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Library Services Needed by the Disabled in Iran: A Qualitative Study

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Library Services Needed by the Disabled in Iran: A Qualitative Study

ABSTRACT

Persons with Disabilities are the world's largest minority. This group, like others, needs information and skills to play a positive role in the community. Public libraries play an important role in providing services to the community, including People with Disabilities, by providing a variety of sources and services. The present study has been conducted using the qualitative content analysis method for identifying the types of library services and programs required for people with visually impaired, physically disabled, and hearing impaired using a semi-structured interview. The sample of the study consisted of 84 individuals, including librarians of public libraries and the disabled in the three groups mentioned. The identified library needs and services are categorized into eight categories: planning and budgeting, advertising and service development, library accessibility and physical condition, services and programs, human resources and training, collection, information equipment, and technology and welfare facilities. The category of services and programs had the highest frequency in all three groups of the disabled. In the group of physically disabled individuals, the category of accessibility ranked highest, and in the two groups of the blind and deaf, services and programs had the highest frequency. The need to know about library services in different ways (email, SMS, and social media, ...) had the highest frequency. Public libraries should plan to make the library accessible, and provide a variety of services and programs for individuals with disabilities.

Keywords: Public Library, Library Services, People with disabilities, visually impaired, physically-mobility impaired, hearing impaired

INTRODUCTION

Disability is a biological-social reality that all countries face and define as a barrier to the human ability to perform an activity naturally. Disability is a major concern for all countries, especially the developing ones (Ayoubi Avaz 2018). Among the reasons for the higher number of disabled people in developing countries is the lower level of compliance with health standards and professional laws, civil and international wars, increased health and life expectancy, the increase in the mean age and population of the elderly, and as a result, the disabilities caused by aging (Ramazani Ghavamabadi 2012, Ayoubi Avaz 2018).

WHO defines disability as "an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions." According to the World Health Survey, about 785 million individuals (15.6%) of the world's population over the age of 15 years are disabled (World Health Organization 2011), so according to this study, in the population of 79,926,270 in Iran (according to the 2016 census), about 12 million individuals have disabilities. (Statistical Centre of Iran 2018). The development of each country depends on the maximum use of human resources, capabilities, and talents of each individual. The disabled, like others, need skills to develop to acquire the motivation to play a positive role in the community (Nikkhah and fadaeei 2016). However, individuals with disabilities are currently faced with a wide range of barriers to living and work, such as access to health services, training, finding a job, and travel. Insufficient standards and policies, negative public attitudes toward individuals with disabilities, lack of services, financial resources, and access to information, insufficient communication, and little participation in decision-making affect their life (Shakespeare and Officer 2011). The ability to acquire and use information allows individuals to choose a variety of options and create better conditions for themselves, and in this regard, public libraries can play a key role (Williamson, Schauder, et al. 2001).

A public library is designed to respond to all members of the community, regardless of color, gender, ethnicity, race, position, or religion, and everyone should be able to use its services equally (Moosavi Zadeh 1998). A look at the programs and services provided by libraries, and the type of resources and equipment collected shows that, unfortunately, libraries haven't tended to provide services to disabled people in the past. Increasing attention to individuals with disabilities at the community level and their involvement in social activities have required libraries to provide appropriate resources and services for them (Leong and Higgins 2010).

Despite the vital role of public libraries in providing services to the disabled, reports indicate that less than 0.1% of them are members of Iranian public libraries (Organization of Public Libraries 2018). The results of studies in Iran also show that libraries do not have a specific plan for the disabled and suffer from insufficient resources, unsuitable space, noncompliance with construction standards, and lack of equipment (Zandian, Bayat Bodaghi et al. 2010, Bodaghi and Zainab 2013, Asnafi and Mirzaei 2014). The above evidence shows that the needs of this group have not been deeply considered. Thus, it is necessary to identify the needs and expectations of individuals with disabilities in public libraries. It highlights the needs of different groups of individuals with disabilities according to their specific conditions and helps public libraries to prioritize programs and improve library services. The purpose of this study was to identify the needs and services of the library for the disabled with physical and motor disabilities, as well as visual and auditory disorders.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the qualitative content analysis method has been employed. The sample of this study includes 84 disabled individuals and librarians with disabilities or librarians with experience in providing services for persons with disabilities. To comprehensively identify the needs and expectations of the disabled from public libraries, semi-structured telephone, and face-to-face

interviews were conducted. A total of 40 librarians and 44 disabled individuals were interviewed. It should be noted that 23 out of 40 librarians interviewed had different disabilities.

