Library including Students with Dyslexia

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Extended Abstract
Inclusive education policy and practice hold great promise for, improving educational equity and promoting child-friendliness in schools. Though there are many policy declarations to support every child’s inclusion in regular educational setup, the implementation is still challenging. Inclusive schooling is conquering the attention of all countries around the globe. These schools can make a difference by putting heavy emphasis on bringing forth a positive learning environment to make all the children, whether abled or disabled, to participate actively in the everyday classroom activities. Inclusion paves way to ensure a change in their lives by removing the barriers to learning, widely ranging from factors like attitude of the teachers and parents, rigid curriculum, absence of infrastructure to lack of accessible resources. Inclusive schools should be manageable and fully accessible for children with disabilities. There must be flexibility in curriculum and all resources needed for learning should be focused on each child’s specific needs. It should also be assured that all children can partake in all the classroom activities. Schools should be furnished with all equipment, technological devices and library resources to cater the needs of these children. There must be provisions for barrier free availability of Braille books, Smart boards, Interactive white boards, Magnifying lens, Reading Machines; Talking Text Books, Sign language interpreters, Computers with speech software and Transcription services for children with disability.

Dyslexia, a specific learning difficulty, is one of the most common invisible, hidden learning disability and is one of the most common difficulty prevailing all over
the world regardless of culture and nations. Educating these children is a great problem as it mainly affects the basic literacy skills like listening, reading, spelling and writing. British Dyslexia Association, 2013, reported about 8% of the world population have dyslexia and 4% is severely affected. A child with dyslexia has to continue as a lifelong dyslexic as it is neurobiological in origin. The child with dyslexia can only develop individual coping strategies to overcome the barriers to learning. With normal intelligence, these children often experience difficulties in reading, a crucial literacy skill which is needed to acquire information from the diversified resources. Reading is very essential at all learning environments for becoming proficient at the content. The Charter for the Reader in 1992, states that reading is the key to cultural and scientific heritage and promotes international understanding. Information searching needs word recognition and spelling skills for exploring relevant documents by using various platforms. Difficulties in reading and spelling that exist throughout the life period of a dyslexic learner, affect the way in which they search information.

Libraries are the main information resource centres for reading and accessing the written language. So, the complete portrait of how dyslexics are learning should be considered by the libraries. Libraries should, for that reason, be in the lead in supporting dyslexic users to overcome this disability. There should be pleasant surrounding with needed materials for these children in a library, so that they feel enthused to visit the libraries. This paper aims to review the extent to which libraries should be inclusive in taking efforts to meet the needs of the dyslexic children. The paper also examines the best practices essential to meet the needs of dyslexic individuals, the materials that can be made available and its potential role in serving the needs of the dyslexic community. As dyslexia is as an educational issue, libraries should provide accessible materials needed for enhancing the active reading process of these students. By
addressing the special needs of children with dyslexia, library continues to have an important role in self-improvement, literacy and lifelong learning of children with dyslexia. Moreover libraries should be encouraged to be inclusive to help children with dyslexia in accessing information and becoming information literatelike the non-disabled peers.

**Keywords:** Inclusion, dyslexia, information search, information literacy, library, reading difficulties
**Inclusive Education**

After the World Conference on Special Needs Education (1994), the concept of inclusion gained increasing momentum and focus. It reflected the importance of including every individual and helping them in their learning by catering according to their individual needs. It also realized the significance of achieving the Salamanca statement, Education for All. The main recommendation made by UNESCO to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is that, everyone should be given the opportunity to be educated, to attain the knowledge and skills needed for their lifelong empowerment, by removing all the barriers to learning irrespective of their age groups. This statement can be made real only through practicing inclusion rather than integration which make precise changes only according to the declared individual needs of the students. The Indian Constitution also stands as a guarantor of liberty, equality of opportunity and of social justice for all the citizens of India without any classification or discrimination. Moreover Article 45 of the constitution also directs the state to provide free and compulsory education for all children including the disabled until they attain the age of 14 years.

