2-29-2020

Effective Library Support for Special Education Programmes Recognised by RCI: A Comparative Study of the Libraries in Maharashtra and Karnataka

Anand Dodamani, Assistant Librarian,
Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Dr Keshava Professor, Dept. of Library and Information Science,
Tumkur University Tumakuru

Effective Library Support for Special Education Programmes Recognised by RCI: A Comparative Study of the Libraries in Maharashtra and Karnataka

Anand Dodamani
Assistant Librarian
Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai
Email: anand.dodamani@tiss.edu

Keshava
Professor
Department of Studies and Research in LIS
Tumkur University, Tumakuru, Karnataka
Email: keshtut@gmail.com

Abstract:

This paper presents the results of a comparative study carried out in Maharashtra and Karnataka on effective library suport for Special Education Programmes recognised by Rehabilitation Council of India, New Delhi. The special education institutes play an important role in the education and development of people with disabilities. The libraries being an integral part of these educational institutes, are expected to support the academic programmes effectively. The findings suggest that the libraries attached to the special education institutes are facing various challenges in terms of finance, infrastructure, collection and ICT facilities. These issues are critically discussed and suitable suggestions were made in the following paragraphs.

(**Keywords**: Special Education Libraries; Library Services for the Disabled; RCI; Libraries in Special Education Institutes; Libraries and Teacher Education)

1.1 Introduction:

Library is regarded as the heart of an educational institute. The leaders in education and the academic librarians have used this metaphor regularly for more than hundred years. Although not precise, the metaphor implies primacy for the library. But in the practice, we have seen something different in the field of special education. We have seen inadequate

infrastructure facilities and lack of financial funding for the special education libraries. Such budgetary limitations affect the libraries in terms of collection and services. It does not mean that all special education libraries are in bad condition. There are some special education libraries which are exception to this. Libraries being at the heart of an educational institute imply that there should be proper availability of funds; there should be proper availability infrastructure facilities; there should be proper organization of information services and there should be proper awareness among the library managers about the use of Information Technology. Considering the situation, a need was felt to study the present status of special education libraries. Keeping in mind the above arguments, the study has chosen the special education libraries functioning in two neighboring states, the Maharashtra and the Karnataka for examination and comparison. A comparative angle was brought into the study to examine the similarities and differences in the activities of the special education libraries situated in the above mentioned states.

1.2 Special Education Programmes Recognised by RCI:

Special education programs are in place to serve individuals with disabilities. In India, the knowledge and process of educating the children with disabilities began in the later part of the 19th century and has evolved into many folds over the years. The Government and Non-Government agencies have been playing critical role in the education of the persons with disabilities.

Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) has developed and standardised various special education and training programmes in order to provide quality special educators and rehabilitation workers to serve the persons with disabilities.

The RCI has a mandate to develop, standardize and regulate all special education and rehabilitation training programmes in the country. As on today, the council has standardized

58 Long Term/ Short Term Training Courses in different categories of disability viz. Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation, Learning Disability, Rehabilitation Engineering, Prosthetics and Orthotics, Community Based Rehabilitation, Rehabilitation Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Speech and Hearing, Locomotor and Cerebral Palsy, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Rehabilitation Therapy, Vocational Counseling and Rehabilitation Social Work, Care Giving and Inclusive Education.

1.3 Library Support to Special Education Programmes of RCI:

Today, libraries are not just mere storehouses of books. Rather, they are the vibrant centers of knowledge. These centers have not only embraced the revolutionary changes caused by Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), but also have emerged as the champions of delivering right information to the right users at the right time. The libraries have been providing a tremendous support to the academic programmes in higher education. The libraries attached to special education institutes are also expected to provide good infrastructure facilities, sufficient number of books and journals, efficient information services and well equipped computing facilities to its patrons. The success of any educational programme depends on the effective library services available in the institute.