Before the interview, the researcher explained the objectives of the study, asked the interview questions and audio recorded the sessions with the permission of the interviewees. The duration of the interview varied from 10 to 45 minutes, depending on the conditions of the interviewees and their willingness to continue the interview. All audio recordings were transcribed. Simultaneous with data collection, data analysis was performed using MAXQDA12.3. After each interview, comments were reviewed, and then the initial coding was made based on the analysis unit, namely the sentences. With the progression of the research, more interviews were conducted and categories and classes, and the relationship between concepts were formed. Finally, after completing the classification, the codes and texts of the interviews were reviewed leading to the formation of concepts based on the similarity and original meaning; the concepts then formed categories. The interviews continued until theoretical saturation and no new code was identified.

At the first stage, 1859 sentences were coded and placed in the form of 196 codes. After the initial coding, the review was carried out and if the codes had the same semantic connotation, they were integrated and then categorized according to the similarity of the concepts. In this study, a total of 196 initial codes, 20 concepts, and 8 categories were identified.

RESULTS

A total of 84 interviews were conducted with 42 librarians working in public libraries and 42 individuals with disabilities in three groups of disabilities including visual, hearing, and mobility impairment. In terms of gender, the interviews consisted of 45 female interviewees and 39 male interviewees. characteristics of the qualitative sample who were interviewed are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample characteristics of participants (n=84)

Characteristic	visually impaired		Hearing impaired		Mobility impaired		Total n (%)
	Disabled	Librarian	Disabled	Librarian	Disabled	Librarian	
Gender							
Male	6	7	9	3	7	7	39 (46.4)
Female	6	9	8	8	6	8	45 (53.6)
Age							
15-24	6	1	5	0	2	0	14 (16.7)
25-44	5	13	9	11	7	13	58 (69.0)
45-64	1	2	3	0	4	2	12 (14.3)
educational levels							
High School diploma	0	0	7	0	2	0	9 (10.7)
Associate's Degrees	2	0	5	0	4	0	11 (13.1)
Bachelor's degree	6	7	4	5	4	6	32 (38.1)
Master's degree	4	6	1	6	2	9	28 (33.3)
Doctoral degree	0	3	0	0	1	0	4 (4.8)

A total of 84 interviews were conducted, and 196 codes were identified and categorized into 20 concepts and 8 categories. These categories included planning and budgeting, advertising and service development, library accessibility and physical conditions, services and programs, human resources and training, collections, equipment and information technology, and welfare facilities. Among the codes identified from the interviews, some of the identified needs go beyond the scope of the library's authority, and some of them can be mentioned including the employment for the disabled, increasing the level of well-being of the disabled, the possibility of buying a car adapted to facilities and free treatment in the category of welfare facilities.

Among these categories, the category of services and programs in all three groups of the disabled had the highest frequency and the category of welfare facilities had the lowest frequency (Table 2).

Table 2: frequency of categories extracted from the interviews

Category	Mobility impaired	Visually impaired	Hearing impaired	Total
Services and programs	81	257	228	566
Accessibility and physical condition	191	110	28	329
Planning and budgeting	59	152	60	271
Marketing and service development	74	108	43	225
Collection	36	132	31	199
Equipment and information technology	7	116	15	138
Human resources and training	28	30	51	109
Welfare facilities	17	16	5	38
Total	493	921	461	1875

1. Services and programs

Services and programs of the public library are the most expected needs. The results of the interviews showed that this category had the highest frequency which includes all needs and expectations related to the two concepts of public library services (book and reference borrowing) and other programs. The needs such as borrowing and reference services, holding workshops and training classes, entertainment, and recreational activities such as holding recreational camps are included in this category. Educational and group programs are also considered by the disabled such as psychology and life skills classes. One of the librarians working in the deaf department in this regard said:

"The psychology workshop we held was very welcoming. The children formed a group at WhatsApp. Every morning they send a series of positive things to themselves. They like workshops that are motivating".