**Need for Inclusive Education**

The essence of the notion of inclusion is about major provision of support services which foresee and make available, a variety of probable needs of the learners. To achieve effective inclusion, the institutions should not focus on the disability of the students but on the resource facilities needed to overcome the barriers to learning. Inclusion in education helps to accept all students who desire to attend the school by reducing the exclusion of students for their disability thereby building a school’s capacity (Sebba & Sachdev, 1997; Booth & Ainscow, 1998). By this process, there is an increased participation and decreased exclusion. The participation in the real sense means recognition, acceptance and respect. Inclusion in this way enables an individual to develop a sense of belonging to a group.

Though large sums were invested as resources in special schools and institutions for children with disabilities, it does not reach more than a fraction of those in need. These contributions were also found not to be helping these children (Banerjee, 2002). There are many challenges in providing quality education across cultures, designing mainstream school systems to be more inclusive of children with disabilities, and finding ways to better support children facing economic hardships. It ensures that every child, regardless of gender, physical and social
attributes, intellectual status, emotional challenges, linguistic backgrounds, or special needs, receives a high-quality education (UNICEF, 2009).

**Dyslexic Inclusion**

MacDonald (2009) observes dyslexic discrimination as a social barrier, rather than an individual problem. The education system which relies mostly on examinations for measuring the intellectual ability has become an institutional barrier that disguises discriminations for students with dyslexia. This discrimination that hinders the students with dyslexia to reach their full capability can be broken down, not by just integrating them in the schools but through including and making them to actively participate in the classroom activities. Inclusiveness is the only approach which safeguards the fundamental human right of education for all children. To transform the life of students with dyslexia valuable and change them to persons with high potentialities, educational system should be reformed by including those students (Viji & Raja, 2017). Hence, inclusive education must be a general practice, mainstreamed into education, not as a specific intervention addressing one disadvantaged group or other.

**Dyslexia and its characteristics**

It was in 1896, Morgan reported the first case of dyslexia in the British Medical Journal after diagnosing the difficulty in reading and spelling, in a 14 years aged boy with normal intelligence. This condition, earlier called as word-blindness, was used by the professionals in the medical field to label people with severe difficulty in reading the print (Morgan, 1896). Dyslexia which means, the reading disability, is the most common learning disability which is characterized by an unexpected difficulty in reading in children and adults. It is often termed as a hidden disability and it is usually linked to difficulty in associating sounds with pictures (Thomson, 1984). In the mild form the affected person has difficulty in reading, but in severe cases of the impairment there is a total loss of the ability to read (Rajakumari et al., 2004).

It was also categorized as a syndrome by Hicks and Murgatroyd (1985), which includes a wide range of symptoms hindering the person's ability to deal with written language and multifaceted environments (Augur, 1986). As well, students with dyslexia often have moderately inefficient rapid information processing capabilities and short-term-memory and as a result they experience difficulties in reading and writing (Simmons & Singleton, 2000). Researchers (Galaburda & Casalis, (1995); Beaton, (2004)) derived that dyslexia is a neuro-developmental
syndrome genetic in origin which may result in difficulties in auditory, visual and temporal processing.

**Encapsulating Dyslexia**

The International Dyslexia Board (2002) gave the most widely accepted definition for Dyslexia which states, “*Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.*” Its fundamental claim is that phonological deficits are the core of reading difficulties. Though Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, 2001 (SENDA) has classified dyslexia as disability, these students do not consider them as disabled and are unwilling to avail the supporting services (Jamieson & Morgan, 2008).