2. Objectives of the Study:

The study was carried out with following research objectives:

1. To identify and comapre the infrastrcture facilities in Special Eduication Libraries in Maharashtra and Karnataka.

2. To identify and compare the fainancial provision for Special Eduication Libraries in Maharashtra and Karnataka.

3. To indentify and compare the provision of Special Reading Materials and Assistive

Technogy in Special Eduication Libraries in Maharashtra and Karnataka.

3. Research Methodology:

The present study was quantitative in nature. A standard survey method was adopted to collect the research data. The target population was defined keeping in view the objectives of the study. The special education institutes in both the states were scattered in different places and it was very difficult for the researcher to collect data from all the special education libraries. Hence, a small but carefully chosen sample was used to represent the target population. The research data was collected from 92 special education libraries (64 in Maharashtra and 28 in Karnataka). The 'Questionnaire' was used as a tool to collect data from the target group.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

The analysis and interpretation of the research data is considered as an essential and deciding factor in any research activity. It is a process of developing answers to research questions through the examination and interpretation of the collected data. The research data collected was analysed using a computer application and presented

4.1 Distribution of Responses:

Table-1: Distribution of Responses:

Name of the States	Number of Institutes Covered
Karnataka	28
Maharashtra	64
Total	92

The table ablve shows the number of institutes covered in Karnataka and Maharashtra for the study. The research data was collected from 92 special education libraries. These libraries include 64 in Maharashtra and 28 in Karnataka.

The overall number of special education institutes in the state of Maharashtra was more as compared to the number of special education institutes in the state of Karnataka. Therefore, in order to make the research data truly representative in nature, more number of special education institutes (64) were chosen from Maharashtra as compared to the number of special education institutes (28).

4.2 Special Education Institutes by Type of Management:

Table-2: Institutes by type of Management

Response Type	Groups		Total
	Karnataka	Maharashtra	
Government	5 (17.9)	06 (9.4)	11 (12)
Semi Government	9 (32.1)	53 (82.8)	62 (67.4)
NGO	14 (50)	1 (1.6)	15 (16.3)
Private	0 (0)	4 (6.2)	4 (4.3)
Total	28 (100)	64 (100)	92 (100)

The Table-2 shows the distribution of special education institutes in Maharashtra and Karnataka based on the status of their management. It is revealed from the above data that the number of special education institutes with government management is higher in Karnataka (17.9%) as compared to Maharashtra which has only 9.4% such institutes.

In Maharashtra, there are more institutes with Semi-Government Status (82.8%) as compared to Karnataka which has only 32.1% of such Institutes. These institutes receive grants from Government (mostly salary grant) and manage their day to day affairs under the directions of Management Board/ Trust. In Maharashtra, many organisations have established special education institutes and are successful in securing partial grant from the government.

Non Government Organisations (NGOs) play a major role in the management of special education institutes in Karnataka. 50% of the special education institutes are being managed purely by the NGOs in this state. But, in Maharashtra this number is very low with only

1.6% of the special education institutes with NGO management.

To summarise the above table, Maharashtra has more number of Special Education Institutes with Semi Government Status (82.8%) and in Karnataka, NGOs play a dominant role in the management of Special Education Institutes with 50% of such institutes under their management.

4.3 Independent Library Building:

Table-3: Library Building

Separate Library Building	Groups		Total
	Karnataka	Maharashtra	
Available	12 (42.9)	12 (19)	24
Not Available	16 (57.1)	51 (81)	67
Total	**28 (100)**	**64 (100)**	**92 (100)**

Independent building is very essential for any library. It helps the library in achieving its goal of providing a quiet and conducive environment to the users for their study. The Table-3 shows the availability of such provision in the special education institutes in Maharashtra and Karnataka.   Karnataka stands out with 42.9% of its special education institutes having their own independent library building as compared to Maharashtra where only 19% of the special education institutes have their own library building. The reason could be the type of management as shown in the Table No. 2 above.

