ROLE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN PROVIDING LIBRARY SERVICES TO THE HOSPITALISED PATIENTS

6.1 Introduction:

The word “Library” comes from the Latin word “Liber” which means “book”. The library is, therefore, a place where books are kept. But the library of today is more than building or a room in which books are kept. The term library may be defined as “collection of graphic, acoustic and holistic materials such as books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, maps, charts, film strips, micro-films, microfiches, phonograph record, CDs, DVDs, magnetic tapes, magnetic disks etc. all designed for use.

A library is a collection of printed or written material arranged and organised for the purpose of study and research of general reading or both. Library is the giant brain of humanity. It preserves the lofty thoughts of master minds, the lovely imagination of sensitive, the wise and weighty counsels of sound and sagacious heads. It links up hundreds and thousands of generations with one and another and thus, provides a panoramic picture of the humanity.

A library is an institution charged with mainly:

(i) Care of collection of documents;
(ii) Duty of making them accessible to those who require them; and
(iii) Function of persuading every person to accept the continuous use of its services. It is essentially a trinity of documents, librarian and reader.

6.2 Public Libraries:

No doubts, citizens in a free society have the right and the responsibility to make choices about their personal lives, their group’s activities and their
government. In order to make choices in each of these areas, they must be challenged, moved and uplifted by examples of human creativity. Collection of reading material and audio-visual material organised to meet the informational, educational and recreational needs of hospitalised patients are libraries. Libraries are grouped into three categories; namely:

(i) Academic libraries;
(ii) Special libraries; and
(iii) Public Libraries.

Academic libraries generally provide original texts, literary, scientific works and journals etc. for their respective students, teachers and researchers, primarily for advancement of education and research. Special libraries are generally attached to research, scientific and other specialised organisations. Main interest is attached to supporting the activities of the organisation to which they are attached.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) defined Public Libraries as “Those which serve the population of a community free of charge or for a nominal fee. They may serve the general public or special categories of the public such as children, members of armed forces, hospitalised patients, prisoners, workers and employees”. Thus, Public Libraries serve both the general public as well as special categories of the public.

We can, therefore, say that Public Libraries are capable of extending their services and are useful to all groups and shades of opinion in the community, irrespective of age, religion, profession, sex, political conviction and economic level. No other social institution can perform such a wide range of services to the public. Public libraries are founded by people, supported by

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the people, enjoyed by the people, established by law and maintained at public expenses out of local taxes and sometimes by state taxes. The Public Libraries are the product of political democracy and believes that self education based on free flow of information through books are essential features of democratic way of life.

Modern Public Library is a social institution, purpose of which is to educate, to inform and to entertain the public through knowledge stored in books, journals, newspapers etc. A Public Library is provided wholly or partly from public funds. Its services are aimed at both the ignorant as well as informed ones. The libraries provide service without any restriction or discrimination based on cast, creed, age, gender or level of literary and social status. Earlier, people thought of library as collector and preserver of knowledge. But with the changing environment, the libraries have changed the out-moded concept of preserving a large number of reading material in to dissemination of knowledge to all.

6.3 Public Libraries in General:

Public Libraries are meant for use of public in general. These are described by the scholars as “Open Universities” of the people. These libraries will stock books on varied subjects to attract all the sections of the society, especially to develop their knowledge in the concerned fields. However, the number of these libraries is more comparing to those of other kinds of libraries and the need of these libraries is also ever-growing. These areas are as important as the schools and colleges for the wide spread of education, culture and knowledge of every respect. President John F. Kennedy said, “if we are to achieve our destiny; then we need more new ideas; for more wise reading, more good books in more Public Libraries. The libraries should be open to all

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2 Viswanathan, C.G. 
except the censor. We must know all the facts and hear all the criticisms. Let us welcome controversial books and controversial authors”.

However, Public Libraries can be classified into four categories; mainly:

(i) Public Libraries managed by the state government through Directorate of Public Libraries;
(ii) Public Libraries managed by the private bodies;
(iii) Public Libraries managed by municipalities; and
(iv) Public Libraries managed by the individuals with their own money.

Though, there is difference in managing point of view and financial soundness, the purpose of these libraries is one and the same. Public Libraries have got important role in the age of science and technological advancement. It is the place where even an ordinary man can also go through thousands of books in course of time. It renders its services to the community in all fields.

Public Libraries provide information essential for the progress of commerce and industry. These make research possible in every field of intellectual life. These aid solitary students in their investigations. These provide relaxation and refreshment to every class of population. There is no question of pursuing any narrow line of service. No doubt, the library is primarily concerned with education and recreation but at the same time a confident assurance that question lies not so much in one or the other, but is how best the library can meet the needs in both fields. A school or college cannot function without a library aiding its work, but a Public Library does not depend to the same extent for its functioning and service in an educational institution. Public Libraries can and will operate even if there were no...
educational institutions near or around them because their function is to take care of intellectual needs and welfare of the community as a whole.³

Public Libraries are concerned with the refreshment of man’s spirit, relaxation, pleasure and for updating the technical, scientific and sociological information for its readers through books. Public Libraries are easily accessible and give free and equal use to all members of the community. Public Libraries are most important instrument in the development of community’s life and progress. Public Libraries develop their individual mental power by reading books. Public libraries can give as much by giving all the help possible to those readers whom seem to have special aptitudes. In the changing environment, Public Libraries can help the majority of our community to adjust with the current trends, to develop correct attitudes and to be aware of the consequences of wrong policies.

