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Library services for visually impaired users: Special reference to selected university libraries of Assam

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Abstract--The library is a storehouse of information. The main functions of a library were to accumulate and preserve the human thought and knowledge of a society. Now a day's education is mandatory for every people of the nation and it is also the fundamental right of people of nations that every people gets equal opportunities for getting the education free of cost without any type of discrimination. So in this regards university also provides equal educations facilities to all users without any type of discrimination. The Differently Abled is not 'special' people, but people with special needs and attention so that they are also able to live their life like ordinary people. Disability is a broad term, that includes all types of disabilities which are related to a person's unable to do his daily work or we can say it makes hurdles and limitations so need the support of others or depend on others thing freely done works/tasks of individuals its call disabilities. The study's principal objectis to examine various Library and Information Services that are existing for the visually impaired Group of people have in the selected University libraries of Assam. The study also emphasizes the special opportunity, facilities, services, various types of tools and infrastructural facilities that the libraries have provided for visually impaired users and its possibilities area.

Keywords--library and information service, visually, impaired, university libraries, special people, discrimination, Assam.

Introduction

A library is a collection of documentary and Non- documentary sources of information, print and Non- Print document preserved for research, and reference and recreation purpose. Library and its functions, delimitations and, characters are changed from time to time to cope with the times and requirements of users. The library is a storehouse of information. The main functions of a library were to accumulate and preserve the human thought and knowledge of a society. Libraries play an important role in society. The study materials and services they provide create chances for learning, support literacy, and education, and help to develop the new thoughts and beliefs that are main to a make and information society.

The Differently Abled is not 'special' people, but people with special needs and attention so that they are also able to live their life like ordinary people. Disability is a broad term, that includes all types of disabilities which are related to a person's unable to do his daily work or we can say its make hurdles and limitations so need the support of others or depend on others thing freely done works/tasks of individuals its call disabilities. Disability also can be defined as a physical or mental condition that forbids anindividual from the use of his or her body (partially, completely, and with ease) to perform daily activities. 'Visually impaired' is a term used to mentions people who are partially sighted or completely blind.

Library and information services convenient for the visually impaired community

In the present age with the help of Information and communication Technology Libraries and information services providers offers various special information services to mitigate the library and information demand of their visually impaired patrons. These include:

- Braille Books- Braille is a typeof reading and writing and touching system where by raised dots are used to represent letters that are read by touching Braille books are usable for users who have both visual and hearing problems.
- Talking Books- Talking books are audio/sound formats of books that could be recorded in suitable format likes- cassettes, CDROM, DVD, and on the internet as e-books.
- Talking Newspapers- Talking Newspaper is an audio recordings format of news articles daily wise.
- Large Printed Materials- Large printed materials are documents printed in large font size so that they be easily visible or suitable to partially sighted users.
- Electronic Texts- These are computer text files.It's also known as a screen reader with the help of this visually impaired user can easily able to meet their requirements.

Some Information communication tools for visually impaired user:

- Screen Magnifier- This is software that allows text or graphics on the computer screen to be magnified up to sixteen times the original.
- Screen Reader: Screen readers a software that reads out the content of a document to the reader. It is beneficial for the special readers of the library patrons.
- Voice Recognition Software: This is a wonderful development for the special library users it supports JAWS talking software (Convert computer into a talking PC) while any patrons want to information for their requirements this allows the user to input data into the computer by voice.

Objective of the study

- To find out the different types of the convenience special Services for the Visually Impaired patrons in the selected University Libraries of Assam.
- To find out the collection available for the Visually Impaired users of surveyed libraries.
- To survey the various advantageous equipment associated to Visually Impaired Users in the libraries under the study.

Area of the study

The area of this study is limited to two (2) University libraries in Assam, it is selected on a purposive basis in the selected University Libraries. One is State University, One is Central University. The selected University Libraries which are lay hold of for study are:

- LakshminathBezbaruah Central Library, Dibrugarh University
- Central Library, Tezpur University (Surveyed period of these libraries – July 2019).

Scope and limitations of the study

The scope of the study deals with the possible areas of the study in the topic. The scope of this study is the main interest in the diverse library facilities for the Visually Impaired users in Assam with specific in relation with the selected University Library of Assam. It also inspects the factors that are responsible for the growth and development of library facilities and services for the visually impaired users/patrons in Assam. The study is not far away from the shortcoming, which can be drawn as only two University Libraries placed in Assam, India are undertaken for the research study. Also, it is not possible to study in detail within a stipulated limited time.

