessible PDFs.

## **5. The DAISY Forum of India:**

The DAISY Forum of India (<https://daisyindia.org/>) is a non-profit group that ensures people with print disabilities have access to books and reading materials. They aim to eliminate the scarcity of accessible books by providing them in various formats, enabling equal access to information regardless of disability. Their mission is to end the "book famine" for people with print disabilities by facilitating education, employment, and personal development.

### **3.11 IFLA Professional Reports No. 89 Access to libraries for person with disabilities: checklist**

In most countries, access for patrons with disabilities to use libraries is not available, nor have they even thought about it. To ensure fairness for everyone who uses the library, we need to see things from the perspective of these people. This includes checking if the library building, services, and programmes meet everyone's needs. This checklist given by the IFLA aims to improve library accessibility for patrons with disabilities by accessing and enhancing physical infrastructure, services, and programs. It emphasizes the importance of involving disability groups, using resources efficiently, and prioritizing equality of access. Ultimately, it's crucial for library staff to make person with disabilities feel welcome and included.

#### **3.11.1 Physical access**

Someone in a wheelchair should be able to reach all areas of the library; a visually impaired person should be able to walk with a cane or guide dog without facing any obstacles; a deaf person should be able to communicate with the library staff; and those with intellectual impairment or reading difficulties should easily find what they need.

##### **Outside the library**

- There should be enough parking spaces marked with the international symbol for disabled people.
- Parking close to the library.
- Clear and easy-to-read signposting
- Unobstructed and well lighted access paths to the entrance
- Smooth and non-slip surface at the entrance
- If needed, a non-slip and not too steep ramp with railings next to the stairs and Railings on both sides of the ramp
- Entry phone accessible for deaf users.

##### **Getting into the library**

- Adequate space for wheelchair turning.

- Wide entrance door.
- Reachable automatic door opener.
- No doorsteps.
- Marked glass doors for the visually impaired.
- Accessible security checkpoints.
- Stairs and steps marked with a contrasting colour
- Pictogram signs for elevators
- Well lighted elevators with buttons and signs in Braille and synthetic speech  
elevator buttons reachable from a wheelchair

### **The physical space**

- Clear and easy-to-read signs with pictograms
- Shelves are reachable from a wheelchair.
- Reading and computer tables of varying heights throughout the library
- Chairs with sturdy armrests
- Unobstructed aisles between bookcases
- Visible and audible fire alarm
- Staff trained to assist patrons in case of emergency

### **Toilets**

- Clear signs with a pictogram indicating the location of the toilets
- Door wide enough for a wheelchair to enter and sufficient space for a wheelchair to turn around
- Room enough for a wheelchair to pull up next to the toilet seat
- Toilet with handles and flushing lever reachable for persons in wheelchairs
- Alarm button reachable for persons in wheelchairs
- Wash basin, mirror at the appropriate height.

### **Circulation desk and Reference/Information desk**

- Adjustable desk
- Induction loop system for hearing impaired persons
- Chairs for elderly and disabled customers

- Accessible self-service circulation stations
- Organised “queue system” in the waiting area

### **Children’s department**

- Clear signs with pictograms leading to the children’s department
- A coloured (yellow for visibility) tactile line leading to the children’s department
- Unobstructed aisles between shelves
- Availability of talking books and other special media
- Computers accessible to children with disabilities
- Shelves and picture book accessible from a wheelchair

### **Department for persons with reading, hearing, and other disabilities**

- Central department for people with reading disabilities
- Yellow tactile line for easy identification
- Clear signs for guidance
- Comfortable seating with bright lighting
- Equipment: tape recorder, CD player, DAISY player, and more
- Tools like magnifying glasses, electronic readers, and CCTV are available.
- Computers with screen adapters and special software

## **3.11.2 Media formats**

### **Special media formats for persons with disabilities**

- Talking books, talking newspapers, and talking periodicals
- Large print books
- Easy-to-read books
- Braille books
- Video/DVD books with subtitles and/or sign language
- E-books
- Tactile picture books

### **Computers**

- Designated computer workstations for patrons in wheelchairs
- Adaptive keyboards or overlays for users with motor impairments
- Computers equipped with screen reading, enlargement, and synthetic speech programmes
- Computers with spelling and instructional software for dyslexic users
- Technical support for computers, preferably on-site
- Staff capable of providing computer usage instructions.

### **3.11.3 Services and communication**

#### **How to train staff**

- Invite people with disabilities to staff meetings to discuss their needs as library users.
- Regularly distribute emails or other information to staff regarding library services tailored to specific disability groups.
- Include information about services for special user groups in the orientation package for new staff members.
- These steps will help ensure that library staff are informed and sensitive to the needs of patrons with disabilities.

#### **Special services for patrons with disabilities**

- Deliver books to people who can't come to the library.
- Visit people in institutions or care facilities to provide library services.
- Offer a reading service for people who struggle with reading, like recording texts or scanning them for use with screen readers.
- Have regular meetings to help people with reading difficulties.

#### **How to provide information to patrons with disabilities**

Since some visitors might struggle to read, the library should offer information about access, Services, materials, and programmes should therefore be available in the alternative formats listed below:

- Information in large print



- Information on audio tape, CD/DVD, or in DAISY format
- Information in Braille
- Information on the library's accessible website
- Information in subtitled and/or sign language videos
- Information via text, telephone, and/or email
- Information on the library's accessible website
- Easy-to-read text for patrons who were born deaf or became deaf before acquiring language skills

### **How do you make information easy to understand?**

- Use short and simple sentences.
- Don't use unfamiliar words.
- Leave space between paragraphs and text.
- Put pictures next to related text.
- Use dark text on a light background.

### **Website**

- Make the website easy to use and find things on it.
- Ensure the children's webpage is easy for kids to use.
- Offer software to adjust text size, font, and contrast.
- Provide alternative formats like plain text (.txt) instead of PDF or Word files.
- Keep content separate from design using style sheets.
- Add a search function to the website.
- Don't use frames or tables.
- Avoid moving elements on the page.
- Use relative text sizes.
- Include text with audio. (Irvall & Nielsen, 2005)

## **3.12: Conclusion**

Disability or no disability, each one of us has a right to access the library. But we rarely see a person with disability enjoying reading in library. Libraries are the place where minds grow, but for someone with disability, they can also bring feelings of anxiety, resentment, and dejection. They play a vital role in ensuring inclusivity by offering services such as braille books and digital platforms designed for individuals with special needs. Even though libraries face problems like not having enough money and staff, they're still trying to improve. They're using special tools and technology to help people with disabilities access information more easily. By embracing these innovations, libraries ensure that everyone, regardless of their abilities, can benefit from their resources and contribute to a more inclusive society.

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## **CHAPTER 4**

### **LIBRARY SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

#### **4.1: Introduction**

Making public library resources and services accessible to individuals with disabilities not only achieves the goal of “information for all,” but it's also about making society more inclusive. Libraries are important because they reflect what's happening in society. They are considered special as they give us access to lots of different information and books, helping us learn and grow. This helps everyone become the best they can be. Overall, libraries bring people together and make society stronger by including everyone. This inclusion can greatly boost their confidence and sense of belonging in society. In this chapter, we'll look at how public libraries at the national and international levels are changing and improving over time, using new technologies to ensure fair access to information for everyone, regardless of their abilities. (Lee, 2001)

#### **4.2 National level**

Following are the public libraries in the India which have implemented library services for individuals with special needs:

##### **4.2.1 The Anna Centenary Library**

Prestigious and well-established state library in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. It stands tall as a symbol of pride for knowledge seekers in Chennai. The library is named in honour of Dr. C. N. Annadurai, a former chief minister of the state popularly known as ‘Anna’ by reason of his great interest in the books and library. In 2010, the library was declared open to the public. The library extends across 3.75 lakh sq. ft. It has nine floors, including facilities like a braille section, a digital library, auditorium, amphitheatre, conference hall, etc. It also caters to differently abled individuals with ramps, wheelchairs, and braille readers. The library stands out because it goes extra mile to make people with disabilities feel at home,

specially its braille section is well equipped with advanced technology. This section has become a saviour and a thoughtful gift for visually impaired individuals. They have around 1500 printed Braille books, 2000 books related to competitive examinations, 145 e-books, and 1080 audio books. They allow users to copy books on their pen drive.

This section has special devices called Braille readers. They are used to store and organize books in English or any other Indian language. This device is easy to use and can hold up to 1000 books, which are around 300 pages long. It also offers a double-sided embosser that prints Braille texts. Its features make printing Braille books and resources quicker, simpler, and more affordable. They also have software tools that convert text composed in English or any other Indian language into braille text.

Visually impaired users have access to computers installed with assistive software tools that help in operating computers with voice commands and text-to-speech conversion, software for Daisy formatted books, a tool for easy search and navigation, and audio books and reference text readers. Additionally, it offers facilities such as its own book reading section, a food court, vehicle parking, and Wi-Fi access, which is under construction.

The library has a seating capacity of around 1,500 people at a time. They have a designated play area for children. The ramps and escalators in the library make the place disabled-friendly. Visually challenged people were overwhelmed to find storybooks and journals available. There is also text-to-braille conversion and the option to print braille copies. Overall, the library attracts visitors of all ages, including those with disabilities. The Anna Centenary Library (<https://www.annacentenarylibrary.org/>)

#### **4.2.2 Delhi Public Library**

The Indian government with the support of UNESCO Delhi Public Library was set up in 1951, inaugurated by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Over time, it became a leading library system covering the entire city. At present it operates under the ministry of culture, government of India headquartered in Chandni Chowk opposite old Delhi railway station. DPL offers free services to people of all ages and backgrounds promoting cultural and recreational activities for everyone's benefits.

The braille library service is dedicated to meeting the reading needs of visually impaired individuals by offering range of specialized services. The library not only provides braille books but also transcribes books in braille, offer internet and email facilities. In periodical section they have around 14 braille magazines and newspapers to the visually impaired (divyangjan). They also purchase braille books from other institutions like AICB Rohini, NAB Mumbai, and NIVH Dehradun. The library delivers reading materials by post if needed. The total collection of braille department is 12,509 and total membership 1420.

The library Infrastructure include three computer terminals for readers, one reading room for appropriate 20 readers and amenities such as drinking water and a desert cooler. Other activities by braille library include organizing annual competitions like debate, speech, essay writing, music, poetry recitation, prize distribution and library orientation to engage and support visually impaired individuals in their reading journey.

The mobile library service was started in 1953 to serve rural areas and also to those people who can't visit library due to any physical challenges. It brings library services to people's homes using mobile vans. At present there are 7 vans operating in 70 areas of Delhi serving 6169 registered users. The registered users of the library can borrow gramophone records, audio video cassettes, DVDs, VCDs, and CDs .The materials include classical music, bhajans, ghazals, movie songs and light music. The registered users of the library can listen songs using lingua phones. The library also provides its services to the most neglected group of people i.e. prisoners. They provide services to the prisoners of central jail, Tihar and mandwali jail of the national capital Delhi. During the year under report, 2925 books were provided to 2915 registered members of prisons. Delhi public library (<https://dpl.gov.in/>)

#### **4.2.3 Kalaingar Centenary Library**

To celebrate Dr. Kalaingar M. Karunanidhi's 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary who served 5 times as chief minister of Tamil Nadu the library is built at Madurai. The library has seven floors including basement and ground floor. This library is not only about books it's a place for children, students, researchers, job seekers, women, seniors and also people with disabilities. From the basement parking area, one can take lift to the floor of their choice. The ground floor has an art gallery which has historic photos of Madurai. The ground floor

also has a separate wing for differently abled people, including braille materials and audio books. On the first floor there is a space dedicated only for kids with vibrant colours and inviting seats in the shape of Tamil and English alphabet. There is special theatre where children can learn yoga, art and origami. They have even a cool hologram thing to play with and own theatre for watching movies and documentaries on big screens. It also has a science park with interactive exhibits.