4.4 Annual Library Budget:

Table-4 Library Budget

Library Budget	Groups		Total
	Karnataka	**Maharashtra**	
Less than 100000	3 (10.7)	10 (15.6)	13 (14.1)

100000 to 500000	14 (50)	45 (70.3)	59 (64.1)
More than 500000	11 (39.3)	9 (14.1)	20 (21.7)
Total	28 (100)	64 (100)	92 (100)

Finance is very important for any library. It is the finance which helps libraries build their collection and plan their services effectively. Without finance nothing is possible in libraries. The above table provides information about the financial standing of special education libraries in Karnataka and Maharashtra. Table-4 indicates that more special education libraries in Karnataka (39.3%) have provision for Library Budget exceeding Rs. 5,00000/- compared to 14.1% of the libraries in Maharashtra. There are more libraries in Maharashtra (70.3%) that have the library budget ranging between Rs. 1, 00000/- to Rs. 5, 00000/- compared to 50% libraries in Karnataka. The libraries that have the library budget less than Rs. 1, 00000/- are more in Maharashtra (15.6%) compared to 10.7% of the libraries in Karnataka. The situation is believed to be due to the type of management of special education institutes.

4.5 Number of Books in Library Collection:

Table -4: Number of Books

Response Type	Groups		Total
	Karnataka	Maharashtra	
Less than 1000	7 (25%)	28 (43.8)	35 (38)
1001 to 5000	0 (0)	22 (34.4)	22(38)
5001 to 10000	8 (28.6)	7(10.9)	15 (16.3)
10001 to 50000	8(28.6)	3(4.7)	11 (12)
More than 50000	5 (17.9)	4(6.2)	9 (9.8)
Total	**28 (100)**	**64 (100)**	**92 (100)**

Libraries are often known for the number of books that they have in their collection. The collection of books makes them popular among the students, teachers and academicians.

The collection rich libraries provide their users and opportunity browse thousands of books on their selected subject areas. They act as one stop points for every information need of the users.

The Table-5 depicts the standing of special education libraries in Maharashtra and Karnataka in terms of number of books that they have in their collection. It becomes very clear from the data shown in the table that 43.8% of the special education libraries in Maharashtra have less than 1000 books in their collection while this number is very small (25%) in Karnataka. In contrast to this, there are 17.9% libraries in Karnataka which have more than 50,000 books in their collection. Maharashtra scores low with only 6.2% of special education libraries having such a large number of books in their collection.

4.6 Availability of Special Reading Collection:

Table -6 Special Reading Collection

Special Reading Collection	Karnataka		Maharashtra		Total	
	A	NA	A	NA	A	NA
Braille Books	8 (28.6)	20 (71.4)	10 (15.6)	54 (84.4)	18 (19.6)	74 (80.4)
Talking/Audio Books	3 (10.7)	25 (89.3)	19 (29.7)	45 (70.3)	22 (23.9)	70 (76.1)
Electronic Books in Readable Format	17 (60.7)	11 (39.30)	30 (46.9)	34 (53.1)	47 (51.1)	45 (48.9)
Tactile Picture Books	2 (7.1)	26 (92.9)	13 (20.3)	51 (79.7)	15 (16.3)	77 (83.7)
Video Books with Captions	18 (64.3)	10 (35.7)	17 (18.8)	47 (73.4)	35 (38)	57 (62)
Video Books with Sign Language	15 (53.6)	13 (46.4)	19 (29.7)	45 (70.3)	34 (37)	58 (63)
Picture Books	23 (82.1)	5 (17.9)	50 (78.1)	14 (21.9)	73 (79.3)	19 (20.7)

Libraries increase their value when they possess special collection in addition to the normal books and periodicals. Braille Books, Talking Books/Audio Books, E-books, Tactile Picture Books, Video Books with Captions, Video Books with Sign Language, Picture Books etc form the special collection in library.

Braille Books are the books with raised dots which people with visual impairment can touch, feel, interpret and understand. There are various agencies both Government and Non-Government, engaged in the production of Braille Books on every subject for the benefit of people with vision impairment. It is expected from the library to possess such books in their collection. Table-6 reveals that more number of special education libraries in Karnataka (28.65%) have Braille Books compared to 15.6% of the libraries in Maharashtra. However, a majority of the libraries in Karnataka (71.4%) and Maharashtra (84.4%) do not have the Braille Books in their collection. The reason could be the availability and popularity of the Assistive Technology Devices with the help of which the people with vision impairment can read the normal books with same accuracy and efficiency.