Methodology

As per the limitations of the study we only selected a total of two University libraries of Assam that are purposively selected for the study. Primary data are collected through a structured questionnaire, personal observation and a

Personal interview base also have been done to collect relevant information. The collected data for each categorization was taken up into were tabulated manner.

Literature search

Craven (2003) the article discussed an understanding of the information-seeking behavior of blind and visually impaired people when using digital resources for the fulfillment of their requirements. Carter (2004) discussed the availability of subjects are is at the spear head of library services as the number of students with disabilities presence colleges or universities continues to increase. Papadopouls, (2012) in his article in light the possibility of conceiving written examinations suitable to be taken by visually impaired students. Eskay and Chima(2013)in their paper is an about enquire into the progression of library services for the blind people - library services for the blind and physically challenged in Nigerian universities with particular reference to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), meeting the needs of persons with visually impaired through information technologies such as Screen reader, Braille translation software, Braille writing equipment, Closed-circuit television (CCTV), and Braille embosser and scanners. Mishra, Ali, and Thakur (2015) in their paper describe and evoke the potential impact of electronic environment systems at the level of library practices and services for visually handicapped persons. Rayini (2017) pointed out the problem faced by the visually impaired, find out their information needs, focus on the special equipment and services that the libraries are likely to provide, and provide remindful rules for improving the library and information services to the visually impaired.

Analysis and Findings

Now a day's education is mandatory for every people of the nation and it is also the fundamental right of people of nations that every people gets equal opportunities to get an education free of cost without any type of discrimination. So in this regards university also provides equal educations facilities to all users without any type of discrimination. The University Libraries with its innovative steps for the implementation of visually impaired users in their respected university taken as the survey topic, the process of data collection is taken into the concern. Accordingly, the survey is done in two selected Universities of Assam. The general information of that selected Universities and their libraries are tabulated given below:

Table 1
General Information about surveyed Universities

Sl. No	Name of the University	Name of the Library	Year of Estd.	Name of the Librarian	Qualification
2	Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh	L.N.B .Library	1965	Dr. Utpal Das	M.Sc., MLISc, M. Phil, Ph.D.
4	Tezpur University, Tezpur.	Central Library	1994	Dr. Mukesh Saikia	MLISc, Ph.D.

In above Table 1, the information about all surveyed Universities, the Name of the library, its year of establishment, and the Name of the Librarian is clearly shown. It is seen that all the librarians are well qualified and informative persons. Here Tezpur University is the Central University and Dibrugarh University is the State University.

Library user

Libraries' main aim and objectives are to provide its user with their required need and fulfill their requirements. The library is nothing without its user. The success of any library is depending upon its user and its services to diversify users' needs. Any person who seeks information or uses the library can be a member of the library such as students, research scholars, faculty, staff, Differently Abled Users, etc.

Table 2
Number of Users in the selected surveyed University Libraries of Assam

SL. NO	Name of the Library	Student	Teachers	Research Scholar	Differently Abled Users	Others	Total Number of users	User Per Day
1	L.N.B Library, DU	4528	203	349	02	292	5374	147
2	Central Library, TU	4046	357	563	09	279	5254	600

The above table 7.2 shows the total library users of Universities are given along with its different member categories. In Central library of TU has the highest number of differently-abled users in comparison to L.N.B. library DU.

Differently abled section

In concern with the different user groups of the library, a library must ensure that about their surroundings of the library. Therefore universities Libraries of Assam to be particularly profound to their needs and provide them effective support to enable them to carry on and increase in the information system and bring them to the perfection of different abilities.

Table 3
Differently Abled Section in the surveyed University Library

Sl. no	Name of University Library	Separate Differently Abled Section Available		
		Yes	No	In progress
2	L.N.B Library, Dibrugarh University	✓	-	-
4	Central Library, Tezpur University	✓	-	-
TOTAL		2	0	0

Table 3, shows a clear picture of the Differently Abled Users Separate Section in the surveyed University Library of Assam. In L.N.B. Library, DU, and Central Library, TU has extra toilet facilities for Differently Abled Users.

Table 4
Blind and visually impaired Users in the Surveyed selected University Libraries of Assam

Types of Disabled Users	LNB Library, DU	Central Library, TU
Blind and visually impaired	✓	✓

Library services for the visually impaired users

To ensure the library is reachable for persons with disabilities includes the facility of services and plans that meet the needs of special user groups. It is important to make ensure that all patrons feel welcome so that they are likely to return. Library staff should keep in mind that persons with disabilities have to overcome not only physical obstacles but also psychological barriers to come to the library and communicate their needs.

