

**PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES FOR
CHILDREN IN INDIA– A CASE STUDY
OF THE DELHI PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Swaha S. Sahoo

Development Officer
Sir Ratan Tata Trust, Mumbai

(2013)

Abstract

This research study critically evaluates the role and function of selected Delhi Public Library branches in providing access to quality children's literature, and advocating reading and knowledge dissemination for children. The library services for children have been evaluated based on four aspects – infrastructure, book selection, extension activities and management and human resource. The research findings indicate that (a) With the exception of Sarojini Nagar library, children's sections/libraries are dull, lack colour and energy, and in several cases, adequate space to accommodate either a large collection of books or children; (b) The collection of material at DPL is very limited. English literature is dominated by foreign authors and publications. Contemporary Indian authors and multicultural stories are missing; (c) DPL lacks a comprehensive policy that engages in promoting early literacy acquisition and reading habit among children, or extension activities that attract children to libraries; and (d) the role of librarians has become limited to managing the day-to-day running of a library. They do not select books. Their motivation and commitment is affected by service conditions and there is a need for strong leadership at the top that could address many of the issues highlighted.

Acknowledgements

With due appreciation for the encouragement, support, and assistance provided to me throughout the research process, I would like to acknowledge and thank the following people:

Mr. P. R. Goswami, former Director (Libraries and CSL), Ministry of Culture, Government of India, for his cooperation and support getting the required permissions

Ms. Sudha Paliwal, Senior LIO, DPL, who extended full cooperation towards conducting this study, was open-minded about suggestions and willing to share information

All the librarians and library staff at DPL who welcomed my questions and shared their experiences and challenges openly

Ms Amrita Patwardhan, my reporting manager at the Sir Ratan Tata Trust, who allowed me the time and space to conduct and write this research report, and provided valuable inputs for the study.

Contents

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
1.1 Aims, Objectives and Research Questions	8
1.2 Rationale	9
2.1 Library Services for Children	11
2.1.1 Special Infrastructure	12
2.1.2 Selecting Quality Children’s Literature	13
2.1.3 Extension Activities	16
Literacy Acquisition.....	16
Internet and Multimedia.....	17
Associating with Schools	18
2.1.4 Management and Human Resource	18
2.2 Developing a Framework for Evaluation.....	20
3.1 Library Movement in India.....	21
3.2 Delhi Public Library	23
4.1 Case Study	25
4.2 Sampling.....	25
4.3 Ethics.....	26
4.4 Data Collection	26
4.5.1 Documentary analysis.....	27
4.5.2 Interviews.....	27
4.5.3 Field Notes	28
4.6 Validity and Reliability.....	28
4.7 Data Analysis	29
4.8 Role of the Researcher	29
4.9 Scope and Limitation	29
Summary.....	30
5.1 Aesthetics	31
5.2 Space	32
5.3 Furniture.....	33
Summary.....	34

6.1 Selection of Resources	35
6.2 Books at DPL	37
6.3 Magazines & Audio Visual.....	39
6.4 Role of Librarian.....	40
Summary	41
7.1 Literacy Acquisition & Critical Thinking.....	42
7.2 Internet and Digital Resources.....	44
7.3 Associating with Schools.....	46
Summary	48
8.1 Organisation Structure	49
8.2 Leadership.....	50
8.3 Budget	52
8.4 Competent Human Resource	53
8.4.1 Professional Development	55
Summary	56
9.1 Summary of Findings.....	58
9.2 Recommendations.....	59
9.2.1 For DPL and Public Library Policy Makers	59
On Management and Human Resource	59
On Material Selection	60
On Infrastructure	61
On Extension Activities	61
9.2.2 For Parag Initiative of SRTT	61
9.3 Library Specific Recommendations.....	62
Background on Parag.....	65
References:.....	67

List of Acronyms

ALA	American Library Association (ALA),
ALSC	Association for Library Service to Children
DPL	Delhi Public Library
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
MLA	Massachusetts Library Association
MLSA	Massachusetts School Library Association
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NCERT	National Council for Educational Research and Training
NKC	National Knowledge Commission
RRRLF	Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation
SRTT	Sir Ratan Tata Trust
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Chapter 1

Introduction

India's National Curriculum Framework (NCF) talks of the importance of school libraries throughout the document (NCERT, 2005). According to the NCF,

“Both teachers and children need to be motivated and trained to use the library as a resource for learning, pleasure, and concentration. The school library should be conceptualized as an intellectual space where teachers, children and members of the community can expect to find the means to deepen their knowledge and imagination” (NCERT, 2005:91).

Yet, the document acknowledges: “Although school libraries have been a subject of policy recommendations for a long time, a functioning library in the school continues to be a rarity” (ibid). Notably, Bhattacharjea et al (2011) show that of the 900 schools surveyed across five states in their study, 32% did not have libraries, 44.5 % had non-functional libraries and only 23.5% schools had libraries and used them. However, no data was found on the current status of public libraries in India. This qualitative study was commissioned by Sir Ratan Tata Trust, Mumbai to understand what role public libraries were playing in enhancing access to children's literature and children's engagement with reading and knowledge. According to (UNESCO, 2001) public libraries provide children an opportunity to experience the enjoyment of reading and the excitement of discovering knowledge and works of the imagination by providing a wide range of materials and activities.

In this context, this study critically evaluates the current status of children's sections in select branches of the Delhi Public Library (DPL) system and the library's role in providing access to children's literature and advocating reading and knowledge dissemination to children. The study relies on the information shared by DPL

management, librarians and children, as well as practitioners in the field collected through in-depth interviews, observations from the field and programme literature. The findings of the study will primarily be used to develop objective understanding about the status of children’s libraries and advocate for reform, especially when India has set up a National Mission of Libraries to improve libraries and access to information. The study is also expected to inform the work of the ‘Parag Initiative’ of the Sir Ratan Tata Trust, as part its elementary education portfolio (See Annexure I).

The next section of the report deals with the aim and objectives of the study. Chapter 2 covers the literature review and discusses the framework for evaluation that has been adopted for the study. Chapter 3 gives a detailed context of the country, state, and the community where the study took place. The next chapter talks of the methodology, data collection and analysis and the limitations of the study. Chapters five, six, seven and eight focus on key findings of the study. The conclusions and recommendations from the study are detailed in Chapter 9.

1.1 Aims, Objectives and Research Questions

The broad research objective was:

To critically evaluate the role and function of selected Delhi Public Library branches in providing access to quality children’s literature, and advocating reading and knowledge dissemination among children from diverse backgrounds.

Following were specific objectives:

- a. Understand the scope of DPL, current status of children’s libraries/sections in DPL libraries and activities related to attracting children to the libraries
- b. Understand the social context in which the libraries function, especially the background of children coming to the libraries and their needs

- c. Look at the quality of books available, the selection process and map it against current trends in children's literature
- d. Understanding challenges and gaps in the DPL system
- e. Make recommendations for improving practices, infrastructure, human resource and their training, outreach and its impact in light of DPL goals and mandate

The following research questions enabled me to fulfill my overall aim and objectives.

1. What is the status of DPL in terms of infrastructure, person power, and leadership in the context of providing services to children?
2. How have services to children developed over the years?
3. What is the procedure for selection of books and do selected books cater to the needs of children of various ages and backgrounds?
4. What are the challenges facing the libraries and their future?

1.2 Rationale

The Parag initiative of Sir Ratan Tata Trust (Refer to Annexure I for background of the initiative) works to strengthen existing libraries and create new ones as a means for underprivileged children to access quality children's literature. However, due to lack of primary data on the status of public libraries for children in India, it was difficult to provide inputs into programme planning of the Parag initiative, which aims to engage with all kinds of library spaces including public libraries. While several studies are available on the development of public libraries in India (Gould, 2007; Handa, 2011; Ngurtinkhuma, 2010; Wani, 2008), digital libraries (Mahesh and Mittal, 2008; Varatharajan and M. Chandrashekara, 2007) case studies on district libraries in India (Parvathamma and Reddy, 2009; Takalkar and Rama Devi, 2001), and some on school libraries (Mahajan, 2005), no primary data could be found on functioning of children's libraries in India or children's section's in public libraries. Lack of primary data on public libraries and children's section particularly, have also been faced by the National Mission on Libraries, a body constituted by the Government of India to look at the current status of libraries in India and recommend measures for improving and strengthening libraries.

In India, several questions remain unanswered including the kind of children coming into public libraries, their reading habits and preferences or even the book selection available at public libraries; development of services in a digital age and the role of public libraries in the context of thousands of first generation learners accessing school education. This case study therefore aims to add to the literature on library services for children in India while also informing the Trust's work on libraries.

The Delhi Public Library was chosen since it is one of the oldest libraries with the largest library network in India, established in 1951. It has zonal libraries, branches and sub-branches, community libraries, deposit stations, mobile library system and a Braille library spread across urban and urban poor locations in Delhi and makes for a compelling case study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter looks at the importance of library services for children, characteristics of library services across countries and maps its various components. Based on this review, a framework of evaluation is outlined to enable the researcher to evaluate the Delhi Public Libraries in New Delhi.

2.1 Library Services for Children

Public Libraries have “a special responsibility to meet the needs of children and young people. If children can be inspired by the excitement of knowledge and by works of the imagination at an early age, they are likely to benefit from these vital elements of personal development throughout their lives, both enriching them and enhancing their contribution to society” (UNESCO, 2001: 26). According to the 2012-17 Strategic Plan of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), free and public library services can enable children to develop a love of reading so that children remain library users throughout their lives and pass this engagement on to future generations. ALSC envisions a future where “libraries continue to be dynamic, responsive, and inclusive physical and virtual environments that are fully equipped to serve all children and the communities that support them” (ALSC, 2010).

Other than providing access to a range of books, public libraries organise special events for children such as storytelling and activities related to the library’s services and resources. Notably, according to UNESCO (2001), public libraries can play a vital role in providing books and audiovisual materials for children in the mother tongue of children in multilingual countries. Libraries should also play a role in providing access to suitable material to young people who experience difficulty in learning to read. The Massachusetts Library Association emphasizes that public libraries should make an effort

to identify underserved and hard-to-reach children including children with special needs, children whose primary language is not English, children at risk, and children in alternate learning and care environments, including home-schooled children. Libraries should then develop services to cater to their specific needs (MLA, 2007).

For Indian children attending government schools, a library becomes a significant part of learning since these children often come from backgrounds where they do not have sufficient educational support at home. Thus one of the first roles of the library is to help children overcome the disadvantages they face – by providing them access to plenty of reading and learning material other than the textbooks. Such access would empower children through exposure, learning, and the holistic development of their personalities (NCCL, 2012:2). Wide reading of literature shows that children’s libraries need to have certain characteristics to attract young readers. Children’s libraries across the world have also developed several forms of services for children depending on their needs. Some of the essential characteristics and services have been discussed below.

2.1.1 Special Infrastructure

When children are asked about the kinds of spaces they like, often they want to be in a place that is colourful, friendly, and peaceful, with lots of open space offering small nooks and corners, animals, plants, flowers, trees, and toys (NCF, 2005: 79). Thus, libraries and reading corners that keep in mind these aesthetics have a better chance of attracting and retaining young readers. According to the guidelines set by the American Library Association (ALA), children’s services need their own library area which must be easily recognizable. It must have special furnishings, decoration and colours and should be distinct from other parts of the library (ALA, 2003). Aesthetics considerations are paramount when planning library spaces for children. Decorative and innovative treatment of the entrance areas of libraries automatically attract children and invite them to explore the space (Bon et al, 2011). In another study, Onal (2009) surveyed 245 children (library users) to understand design criteria for an ideal library; 77% children

said the aesthetics and appearance of the library was most important followed by comfortable and flexible furniture (61%).

