

Collection development and management within public libraries in Delhi

Management
within public
libraries
in Delhi

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A study on government owned public libraries in the changing digital environment

Prabhjeet Kaur and Paramjeet Kaur Walia
University of Delhi, Delhi, India

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to find out about the collection development and management in the public libraries governed by the government or its agencies in Delhi and compare them with the international standards for public libraries.

Design/methodology/approach – In all, Delhi has three chains of public libraries namely Delhi Public Library (DPL), like Hardayal Municipal Public Library (HMPL) and New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) public libraries. The librarian/heads of selected branches were approached with a structured questionnaire aimed at collecting information on the collection development and managements in these libraries and selected branches. The data were then analysed and interpreted.

Findings – It was found that with the advent of ICT and its impact on the society, it is evident that the public libraries are not making the desired effort to reach out to the public and make it more appealing to the users. The main problem with the library remains to be the lack of membership. A few initiatives have been taken, but still there were not many digital services being provided by these public libraries in the present day digital environment.

Research limitations/implications – The study was limited to the public libraries within the physical region of Delhi only.

Practical implications – The evaluation sheds light on the existing scenario of public libraries in Delhi and may contribute in their future development.

Social implications – With the acceptance of the international standards as suggested in the study, the public libraries in Delhi would be better able to provide information resources and services to the masses. The better learned masses make the society more advanced. An information rich society would thus lead to an overall growth and development of the state.

Originality/value – There have been many studies in the past on DPL but none have intended to cover other public libraries chains like HMPL and NDMC public libraries which are governed by the government or its agencies and are established with aim of imparting information to the population of Delhi. Also, a similar the comparison with international standards was never done earlier.

Keywords Collection development, Delhi Public Library, Public libraries – Delhi, Public library standards

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Public libraries play a vital role in the process of imparting education to the society. They can act as the first means by which a person gets access to books outside home. Public libraries also help the education system of the region in imparting knowledge along with inculcating reading habits among children and adults alike. According to the *UNESCO Public Library Manifesto*, “The Public Library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users”. The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access



for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status (UNESCO, 1994).

Delhi is the capital of India and a place where various eminent personalities in all fields of endeavour reside. The education system in the city is supported by the government, public and private institutions. Many students access the public libraries to fulfil their information requirements which are not met by the school library. Public libraries also act as an educational institution for children who are unable to go to school or adults who are neo-literates. The access to a public library is not limited to just children; it provides access to information for all irrespective of age, race, religion, etc. Thus the staff of a public library must develop a collection fit for the masses and manage it to fulfil the information requirements of the people it caters for.

The present paper aims at surveying the condition of the public libraries of Delhi regarding the collection development and management among them. To fulfil this requirement a library survey was conducted to gather relevant data. A library survey involves systematically collecting the details of the library pertaining to the members, budget, activities, staff, functions, collection, services, infrastructure, etc. for a particular time or over a period of time from June till August. The techniques which can be used to collect such data can be questionnaire, interview, observation and various documents such as annual reports of the libraries, brochures, etc.

Before conducting the survey, a review of related literature was done so as to get a better understanding about the public libraries and survey technique. The earliest case of published literature involving a survey conducted on a public library in Delhi by Dr M.M.L. Tandon, the then director of Delhi Public Library (DPL). Tandon (1960) presented this report in Regional Seminar on Library Development in South Asia organized by UNESCO and spanned across data from 1955 to 1960. The report provided an insight into the detailed report of the library on various aspects including the book stock, the issuing of books. It stated that literature for newly literates was also made a part of the library collection. Stress was given to providing free information services and open access to the masses. The need of sturdy library legislation was also emphasized in this report. DPL was established as a UNESCO Project in 1951. In the 1973 INTAMEL meeting, Gupta (1974) presented a report on the services of the library. The management and financial aspects of the library were discussed. The library system itself was also described along with its governance. The technical services and readers services of the library were listed along with extension services which the library provides. Suggestions were made in the form of technical advice and assistance. The paper concluded with a critique on the conditions of the DPL.

