# Library Services for Users with Disabilities in India: A Bibliometric Analysis.

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**ABSTRACT**

Library services for users with disabilities are not just a matter of convenience; they are a fundamental right that ensures equal access to information, education, and knowledge. This literature review sheds light on the significance of accessible libraries, explores the challenges encountered by users with disabilities, and analyzes how libraries can bridge this gap. The 112 articles on this research topic retrieved from Scopus, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, EBSCO, ProQuest and the institutional repositories for the articles in this study. The researcher focused on collecting the literature from 2016 onwards, as the year is very prominent for this study in light of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 by the Government of India. This study indicates that there is a substantial focus on this subject post 2016 resulting in almost 45% of the total publication in this domain. This study is an key reference for the librarians and policy makers about for establishing the library services to the disabilities in the India context.

**Keywords:** Persons with disability, information accessibility, Academic libraries, Library Services, Differently Abled Library Users, Library Access to Disabled Users.

## Introduction:

The accessibility of library services for persons with disabilities is an important and complex issue that has garnered increasing attention in recent years. As libraries strive to be inclusive and equitable spaces for all members of the community, it is essential to address the unique barriers that individuals with disabilities may encounter when accessing library resources and participating in library programs. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current landscape of accessibility in library services for persons with disabilities, highlighting the challenges, accommodations, and areas for future improvement. By examining the existing literature and initiatives in this field, this review seeks to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on promoting accessibility and inclusivity in library services for persons with disabilities.

The researcher focused on collecting the literature from 2016 onwards, as the year is very prominent for this study in light of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 by the Government of India. This legislation provides a legal framework for promoting accessibility and inclusivity across various domains, including library services. Further, the researcher has considered the earlier literature reviews in this area of research discussed in the subsequent sections.

The general search in Google Scholar with the search string: **"library services" and users with disabilities** has yielded **22,300** results. With a focused search string: with '**and India'** the results were **9,380** as of **May 12, 2024**. The filtered search string with the year of publication from 2016 to 2024 has resulted in **3,970** articles. This clearly indicates that there is a substantial focus on this subject post 2016 resulting in almost 45% of the total publication in this domain. The researcher has considered Scopus, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, EBSCO, ProQuest and the institutional repositories for the articles in this study.

In summary, this literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current landscape of library services for users with disabilities in India. Further, the review is more focused on the library services offered by the Law Libraries in Indian context.

As we delve deeper into the literature, it becomes evident that while significant progress has been made in addressing the needs of users with disabilities, there are still challenges and opportunities that warrant further exploration and consideration (Ahmed & Naveed, 2020; Ayoung et al., 2021; Elaturoti, 2021; Hamad, 2023; Khasseh et al., 2020). The synthesis of these diverse perspectives and findings will provide a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape of library services for users with disabilities in India, ultimately guiding future research and initiatives in this critical area.

**Need for library services for persons with disabilities**

Library services for users with disabilities are not just a matter of convenience; they are a fundamental right that ensures equal access to information, education, and knowledge (Bhardwaj, 2018). The research work by Gul & Khowaja (2020) has observed that persons with disabilities often face unique challenges in accessing library resources, whether it's due to physical barriers, limited availability of materials in accessible formats, or the lack of awareness and understanding among library staff about their specific needs. The observation is also prominently made by the many other authors (Chaurasia & Singh, 2022; Dhiman, 2022; Khot et al., 2022; Mohapatra, 2018; Nazim, 2021; Sanaman & Kumar, 2014; A. K. Sharma, 2022) in the Indian context.

Library services play a crucial role in addressing these challenges. The prominent research work from Indian library professionals and researchers (Barua & Rahman, 2020a; Dodamani & Dodamani, 2019a; Nazim, 2021; B. Yadav & Singh, 2022a) has opined that accessible formats such as braille books, audio recordings, and digital materials enable individuals with visual or print impairments to access information effectively. Additionally, assistive technologies such as screen readers, magnification software, or adaptive keyboards can substantially enhance the accessibility of digital resources for users with disabilities. Moreover, well-trained library staff who are knowledgeable about disability issues and equipped to provide appropriate support can greatly enrich the overall library experience for users with disabilities (Indumathi & Sophia, 2019; Nazim et al., 2021a; Salauddin, 2022a).

In the Indian context, the need for library services for persons with disabilities is particularly significant in light of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016 (Barua & Rahman, 2020a; Mohapatra, 2018). This legislation provides a legal framework for promoting accessibility and inclusivity across various domains, including library services. By aligning library practices with the provisions of this act, libraries can contribute to the larger goal of creating a barrier-free and equitable society for individuals with disabilities.

In society, the term "disability" refers to a diverse group of individuals with a wide range of needs and conditions that affect their daily functioning (Ayoung et al., 2021). The author opines that disability can be understood as an umbrella term that encompasses various impairments, whether physical, mental, or emotional. These impairments can result from disease, injury, or inherent biological differences. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), disability has three dimensions (Williamson et al., 2001).

Libraries play a critical role in providing access to information and educational resources for all members of the community, including those with disabilities (Welch et al., 2021). Accessibility in library services is essential to ensure that individuals with disabilities can fully participate in the

benefits of library resources and programs. Providing equitable access to information and technology for individuals with disabilities is not only a legal requirement under various disability rights laws, but it also aligns with the principle of inclusivity and equal opportunity for all (Kishore, 1999).

## Understanding accessibility in library services

People with disabilities face numerous barriers in accessing library services and resources, which can limit their ability to fully participate in educational, cultural, and recreational activities (Bélanger, 2022). These barriers can include physical barriers, such as inaccessible buildings or lack of assistive technology (Alabi & Mutula, 2020); communication barriers, such as inadequate signage or limited availability of materials in alternative formats (Brown & Waelde, 2015); and attitudinal barriers, such as stigma or lack of understanding (Day & Fleischmann, 2020).