Public Libraries play an important role in the spread of education. An effective educational system requires books, if the books are to bat the disposal of every one, there must be good library system. It is not possible to encourage research, continuing education and adult education without libraries. Public Libraries provide information in science and technology. These can provide to common people accurate information quickly in depth particularly on topics of urgent concern. These have to support the people to get along in present day world where inventions and discoveries are flooding everyday impelling them to have continuous education for professional maturity.

Public Libraries play vital role in social education for preparing people for social adjustment. These play an important role in providing opportunity to the whole community to understand social evils and methods and how to rectify and control them. There can be no social reforms through shouting, complaining and denunciation but by awakening of thought and progress of

ideas. The libraries poster, idealism and strengthen the struggling aspirations of
the human mind. Public Libraries transmit the social and cultural heritage
inculcating the values and experiences of the past with a unifying effect,
enhancing the quality of personal life of the individual and providing him with
a means to climb the social ladder\textsuperscript{4}. If the social structure of the nation is to be
maintained or improved, everyone right from child to old. Whether literate or
non-literate, must encourage to make use of libraries. Economic development is
impossible without extensive use of scientific and technical know-how
embodied in books. Public Libraries provide right book and right information
at proper time for scientists, engineers, agronists etc. Industrial development
also depends on new knowledge disseminated through Public Libraries.

Public Libraries also play an important role in agriculture. These
familiarise the farmers with new agricultural practices and improve the
production. These also help in the successful functioning of the domestic and
international trade by providing the manufacturing information regarding
sources of all types. Public Libraries play significant role in nation’s cultural
development. These play significant role in collecting and preserving the
cultural heritage of the community and provide reading material to the people
to enrich their cultural awareness. Public Libraries are the main recognised
media for supplying harmless and elevating leisure.

Public Libraries provide services to every type of readers like students,
teachers, researchers, businessmen, professionals, housewives, children, retired
persons, neo-literates etc. These are the only libraries which can provide
services to the hospitalised patients as every type of patient comes in the
hospital for his/her treatment. So, various types of library services can be
provided to different types of hospitalised patients. So, by utilising Public
Library services, hospital patients bored or idle time can be put into
constructive use and will help in speedy recovery from their ailment as reading

\textsuperscript{4} Nair, R. Raman.
facilities will remove their tension caused by their disease. Therefore, Public Libraries are only main agencies that can provide best services to the hospitalised patients.

6.4 Need of the Hospitalised Patients:

The hospitalised patients, whether for a short or long recuperative period, are confined in a totally unfamiliar world from which they want nothing more than escape. As a matter of fact, the patients admitted in the hospital come from far flung area and have to stay for a shorter or longer period but other things, no doubt, remain equal and in this regard it will take more time as compared to the patients, who have to stay for a shorter time. But one thing is common that the requirements will be the same.

The amount of time spent by the hospitalised patients during treatment in the hospital by various categories would vary, yet it is certain that patients in the hospital do not find any option but to stay in the hospital for shorter or longer time for their treatment. The period of stay depends upon nature of disease from which they suffer. So, it is obvious that time is involved for the recovery of patients from sickness. The amount of time is involved may vary but it definitely effects the patient’s recovery. Therefore, in order to relax their tension from their ailment or disease, it is compulsory to provide some reading material which will give them some solace and leisure to pass their time properly. If this time is not utilised for any purpose, their time will not pass and it will create problems for passing time during their disease or recovery.

There is proverbial saying that “an idle brain is a devils workshop”. It is well applicable to the patients undergoing treatment in the wards of the hospital because if they sit idle, their mind will be filled up with anxiety and tension. The only solution is that they can be made busy by way of providing them reading facilities for their recreation, so that they may be carefree from tension. By these devices their bored or idle time can be put into constructive use.
No doubt, all the patients of hospital would like to utilise their bored time for recreation, if necessary facilities are provided. Generally, we find some hospitalised patients in the ward reading newspapers, magazines, books and different types of literatures and some patients playing cards with relatives or dear ones. It shows that patients are interested in passing their idle or bored time gainfully. It has been revealed that such hospitalised patients indulge in reading and gathering information through reading or listening or watching and by other means of recreation. There are also other hospitalised patients who want to consume their time gainfully, but in reality they cannot do so because they think, if they do so, it would be against a burden upon their mind to bear, which is beyond their capacity. It will create burden and responsibility which they cannot afford to spare themselves during treatment and cannot purchase reading material. In fact, patients want to avail their idle time, but lack of facilities play adverse role to pass their time. Therefore, if facilities for use of required reading material for information and recreation are provided or made available to patients in the hospital, it is sure that majority of them would follow and make use of these facilities and will pass their free and idle time constructively. If such facilities are provided free of cost, all patients would agree to avail of.