From governance point of view, Jambhekar (1995) investigated the policies of the Central Government in India, regarding the financial outlay in the Five Year Plans, important developments, and their impact on establishment of the public library system, since independence was achieved in 1947. Similarly, Bhattacharjee (2002) presented a country report on behalf of India for the Public Libraries Section of IFLA. It described the growth and development of public library initiatives in phases according to Five Year Plans. The library legislation was summarized with emphasis on each state. The structure of public library system for a state with library legislation was also provided. Problems faced by developing nation regarding the development of public libraries were addressed and suggestions were made.

Based on the widely accepted conceptualization of ICT for development, the poster session presented by Ghosh (2003) at IFLA Congress suggested various ways where convergence technologies can be used to improve and promote the existing

library services. An attempt was made to make a proposal for ICT-driven public libraries for Indian states with suitable library extension programmes to help the entire rural and urban community especially unprivileged masses. Wani (2008) in the paper titled "Development of public libraries in India" gave an overview of public library development in India from ancient times to the present day. It describes initiatives undertaken by private foundations and by local, state and central government, and details the particular characteristics of Indian society and their relationship to library and information systems.

As not many studies were done on public libraries except DPL, an effort was made to select other public libraries in Delhi as well so as to have a comparative account among them. The sample thus selected for the study included all three public libraries governed by government agencies in Delhi, namely DPL, Hardayal Municipal Public Library (HMPL) and New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) public libraries. These libraries had branches all over Delhi, thus only five branches, which were considered as the representative of all the branches, were considered for gathering data were selected of the survey. These included the following branches:

- (1) DPL: Chandni Chowk (north), Shahdara (northeast), Karol Bagh (central), Sarojini Nagar (southwest), Patel Nagar (west), (Delhi Public Library (DPL), 2012);
- (2) HMPL: Chandni Chowk (north), Rampura (north), Rohini (northwest), Mayur Vihar (east), Rajouri Garden (west); and
- (3) New Delhi Municipal Council public library (NDMC): Palika Kendra (New Delhi), Mandir Marg (New Delhi), Lodhi Colony (south), East Kidwai Nagar (south), Moti Bagh (southwest), (New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), 2012).

For the survey, a questionnaire was distributed to the librarians of these main branches of the three public libraries whereas in branch libraries, the questionnaire was addressed to the head of the branch visited. Some of the data were also taken using observational methods so as not to overburden the librarian with questions having obvious answers. Data were also collected by interviewing different members of the staff of these libraries to obtain information pertaining to their respective positions in the library. The responses received were then grouped and tabulated to present comparative analyses of all the government public libraries. The data collected and interpretations made are presented under the following headings for the ease of analysis and interpretation.

Year of establishment and governing agency

Delhi is a city in which the historical past and contemporary life coexist harmoniously. The city, with its depth and abundance of heritage, has demonstrated its universal significance in these times of globalization and change. In Delhi, the public libraries house a wealth of information about the city's history and culture depending on the times during which these libraries were set and their governing agencies. The following Table I shows the dates of establishment and the name of the governing bodies overseeing the public libraries of Delhi.

As seen from the above table, it is evident that public libraries started developing in Delhi even before independence. Efforts to collect information and disseminate it among the public started because at the time of struggle for independence, people of India were denied information leaving libraries as a channel to get the information to

the masses. The earliest of the public libraries among the selected ones was HMPL which was originally named after Lord Hardinge. Later, in 1970, it was renamed as HMPL. DPL was established by the efforts of Ministry of Culture. The latest chain of government-owned public libraries was set up by NDMC in 1984. These public libraries were established in the area under the jurisdiction of NDMC only covering the New Delhi part of the city of Delhi.

Membership

Membership of a library comprises members registered with the library who can use the information resources and services of that library. The membership of a public library reflects its impact on the society. The greater the membership means that more people are willing to come to the library to use its information resources and services. It was found that selected branches of DPL had the largest number of registered members with 31,820 members at the time of collection of data. This could be due to the selection of only major branch libraries among the sample as they were the representative of the zone in which they were located. HMPL had about 3,000 members while NDMC library had close to 2,000 members.

In the absence of any standards or guidelines for the membership of a public library been given by IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines, the standards and guidelines for Australian Public Libraries was consulted. According to this the baseline per cent of eligible population who are library members is equal to 46 per cent (Australian Library and Information Association, 2011). This means that in every population, at least 46 per cent of the total population should be a member of the public library.

