

Investigation of Information Needs of Blind and Low-sighted Users in Kerman City and Their Use of Library Services

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Abstract

Purpose: This research is devoted to study the information needs of blind and low-sighted users in Kerman City and their use of library services.

Methodology: The methodology of this research is of descriptive-survey type and the population under study included blind and low-sighted members of academic and public libraries of Kerman City which consisted of 55 users and 13 libraries. Data collection was accomplished by questionnaire. To this end, two separate questionnaires were designed for blind and low-sighted users and library managers.

Findings: The results showed that the resources with highest use by blind and low-sighted users are auditory (64%) and Berrile (42%) resources. Unfortunately a very low percentage of these clients use electronic resources. Furthermore, facilities and technologies in libraries are utilized at a very low extent. 90 percent of blind and low-sighted users have considered library resources as insufficient. Also, 80 percent of users believe that the role of library in meeting their information needs is medium or less. Most of these users (78%) stated that librarians have helped them in accessing their needed information.

Originality/Value: The results of this study can assist the officials in programming for providing facilities and information technologies necessary for specialized services to blind users in libraries. This paper additionally emphasizes sharing of specialized resources for blind users in public libraries and formation of inter-library collaboration system, and considers the establishment of national network of blinds information dissemination by National Institution of Public Libraries with collaboration of National Library of Iran as the basic solution for access of blinds to a wide range of information resources.

Keywords: Kerman libraries; Blind users; Low-sighted users; Information needs; Library service