**Reading and barriers in reading**

Reading is a remarkable human skill in which the concept of literacy is rooted. The children learn to read spontaneously and practice literacy. It is through reading, information is used in accordance with the personal, family and community. It is the most important tool for acquiring the information literacy. The adopted Charter for the Reader in 1992 states that reading which is the key to cultural and scientific heritage, encourages international understanding. The strength of democratic nation is based on the well informed people. Multiple skills are required in the stages of learning to read. These skills include the development of awareness that spoken language can be segmented into smaller elements (i.e., phonemes), identifying letters, learning the rules of how print maps onto sound, recognizing whole words not only accurately but also rapidly (automatically), acquiring a vocabulary, and extracting meaning from the printed words. Teaching children the rules for mapping the orthography (letters) against the elemental sounds of spoken language (phonemes) is focused in the beginning of reading instruction. Children initially learn to read words by mapping letters to sounds, and eventually, after reading and rereading a word correctly, the child can read the word not only accurately but also fluently (and, it is inferred, automatically). Fluent reading is the ability to read text accurately and rapidly with proper expression (National Reading Panel, 2000).
When the experience with reading instruction builds up, accurate reading is achieved. In the process of learning to read, recoding the letters (orthography) into their sounds (phonology) is a forbidding step for some children. As a result, there is a disruption in the reading process and these children were unable to read fluently (Shaywitz, Morris, & Shaywitz, 2008). This failure in the development of fluent reading is a hallmark of dyslexia that continues into adolescence and then adulthood, even though accuracy improves. This lack of fluent reading, though reading is effortful and slow, is often considered as the sine qua non of dyslexia (Lefly & Pennington, 1991; Shaywitz, 2003). The students with dyslexia are usually as good as their peers in intelligence, many abilities and skills other than reading, comprehension and spelling (Raja & Viji, 2018).

**Library promoting Information Literacy through Reading**

International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA, 2001) defines, “library as a physical and digital learning space where reading, inquiry, research, thinking, imagination, and creativity are central to students’ information-to-knowledge journey and to their personal, social, and cultural growth.” This physical and digital place is known by several terms, centre for documentation and information, library resource centre and library learning commons. They have multifarious environments with vast amount of resources, arranged in a specific organised order so that resources can be easily made available and retrieved by people who want to improve their information literacy. The IFLA School Library Guidelines (2015) recommends that the central instructional activities of a library should be focused on promoting literacy and reading, instructing about media and information literacy, inquiry-based teaching, integrating technology and professional development of teachers.

The Library Services for People with Disabilities Policy (2001) declared that through putting on Universal Design principles to action, libraries should facilitate the active participation of all people with disability not just by merely accommodating their needs. It should ensure that all the policies, resources and support services should meet the needs of all the individuals. It should improve the infrastructure, material resources, assistive technology devices and training to library staff to work together with these people.

Harrison (2004) recognizes library as an important resource playing a vital role in supporting students with disability. Reading of any student in an educational setup is supported by the library. This shows a positive link between levels of reading and results of learning. This
positive influence helps to close the gaps of achievement which are common for students with disabilities and also who are poor and socially disadvantaged. Libraries are said to be pragmatic when they provide reading resources according to the individual preferences, needs and rights of the readers. Selection of their own reading materials helps the learners to develop their vocabulary, writing ability and grammar. When there is easy accessibility to quality books, the students can improve their fluency and comprehension skills in learning the language and develops the information literacy. These information literate students in turn can synthesizes main ideas to construct new concepts.

**Challenges and library necessities for dyslexia**

Libraries have an obligation to help dyslexic students throughout their studies in spite of increasing numbers and limited resources. Nielsen (2006) emphasizes that it is the duty of libraries to make sure that students with dyslexia also should be given equal importance as their peers in accessing information. Libraries present substantial obstacles to these students because of its difficult plans and classification systems (Coxon, 2003). One of the prevalent hindrances which were recognized was that libraries were not providing material in a format suitable for these children to read. The SCONUL Access steering group (2007) identified a number of barriers to dyslexic library users including: i) difficulty in interpreting and understanding information given ii) remembering instructions iii) sequencing and interpreting shelf marks iv) communicating needs to library staff v) assimilating information making library orientation difficult vi) poor attention span e.g. during induction sessions and vii) poor organisational skills making obtaining the required resources within a timeframe difficult.