On the fifth floor, there's an e library where users can access online stuff. This floor also has multimedia hall with 48 PCs. They also digitize old books and make videos in a studio. Here audio content for visually challenged is also created and even record talks by famous people. Kalaingar Centenary Library (<https://www.kalaingarcentenarylibrary.org/>)

#### **4.2.4 National Accessible Library**

The National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (NIEPVD) operates the National Accessible Library, which caters to the reading needs of visually impaired individuals, scholars, researchers and professionals in the field. It offers literature in print, braille, and talking book formats.

The library is divided into sections for print, braille and talking books and it also provides extension services. The braille section alone offers around 17,542 titles with over 1,33,887 volumes. The library serves approximately 27,000 members, including both in house and extension counter members. Additionally there are braille and print magazines and 26 print magazines. Overall the library aims to ensure access to reading materials for visually impaired individuals across the nation. The central braille press and its branches produce braille books and magazines in 14 languages and also offer large print textbooks.

NIEPVD's talking book unit and 91.2 NIVH Hello Doon radio station promote accessibility for persons with disabilities through talking books, accessible videos, and skill development initiatives. The early intervention centre provides support for children under 6 with disabilities or developmental delays offering assessments, therapy and education services. They also help at risk infants or children to ensure early intervention for optimal development. National Accessible library ([https://nivh.gov.in/?page\\_id=5937](https://nivh.gov.in/?page_id=5937) )

#### **4.2.5 The State Central Library in Trivandrum**

The State Central Library in Trivandrum, India, established in 1829 as the Trivandrum People's Library, is one of India's oldest libraries. It became public in 1898, received a Gothic-style building in 1900, and was declared the State Central Library in 1958. Kerala lives up to its reputation as India's most literate state. The Kerala State Central Library in state capital Thiruvananthapuram has a special section called the Braille Section for people who are blind, visually impaired, or have other physical disabilities that affect reading. This section provides books, audio books, computers, and more in Braille format. Visually impaired individuals can access this section during its working hours without any membership fee. The Braille wing aims to offer modern amenities to make visitors with visual impairments feel comfortable. The State Central Library (<https://statelibrary.kerala.gov.in/en/home/> )

The braille wing is envisaged to provide all modern amenities to help make visually impaired visitors comfortable. Besides books in Braille format, the new wing also have an impressive collection of talking and audio books in various languages including English and Hindi besides Malayalam. ("188- yr- old Kerala," 2019)

Reportedly, there are 253 Braille books in the newly opened wing. The Braille wing is constructed close to the main library so visually impaired people have easy access. There are plans to introduce more audio versions of the books as there's not enough space for books in Braille. The library has Closed Reference/Special Collections, Gazette/Rare books, Reprographic section, Summer School, Internet Browsing center, Auditorium Rental and Reference Service. ("Kerala's state capital," 2019)

#### **4.3 International level**

Following are the public libraries which have implemented library services for individuals with special needs at international level are:

##### **4.3.1 National Library of Australia**

The national library of Australia began in 1901; it was initially part of the Parliament library. In 1960, it became separate, and in 1968, it moved to a new building in Canberra.



They celebrated their centenary in 2001 with a website and a book about their history. Their main aim is to make sure everyone, including those with disabilities, can easily access their collections, exhibitions, buildings, and events. It doesn't matter if they visit the library in person or access collections online; they should be able to access what they wish to have without facing any difficulty. The library's plan is built on the national disability strategy.

In the library, you can enter the foyer and reading room through doors that open automatically. Other places on the ground floor, like the bookshop and cafe, are reachable through regular open doorways. At the front entrance, there are 15 stone steps with handrails that light up at night. Visitors who are in wheelchairs or physically impaired can use ramps on the south side of the building to get inside. Alternatively, they can call security and arrange to enter on lower ground floor 2. The library map shows where you can find disabled parking and the access ramp. There are eight accessible parking spaces on the south side of the building. On the lower ground floor, across from the lift area, there's a public telephone.

In the main reading room, they can use a special device called an optelec clearview to make things on the computer screen bigger, making it easier for those with low vision to read documents. JAWS screen reading software helps to use computer applications by converting on-screen text into synthesised speech. A trackball mouse is easier to use if you have trouble moving your hands a lot. You control it by rolling a ball with your fingers instead of moving the whole mouse. There is on-screen magnification on the computer for better visibility. They have two special keyboards from Vision Australia with bigger letters and better contrast for people with low vision. There are two desks you can adjust to stand or sit at.

For those who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, they can contact the National Relay Service, which includes text telephone, chat calls, captioned calls, and speak-and-listen services. In the theatre, conference room, and Ferguson room, there are special systems that improve sound for people with hearing aids. If visitors want a wheelchair, you can get one at the information desks on the first floor. All reading rooms have desks that are easy for wheelchair users to reach. There are toilets for wheelchair users

on the first floor and downstairs. The buttons in the elevators are set up so people in wheelchairs can reach them easily.

The national library of Australia provides Bindimaps, a mobile app for blind or low-vision visitors. It offers audio directions and visual maps for indoor navigation using Bluetooth beacons placed throughout the library. The website is created in such a way that everyone, including people with disabilities, can access it. They follow rules set by the Australian government and use guidelines called WCAG 2.0. In 2020 Vision Australia checked the website and confirmed it met all the important accessibility rules. National Library of Australia (<https://www.nla.gov.au/>)

#### **4.3.2 National Library Board Singapore**

The Library Board of Singapore was established in 1995 to ensure that everyone is able to enjoy the services and resources, including people with disabilities. The library has wheelchair-friendly routes, which are designed to accommodate wheelchair users via barrier-free routes. The library has picture guides called social stories that guide persons with disabilities in learning what to expect and how to react in specific situations or settings they might face in the library. They also have a visual schedule to help children plan what they want to do when they visit the library. They also have a unique facility for booking a tour, in which a special tour with staff is arranged on request. They will make sure it's perfect for you, whether you have autism, a physical or intellectual disability, a visual impairment, or a hearing problem. They will make sure you feel comfortable and supported during the visit.

Punggol Regional Library, is a modern library officially opened on April 5, 2023. The library includes accessibility features such as assistive technology devices. At the library, you will find Friendly and well-trained staff ready to assist everyone, including those with disabilities. Accessible physical infrastructure and services, such as adult changing tables. Borrow and Go is a wheelchair-friendly borrowing portal. Assistive technology devices such as track balls, joysticks, black and white large keyboards, high-contrast and colour-contrast large keyboards, and magnifiers. The stories come alive in a room that uses

images, light, and sound effects to create an immersive and interactive experience. The children's section has a toy library where kids, including those with disabilities, can play and learn. It offers a range of toys, educational tools, puppets, etc. Calm pods for quiet and safe spaces are especially useful for individuals with disabilities. An accessible collection with 3000 books is tailored for people with disabilities and their caregivers. Priority spaces marked with a Purple Heart icon are for use by individuals with disabilities. Reading materials for those who can't come to the library, they offer a huge collection of eBooks, audiobooks, magazines, and e-newspapers that can be accessed from home using the NLB mobile app. E Resources include learning courseware, videos with closed captioning, database full text, journal articles, and indexes for educational and research papers.

Access eBooks from the accessible collection or find CDs descriptive videos and braille books through the Singapore Association of Visually Handicapped Online Catalogues. NLB's programmes are inclusive, with adaptations like sensory story time for those with disabilities. In addition to regular membership benefits, people with disabilities get more benefits, such as more time to borrow and renew items, which doubles from 21 days to 42 days. Free reservation of items, which usually cost \$1.57 per item. Priority access to special features at Punggol Regional Library. The calm down to the library spaces at Woodlands Regional Library is specially made for children with autism and sensory needs; it has quite private areas and a soft floor to make it comfortable for them. National Library Board Singapore (<https://www.nlb.gov.sg/main/home>)

#### **4.3.3 National Diet Library**

The National Diet Library (NDL) is the main library for Japan's parliament, helping lawmakers with their research and studies. Its main job is to collect, organise, and keep books and other materials, making them available to lawmakers and the public. It also works with other related organisations to fulfil its mission.

The library offers services that can be used without visiting the library via the internet or other libraries. The NDL provides services and support for persons with disabilities to use materials and information. An international book data service was launched under the

Marrakesh Treaty to help people with print disabilities access books. Now the national diet library is lending special books to those who can't read regular ones. They have also joined the global book service for people with print disabilities. They want to make sure everyone can read, whether in Japan or elsewhere. For services outside Japan, they provide accessible books and data made in Japan to foreign libraries or other institutions. For services inside Japan, they help to requests accessible book data made outside Japan, like Daisy format, for people in Japan.

The National Diet Library has expanded the kinds of accessible data it collects for people with print disabilities. Along with audio files like MP3s, they will also gather text data in formats like EPUB3, Docs and PDF with text. The National diet Library's data transmission service for persons with print disabilities is available to individuals and institutions in Marrakesh Treaty countries outside Japan. Through NDL Online, the national Diet Library offers access to various materials, including braille, large print, audio cassettes, and Daisy materials that they have collected. NDL search lets users find materials for people with disabilities from various databases, including those from the NDL and public libraries, the braille catalogue, and other union catalogues available online.

The national Diet Library in Tokyo offers comprehensive support and accommodations for individuals with disabilities, including accessible transportation options, parking facilities and barrier-free entrances library staff are available to assist with navigating the library and accessing materials, with written communication options provided upon request. Facilities such as barrier-free lockers, wheelchairs, and handicapped restrooms are available, along with reading rooms equipped with braille displays, magnifying machines, and print magnifying equipment. Hearing loops and communication support speakers are accessible, ensuring effective communication for individuals with hearing impairments. Additionally, online services allow individuals with disabilities to access library materials remotely, and interlibrary loan services are also available.

The Kansai-Kan of the National Diet Library provides comprehensive services for individuals with disabilities, including accessible transportation options. Parking facilities and barrier-free entrance assistance are available via phone, email, or fax, with directions

and parking information provided. Reading spaces are equipped with PCs and print magnifying devices, and restrooms for people with disabilities. Remote services include internet access to materials and interlibrary loans, ensuring accessibility for all.

The International Library of Children's Literature is a national library dedicated to children's books and provides accessibility services such as parking, wheelchair access, braille books, and accessible restrooms. Wheelchairs and walking aids can be rented, and guide dogs are allowed for those with print disabilities. The library offers a data transmission service for accessing materials online. Special materials like recordings of children's books are also available upon request, with a dedicated reading room for a person with disabilities and communication support available in writing. National Diet Library (<https://www.ndl.go.jp/en/> )

#### **4.3.4 National library of Scotland**

The National Library of Scotland, situated at George IV Bridge, stands as Scotland's largest repository of knowledge, housing millions of books, maps, manuscripts, and newspapers from diverse corners of the world. As an inclusive institution, it extend a warm welcome to all visitors, ensuring equal access to resources and facilities, including individuals with disabilities. For those holding a blue badge, convenient parking options are available, including yellow lines on George IV Bridge and all-day parking on the south side of Victoria Street. Upon entering the library from George IV Bridge, visitors encounter accessible doors that open automatically, facilitating easy access for all. Wheelchair users benefit from lifts positioned on both sides of the stairs, with staff readily available to provide assistance if required. Throughout the building, they have implemented various accommodations to enhance accessibility. Facilities include wheelchair-accessible toilets, lockers, and desks equipped with hearing loops to aid individuals with hearing impairments. Additionally, the ground floor houses a visitor centre, a registration area, and a unisex accessible toilet. Moving to the upper floors, visitors can access reading rooms via the main staircase or dedicated lifts, ensuring accessibility for all. Special collections are housed on the second floor, with accommodations such as adjustable tables, special chairs, and magnifying devices available.