Considering DPL as the premier public library service provider for the region of Delhi, the following calculations were made:

population of Delhi = 16,753,235 (India, 2011);
total membership of DPL (all branches) = 78,425 (at time of data collection); and
percentage of population who were library members = 0.468 per cent.

According to the calculations done above, it can be clearly seen that the actual percentage of population who were members of the DPL was 100 times less than what the standard figure suggested. Delhi, has a literacy rate of 86.34, still the number of people using the library resources and services is far less than what it should be. Furthermore, there is a more pressing need for the illiterate population to be a member of the library so that they can learn to read and write in order to increase the literacy rate to a better level.

In a different scenario, if we take total membership of all the public libraries selected for the study, assuming them to be working towards the common goal of imparting information resources and services among the public of Delhi; we can calculate the exact percentage of population of Delhi who are members of one public library or the other. It must be noted that the following calculation would stand good on the

Table I.

Year of establishment and governing agency of public libraries under study

Library	Year of establishment	Governing agency
DPL	1951	Ministry of Culture
HMPL	1864	Municipal Corporation of Delhi
NDMC	1984	New Delhi Municipal Council

supposition that none of the member of one public library had the membership to another such library in Delhi:

population of Delhi = 16,753,235 (India, 2011);
total membership of public libraries in Delhi = 99,475; and
percentage of population who were library members = 0.57 per cent.

Even if all the membership of all the selected public libraries were taken together, they still did not manage to make a membership of even 1 per cent of the existing population of Delhi. All around, just about one person in every 200 people in the population was a member of a public library. This shows the public libraries of Delhi in a bad light and in a great need to attract more and more members to serve.

ICT infrastructure

With the advances in technology pertaining to acquiring, storing, organizing and disseminating information, information and communication technology has become an integral part of libraries these days. The hardware infrastructure which forms a part of ICT includes computers, printers, scanners, photocopy machines and television sets. This equipment helps in imparting and sharing information among the members of the public libraries. They also add to the functionality and visual appeal of the public libraries. The following table enumerates the availability of ICT components in the selected public libraries.

Table II shows that although the number of computers for the members is greater in NDMC library, members are not being given a chance to use them. Also, only the Central Library of the NDMC had computers meant for members and none of its branches had any computers either for the staff or the members. DPL Central Library (Chandni Chowk) had a provision of ten computers for its members; however, some of them are not functioning due to technical faults with the systems and poor maintenance. Similar is the scenario in Sarojini Nagar, Patel Nagar, R.K. Puram Sector-8, Shahdara, Karol Bagh and Narela Branches of DPL where each of the libraries had computers but due to poor maintenance not all of them were in a working condition. In addition, the computers were connected to one printer-cum-scanner in all these libraries. HMPL Central Library does not provide any ICT facilities to its members, however, they had two computers but they were only for the staff. On the other hand, the Mayur Vihar branch had a provision of five computes (sponsored by ICAI), but they had no facility for internet access. Thus, the computers were left unused. Other branches of HMPL had no ICT provisions. Apart from computers, ICT components also include printer, scanner and photocopier. Only DPL and NDMC library provides its members with printing, scanning and photocopying facilities.

According to the *IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines* (2nd ed.) suggests “A standard of one computer access point per 5,000 population” (Koontz and Gubbin, 2012).

Library	Computer	Printer	Scanner	Photocopier	Television set
DPL*	45	5	5	1	1
HMPL*	5	0	0	0	1
NDMC*	15	5	2	1	1

Note: *Figures for selected branches only

Table II.
Availability of ICT
infrastructure in
public libraries
under study

Taking into consideration the above standard, it was found that DPL, which serves the entire population of Delhi, had a total of around 100 computers for its members. Keeping in mind the population of Delhi to be 16.7 million according to Census (India, 2011), it was calculated that DPL provided a single computer access point per 167,000 of the population. This can be further explained by the following calculations:

population of Delhi = 16,753,235 (India, 2011);
number of PCs required (as per standard) = 3,350; and
number of PCs present in DPL = 100.

The calculated figure was not at all comparable to what the standard says because going by the standard, the computers in all the DPL libraries should be 3,350 which is extremely larger than the actual number that should have been. The lack of ICT infrastructure is a major drawback in the public library scenario of Delhi. Even the computers present in the library were not in working condition and some of them were found to be under maintenance due to technical difficulties which were not being promptly looked into because of the lack of technically sound staff.