Notably, according to Bon et al (2011) many libraries have special features inside the library such as children's small scale houses with cozy seating, murals painted by famous children's illustrators or by children themselves. Review of literature (ALSC, 2010; IFLA, 2003; UNESCO, 2001) shows that the children's library must serve all citizens and groups including babies/toddlers, pre-school children, elementary/primary school children (age 5-10), older children (age 11 - 14), young people with reading, learning and developmental difficulties, parents and other adults working with books / media and children, and families. The furnishing for children's library must be flexible (e.g. mobile shelves) and shelving must allow different media to be presented. Shelving designs for children's material can include wider shelves for easy books, narrow shelves to accommodate videos, bins and open boxes for large formats like picture books. Furnishing should support communication among children / library users so that children can meet with their peers. All facilities must also be accessible to disabled children (ALA, 2003; Bon et al, 2011). Thus designing a library space for children must take into account aesthetics, space and furniture requirements.

2.1.2 Selecting Quality Children's Literature

Review of literature shows that the quality and variety of books available in a library will to a large extent decide the interest level of readers. For children, the ability to read grows with exposure to a variety of worthwhile reading material beyond textbooks, including children's literature, magazines and reference books. Given that libraries can select a limited number of titles every year from thousands on offer, the process of book selection becomes very important (NCCL, 2012). Past research has shown that book selection, whether for children or adults is an evolving area with constant changes in selection criteria. It is also a subjective field where a book's qualities may be perceived by individuals/experts differently.

According to Jenkins and Austin (1987), a good book for children can transcend time, space, and language, and help readers to “learn about an individual or a group of people whose stories take place in a specific historical and physical setting” (1987: 6). The authors say that exposure to quality multicultural literature is also important as it helps children appreciate other ethnic groups, eliminate cultural ethnocentrism, and develop multiple perspectives (ibid). To select multicultural literature, Mei-Yu (1998) developed guidelines by adopting recommendations from various language, art and multicultural educators. These include positive portrayals of characters with authentic and realistic behaviors, avoiding stereotypes of a particular cultural group, authentic illustrations to enhance the quality of the text and pluralistic themes to foster belief in cultural diversity as well as reflect the changing nature of a country’s population (ibid).

Notably, leading institutions across the world that support libraries have well-defined criteria selection for selection of children’s books. Every year since 1940, the ALSC comes out with a Notable Children’s Books (NCB) List, which comprises the best of American children’s literature and is widely circulated and used by libraries across America to select books. According to the NCB committee manual the evaluation criteria for books include literary quality, originality of text and illustration, clarity and style of language, excellence of illustration, excellence of design and format, clarity of organization and accuracy of information, subject matter of interest and value to children and the likelihood of acceptance by children (ALA, 2009).

Library associations often come up with guidelines to help member libraries select quality books. School libraries and libraries for children need to be especially careful while selecting books for young readers. A look at the selection criteria of the Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) in India showed that not much attention has been paid to selecting quality books for children (RRRLF, 2012). RRRLF is an autonomous organization established and fully financed by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. It is the nodal agency of the government to support public library services and promote public library movement in the country. Notably, there is no separate guideline for book selection for children’s and adult libraries supported by

RRRLF. Secondly, the guidelines do not mention any of the quality parameters highlighted in the literature review. Rather, the guidelines advice on a break-up of subjects (art and literature - 20%; social science, history and others- 15%; philosophy and religion - 5%; general and reference books -20%; popular science -20% and children's literature including literature for neo literates-20%) (ibid).

The Foundation does specify that translations of award winning books and government publications should find a place in book selection. While its states that rural public libraries should cater to the needs of neo-literates and people with limited education, there is no guideline on what qualities such books should possess or how to evaluate them. Significantly, the Foundation specifies physical specimens of books for price verification and not for the purpose of quality checks. Selectors are also free to choose from catalogues of “reputed publishers” and published book reviews. Selectors have been asked not to buy text books, costly books and foreign publications and to give preference to the books published within the last three years including the year of selection (RRRLF, 2012). While all these points are useful, detailed criteria, encouraging selectors to review the content, suitability, kinds of values underlying the books, quality of illustrations, production have not be provided.

The role of a librarian in book selection also does not find place in the selection guidelines of RRRLF. Notably, libraries across the world rely on qualified librarians, library staff and library committees for selecting library books. According to Connor (1990) a librarian must know the collection and community and understand child development and the interests of children to be able to select books. Children's reading skills in a particular community should also be taken into account while making book selection. Moreover, constant communication between schools and public libraries will help librarians anticipate demands for help with school assignments (ibid).

2.1.3 Extension Activities

According to guidelines provided by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), children's libraries conduct different activities designed for children and adults including exhibitions, promotions of books and other media, workshops, reading and literacy sessions/programmes and other leisure time activities (IFLA, 2003). Giving the case study of two libraries, Vaijayanti and Mohan (2009) talk of a library as a hub of activity and learning. The authors highlight activities including art and drawing, story-telling, book discussions, literacy improvement activities such as finding vowels and words, and story writing competitions. According to Walter (2003) children look for a variety of activities other than reading books when they come into a library. They browse the shelves and participate in book discussion groups, drop in for homework assistance, and cluster around the computer workstations to look for information. They play games, do e-mail, and chat with friends from school and around the world (ibid). Some of the significant activities have been discussed below.

Literacy Acquisition

Public libraries across the world have actively supported literacy campaigns, as literacy is the key to education and knowledge and to the use of libraries and information services. According to Celano and Neuman (2001) libraries continue to play a major role in fostering literacy in the US, particularly among those segments of the populations that need special assistance in developing literacy skills, such as preschool and elementary school children. The authors emphasize that public libraries are in a remarkable position to expose children to great quantities of print and meaningful language opportunities that researchers say are crucial to reading achievement. The authors surveyed Pennsylvania libraries and concluded that summer reading programs were flourishing, attracting large numbers of children and families to the library each year (ibid). Library programs also encourage parents to play greater roles in their children's literacy development—another factor leading to reading achievement (UNESCO, 2001).

In her 2003 American Libraries article ‘Public libraries and early literacy: raising a Reader’, Renea Arnold, program manager for Early Childhood Resources at the Multnomah County Library in Portland, Oregon states:

“The most significant research to impact library programming is the clear evidence that phonological sensitivity and letter knowledge skills are highly predictive of later reading success. Although children need direct instruction to gain these skills, the skills are not reached through drills, but by engaging them in fun, interactive, age-appropriate activities.”(Arnold, 2003)

However not all children grow up in a literacy rich environment or have parents who read to them. Some parents do not have the literacy skills themselves or the financial resources to purchase books or provide children with literacy based activities (Bohrer, 2005). Children from poor and marginalized families are most at risk of entering school with less prior knowledge in literacy prerequisites. They are the children who are less likely to have children’s books in their homes and are less likely to be read to frequently (Celano, 2001, Meyers, 2002, Rosenthal, 2004). Therefore, this role of providing early literacy activities has been taken up by public libraries across the world. Libraries conduct workshops with parents to inform about the importance to reading. They conduct several activities other than reading a story, or singing a song, that allows children to learn new words, hear rhymes, and clap syllables – all important for later reading success (MacLean, 2008).

Internet and Multimedia

The role of public libraries has been challenged and redefined in a digital age. The ALA mandates that children’s libraries and departments should be equipped with IT facilities with the same priority as the adult section of the library (ALA, 2003). Providing Internet access is the first step to staying relevant with young users. Lapan (2012) states that libraries are embracing the digital age in different ways such as providing free internet access to users. Libraries in the US offer online homework help for students, child and lifelong learner programs, and access to e-book and e-audio books. It is also essential for

library staff to be able to inform the public about internet resources as well as traditional resources. OPACs, multimedia workstations, Internet workstations, and a variety of software (to use in the library and for loan) must be provided by public libraries (ALA, 2003). According to the recommendations of the Working Group on Libraries constituted by the National Knowledge Commission (GoI, 2007) a library's physical collection may be supplemented by access to networks and e-resources. To enable equitable and universal access to knowledge resources, public libraries should create more digital resources which can be shared.

Associating with Schools

Several researchers (Fitzgibbons, 2000; Haycock, 2001; Lee and Baur, 2003) have looked into the advantages of close cooperation between public libraries, especially children and youth libraries, and schools. Gomes and Sullivan (2009) highlight that public libraries can collaborate with schools by providing reference material and help with school homework and projects, services after school and during holidays, activities that tap the creativity of students and also information literacy. Secondly, interacting with school/public library counterparts can help professionals anticipate a program or service need, know each other's mission and role, take initiative for a program or service and respect and rely on each other's knowledge and expertise (MSLA, 2006).

2.1.4 Management and Human Resource

Qualified, trained and committed librarians and library staff are essential for all libraries but their understanding of the work and enthusiasm become critical when dealing with children. Robert L. Katz in his seminal article in 1955 entitled "Skills of an Effective Administrator" identifies three basic managerial skills: technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills. Technical skills include familiarity with the major works in children's literature, the ability to answer a variety of reference questions correctly, an understanding of the needs and interests of children, and knowledge of cataloging practices. Human skills are often referred to as leadership skills. Children's librarians are faced with developing good leadership skills not only to motivate employees in their own

department, but also to lead and motivate children, parents, teachers, and other adults. The third skill which Katz discusses is the conceptual skill. This refers to the ability of a librarian to place the library in a broader framework and look at children's library's practices in the context of the social, political and educational realities (Katz, 1955).

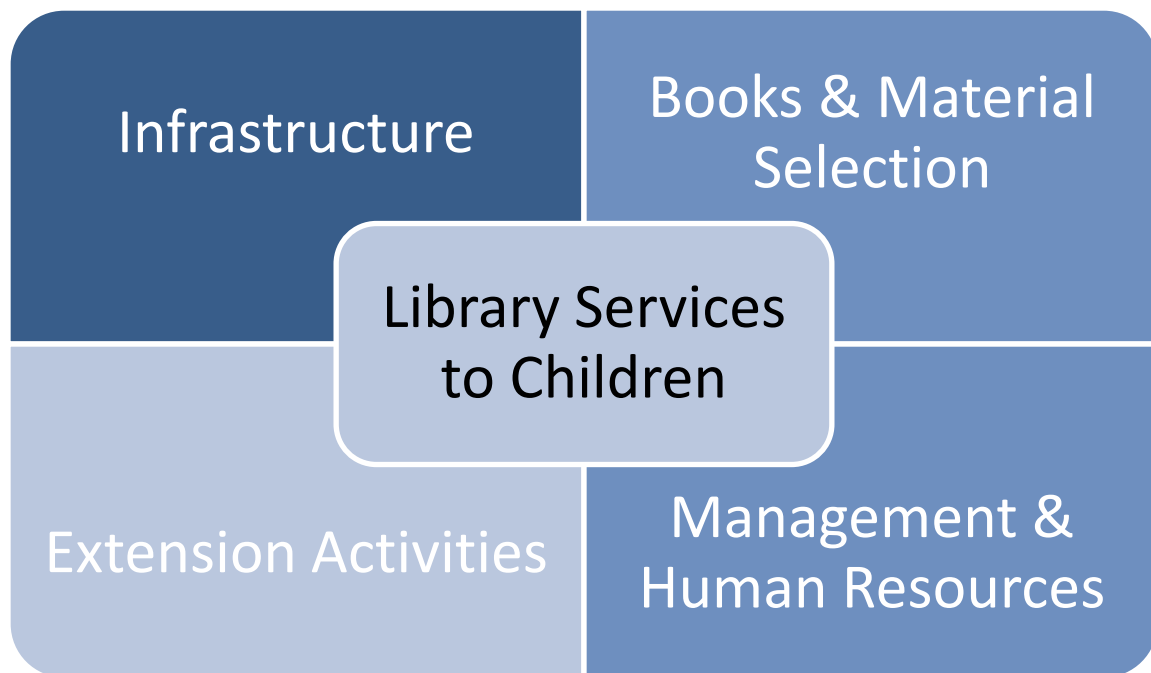
From a review of literature (ALSC, 2009; Cerney et al, 2006; Walter, 2003) some core areas were identified based on which a librarian or a library staff in a children's library can be evaluated. Librarians and library staff should be able to identify the needs of children coming to the library and also the needs of parents, and other adults who use the resources of the children's department. All librarians should demonstrate a knowledge and appreciation of children's literature, periodicals, audiovisual materials, websites and other electronic media (ibid). A librarian has to be involved in all aspects of the library's planning process to represent and support services to children. Keeping the needs of children in mind, librarians should develop budgets, analyse government policies regarding libraries, and be in touch with community leaders to build a case for their library if needed. For a library to become an active place and attract children, librarians have to go beyond books, weaving in different activities that interest children, enable them to learn new things and also have fun. A qualified and committed librarian designs, promotes, presents, and evaluates a variety of programs for children of all ages, based on their developmental needs and interests and the goals of the library (ALSC, 2009).