For visitors requiring assistance with pre ordering materials or accessing books stored upstairs, our dedicated staff is on hand to provide support. Furthermore, service counters are equipped with induction loops, while portable induction loops are available for added convenience. In cases of emergencies, evacuation procedures are clearly outlined, with designated routes and assembly points to ensure the safety of all visitors. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are available for individuals with medical conditions or disabilities, with staff trained to assist in evacuation and re-entry. Their commitment to improving accessibility extends beyond physical accommodations. The feedback from visitors specially disabled people are given more value and encourage them to share their thoughts through comments form.

At the National Library of Scotland, they strive to create an inclusive environment where all visitors can engage with collections and services comfortably. They have special chairs, adjustable tables, and foot supports available. We can also provide cushions, magnifying glasses, and tools to keep books open. Additionally, there are book rests and laptop stands. If you need access to books stored upstairs but have difficulty with stairs, ask staff for assistance. Inside the Special Collections Reading Room, you'll find: Tables that you can adjust the height of Special chairs for better posture and balance. If you need any of this equipment, just ask at the inquiry desk. Next to the Issue Hall, on the right side, is the Discovery Room. Inside, you'll find computers with large keyboards and screens. Tables that you can adjust the height. 'MyReader2' (a CCTV/video magnifier) for enlarging text, Software like Kurzweil, Supernova, and JAWS.

If anyone need to access to books stored upstairs but have difficulty with stairs, ask staff for assistance. For regular users, you can pre-order up to six items, but if you have any disabilities, you can reserve more items if necessary. They have a wheelchair for visitors who can't stand for long periods of time. You can bring assistance dogs into the building. Visitors can go to our cafe located on the ground floor, which is part of the Visitor Centre. It's easily accessible with level entry, along with the shop and exhibitions. In the locker room, there are tables and chairs where you can sit and have your own food and drinks. National library of Scotland (<https://www.nls.uk/> )

#### **4.3.5 The Library of Congress**

The Library of Congress is dedicated to ensuring that its services are accessible to everyone, regardless of disabilities. Through various initiatives and programmes, such as the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS), a programme run by the Library of Congress that offers free library services to people who are blind, visually impaired, or have physical disabilities that prevent them from reading regular books. This programme provides materials like braille and recorded books to eligible individuals across the United States.

The BARD Mobile app, offered by the National Library Service, allows users to access braille and talking books directly from the Library of Congress. For visitors with visual impairments, the library offers Touch History Tours, which are accessible tours designed to allow people to experience the Thomas Jefferson Building through touch. Additionally, for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, this programme offers services such as captioning for live events. They provide things like interpreters for events, special entrances for people with disabilities, and clear signs for accessible bathrooms. They even have plans for emergencies that help people with disabilities.

For researchers with disabilities, they have special tools to help them read and access materials. These tools include things like software that makes things bigger and machines that read aloud. They have a huge collection of over 300,000 audio and braille books available on their website, called BARD. People can easily find and download these books. NLS also offers informational publications and has a service called "Ask a Librarian!" where people can get help. They keep patrons updated through emails and online events. They support braille education with online resources and lists of accessible reading materials, free currency readers, equipment for listening to books, and resources for children and organizations. NLS Studio also provides guides on how to pronounce words correctly and information for people who want to become narrators.

The Patron Engagement Section (PES) of NLS helps patrons by providing resources, services, and support to improve their NLS experience. This includes the braille on

Demand programme, which offers monthly hard-copy braille books. Patrons can request braille books online or through their library. Additionally, NLS offers a variety of music materials, such as braille, audio recordings, and magazines, catering to individuals with visual impairments. These materials cover different music genres and instructional content and can be requested directly from NLS headquarters in Washington, DC.

The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) offers resources in multiple languages for visually impaired individuals, obtained through partnerships like the Marrakesh Treaty. They also provide braille education through the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), offering certification programmes and resources such as the Braille Alphabet Card and "Fun with Braille" booklet. The Library of Congress (<https://www.loc.gov/nls/>)

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## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

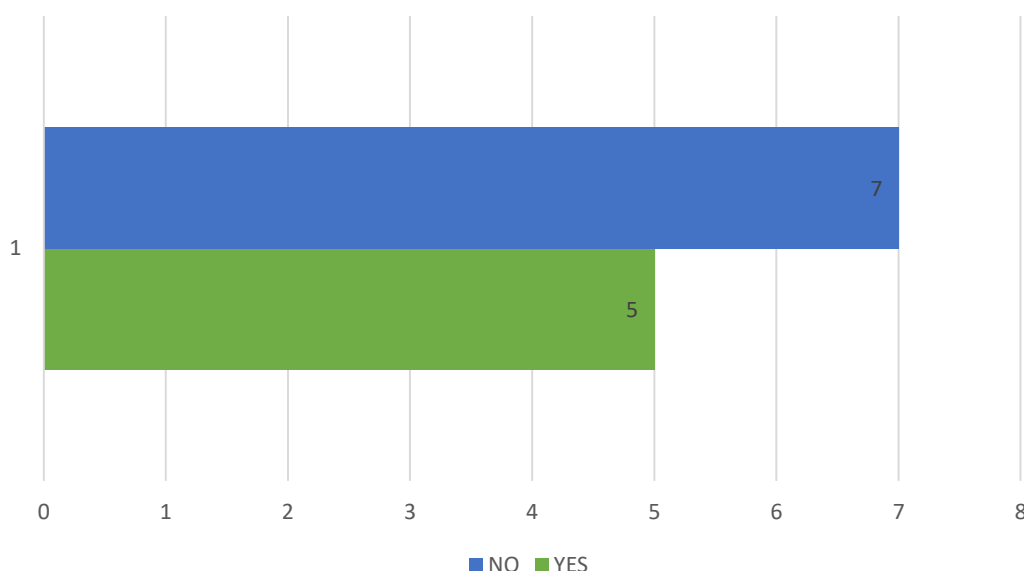
This chapter presents the interpretation and analysis of data. The research has adopted a mixed method approach wherein both quantitative data from a questionnaire and qualitative data from an interview are used. The objective of this questionnaire is to examine how public libraries in Goa are currently catering to the needs of individuals with special needs and to identify the challenges faced in accessing library resources and services. The data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The questionnaire was distributed to the library in charge of 12 public libraries in Goa, and secondary data like the Goa Disability Census 2011 and Educational Statistics at a Glance were utilized to supplement the analysis. By combining survey data, interviews, and secondary sources, a comprehensive understanding is achieved, and finally, the collected data is presented using tables, charts, etc. The data analysis consists of two parts. The first part examines five libraries that provide services to individuals with special needs whereas the second part focuses on seven libraries that currently do not offer services to individuals with special needs. The public libraries that I have chosen for my study are:

**Table 5.1 List of public libraries of Goa**

<b>SR. NO.</b>	<b>NAME OF THE LIBRARY</b>
1	Krishnadas Shama Goa State Central Library
2	Dr. Francisco Luis Gomes District Library
3	Government Taluka Library, Bicholim, Goa
4	Government Taluka Library, Canacona, Goa
5	Government Taluka Library, Curchorem, Goa
6	Government Taluka Library, Pernem, Goa
7	Government Taluka Library, Ponda, Goa
8	Government Taluka Library, Sanguem, Goa

9	Government Taluka Library, Valpoi, Goa
10	Government Town Library, Cuncolim, Goa
11	Government Town Library, Quepem, Goa
12	Government Town Library, Sakhali, Goa

### 5.1.1 Provision of library facilities for individuals with special needs



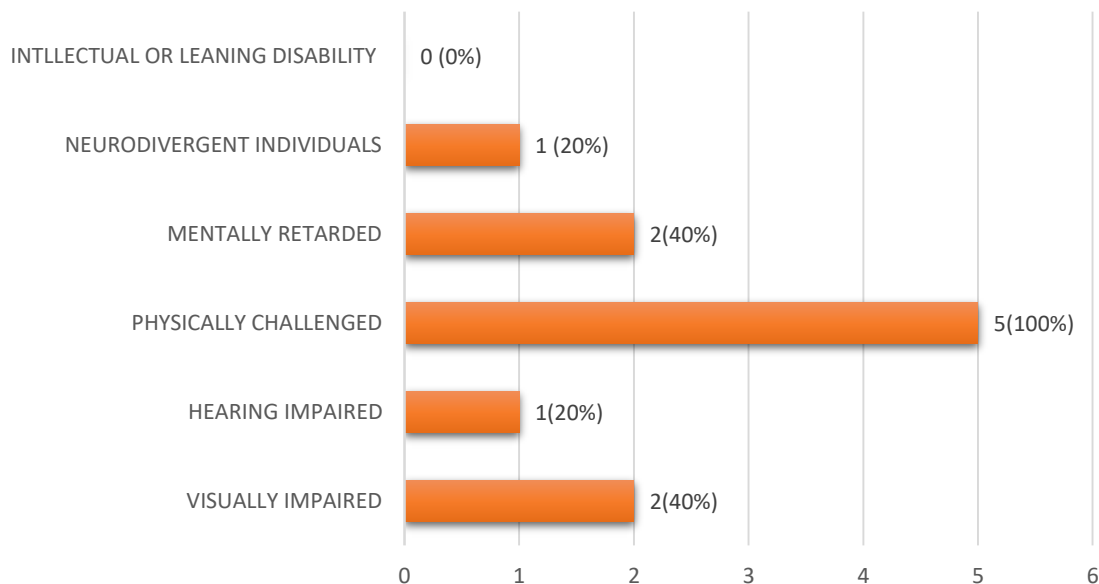
**Figure 5.1 Provision of library facilities for individuals with special needs**

From the above figure 5.1, it is revealed that out of 12 public libraries in Goa selected as a sample for study, only 5 libraries are providing library resources and services for individuals with special needs. The remaining 7 libraries confirmed that currently their library doesn't have any resources or services that will help cater to individuals with special needs.

When further questions were asked why the library doesn't offer services for people with special needs, many said it's because there hasn't been a demand for it. They also pointed out that individuals with special needs don't visit the library frequently, so they don't see the necessity for specialised services.

Some librarians expressed a willingness to provide resources and facilities for individuals with special needs if there is a demand for it, they would do their best to introduce at least basic services and resources.

### **5.1.2 Types of individuals with special needs that the library considers in order to provide information resources and services**



**Figure 5.2 Types of individuals with special needs that the library considers**

#### **5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

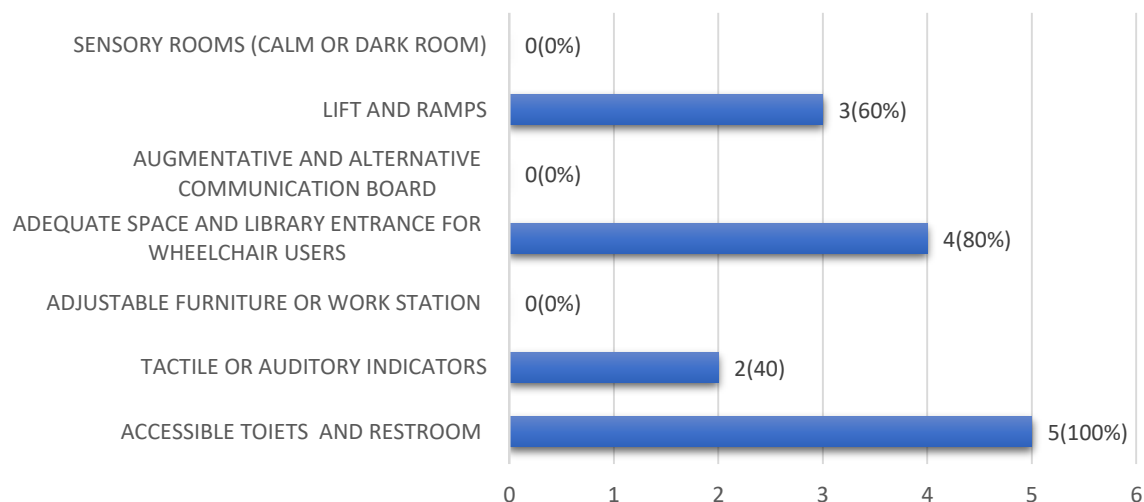
The purpose of this question is to identify the specific categories of people with special needs being served by the libraries. Figure 5.2 shows all 5 (100%) libraries provide library resources and services to the physically challenged, while 2 libraries (40%) cater to visually impaired and mentally retarded individuals. Only 1 (20%) library offers services for people with hearing impairments. However, no public library provides resources and services for individuals with intellectual or learning disabilities.