Thus, none of the libraries had adequate ICT infrastructure to serve its population effectively. Even the existing infrastructure was not considered up to the mark and technical problems in the computers were found to be very common among those who had the facility.

Human resources

The human resources of a library consists of the entire group of paid employees responsible for the operation and management of a library or library system, including its director, librarians, para-professionals, technical assistants, clerics, etc. In public libraries, a distinction may be made between professionally trained librarians and support-staff. There are various designations of LIS professionals in public libraries which can be grouped into the following:

- Professional: professional consists of those who possess a professional degree in library and information science. Professionals are employed at a higher level and middle level and are responsible for administration and managerial jobs. Usually designations like librarian, deputy librarian, assistant librarian and senior library assistants are included here.
- Para-professional/semi-professionals: they are the ones with a diploma or a certificate in LIS. Their designation may be library assistant, technical or professional assistant, junior cataloguer or equivalent. They perform the routine professional and technical jobs.
- Unskilled/supporting staff: they are with the minimum educational background and are adequately experienced in doing a particular job or trade and usually have a non-library degree or not. The designation may be reprographic assistant, book arranger, book binder, conversation assistant, typist and equivalent.

Besides the above categories of staff, some other staff are also necessary for the functioning of the library. They include attendant, cleaner, peon, gardener and sweeper. The distribution of the staff of the public libraries under the above-mentioned categories was tabulated in Table III.

As seen from the above table, the maximum number of staff members in each of the above-mentioned categories if in DPL, i.e. 103. This is due to the fact that DPL system

has a total of 45 libraries at different levels along with 70 mobile service points and 22 deposit stations. For all of these, the technical processing is centralized and is carried out in the Central Library (Chandni Chowk) which hosts all the staff for this purpose. Among the ten staff members under the professional category, the highest positions are held by the director general and a director of the library followed by an assistant director followed by three library and information officers and four assistant library and information officers. The para-professionals include library and information assistants while the supporting staff comprises library clerks and library attendants.

Similar to DPL, in HMPL, the system of processing is centralized and is performed at the Central Library (Chandni Chowk). The highest position is held by the librarian followed by a senior assistant librarian and four assistant librarians. There is also one junior librarian who falls under the professional staff category. The para-professional designation includes technical assistants and senior library attendants, whereas the supporting staff includes library attendants and counter clerks.

Though, for NDMC library too, the processing is centralized, but the number of staff members is limited because it has a system of just eight public libraries unlike DPL and HMPL which have a much larger number of libraries. The head of the library is the library and information officer who is the only professional. The para-professionals include assistant librarians and senior library assistants and the supportive staff is made up of library attendants.

According to the *IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines* (2nd ed.) suggests: “One full-time equivalent member of staff for 2,500 population” (Koontz and Gubbin, 2012).

As per the standard, there must be at least one full-time member of staff per 2,500 population. Applying the above-mentioned ratio on the population of Delhi it was found that, the number of staff members should be at least 6,700:

population of Delhi = 16,753,235 (India, 2011);
 required staff members (as per standard) = 6,701;
 staff members in DPL = 449; and
 number of staff members per 2,500 population = 0.067.

DPL, which is a city wide network of libraries, had sanctioned staff strength of 449 staff members. Upon calculations it was found that the required number was 6,701 which is around 15 times greater than the present setting. This is because of the fact that for each library in its system, there are more or less the same number of staff members except for bigger libraries like central and branch libraries. Besides, even the present capacity for sanctioned staff was not occupied with about 200 posts still lying vacant. However, the day to day staff shortage is compensated by outsourcing various services. Furthermore, it was stated by the authorities that efforts were being made to fill the vacant posts by recruiting agencies like Delhi Subordinate Services Selection Board.

In case of HMPL and its branches, the number of staff members was even lower than that of the DPL with more or less the same number of population under its

Library	Professional	Para-professional	Supporting	Total
DPL*	10	46	47	103
HMPL*	7	12	19	31
NDMC*	1	7	6	14

Note: *Figures for selected branch libraries only

Table III.
Human resources in
the public libraries
under study

covered area. Thus, the calculations were not made for this library, and it could be said that this library system had a more pressing need for higher number of libraries and corresponding number of staff members so that it is able to serve the population better. Similar was the case with NDMC public libraries.