Talking/ Audio Books are the books that are specially designed to help the people with vision impairment. These books can be read with the help of special reading devices and softwares designed for the purpose. More number of special education libraries in Maharashtra (29.7%) have Talking/ Audio Books compared to 10.7% of the libraries in Karnataka.

Electronic Books which are popularly known as E-books are the preferred format of most of the libraries today. Many libraries have already adopted 'E-first Policy' under which they try to purchase the book in electronic format first, if available. The advantage of having e-book is that a number of library users can refer the book at the same time from different locations unlike the printed book. A more number of special education libraries in Karnataka (60.7%) have Electronic Books as compared to their counterparts in Maharashtra (46.9%).

Tactile Picture Books are the special picture books designed to assist the people with vision impairment to see the pictures through touch and feel. Very few special education libraries in Karnataka (7.1%) have Tactile Picture Books compared to the libraries in Maharashtra (20.3%). It is very depressing to note that a majority of the libraries in Karnataka (92.9%)

and Maharashtra (79.7%) do not have Tactile Books.

Video Books with Captions help the people with hearing impairment to understand the videos effectively. People with hearing impairment can read the texts coming at the bottom of the video explaining each seen and conversation depicted in the video. More special education libraries in Karnataka (64.3%) have made provision for Video Books with Captions compared to the 18.8% of the libraries in Maharashtra.

Video Books with Sign Language too are designed to help the people with hearing impairment to understand the videos well. These are the books through which educators try to simplify the complex concepts being taught in classrooms. More special education libraries in Karnataka (53.65) have Video Books with Sign Language compared to 29.7% libraries in Maharashtra.

Picture Books are also designed with an intention to make the difficult concepts easy to understand for the people with hearing impairment. The people with hearing problems find it difficult to grasp the instruction given by the trainers/ teachers during classroom sessions. The Picture Books aid the trainers in teaching the people with hearing impairment. The Libraries with picture books in their posession are more in Karnataka (82.1%) as compared to the Maharashtra (78.1%).

4.7 Availability of Assistive Technology Devices:

Table -7 Assistive Technology Devices:

Assistive Technology Devices	Karnataka		Maharashtra		Total	
	A	NA	A	NA	A	NA
Screen Magnification Software	5 (17.9)	23 (82.1)	14 (21.9)	50 (78.1)	19 (20.7)	73 (79.3)
Scanning and Reading Appliance (SARA)	4 (14.3)	24 (85.7)	16 (25)	48 (75)	20 (21.8)	72 (78.2)
Screen Readers	12 (42.9)	16 (57.1)	37 (57.8)	27 (42.2)	49 (53.3)	43 (46.7)
Braille Printers	3 (10.7)	25 (89.3)	12 (18.8)	52 (81.2)	15 (16.3)	77 (83.7)
Large Screen Monitors	4 (14.3)	24 (85.7)	12 (18.8)	52 (81.2)	16 (17.4)	76 (82.6)
Large Print Keyboards	4 (14.3)	24	14	50	18	74

		(85.7)	(21.9)	(78.10	(19.6)	(80.4)
Digital Voice Recorders	12 (42.9)	16 (57.1)	20 (31.2)	44 (68.8)	32 (34.8)	60 (65.2)
Amplification Devices	15 (53.6)	13 (46.4)	25 (39.1)	39 (60.9)	40 (43.5)	52 (56.5)
Augmentative Communication Devices	15 (53.6)	13 (46.40	25 (39.1)	39 (60.9)	40 (43.5)	52 (56.5)

Libraries possess a huge amount of information both in print and digital forms. Most of information stored in the books and other materials can be obtained via the visual and auditory senses. Therefore, unless such information is available in an alternate format, it is not possible for the people with sensory impairments to get access to it. Today, with the help of Assistive Technology (A.T.) the people with vision impairment can access the non-Braille documents and other electronic resources stored in the libraries without any difficulty. In order to provide equal access to library resources for all, libraries are expected to possess the Assistive Technology Devices.