To address these barriers and promote accessibility, it is essential for libraries to offer a range of services that are tailored to the specific needs of users with disabilities. One important service that libraries can provide is assistive technology (Chaurasia & Singh, 2022; Nazim et al., 2021a; A. K. Sharma, 2022). Ringwald et al., (2023) define assistive technology as any device, equipment, or software that helps individuals with disabilities perform tasks, improve their functional capabilities, and increase their independence in accessing and using library resources and services. For visually-impaired users, libraries can offer screen reading software, braille displays, and magnification tools to assist with reading and accessing digital content (Onoyeyan, 2019). Additionally, Ahmed & Naveed have suggested that libraries can provide accessible workstations with adaptive hardware and software, such as adjustable tables, ergonomic keyboards, and speech recognition software, to assist individuals with physical disabilities in accessing and using library resources (Ahmed & Naveed, 2020). Another crucial service that libraries can offer is the provision of materials in alternative formats. Alternative formats refer to materials that are available in formats other than traditional print, such as large print, audio, or electronic text (Hamad, 2023). These formats are essential for individuals with visual impairments, learning disabilities, or other print-related disabilities.

## Overview of barriers faced by persons with disabilities in accessing library services

The researcher came across several studies which has helped in understanding the different barriers faced by the disabled users to access the library services. The researcher opines that documentation regarding the solutions to overcome the barriers are volunteer by the libraries in the International scenario especially in the European region (Beqiraj et al., 2017; Kinnell & Creaser, 2001; Pyper et al., 2024; Römhild & Hollederer, 2024) as explained by the experiments made by several libraries as case examples. However, in the United States and in the Asia Pacific region libraries are following norms laid by the accreditation and assessment bodies, as the authors conclude their learning by explaining how they have met the standards, policies and the accreditation requirements (Ahmed & Naveed, 2020; Barua & Rahman, 2020b; Majinge & Mutula, 2018; Nazim, 2021; Prince, 2024; Rayini, 2017a; Roberson et al., 2022).

In the Indian context, persons with disabilities encounter various barriers when accessing library services. These barriers can be broadly categorized into physical, technological, and attitudinal challenges that hinder their full participation and engagement in library activities (Roy & Bandyopadhyay, 2009).

The researcher has listed the following major barriers as understood from the literature study. Further, this study has made an attempt to highlight the other barriers or hindrances faced by the users with disabilities to access library services in the subsequent sections.

- **Physical Barriers:** Prominent work by Welch et al.,(2021), Illako et al.,(2020), Khassesh et al., (2020), Lara-Alvarez et al., (2020); Pionke (2016) and Pionke & Manson (2018) have added great value to this research for providing an understanding of the various strategies, services and architectural limitations in libraries. The author opines that particularly older buildings, can impede physical access and navigation. Further, the facilities to overcome the barriers include a lack of ramps, automatic doors, and accessible restrooms, creating difficulties for patrons with mobility impairments.

- **Technological Barriers:** Graves & German and in the Indian context Sharma and Choudhary have done a comprehensive study on Technological barriers. The authors opine that technology also pose challenges for persons with disabilities in utilizing library resources and services. Similar studies in this dimension opine that limited availability of assistive technologies, such as screen readers or adaptive computer devices, can impede access to digital materials for patrons with visual or cognitive impairments (Indumathi & Sophia, 2019; Lara-Alvarez et al., 2020) may act as a major technology barrier for users with disability. Furthermore, the studies on the library websites found that the lack of accessible website design and digital content can create barriers for individuals with diverse disabilities, affecting their ability to search, retrieve, and engage with online library resources (Graves & German, 2018; A. Sharma & Choudhary, 2021).

- **Attitudinal Barriers:** Attitudinal barriers encompass the social and cultural attitudes that contribute to the exclusion and marginalization of persons with disabilities within library settings (Ferrara, 2024). The psychological and behavioural studies by Daskalakes & Cahill (2023b); Ferrara (2024); Layden et al., (2021); Mates (2009) have conveyed that negative stereotypes, lack of awareness, and inadequate training of library staff can result in patronizing or dismissive interactions with users with disabilities.

- **Information Barriers**: The researcher has observed that only a few studies have focused on the information barriers. Ahmed & Naveed (2020); Majinge & Mutula (2018); Mohapatra (2018); Yadav & Singh (2022a) are some of the core literatures in this dimension.

- **Service Awareness Barrier:** As mentioned in the attitude barrier, several studies in the area of library and information science, and in other social science domains have opined that untrained staff may struggle to provide adequate assistance to patrons with disabilities. This can range from difficulties retrieving materials in accessible formats to a lack of understanding of alternative communication methods.

Addressing these barriers requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach that encompasses infrastructural improvements, technological advancements, and attitudinal shifts within the library community.

**Technology and assistive devices for enhancing accessibility**

In the context of effective library service, technology and assistive devices play a significant role in enhancing accessibility to library services for users with disabilities. By leveraging these tools, libraries can address the unique needs of individuals with disabilities and provide equitable access to information and resources.

- **Assistive Technologies:** The researcher has observed that there is growing trend in the publication of articles with respect to assistive technologies. Kaunda & Chizwina (2019); Nazim et al., (2021b); Odigie & Okube (2021); Pradhan & Samanta (2018); and Salauddin (2022b) have worked in this area and stands out as core reference in this dimension.

- **Accessible Digital Content:** Research with respect to the content especially digital content by Fenlon et al., (2016); Khan et al., (2015); Matsumura & Ochiai, (2023); and Waecker

et al., (2019) has added value to the understanding of the importance of different document format and accessing methods in effective library services.

- **Trainings and Workshops:** The researcher opines that providing accessibility facility is important, but equally important is to educate the community on how to access and use the services and facilities. This learning is the outcome of the studies by Akbar et al., (2024); Khot et al., (2022); Killedar & Khot, (2021); Luvale, (2022); and Schroeder, (2018).
- **Collaborative Initiatives:** In the Indian context, persons with disabilities encounter various barriers when accessing library services. These barriers can be broadly categorized into physical, technological, and attitudinal challenges that hinder their full participation and engagement in library activities. This demands a collective effort from all the stakeholders of the organization or institution to address this issue. This opinion is in line with the studies the author referred as part of this literature study (Ayoung et al., 2021; Chataika et al., 2012; Hamad, 2023; Kaunda & Chizwina, 2019).