#### **7 libraries that do not furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

Those 7 libraries confirmed that currently they don't offer any specialized resources or services for individuals with special needs. Their collection mainly comprises printed sources such as books and newspapers, mainly catering to the general population.

However, it's noted that users with special needs do visit the library. Some librarians mentioned instances of students with autism, learning disabilities, physical challenges, and stammering issues visit library. They utilize general resources that are available in the library. Despite their presence, the library lacks dedicated resources for them. This suggests a widespread need for such services across all libraries.

### 5.1.3 Types of facilities library buildings provide for individuals with special needs



**Figure 5.3 Facilities library building provides**

#### **5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

The question was intended to find out what different types of facilities a library building has to make it disabled friendly. The above figure 5.3 depicts that all 5 (100%) libraries that provide services to special needs have accessible toilets. 4 (80%) libraries has adequate space and library entrances for wheelchair users. 2 libraries have lift facilities, and 3 libraries (60%) have ramps for people in wheelchairs or any other person. Whereas only 2 (40%) libraries have tactile flooring to guide the visually impaired. While there are no provisions in the library building like sensory rooms (calm or dark rooms), Augmentative

and alternative communication board, and adjustable furniture or workstations for disabled people.

### **7 libraries that do not furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

Most of these library buildings are situated either on the first or second floor and lack lift provisions, making access impossible for wheelchair users. Additionally, all those seven libraries lack adequate space to accommodate resources and services for individuals with special needs. Each library has toilets, but some are not designed primarily for disabled people. Moreover, as most libraries are rented, so no modifications can be made. However, they have assured that in the future, when new libraries are built, they will ensure that the building plans consider the needs of disabled people.

#### 5.1.4 Library resources and services available to cater to individuals with special needs

**Table 5.2 library resources and services available for special need**

<b>LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES AVAILABLE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Braille books	2	40%
Talking books	0	0%
large print materials	2	40%
Daisy book	0	0%
Moon type	0	0%
Magnification tools	1	20%
Personal reading service	0	0%
Transcription services	1	20%
Extended operating hours	0	0%
User education	2	40%
Loan services	1	20%
pictures	1	20%
Electronic bulletin boards	0	0%
Film strips	0	0%
Graphics	0	0%
Film shows	0	0%
Use of sign language to communicate	1	20%
Exhibition of books, video tapes	0	0%
Accessible online database	0	0%
Picture books	2	40%
Easy to read books	1	20%
Motion pictures	0	0%
Posters	1	20%
Television	1	20%
Games and toys	4	80%

Group activities according to mental age	1	20%
Organising cultural programmes	0	0%
Speech drills	0	0%
Story hours	1	20%
Books and newspapers (print)	5	100%
Audio and visuals	1	20%
E resources	1	20%
Ergonomic keyboard	1	20%
Reference service	5	100%
Internet service	1	20%
selective dissemination of information	3	60%
Interlibrary loan services	5	100%
OPAC Services	5	100%

### **5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

The question was designed to ascertain the various resources and services currently provided by libraries to individuals with special needs. Looking at the above table 5.2, it can be seen that all 5 libraries (100%) provide basic resources such as books and newspapers (print), reference services, interlibrary loan services, and OPAC services. Additionally, 80% i.e. 4 libraries, offer toys and games, while 3 (60%) libraries provide selective dissemination of information. 2 libraries have dedicated section for visually impaired individuals or those with print disabilities, offering braille materials and large print materials. Another two libraries offer picture books and provide user education to every new member or visitor. However, only 1 (20%) library has resources like magnification tools, pictures, E resources, easy- to- read books, posters, film strips, television, audio and visuals, ergonomic keyboards

Services like internet service, conduct story hours, group activities according to mental age, use of sign language to communicate, loan services, and also transcription services from text to braille script are offered by some libraries. Presently, public libraries in Goa do not provide talking books, Daisy books, Moon type materials, electronic bulletin boards,

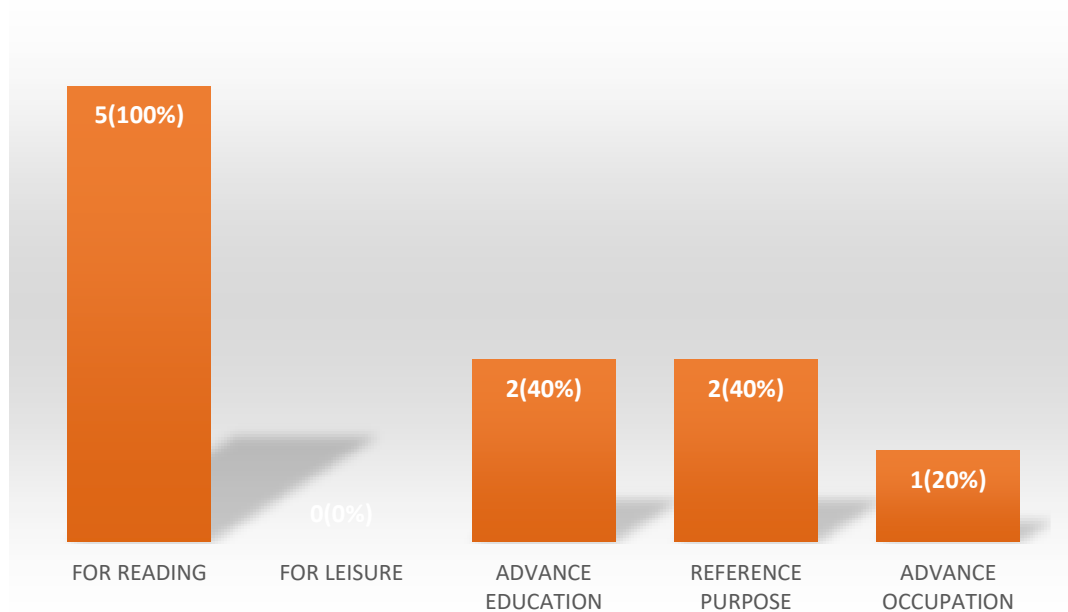


graphics, or accessible online databases. Furthermore, they do not offer specialized services such as speech drills, organizing cultural programs for individuals with special needs, hosting exhibitions of books and videotapes, library film shows, extended operating hours, or personal reading services for disabled individuals.

### **7 libraries that do not furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

In seven libraries, they all have traditional reading materials like books, magazines, newspapers, picture books and posters. General services like reference service and OPAC service are also provided. For users who want resources like braille materials, they can get them through interlibrary loan services. They also conduct exhibitions of books on special days like children's Day, Women's Day etc., depending on the type of occasion related to that exhibition.

### 5.1.5 The purpose of using information resources and services for special needs



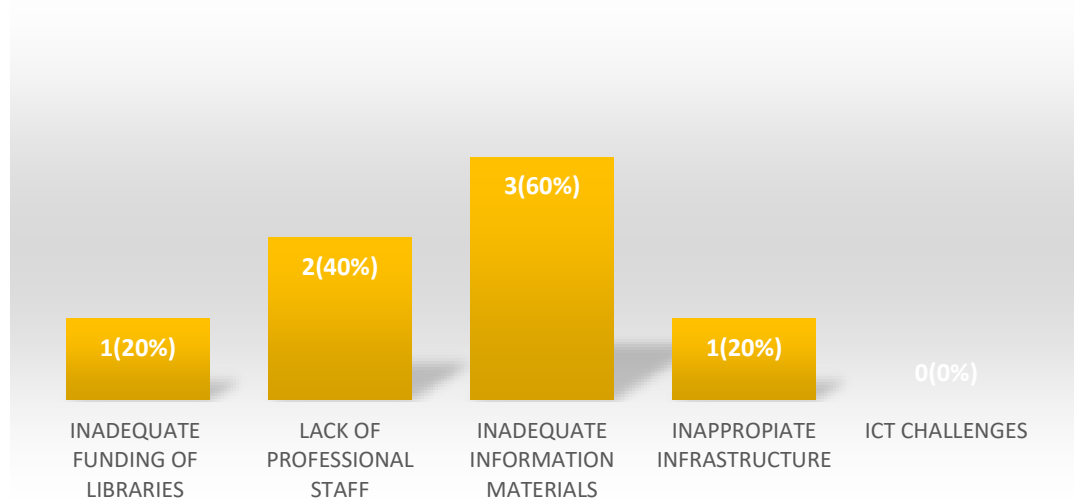
**Figure 5.4 Purpose of Using Information Resources and Services**

#### **5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

The question was asked to librarian to understand the purposes for which individuals with special needs utilize library resources and services. As seen in figure 5.4 the majority, comprising five librarians (100%), indicated that these individuals primarily visit the library and use information resources and services for reading purposes.

Additionally, two librarians (40%) mentioned that patrons with special needs often come for reference purposes and to advance their education. On the other hand, only one library in charge (20%) stated that individuals with special needs visit the library to advance their occupation. Interestingly, none of the librarians mentioned leisure as a primary purpose for the visits of individuals with special needs.

### 5.1.6 Challenges that the library faces in implementing its services and programmes.



**Figure 5.5 Challenges Faced by Libraries**

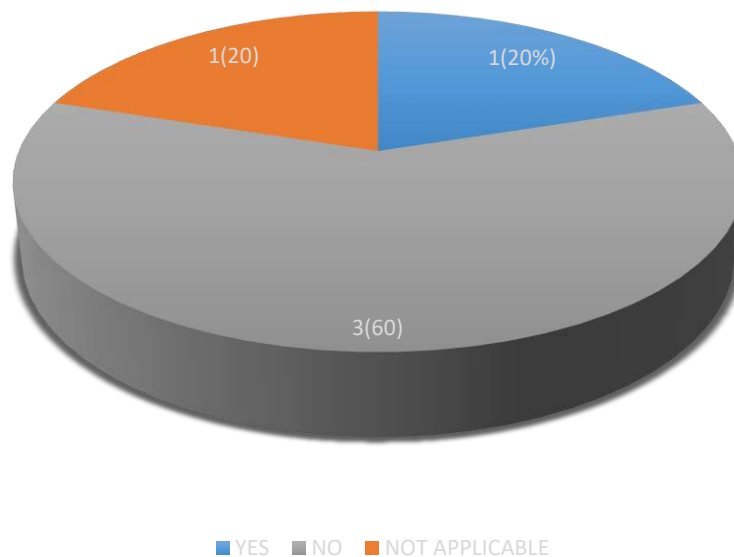
#### **5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

The question is intended to identify the challenges faced by libraries in implementing their services and programmes for users with special needs. The above figure 5.5 depicts that 3 (60%) libraries encounter difficulties due to inadequate information materials available in accessible formats such as braille, large print, and audio books. Additionally, 40% (2 libraries) said the lack of professional staff was a hindrance to effectively implementing services and programs. Furthermore, one library highlighted inadequate funding as a challenge, while another library identified inappropriate infrastructure as an obstacle. Notably, there were no responses indicating challenges related to ICT issues.