Besides, holding information technology training classes and working with phones and computers are among the demands of individuals with disabilities, especially the blind. *"I've seen the library run Android-oriented and orientation training classes, which is great. If it can upgrade, it's much better than Windows or ICDL training classes".*

1. Accessibility and physical condition of the library

The second category of identified needs refers to the accessibility of the library and its physical condition, which has 332 frequencies. In this category, we have the code related to the space and physical structure of the library, the library entrance, shelves, and furniture, the location of the library, and toilets. The most important needs identified in this group were the accessibility of the library, the provision of the means of transportation to the library, and the provision of friendly and attractive space for interaction and dialogue, respectively. About the importance of accessibility and physical structure of the library, a mobility disabled individual said: *"It was easy for me to use the library with the walker and cane, but since I got in a wheelchair I couldn't go to the library because of the stairs and the steep slope of the ramps. It was difficult to go to the WC and pick up books. I could not turn in the library hallway. The corridors were narrow and I hit the sides".*

Regarding the reason why individuals with physical disabilities do not refer, a librarian stated: *"A person with a disability cannot enter our library and use the reading room. Toilets are not suitable".*

In addition to the physical structure and space of the library, such as the location of the library, access to the entrance and interior, furniture and appliances are also very important. A physically disabled person in this regard believed: "*in public libraries, tables and chairs are not standard for a disabled person at all. There should be an environment where they do not have to stay in the same wheelchair, so they can sit. The seats in most libraries are very small, thin, and wooden, which is not very suitable. Sometimes a disabled person is not able to bend his knee. There should be a series of equipment to put his feet on*".

3. Planning and budgeting

As the third rank of needs and services of the library for interviewees after the categories of services and programs (566 semantic units) and accessibility and physical structure of the library (332 semantic units), this category has 252 semantic units. The subcategory concepts of this category include policymaking and planning, service evaluation, and budget allocation. To provide appropriate services to individuals with disabilities in public libraries, libraries should have a written policy and plan and budget for these services. Also, libraries should consult with and support individuals with disabilities and their supporting organizations and associations when planning services, and evaluating the services provided. The most important needs identified in this category are communication and cooperation of the library with other organizations, allocation of appropriate budget, and the need for the trustee / organizational support of the production of books, respectively. Regarding the policy-making and awareness of the officials, one of the librarians working in the deaf department said:

"The problem is that a lot of our officials don't have a view of the deaf department. Because the officials don't know what to do with it, we have to remind several times for each request". Another demand of the disabled in this category is policy-making and communication with publishers to provide the file and text of the book. One of the blind individuals in this regard responded:

"If they come and give us the text of the books, that's great. Now, rules have to be written about how those terms are created, but if they provide the Word or pdf document, it can be read, not the image... we can read on computers and other devices, and the costs are much lower."

In addition to the need for macro-policies across the country, libraries should have a well-written plan and policy for short and long-term objectives to provide appropriate services to the disabled. Such a plan helps libraries to consider and address the needs of individuals with disabilities when planning and evaluating their services, and to evaluate their services accordingly.

4. Marketing and service development

In this category, the needs that have been mentioned to inform and promote services and methods of upgrading and improving services have been included. If services and programs have been provided, but the audience has not been properly informed, it cannot be expected that more audiences will be attracted to the library and that programs provided will be used by more disabled individuals. In total, the sub-category of this category was mentioned 225 times in the interviews. The most important need identified in all three groups of disabled individuals was to inform patrons of the library services through various methods of disseminating information. Creating a culture of dealing with the disabled and raising parents' awareness of disability are other needs that are included in the following. Here are some examples of what was mentioned about the group in the interviews:

"Because the information is sparse. I haven't heard even relatives and friends talk about the library. It's kind of like people get a book from the library and it's more like a novel. I haven't heard about the library programs yet. The authorities need to solidify the information".

Other concepts related to this category include improving the services of the public library through need assessment of the disabled, raising the culture of the community in dealing with the disabled, appreciating the successful disabled, providing the ground for the presence of all classes of the community in the library, raising parents' awareness of disability, modeling successful libraries around the world and providing services in care centers for the disabled or hospitals. One of the disabled individuals said:

"They should come to the hospital and medical centers and say, Sir, let's take you to the library and read a book. Talk to each other. Describe the books you read". A librarian attributed the lack of visits to libraries to parents' lack of awareness: "Due to the family's great sensitivity to the movement of their disabled and their emphasis on their presence with them, they sometimes refused to bring them to the library due to tight business, although we reassured them that we would take care of their children and help them with their movement and things like that... we still couldn't convince some families to let the disabled come to the library".