These children have problems in accessing the printed word when it is small and clustered with too many words in a sentence. Since most of the printed material is in black and white colour, these present difficulties. When students who struggle to read are made available with alternative materials for reading, like audiobooks, they showed better reading skills and enhanced attitudes toward reading. Since these students need alternative special reading devices, Nielsen and Irvall (2001) advocated the importance of investing in assistive technology for these users with dyslexia. But it was argued by McNaught (2011) that there was a lack in proper rendering of support services for students with dyslexia as the inclusive technologies such as e-books are not initiated.
Singleton (1999) raised the issue that many students with dyslexia feel difficult in using the library resources and tempt to avoid using the facilities. So the facilities in the libraries should be made convenient for the easy accessibility. But in contradiction to this issue, Belger and Chelin (2013) investigated in their study that majority of students are accessing library resources independently with minimal support from library.

**Library necessities for Dyslexic learners**

According to Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dyslexia, IFLA (2001) the specific services and materials that can be provided for the students with reading disability are outlined below:

*Pleasant reading environment:* When students with reading disabilities enter the library it should be in an appealing and inspiring setting with a variety of print and digital materials located in a central area to catch the attention of the entering students. There should also be clear signposting, highlighted with pictograms and a coloured line on the floor to lead the students to the relevant materials. Their section should be designed attractively with appropriate seating arrangements. Technological devices that support their reading should be present in their area.

*Easy-to-Read Materials:* There are two types of Easy-to-Read books. They are adaptations of existing books and another one is specially written books. Some of them are available with a taped version. The students can follow the printed matter by listening to the tape and as a result their reading comprehension can be improved.

*Talking books:* These new digital books are very helpful for the students with dyslexia as they provide them facility for reading by listening rather than reading by seeing. These books also have different speed levels for developing their speed in reading at their own relaxed speed. These books can also be lent to the students.

*Newspapers:* Newspapers are main sources of information. These can be made on tape so that all the reading impaired students can read. Electronic version of daily newspapers can be read on a computer with the help of enlarged print or synthetic speech.

*Periodicals:* Other than books, periodicals on current events, science, medicine, and other domains can also be made available for students with dyslexia. The students should be given information about these materials and how to find these resources.

*Pamphlets and brochures:* Pamphlets and brochures from public and private agencies should also be provided on tape. The students are provided with equal access to these materials through the
audio format.

**Reading Service:** To a person with reading difficulty, reading personal letters and other written communication can be a major problem. The library can give a reading service to these students to read the letters. The letters are made possible to be recorded and scanned and made to read with the help of synthetic speech in the library.

**Videos with easy-to-read subtitles:** When watching videos the students with dyslexia may experience difficulty in following the story because of the complex nature of the spoken language. To overcome this difficulty the films can be made in versions with subtitles that are easy-to-read without diminishing their interests.

**Information technology:** Using multimedia approach is an important method for reading. Since they have poor spelling, the computers present great problems in acquiring information. There are many multimedia software available to improve the spelling and grammar. For providing equal opportunity, the library should be equipped with synthetic speech and text magnification computers. Voice recognition versions should be available to persons with reading and spelling difficulties. Assistive technology devices such as spell checkers, talking word processor, note taking device, word prediction device, prewriting device and multimedia software device can be made provided to the students with reading difficulties.

**Good and Healthy Practices for an Inclusive Library**

Library should ensure that their policies and practices designed should be in an inclusive way to identify and remove all the – environmental, attitudinal barriers that prevent disabled people from using library services. Importance for developing good practices is envisioned to promote inclusivity in libraries. There should be a positive attitude among the staff in the organization which is a vital criterion for successful practicing. Also, when the students with dyslexia request for help due to their poor organizational skills, the staffs in the library should give needed descriptions and explanations about accessing resources and how to manage them (Jamieson & Morgan, 2007). Adopting minimum type sizes for posters and leaflets, choosing appropriate colour combinations, and creating a clear understandable layout can be practiced (British Dyslexia Association, 2006). Equity in providing support services and material resources in needed formats should be encouraged. Information about the disability should be kept confidential for privacy and unnecessary disclosures.
Activities based on literacy to enhance reading and extensive use of online platforms to gain information should be provided. Written materials, self-selected reading materials for debating and interacting with others should be ensured. New fiction and non-fiction materials should be promoted to both teachers and students through book talks, library displays, and information on the library’s webpage. Since they struggle to read the instructions given in the manual, the word processor which is a boon for dyslexic users should be provided. It is through word processors they are independent to write letters and check their spellings. Though there may be financial constraints, by offering word processors, help can be extended to a large number of dyslexics who are excluded and are in a verge of frustration due to their underperformance (Bliss, 1986).