6.5 Role of Public Libraries Towards Hospitalised Patients:

In the society, there are special categories of hospitalised patients, prisoners, industrial workers etc. who cannot move out and cannot visit the libraries but have the right of information. Out of these classes, the most important class is the hospitalised patients that cannot go outside from the hospital due to their ailment. This class of people needs special attention for availing of information. According to Untied Nations, they have the right to information from Public Libraries. The Public Libraries, which are regarded as social forces for safeguarding democracy, creating political awareness,
bringing social awareness, for fostering creative leisure activities, can provide services to the hospitalised patients.

There are only Public Libraries which provide following functions that are suitable to the hospitalised patients:

(i) Rehabilitation;
(ii) To motivate and inspire;
(iii) Aesthetic appreciation;
(iv) Vocations;
(v) Education;
(vi) Entertainment;
(vii) Recreation; and
(viii) Information.

Public Libraries play an important role in providing information in history, geography, cultural personality, industry, agriculture, health education etc. to the hospitalised patients. This means that the Public Libraries have capacity for keeping every type of information as every type of patients come in the hospitals for their treatment. Public Libraries provide not only information and education to literates but also fulfill the needs of illiterates. Hospitalised patients can utilise their idle time by reading books. Recreation and entertainment can be provided by Public Library services. There are special types of books which bring relaxation and pleasure. The Public Libraries services become the part of the hospitalised patient’s rehabilitation-programme with the help of reading books on different vocations. The inspiration of reading books can help in speedy recovery of the patients. In brief, we can say that Public Libraries are capable to find out solution when and where people find free time, can make good use of time constructively. In the hospital, every type of patients come for their treatment and Public Libraries can provide best services to pass their idle or bored time according to their needs and can play vital role in health progress.
Reading facilities through books by Public Libraries are important for patients who are chronically ill, because these help them to accept and overcome their handicap. They can learn the nature of disease and the ways by which they can overcome some of their limitations. Material on home care of invalids can be made easier for both the patients and their families when they leave the hospital. Public Library books can be helpful to attain vocational rehabilitation and material for formal and informal education by which they can start training for jobs requiring little or no physical efforts or movement. Such training through books can help the patients to become fit and provide them with a livelihood later when they are back in the mainstream of life.

Public Libraries can provide light literature through books to the patients. These libraries can provide attractive ways of improving basic reading skills. Again, this may be derived quite unconsciously and quite unintentionally but the advantage of having such skills may be judged conversely from the penalties of illiteracy. It is, thus, incumbent upon Public Libraries to provide this easy and pleasant source of reading training to the hospitalised patients and it is especially important that children and young patients should have a wide range of literature from which to draw their recreational reading. There should be no strain on the patients, when more reading has to be undertaken.

The ‘cure of book’ is of little use to the patients who are suffering from an acute illness or disability, as these are for short time and the hospitalised patients knowing this, are mainly concerned with affairs outside the hospital or are in such a condition as to have little interest beyond their immediate discomfort. Despite this, there is often time for reading, even with short term patients. The benefits of such reading do not differ greatly from those derived from similar reading under normal condition. Public Libraries can provide service of reading to those the hospitalised patients for early recovery in consultation with medical professionals.
Reading to patients is an alternative where full active participation is not possible. It can be compensation for some lost faculty and this is reflected in the use of libraries by deaf people. Public Libraries, through their services to the hospitalised patients, can make remarkable contribution not only to the mental well-being of the patients but also to their physical health.

The invalid patients can absorb themselves in a book and be transported, in imagination at least, from their restricted life back to normalcy and all with little exertion or inconvenience. In convalescence from sickness or where an otherwise healthy persons are immobilised; boredom is serious threat to recovery, since it either depresses or tempts over exertion. Reading facilities by Public Libraries, even only of the simplest and lightest literature is a boon in such circumstances, the patients having a substitute for the mental or bodily activity they normally would have been enjoying.

Public Libraries can play vital role by giving library services to the aged, who are admitted in the hospitals and can bring comfort to people whose usefulness in professional, industrial and commercial life is judged to be negligible. It is necessary for some social service to recognise that the age alone is not a yardstick of intellectual ability for the old, the means to utilise the talents still left to them. Lady John Manners, whose conception of libraries was based almost exclusively on social improvement, wrote that she could not help wishing that books might be provided in every workhouse. The principle remains the same, books are alternative, albeit an imperfect one, for full life when that itself is denied. This can be done when library services of reading will be provided to the aged patients and by this, their tension towards ailment will be diverted and will be changed into speedy recovery. Only Public Libraries can play active role by providing reading materials to the patients.