5. Collection

Another group of services needed by the disabled is the existence of an appropriate and rich collection of resources. Services in this category include providing access to resources, in the library, and at home. The existence of sufficient, diverse, and up-to-date resources based on the needs of the disabled has been the second need expressed in all the three groups of the disabled. Also, the disabled expected that a variety of formats (audiobooks, Braille, large print materials, ...) be available in the library. The next important need in this group was the provision of audiobooks based on the needs of the blind and visually impaired. Because many audio and braille books available in libraries are not based on the needs of users. A librarian in this regard said:

"Our disabled are very limited in Braille resources. If I had the budget and responsibility, I would have provided more opportunities to print Braille books and try to see what the disabled needed most. Because we have so few resources, the paper is expensive and we should try to make the best use of these resources, not printing a book that is buried in the library".

A disabled individual talked about the library's collection: *"Unfortunately, the books in the library are the books that were written and published years ago, or there are books that are not useful".*

Another need in this group is the existence of resources in the field of disability familiarity. *"The books related to the life of successful individuals with disabilities as well as books that raise awareness about the phenomenon of disability are among the interests of individuals with disabilities,"* said one mobility disabled person.

6. Equipment and information technology

Another category of the disabled needs in public libraries is related to information equipment and technology. In this category, two concepts of information technologies and library website features have been considered. The most important need identified in this category has been the need for facilities to generate resources or provide services (Audiobook recording studio, CCTV, computer, Mouse, Keyboard, assistive listening devices,). The three main needs identified in this category include the accessibility of equipment to produce resources and services, provision of resources in various formats, and the existence of computers with special facilities for the user. For example, one of the interviewees said:

"It would be great if we had a TV that we could sometimes show short films for children. All the equipment we have is the same books and storytelling".

In addition to visual and auditory equipment, information and communication technologies have also been needed by individuals with disabilities. These include easy access to the library's website and a continuous library catalog. A librarian in this regard said: *"What is felt is a gap and what the members are looking for a lot is having an integrated database of Audiobooks provided across the public libraries of the country"*.

7. Human resources and training

Another category identified based on the views of individuals with disabilities and librarians, whose underlying factors affect services and their quality, is the human resources and training. This category includes factors that indicate the training and attitude of librarians. The library staff should have a clear understanding of the library's policy on serving the disabled and their needs, as well as receiving necessary training in this field. According to the disabled and librarians, if the librarians are given the necessary training about the disabled, one can expect better services. The subsequent needs in this category included familiarity of librarians with sign language and hiring trained librarians for the provision of services to the disabled. Regarding the attitude of librarians, one of the disabled said: *"Once I went to the library. It was very difficult for me to go. Because I was with Crutches, it was very noisy. It made a very loud noise. I asked a book and he told me to go and find it myself, but go silent. He started whining. He treated me very differently. Of course, I got used to it"*.

A disabled person described his expectation from the library as *"having security, up-to-date books, the librarian's proper behavior with everyone"*. In this group, one of the factors in attracting the disabled to the library and using it is the motivation and attitude of the staff and training of librarians.

8. Welfare facilities

Welfare facilities for the disabled are other needs expressed by the disabled. Although this category is less pronounced than others, it includes concepts that increase the level of welfare of the disabled in various ways, including providing employment, facilities for rehabilitation equipment, and the purchase of appropriate machinery. The needs mentioned in this category are usually within the authority of other organizations and the library does not have much ability to solve them.

An example of a reference to these factors is given below.

"Another problem is public transportation. I want to use the bus, but how can I take the stairs? If I don't have a place to sit, I will be pushed and my artificial leg may be damaged. The public transportation is not suitable for the disabled. I think they should give a cheaper and installment-adapted car to the disabled helping a lot to the independence of the disabled".

In general, the results of interviews with librarians and the disabled in the eight categories showed that, in the mobility impaired group, the category of accessibility and physical structure of the library space had the highest frequency, and in the two groups of the blind and deaf, services and programs they needed had the highest frequency. In the group of the mobility impaired, the lowest frequency was related to the category of equipment and technology, and in the case of the blind and deaf, it was related to the category of welfare facilities.

Regarding the existence of the three groups of individuals with disabilities (physical-motor, blind and visually impaired, deaf, and auditory impaired) in the present study, 10 needs with the highest frequency of each group are given in Table 3.