#### **7 libraries that do not furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

These libraries face several key challenges. Firstly, they struggle with limited space, which makes it difficult to provide all the necessary services. Secondly, they don't have enough funding to support the needs of people with disabilities, like providing accessible resources or facilities. Thirdly, the staff at these libraries haven't received any special training to assist individuals with special needs effectively. Lastly, they also have issues with technology because there's no internet connection available in the library.

### 5.1.7 Libraries tried to eliminate the physical barriers to provide access



**Figure 5.6 Eliminate physical barriers.**

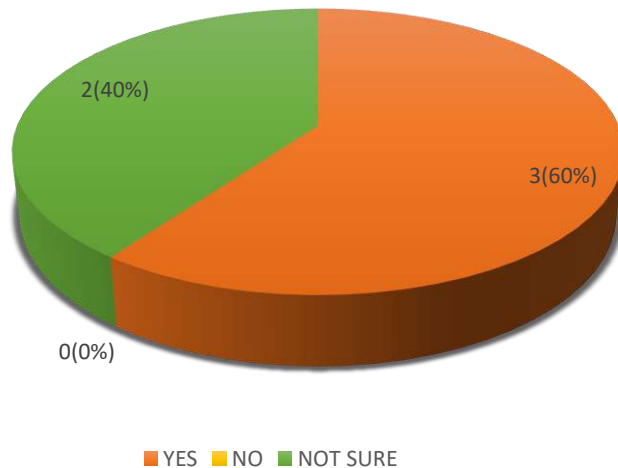
#### **5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

The question asked whether the library has made efforts to eliminate physical barriers to provide access to individuals with special needs. Figure 5.6 shows that majority, which includes 3 libraries (60%), indicated that they have not undertaken such efforts. 1 library (20%) reported that they have made attempts to eliminate physical barriers in the library. Another library chose "not applicable" as their response.

#### **7 libraries that do not furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

Some librarians said they want to eliminate barriers that are stopping people with special needs from entering library. They feel bad because they are not able to satisfy their information requirements in an accessible format. Till now, no such efforts have been made to minimize the physical barriers.

### 5.1.8 Awareness of the library resources and services available for individuals with special needs



**Figure 5.7 Awareness of library resources and services.**

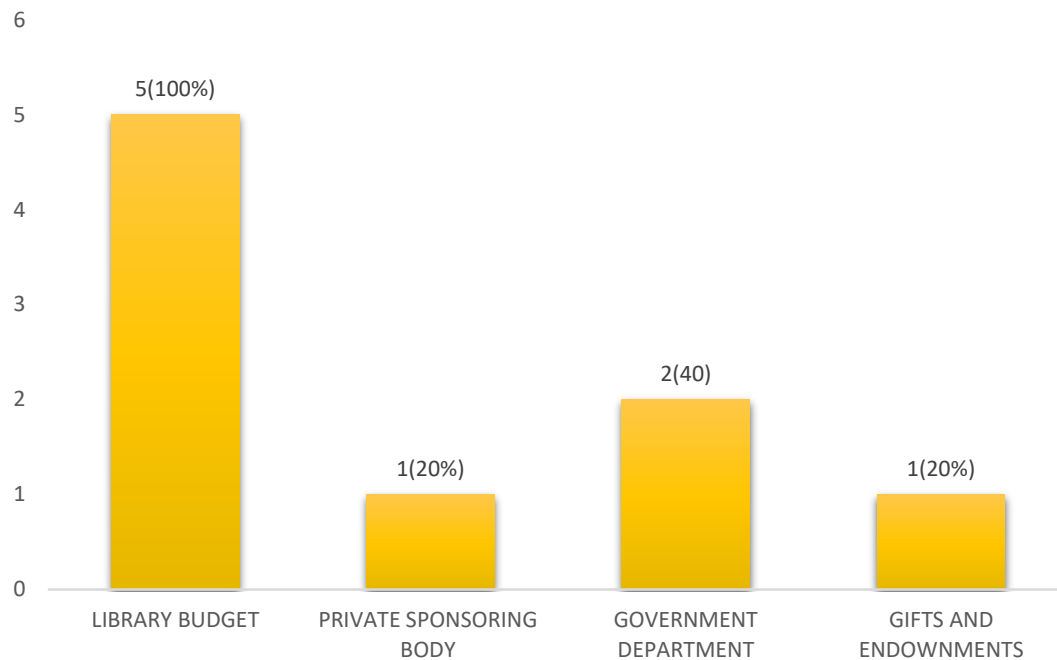
#### **5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

The purpose of this question is to determine whether people are aware of the library resources and services available for individuals with special needs. The above figure 5.7 shows that 3 libraries (60%) confirmed that most of the people are aware of the resources and services, while 2 libraries (40%) were not sure whether people were aware or not.

#### **7 libraries that do not furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

The majority of the population is aware of these libraries and the information resources and services available to general users.

### 5.1.9 Source of funding for services and equipment for individuals with special needs



**Figure 5.8 Source of funding**

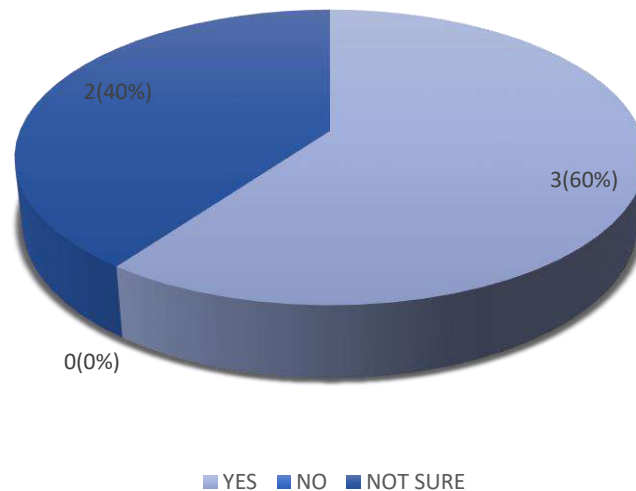
#### **5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

The above figure 5.8 illustrates the diverse sources of funding for services and equipment for individuals with special needs. All 5 (100%) libraries surveyed rely on their allocated library budgets. Additionally, 2 (40%) receive funding from government departments, while only 1 library (20%) obtains support from private sponsoring bodies and gifts/endowments, respectively. Overall, library budgets are the main source of funding, with some receiving supplementary support from government agencies and private sources.

#### **7 libraries that do not furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

The only source of funding for libraries is the library budget. All the resources are acquired or purchased through the central library.

#### 5.1.10 library staff aware of the issues faced by individuals with special needs



**Figure 5.9 Library staff awareness**

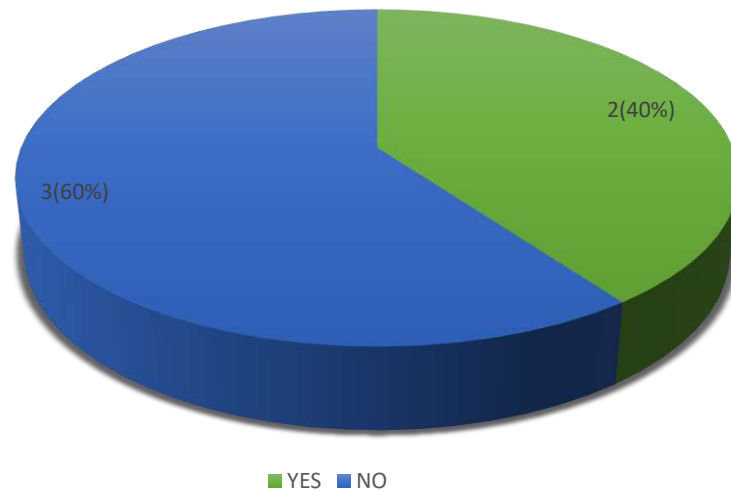
#### **5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

The purpose of this question is to know whether their library staff is aware of problems faced by individuals with special needs. The above figure 5.9 shows that out of the five libraries surveyed, 3 libraries (60%) indicated that they were indeed aware of these challenges. However, two libraries (40%) expressed uncertainty regarding whether all staff members are aware of these issues.

#### **7 libraries that do not furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

The library staff is aware that there are many differently abled individuals in the surrounding area and the problems they face.

### 5.1.11 Dedicated library staff to assist individuals with special needs



**Figure 5.10 Dedicated Library Staff**

#### **5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

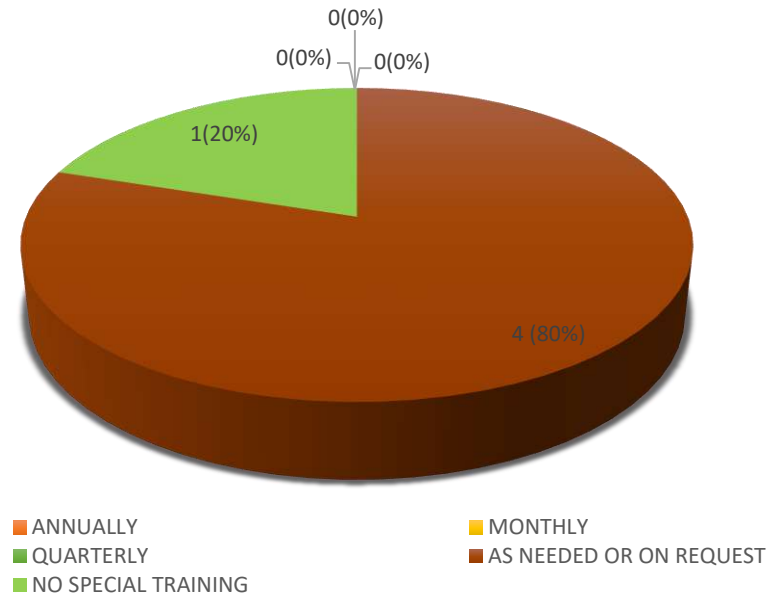
The purpose of the question is to determine if there is dedicated staff available to assist individuals with special needs. According to the data presented in Figure 5.10, out of the five public libraries in Goa surveyed, three (60%) have dedicated staff specifically for individuals with disabilities, such as those who work in the braille section. However, two libraries (40%) do not have such dedicated staff.

#### **7 libraries that do not furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

They don't have more staff because the library is small, and thus, there's no significant need for additional personnel.



### 5.1.12 Library staff training to enhance their ability to assist individuals with special needs



**Figure 5.11 Library staff training to assist differently abled individuals**

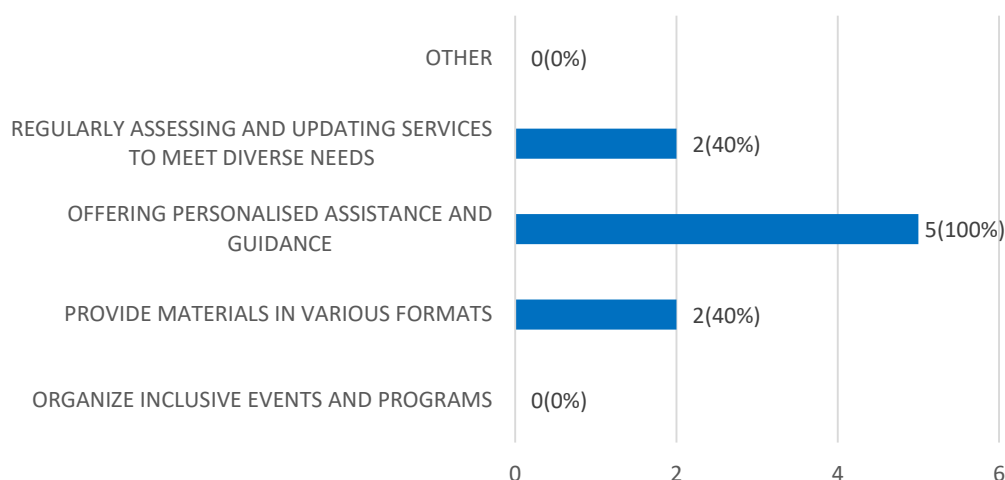
#### **5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

Figure 5.11 shows that library staff members mostly undergo training to enhance their ability to assist individuals with special needs as needed or upon request, according to responses from 4 libraries (80%). This suggests that staff receive training when there is a specific need or when they request it. Only 1 library (20%) indicated that there is no special training provided to staff for assisting individuals with special needs. This implies that library staff members are not given training on a quarterly, monthly, or annual basis.