**Previous research on library accessibility for persons with disabilities globally**

- The paper emphasizes the importance of consistent practices and policies for providing inclusive resources and services to persons with disabilities at a public university library, highlighting the need for a university-wide commitment to accessibility and presenting initiatives for future procurement guidelines (Falloon, 2015). The paper discusses issues of online access for people with disabilities in libraries, focusing on information needs, recreational interests, the role of the internet, and the importance of partnerships between libraries and disability groups (Williamson et al., 2001). The paper discusses the lack of focus on disabled users in library education, emphasizing the importance of incorporating disability issues in curricula to better serve people with disabilities (Koulikourdi, 2008). The paper discusses challenges in accessing information resources for people with visual impairments in university libraries, emphasizing the need for assistive technologies, enabling policies, and skilled staff to overcome barriers and promote social inclusion (Majinge & Mutula, 2018). The paper discusses the experiences of blind and visually impaired individuals with electronic information services in public libraries, highlighting the disconnect between user needs and library services, recommending further investigation into remote access, and stressing the importance of consulting with both blind and partially sighted individuals in service development (Lewis, 2004).

Table 1:
Summary of Earlier Literature Reviews on Library Services for Disabled Users

| SN | Article Title | Authors | Year | Journal Details | Abstract |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Public Library Services for Differently abled Persons: Literature Review with Global Perspective (Patil & Kumbar, 2021) | Rohit R Patil and B D Kumbar | 2021 | The Journal of Indian Library Association (JILA), Vol 56, No 1 (2020) Page 56 - 64 | This paper critically examines the literature published in the first two decades of 21 st century on public library services for differently abled persons and presented in a chronological order. Majority of the research literature is published from the developed countries as compared to developing countries. Published literature also stressed on the need for major improvements in services and further research in the area of resources and services for differently abled user community. |
| 2 | Library Services for Students with Disabilities: Barriers and Way Forward (Farooq & Manzoor, 2021) | Farooq, Tania and Manzoor, Shazia | 2021 | Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal). 6720 | In this paper we have focused on some of the barriers that students with disabilities face while accessing the library services. These have been identified as a) Inaccessible Formats, Materials and Web-Pages b) Inaccessible Libraries c) Lack of Trained Staff in the Libraries. This has been followed by a set of recommendations to make libraries inclusive and accessible for all. |
| 3 | Accessibility of Library Services for Persons with Disabilities: A Study of Services provided by Select Law University Libraries in India (Singh, 2021) | Singh, Akash | 2021 | Indian Journal of Information, Library & Society 34 (3-4), 189-199 | The paper examines the measures initiated by law universities in India to serve library patrons with disabilities. The paper highlights various types of disabilities need required to address for necessary assistance and for imparting education academic institutions based on IFLA guidelines. The paper concludes with the findings that the there is much scope for law university libraries to add more assisting technologies for serving persons with disabilities more effectively and at ease. |

**Studies focusing on library accessibility in educational institutions in India**

- The role of libraries in implementing the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in higher education in India is crucial, as they promote access to diverse knowledge resources, encourage research, and foster critical thinking skills (Jayamma et al., 2023). However, the accessibility of Indian university libraries to the general public and their ability to keep up with ICT developments is a concern (A. Yadav & Arora, 2019). This is particularly relevant for students with visual impairment, who face challenges in accessing library collections due to a lack of assistive technology (Dodamani & Dodamani, 2019b). Therefore, while libraries play a significant role in education, there is a need to address issues of accessibility and inclusion in Indian educational institutions.

- A series of studies have highlighted the challenges faced by users with disabilities in accessing library services in Indian educational institutions. (Nazim et al., 2021b) found that while Aligarh Muslim University has a purpose-built library for users with disabilities, it lacks adequate funding for facilities, assistive technologies, and accessible collections. Similarly, (Dodamani & Dodamani, 2019c) noted a lack of assistive technology in university libraries, with only a small percentage having Braille books, accessible websites, designated staff, or a documented disability policy. Three prominent research (Kumar & Sanaman, 2015), (Rayini, 2017b) and (Junaid & Jaiswal, 2021) identified web accessibility issues, such as the lack of web-based catalogues and compatibility issues with screen readers, in leading academic and special libraries in Delhi and central university libraries in North India, respectively. These studies collectively underscore the need for improved funding, assistive technology, and web accessibility in Indian educational institution libraries to better serve users with disabilities.
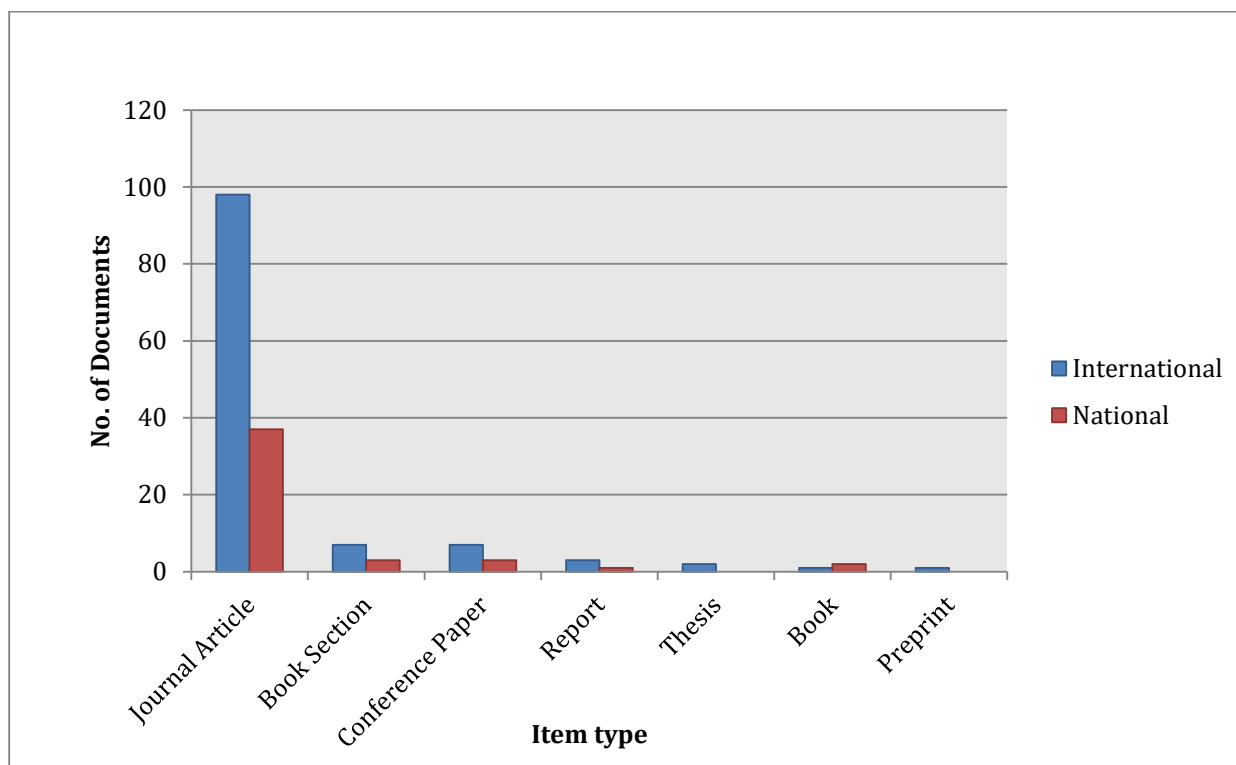
**Discussion on the literature review:**