Other than the total staff strength, the *IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines* (2nd ed.) also recommends the following standard to be followed “One-third of staff (excluding support-staff) should be qualified librarians” (Koontz and Gubbin, 2012).

According to the above-mentioned standard, the number of staff members who are qualified to be librarians must be one-third of the total number of staff members excluding the supporting staff. Excluding the supporting staff from the total staff members of the library gives the total number of professionals and the para-professionals. For every professional member of the staff there must be double the number of para-professional staff employed by the library. Applying this standard in the case of DPL it was found that the number of para-professionals exceeded the number of professional staff by a very large number. The calculations made for this situation were as shown in Table IV.

The required ratio for the professional vs para-professional staff was supposed to be 1:2, but the calculated ratio for DPL was highly deviated to the extent that for every member of professional staff, there were more than 11 para-professional staff members. This was because the only professional staff members recruited by the library system were for the main library and the branch libraries, whereas all the other smaller libraries of the entire system were headed by para-professional staff with one supporting staff member. In case of HMPL, the ratio was less so but still deviated enough to be out of range of the standard guideline. According to the calculations done above, it was found that for each one of the professional staff members, the number of para-professionals were five times more. Similar to DPL, the smaller libraries in this chain of libraries were headed by a single para-professional only. The figures for NDMC were similar to that of DPL. The NDMC libraries being a network of eight libraries had just a single para-professional staff member per unit and no professional staff. Even the central library had a single professional member of the staff, the other position being vacant during data collection.

Collection development and collection management

Collection development is the process of selecting, acquiring and organizing the information resources of a library. It starts with the formulation of selection criteria, usually under the overall guidance of a written collection development policy. This is followed by technical processing which includes classification and cataloguing. After technical processing, the collection is organized which require proper display techniques and guiding signs so as to make the information resources easy to locate. The following tables and figure give details about all such aspects of collection development in the selected public libraries of Delhi.

Table IV.

Professional vs
para-professional
staff ratio

Library	Professionals	Para-professionals	Professional vs para-professionals
DPL	10	115	1:115
HMPL	7	35	1:5
NDMC	1	10	1:10

It was found that the largest collection was that of DPL with more than 1.6 million titles. This could be owed to the fact that the DPL collection includes the stock in all the libraries under the DPL system and not just the individual libraries selected for the study. HMPL and NDMC library followed with 170,000 and 150,000 collection, respectively.

According to the *IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines* (2nd ed.): “An established collection should be between 2 to 3 items per capita” is suggested (Koontz and Gubbin, 2012).

Going by the standard, it can be seen that a library must have two to three items per person for the area it endeavours to cover. Given that the population of Delhi is 16.7 million according to Census (India, 2011), and the total DPL collection (at the time of collection of data) was around 1.6 million, it can be calculated that there are 0.096 item per person of the entire population:

population of Delhi = 16,753,235 (India, 2011);
total collection = 1,608,813;
number of members = 78,425;
number of books per capita = 0.096; and
number of books per member = 20.5.

However, if instead of total population, we take into account the number of members of the library system, i.e. 78,425 (total DPL population), it can be calculated that this amount gets significantly increased to 20.5 items per person of the total membership.

Similarly, in the case of HMPL, the number of items per capita membership amounts to 56.66 items per member which is huge compared to 0.01 per capita of the population. Similarly, in case of NDMC, items per member was found to be 75, while item per capita of the population was 1.21 which was as near as it got to the standard specification of two to three items. The high number of collection in case of membership signifies that the membership is far less in number as compared to the collection. But, on the other hand, the number of information resources for every person in the total population is very low and this amounts to the lack of membership too. Thus, the only way out is to increase the number of members and proportionally increasing the library’s collection.

Language of the collection

Delhi is known as a multicultural hub as it plays host to many cultures and religions found all across India. People from different states have come to settle in Delhi making it an amalgamation of cultures and languages. Despite the variety, English, Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi form the principal languages of the state. The following table gives information regarding the languages in which collections are available in public libraries under study.