#### **7 libraries that do not furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

No special training is provided to library staff members on how to handle such people effectively.

### 5.1.13 library professionals' contribution to empowering individuals with special need



**Figure 5.12 Empowerment of individuals with special needs**

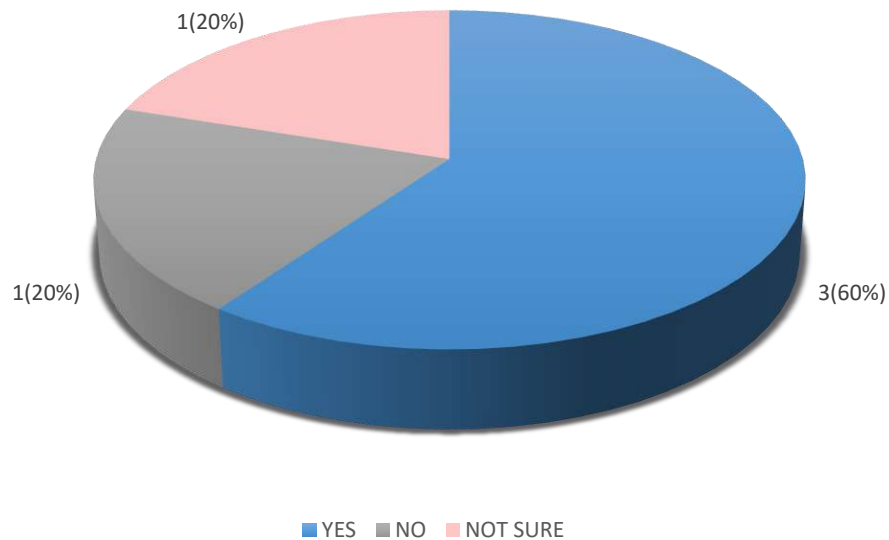
#### **5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

The purpose of this question is to understand the role of library professionals in empowering individuals with special needs, ensuring their full participation in library services and community activities. Figure 5.12 shows that all five surveyed libraries (100%) empower individuals with special needs by providing personalized assistance and guidance. Two libraries regularly assess and update their services to meet diverse needs and offer materials in various formats. However, none of the libraries organize inclusive events and programmes to empower them.

#### **7 libraries that do not furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

These libraries lack materials in various formats and do not organize inclusive events or programmes, primarily because only a handful people visit library. However one librarian assured that if there are such people, surely they will think of having inclusive events.

**5.1.14 The library implement accessibility policies and programs by library planning committee.**



**Figure 5.13 Accessibility Policies and Programs by Library Planning Committee**

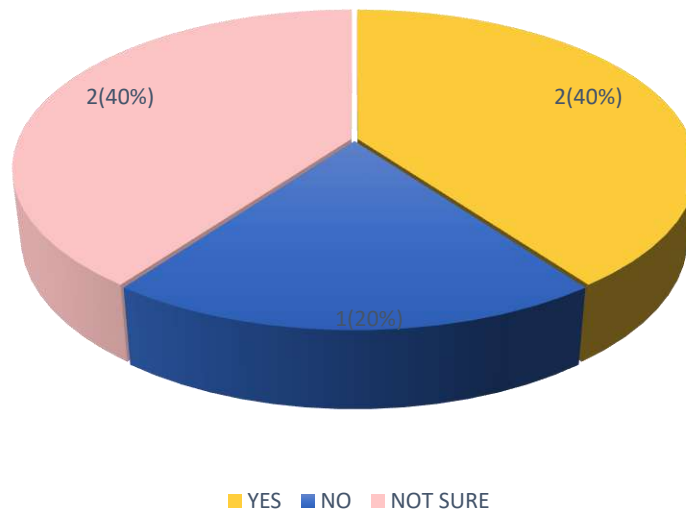
**5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

Figure 5.13 shows that out of the 5 surveyed libraries, 3 libraries (60%) have implemented accessibility policies and programs. While 1 library (20%) hasn't done yet, another 1 library (20%) is unsure about whether they have implemented these policies or not.

**7 libraries that do not furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

All these libraries have not implemented any policies and programmes for individuals with special needs. Policies and programmes are conducted only for general users of the library.

#### 5.1.15 Successful outreach initiative to make people with special needs aware of library services



**Figure 5.14 Successful Outreach Initiative**

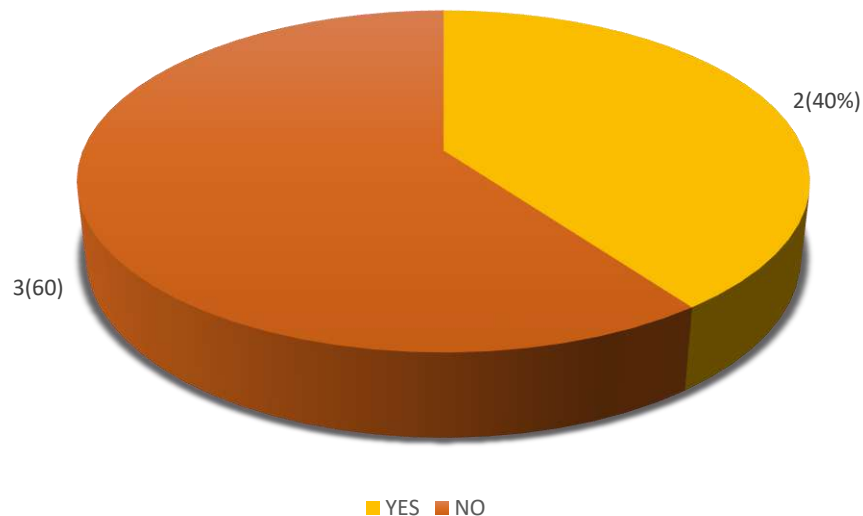
#### **5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

The librarian was asked to determine if the library had successfully implemented outreach initiatives to raise awareness among people with special needs about library services. From the figure 5.14, it is revealed that two libraries (40%) conducted outreach initiatives to promote their library services, while two libraries (40%) did not undertake such initiatives, and one library (20%) was unsure.

#### **7 libraries that do not furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

This libraries had successfully implemented outreach initiatives to raise awareness among the general masses of population about the existence of the library and the various resources and services available. They visit schools, conduct competitions, workshops, seminars etc.

#### **5.1.16 Library implemented any digital platforms or online resources to enhance accessibility for patrons with special needs**



**Figure 5.15 Digital Platforms or Online Resources**

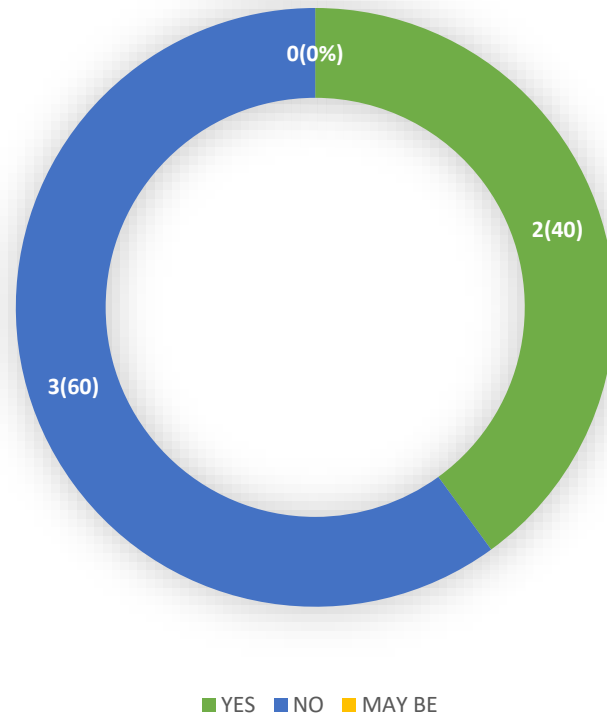
#### **5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

The question is intended to know if the library implemented any digital platforms or online resources to improve accessibility for patrons with special needs. From the figure 5.15, it is clear that out of 5 libraries, 3 libraries don't have any digital platforms or online resources to cater to individuals with special needs. While only 2 libraries have implemented digital platforms and are online.

#### **7 libraries that do not furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

Forget about having digital resources and platforms; they don't even have internet connectivity in the library. Some libraries use their own internet for library work. If any user wants information from online sources, they search and provide them with a print copy of it. They don't have a separate OPAC for their library; they all use integrated OPAC created by the Central Library. Other than OPAC they don't have any type of e- resources.

#### 5.1.17 specialized orientation sessions to assist user in navigating and searching for information



**Figure 5.16 specialized orientation sessions**

#### **5 libraries that furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

The purpose of the question is to determine whether or not orientation sessions are provided for individuals with special needs. From the above figure 5.16, it can be seen as Out of the libraries surveyed, 3 libraries (60%) don't have orientation sessions for special needs individuals in the library, whereas only 2 libraries (40%) give orientation sessions for new users in the library.

#### **7 libraries that do not furnish assistance to individuals with special needs**

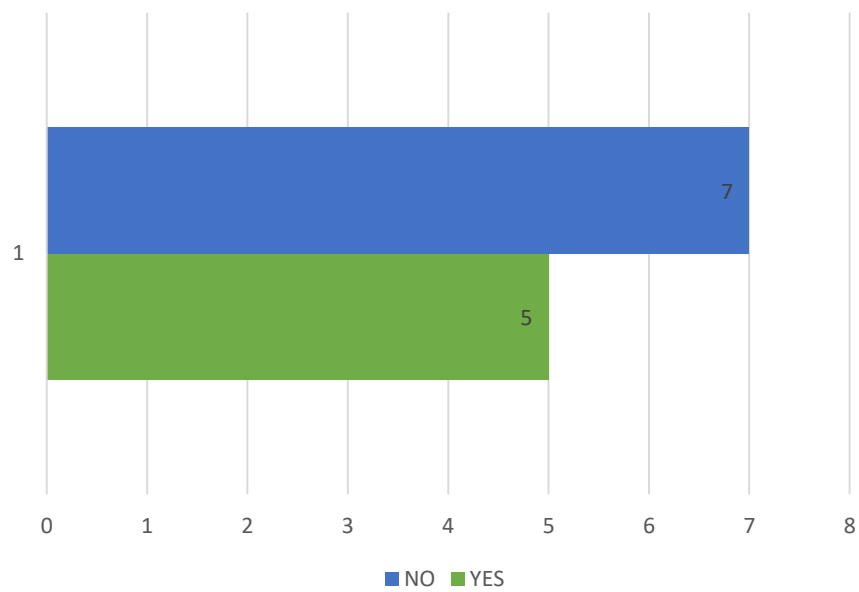
These libraries give orientation only for general users.