The literature review on the use of assistive technologies to provide library services to users with disabilities in Indian law libraries reveals several insightful trends and patterns based on the bibliographic data presented. Below is an analysis of the tables from the document.

**Table 2:**
**Item Type considered for analysis**

| S.N. | Item type | International | National |
|------|-----------|--------------|----------|
| 1 | Journal Article | 98 | 37 |
| 2 | Book Section | 7 | 3 |
| 3 | Conference Paper | 7 | 3 |
| 4 | Report | 3 | 1 |
| 5 | Thesis | 2 | 0 |
| 6 | Book | 1 | 2 |
| 7 | Preprint | 1 | **0** |
| **Total** | | **119** | **46** |

**Figure 1:**
**Item Type considered for analysis**



## Analysis of Item Types

### International Publications:

- **Journal Articles** dominate with 98 publications, indicating a strong focus on scholarly articles in the field.
- **Book Sections** and **Conference Papers** are tied, each with 7 publications, suggesting moderate engagement in presenting research in edited volumes and conferences.
- **Reports** (3), **Theses** (2), **Books** (1), and **Preprints** (1) represent a smaller portion, reflecting lesser emphasis on these formats in international contributions.
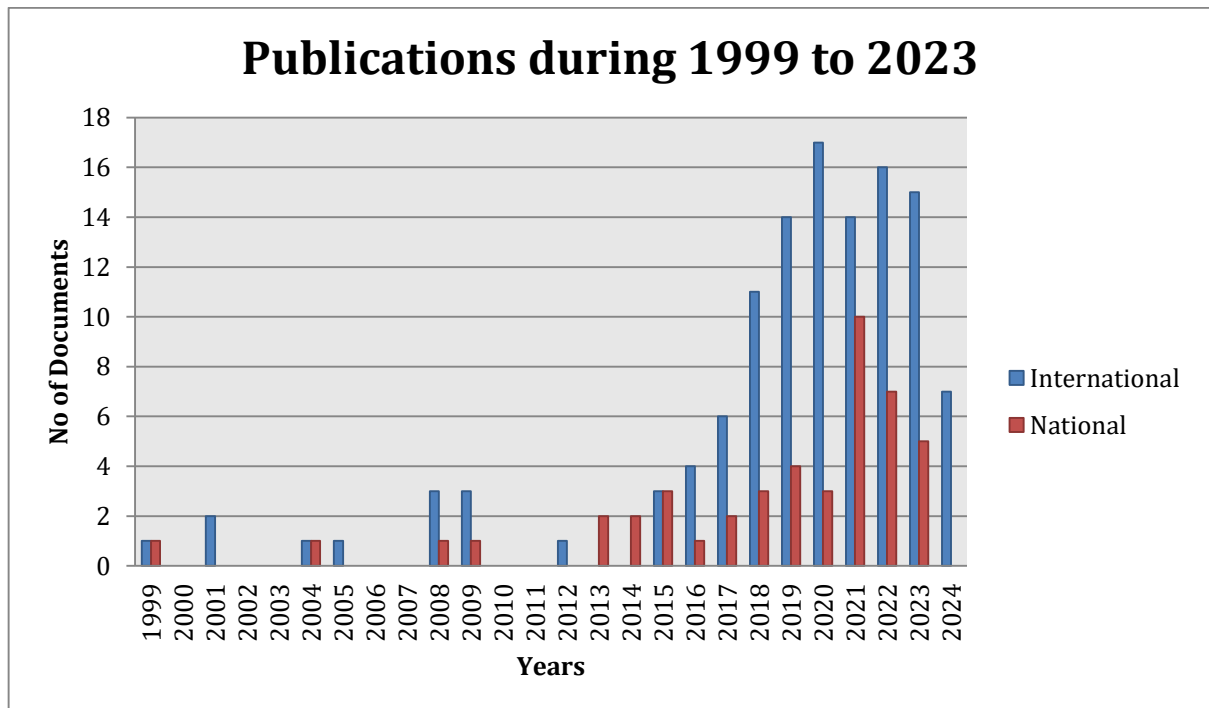
### National Publications:

- **Journal Articles** are again predominant with 37 publications, but with a significantly lower count compared to international publications.
- **Book Sections** and **Conference Papers** also have equal representation, each with 3 publications.
- **Reports** (1) and **Books** (2) are few, with no national theses or preprints recorded.