Many hospitalised elderly patients, who are for longer time in the wards due to their diseases, may try to continue their studies, hobbies and other interests of their early years. But even a greater number thereof will be forced
confine themselves to recreational reading of the lightest character. The Public Libraries can fully participate with those, who are no longer able to join the pastimes of their youth. These must provide ample supply of books suitable for subjective interest and for physical make up of the elderly patients. By reading books, they can pass their idle time easily and can make their time into constructive use.

Public Libraries can provide services to the blind hospitalised patients also, who are cut off from full participation in community, by supplying talking books, long playing disco or tape recordings of greater books. These libraries can also provide services by helping the blind and near blind hospitalised patients with the services of reading books printed enough in large type to overcome their particular disability. Hospitalised patients with failing eyesight can be helped only by the limited and sporadic efforts of individual librarians who produced book list, drawing attention to particular volumes, in larger than usual types.

Hence, it is evident that Public Libraries can play remarkable role in providing library services to the hospitalised patients. These libraries can fulfill needs of the patients according to their tastes, by providing every type of literature. So, by providing library services, hospitalised patient’s idle or bored time can be changed into constructive use and will help in speedy recovery from their ailment.

6.6 Types of Literature Required by the Hospitalised Patients:

Public Libraries have versatile clientele as users from all sections of the society and the hospitalised patients also come from all sections of the society. There is little difference between their tastes and those of general public when freedom of choice is offered. Illness or disability has little influence on what a person wants to read. The same background factors that influence the well or normal individual in his reading or non-reading will usually apply. However,
what the patients want to read and what they should read are not always synonymous, because certain types of material or literature can put a depressing or debilitating effect on patients with serious physical or mental problem. Therefore, the librarians or staff of the Public Libraries should understand the condition of the hospitalised patients in thoroughly or should consult the medical professionals and use discrimination in selecting the literature to be delivered to the patients.

Biographies are especially useful because these often reveal the subjective problems and frustrations because they are the real life stories rather than imaginary people. These can be more helpful for convincing the patients. Large volumes in size and gloomy depressing biographies should not be offered as these effect the patient’s physical strength and state of mind.

There is a great power in imaginative literature or material to show effective changes in the patients than non-fiction for studying the dynamics of reading. These are also as a basis for psycho-diagnosis, one might well use an occasional piece of didactic material.

The literature of the following types are most effective in healing or speedy recovery of the hospitalised patients:

- (i) Short stories are valuable among patients;
- (ii) Poetry is helpful in giving relief for the emotions;
- (iii) Science fiction keeps away the patients from immediate problems; and
- (iv) Fables are most useful for small and elementary children. The obvious moral usually contained in such tales is easy for the child-patients to understand and more easily trigger discussion than more complex material.

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From two years to six years old children, there is need of familiar events to read to them. Children from six to eleven years will be interested in fantasy and tales of imagination and adventure.

In the book, ‘Books and the Teen-age Reader’ written by Carlsen\(^7\), children of twelve to fifteen years will prefer to read animal stories, adventure, science fiction, mysteries, tales of the supernatural, sports, growing up around the world, home and family living, slapstick and stories with background of history and pioneer life. Children from fifteen to eighteen years would like to read war stories, romance stories, the stories of adolescent life and general adult literature or popular material. From eighteen to twenties years, in young manhood or womanhood, personal values, social significance, strange and unusual experiences and themes of translation are mostly liked by the adults.

6.6.1 Poetry:

Library materials in the form of poetry can be supplied by the Public Libraries for the hospitalised patients. It will work as therapy to patients. These books can motivate them in their efforts to overcome emotional problems. Poetry can develop a philosophy of life and make it easier to adjust their importance. It can help the patients to widen the scope of interpersonal relationship and experiences of the patients. By hearing or reading poetry helps the patients for creative activity of great therapeutic value. The fewer words of poetry are more poignant and significant and can be used to express an emotion or idea. It is the shortest distance between the writer and the reader. Poems can be helpful to lift the patient from present dilemma into realities of living in moments of ecstasy by reflecting the past. Poetry helps the patient to become more spontaneous, thereby, providing a release for pent-up emotions.

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\(^7\) Carlsen, G.R.  
6.6.2 Science Fiction:

Science fiction can also play an important role for the hospitalised patients as bibliotherapy, particularly in its psychological aspects. It helps in offering some solace for frustration of modern man’s greatest embarrassment, namely his probing into age-old problems have created so many seemingly unsolved problems. Science fiction is satisfying fiction because it solves problems. Science exploration and amazing accomplishment of science fiction heroes give lavish scope to man’s findings, to his courage and to his aspirations. It restores or revives confidence of patients. Therefore, Public Libraries can play vital role in providing science fiction for the welfare of the patients.