#### **5.1.18 Best practices implemented by libraries**

Some of the libraries are implementing a range of best practices to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all patrons. By providing dedicated sections with books and magazines in Braille, libraries cater to the visually impaired. Facilities such as individual and group study rooms accommodate different study preferences. Equipment like automatic wheelchairs and magnifying glasses support patrons with disabilities. Libraries also offer a variety of audio books, CDs, and DVDs, as well as training in the use of assistive equipment and software. Mobile libraries extend services to different special schools, organizing programs for the students and facilitating access to library resources. Libraries are making it easier for people to access information and resources by using Whatsapp to provide requested information online. They also bring students from special schools to the library to teach them how to use library resources. To help those who have trouble with transportation, libraries deliver books to places like bus stops or other common areas. These practices show that there are few libraries which are working hard to include everyone, make resources easy to access, and involve the community. They want to help people from all backgrounds and abilities by providing a variety of materials and services to learn and grow. But there are areas where they can further enhance their efforts or introduce new initiatives to better serve their communities. It implies that there are opportunities for growth and development in how libraries cater to the diverse needs of their patrons.

## 5.2 Hypotheses testing

**Hypothesis 1: Most of the public libraries in Goa provide facilities for individuals with special needs.**



**Figure 5.1 Provision of library facilities for individuals with special needs**



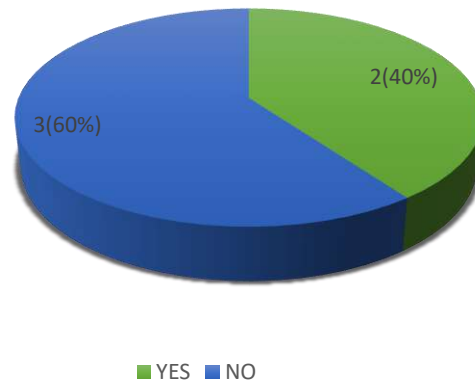
**Table 5.2 library resources and services available for special need**

<b>LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES AVAILABLE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>Braille books</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Talking books</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>large print materials</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Daisy book</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Moon type</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Magnification tools</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Personal reading service</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Transcription services</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Extended operating hours</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>User education</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Loan services</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>pictures</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Electronic bulletin boards</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Film strips</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Graphics</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Film shows</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Use of sign language to communicate</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Exhibition of books, video tapes</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Accessible online database</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Picture books</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Easy to read books</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Motion pictures</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Posters</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Television</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Games and toys</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>80%</b>

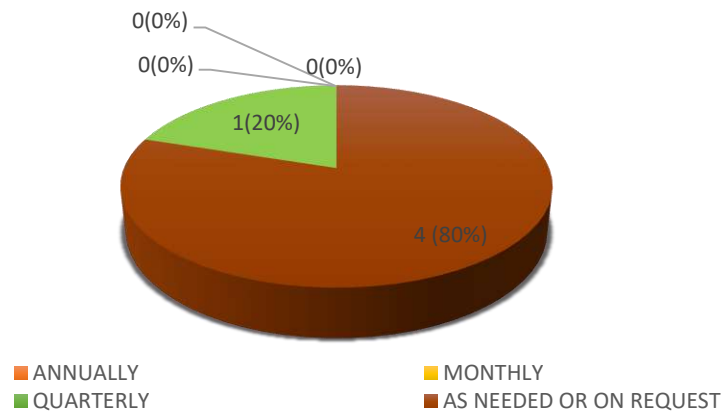
<b>Group activities according to mental age</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Organising cultural programmes</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Speech drills</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Story hours</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Books and newspapers (print)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Audio and visuals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>E resources</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Ergonomic keyboard</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Reference service</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Internet service</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>selective dissemination of information</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Interlibrary loan services</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>OPAC Services</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 5.1 indicates that the majority of public libraries in Goa do not offer facilities for individuals with special needs, as only 5 out of 12 libraries sampled provide resources and services catering to them. This finding is further supported by Figure 5.3 and Table 5.2, which illustrate that only a minority of libraries offer such services. Therefore, the hypothesis that “**most of the public libraries in Goa provide facilities for individuals with special needs**” is proven to be incorrect and is rejected.

**Hypothesis 2: The library staff is not well trained to help individuals with disabilities.**



**Figure 5.10 Dedicated Library Staff**



**Figure 5.11 Library staff training to assist differently abled individuals**

Figure 5.10 shows that out of 12 libraries, only 3 have dedicated staff to assist individuals with special needs; and lastly, from Figure 5.11, it can be seen that only 4 libraries receive training to assist special needs individuals, and the remaining 8 libraries don't have any special training. Therefore, we can say that the hypothesis that the “**library staff is not well trained to help individuals with disabilities**” is correct and accepted.

**Hypothesis 3: There is a greater need for library services in the public libraries of Goa.**

**Table 5.3 Goa Disability Census 2011 Overall Disability**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Seeing</b>	<b>Hearing</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Movement</b>	<b>Mentally Retarded</b>	<b>Mentally Ill</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>Multiple Disability</b>
Total	33,012	17,016	15,996	4,964	5,347	5,272	5,578	1,817	1,675	5,784	2,575
0-4	980	498	482	126	180	44	58	59	10	428	75
5-9	1,407	728	679	151	242	345	85	108	43	298	135
10-19	3,644	2,027	1,617	414	568	681	317	459	144	711	350
20-29	4,128	2,286	1,842	448	653	921	421	340	214	823	308
30-39	4,549	2,402	2,147	520	656	959	667	301	354	789	303
40-49	4,687	2,617	2,070	709	680	861	720	264	340	868	245
50-59	4,295	2,287	2,008	774	624	661	878	137	260	709	252
60-69	4,434	2,198	2,236	901	750	516	1,057	85	178	617	330
70-79	3,089	1,319	1,770	636	606	195	845	51	83	361	312
80-89	1,409	514	895	222	310	53	433	11	39	145	196
90+	302	100	202	52	60	17	90	2	4	18	59
Age Not Stated	88	40	48	11	18	19	7	0	6	17	10

**Table 5.4 Educational Statistics at a Glance 2019-20**

<b>SPECIAL SCHOOLS</b>	<b>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</b>
Atmavishvas School, For Special Children Near Community Health Centre, Murmuse Tuem	72
Sanjay School for Special Education Alto Betim, Porvorim, Bardez 403 521.	
AASTHA Anand Niketan special school for differently abled. Urban Health centre, Ghateshwarnagar, Khorlim, Mapusa- Goa.	71
Keshav Seva Sadhana's School for Special Children, Vathadeo Sarvan, Bicholim-Goa	173
Keshav Seva Sadhana's School for Special Children, Old Block of Community Health Centre, Valpoi, Sattari-Goa. 403 506.	67
Lokvishwas Pratishthan's Special School, Vadadev Nagar, Honda, Sattari-Goa	40
Disha Charitable Trust's, Behind Directorate of Education, 18 June Road, Panaji-Goa.403 001.	67
People's Education Trust School for Appropriate Learning. Mala, Panaji-Goa.403 001.	49
Peace Haven Special School, Caranzalem-Goa	42
St. Xavier's Academy, Kadamba Road, Old Goa	245
Fairyland Special School, Gon Velha, Goa Islands.	31
Lokvishwas Prathisthan's Late Meenatai B. Thackre Residential Primary School for Hearing Impaired Children Shantadurga Krupashram, Kapileshwari. Dhavali Ponda. 403 401.	23

Lokvishwas Prathisthan's Special School, Shantadurga Krupashram, Kapileshwari, Dhavali Ponda. 403 401.	152
Lokvishwas Prathisthan's Virani Isani High School for Hearing Impaired Children, Shantadurga Krupashram, Kapileshwari Ponda-Goa.	31
Lokvishwas Prathisthan's Ismail J. Virani & Nabad L. Virani School & Home for Visually Impaired Children, Shantadurga Krupashram, Kapileshwari, Dhavali-Ponda.	22
Vidhya Vardini Education Society, Special School, Takwada Usgaon-Ponda	
Lokvishwas Prathisthan's Special School, Khandola, Marcel-Goa	26
Lokvishwas Prathisthan's Special School Jambolim, Mollem, Dharbandora-Goa.	25
Sanjay Center School for Special Education, Pontemol, Curchorem	
Chetna Education Society School & Rehabilitation Centre for Special Children Visawa 410 Carriamoddi, Curchorem-Goa 403706.	107
Lokvishwas Prathisthan's Special School, Near Fish Market - Quepem Goa.	58
Lokvishwas Prathisthan's Special School Mokhard, Shristhal Canacona Goa	61
Daddy's Home Special School Near Mutt Sankul, Gogol, Margao-Goa.	
Gujarathi Samaj Educational Trust For the Handicapped Special School, Near Maruti Temple, Aquem, Margao Goa	228
Jyot School for Children with Autism C/o Chaitanya Math, Behind Pre-owned Cars Showroom, Near Datta Mandir, Davorlim, Margao, Salcete-Goa.	47

St. Vincent de Paul Special School, Batora Waddo, Curtorim. Salcete-Goa.	35
New Dawn Ashadeep, Special School, Near Deepvihar Secondary School, Sada, Mormugao-Goa.	103
Sanjay Centre School for Special Education, Bogda, Vasco.	
Divshray Tutelage's Special School for intellectual disabled Children, Shiroda Ponda	
Lokvishwas Pratisthan's Higher Secondary Vocational (HI), Shantadurga Krupashram, Kapileshwari, Dhavali, Ponda-Goa	12
Sanjay Centre, Higher Secondary School and Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Centre, old SCERT building, Alto Porvorim Bardez-Goa.	

Based on the data from the Goa Disability Census 2011 (Table 5.3) and the widespread presence of special schools in the region (Table 5.4), it is clear that there is a significant population of individuals with disabilities in Goa. This emphasizes the importance of providing specialized assistance and resources tailored to their diverse needs. Additionally, the widespread presence of special schools indicates a need for library services to help children with disabilities in their education. Therefore, it can be concluded that the hypothesis "**There is a greater need for library services in public libraries in Goa**" is correct and accepted.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter outlines the key findings of the study and provides suggestions and conclusions based on the research.

#### **6.1 Findings**

- The study revealed that out of the 12 public libraries in Goa selected for the study, only 5 libraries (41.7%) are providing resources and services for individuals with special needs. The remaining 7 libraries (58.3%) do not currently offer resources or services to cater to individuals with special needs due to a lack of demand and infrequent visits from such individuals. However, librarians have expressed a willingness to provide services if there is demand.
- The study shows that out of 5 libraries that provide services to individuals with special needs, cater to physically challenged individuals, whereas only 2 libraries (40%) offer services to visually impaired and mentally retarded individuals. 1 library (20%) serves those with hearing impairments.
- The study found that those libraries that provide services to people with special needs, they have accessible toilets, 4 libraries (80%) have adequate space and entrances for wheelchair users. 3 libraries (60%) provide ramps, while 2 libraries (40%) have tactile flooring for the visually impaired. However, provisions such as sensory rooms, communication boards, and adjustable furniture are lacking.
- 7 libraries that currently don't offer services for individuals with special needs are on upper floors without lift access, which hinders wheelchair users. Libraries lack space for accommodating individuals with special needs; although each library provides toilets, some are not specifically designed for disabled people. Since many libraries are rented, modifications are restricted.
- All 12 libraries surveyed offer basic resources such as printed materials and services like reference, interlibrary loans, and OPAC services. While 4 libraries



out of 5 (80%) provide toys and games, while 3 libraries (60%) offer selective dissemination of information, large print materials, picture books, and user education. Only 1 library (20%) has specialised resources such as magnification tools, e-resources, easy-to-read books, posters, film strips, television, audio and visual materials, and ergonomic keyboards.