For librarians and library staff in children's libraries to acquire the core competencies mentioned above, professionalism, continuous capacity building and professional development is required (Walter, 2003). All children's libraries should provide opportunities for staff to participate in local, state, and national professional organizations to strengthen skills, interact with fellow professionals, promote professional association, scholarships, and contribute to the library profession. Librarians should also be urged to pursue professional development and continuing education opportunities throughout their career (ibid).

2.2 Developing a Framework for Evaluation

Based on review of literature, the major features that are required for providing good quality library services to children are summarised in Figure 1)

Figure 1: Framework for Evaluation of Library Services to Children



These four components will influence the outcome of any children's library, both in the short term and in the run long. Based on the above figure, the study focused on the four elements of infrastructure, book selection, extension activities and human resource to evaluate Delhi Public Library's children's libraries/corners. The study has used mixed methods, which include questionnaires and open ended interviews to evaluate each of the library branches against these parameters, supported by documentary analysis and field notes as the key data collection methods.

The next chapter discusses the social context in which the Delhi Public Library is located.

Chapter 3

Research Context

This chapter provides an overview of the library scenario in India. It summarises the various initiatives taken over the years to promote public libraries in India and tries to look at children specific issues. The social and educational context in which DPL exists is also discussed.

3.1 Library Movement in India

The Calcutta Public Library, established in 1836, is often referred to as the first public library of India in literature. It was not a government institution and ran on a proprietary basis. Any subscriber paying Rs 300 at one time or in three installments was considered a proprietor. Poor students and others were allowed to use the library free of charge for a specified period of time. In 1883, Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekward introduced free compulsory elementary education supported by libraries in Baroda district. In 1907, this free public library service was introduced as a system and extended to the entire state. However, this initiative of the Maharaja was not replicated by other states and it remained a rare case. After the British conquered India, the Imperial Library Act was passed in 1902 and Lord Curzon transformed the Calcutta Public Library into the Imperial Library. After independence in 1948, the name of the Imperial Library was changed to the National Library (Ngurtinkhuma, 2010; Wani, 2008).

The 1951 census, the first conducted after independence, found that out of 2,843 local governments in the urban and rural areas in India, about 950 or one-third maintained public libraries. In addition, there were about 1,500 subscription libraries. However, the public libraries were primarily reading rooms with a few hundred books for reading on the premises. In 1957, the government of India set up the Sinha committee to report on the status of development of public libraries in India. The committee reported that genuine public library service was a rarity, and that public library service throughout the

country was unsatisfactory (MoE, 1961). In 1972, the RRRLF was set up by the government to promote library movement in India. It was meant to develop a national library system by integrating the services of national state, district and other types of libraries through an interlibrary lending system. RRRLF was envisioned to play the role similar to that of the American Library Association, which works on library advocacy and legislation, organizing library events and conferences, disseminating information about education and careers in library sciences, encouraging research and professional learning among library staff, and providing guidelines for library services (ALA, 2012).

In 1986, the Chattopadhyay committee submitted a set of recommendations for formulating a national policy on library and information system. These included an emphasis on rural public libraries, creation of standards and guidelines for library services, strengthening of RRRLF to discharge its role as the national agency for coordinating and assisting the development of public libraries, establishing a National Commission on Libraries and linking community/public libraries to primary schools. Where schools do not have libraries of their own, the community centre library should provide children with adequate services, the committee recommended. In 2008, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC), set up by the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, also submitted a set of recommendations on library services that are very similar to that of the Chattopadhyay committee (NKC, 2008). The review of literature shows that while several committees were set up by the government to recommend measures for public library development in India, lack of political will and financial investments meant that many of these recommendations stayed on paper.

Reflecting the poor status of public libraries in India, the NKC's working group on libraries called for "immediate and sustained attention" towards the Library and Information Services (LIS) sector. The task force concluded that there was no available data on the total number of libraries in India. Data on needs of library users and reading habits was also not available. Following a list of recommendations of the NKC (2008), a National Mission on Libraries has been set up. The national mission will look into various aspects including a national census of libraries, content creation and setting up of

community information centres, up-gradation of the existing public libraries, school and college libraries and use of school libraries as community libraries, and improvement in library and information science education training and research facilities (NLM, 2012).

3.2 Delhi Public Library

The Delhi Public Library (DPL) was started in 1951 as the first UNESCO Public Library Pilot Project under the joint auspices of UNESCO and the Government of India. The purpose of this library was to adopt “Modern Techniques to Indian Conditions” and to serve as a model public library for Asia. It began with one library in old Delhi and has since expanded its network to cover several areas of New Delhi. The DPL network consists of a central library, a zonal library, 3 branch libraries, 24 sub-branch libraries, 3 community libraries, 12 libraries located in resettlement colonies, one Braille library, 70 mobile service points and 22 deposit stations. Notably, the UNESCO in 1960 stated that given the resources -- financial and material – available to the library, DPL had the potential of giving 100% coverage to the entire Union Territory of Delhi (UNESCO, 1960). According to the UNESCO report, in 1960, there were separate lending and reference sections for adults and children, with over 10,000 children members children below the age of 15 years as of March 31, 1960. The library conducted story hour, new hour, and film showings for children, who also have their study and discussion groups. Every year cultural competitions in story writing, story telling, extempore speech, music and drama, etc were held, followed by book prizes to winners. Given the vibrant start and specific focus of DPL on children at the beginning, it is pertinent to look at how these services for children have developed and evolved over the years.

Secondly, Delhi also has a large number of schools, with the Municipal Corporation schools catering to a large number of urban poor and first generation learners. There are 3,507 government and aided schools (catering to 6-14 year age group) under the state government and local bodies having a total enrollment of 17.20 lakh as on 2010-11. However, the total number of schools run by various agencies including private bodies is 5,073 (from Grade 1-12) with gross enrolment of 39.20 lakh as on 2010-11 (GoD, 2012).

In this context, a study of the children's sections of DPL's libraries will provide significant insights into the membership, number of children accessing books and their reading habits and the development of a reading culture over the years. It will also give insights into the working and challenges of one of India's largest library networks.

The next chapter looks at the methodology used for the research.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

This chapter describes the research design, the sampling process, and data collection methods and data analysis procedures. The informed consent procedure and the measures taken to ensure confidentiality of the participants are explained. The role of the researcher and the study limitations are stated.

4.1 Case Study

Research indicates that a case study can penetrate situations in a way that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis (Cohen et al, 2007). Case studies focus on individual actors or group of actors and seek to understand their perceptions of events (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995:322). Thus, a case study approach enables my understanding of the functioning of children's sections of the DPL through the eyes of the different actors involved. This is also an intrinsic case study (Stake, 2005) where the researcher is interested in the particular case itself. The 'purpose is not to come to understand some abstract construct or generic phenomena.' This study seeks to understand the working and challenges of the seven DPL branch libraries specifically. There is no intention to use these case studies to understand how children's sections in public libraries across the country function or to gather information about them in general.

4.2 Sampling

There are two main methods of sampling (Cohen and Holliday, 1982 as cited in Cohen et al, 2000) -- random sampling and purposive sampling. A random sample draws randomly from the wider population and is useful if the researcher wishes to make generalisations. In a purposive sample, sampling is done with a purpose in mind and targeting a particular group. Purposive sampling can be used for situations where a targeted sample needs to be

reached quickly and where sampling for proportionality is not the primary concern. Small scale research often uses purposive samples as they are less expensive, can be undertaken in a limited time span and can prove adequate where researchers do not intend to generalise their findings (Cohen et al, 2000). This case study therefore uses purposive sampling techniques. All DPL branch libraries were scanned and seven branches that had independent children's section or corners were identified. All the seven librarians were interviewed along with one library support staff from each library. Since DPL is run by a centralized management structure, it was easy to identify key management personnel and interview them.

4.3 Ethics

Informed consent was sought from the adults comprising librarians, library assistants and members of the management involved in the programme implementation. Diener and Crandall (1978, cited in Cohen et al 2000: 51) define informed consent as 'the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions'. Those who agreed to participate voluntarily were then assured of their right to privacy through the promise of confidentiality. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw at any point of the interview without providing any explanation. While children attending the libraries were observed they were not interviewed.

4.4 Data Collection

In order to evaluate and understand the process of implementation of the RBC, its components and the perception of the stakeholders, documentary analysis, semi-structured group and individual interviews were used as the key research tools.

4.5.1 Documentary analysis

According to Cohen et al (2007), documentary analysis includes analysis of government literature, public records, programme guidelines, newspapers and reports and statistics among others. Documentary analysis is useful as it renders ‘more visible the phenomena under study’ (Prior, 2003 in Cohen et al, 2007). However, it is important to bear in mind that all documents are written for a purpose, and cater to an audience other than researchers. They may be biased, give one side of a story or explain the government’s point of view. Therefore they need to be analysed critically (Cohen et al, 2007; Grix, 2001). For the purpose of this case study, I analysed DPL annual reports, review reports and brochures and leaflets published for the purpose of dissemination.

4.5.2 Interviews

Interviews are a means to ‘understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience’ (Seidman, 2006:9). As a method of data collection, interviews are flexible, and enable multi-sensory channels such as verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard to be used. The order of the interview can be controlled while still giving space to spontaneity, and the interviewer can press for responses about complex issues (Cohen et al, 2007). Notably, several factors may differ from one interview to another, such as mutual trust, social distance, and the interviewer’s control (Cicourel, 1964). However, repeating and cross-checking information shared and multiple visits to the programme centre can minimise such possibilities. In this study both individual and group interviews were used. Informal conversation interviews were mixed with a general interview guide. The interview style used was informal, engaging and conducted using the local language which I was familiar with. An interview always began as a conversation, talking about the purpose of the research, the researcher’s background and soliciting similar information from the interviewees.

4.5.3 Field Notes

In her recommendations for conducting qualitative research, Morrow (2005:259) writes, 'Field notes taken from observation in the field or during and after interviews are essential to exploring and expressing the content of the study.' Rossman and Rallis (2003) encourage the use of thick description and providing elaborate details in the field notes to enhance future analysis. In addition to recording observations, field notes promote reflexivity on the part of the researcher (Creswell, 1998). While conducting this study, detailed notes were taken during library visits and informal discussions with the participants.

4.6 Validity and Reliability

Winter (2000 as cited in Creswell, 2003) states that in qualitative data, validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the objectivity of the researcher. Triangulation is defined as the 'use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behavior (Cohen et al, 2007:141). In this study, I first conducted individual interviews with librarians. Their responses were noted and this was followed up with group interviews where the same questions were asked along with several others. Inconsistencies in responses were noted. Notes were also compared after talking to various stakeholders to point out similarities and contentious issues. As for researcher's objectivity, Maxwell (1992) suggests 'understanding' as a more suitable term than 'validity' in qualitative research. Moreover, researchers are part of the world they research and cannot be completely objective about it. Hence other people's perspectives are as valid as the researcher's (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). In this study, the researcher's interpretation of the findings has been influenced by the perspectives shared by the different stakeholders involved.

4.7 Data Analysis

As soon as possible after each interview, the interviews were transcribed. Since several interviews were conducted in Hindi they were translated into English. According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) the process of reading and rereading the transcripts increases familiarity and coherence of the data as a whole. Therefore each interview transcript was read several times and analysed keeping in mind the primary themes developed during the review of literature on public libraries for children. Other themes that emerged were scrutinised to see how they fit into the existing themes (Anfara et al, 2002).