6.6.3 Light Fiction:

Light fiction and suspense stories, mysteries of the conventional type, Gothic mysteries etc. are all good fodder for the hospitalised patients whose primary need is to relax. Many hospitalised patients have capacity to read something short. They like to finish it. For such patients, short stories, magazines, articles can be useful. Horror stories should be kept away from mental or psychiatric patients. It is important to the note here that the Librarians of the Public Libraries need to restrict these books or these should be supplied with or after the consultation of medical professionals.

6.6.4 Illustrative or Picture Books:

These books are helpful for those patients who cannot read and would prefer to see picture books. A collection of illustrative material is better than books of pictures because these provide scene from daily life as a universal experience, scene of lovers, pregnancy, motherhood, childhood, holidays, prayers etc. These types of literatures or books are much more likely to contain something with which the patients can easily identify. But huge books (in size)
should not be supplied to the hospitalised patients as these are not very convenient for them to handle for reading.

6.6.5 Self Help Books:

Self help books may also be useful for therapy to the hospitalised patients. The patients read the recommended self help books and after that they discuss about them with medical professionals. These books are good basis for an approach to solve personal problems. The discussion is also important factor to the hospitalised patients for bibliotherapy.

6.6.6 Favourite Non-Fiction:

Favourite non-fiction books can also play important role to the hospitalised patients for relief of their ailments. Religious books are generally demanded by the sick patients. They need something to make them laugh and forget their problems or troubles. These patients also need something serious, especially if religion dominates a large place in their lives. Travelling is good because it permits the imagination to roam even while physical body is confined to bed. It brings a sense of freedom, which no other type of books or periodicals can provide to the patients.

It is evident that the above mentioned literature is most helpful in speedy recovery of the hospitalised patients and by these books their idle or bored time can be put into constructive use. Being in possession of every type of literature, Public Libraries can supply these materials easily for the welfare of the patients.

6.7 Methods of Providing Library Services to the Hospitalised Patients:

Methods by which library services are to be provided are also important for the patients. The following are some of the methods through which library services can be provided to the hospitalised patients.
6.7.1 Providing an Outreach Programme:

These programmes are helpful to discover potential readers who may be in the hospitals or health care institutions. Non-library users come to these agencies in fairly substantial numbers. Frequently, this is the first contact between library and some minority groups, new comers to the community and large number of physicians and nurses.

6.7.2 Extending Services in the Patient’s Library to all Hospital Institution Personnel:

These services come under the jurisdiction of Public Libraries’ obligation to reach all the citizens of the society for which it was established to serve. Hours of work, even location of the institution, may make it difficult to reach a library outlet during off duty hours. Enlarged access to library service by means of mini libraries, stations, sub-branches and branches placed in hospital institutions greatly extend the Public Libraries ability to serve the total population, demonstrating to new clientele, the availability of library materials, the range of interest they are designed to meet and more than any thing else, the simplicity and informality with which the process of borrowing a book or other reading material collection may be handled.

6.7.3 Direct Request to Public Libraries:

Direct request to Public Libraries from the health care institution can be easily handled. A staff member or a group of staff members, perhaps a therapy team or some one in nursing, occupational therapy, or social service departments may become aware of potential enrichment of patient’s care, which planned professional library service could bring to the institution. Direct requests of hospitalised patients can be sent by e-mail, fax or by staff member and books can be collected from Public Libraries. By direct request to Public Libraries, the patient’s demands, according to their tastes and needs, can be fulfilled very quickly.
6.7.4 Making Use of Professional Ability:

Library professionals skills can play vital role in selecting reading materials for specific use according to their tastes and desires. No extension service library or small library can store an adequate permanent or semi-stationary collection. Provision to access to large central collection and method for influx of new material not only in order to give reply to specified material requests but to assure to hold collection.

Public Libraries having experience, in any field of library’s work can take this responsibility. The experience of the librarians of Public Libraries can be utilised into constructive use in managing, organising and operating library services programmes to the hospitalised patients of health care institutions, but staff members who have had some experience in branches or with extension service such as book mobile facility service have a head start in making of this specialisation. In addition, it should be stressed that intensive job-training and orientation to health care milieu is necessary.

6.7.5 Library Materials and Reading Aids:

All kinds of print and non-print material may be included in the collection provided by Public Libraries for circulation to the users in the hospitals. Fiction and non-fiction books for the adults and children books in large print, books in foreign languages, braille, talking books, periodicals, paper backs, recordings, films, audio-visual material, pamphlets, travel folders and other vertical file material and picture file material.

6.7.6 Reading Guidance and Bibliotherapy:

Reading guidance and bibliotherapy method should also be adopted in providing library services to the hospitalised patients. The aim and object of bibliotherapy is not only to give a therapeutic emotional experience through reading with in a group, but it is a part of total therapy programme. Reading
assistance is provided to the hospitalised patients in choosing books and inform, motivate, inspire, or help them while they are undergoing treatment in the wards of the hospitals. These types of services or methods may be helpful in passing idle time in constructive use.