**Table 3:**
**Year Wise Publications on the Research Topic at National and International Journals**

| Publication Year | International | National |
|---|---|---|
| 1999 | 1 | 1 |
| 2000 | 0 | 0 |
| 2001 | 2 | 0 |

| Year | International | National |
|------|------|------|
| 2002 | 0 | 0 |
| 2003 | 0 | 0 |
| 2004 | 1 | 1 |
| 2005 | 1 | 0 |
| 2006 | 0 | 0 |
| 2007 | 0 | 0 |
| 2008 | 3 | 1 |
| 2009 | 3 | 1 |
| 2010 | 0 | 0 |
| 2011 | 0 | 0 |
| 2012 | 1 | 0 |
| 2013 | 0 | 2 |
| 2014 | 0 | 2 |
| 2015 | 3 | 3 |
| 2016 | 4 | 1 |
| 2017 | 6 | 2 |
| 2018 | 11 | 3 |
| 2019 | 14 | 4 |
| 2020 | 17 | 3 |
| 2021 | 14 | 10 |
| 2022 | 16 | 7 |
| 2023 | 15 | 5 |
| 2024 | 7 | 0 |
| **Total** | **119** | **46** |

**Figure 2:**
**Year Wise Publications on the Research Topic at National and International Journals**



**Year-wise Distribution of Publications**

**International Trends:**

- The data indicates a slow start with only sporadic publications before 2008.
- A notable increase begins from 2017 onwards, peaking in 2020 with 17 publications.
- There is a general upward trend, demonstrating growing research interest in this domain over recent years.

**National Trends:**

- National publications exhibit a more irregular pattern with very few publications before 2013.
- A noticeable increase is observed from 2015, peaking in 2021 with 10 publications.
- This suggests a burgeoning interest within India over the last decade, aligning with global trends but at a smaller scale.

**Table 4:**
**Top 10 International Journals Publishing Research on the Research Topic**

| S/L | Publication Title | No. of Publication |
|-----|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Library Philosophy and Practice | 11 |
| 2 | Journal of Library Administration | 8 |
| 3 | Reference Services Review | 4 |
| 4 | Library Trends | 4 |
| 5 | Journal of Librarianship and Information Science | 4 |
| 6 | Journal of Access Services | 3 |
| 7 | Journal of Academic Librarianship | 3 |
| 8 | International Information and Library Review | 3 |
| 9 | Evidence Based Library and Information Practice | 3 |
| 10 | Univ. Libr.New. Stage. Soc. Commun. Dev. Conf. Proc. | 2 |

