

Role of Libraries for Disadvantage People: With Special Reference to Economically Weaker Section

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INTRODUCTION

"If a poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him" - Swami Vivekananda

Libraries are synonymous with the education and can have multitudinous effects to stimulate economic, social and cultural development. Besides, lending books libraries are encompassing in rendering material for research goals. All cannot procure each book or journal for their educational objectives. Thus, their dependence is on the library and its services. Libraries play a pivotal role in the nation's development and also, viewed as gateways to information and culture. Libraries through its resources and services proffer various possibilities in learning, assisting literacy, education and aids in moulding the innovative thoughts and views help to shape the new ideas and perspectives which are crucial to imaginative and modern society. The idea is to ensure the provision of trustworthy information that is generated and collected by preceding generations. The non-existence of libraries can't be imagined in a world as it would create difficulties in advancing research and preserving the world's accumulated information and traditions for upcoming generations.

DISADVANTAGE PEOPLE:

The pre-eminent postulates of exercise for librarians and libraries are to assure that all persons despite their identity such as age, gender, disability, religion, caste, creed, socio-economic status and so on can access the libraries and its services without any distinction. However, not everyone has access to it; these people may be referred to as "disadvantaged people". These people may have a disadvantage from the rest due to physical conditions and ailments, age-related disorders or the economically weaker section (below the poverty line, reserved categories like SC/ST).

Disadvantage people should not be treated as a lost cause. With the right kind of support and motivations, they can prove to be assets rather than a liability for the nation and can lead to self-development and play an active role in societal progress. Aforementioned can be aptly exemplified with examples of people like Javed Abidi who despite being physically was undeterred from pursuing his dream of becoming a journalist and is now director of NCPEDP (National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People), a non-governmental organisation. These people prove that disability is just in a state of mind.

Concentrating on the economically weaker section mainly covered under the below poverty line category; these people have a very bleak and dismal future as they have limited or no access to education and its premises like schools and libraries.

ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN HELPING DISADVANTAGE PEOPLE

Libraries are the source of information to enhance knowledge and knowledge is the best weapon to fight poverty. Let us take an example when a poor farmer goes to cultivate his land he must have information about the condition of soil and other parameters and also foresightedness about the market condition of about his produce. Sadly speaking most of the time, these poor fellow falls into debt traps even after having a bumper crop!

Libraries play a vital role in providing the right amount of information at the right time and even rendering Recreation, Inspiration books and encourage them to accomplish their aspirations.

HOW CAN WE THE LIBRARIANS HELP DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE

Broadly we can divide all our actions into three major sections.

- Create infrastructure
- Use of technologies and gadgetries
- Especially trained human resource

To overcome the problems of disadvantaged people libraries can start examining the difficulties, needs and preferences at regular intervals. The focus should be on providing facilities and information that can be helpful in fulfilling their requirements and preferences. The below-mentioned ways through which libraries significantly play their role in enhancing the education of socially disadvantaged people are:

1. **Design infrastructure:** There is a need to plan space to store the reading and multimedia inputs as well as a generous space concerning sitting and reading.

2. **Usage of technologies and gadgets:** We all know the role of internet computers and tablets and their impact on our lives. In financially and socially backward areas all these can be used for creating recreation facility to attract people to libraries which are the biggest roadblock for the success of such facilities. The second best idea that we should promote multimedia inputs as much as we can the reason is the level and the quality of literacy is not a required level. Third the most crucial is cheap as we all know at the end of the day what really matters is that it should be cost effective.

3. **Human resource:** Human resources are the most valuable part with all the infrastructure and gadgetries they might turn up into a white elephant. To deliver services, we need our library personnel to be dedicated and well-groomed about the social, cultural and financial needs. These people should feel free to discuss or obtain information about any problem disadvantage people are facing. The idea is libraries are there to promote them to tackle the problems logically and scientifically not by mere whims and fancies.

SO FAR ACCOMPLISHED BY SOME OF THE LIBRARIES:

Numbers of steps already taken by many libraries for the betterment of disadvantaged people are.

1. **Book bank scheme:** Libraries can build a book bank, mainly to provide the textbooks related to the academic syllabus for the whole session. PEC University of Technology,

Chandigarh, Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University-School of Petroleum Technology and many other institutions are running similar concept schemes.

2. **Mobile library/library on wheels:** Those people who cannot reach out to libraries, libraries can reach out to them through their concept of mobile libraries. These help in bringing the vast knowledge of books even to the remotest of the places.

3. **Loan Tablets/Laptops:** In this ICT era libraries are not only building their collection in print form but also acquiring electronic resources. Using software's and applications, recent and updated technologies, scientific inputs, digital resources to bring them at par with the outside world by providing tablets and laptops on loan basis with internet access.

4. **Organise seminar and workshops:** Some libraries organise meetings, workshops, symposiums for discussions, interactions, debates about the relevance and the progress of the social activities to help the economically weaker section.

5. **Earn and learn Scheme:** A few libraries are offering employment opportunities to these people along with access to the libraries to provide both income and information. Savitribai Phule Pune University and Guru Nanak College of Arts, Science & Commerce, Mumbai, Panjab University library project 'earn while learning' and many others institutions are running this scheme to encourage students to continue their studies and provide them with a source of income.

CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS:

1. **Provision of adequate funds:** Funding is a primary hindrance for libraries. The chief issue is a requirement of appropriate funds for successful implementation of any programme.

2. **Provision of infrastructure:** Providing of infrastructure in villages to take up library initiatives interaction with Panchayats and village people and creating awareness about the importance of education and libraries and winning over their support.

3. **Setting up the nodal centres:** To set up the nodal centres at district levels to keep records and statistics of setups.

4. **Regular field visits:** The requirement of conducting regular field visits and inspections to ensure the quality of services and proper usage of resources.

5. **Training of Human resource.** As discussed above, this factor plays the crucial role to achieve maximum by putting minimum inputs. For working among poor people, social bonding is must and time to time we must update and upgrade our personals so that their capacity to produce the outcomes should be at level best. Training of staff must involve attending the conferences, workshops, seminars and short-term training courses.

6. **Establishing social clubs,** discussions groups and peer groups so that they can interact with one another and share their interest's, feelings, problems and opinions and support each other.

7. **Openness:** The staff should have the friendly attitude and a calm and patient demeanour to have open communication with these people so that they should feel free to give their recommendations and opinions to the staff and such should be implemented.

8. Collaboration and discussions with NGO's: (Non-Governmental Organizations). The purpose of the library can actualise by joining hands with various government agencies, NGO'S and cooperative societies working in the similar direction. Knowledge generation and new forms of potential relationship to the degree, those who don't have access to information remain entirely dominated by those who have the information.

CONCLUSION

Stipulation of vital knowledge to have-nots is consequently crucial. The necessity is to render social equity and is a central human virtue. Thus, in the age of information explosion, it is just not enough to exploit the information in various formats but also providing these information services to users or society, especially paying attention to socially disadvantaged. The provision of accessing the information resources and conducting the training on how to assess these resources should be organised free of cost, especially for disabled and disadvantaged people.

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