6.7.7 Health Education:

Health education is one of the important factors or methods in providing library services to the hospitalised patients. By giving health education patients can know how to live while suffering from diseases. This should be given or specific sickness or handicapping condition with the consultation of staff advice. Many such requests may be of positive nature and of a kind that the physician may have stimulate how to live with diabetes, stroke, weak heart, or how to carry on the routine of daily life without use of arm or leg. A further argument for the development of closer working relationship between the Public Libraries staff members and the physicians are found in trend towards actual prescription materials containing direction on proper diet, activities and care of specific sickness, in order to save the time of medical professionals in verbal counselling. The trend stresses the need for Public Libraries to find a stock a greater supply of sound, medically approved information written in non-technical language by which patient can easily understand and may be helpful in speedy recovery and relief from strain.

6.7.8 Promoting Library Services to the Hospitalised Patients by Publicising:

Promoting library services by publicising is an important factor for motivating the hospitalised patients. One of the areas included by the Public Libraries, when making its agreement with the institution, is the arrangements for using some of the institution’s facilities to publicise the library services and

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holding public address system or radio or television etc. Staff of the Public Libraries may be invited to take part in this programme outlet. Display areas and cases, bulletin boards and interior windows of 'health care institution may be used for posters and exhibition related to the library in the institutions for Public Libraries' general collections and services.

6.7.9 Books Cart Service:

Books Cart Service by Public Libraries can play an important role in providing library services to the hospitalised patients. The book cart round are basic to patient library services and form a large part of the library service in hospitals for the admitted patients. Library materials can be circulated from book cart. It is the most strenuous and far reaching activity of library staff of the Public Libraries. Certainly, it is among the most effective means of entering in full life of the institution.

6.7.10 Story Telling and Reading Aloud:

Story telling and reading aloud is also a very good method to give relief to the patients. Story telling is generally associated with children and not the patients of all ages. The story should be interesting and carefully chosen to fit the patients group, taking into account not only age and interests but also the sex, illness or handicap. A story hour for children should be planned depending upon institutions routine. It is, too exciting just before bedtime. In contrast, reading aloud will also be more relaxing and sleep provoking while also fulfilling for many children a familiar and loved routine\textsuperscript{10}. Story telling for deaf children is also important towards the more direct teaching procedures and motivation in reading. Story telling plays an important role towards blind child patients. It demands special adoptions, since story telling usually depends on watching as well as listening for its effectiveness. Reading aloud is one of the

\textsuperscript{10} Limper, Hilda.
most familiar kind of services to the hospitalised patients of all ages. Most of
the adult patients like to listen to a good reader either as individual or in
groups. Not only stories, but poems and short articles can also be used for this
purpose.

6.7.11 Delivery of Books or Lending of Books:

There should be delivery of books for the hospitalised patients and by
this, they can read the library material and can pass their idle time into
constructive use. There should be some system like issuing and returning
system by fixing of time and after that they can borrow other books or delivery
of books can also be done by staff members of the ward. Staff of the Public
Libraries can keep the books with the ward incharge of the hospital by fixing
the time till next visit. So, there should be some system of delivery of books
after discussing with the hospital authorities.

Public Libraries can adopt the above mentioned methods easily being
experienced in providing library services to all communities as these agencies
are already providing services to their clientele as a whole. Therefore, there is
no problem in providing library services to the hospitalised patients being in
the possession of every type of specialised information.

6.8 Role of Mobile Library Service:

Mobile libraries are collection of books arranged in vehicles. Their main
purpose is to provide library services to the area, inhabitants of which are
unable to reach the main library or library due to their old age, physical
handicaps, hospitalisation and long distance etc. It was also defined as, “A
collection of books sent for stated period by a Central Library or Public Library
to branch libraries, club or other organisation and in some instance to an
individual”.

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The main characteristics, from which it derives its name, are its temporary location in the place to which it is sent and the implication that any travelling library will or may be changed for others. The idea of travelling library has spread throughout the civilised world and the small collection of books changed frequently is known in many places in which the more elaborate Public Library is yet unknown.

The special features of the travelling libraries are economy, mobility and adaptability. The collection is limited to books definitely chosen for some purpose. The obsolete and useless books are eliminated. Books on timely topics or those needed to meet changes in the community can in this way be put in the home, the store, the garage or wherever people congregate. It is not limited to any one place. No permanent or special building or special assistance is needed to give satisfactory service, if intelligence in selection is shown by the Public Libraries which issue it. The only records needed are the simplest type of lending records.