**Figure 3:**
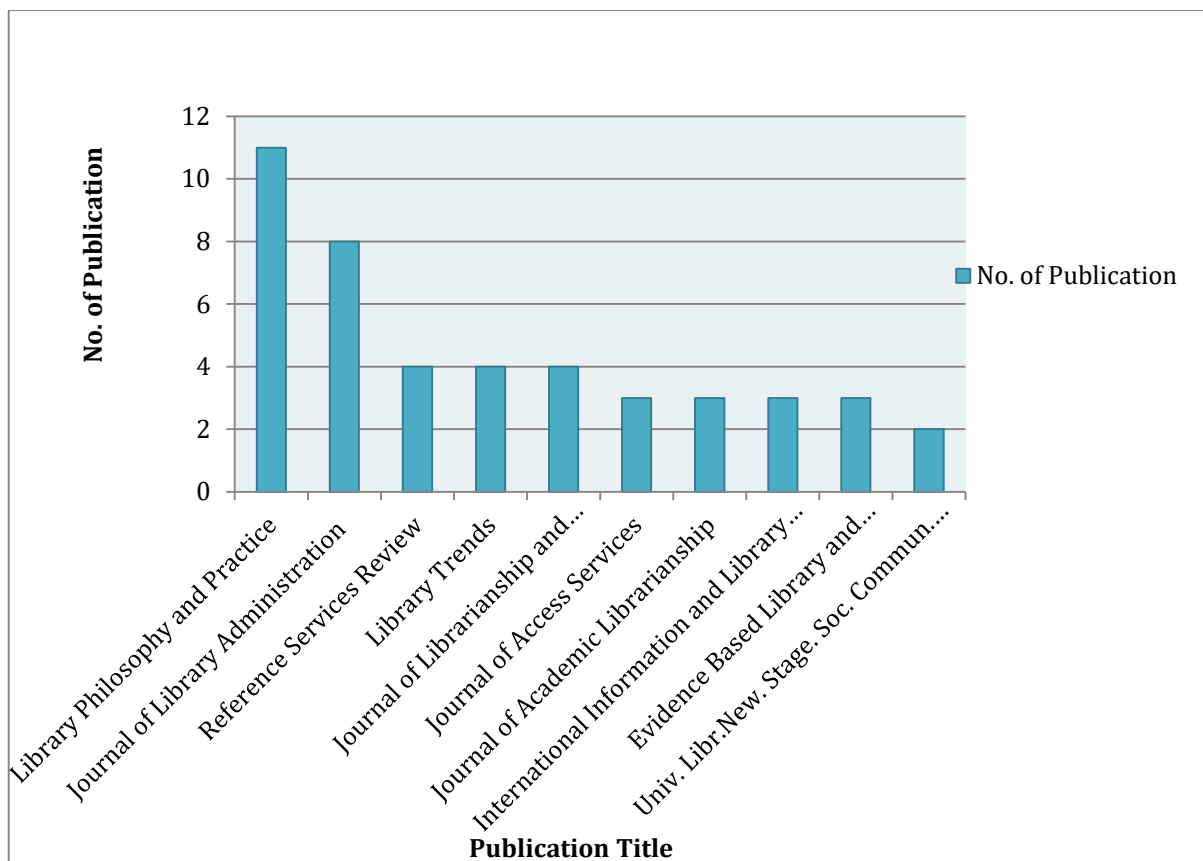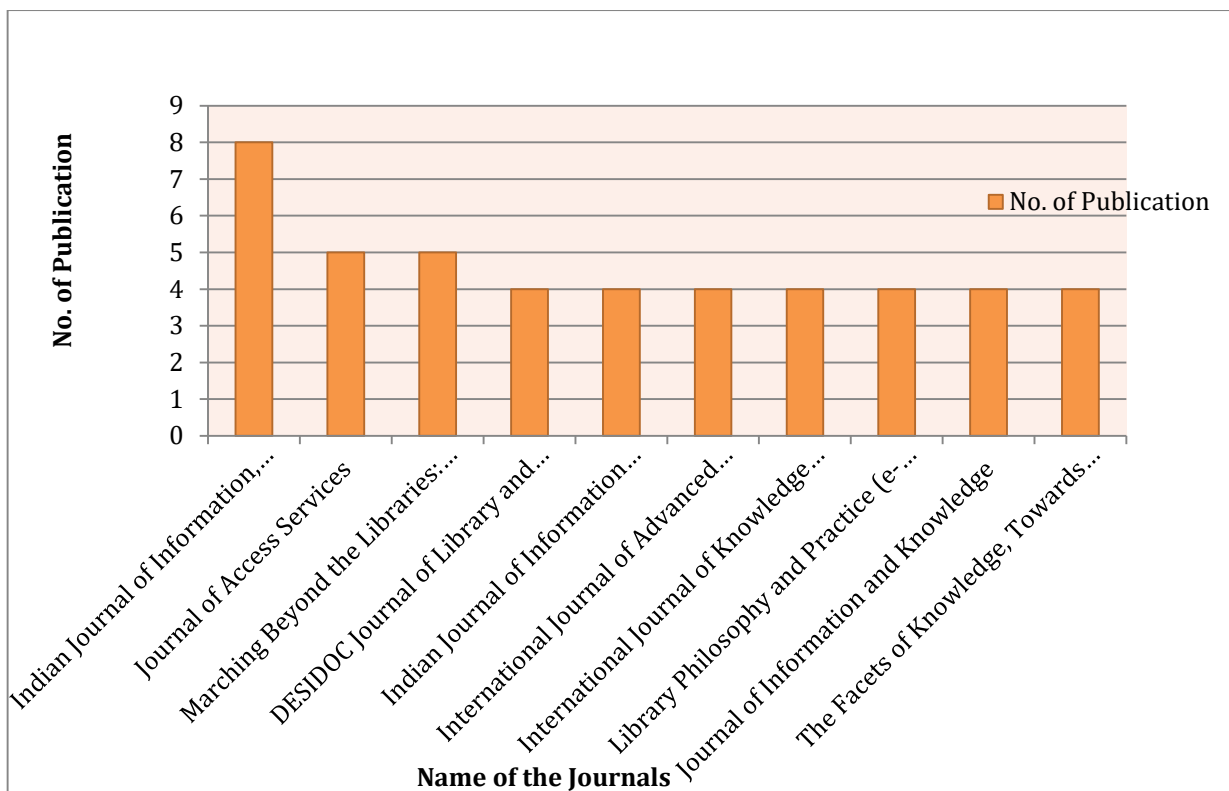**Top 10 International Journals Publishing Research on the Research Topic**

**Table 5:**
**Top 10 National Journals (in India) Publishing Research on the Research Topic**

| S/L | Name of the Journals | No. of Publication |
|-----|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Indian Journal of Information, Library & Society | 8 |
| 2 | Journal of Access Services | 5 |
| 3 | Marching Beyond the Libraries: Managerial and Technological Competencies (by Indian Journals) | 5 |
| 4 | DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology | 4 |
| 5 | Indian Journal of Information Sources and Services | 4 |
| 6 | International Journal of Advanced Research (IJAR) | 4 |
| 7 | International Journal of Knowledge Content Development & Technology | 4 |
| 8 | Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal) | 4 |
| 9 | Journal of Information and Knowledge | 4 |
| 10 | The Facets of Knowledge, Towards Synergy of Multidisciplinary Studies | 4 |

**Figure 5:**
**Top 10 National Journals (in India) Publishing Research on the Research Topic**

## Analysis of Top Journals

### International Journals:

- **Library Philosophy and Practice** leads with 11 publications, indicating its prominence in disseminating research on this topic.
- **Journal of Library Administration** (8 publications) and journals like **Reference Services Review** and **Library Trends** (each with 4 publications) also play significant roles.
- This spread across diverse journals underscores a wide-ranging interest in assistive technologies across library science fields.

### National Journals:

- **Indian Journal of Information Library & Society** tops with 8 publications, highlighting its critical role in the national context.
- Other journals like **Journal of Access Services** and **Marching Beyond the Libraries** have substantial contributions, each with 5 publications.
- Several journals share equal contributions, indicating a diverse but evenly spread focus among national publications.