Special literacy events such as exhibitions, library visits and celebrating international literacy days can be organized to promote the literacy profile. The library should also support teachers by recommending books appropriate for reading projects for these students to become information literate. The borrowing policies, fines and penalties for renewing and lost materials should be liberal because the students have slow reading. Parents can develop their disabled children’s literacy through home reading programs and read aloud programs and exhibit their talents.

When the front line service is reduced and there is a shift towards computerized service or self-service (Jones, 2004), this affects dyslexia friendly environment of the students with dyslexia. Moreover, as the students with dyslexia also have spelling difficulties, the computerised catalogues should have spell check facility to overcome their errors in spellings thus providing opportunity in a more equitable manner. Creating an inclusive friendly learning environment is very much essential to them than having individual support. By auditing the support service delivery, the areas and aspects in which barriers are present can be identified, monitored, reported and evaluated for enhancing the quality changes in the library.

**Educational Implications**

Developing information literate students is the goal of all libraries. These information literates are the sole responsible and ethical members in society. The students who are information literate are competent and are aware of their information needs and vigorously involve in the realm of ideas. They are more confident in their problem-solving ability and have the knowledge to trace out appropriate and consistent information. They are capable of managing technology
devices to access information and effectively communicate the facts or ideas that they have learned. They embrace high valued works and can makeworthy products. Information literate students are flexible, have the potential to adjust to change and work effectively both in groups and individually. The libraries should always be within framework of ethics of all the native, state, and national supremacy, providing equity in the learning opportunities for both the disabled and abled students and thereby improving their skills which are desirable for the energetic participation in the knowledge society.

To maintain equity in the continuously progressing educational and cultural environment, libraries are needed to be supported by legislations and persistent financial funding. Library plays an integral part in the educational setup which develops the literacy, information literacy, teaching, learning and culture supporting all students with or without disability to achieve the universal statement of education for all.

The library staff and also volunteers should follow the ethical standards when they deal students with dyslexia. They should not be biased and stereotyped with their personal attitudes while rendering their support services. They should treat all the students without partiality irrespective of their abilities and background. These quality modifications in the library guidelines can envision a world of inclusion, equity of opportunity, and social justice in this changing trendy world to achieve the 21st century goals.

**Conclusion**
The skills and attributes required to become information literate from the perspective of information users with dyslexia, the reading disability, should be highlighted through the policy planning which plays an important role in developing information literacy among these students. Difficulties in reading and spelling are persistent throughout the life of students with dyslexia and this influences the way how they access and use the information. These information users have many obstacles in finding suitable material and also problems in dealing with the complex library environment. So to overcome these hindrances and transforming them into potential users of library resources, it is the valid task of libraries to provide appropriate support services to these students. The needed type of library resources for students with dyslexia should be planned and targeted to counterpart their requirements. There should be allocation of special budgets for improving the collected materials for them. The human resources in the library should assist these information users without any labeling of this category and should have provisions for
good, innovative and healthy practices and stimulate to feel a sense of welcoming to the library. Some of the students are very potential users of libraries. Moreover, they are also intelligent and are very curious to learn. But they experience much difficulty in learning by reading and hesitate to visit the libraries. The lack of awareness about these children, by their parents, teachers and the people in the society, make them helpless. Dyslexics feel imprisoned by their disability and all they require is the keys to open the doors and expose them to the literacy legacy.

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