6.8.1 Need of Mobile Libraries:

The need of Mobile Libraries reminds of man, who lives at a place where his contracts with any kind of library is impossible. No doubt, he has the knowledge of nature which will perhaps have much more to give him than he can value, higher than the gifts of the city. Nevertheless, he needs books more than city-dwellers for the following reasons:

(i) He meets fewer of his fellowmen to hear from them, their ideas and opinions, he enjoys less of the discussions, arguments and interplay of minds and so he needs books to give him information that other men might have given him by word of mouth;

(ii) He has to rely more upon his own resources both materially and intellectually, because there are a few specialists to whom he can turn for advice or to do for him. He has to figure out for himself a process where practical books can be very useful;

(iii) He has fewer idle time occupations from which to change;
(iv) Children with limited educational opportunities have been to supplement their knowledge; and

(v) In the world of today and in this democratic era, education is a right for all. The villagers should not be deprived of this privilege. It is duty of the state to provide library services for one and all who are unable to come in the libraries like hospitalised patients who are in dire need to pass their idle time into constructive use.

Library services are needed in prisons, for soldiers, sailors, airmen, merchants, hospitalised patients etc. Public Library agencies should play a large part in fulfilling their needs. For example in some countries, prison authorities make a grant to the library authorities of cities where prisons are situated, in return for which the libraries provide books. Some sea-port libraries in some countries with or without financial help from the shipping companies supply books sufficient to last, the crew of merchant ships on every voyage. At the end of each voyage, the books are recovered and new books are supplied. Books are also supplied by Public Libraries to the hospitalised patients by mobile services. It becomes the duty or task of the State Libraries or Public Libraries to provide mobile library services to such needy institutions.

Libraries in the hospitals, infirmaries asylums, institutions for the aged and poor should be an integral part of Public Libraries and these agencies can provide mobile library services to health care institutions. These mobile services can be more effective as these are needed for passing their idle time. It is a fairly sound generalisation that local library authorities, along with serving the general Public Library, also has a responsibility for providing books to citizens who are unable to visit normal service points. A brief reference to two especially needy groups can be made. Firstly, many sick and infirm people are not in the institutions but in their homes, many are without friends and relations who can bring them books from the library. There are in some cities, assistants who visit their bed-ridden patients every fortnight, taking them enough books to last them till the next visit, thus establishing pleasing contact with the invalids to reach the outside world.
Another important task of the libraries is to provide books for the blind. This service can be best organised by the State Library or Public Library and through it may well utilise normal agencies for distribution. Few local library authorities may need to provide to their own blind readers a really adequate range materials. Consequently, the attempts by independent local authorities to supply books by mobile service for the blind hospitalised patients will surely result in efficient service.

Dr S.R. Ranganathan has enunciated “Five Laws” which can be used as guiding principles for the efficient working of mobile libraries also. These are as follows:

(i) Books are for use;
(ii) Every reader his or her book;
(iii) Every book its reader;
(iv) Save the time of the reader; and
(v) Library is a growing organism.

It is clear from above Five Laws of Library Science that only mobile libraries are effective and fulfill these objects by giving services at any place and these can fulfill the needs of every type of readers such as hospitalised patients and others who cannot visit the libraries. It is necessary to develop the models of library service for reading promotion, obtaining information and self-learning for people through various methods suitable to the target groups. Available sources must be utilised properly. Various types of services can be provided to every type of community at every place by mobile libraries such as train mobile libraries, bus mobile libraries and floating libraries etc. Mobile bus libraries can provide best services to the hospitalised patients according to their needs and tastes. These mobile services can fulfill their needs of reading material on the same day or next day. This is the fastest service to the hospitalised patients. The mobile service to some extent fulfils its aims and objectives by providing services at the door steps of the admitted patients. By
this, patient’s idle time can be put into constructive use and may be helpful in speedy recovery and relief from tension of their diseases.

6.8.2 Organisation and Administration of Mobile Libraries:

The general conception of the organisation and administration of the book mobile would mean, efficient management of funds, the size of the book collection, mobile, the population served, consideration of the community schedule of work centralisation of certain procedure for action, housing of the staff, care of the books, selection of literature for various groups of the hospitalised patients, promotion of interest amongst individuals and regulate system of publicity to emphasize the importance of book mobile. By all these steps, effective mobile service can be provided to the hospitalised patients.

6.9 Suggestions for Effective Library Services to the Hospitalised Patients:

For providing effective library services, according to their needs and tastes, at the door steps of the hospitalised patients, the following suggestions can be considered:

6.9.1 Funds:

Funds are important for providing library services by the Public Libraries. Normally books can be collected by the hospital staff or Ward Incharge from Public Libraries, which are in their existing stock. In the hospitals, different types of patients come from different communities and there is need of special reading materials according to their tastes and needs. Therefore, special grant should be provided by the state government or concerned department for the hospitalised patients. Special reading materials can be produced by Public Libraries and special library services can be procured by these agencies. In Western countries, some health care institutions also provide funds for procuring special reading books to the Public Libraries.
for their hospitalised patients. So funds must be provided to the Public Libraries for providing effective library services to the hospitalised patients.