**Table 6:**
**Top 10 International (from Abroad) Authors/Researchers and their contribution to the Research Topic**

| S/L | International Author | No. of author |
|-----|---------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Cahill, M. | 2 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | Mutula, Stephen Mudogo | 2 |
| 3 | Okwor, R.N. | 2 |
| 4 | Bélanger, A. | 2 |
| 5 | Daskalakes, D.T.M. | 2 |
| 6 | Ihekwoaba, E.C. | 2 |
| 7 | Mates, Barbara T. | 2 |
| 8 | Pionke, J.J. | 2 |
| 9 | Abu Al Rub, M.O. | 1 |
| 10 | Acosta-Vargas, P. | 1 |

**Figure 5:**
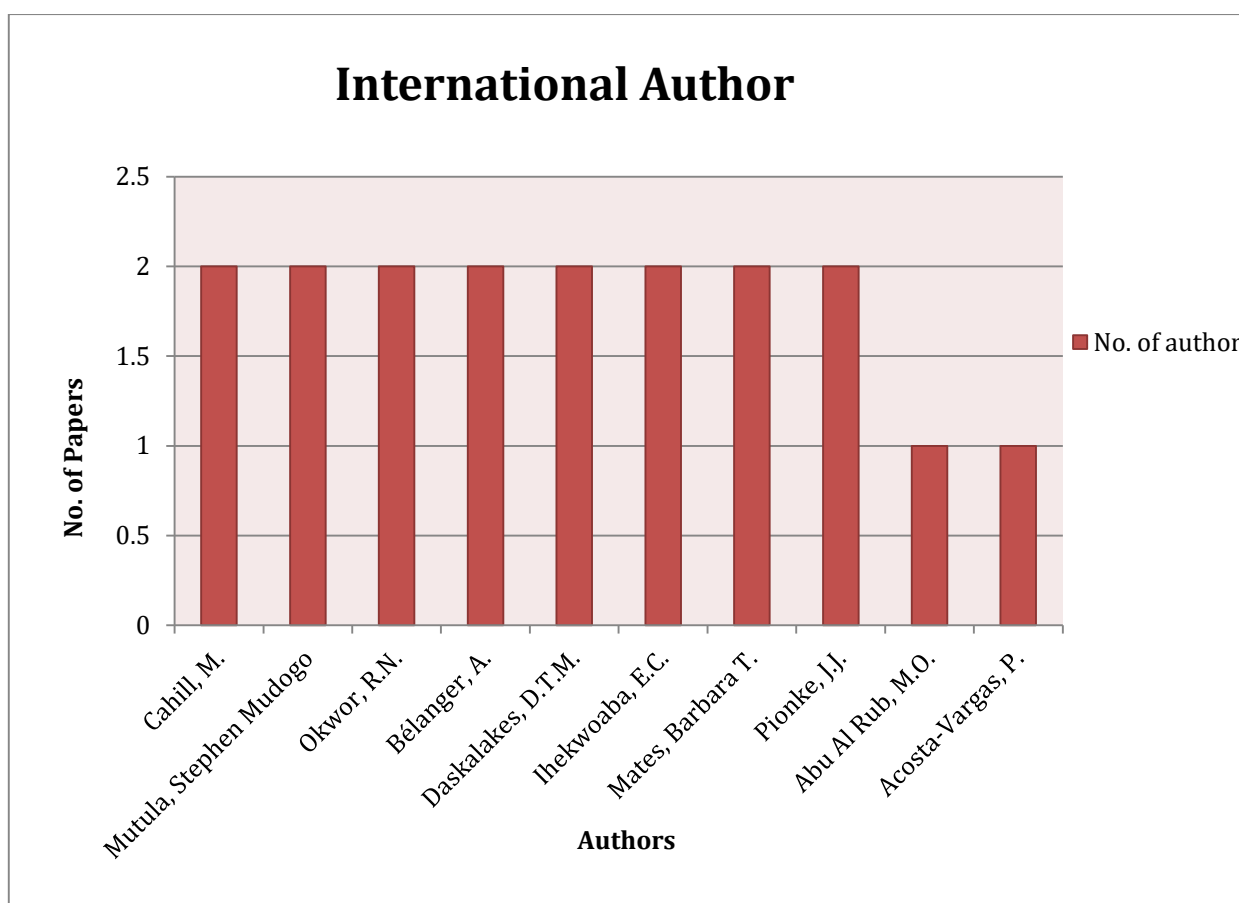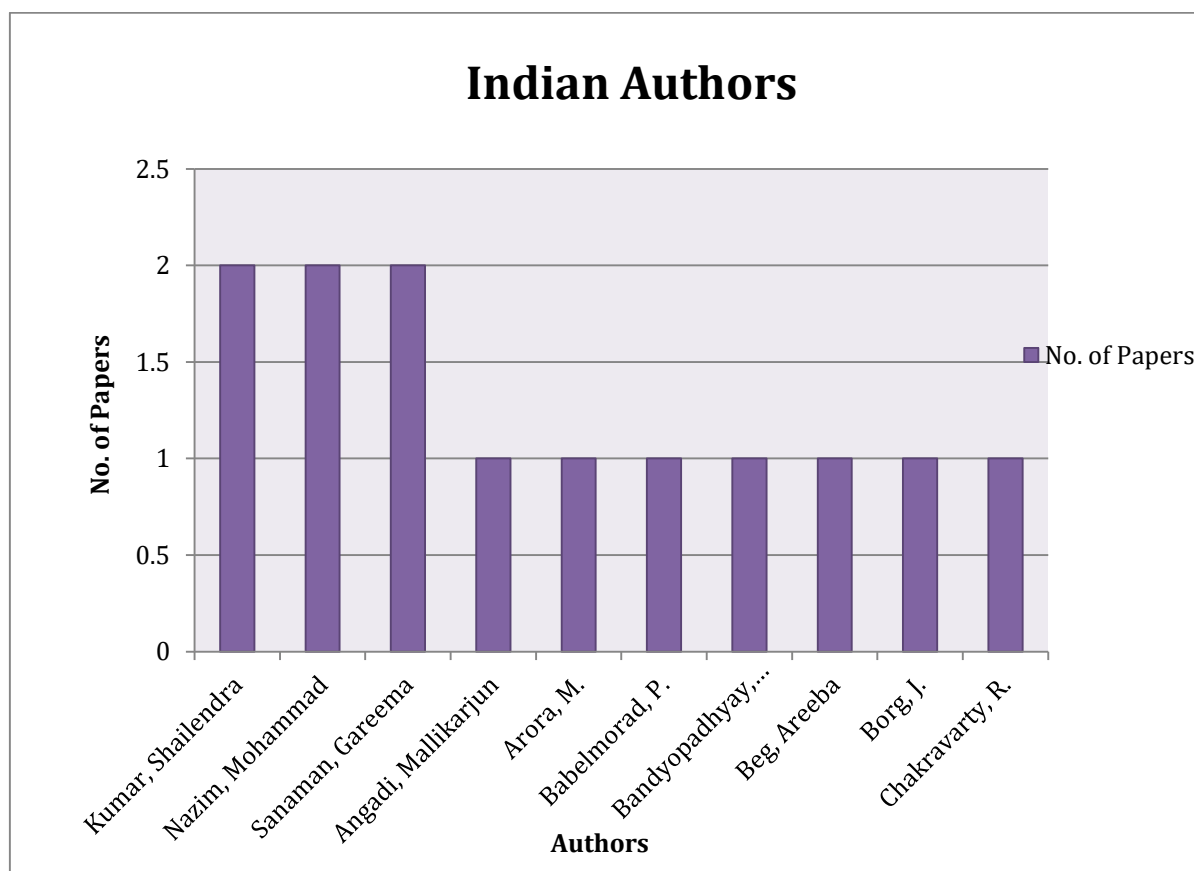**Top 10 International (from Abroad) Authors/Researchers and their contribution to the Research Topic**