Table3: 10 needs with the highest frequency of each group

category	need
	Informing the library's' services to the disabled through various channels

category	need
physically-mobility	Access to the library's entrance
	Having a standard ramp
	Providing a friendly and engaging interaction space
	Adequate/diverse and up-to-date resources based on the needs of the disabled
	Library's communication and cooperation with other organizations and vice versa
	Suitable tables and chairs
	Providing a means of transportation
	Allocating the appropriate budget
	An Appropriate and respectful treatment of the disabled
visually impaired	Facilities for producing resources or performing services
	Informing the library's' services to the disabled through various channels
	Providing borrow and reference services (email, in person, post, send download link)
	Various books in various formats
	Adequate/diverse and up-to-date resources based on the needs of the disabled
	Allocating the appropriate budget
	Providing a means of transportation
	Production of telling references as needed
	Library's communication and cooperation with other organizations and vice versa
	The need for a trustee / organizational support for the production of telling books
Hearing impaired	Storytelling
	Familiarizing librarians with sign language
	Library's communication and cooperation with other organizations
	Teaching concepts to the deaf/increasing vocabulary range
	Special resources for the deaf
	Raising parental awareness
	Making a handicraft
	Facilities for producing resources or performing services
	Informing the library's' services to the disabled through various channels
	Holding training workshops for the disabled for librarians

DISCUSSION

The number of individuals with disabilities in the world, especially in developing countries is increasing. It has necessitated the provision of better living conditions, using the capabilities and abilities of this group of individuals and increasing their presence in the community (Ayoubi Avaz 2018), especially by the public libraries (Leong 2010, Rayini 2017). Hence, the present study, using interviews, has identified services and programs for the disabled (blind and visually impaired, deaf, and auditory impaired and physically disabled) that can be provided through public libraries. The results of the

analysis of interviews showed that most attention was given to services and programs provided by public libraries and accessibility and physical condition

The first group of needs identified in this study was to provide additional services and programs for the disabled. Various studies and guidelines have emphasized that all standard services that the public library provides to its users should also be provided to individuals with disabilities (Canadian Library Association 1997, Day and Al-Khalifah 2000). However, studies show that in most cases, library services for the disabled are not considered and special services are not provided (Lawal-Solarin 2012), and it seems that there is not enough knowledge of the library services needed by individuals with disabilities (Williamson, Schauder et al. 2001, Koulikourdi 2008).

The second group of identified needs included accessibility and physical structure of the library. The right to access facilities, services, and information resources is one of the main rights of the disabled to which libraries should pay attention (Chaputula 2016). One of the basic principles of public libraries is the accessibility of library services for all individuals and groups in the community. In the public library, services should be provided equally to disabled and healthy individuals. The design of the library building and its environment should be accessible to all people including individuals with physical and sensory disabilities. The design of the building and the environment of the libraries should be based on the architectural standards approved by the organizations that support the disabled. The working hours of the library, service development, and collection should also be based on the principle of access for all and access to different forms of information appropriate to the specific groups of users (Canadian Library Association 1997, Library Association of Australia 1998, Gill 2001, Kavanagh and Sköld 2005, Finnish working group 2017). Studies show that one of the major challenges facing individuals with disabilities is accessing library resources and services (Ekwelem 2013). In Lawal-Solarin (2012) respondents said they had difficulty accessing the information resources they needed (Lawal-Solarin 2012). A study on Malawi libraries showed that there was a problem with access to the library building and entrances for individuals with disabilities and that one of the needs of individuals with disabilities was access to spaces and buildings (Chaputula 2016).

Another category of needs identified in this study is planning and budgeting. To ensure proper service to all members of the community, there should be a strategic and developed plan that includes library goals, short and long-term goals, strategies and performance appraisal to ensure access for all and efficiency. This plan should be documented and approved by the managers of the organization. The library plan should be proportional to macro policies and budget and meet the needs of users and priorities. The mission statement should reflect the functions of the library and the right of all members of the community to use the library's references and services. The goals of the library should ensure that the library staff treats the disabled with respect and dignity and that all library facilities and services are available. If there are barriers or restrictions in some fields, plans should be made to address them. Studies show that few libraries have a written policy. The libraries should consider the needs of individuals with disabilities when determining their budget and expenses. Part of the library budget should be set aside to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities and the equipment they need.

Another category of needs identified in this study was advertising and service development. In this study, the need to market library services to the disabled through various channels had the highest frequency, which means that the disabled are not well aware of the current programs and services that libraries provide. Public libraries should inform the community members of the services they provide. Service advertising ranges from simple methods such as installing notices and banners and providing brochures to become familiar with library services and working hours, to more advanced methods such as marketing programs and using websites to improve library services and activities (Canadian Library Association 1997, Day and Al-Khalifah 2000, Gill 2001). A library should have a public

relations and marketing program that promotes the library services to the public and leads to the participation and investment of other organizations and individuals. However, the results of some studies show few libraries provide information about the services to the disabled (Chaputula 2016).