6.9.2 Legislation or National Policy:

There should be instructions from State Government or Education Department, under which Public Libraries are working, for providing libraries services to the hospitalised patients or health care institutions. This is possible if, at national level, there should be firm and total commitment to take amenities to the grassroot throughout the country irrespective of their geographical location, physical condition, education, religion, sex or age. To fulfill or achieve the goals, Central Government, through Parliament, should pass a law enacting the provision of library services to the hospitalised patients. National Library Commission should be set up, consisting of members of the relevant government. Ministries, hospital’s medical professionals agencies, social welfare groups, voluntary organisations and representative of library associations to deal with all aspects of library services to the hospitalised patients as a whole. Decentralised system of operation should be followed by National Library Commission. In the states where Public Libraries are administered and organised by State Governments or Education Departments. They should follow the instructions of National Library Commission and further communicate to the concerned departments of Public Libraries regarding library services to the hospitalised patients. All Public Libraries should establish sections devoted to extents its services to the patients. The service should be based according to their tastes and needs. This can be done by conducting survey of the patients and in consultation with the hospital’s medical staff. Library services should reach to every nook and corner of the hospital wards or at the door steps of the patients by establishing branch libraries, community centres etc.
6.9.3 Recruitment of More Professional Library Staff:

Although the staff members of the Public Libraries are interested to provide library services to the hospitalised patients yet they are helpless with existing staff which is already limited and is recruited only for the present (existing) services in the libraries. There is need for more library professional staff for providing library services especially for the hospitalised patients.

6.9.4 Coordination Between the Hospital Authority and the Public Library:

There should be coordination between the hospital authority and the Public Library. The hospital authority should take keen interest towards Public Libraries and should assists at every step. Public Libraries should also consult medical professionals in providing reading facilities to the hospitalised patients. Without hospital authority’s consent or coordination, the Public Libraries cannot provide library services although these are willing to provide library services to the hospitalised patients.

Therefore, willingness, consent and coordination of hospital authority are necessary. All staff serving the hospitalised patients should make every efforts to help actively and warmly bearing in mind that some potential users may be turned out by unanimated efficiency in cool mind. Two way communication between field staff i.e. Public Libraries and hospital management are very important in providing effective libraries services to the hospitalised patients.

6.10 Views of Librarians of Public Libraries:

In order to ascertain the views of the Librarians of the Public Libraries for providing library services to the hospitalised patients, a “Questionnaire” was prepared, as per “Appendix-III”. The information was collected from the librarians of the following libraries:
Central State Library, Sector-17, Chandigarh;
State Library, Sector-34, Chandigarh;
Lajpat Rai Public Library, Sector-15, Chandigarh;
Delhi Public Library, Opposite Delhi Railway Station, Delhi;
Delhi Public Library, Sarojini Nagar, Delhi; and
Delhi Public Library, Karol Bagh, Delhi.

The view of the librarians of the above mentioned libraries have been analysed and consolidated, which are presented below:

All the Librarians of the above mentioned Public Libraries have stated that they are shortage of professional staff. They also explained that they are facing scarcity of funds for purchase of books, journals and equipment needed in the library. Still, according to them, they are managing the library and providing the essential library services, with whatever staff and funds they have at their disposal. Since their libraries are large enough, they have variety of staff with different designations and pay scales.

Being Public Libraries their opening hours are flexible. These are opened at 10:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. and are closed at 6 p.m. or 7 p.m.. All of these Public Libraries remain closed on Sundays while some of these remain closed on Saturdays also. These libraries provide library services such as circulation of documents, reference service, current awareness service, photo copying service, inter library loan service and internet related services. Delhi Public Library and Central State Library, Sector-17, Chandigarh provide Mobile Library Services also. This service is not provided daily but on certain days of the week only, covering different geographical areas for the purpose.

They have revealed that, at present, they are not providing mobile library service to the patients admitted in any of the hospitals within their catchment area. The main reason for this, according to the Chief Librarians of the aforesaid Public Libraries, is that there is no demand from the hospital
authorities in this regard. This seems to be so, due to the reason that there is no arrangement in the hospital to receive the books, circulate amongst the patients, take these back and then return to the Public Libraries. Moreover, the hospital authorities have not made any arrangements with the NGOs/Voluntary Organisations/ Social Workers etc. to share the responsibility in providing library services to the hospitalised patients.

But all the librarians of the above mentioned Public Libraries emphatically stated that they are willing to provide the reading materials for the hospitalised patients through their mobile vans once or twice a week, provided that the same is received by some responsible person authorised by the Director of the hospital concerned against receipt. Subsequently the same should be returned back to the mobile van staff on the fixed day and time for the purpose. According to them the hospital authorities should make a policy to provide library services to their indoor patients on regular basis. They should also write to the Public Libraries in their cities to provide mobile library service so that proper schedule is finalised and notified to all concerned in this regard. This confirms our Hypothesis No. X that “Public Libraries are willing to provide library services to the hospitalised patients through their mobile libraries”.

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