**Table 7:**
**Top 10 National (in India) Authors/Researchers and their contribution to the Research Topic**

| S/L | Indian Authors | No. of Papers |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Kumar, Shailendra | 2 |
| 2 | Nazim, Mohammad | 2 |
| 3 | Sanaman, Gareema | 2 |
| 4 | Angadi, Mallikarjun | 1 |

| 5 | Arora, M. | 1 |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | Babelmorad, P. | 1 |
| 7 | Bandyopadhyay, Ratna | 1 |
| 8 | Beg, Areeba | 1 |
| 9 | Borg, J. | 1 |
| 10 | Chakravarty, R. | 1 |

**Figure 6:**
**Top 10 National (in India) Authors/Researchers and their contribution to the Research Topic**



**Analysis of Top Authors**

**International Authors:**

- Multiple authors, including **Cahill M.**, **Mutula Stephen Mudogo**, and **Okwor R.N.**, each contributed 2 publications, indicating collaborative or repeated contributions by key researchers in the field.
- A spread of contributions from various authors suggests a broad international research community.

**Indian Authors:**

- Authors like **Kumar Shailendra**, **Nazim Mohammad**, and **Sanaman Gareema** each have 2 publications, showing active participation from these researchers in national studies.

Single contributions from numerous authors highlight a growing but still emerging research community in India.

**Overall Insights:**

The predominance of journal articles across both international and national contexts underscores the importance of peer-reviewed publications in this field. The upward trend in publications, especially after 2017, reflects increasing recognition and research activity related to assistive technologies in libraries. Leading journals and repeated contributions by specific authors indicate key platforms and researchers driving the discourse on assistive technologies in library services. The disparity in the volume of international vs. national publications points to a potential need for increased research support and dissemination platforms within India to bridge the gap.

This analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of research on assistive technologies in library services for users with disabilities, highlighting trends, key contributors, and areas for further exploration and development.

**Conclusion:**

This article delves into the current state of accessibility in library services for users with disabilities in India. Libraries play a vital role in promoting information equity and knowledge access for everyone. However, individuals with disabilities often face challenges in accessing library resources and participating in library programs due to physical barriers, limited availability of materials in accessible formats, and a lack of awareness among library staff.

This literature review sheds light on the significance of accessible libraries, explores the challenges encountered by users with disabilities, and analyzes how libraries can bridge this gap. We will also explore the legal framework provided by the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, for promoting library accessibility in India.

Library services for individuals with disabilities are not just a privilege; they are a fundamental right. Research by Bhardwaj (2018) emphasizes that accessible libraries ensure equal access to information, education, and knowledge. This empowers individuals with disabilities to actively participate in academic pursuits, lifelong learning, and informed decision-making.

However, studies by Gul & Khowaja (2020) and others (Chaurasia & Singh, 2022; Dhiman, 2022; Khot et al., 2022) highlight the challenges faced by users with disabilities. These include physical barriers within libraries, limited availability of materials in accessible formats like braille, audiobooks, and digital materials with screen reader compatibility. Additionally, a lack of awareness and training among library staff regarding disability needs can create obstacles for users.

Fortunately, numerous strategies can be implemented to create inclusive library environments. Research by Barua & Rahman (2020a) and others (Dodamani & Dodamani, 2019a; Nazim, 2021; B. Yadav & Singh, 2022a) emphasizes the importance of providing accessible materials. This includes offering braille books, audio recordings, and digital resources compatible with assistive technologies like screen readers and screen magnifiers.

Furthermore, library staff training on disability issues is crucial (Indumathi & Sophia, 2019; Nazim et al., 2021a; Salauddin, 2022a). Well-trained staff can provide effective assistance, ensure users feel welcome, and navigate resources efficiently. Libraries should also prioritize physical accessibility through ramps, elevators, and proper spacing between furniture (Grassi, 2018; Panda & Chakravarty, 2020; Pionke & Manson, 2018; van Holstein et al., 2021).

Libraries must actively engage with users with disabilities to understand their specific needs and preferences. This collaborative approach allows libraries to develop targeted services and resources, fostering a truly inclusive environment for all.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016 (RPWD Act) serves as a significant legal framework for promoting library accessibility in India (Barua & Rahman, 2020a; Mohapatra, 2018). This act mandates the creation of inclusive environments within libraries, aligning with global efforts to ensure equitable access to information for all. By adhering to the RPWD Act, libraries can contribute to a more inclusive and barrier-free society.

Libraries are essential hubs of information and knowledge, and ensuring accessibility for users with disabilities is paramount. This literature review has explored the challenges and opportunities in creating inclusive libraries. By implementing the strategies discussed and aligning with the legal framework of the RPWD Act, libraries can bridge the gap and fulfill their role as welcoming spaces for all members of the community.

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