From the above Table V it can be seen that all of the public libraries in the study had collections in English, Hindi and Urdu. DPL and HMPL also had collection in Punjabi,

Library	English	Hindi	Punjabi	Urdu	Others
DPL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HMPL	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
NDMC	✓	✓	X	✓	X

Table V.
Language of the
collection in the
public libraries
under study

which is one of the four principal languages of Delhi. DPL, being the State run public library network of Delhi had different types of collection in Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil and Telugu.

Technical processing

After acquisition, information resources have to undergo technical processing so as to make them searchable. The main course of action of technical processing involves classification and cataloguing. For classification, schemes are used to give classification numbers to the information resources depending on their subject whereas, cataloguing involves bibliographically describing the information resources according to a cataloguing code, so as to make it searchable by different fields like author, title, subject and so on.

As seen in Table VI, the majority of the selected public libraries use Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) to classify their collections and Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR) for cataloguing along with local variation in which the libraries use a code customized to their needs. DPL uses DDC for classification purposes but still maintains its catalogue by Classified Catalogue Code (CCC). HMPL uses DDC to classify its collection but its classification numbers also shows some local variation, including alphabets along with the DDC numerals. NDMC is the only public library among the selected ones which used Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) as the classification scheme, though it used AACR for cataloguing purposes.

Organization of the collection

After classification and cataloguing, the collection needs to be organized on the shelves from where the members can pick them up according to their needs. A library's collection can be organized alphabetically, in a classified manner or in a mixed way. The type of access is either open or closed depending on the accessibility to the collection. If the collection is easily accessible, then it is said to be open; otherwise, if it is kept under lock and key then it is closed. The following table gives these details about the selected public libraries in Delhi.

From Table VII, it can be seen that NDMC library it is arranged in an alphabetical manner while in DPL and HMPL it is arranged in a mixed sort of way. Where type of

Table VI.

System of technical processing used in the public libraries under study

Library	Classification scheme	Cataloguing code
DPL	DDC	CCC
HMPL	LV based on DDC	Subject
NDMC	UDC	AACR

Note: LV, local variation

Table VII.

Organization of collection and type of access in the public libraries under study

Library	Organization of collection	Type of access	Security mechanism
DPL	Mixed	Open	No
HMPL	Mixed	Mixed	No
NDMC	Alphabetical	Mixed	No

access is concerned it can be seen that two libraries had open, two closed while two had a mixed type of access. In DPL, the access to the collection is completely open to the users of the library. HMPL and NDMC libraries had a mixed type of access because some of its branches had open access while the others had closed access. It was strange to know that none of the selected public libraries had any kind of security measure to protect its collection.

Signage techniques

Classification and cataloguing processes are very essential to make an information resource searchable. But, it is also important that the library makes efforts to make the same information resource easily locatable in its premises. This is made possible by using correct signage in the library so that the user can easily identify the location of a desired document in the library.

The Table VIII above shows the signage techniques and its presence in the selected public libraries. It can be seen that DPL and HMPL used three signage techniques while NDMC library used just one. NDMC libraries lagged behind with its library using just shelf labels to guide its users around the shelves. While all the selected public libraries used shelf labels, only DPL and HMPL used bay guides and section guides were found only in HMPL. Apart from leading to the collection signage also helps the user to recognize the location of utilities in the library; and only DPL had such signs.

Shelving and display infrastructure

Apart from having proper signage, it is imperative for a library to display its collection in a way that is noticed by the library members. Different shelving techniques are used by libraries for different types of collection to make its members aware of the collection. Table IX lists availability of such shelving techniques in the public libraries.

As seen in Table IX above, all libraries used book ends on their shelves to keep the collection together. On the other hand, none of them had books easel on which large or delicate books could be supported while reading and could double up as a display technique also. From among the selected libraries, a magazine stand, a brochure display stand, a CD/DVD display stand, newspaper display stand and periodical rack were a part of the DPL system. NDMC library also had a periodical rack where the magazines were kept in a pigeon-hole style. None of the selected public libraries had desktop displays or wall mount displays for its collection. HMPL had a book ease to be used for its old and valuable collection. A trolley was used only in DPL to transfer collection from one place to another. None of the libraries had any kind of compact shelving technique for its collection.