4.8 Role of the Researcher

In line with the aim of the study, which is to understand the functioning and challenges of the children's sections of DPL through observations, questionnaires and interviews with stakeholders, my identity as a researcher played a crucial role in the research design, collection and analysis of data. I understand that I am not independent of what I am researching. This study presents one version of social reality that cannot be considered definitive or objective (Bryman, 2004). While I was met with initial discomfort from several librarians, once it was clear that the interviews were for the purpose of the research, the librarians opened up and spoke comfortably. I was also aware that government officials tend to share only the successes of a programme and therefore, attempted to get a holistic picture by talking to as many stakeholders as possible.

4.9 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this paper is restricted to the seven DPL branches which have children's section or corners. Secondly, inclusion in terms of disability or special needs has been excluded as this is a vast area and needs specialised knowledge. Since this research uses a case study approach, the findings are limited to the seven branches with a small sample size and cannot be generalised. Lastly, my role as a researcher may have influenced the

response of interviewees, especially government officials and members of the management.

Summary

This chapter describes the research methodology. I have argued that a qualitative case study approach is best suited to answer the research questions guiding this inquiry. To understand the social context of the programme and evaluate its elements, group and individual interviews were extensively used for data collection. A justification for the sampling, data collection methods and data analysis has also been given.

The next chapter begins the analysis of data with the first element – infrastructure.

Chapter 5

Infrastructure for Children's Libraries

A children's library or section within a public library should be a distinct space for children, where they are comfortable and relaxed. Children should be able to access books easily, browse and read books, enjoy the environment and find the atmosphere friendly. This chapter evaluates the DPL libraries/branches on various parameters based on the literature review.

5.1 Aesthetics

In terms of aesthetics, the DPL survey threw mixed results with most libraries giving little attention to the overall aesthetics and designing of the children's spaces. In a majority of the libraries visited, there is either a children's corner or a small children's section that houses children's collections. The children's library at the Sarojini Nagar branch is housed independently in a separate room. The large room is brightly lit, has new flooring that is polished and clean, and coloured bookshelves that make the library attractive. Some plants and artificial flowers have been used for decoration. A part of the children's section at the Narela library is more interactive with charts on flowers, animals, freedom fighters and other themes and a few paintings. At Janakpuri Library, the children's corner is tucked away at the back of the room and is dark and difficult to access.

The DPL libraries have also not used books, illustrations or works by children to make the library space attractive. Most of the libraries visited used cutouts of cartoon characters and Barbie dolls on the bookshelves and walls. The library at Chandni Chowk does have paintings of children on all its walls. But rather than a showcasing of children's talents, the paintings look like an attempt to hide the crumbling plasters on the walls. Since all the DPL libraries bind the books to ensure books last longer, all books have a dull grey or

maroon binding that hides the name of the book and also makes the library look monotonous and boring. Librarians admitted that this was a challenge and binding books also discouraged children from browsing. However, it was an obligation to prevent wear and tear and ensure that books last long.

5.2 Space

According to IFLA guidelines for library services for children (IFLA, 2003) the public library design must address the needs of children and how they use libraries including story-telling spaces, books within easy reach for children, nap areas, etc. This thought process is not reflected in a majority of DPL libraries. Except for Sarojini Nagar and Chandni Chowk, where DPL has separate children's libraries, space is a major issue in all other libraries surveyed. At Sarojini Nagar, the large room that houses the library has adequate lighting and reading space. The library also has separate rooms where activities with children are conducted. While the Chandni Chowk library has tables for reading, the library itself is dull and the space is closed and uninspiring. At the Janakpuri library for instance, the library corner at the back has no room for accommodating more than four to five children at a time. At Shahdra too, the small room is inadequate for the large number of members. Most of the DPL libraries thus do not have a space where children can sit and relax, read at leisure or browse and interact with other children.

Secondly, there is no age differentiation and thus library space for children is treated as one single entity. There are no separate corners for early readers and young adults. DPL libraries categorize children as 6-15 and adults above that. There is also no space where parents can spend time with their children in the libraries. The very limited space means that a majority of the libraries surveyed cannot accommodate school groups or conduct group activities.

“Very few parents accompany their children to the library. We mostly get poor children who are very independent and where both parents are out working. The space needs to be

redone and we can make it attractive for children. But we have never thought of taking a lead on this,” (Interview with librarian).

The availability of space is a major challenge for DPL libraries as several run from rented places. Secondly, finding space for community activities and large group activities has also become difficult.

“Everyone wants to charge exorbitant rates for renting out space. Nobody wants to give free space for a public library. Several of our branches had to close because we could not afford to pay market price for the space we were renting or which had been given to us free. In some of our children’s libraries we may want to expand and improve infrastructure, but we are restricted by lack of space. (Interview with management)

5.3 Furniture

The furnishing at DPL children’s libraries is limited to low height tables and chairs which are painted in bright colours. However, these are suitable for younger children and older children may find these too small. There is no provision in any of the libraries for pre-school children since DPL caters to six-year-olds and above. The assumption is that toddlers and pre-school children will not use the libraries.

“Small children will not come to libraries since they are dependent on parents. So we do not keep picture books or rugs for them to sit on. There is also no play area. But we have games for older children.”

None of the DPL libraries are disable-friendly. They do not have ramps for the physically challenged children and the space required for them to navigate a wheelchair or crutches for instance, is absent. While DPL has a separate Braille library for the visually challenged, no other forms of disability have been addressed in the library infrastructure in any of the branches visited. It seems as if DPL does not expect physically challenged children to access its libraries and interview with staff revealed that they did not have any

children with such challenges. While disable-friendly infrastructure has not been looked at in detail in this research study, it is a significant area of research and advocacy.

Shelving also follows the age-old and redundant system of fixed single size shelves. Across DPL libraries, all books irrespective of size, are shelved in the same manner following the Dewey classification system, rather than ensuring visibility and easy access. For example, several books for primary school children are not hard bound, have small stories and comprise a few pages. Since these books are difficult to shelf upright, they are piled one on top of the other so that their attractive and colourful book covers are hidden. Picture books could be placed in bins or hung on rods so that children are not only attracted by the display but also the book cover. While librarians conceded that book display needed to be improved, they cited lack of space as a major constraint.

The lack of understanding into the needs of children in terms of space, light and free movement is reflected in the infrastructure of the DPL libraries. Only 2 out of 60 odd branches of the DPL have separate children's libraries. Four have separate rooms designated as children's section and one has a separate children's corner as part of the larger library. Observations at the libraries show that children do not have enough time to browse or read in the library. They also do not have the space or the environment to interact with each other, or participate in activities. All librarians interviewed agreed that activities related to books, reading, art etc could play a big role in bringing children into the libraries and turning them into regular members. However, several revealed that despite highlighting the lack of space no action has been taken to address the problem.

Summary

This chapter highlights the infrastructural needs for setting up a children's library in terms of space, furniture and aesthetics that have proved to attract children. Analysis of data and observations show that DPL needs to do much work to improve these aspects of its children's libraries. Much of existing infrastructure could be improved with minimal changes.

Chapter 6

Selection of Books & Resources

Over the years, libraries, associations, and book award committees have developed criteria for selection of books and resources that they follow and revise regularly.

This chapter looks at the existing selection policy of the DPL libraries with regards to its children's section and analyses the gaps areas.

6.1 Selection of Resources

DPL's collection management policy was revised in 2007, the older version having being developed in 1991. The policy lists out the following "factors" that should be kept in mind while selecting resources (DPL, 2007):

1. Relevance of information/content to immediate user requirements
2. Popular demand from users
3. Present and potential needs of the community of users
4. Listing in professionally recognized selection tools
5. Favourable reviews in professional, literary or general periodicals/newspapers
6. Reputation of the author, creator, publishers
7. Suitability of physical form for library use (size, paper, print, binding)
8. Cost of book in relation to total budget
9. Availability of funds
10. Extent to which the item supplements existing collection
11. Accuracy of information
12. Collection of other libraries within the neighbourhood

The criteria applies to all resources acquired by the library, whether for adults section or for children. Notably, the DPL policy of 2007 makes no separate mention of selecting resources for children. Interviews with librarians revealed that DPL has separate book advisory committees for children and adults. The children's book advisory committee is supposed to meet each quarter. However, there are no stated criteria or qualification for selection of members to the children's book advisory committee.

“We invite popular authors, experienced librarians, publishers, school teachers and others who have knowledge of children's literature. We also have a senior DPL librarian as a member. There are no written rules. Members are invited through word-of-mouth...”

(Interview with senior librarian)

But the DPL does not have specific criteria for selection of children's books. The library's collection policy lists general selection tools including review in journals and newspapers, publishers' and booksellers' catalogue, appropriate websites, titles shortlisted for awards, catalogues of other libraries, suggestions from users, library staff, board members, books received under the D B Act¹, and books supplied by booksellers on approval basis. According to library staff the selection tools are also used by the children's book advisory committee. DPL also has a panel of 30 booksellers (majority from Delhi) who provide list of books.

“We also have a list of vendors who submit new books every month and all those books are placed before the committee. There are no specific norms for vendors to follow. The vendors are the main source of books; publishers also send catalogues and readers can suggest books. Once the list of selected books comes to us (the librarian), we order copies according to the library's requirements” (Interview with DPL staff)

¹ The Delivery Of Books And Newspapers (Public Libraries) Act, 1954) under which every publisher in India has to send a copy of a new book and newspaper to four libraries in India including National library of Calcutta, Connemara Public Library, Chennai, Asiatic Society of Bombay's library, and the Delhi Public Library

Notably, Connor (1990) warns against using publisher catalogues, which he terms as advertisements, for book selection. According to him, catalogues are aimed at selling material and not evaluating them. Books sold directly to the library by children's books salespeople (and vendors in case of DPL) are poor or mediocre in quality and many may not have been reviewed (ibid). A review of the children's collection at DPL libraries also shows that the collection does not reflect the need and aptitude of the users and reflects an imbalance between books exposing children to global and local stories. The librarians and library staff, while aware of the background of children coming to the libraries, are unable to make the connection between their requirements and the existing book collection.

6.2 Books at DPL

While DPL lists relevance of content to the user and needs of the community as factors essential for selecting resources, all its libraries across Delhi have the same set of books irrespective of the community in which they are located, or the needs of the children they cater to. For example, the children's library at Sarojini Nagar is located in an upper middle class residential area, where children mostly attend private English medium schools according to the library staff. In contrast, almost all children coming to the DPL library in Shahdra belong to daily wage workers and have low literacy levels. But the books available in both the libraries are the same. In the neighbourhood of the Chandni Chowk library, there are several Urdu medium schools and Urdu speaking population. But there is only a handful of old Urdu books in the children's section of the library.

According to guidelines developed, a careful book selection can help develop many faculties in children that are emphasized in the curriculum but are difficult to formally work upon in the classroom (NCCL, 2012). Yet, the book collection of primary class children in DPL comprises mythology, historical and religious figures, biographies of Indian leaders, and stories from the Panchatantra, which are an ancient Indian inter-related collection of animal fables in verse and prose. This is true of both the Hindi and English collection of books for younger children. Delightful and richly illustrated books

by internationally acclaimed authors/illustrators to name a few such as Anushka Ravishankar, Devika Rangachari, Indira Ananthakrishnan, Manjula Padmanabhan and many others are absent from the collection. Books by several Indian publishers who have published original and contemporary stories over the last 10 years are also missing. Where they were available, they were stacked on top of each other, out of sight from children and making it difficult for them to browse and select.