The Magnification device/glass helps the people with low vision to see the printed text and images in enlarged form. The table above shows that more number of special education libraries in Maharashtra (21.9%) have made provision for magnification devices as compared to the libraries in Karnataka (17.9%). A majority of libraries in both the states lack this facility.

Scanning and Reading Appliances (SARAs) help the people with vision impairment to read printed text with a touch of Indian voice accent. More number of libraries in Maharashtra (25%) have these devices as compared to the libraries in Karnataka (14.3%).

Screen Reader is software programme designed and developed in order to help the people with print disabilities read the text that is displayed on the computer screen. 57.8% of the libraries in Maharashtra have made provision for this software as compared 42.9% in Karnataka. It is happy to notice that a considerable number of special education libraries in bothe the states have made provision for this facility.

Braille Embossers are nothing but the 'printers' for Braille. The embosser creates raised dots on the page to form Braille characters. The people with visual impairment will translate the

typed documents into the Braille Code with the help of software programmes and then print the same in Braille form using the Braille Embosser. More number of libraries in Maharashtra (18.8%) have made provision for the Braille Emobossers as compared to 10.7% of the libraries in Karnataka.

Large Screen Monitors help the people with low vision problems to read the displayed text clearly with large font settings. Only 14.3% of the special education libraries in Karnataka and 18.8% libraries in Maharashtra have this facility which is very disappointing to note..

Large Print Keyboard is an easy-to-read keyboard with bold, high-contrast keys for fast, accurate typing. It helps the people with low vision problems access the computer with ease. 21.9% of the libraries in Maharashtra have this facility while only 14.3% of the libraris in Karnataka have made this provision.

Digital Voice Recorders are very handy tools used by the people with vision impairment to record the Speeches and Lectures delivered. These devices help them recollect the subject matter later and make necessary notes by listening to the recorded voice. A considerable number of special education libraries in Karnataka (42.9%) and in Maharashtra (31.2%) have these devices.

Amplification Devices are the devices used to enhance the voice quality in the classrooms and special seminar rooms for the benefit of people with hearing impairment. A More number of special education institutes in Maharashtra (60.9%) have made provision for this service as compared the libraries in Karnataka (53.6%) .

Augmentative Communication Devices are the devices used as additional tools to enhance the quality of voice for the benefit of people with hearing impairment. A majority of the special education libraries in Maharashtra (60.9%) have this facility as compared to the libraries in Karnataka (53.6%).

5. Major Findings of the Study:

5.1 A majority of the special education institutes (82.8%) in Maharashtra are run by the Semi Government Organisations (Grant-In-Aid institutes) and in Karnataka, Non Government Organisations (NGOs) play a dominant role with 50% of the institutes managed by them. Both the states have less number of institutes with Government Management (Karnataka 17.9% and Maharashtra 9.4%).

5.2. Karnataka stands out with 42.9% of its special education institutes having their own independent library building as compared to Maharashtra where only 19% of the special education institutes have their own library building. The reason could be the type of management as discussed in the previous chapter.

5.3 Around 43.8% of the special education libraries in Maharashtra have less than 1000 books in their collection while this number is very small (25%) in Karnataka.

5.4 There is difference between the special education libraries in Karnataka and Maharashtra in the provision of library finance. More special education libraries in Karnataka (39.3%) have provision for 'Library Budget' exceeding Rs. 5,00000/- as compared to the libraries in Maharashtra (14.1%). In contrast to this, there are more libraries in Maharashtra (70.3%) that have the 'Library Budget' ranging between Rs. 1, 00000/- to Rs. 5, 00000/- compared to 50% libraries in Karnataka. The number of libraries that have the 'Library Budget' less than Rs. 1, 00000/- are more in Maharashtra (15.6%) as compared to the libraries in Karnataka (10.7%).