Signage technique	DPL	HMPL	NDMC
Gangway guide	X	X	X
Bay guide	✓	✓	X
Shelf label	✓	✓	✓
Shelf marker	X	X	X
Section guide	X	✓	X
Guide to utilities	✓	X	X

Table VIII.
Signage techniques
used in public
libraries under study

Table IX.
Shelving and display
infrastructure used
in public libraries
under study

Infrastructure	DPL	HMPL	NDMC
Book end	✓	✓	✓
Book easel	X	X	X
Magazine stand	✓	X	X
Newspaper display	✓	X	X
Periodical rack	✓	X	✓
Brochure display	✓	X	X
CD/DVD display	✓	X	X
Desktop display	X	X	X
Wall mount display	X	X	X
Book ease	X	✓	X
Trolley	✓	X	X
Compact shelving	X	X	X

Availability of information resources

Public libraries try to procure books on most of the main subject areas. Also, with respect to different formats of information, it arranges for the audio-visual or multi-media resources which are useful for illiterates or neo-literates who may not be able to read much. Public libraries are typically lending libraries, circulating books and other materials to the users; they also have non-circulating reference collections. It typically focuses on popular materials such as popular fiction and videos, as well as educational and non-fiction materials of interest to the general public; in the larger cities, they are to some extent reference libraries as well. Public libraries also provide materials for children, including books, videos and other materials (both fiction and non-fiction), often housed in a special section. Public libraries not only collect books and periodicals but also procure other graphic, holistic and acoustic material such as books and journals, maps and charts, microfilm and the like all designed for use. In the digital environment, public libraries have a wide array of other media including CD, software, video tapes, as well as digital information resources. Table X gives the availability of all kinds of information resources in the selected public libraries.

The above Table X clearly shows that all the selected public libraries had basic information resources like books including textbooks, fiction and non-fiction; as well as serials including newspapers, magazines and journals. Among the reference resources, all libraries had encyclopaedias, dictionaries, directories and biographies; whereas, none of them housed abstracts and indexes, maps, atlases and bibliographies in their reference collection, while almanacs were found only in DPL and NDMC library. Since all the public libraries selected were under the governance of the government or its agencies, they included government documents in their collection. Among the children's collection, DPL and NDMC libraries had story books for the younger age group. Only DPL included activity books in its children section and toys or games were a part of DPL. As far as a special collection was concerned, DPL and HMPL had old manuscripts and archives among their collection. Only DPL had Braille books as a part of its collection for the visually impaired clientele. Strangely, none of the selected public libraries had any sort of digital collection on them, neither did they had anything on tape, audio as well as video except for DPL. It had a huge collection of CD-ROM and DVD which formed a part of its audio and video collection. DPL also had a list of web resources which could be consulted to get access to e-books. Special collection in DPL consisted of antique gramophone records but they were limited to the Central Library only.

Information resource	DPL	HMPL	NDMC
Textbooks	✓	✓	✓
Fiction	✓	✓	✓
Non-fictions	✓	✓	✓
Newspapers	✓	✓	✓
Magazines	✓	✓	✓
Journals	✓	✓	X
Dictionaries	✓	✓	✓
Encyclopaedias	✓	✓	✓
Biographies	✓	✓	✓
Directories	✓	✓	✓
Almanacs	✓	X	✓
Maps	✓	✓	✓
Atlases	✓	✓	✓
Bibliographies	✓	✓	✓
Abstracts	X	X	X
Indexes	X	X	X
Government documents	✓	✓	✓
Story books	✓	X	✓
Activity books	✓	X	X
Toys/games	✓	X	X
Manuscripts	✓	✓	X
Archives	✓	✓	X
Braille books	✓	X	X
Audio books	X	X	X
e-books	X	X	X
e-newspapers	X	X	X
e-journals	X	X	X
Online databases	X	X	X
Web resources	✓	X	X
Images/photographs	X	X	X
Softwares	X	X	X
Audio tapes	✓	X	X
Video tapes	✓	X	X
Microfilms	X	X	X
CD-ROMs/DVDs	✓	X	X
Gramophone records	✓	X	X

Table X.
Availability of
different information
resources in the
selected public
libraries

Information services

The public library is planned so as to become the hub of social life, a real community centre around which the daily life and habits of the people are geared. The main function of public libraries is to serve the public's information needs generally. The public library must offer adults and children the opportunity to keep up to date, to educate themselves continuously and keep abreast of progress in the sciences and arts. It helps people to form their own opinions, and develop their creative and critical capacities and powers of appreciation. Public libraries provide services for all kinds of people. They include general services like lending, reference service, photocopy, etc. Public libraries may also provide other services, such as community meeting rooms, children's story time or after-school programme, and space for adult education and other programmes or other community services. The following table lists the different types of information services and their availability in the selected public libraries.