Table 5
Library services for visually impaired in surveyed university

Sl. No	Services	L.N.B. Library, DU	Central Library, TU
1	Retrieval of information from the stacks	✓	✓
2	Photocopy assistance	✓	✓
3.	Specialized reference service	✓	✓
4	Delivery service		✓
5	Modification of lending rules	✓	✓
6	Specialized orientation tours	✓	✓
7	Telephone request	✓	✓
8.	Discount for online searching	✓	✓
9	Sign language for the hearing impaired	--	✓
10	Braille translation	--	✓
11	Reformatting to another medium	--	✓
12	Wheelchair	✓	✓
13	Toilet	✓	✓
Total		6	11

The above table shows that Library services are offered for Differently Abled users in Surveyed University libraries of Assam. Library services are important for differently-abled users so the library provides some special services to differently-abled users. From the surveyed university libraries, it is shown that Central Library, Tezpur University provides more services to differently Abled users in comparison to LNB library DU. Also Central library TU has provided a braille translation service.

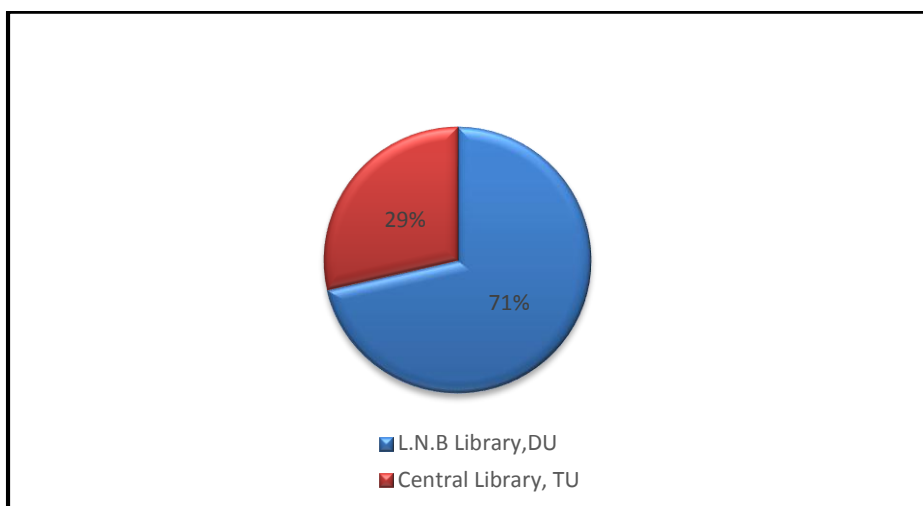


Figure 1. Library services for Visually Impaired Users in surveyed University Libraries of Assam

Types of equipment

University Library provides services to Differently Abled users to fulfill their information needs. In that term ICT plays the role of a significance to services provides for the differently-abled users of university library various types of equipment which are available in the library for the differently-abled users.

Table 6
Types of Equipment available in the Surveyed selected University Library of Assam

Sl. No	Types of Equipments	LNB Library, DU	Central Library, TU
1	Scanner/ reader	✓	✓
2	Braille printer	✓	--
3	Keyboard overlay	✓	✓
4	Handheld scanner	✓	--
5	Speech synthesis	--	--
6	Braille typewriter	✓	--
7	TTY/TDD	--	--
8	CCTV	✓	✓
9	Tape recorder	--	--
Total		6	3

Above Table 7 shows the types of equipment available in the surveyed University Library it also shows the results of various equipment available in the surveyed university library of Assam. Table 7.7 shows that L.N.B. Library, DU provides more equipment's i.e. 6 regarding the others surveyed University library.