5.5. Most of the special education libraries in Karnataka and Maharashtra do not have important Assistive Technology Devices for the students with sensory impairments studying there. Around 82.1% of the libraries in Karnataka and 78.1% libraries in Maharashtra do not have Magnification Devices. A majority of the libraries in Karnataka (85.7%) and Maharashtra (75%) do not have SARA devices. Around 89.3% of the libraries in Karnataka and 81.2% in Maharashtra do not have the Braille Embossers. Only

14.3% of the special education libraries in Karnataka and 18.8% libraries in Maharashtra have Large Screen Monitors. A majority of the libraries in Karnataka (85.7%) and Maharashtra (78.1%) do not have Large Print Keyboards.

5.6 There is similarity between the special education libraries in Karnataka and Maharashtra in the provision of special reading materials for the the people with sensory disabilities. A majority of the libraries in Karnataka (71.4%) and Maharashtra (84.4%) do not have the Braille Books in their collection. Around 89.3% libraries in Karnataka and 70.3% libraries in Maharashtra (70.3%) do not have Talking Books or Audio Books. A majority of the libraries in Karnataka (92.9%) and Maharashtra (79.7%) do not have Tactile Books.

6. Important Suggestions:

6.1 The Rehabilitation Council of India (R.C.I.), being an apex body, should formulate clear guidelines for the maintenance of minimum standards in libraries attached to the Special Education Institutes.

6.2 The Rehabilitation Council of India, being an apex body, should provide financial support in the form of grants to the Special Education Libraries as the UGC does for recognized colleges and universities.

6.3 The Non Government Organizations running the Special Education Programmes should try to secure funds through donations separately for the development of libraries attached to their institutes.

6.4 The management of special education colleges should give more importance to the development of libraries attached to them and provide all possible support in this regard.

7. Conclusion:

Libraries attached to the special education institutes can play an important role in educating the students and faculty by providing library and information services on par with any other higher education libraries. From the findings and discussions stated above, we can safely conclude that due to some limitations, few special education libraries in Karnataka and Maharashtra are not successful in providing effective library support. The libraries are facing problems with regard funding, infrastructure, implementation of Information Technology and skilled library professionals. These problems can be overcome provided the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) prepares and implements standard guidelines on library services in special education libraries.

Bibliography:

Barbotte, E., Guillemin, F., & Chau, N. (2001). Prevalence of impairments, disabilities, handicaps and quality of life in the general population: a review of recent literature. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, *79*(11), 1047–1055.

Census of India. (2011). *Disabled Population by type of Disability*. New Delhi. Retrieved from http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/C-series/c-20.html

Firstpost.com. (2016, May 27). Draft to modify Right of Persons with Disabilities Bill sent to PMO. *Newspaper*. New Delhi. Retrieved from http://www.firstpost.com/india/draft-to-modify-right-of-persons-with-disabilities-

bill-sent-to-pmo-2801326.html

Hallahan, D. P., & Kauffman, J. M. (1994). Toward a culture of disability in the aftermath of Deno and Dunn. *The Journal of Special Education*, *27*(4), 496-508.

Murickan, J., & Kareparampil, G. (1995). *Persons with disabilities in society* (1st ed.). Trivendrum: Kerala Foundation for the Blind.

RCI. (2014). Rehabilitation Council of India. Retrieved December 12, 2014, from http://www.rehabcouncil.nic.in/

StatPac. (2014). Survey Sampling Method. Retrieved January 2, 2014, from http://www.statpac.com/surveys/sampling.htm

USC Libraries. (2015). The Methodology. Retrieved April 3, 2015, from http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/methodology

Vikaspedia. (2015). Types of Disabilities. Retrieved February 15, 2015, from http://vikaspedia.in/education/parents-corner/guidelines-for-parents-of-children-with-disabilities/types-of-disabilities#section-3

World Health Organisation. (2014). Disabilities. Retrieved April 2, 2014, from http://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en/