- It has been discovered that the majority of individuals with special needs utilise information resources and services for reading purposes only.
- A major issue identified is the lack of accessible materials such as braille, large print, and audiobooks, as reported by 3 libraries (60%). Additionally, 2 libraries (40%) struggle due to a shortage of specialized staff and inadequate infrastructure.
- Only 1 library has made efforts to remove physical barriers, while the other 11 libraries have not.
- The study found that 60% of libraries (3 out of 5) reported that most people are aware of the resources and services available for individuals with special needs. However, 40% of libraries (2 out of 5) were uncertain whether people are aware or not.
- The study found that all libraries surveyed (100%) rely on their allocated library budgets as the main source of funding for services and equipment for individuals with special needs. All the resources are acquired or purchased through the central library.
- The study found that 3 libraries (60%) reported their staff was aware of the challenges faced by individuals with special needs, while 2 (40%) were unsure if all staff members were aware.
- The study found that 60% of public libraries in Goa (3 out of 5) have dedicated staff specifically to assist individuals with special needs, such as those working in the braille section. However, 40% of libraries (2 out of 5) lack dedicated staff for this purpose.
- It was found that out of 12 public libraries in Goa, staff at 8 libraries do not receive any training on how to effectively assist individuals with special needs, while 4 libraries provide training to staff as needed or upon request.

- The study found that all five surveyed libraries (100%) empower individuals with special needs by providing personalised assistance and guidance. Additionally, 2 libraries regularly assess and update their services to meet diverse needs and offer materials in various formats.
- Out of the five surveyed libraries, 3 (60%) have implemented accessibility policies and programmes, while 1 library (20%) has not, and another 1 library (20%) is unsure. The remaining seven libraries focus their policies and programs solely on general users of the library.
- Out of the 5 libraries that provide assistance to individuals with special needs, 2 libraries (40%) conducted outreach initiatives, while 2 libraries (40%) did not, and 1 library (20%) was unsure. The remaining seven libraries that do not assist individuals with special needs focus on general outreach activities such as school visits, competitions, workshops, and seminars.
- The study found that from the five libraries that provide assistance to individuals with special needs, 3 libraries (60%) lack digital platforms or online resources, while 2 libraries (40%) have implemented them. The seven libraries that do not assist individuals with special needs lack internet connectivity and rely on print copies of online information.
- Out of the five libraries that provide assistance to individuals with special needs, 3 (60%) do not offer orientation sessions, while 2 (40%) do. The 7 libraries that do not offer assistance only conduct orientation sessions for general users, suggesting a lack of specific support and resources for individuals with special needs.
- The study found that best practices implemented by libraries by offering books and magazines in Braille for people who can't see well. They have individual and group study rooms for different ways people like to study. They provide equipment like automatic wheelchairs and magnifying glasses for those with disabilities. Libraries also have audio books, CDs, and DVDs, and teach people how to use special tools and software. Mobile libraries visit special schools to share resources, and libraries use WhatsApp to give information online. They bring special school students to the library to learn how to use resources and

deliver books to bus stops or common areas for people who have trouble with transportation.

## **6.2 Suggestions**

There is a significant gap in the provision of facilities and services for individuals with special needs in public libraries across Goa. Only 5 libraries offer special assistance despite the prevalence of disabilities in the region, as indicated by the Goa Disability Census 2011 and the presence of numerous special schools. To bridge this gap and better serve individuals with special needs, public libraries could consider implementing the following suggestions:

- Libraries should provide resources such as educational toys, picture books, and puzzles tailored to individuals with mental disabilities, autism, and learning disabilities. Additionally, they should have special rooms, like calm or dark rooms, where these individuals can relax and feel comfortable.
- Information needs of differently abled persons are the same as those of other persons. It is just that they need the same information in different formats. Hence, it is suggested that libraries procure information resources in alternative formats like large print books, braille books, audio/talking books, easy-to-read books, etc.
- It is suggested that public libraries in Goa make efforts in the direction of physical accessibility by providing sufficient parking, ramps, elevators, accessible furniture, toilets, etc. to accommodate differently abled persons.
- The library should also have an Augmentative and Alternative Communication Board (AAC) and can use large, easy-to-read signs to help people find their way around the library.
- Libraries can create clubs for individuals with disabilities, offering a space for socialisation where they can meet, connect, and enjoy activities designed just for them.
- Library professionals should actively contribute to empowering individuals with special needs by organising inclusive events and programmes, providing materials

in various formats, offering personalised assistance, and regularly assessing and updating services to meet the diverse needs of those users.

- Libraries should implement policies and programmes and use new technology and digital platforms to make services better and more accessible for people with special needs.
- Libraries can set up a dedicated feedback and suggestion box for people with special needs. This allows them to share their thoughts, experiences, and suggestions for improving accessibility and inclusivity in the library.
- Libraries should conduct outreach initiatives to raise awareness about available services.
- Libraries should also hold special orientation sessions to assist users in navigating the library effectively.
- Libraries should improve their catalogue and website by offering options like text enlargement, colour contrast adjustments, and voice or audio features. These enhancements help make library resources more accessible for all users, including those with visual impairments.
- Providing talking or audiobooks in English and also in native languages can improve accessibility.
- Libraries can offer special facilities like free transportation for greater access to resources.
- Providing special services like home delivery of books, books by mail, by post, and reference services by fax or email can benefit differently abled persons.
- Book shelves, circulation and reference desks, and buttons on lifts should be at a reachable height.
- Public libraries should ensure accessibility through the provision of tactile maps and footpaths inside the library, as well as braille buttons and voice announcements in elevators.
- Practical measures should be taken for the provision of budget, including constructing library buildings with ramps and installing lifts, acquiring braille and large print, and providing assistive equipment.

- It is essential to conduct staff training sessions to improve the perception of the library staff towards people with special needs. And also to provide services effectively.
- The library should conduct user studies at regular intervals to develop an effective, user-centred library and information services.
- The existing library facilities should be redesigned and modified with new technologies so as to enable mobility-challenged users to effectively and efficiently use library resources.
- Libraries should follow the guidelines designed by the IFLA Checklist regarding access to library services for users with disabilities.
- Libraries should allocate special funds for new assistive technologies and developing collections in convenient formats.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

Individuals with special needs are an essential part of our society. It's important not to overlook them, even though they are often seen as burden on society or deemed to have little value. Conventional library resources may not always meet their needs, but it's also important not to forget that they deserve equal access to information and learning opportunities. This study aims to make a small contribution by making library services more accessible to individuals with special needs.

In Goa, individuals with special needs are scattered across various regions, making it essential to provide resources and services in accessible formats to ensure they can benefit from them. The accessibility of library resources and services for individuals with special needs is still a critical issue that requires continuous effort and improvement. Libraries must ensure that everyone, including those with special needs, can use their resources and services without facing barriers. Library staff should understand that people with special needs shouldn't feel less capable because of their disabilities. Even if individuals with special needs approach tasks differently, they are just as capable as anyone else. Therefore, libraries should adapt and make changes to support their needs.

The study provides insight into the current state of public libraries in Goa regarding accessibility and services for people with special needs. It emphasises the need for ongoing improvements in these services. The study on public libraries in Goa shows that there is a big gap in providing services and resources for differently abled people. Only 5 out of 12 public libraries offer service for this group, mainly focusing on people with physical disabilities. Most libraries lack accessible facilities, specialised resources, trained staff, and proper policies for helping individuals with special needs.

The study suggests libraries in Goa need to improve in several areas, including offering different formats of materials such as large print and braille, ensuring buildings are physically accessible, creating specialised programmes, and training staff to support individuals with special needs. Libraries also need to adopt inclusive policies and use technology to improve accessibility. By making these changes, libraries can create a welcoming environment for all users. Libraries in Goa should take these steps to support the rights of individuals with special needs to access information and actively participate in the community. This approach can promote fairness and inclusivity for everyone.

In conclusion, enhancing library services for individuals with special needs in Goa requires physical accessibility, diverse resources, staff training, inclusive programming, outreach efforts, and policy implementation. These measures will create inclusive environments that effectively empower and engage this population

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## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

I am Miss Bhavani Rabinal, a student of Goa University pursuing degree in Master of Library and Information Science (MLISC). As part of my studies, I have undertaken a minor research on the topic “Enhancing Library Services for Individuals with Special Needs: A Study.” Under the guidance of Dr. Shamin Pereira, Assistant Professor, Library and Information Science Programme. Kindly, fill out these questionnaires. I assure you that the information you provide will be kept confidential and will be used only for academic purpose. Thank you

Name of the Library:

Name of Respondent:

1) Does your library provide resources and services for individuals with special needs?

Yes

No

2) Which type of individuals with special needs are you providing library services in your library?

- Visually impaired
- Hearing impaired
- Physically challenged
- Mentally retarded
- Neurodivergent individuals (Autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome)
- Intellectual or learning disability
- Any other \_\_\_\_\_

3) What type of facilities do your library buildings provide for individuals with special needs?

Accessible restrooms and toilets

Tactile or auditory indicators like alarms and announcements

Adjustable furniture or work stations

Adequate space and library entrance for wheelchair users

Augmentative and alternative communication board (AAC)

Lifts and ramps

Sensory rooms (calm rooms or dark room)

Any other \_\_\_\_\_

4) What are the different library resources and services available to cater to individuals with special needs?

**Visually impaired**

• **Resources**

Braille books

Talking books

Large print materials

Magnification tools

Daisy book

Moon type

- **Services**
  - Personal reading services
  - User education
  - Loan services
  - Transcription services
  - Extended operating hours

### **Hearing impaired**

- **Resources**
  - Pictures
  - Electronic bulletin board
  - Film strips
  - Books & Resources
  - Graphics
  - Any other
- **Services**
  - Film shows
  - Use of sign language to communicate
  - Exhibition of books, periodicals, videotapes etc.
  - Accessible online databases
  - Any other \_\_\_\_\_

## **Mentally retarded**

- **Resources**

Picture books

Easy-to-read books

Posters

Motion pictures

Television

Games & toys

- **Services**

Group activities according to mental age

Organizing exhibitions, cultural shows and film shows

Speech drills

Story hours

Any other \_\_\_\_\_

## **Physically challenged**

- **Resources**

Books and newspaper (print resources)

Audio and visuals

E-Resource like e-books

Any other \_\_\_\_\_

- **Services**

Reference service

Internet service

Selective dissemination of information

Inter library loan

OPAC Services

5) For what purpose are the information resources and services in library being used by people with special needs?

- For reading
- For leisure
- Advance education
- Reference purpose
- Advance occupation
- Any other \_\_\_\_\_

6) What challenges does the library face in implementing its services and programs for users with special needs? Inadequate funding of libraries

- Lack of professional/insufficient staff
- Inadequate information materials
- Inappropriate infrastructure
- ICT challenges

- Any \_\_\_\_\_ other  
\_\_\_\_\_

7) Has your library tried to eliminate the physical barriers in order to provide access the library? If yes, please specify.

Yes/ No/ Not applicable \_\_\_\_\_

8) Are people aware of the library resources and services that are available in your library?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

9) What is the source of funding for services and equipment for individuals with special needs? Library budget

- Private sponsoring body
- Government department
- Gifts and endowments
- Any other \_\_\_\_\_

10) Is the library staff aware of problems faced by individuals with special needs?

- Yes
- No
- Not  
sure

11) Is there dedicated staff to assist individuals with special needs in locating and accessing suitable materials?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

12) How often do library staff members undergo training to enhance their ability to assist individuals with special needs?

- Annually
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- As needed or on request
- No special Training

13) How do library professionals actively contribute to empowering individuals with special needs, ensuring their full participation in both library services and community activities?

- Organize inclusive events and programs
- Provide materials in various formats
- Offering personalised assistance and guidance
- Regularly assessing and updating services to meet diverse needs
- Any other

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14) Does the library's access planning committee make plans or policies that help people with special needs use the library easily?

- Yes
- No

- Not  
sure

15) Has there been successful outreach initiatives to make individuals with special needs aware of the library's services?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

16) Has the library implemented any digital platforms or online resources to enhance accessibility for patrons with special needs?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

17) Does your library offer specialized orientation sessions to assist users in navigating and searching for information effectively?

- Yes
- No
- May be

18) What are the best practices implemented by your library to enhance library services for individuals with special needs?

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**THANK YOU**