

A Study of the Status of Public Libraries in Khuzestan in terms of the Standards of Resources, Supplies, and Staff, with Regard to Library Services for the Blind and the Semi-Blind

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Abstract

Purpose: The present paper tries to study and evaluate the status of Khuzestan public libraries in relation to the existence of a special section for blind and semi-blind users, and the compatibility of the existing situation with standards for resources, facilities, and labor force. It also aims to examine the expectations of staff.

Methodology: The present study is a descriptive survey. The research population consists of three libraries: Saamen al Aemmeh, (Abadan), Shaheed Sharif (Khorramshahr), and Central Library (Ahvaz). Data have been gathered via observations by researchers, via interviews with authorities in Behzisti office in Khuzestan province, and through the employment of a collection of relevant standards. The standards being employed are: The National Standards of Library Services for the Blind (Taavoni, 1379), and the Regulation on How to Develop the Blind users' Section of Public Libraries (General Office of Public Library Services, Iran Public Libraries Foundation, 1389). The first standard introduces the services required for blind and semi-blind users in libraries, and the second standard is a guideline to develop and expand a special section for these people in public libraries, with an emphasis on Iran Public Libraries Foundation's policy.

Findings: Results demonstrate that environment currently available in the special section for the blind and semi-blind in the libraries studied is not suitable, and that these libraries are incompatible with some of the standards.

Originality/value: To the best of our knowledge, no research work has been carried out to compare the special section for the blind and semi-blind users in Khuzestan public libraries with regard to standards and guidelines.

Keywords: Blind users, semi-blind users, Public libraries, libraries services for the blind