Notably, a well-selected collection of books balances between ‘the local and the global’, and exposes children to the finest reading material from different parts of the country and the world. Children are exposed to different geographies, cultures and realms of inquiry. India, being a multicultural country, there are several cultures and stories from across the states that children can access through quality children’s literature. But DPL’s English book collection for older children (11-15 years) is dominated by foreign authors including Darren Shan, R L Stein, Enid Blyton, Dan Gutman’s school series and Lemony Snicket series. These books are prominently displayed in all the libraries, while there is little Indian writing that is showcased. Contemporary Indian authors such as Paro Anand, Poile Sengupta, Ranjit Lal, Shanta Rameshwar Rao, Roopa Pai with her Taranauts series and Anjali Raghuvver or internationally acclaimed authors such as Dr Seuss, Roald Dahl, Eric Carle, P.D. Eastman, Jane Yolen, Kevin Henkes, Katherine Paterson and Beatrix Potter are not to be found in the DPL collection. In some libraries, such as Sarojini Nagar and Chandni Chowk, there were several books by Indian authors such as T. V. Padma, Ruskin Bond, and Suniti Namjoshi (Aditi Series). But unlike the foreign authors who occupy pride of place in the shelves, these books are relegated to the last two rows of a single book shelf.

An important factor that influences what children read is their literacy levels and ability to read fluently. A majority of children coming to DPL children’s libraries attend government schools; belong to lower middle class and poor socio-economic classes. Several libraries cater to children of slum dwellers and daily wage workers who do not have access to books beyond textbooks (Interviews with DPL staff). Research shows that difficult vocabulary, unfamiliar contexts and foreign stories can put off young children

from reading. Notably, in a majority of DPL libraries visited the English books looked new and showed little wear and tear from regular usage. Librarians shared that children found English books “difficult to read and non-interesting”. A majority also demanded “smaller stories with simple language and pictures.” At the library in Shahdra, the librarian shared that many children who come to the library struggle to read fluently and several can barely read. However, there are no books that can cater to the needs of such children at the Shahdra library despite growing range of early readers developed by some of the leading Indian publishers and educational institutions such as NCERT.

While children prefer Hindi books, the Hindi collection leaves much to be desired. The collection is dominated by poor quality of publishing, old stories, retelling of mythologies, religious and historical figures and are heavy on text. Notably, NCCL (2012) states that books that “preach morals without giving the child a chance to think” should be avoided. Yet a majority of books in Hindi have morals at the end, especially those targeting younger children. A large part of the Hindi collection for older children comprises non-fiction books. Unlike selection criteria laid down by several agencies, non-fiction Hindi books at DPL are text-heavy and overloaded with information. They are not supported by engaging illustrations or photos. At the Narela library for instance, there is a huge demand from children for non-fiction books, reference material, encyclopedias, maps etc but the library has been unable to cater to these needs.

6.3 Magazines & Audio Visual

The collection of magazines varies according to the library. At the Chandni Chowk Library, there are 11 magazines in English including *Champak*, *Chandamama*, *Children’s Digest*, *Children’s World*, *Junior Science Digest*, *Junior Science Refresher* and *Tinkle*. Hindi magazines comprise *Lotpot*, *Nandan*, *Bal Bharti*, *School Today*, *Champak*, *Chandamama* and others. While the author found the magazines underutilized in the Chandni Chowk library, at Janakpuri, which gets around 150 children every day, there were only three magazines – *Champak*, *Lotpot* and *Nandan*, each in Hindi and English. At Narela library, only two magazines in Hindi were available -- *Champak* and

Bal Bhaskar. DPL does not follow any policy on subscription of children's magazines at its libraries and it appeared to the researcher that the number of magazines in each library was decided arbitrarily rather than based on any analysis of use and demand from children. Two of the popular children's magazines being published at present – *Chakmak* by Eklavya and *Firki* by NCERT were missing from the DPL libraries. The audio visual resources at the libraries are a recent addition and comprise mostly movies and subject DVDs. Except for a few animation movies there is not much for children to choose from.

6.4 Role of Librarian

Review of literature (ALSC, 2009; Cerney et al, 2006; Walter, 2003) shows that all librarians should demonstrate a knowledge and appreciation of children's literature, periodicals, audiovisual materials, websites and other electronic media, and other materials that contribute to a diverse, current, and relevant children's collection. However, interviews with librarians across the seven libraries showed that none of them were up-to-date with contemporary children literature, either in India or internationally. While all claimed to visit book fairs regularly, they were not aware of authors, bestsellers, or changes in the children's publishing industry. Most importantly, while librarians across the world are involved in selecting books and resources for their library, the DPL librarians are not involved in the selection process in any decisive manner. They can recommend books but it is up to the book advisory committee to accept the recommendations.

As one librarian put it, "We are service providers. I don't even select books. I only request but ultimate selection of books is done by the central office" (*Interview with librarian*).

Librarians were also unable to give data on most popular books and authors among children and children's preferences. According to the librarians, users have the right to recommend books that are then purchased by the DPL. However, no child had recommended a book till date, librarians said, and neither had they recommended books

for children. The lack of involvement of librarians and library staff in the selection of books for children needs to be seriously looked into. Knowledge about children's literature and involvement in building the library collection are vital for a librarian, and needs to be built into the library system.

Summary

This chapter has looked at the collection policy of the DPL and analysed the book collection across the seven libraries. There is a need to decentralize the selection of books and resources depending on the community in which a DPL library is located. Secondly, at present DPL librarians play no role in selection of children's literature and resources and these needs to be investigated urgently.

Chapter 7

Extension Activities

This chapter looks at the various extension activities that the DPL libraries are engaged in and evaluates their use for children and parents.

7.1 Literacy Acquisition & Critical Thinking

Interviews and observations reveal that early literacy activities are absent from DPL libraries, where pre-school children or early readers have been excluded completely. The age-group of children DPL serve begins at 6 years, the official age for children to attend grade I in government schools across India. Notably, a committee set up for modernization of the DPL had suggested that DPL's children libraries should focus on children from three years. However, discussions with DPL staff revealed that they did not expect children below 6 years to access libraries or books. Nor were they familiar with the concept of reading aloud to younger children.

“Very small children cannot come by themselves. And we mostly get children from 8 years and above.” (Interview with staff)

However, unlike the common understanding among DPL staff, not all children to access books at DPL are independent readers. Discussions revealed that many children who came to DPL libraries in Shahdra and Narela that cater to the urban poor could not read even simple sentences fluently.

“Many children have become members but cannot read simple words. In such circumstances I don't know what to do. They need basic literacy support but I am not equipped to do that. Neither do we have such programmes. But I think such programmes would be welcomed by children ...it would help them immensely” (Interview with staff at Shahdra Library)

Informal discussions with children at the libraries revealed that children in Grade 7 and 8 were opting of short story books with simple language, despite the availability of more complex stories. They wanted books that were “easy to read, did not have difficult words, and had pictures.” However, as discussed in Chapter 4, the book selection is not done taking into account the diverse reading levels and interests of children.

Apart from providing access to quality literature, libraries conduct several forms of extension activities that bring children into libraries and make the library into an activity hub. Krüger (2003) cites best library practices that help children acquire literacy skills and critical thinking ability through fun events. The children’s library in Wilhelmshaus, Germany has developed a narration game, where children enact plays based on the literature they read. There is also a ‘picture-book-show, which offers a new perspective and understanding of illustrations by presenting the pictures from a different viewpoint. Other libraries invite readers to conduct read-aloud sessions with children; children also interact with authors and artists (ibid).

At the DPL library in Sarojini Nagar, sporadic events are organised including film screenings, story-telling sessions and painting competitions. The librarian too expressed a lot of interest in turning these into year-long events with some activity being organised every month. She revealed that young adults had demanded English improvement lessons and computer literacy classes. However, the library did not have the required person power or the training to organise these events on a regular basis, she said.

“We want to have activities not only for children but also life-long learning for adults including some vocational training for out-of-school children. We will invite external agencies who are willing to take up a contract and conduct these activities for us.”
(Interview with librarian)

Notably, prior to 2000, the children’s library at Chandni Chowk had a children’s librarian and another post for a librarian responsible for conducting social education activities.

However, these posts have been abolished and merged with other posts. Shortage of staff was cited as a primary reason for lack of extension activities.

“The librarians are also burdened with administrative work. They have to look at management of their respective libraries, finances, and also juggle other work. There is no time to conduct extension activities.” (Interview with librarian)

While some librarians seemed interested in developing an action plan for making the DPL libraries an active hub of events and cultural and social exchange, lack of leadership and ownership of the mandate appears to be a big challenge. This point has been taken up in detail in Chapter 7. Secondly, the library would do better to appoint a full-time librarian to plan and execute the activities depending on the needs of the community and the children, rather than outsourcing this responsibility.

7.2 Internet and Digital Resources

While public libraries across the world are embracing the digital age in different ways (Lapan, 2012), DPL libraries are limited to providing Internet access and videos and CDs to its young members. All the DPL libraries visited had computer kiosks. Six out of seven libraries allowed children to browse the Internet for 30 minutes every day. Library staff interviewed agreed that the Internet was a major attraction among children who waited in queues for several hours to access free Internet. This was also a major reason behind increase in membership. Yet, observations at the libraries show that the library staff is not well-versed or comfortable with technology. Children are left on their own for 30 minutes without any guidance. They either play computer games or browse the Internet without any clear idea of what they are looking for. Many children also did not know how to browse for information and there is no specific guidance available to them.

Mitra (1988) suggests that unsupervised use of computers can lead to accelerated learning of skills in children. However, children should have adequate exposure over a period of time and should also be able to access motivated content (Ahuja et al, 1995). The authors

show that the structured use of computer games over a period of four years resulted automatically in children learning skills. Just 30 minutes of unsupported access to a computer per child at DPL libraries may not have the desired effect. Secondly, the same child may not get to access the computer every day.

“At times children are looking for resources and I allow them up to 30 minutes extra. But the number of children is much more than computers and we have to strictly follow the 30 minute time limit. We had started with one hour but had to decrease the time limit as the number of children increased.” (Interview with librarian)

Therefore, there is an urgent need for DPL to plan its digital access strategy to provide children with meaningful and adequate computer access. Notably, the ALA warns that while providing Internet access, libraries must protect the younger and more vulnerable members of the public from being confronted with inappropriate information and images (ALA, 2003). But the DPL Policy on Public Use of Internet states that parents and guardians, and not the library, are responsible to monitor the content accessed by children. The policy also states that the library is “not responsible for the accuracy, validity and type of information accessed online” (DPL, 2007). This attitude of the library is reflected in the staff that leaves children alone to utilize their 30 minutes of Internet access.

It was also observed that while waiting for their Internet slot, children browse through the books in the library and many also pick up books to read. The author felt that this was a good opportunity for librarians to introduce new books to children or get their attention by conducting small activities around books. However, in all DPL libraries children are left to themselves, whether it is browsing the book shelves or the Internet. Notably, at the Hippocampus Library in Bangalore, a privately run library with paid membership, children have access to the Internet and video game console X Box. According to the librarian, the X Box is useful in keeping children engaged for 45 minutes during holidays or weekends. However, while it may bring children in, the librarian said that age-appropriate and attractive books and activities kept the interest in the library alive

(Interview with the researcher). The ALA also recommends that public libraries should provide multimedia workstations, Internet workstations, and a variety of software (to use in the library and for loan) (ALA, 2003). Since staff in all the DPL libraries agreed that availability of free internet had helped in increasing membership among children, this opportunity needs to be grabbed and made use of.

There are also issues of accessing online resources and digital books that are beyond the purview of this report. However, the researcher acknowledges that these are areas that public libraries across India will need to need focus on and develop in the future, especially in the context of children.

7.3 Associating with Schools

Haycock (2001) emphasizes that close cooperation between public libraries, especially children and youth libraries and schools will result in improved collection, better services, less duplication, more electronic/media programs and services and better use of funds. At the seven branches of DPL little or no cooperation was seen between DPL libraries and the neighbouring schools or community centres. At the central library in Chandni Chowk, there are 20-25 schools in the neighbourhood. But other than distributing free membership cards, the library staff has no interaction with the schools.

“This is a commercial area and children cannot access it by themselves. They need to be accompanied by adults. Although there are a number of schools within accessible distance, not too many children come to the library. Teachers are also not willing to take the responsibility of bringing children.” (Interview with library staff)

In the absence of members, the children’s library has also failed to come up with alternative strategies such as encouraging institutional borrowing or sending mobile library vans to schools on certain days.