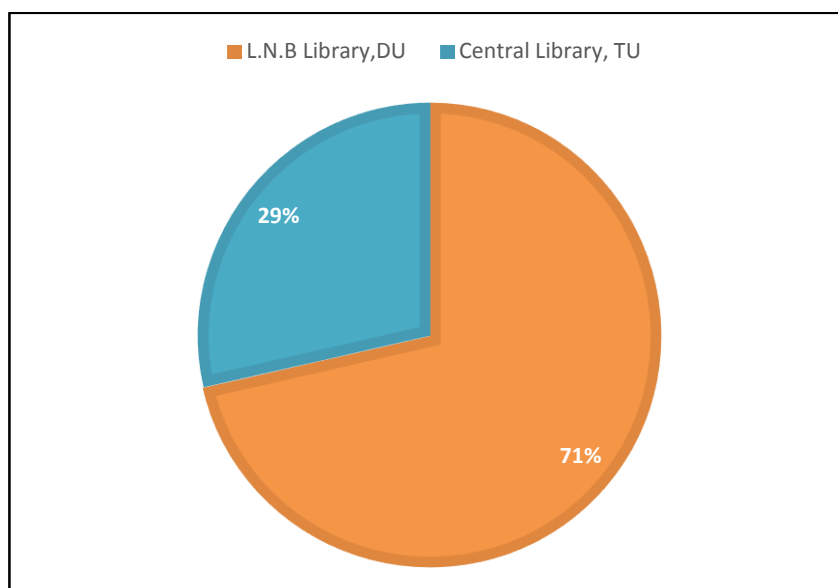


Figure 2. Types of equipment's available in the surveyed selected University Library of Assam

Facilities visually impaired student

The university library provides various types of facilities to Visually Impaired Community so that it can reduce their barriers of study. Facilities are such which make the equal opportunities to meet their information needs without any types of discriminations.

Table 8
Facilities for Visually Impaired Patrons in the surveyed University Library of Assam

Sl. No	Types of facilities	LNB Library,DU	Central Library,TU
1	Large print books	-	-
2	Large print magazines	-	-
3	Large-print newspapers	-	-
4.	Braille materials	✓	-
5	Spoken word books	✓	✓
6	Talking magazines	✓	-
7	Talking newspapers	✓	-
8	Audiovisual methods	✓	✓
Total		5	2

In table 8, facilities have for the Visually Impaired patrons in the surveyed university library of Assam. It shows that L.N.B. Library DU provides more services regarding the other mentioned surveyed university libraries.

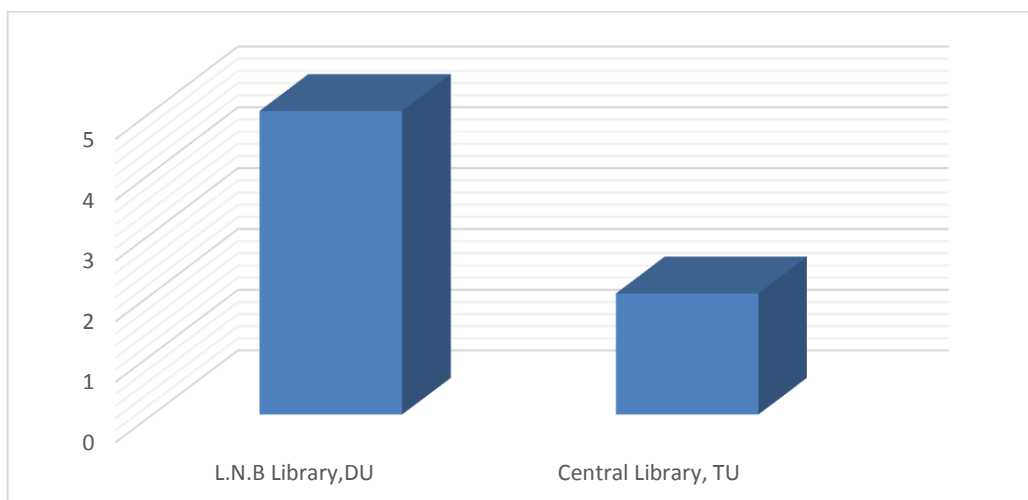


Figure 3. Facilities for Visually Impaired in the surveyed University Library of Assam

Physical barriers

For physically challenged people to gain their information or document in the library conveniently or easily in that case ICT plays a vital role. A barrier-free environment in academic institutions assistance in increasing performance and also helps in making a person freely find out their requirements and easily fulfill their requirements.

Table 9
Physical barriers been Eliminated In surveyed University Library

Sl. No	Categories	L.N.B Library, DU	Central Library, TU
1	Entryways	✓	✓
2	Restrooms	✓	✓
3	Water functions	✓	✓
4	Elevators	✓	✓
5	Stack aisle widths	--	--
6	Telephone	✓	--
7	Signage	--	✓
8	Service Counter heights	✓	✓
9	Computers workstations	✓	✓
10	Ramps	✓	✓
11	Door hardware	✓	✓
12	Toilet	✓	✓
Total		10	10

Table 9 shows the Physical barriers been eliminated to provide access to library collections and services to Differently Abled Users in surveyed University Library. Eliminated physical barriers can help the users easily search their required

information without any types of facing problems. In the above table, L.N.B Library, DU, and Central Library, TU libraries have an equal number of services.