Table XI clearly shows that the general services like issue/return, renewals and reading rooms were available in all the selected public libraries. HMPL, organized book exhibitions as well as user orientation for its members. DPL, HMPL and NDMC libraries served their users by providing additional general services like reservations, catalogue and reference service. Photocopying facility were available in DPL and

Information service	DPL	HMPL	NDMC
Issue/return	✓	✓	✓
Renew	✓	✓	✓
Reservation	✓	✓	✓
Catalogue	✓	✓	✓
Reference service	✓	✓	✓
Reading room	✓	✓	✓
Photocopy service	✓	X	✓
Printing	✓	X	X
Scanning	✓	X	X
New arrivals	✓	✓	✓
Translation service	X	X	X
Inter-library loan	✓	X	X
Document delivery	X	X	X
CAS	X	X	X
SDI	X	X	X
Abstracting	X	X	X
Indexing	X	X	X
Games	✓	X	X
Story time	✓	X	X
Book readings	✓	X	X
Plays	✓	X	X
Quiz	✓	X	X
Debates	✓	X	X
Painting competitions	✓	X	X
Mobile library service	✓	X	X
Book clubs	X	X	X
Exhibitions	✓	✓	X
User orientation	X	✓	X
Educational programmes	✓	X	X
Lectures/seminars	✓	X	X
Lifelong learning	X	X	X
Poetry sessions	✓	X	X
Movie screenings	✓	X	X
Community meeting hours	✓	X	X
Group discussions	✓	X	X
Cultural programmes	✓	X	X
Adult education	✓	X	X
Internet service	✓	X	✓
OPAC	✓	X	✓
Online renewal	✓	X	X
Online reservation	✓	X	X
Online resources	X	X	X
Online reference service	X	X	X
Virtual tours	X	X	X
Social networking	✓	X	X
Online forums	X	X	X

Table XI.
Availability of
different information
services in the
selected public
libraries

NDMC libraries; while only DPL provided printing, scanning and inter-library loan services. It also provided all kinds of special services for children like storytelling, games, organizing painting competitions, quiz, debates, movie screenings, etc. And it was the only one to offer educational programmes for its members along with organizing lectures and seminars for their benefit. Intimation of new arrivals was provided by all the libraries funded by the government or its agencies. DPL exclusively offered various types of extension services for its members like mobile library services, organizing cultural programmes, adult educational programmes, community meeting hours, etc. Among the digital services offered by the selected public libraries, DPL and NDMC library provided the members with computer terminals to access the internet. DPL and NDMC libraries provided OPAC facilities to its members among which only DPL extended this service to be accessed via the web site of the library. Apart from these no other digital services were offered by any of the selected public libraries except for DPL which provided online renewals, online reservations and social networking capabilities via the web site of the library.

Conclusion

With the advent of ICT and its impact on the society, it is evident that the public libraries are not making the desired effort to reach out to the public and make it more appealing to the users. They still need to meet the increasing demands of today's society by incorporating more and more components of ICT in its functionality which thereby might result in an increase in its efficiency. The public libraries need to be as much user friendly as they need to be tech-friendly in order to achieve its main goal of providing unparalleled information resources and information services to the users. They also need to market their information resources as well as their information services to the public to attract more members and to be a service to the public.

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About the authors

Dr Prabhjeet Kaur has completed her PhD (UGC-NET with JRF) in the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Delhi. She served as an Intern in The American Library, Delhi, and has worked on an Automation Project at the Ratan Tata Library, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi. Dr Prabhjeet Kaur is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: prabhjeet_says@yahoo.co.in

Dr Paramjeet Kaur Walia is working as Associate Professor and Ex-Head in the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Delhi. Prior to this, she taught for 15+ years in the Department of Library and Information Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh. She had also served in different capacities in academic and special libraries. She has contributed many research papers in journals and conference proceedings.

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