“This (institutional borrowing) can be done. But the management of the library and the respective schools has to take the initiative. Here no one is ready to take the responsibility and there are too many bureaucratic hurdles such budget, management, reporting, etc.” (Interview with library staff)

Interviews also revealed that school teachers were uninterested and unwilling to encourage children to use public libraries.

“They are scared that if children lose books or there is wear and tear, then they (teachers) will be penalized by the library. They don’t want to take the responsibility. Teachers also say that they are overworked and cannot take time out to visit public libraries” (Interview with DPL librarian).

While challenges in associating with schools remain, the DPL management has not done much to find ways to cooperate and work together. Notably, public libraries are often used by children as a point of resource collection for completing homework, and interacting with other children. DPL libraries get their share of children who come to seek reference material for homework and summer projects. But the libraries have a fixed set of reference material, irrespective of the needs of the school curriculum. A lot of Hindi non-fiction books are used as reference material and not for reading for pleasure according to many librarians. Mahajan (2009) highlights the poor state of school libraries in India and refers to several surveys carried out which show that school libraries are unable to inculcate reading interest among children and do not support achievement of information literacy. The books and material in most of the school libraries are kept in cabinets under lock and key and are made available to the students on demand only. In the absence of a robust library system in a majority of government schools in Delhi, the role of the DPL libraries becomes significant is providing children with a variety of reading material. The need for a detailed plan to rope in schools and partner with them for DPL to supplement children’s educational and recreational needs emerged during the study.

Summary

This chapter has looked at the various extension activities conducted by the DPL and concludes that while DPL has taken up some initiatives, it need to plan and organise activities to make the library a fun place for children. Secondly, providing free Internet access without any help or guidance has not helped children very much. Last but not the least, there is a lot of opportunity for DPL libraries to collaborate with neighbouring school. This will not only help in increasing membership, it will also ensure that the library collection is relevant to the needs of children and teachers, this complementing school education.

Chapter 8

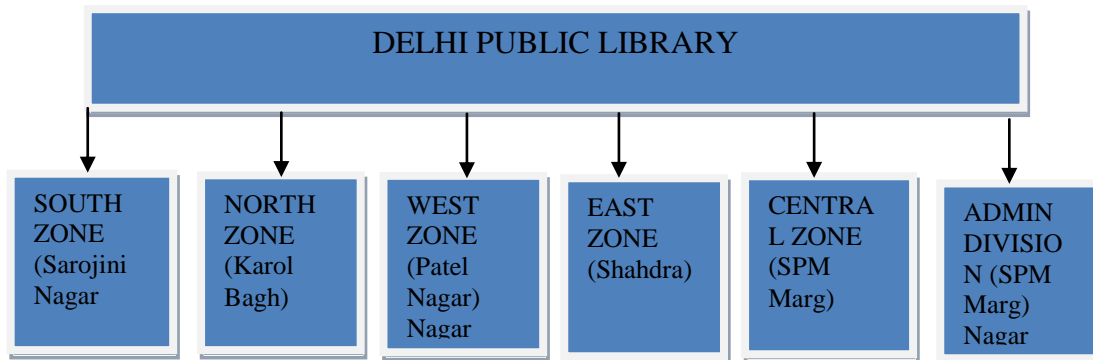
Management

This chapter will look at the management of the DPL libraries; discuss issues of human resource and capacity building and leadership for library management.

8.1 Organisation Structure

The DPL is headed by the Delhi Library Board, which is the governing body of the library and consists of 15 members headed by the chairman, who is nominated by the Minister of Culture, Government of India; director general, DPL is the ex-officio member secretary of the Board. There are various subcommittees constituted by the Board to manage activities including finance & establishment committee, books advisory committee, departmental promotion committee etc. The DPL libraries are divided into five zones covering the whole of New Delhi. The DPL network consists of a central library, a zonal library, 3 branch libraries, 24 sub-branch libraries, 3 community libraries, 12 libraries located in resettlement colonies, one Braille library, 70 mobile service points and 22 deposit stations.

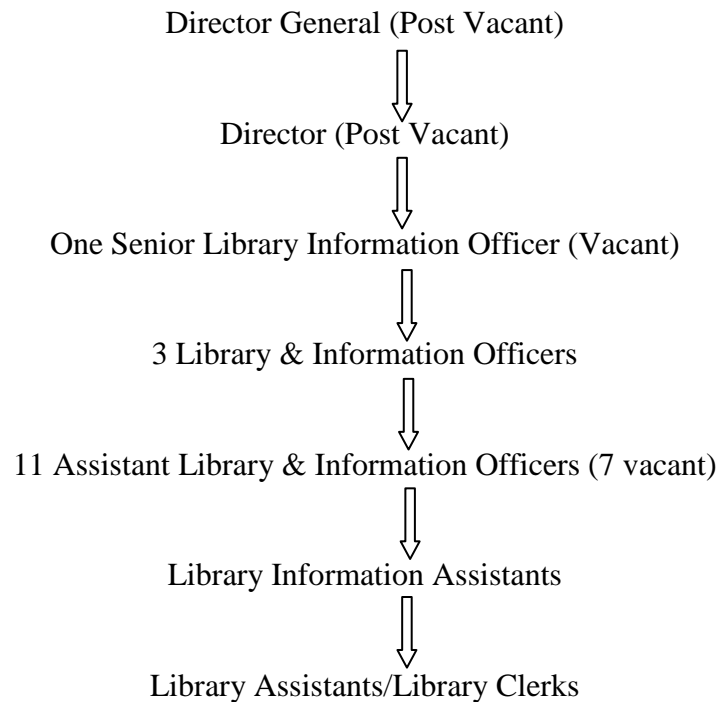
The Organizational Structure of Delhi Public Library is as below:-



The Delhi Public Library has a centralized structure, where all decisions are taken by the respective sub-committees and cleared by the DPL board. The librarians and library staff in the branch and sub-branch libraries just follow the instructions/ rules set by the board.

8.2 Leadership

The leadership hierarchy of the DPL and present status (as of Feb 10, 2013) is as follows:



The chairman of the DPL Board is an honorary post and the Director General is the head of the library for managing the library and formulating and implementing the library's policies. However, the post of DG and Director, the two top management posts at the DPL, has been lying vacant. The post of Director has been vacant since July 2011. The post of Director-General was created after a review committee set up by the Government of India to look into the functioning of the DPL, recommended creation of the post.

“The role of the DG was to expand the DPL beyond the existing zones to cover the entire NCR (National Capital region); to look at computerization of the whole library system, provision of Internet etc. The review committee also recommended that there should be two directors to handle the increasing work load. ” (Interview of Administration)

In the absence of leadership, the DPL's libraries have suffered from lack of planning, motivation and stagnancy. According to interviews with library staff, there is no defined

vision for the children's section and no one to lead the libraries or ensure that the children's libraries are developed according to a set of standards.

“There are many ideas that can be implemented. But there is no one who will take the responsibility of a scheme/ plan and take it forward. The management has to take a call. But bureaucratic hurdles are there and there is no motivation or willingness to take responsibility.”

“There is a leadership issue as no initiative is taken or owned from the top management. Staff is also not trained to look at children's literature as a special segment. The attitude of the staff is 'government-type'. There are no additional incentives for things well done or negative impact for work gone wrong. Since staff will be paid irrespective of performance, they do not take an interest. Moreover, not many are willing to take responsibility of something is taken up but does not work out.

Another librarian shared that providing incentives to interested staff could prove to be a big motivational factor and encourage librarians to lead.

“Some years back I saw London Public Library conduct road shows and give on the spot membership. DPL should give some form of incentive (ex: if you get 500 members you will get a promotion). But here you get equal rights whether you work or not.”

In the absence of leadership and a strong and capable management, several issues such as service conditions, staff shortage, and motivation have been relegated to the background. DPL staff revealed that for several years, there was a ban on recruitment of new staff. But several people retired at the same time and vacancies kept increasing. This resulted in merging of responsibilities and several administrative jobs were allotted to librarians, leaving them “with no time or energy to devote to the quality of library and books.” Secondly, service conditions did not take into account the roles and responsibilities of the staff. Rather, the pay structure has been rigidly defined based on qualifications and number of years of experience.

“In several sub-branch libraries, library assistants or clerks are managing the whole library in the absence of librarians. Despite doing this for several years, they are paid according to their grade and not the roles they are performing. This has led to a lot of dissatisfaction.” (Interview with staff)

Notably, a librarian’s role is not just limited to books and services. A librarian has to be involved in all aspects of the library's planning process to represent and support services to children. Keeping the needs of children in mind, librarians should develop, justify, administer, manage, and evaluate a budget. They should be aware of government policies regarding libraries, budget cuts and be in touch with community leaders to build a case for their library if needed. An efficient library management team considers the needs, opinions, and requests of children in the development and evaluation of library services and collaborates with other agencies serving children, including other libraries, schools, and other community agencies. Children’s libraries also lobby on behalf of children for the highest quality library service, through library governance and the political process (Walter, 2003).

8.3 Budget

Children’s libraries need an annual budget to ensure they develop and grow. This budget should provide for the purchase of books and other resources including magazines, audio visual and computer games. IFLA (2003) suggests that children’s library budgets could be linked to the percentage of children in the overall population. If the child population of the community served is 20%, the proportion of money spent on children’s books and other resources should be the same (i.e. 20% of the total library budget). Secondly, different types of books and resources are required for babies/toddlers, pre-school children (under 4), elementary/primary school children (age 5-10), and older children (age 11-14). Each age range has different needs and expectations. The amount spent on these will vary depending according to the profile of the local community and the use made of the library, e.g. a library service with a very young community will need more pre-school materials. However, the DPL has no separate budget for its children’s libraries

and sections. Nor is a separate planning done based on the profile of its members and users. Notably, the annual budget of DPL for 2010-11 was Rs 16.66 crore. The budget is divided under three categories – books and reading material, establishment and other items. Senior library management staff interviewed said they did not have a separate budget for children.

“We evaluate the needs; see which books are in demand and which books need to be replaced. We also acquire new books every year based on recommendations of the book advisory committee.”

Notably, an advisory committee report (DPL, 2007) states that at least 50% of the DPL’s plan budget should be spent on acquiring resources, out of which 80% should be spent on books and the rest on other kinds of resources. But according to DPL’s annual report (2010-11), only 23% of the plan budget was spent on books and reading material. The bulk of the money went towards establishment costs (DPL, 2011). While no one was able to share what percentage of funds was spent on children during the interviews, some said that the DPL did not lack funds. According to one interviewee, *“We have the budget to pay authors and illustrators to conduct workshops and activities. We can also arrange for snacks for children who attend. We need someone to coordinate the whole effort.”* The DPL library is fully funded by the Government of India and staff said they had never felt the need to raise funds from other sources.

8.4 Competent Human Resource

Ideally, children’s libraries should have their own librarians where possible. In case of a librarian looking after both the adult and children’s sections of a library, the librarian should be trained in several core competencies that all children’s librarians and other library staff should possess if their duties include delivering library service to and advocating library service for children aged 0-14 (ALSC, 2009). To begin with, none of the DPL libraries have a separate post of children’s librarians, including the two at Sarojini Nagar and Chandni Chowk, which have separate children’s libraries and not just

one room kept aside for children. DPL staff said that the librarian for the general library was supposed to look after the children's section. For librarians and library staff to cater to children, they should understand theories of infant, child, and adolescent learning and development and their implications for library service. A librarian should regularly assess diverse needs, preferences, and resources of the community. Since several DPL libraries are situated in multicultural communities, an understanding of and respect for diversity in cultural and ethnic values should be present (ALSC, 2009). While DPL librarians were aware of the general socio-economic background of the children coming to their libraries, there were unaware of the needs and tastes of this diverse membership. If there were aware, there did not have the autonomy or the training to address these needs. For example, the librarian at Shahdra library said that children coming to the library belonged to the poorest sections of society.

“Many do not know how to read well. Their parents don't have any role to play in their education. And schools are also failing them. In this situation, a public library can do much for them to improve literacy and reading skills. They treat the library as an extension of the school. But we are not equipped to cater to their needs.”