Satisfaction of the library services provide for visually impaired users in surveyed university libraries of Assam

The satisfaction of the user is crucial from the library view point. As the library's main aim is to satisfy its user, therefore the satisfaction of the user is seriously taken care of by the Library. In the following Table 7.10, the level of satisfaction is shown in percentage where n=10 is measured.

Table 10
Overall satisfaction of the visually impaired user in selected university libraries of Assam

Sl no.	Category	Satisfied	Somehow Satisfied	Never Satisfied
1.	Books	30%	20%	-
2.	Journals	30%	20%	-
3.	Newspapers and Magazines	30%	20%	-
4.	Indexing and Abstracts resources	-	30%	20%
5.	Reference Materials	-	50%	-
6.	Audio-Visual Materials	10%	40%	-
7.	Bibliographies Materials	-	10%	40%
8.	Online and Electronic Materials	-	50%	-

In Table 10 it is seen the Overall Satisfaction level of the differently Abled User in Selected University Libraries of Assam with the library materials in the surveyed university library for the differently-abled people. From the Table, Users are satisfied with the library materials and they benefited from the library. It is seen that in the context of books, Journals, Newspapers, and Magazines 30% of users are satisfied and 20% of users are somehow satisfied. In the context of Indexing and Abstracting Resources 30% are Somehow satisfied and 20% are never satisfied other hands in the context of reference Materials 50% are somehow satisfied it is also seen that 10% are satisfied and 40% are somehow satisfied from the Audio -Visual materials, from the Bibliographic materials 10% are satisfied and 40% are not satisfied and in the regards of online and electronic materials 50% are somehow satisfied.

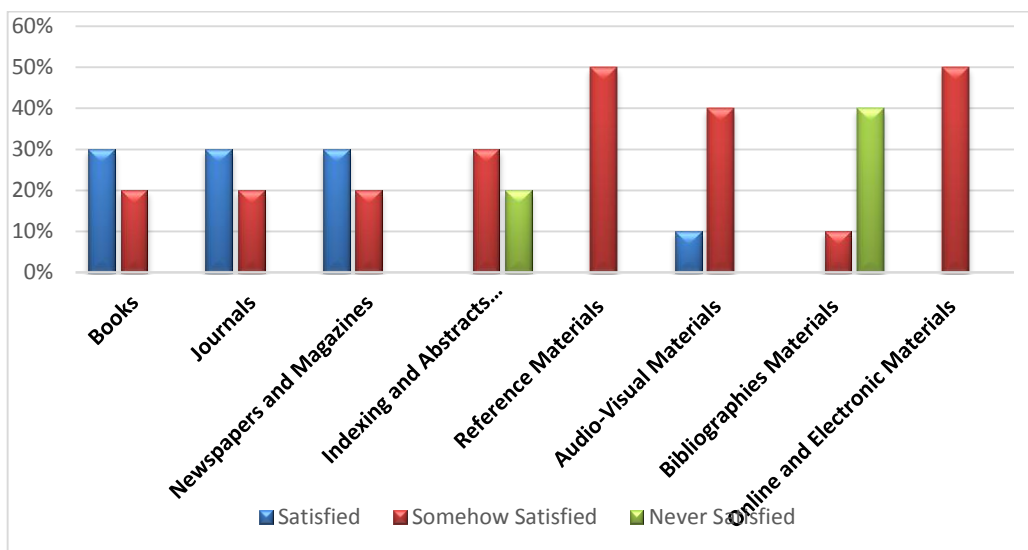


Figure 4. Overall Satisfaction of the Visually Impaired User in selected University Libraries of Assam

Conclusion

After having an analysis of information and results obtained from the study, it can be concluded that most of the users need frequent help, so it is needed that library staff must be trained and cooperative so that everyone can learn the accessibility and usability of electronic information services. The responsibility of a successful operation of a library depends on its library staff. Hence an adequate number of capable people should be appointed in the library. The library should ensure that internet classes or workshops for blind or low vision groups of library users with the use of information technology. So that the classes could range from basic web surfing to advanced web searches to e-mail. The visually impaired, particularly those living in developing countries like India have been marginalized for too long because of the lack of reachable materials. Therefore, Indian libraries in collaboration with other stakeholders must stand up to their moral obligation in ensuring an inclusive and equitable library and information services to the visually impaired.

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