Another group of needs was the library's collection and references. All age groups and individuals in the community should be able to find content and information tailored to their needs. The library's collection and services should include a variety of information resources, from print materials to modern media and technology. The library's collection should be consistent with local needs and conditions and reflect the current trend and evolution of a community. For this purpose, libraries should have a developed policy for their collection, which provides a resource for all classes of a community (Canadian Library Association 1997, Library Association of Australia 1998, Day and Al-Khalifah 2000, Gill 2001, Kavanagh and Sköld 2005, Finnish working group 2017). The Libraries in the past were originally placing where physical materials, mainly books, and magazines, were stored. Today, most libraries, especially public libraries, provide information in a variety of forms, from traditional printed books to CD-ROMs and online journals to individuals who cannot use traditional print references, including the blind and deaf, to access the information they need. The library should be able to produce information resources in various formats, including Braille and audiobooks if necessary and in compliance with copyright laws (Library Association of Australia 1998, Kavanagh and Sköld 2005, Asnafi and Mirzaei 2014). Among the most important needs of the disabled in this study is the field of collection namely the existence of sufficient / diverse and up-to-date resources based on the needs of the disabled and the existence of facilities for the production of resources or services. In a study conducted in Malawi, access to appropriate services and resources was a major group of the needs (Chaputula 2016).

Another category was the staff and their training. The presence of trained staff with the right attitude was one of the stated needs of the disabled in all groups. The staff plays a key role in library performance and service delivery. To provide services to users, especially users with special needs such as the disabled, staff with skills and familiarity in this field are pivotal. The library staff should be available to users and have a clear understanding of the library policy, their duties and responsibilities, as well as the needs of individuals. Providing quality collections and quality services to the disabled is possible when staff, in addition to having sufficient knowledge and experience in working with the disabled, have a positive attitude towards the disabled (Canadian Library Association 1997, Day and Al-Khalifah 2000). The study results of Brodsky and Wells (2011) showed that the positive view of individuals with disabilities was higher among librarians who had received formal training in this field (Brodsky and Wells 2011). However, the study results show that a small number of libraries have specialized and trained staff to work with the disabled and are aware of how to use the equipment they use (Koulikourdi 2008).

Currently, technology plays an important role in human life and work, and life is almost impossible without technology. Today, technology has also a profound effect on the life of individuals with disabilities. One way for individuals with disabilities to progress and participate in the community is to use computers and Internet-based technologies (Vahdat, Shahhoseini, et al. 2007), and a way to increase service and improve delivery in libraries is to use technology. The public libraries should provide as much equipment as possible for the disabled to use references and services. The technologies may include Braille printers, various software for converting text to speech or vice versa, different types of mouse and keyboard, etc (Canadian Library Association 1997, Library Association of Australia 1998, Finnish working group 2017). The study results of Mir Hosseini et al. on public libraries in Tehran showed that the higher the level of information and technology resources in libraries, the more services provided necessitating increasing use of technology in providing services to the disabled (Mirhosseini, Abazari et al. 2017). In a study by Chaputula and Mapulanga, one of the main reason

libraries failed to provide services to individuals with disabilities was the expensive equipment needed by individuals with disabilities (Chaputula 2016).

Conclusion

The study results showed that for using public libraries and accessing the required information by the disabled, services and facilities should be provided. These services include providing access to library space and references, holding training and recreational courses tailored to the needs of the disabled, having trained and positive human resources and librarians, providing a collection of new and diverse books and references in various formats, and equipped libraries to new technologies that can only be achieved with a well-written plan and budget allocation.

Information should be provided regardless of race, religion, age, nationality, or language at the right time and format for the clients. Public libraries should be at the forefront of removing barriers to provide information especially for the disabled given their primary mission as information providers.

We found that informing the library services through various channels, accessibility of the library building, and the existence of ramps for the physically disabled were the most important needs. In the group of the blind, the existence of facilities for the production of talking resources, providing services through distance borrowing services, and non-face-to-face reference, including sending the book by post or download link via email were among the important needs. In the deaf group, storytelling needs, librarians' familiarity with sign language, and the library's connection to deaf associations and related organizations were among the most important needs. In general people with disabilities need resources and services that address their particular challenges.

To meet these needs, in addition to need assessment of different groups of individuals with disabilities and the organizations and associations that support them, libraries should have the necessary planning and funding. Also, by providing appropriate facilities, accessible buildings, services, and programs, they set the ground for the presence of the disabled in the library.

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