Secondly, knowledge of material – books, magazines, audio-visual, digital – is of primary importance for librarians. Librarians should also keep in touch with new materials by consulting a wide variety of reviewing sources and publishers' catalogs, by attending professional meetings, and by reading, viewing, and listening. According to ALSC (2009) they should understand and apply criteria for evaluating the content and artistic merit of children's materials in all genres and formats. They should also possess up-to-date computer and technology skills necessary for effective communications and presentations, apply technological skills to provide reference services and programs and support access to Internet and electronic resources for children. However, none of the seven librarians at DPL had any knowledge of children's literature, latest titles, or popular books and authors. When asked, one librarian said, *“Harry Potter is very popular. Other than that children borrow comic books and Panchatantra.”* Librarians were also not up-to-date about contemporary Indian authors and publishers working exclusively with children's books, or what was available in the market. A majority of

Indian publishers such as Pratham Books, Tulika, Katha and Eklavya, which have in recent years brought out some excellent books for children, were missing from the library shelves. When asked, only one librarian out of 7 had heard of these publishers.

“They publish stories for very small children and we don’t get children below 6 years. So we don’t keep those books here.” (Interview with librarian).

Secondly, the librarians were not aware of the collection in the library. Neither were they interested in understanding what books children liked and what they did not. This is significant because all the librarians interviewed had worked with the DPL for a minimum of 15 years and a maximum of 25 years. Librarians at DPL do not have the autonomy to select books for the library and therefore lack the motivation to remain informed about the latest happenings in the sector. Under the DPL structure as discussed in Chapter 4, a book advisory committee selects books. Librarians said they could recommend books but none of them had recommended any books for children. They all said that they attended book fairs.

8.4.1 Professional Development

Continuous capacity building and professional development is required for librarians and library staff in children’s libraries to stay informed of current trends, emerging technologies, research in librarianship, and selecting and recommending suitable material for children. None of the seven librarians interviewed were engaged in any of the above tasks. It was felt by the researcher that the role of the librarians was limited to lending books, keeping a tab on the book collection and taking care of administrative issues.

All the seven librarians had done their Bachelors/Masters in Library and Information Science. But none had since attended any capacity building course or workshop related to quality improvement in libraries. They had not heard of any such courses specifically in children’s literature. Staff had been given training in learning to handle computers, filing notes in Hindi and English and cataloguing and using DPL’s internal management software. While several used computers haltingly, they had not acquired the level of proficiency expected to guide children. Librarians had attended conferences in library science and management. But no one has attended courses that helped them choose books

for libraries, understand and interact with children or even adults, conduct activities or any other aspects of running a library qualitatively.

“How to get children to the library is one of the major challenges we face. For example, going to schools with mobile vans to showcase services could be done. Holding orientation programmes for schools and teachers; finding out the need of schools and catering to their needs is necessary. But our staff does not have the requisite training for all this. There is also no point person for this or even a plan.”

An efficient library management team considers the needs, opinions, and requests of children in the development and evaluation of library services and collaborates with other agencies serving children, including other libraries, schools, and other community agencies. Children’s libraries also lobby on behalf of children for the highest quality library service, through library governance and the political process. These qualities did not come across in the detailed and in-depth interviews conducted. Last but not the least, a library’s management policy should include opportunities for staff to participate in professional development courses and meetings, to strengthen skills, interact with fellow professionals, promote professional association scholarships, and contribute to the library profession. Librarians should also be urged to pursue professional development and continuing education opportunities throughout their career. It is important to note that a review committee report (DPL, 2007) had recommended training of DPL staff on a host of issues including leadership skills, technology related competencies, management skills and interpersonal and communication skills. The committee had recommended setting up of an internal training facility at DPL at a onetime budget of Rs 23 lakh and recurring expenditure of Rs 4.50 lakh per year for sustaining training activities. However, no action has been taken on this.

Summary

This chapter has looked into crucial aspects of management and leadership which determine the service conditions and motivational levels of DPL’s library staff. There is a huge challenge of staff shortage with 40% of the positions lying vacant. With the

existing staff, there is no focus on capacity building with special emphasis on children's needs and these needs to be addressed to develop children's libraries independently. The various competencies of children's librarians that have been highlighted in this chapter also need to be studied carefully and integrated into the DPL system.

The next chapter provides a list of key findings of the study and outlines some recommendations.

Conclusion

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section summarises the key findings of the study. The second section outlines two sets of recommendations – one for DPL and public libraries in general; and the second for the Parag initiative of Sir Ratan Tata Trust. The third section is a table that gives data on the strengths, challenges and possible areas of intervention for each of the seven libraries visited.

9.1 Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to critically evaluate the current status of children's libraries/sections under the Delhi Public Library system and the library's role in providing access to children's literature and advocating reading and knowledge dissemination among children. The selected libraries were evaluated based on the four elements of infrastructure, book selection, extension activities and management and human resource. The research findings indicate that with the exception of Sarojini Nagar library, the children's sections of all other DPL libraries have been neglected and not received professional attention. The libraries are dull, lack colour and energy, and in several cases, adequate space to accommodate a large collection of books and children.

Secondly, the collection of material at DPL is very limited and does not cater to the needs of children visiting the libraries, who mostly belong to lower socio-economic families with limited or no access to reading material beyond school textbooks. A large collection of English literature is dominated by foreign authors and publication. Contemporary Indian authors and multicultural stories are missing. In Hindi, the books are mostly in black and white, lack originality of text and illustrations and are dominated by mythology, religious and historical figures. There is no policy on children's magazines and audio-visual material is extremely limited. Access to digital content in the form of on-line journals and e-books is unavailable for children.

DPL lacks a comprehensive policy that takes care of extension activities to attract and engage children. Analysis of data shows that DPL has not engaged in any significant manner to promote early literacy acquisition and reading habit among children. A limited number of activities are conducted in the Sarojini Nagar library. These are received well by children, thus pointing towards a need to institutionalize such activities. DPL has provided Internet browsing facilities for children free of cost and these needs to be appreciated. But observations show that children accessing these services need help and guidance.

The role of librarians has become limited to managing the day-to-day running of a library. Librarians do not have the autonomy to select books and do not participate in the selection of material in any significant manner. Their motivation and commitment is affected by service conditions that do not recognize innovation and staff shortage. Last but not the least, there is a gaping need for strong leadership at the top that could address many of the issues highlighted.

9.2 Recommendations

9.2.1 For DPL and Public Library Policy Makers

On Management and Human Resource

The DPL needs to put in place a comprehensive policy on the development of children's libraries, with expected aims and outputs and the roles and responsibilities of the library staff clearly defined. According to ALA (2003), "No endorsement can be made of a modern updated public library if it does not meet the needs of children and their future by providing adequate services, materials and programmes." While DPL has over 10,000 children members in 1960, 50 years later in the number had gone up to a little under 18,000 in 2010-11. Given its presence in multiple locations across Delhi, DPL is in a position to cater to the needs of children from diverse backgrounds. The DPL policy on children's libraries should be based on a set of questions (such as what is the total child population of this area; how many children can we cater to; what is their reading and

literacy level; what extension activities are possible and needed; what training would the DPL staff need to implement these plan etc).

While it is necessary to have firm and committed leadership at the top, the DPL could look at a bottoms-up approach for rejuvenating its children's sections by training and empowering the librarians. It was felt during the interviews that several of the library staff was enthusiastic to deal with children. But they were bogged down by lack of leadership, motivation, and also caught in handling administrative jobs. Workshops and courses that introduce librarians and library staff to the importance of developing a reading culture in children, exposure visits to dynamic children's libraries across the country, and recognition of the work being done will go a long way in encouraging library staff.

A separate budget needs to be set aside for the children's sections thus according priority to this much neglected area.

On Material Selection

DPL needs to urgently put in place a written policy of selection of books, emphasizing the qualitative aspects that need to be kept in mind before selecting a book for the library. Several criteria for book selection exist internationally that the DPL can refer to. Nationally, a set of criteria developed by the NCERT (not yet in public domain) and another created by a group of experts (NCCL, 2012) can be used by DPL. There is also a need to standardize the process of selection of members to the book advisory committee. At present members are selected by word-of-mouth or reference. A set of competencies for selecting children's reading material must be specified by the DPL board.

The multicultural and diverse nature of India and its people should be reflected in the book collection. Therefore, there is need to widen the base of publishers, authors and illustrators to include contemporary books that reflect today's society and children.

All librarians should be aware of the latest in children's literature, read and write reviews, attend children's literature festivals, and plan activities for their members.

On Infrastructure

The Sarojini Nagar library comes closest to defining a vibrant and cheerful public library for children as discussed in the literature review. The researcher acknowledges that issues of space shortage will persist. Given the shortage of space, there are several areas which DPL can address, such as changing the paint on the walls to a much brighter shade; bringing in paintings by children, works by children's authors and illustrators into the library space; improving the display of books by putting big books in bins, hanging strings for display of small format books etc. In libraries where there is no space to conduct activities, the time that children spend browsing books for borrowing is valuable and an interactive environment can encourage them to come back. The problem of storing old books that are no more in use has come up repeatedly in conversations and as discussed in Chapter 4. DPL should immediately put a policy in place for discarding these books. This would free up much needed space in many of the libraries including Patel Nagar, Sarojini Nagar and Janakpuri.

On Extension Activities

As the UNESCO (1960) document shows, several extension activities were carried out by DPL when the library began functioning. While several activities such as English proficiency classes, regular storytelling sessions, puppetry, digital literacy and theatre have been identified by the DPL staff as areas of demand, DPL needs to put one person in charge of planning and executing these activities. While DPL staff have said repeatedly that there is no shortage of funds, DPL should actively seek out partners who are working in the above identified areas to provide their expertise.

9.2.2 For Parag Initiative of SRTT

During the course of the study several areas have come up where the Trust's Parag initiative can contribute towards. First and foremost is advocacy with the highest authorities (in this case the Ministry of Culture and the DPL Board) to accord due importance to children's libraries and sections in the DPL network. As part of the

National Mission on Libraries, this study could be presented and a case for focusing on children’s libraries could be built.

Secondly, Parag, in consultation with DPL, could develop a training programme or a series of workshops for library staff on operating children’s libraries.

Parag has worked with partners who are running children’s libraries and educational centres. Parag could partner with DPL to take up two of its libraries as pilots and turn them into model children’s libraries that will represent many of the characteristics discussed through this study. Given dearth of demonstration sites, investing in select libraries for improving collection, training the staff and holding range of activities to attract, sustain and develop children’s readership can go a long way in creating a benchmark.

Parag, in collaboration with DPL, could plan to hold a national seminar/conference/round table on public libraries and their role in literacy acquisition and building reading habits among children. Libraries would have a chance to present best practices, and also share and learn from each other’s experiences. This will put the theme of ‘libraries for children’ firmly under the spotlight.

With several years of experience in supporting original and multicultural regional language children’s literature in India, the Parag team could be instrumental in giving suggestions to DPL on improving its books and resource collection.

9.3 Library Specific Recommendations

Table:

Library	Strengths	Challenges	Recommendation
Sarojini Nagar	Adequate space to increase book collection and hold regular activities; At least 10 schools in immediate	Children’s library has no dedicated librarian; Activities are held but not regularly; Book collection needs	A full time librarian can be appointed and trained to make the children’s library active. Close coordination and regular collaboration with schools will

	vicinity; Staff is interested in conducting activities	to be multicultural and contextual, with much more Indian literature available	help increase membership and usage; the library could also partner with organizations to bring in skills.
Central Library	<p>Has adequate space to increase book collection and hold regular activities</p> <p>Also has a large number of staff availability overall</p>	<p>Library is in a dilapidated condition, and has hundreds of old and worn books that need to be replaced with new ones</p> <p>The location is difficult for children to access despite being very close to metro station. It is a commercial area with the old Delhi railway station and businesses nearby</p>	<p>Improving the aesthetics of the library and display of books is very important to attract children.</p> <p>While the challenge remains, a concentrated drive to increase membership and collection needs to be done. Depending on response, one can determine if distance and accessibility are issues</p> <p>There is scope for starting institutional lending schemes for schools that don't have libraries or want to supplement their library collection</p>
Janakpuri Library	<p>The location is its strength as it has several residential colonies nearby from which children come</p> <p>There are 10-15 schools in the vicinity of the library and 4 within walking distance</p>	<p>Space is the biggest problem as children's section comprises only three shelves in the main library. This means only a handful of books are available in both English and Hindi</p>	<p>A large space is available in the basement, which is filled with old and unused books. If this space is freed up, the section can be used to develop a full-fledged children's library and also conduct activities</p> <p>The librarians have not actively pursued schools as they say lack of space means they cannot afford to increase membership</p>
Patel Nagar	<p>Has a separate room for children and also a large collection of books</p>	<p>Collection is under used due to lack of membership</p>	<p>Library staff shared that most houses in the neighbourhood are empty as people have moved out and higher educational institutes /businesses have come up in the area. One dedicated drive to increase membership should be done before recommending alternatives for the library.</p>

<p>Vinobha Puri</p>	<p>Space is the biggest advantage. There are three rooms for children and a lot of scope exists for increasing book collection and conducting activities.</p> <p>Has 10 schools in the vicinity</p>	<p>No concentrated drive to increase membership yet</p> <p>Space is not utilized well.</p>	<p>Because of availability of space, collection should be increased and also membership from neighbouring schools</p> <p>Lot of scope to conduct activities and retain children's interest in the library</p>
<p>Shahdra</p>	<p>The library is located in one of Delhi's poorest localities and caters to children of daily wage labourers mostly, thus providing access to underprivileged children</p>	<p>Several children who come to the library have difficulty reading even simple text</p> <p>There is a huge demand for Hindi literature and non-fiction books but these are not available</p> <p>There is no space for the library to expand</p>	<p>Space is the first factor that DPL needs to address. Because of thousands of genuine students who need the library and use it, just saying that there is no space does not address the problem. Alternatives need to be explored seriously</p> <p>Story sessions and other early literacy activities that help improve reading and literacy would work very well with children coming to the library.</p>
<p>Narela</p>	<p>The library is located in a central area of Narela and easily accessible by children. Librarian is dynamic and very interested in children and the library</p>	<p>Electricity is a major problem. With several hours of cut, the library is in darkness most of the time, thus putting children off.</p> <p>Collection needs to be according to the context and need of children; the Hindi book collection needs to improve and also be displayed better</p>	<p>Several options including emergency lights, solar lights, generators etc can be explored</p> <p>High interest of librarian to start activities and sessions for children. Also need to improve Hindi collection and strengthen non-fiction collection.</p>

Annexure I

Background on Parag

Established in 1919, the Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT) is one of the oldest philanthropic institutions in India, and has played a pioneering role in changing traditional ideas of charity. The Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust, formed in 1974, works together with SRTT to bestow grants. The Trusts support work in education, health, livelihoods and civil society and governance.

Children's Literature has been identified as a key gap area in elementary education. Based on recommendation by education experts, the Trusts launched their initiative 'Parag' to promote children's literature in Indian languages, recognizing importance of quality children's literature for elementary education and child development. Scope of Parag initiative included: i) development of quality children's literature and educational publishing; ii) dissemination channels for ensuring access to books including focused efforts to promote libraries; iii) capacity building of key stakeholder pertaining to children's literature and libraries; and iv) networking, creating resource material to bring prominence to children's literature as a sector.

The importance of children's literature in regional languages and their mother tongues has been highlighted by several studies. Notably, the NCF 2005 emphasizes a three-language formula with emphasis on mother tongue as the medium of instruction. It focuses on availability of resources, including children's literature in regional languages, to encourage reading and writing, especially among first generation learners, to make various resources beyond textbooks available to children. However, only a handful of publishers in India are engaged in quality publishing of children's literature in regional languages.

Increasing Access to quality books: Parag has supported the publication of around 200 new titles in about 9 languages (Hindi, Marathi, Urdu, English, Malayalam, Telugu,

Gujarati and pilot material in non-mainstream languages, i.e. Bhili and Santhali). Titles include picture books, educational publishing, curricular material, activity books, poems, story books for various ages. Over 550,000 original print runs and large number of editions / print runs have reached around 8-9 million readers.

To ensure access to all strata of society, the price of Parag-supported books is kept low. For instance, more than 70% of Parag books are priced below Rs 50. Wide distribution of Parag-supported books has taken place through participation in state level purchases made through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan across 200,000 primary schools in three states in the country.

Parag has supported 100 classrooms/ school based libraries and 30 community based libraries through partners to improve access to and quality of books. Reader's Clubs have been set up in 50 primary schools in Yadgir, Karnataka to enable students to access quality children's literature.

Creating Capacity and Generating Resources: Parag has organized workshops on storytelling, reading promoting, analysis of children's literature, and created platforms for authors, illustrators, publishers, educators to meet, share and learn from each other. It has also supported the creation of resource material for librarians and teachers in the form of an annotated bibliography of magazines for children, a graded annotated bibliography of English books for children, a guidebook for developing reading habit in children and a manual of library procedures and routines among others.

Annexure III

References:

Takalkar, A. and Rama Devi T. (2001) 'Rural libraries: A comparative study in four States of India', *Public Library Quarterly*, 19 (3), pp. 43-55

ALA (2009) 'Notable Children's Books Committee Manual' accessed at <http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/notalists/ncb/ncbslctcomm> on 2nd January 2013

ALSC (2009) 'Competencies for Librarians Serving Children in Public Libraries' accessed at <http://www.ala.org/alsc/edcareers/alsccorecomps> on 30th Jan 2013

Ahuja, R., Mitra, S., Kumar, R. & Singh, M.(1995) Education through Digital Entertainment – A Structured Approach, Proc. XXX Annual Convention of CSI Tata McGraw Hill, New Delhi, pp-187 – 194

Bon, I., Cranfield, A., Latimer, K. (Eds) (2011) *Designing Library Space for Children*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter

Connor, J. G. (1990) *Children's Library Services Handbook*, 4(23), Phoenix: The Oryx Press

Cerny, R., Markey, P. and Williams, A. (2006) *Outstanding Library Service to Children: Putting the Core Competencies to Work*, American Library Association

Das, A.K., and Lal, B (2006) *Information literacy and public libraries in India*, Delhi: Delhi Public Library

Davies, S. (2008) 'Taking stock: The future of our public library service', accessed <http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/17301.pdf> on 28th January 2013

Gould, E. (2007) 'Public Libraries in Southern India' available at <http://depts.washington.edu/iworlduw/southernindialibraries.pdf>, accessed on 30th January 2013

GoD (2012) 'An Approach to the 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17)' available at <http://delhi.gov.in/wps/wcm/connect/a7a397804c0a2b9cbcd5bd8696242497/139-187+General+Education.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&lmod=781857439&CACHEID=a7a397804c0a2b9cbcd5bd8696242497> accessed on 13th Feb 2013

Handa (2011) available at <http://dspace.jgu.edu.in:8080/dspace/bitstream/10739/177/1/ROLE%20OF%20PUBLIC%20LIBRARY%20IN%20THE%20SOCIETY%20AND%20A%20FUTURE%20VISION%20OF%20ICT%20ENABLED%20RENDERING%20OF%20ITS%20SERVICES%20WITH%20SPECIAL%20CONTEXT%20TO%20INDIA%2019.pdf> , accessed on 25th December 2012

Jenkins, E. C. and Austin, M. C. (1987) *Literature for Children about Asian and Asian Americans*, New York: Greenwood Press

Katz, R. L. (1952) "Skills of an Effective Administrator", reprinted in Harvard Business Review, (Sept/Oct 1974):90-102

Krüger, S. (2003) 'The PISA-shock and its consequences: The future of libraries for children in Germany', Available at http://webdoc.sub.gwdg.de/ebook/aw/2003/ifla/vortraege/iv/ifla69/papers/079e_trans-Krueger.pdf , accessed 31st January 2013

Lapan, T. (2012) 'Libraries reinvent themselves for the digital age', available at <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2012/apr/11/libraries-reinvent-themselves-digital-age/>, accessed 29th January 2013

Mahajan, P. (2009) "School Libraries in India: Present-day Scenario," Library Philosophy and Practice, accessed at <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/371> accessed 31st January 2013

MacLean, J. (2008) 'Library preschool storytimes:Developing early literacy skills in children' available at <http://www.ed.psu.edu/educ/goodling-institute/professional-development/Judy%20MacLean%20Library%20Preschool%20Storytimes.pdf> accessed on 31st March 2013

Mei-Yu, L. (1998) 'Multicultural Children's Literature in the Elementary Classroom', accessed at <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED423552.pdf> on 2nd January 2013

MLA (2007) 'Standards for Public Library Services to Children in Massachusetts', available at <http://www.masslib.org/yss/ServicesToChildrenFinal2007.pdf> , accessed on 2nd January 2013

Mitra, S. (1998), 'A computer assisted learning strategy for computer literacy programmes', Annual Convention of the All-India Association for Educational Technology, Goa

NKC (2008) 'Report of the Working Group on Libraries', available at http://knowledgecommission.gov.in/downloads/documents/wg_lib.pdf accessed on 10th Nov 2012

Önal, H. I. (2009) 'Designing Tomorrow's Libraries with Children's Views' accessed at <http://conference.ifla.org/past/ifla75/103-onal-en.pdf> on 2nd January 2013

Mahesh, G. and Mittal, R. (2008) 'Digital Libraries in India: A Review', available at <http://www.librijournal.org/pdf/2008-1pp15-24.pdf> , accessed on 15th January 2013

Parvathamma, N. and Reddy, S. (2009) 'Use of Information Resources and Services in Public Libraries: A case of Bidar district, Karnataka State, India,' available at [http://nopr.niscair.res.in/bitstream/123456789/7263/1/ALIS%2056\(4\)%20249-254.pdf](http://nopr.niscair.res.in/bitstream/123456789/7263/1/ALIS%2056(4)%20249-254.pdf), accessed on 15th January 2013

RRRLF (2012) 'Guidelines for Selection of Books and Recipient Libraries in the States / Union Territories' available at <http://rrrlf.nic.in/guide2.htm> , accessed on 3rd January 2013

Singh, R. (2011) 'Future of Indian Public Libraries: Beginning the Great Transformation', available at <http://dspace.jgu.edu.in:8080/dspace/bitstream/10739/164/1/Future%20of%20Indian%20Public%20Libraries%2006.pdf> , accessed on 10th January 2013

Deoghuria, S. (2010) 'Are Research Libraries in India prepared in Digital Age?', available at <http://arxiv.iacs.res.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/10821/166/1/deoghuria.pdf> , accessed on 15th January 2013

Sreekumar, M.G. and Sreejaya, P. (2005) 'Digital Library Initiatives and Issues in India: Efforts on Scholarly Knowledge Management', available at <http://dspace.iimk.ac.in/bitstream/2259/252/1/05-mgs-ps-pape>, accessed on 15th January 2013

Trim, M. (2004) *Growing and Knowing: A Selection Guide for Children's Literature*, Munich: K G Saur Verlag Gmbh & Co

UNESCO (1960) 'Regional Seminar on Library Development in South Asia' available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001476/147673eb.pdf> accessed 1st January 2013

Vaijayanti, K. and Mohan, L. (2009) 'School Library Programme: Two Case Studies', accessed at http://www.akshara.org.in/reports/rande/Akshara_Libraries_casestudy2_re06.pdf on 29th Jan 2009

Varatharajan, N. and Chandrashekhara, M. (2007) 'Digital Library Initiatives at Higher Education and Research Institutions in India', available at <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/~mbolin/vara-chandra.pdf>, accessed 15th January 2013

Walter, V. A (2001) *Children and Libraries: Getting it Right*, American Library Association

Walter, V. A. (2003) 'Public Library Service to Children and Teens: A Research Agenda', *Library Trends*, Vol. 51 (4), pp. 571-589

Wani, Z. A. (2008) 'Development of Public Libraries in India', available at <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1168&context=libphilprac>, accessed on 20th January 2013