PUBLIC LIBRARIES' RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A STUDY BASED ON DELHI PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

This paper intends to share the activities of Delhi Public Library during the COVID-19 pandemic days. Furthermore, the study highlights the details on how public libraries have embraced various most suitable practices to the new-normal era. The study analysed 20 selected public libraries in Delhi under DPL system. The public libraries have taken the precautions such as provision of hand sanitizer at the library entrance; social distancing norms were strictly followed; use of masks was mandatory and meetings/ gatherings were restricted in the library. All the libraries under DPL system is found to be suspended book fines during the pandemic days. It is also observed that the library system provided information on the latest updates through DPL website. The library professionals sanitized the documents immediately when returned to the library during those pandemic days. DPL disseminated health information through library website and social media. The library professionals frequently faced the problems such as difficulties in conducting proper user education programmes regarding access to digital information, difficulties in retraining librarians in new-normal library services and problem of instability of internet networks.

Keywords: Libraries, Public libraries, Indian Libraries, Corona Virus, Pandemic, COVID-19, COVID-19 pandemic, Disasters, Library services, Delhi Public Library System, Social Media.

1. Introduction

Public libraries play an indispensable role in society for imparting knowledge to the general community. These libraries offer services to all the public without levying any charge. Public libraries are confronting new challenges to offer services to their readers during the COVID-19 pandemic situation. During this pandemic and the subsequent lockdown, several libraries offer online facilities by facilitating remote access. Although the library is not yet operational for direct usage of resources, it has continued with the amalgam of traditional and online services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced new pressures into the public library landscape. Libraries around the world were forced to close down when cases of the COVID-19 virus increased, and some currently remain fully closed to the public. Others remain closed in terms of physical spaces and branches, but are offering online services, including the lending of e-books and other resources that may be accessed using an internet connection. Some public libraries have reopened with restrictions on the lending of their physical collections. Many have implemented a quarantine period on returned materials. For instance, a library may hold a returned item for 72 hours to ensure that there is no contagion on the item before placing it back into circulation (IFLA, 2020).

This survey is designed to capture information about the services and facilities offered by public libraries in Delhi, with special reference to Delhi Public Library (DPL) system. DPL system comprises of a Central Library, 3 Branch Libraries, 19 Sub-Branch Libraries, 1 Community Library, 8 Re-settlement Colony Libraries, One Braille Library, 158 Mobile Library Service Points (including 18 Braille Mobile library points) and 28 Deposit Stations in the Union Territory of Delhi and NCR (Delhi Public Library, n. d.). The study mainly focuses on the selected 20 branches/sub-branches/ units of libraries under DPL network.

2. Review of Literature

A number of studies regarding the impact of COVID-19 on libraries have been found, but lack of such studies based on public libraries are comparatively less. Medawar and Tabet (2021) described how Qatar National Library embraced the pandemic situation; the library offered collections, services, and support to the users. The library shifted to virtual, and users got support through LibAnswer, LibChat, Library Aware and virtual research and writing consultations. It was also found that nearly 30% of the staff members were working inside the library and all others were working remotely.

A snapshot study to gather data on how people using the public libraries during COVID-19 is detailed by Guernsey et al. (2021). Another recent article by Neyra (2021) deals with the ways in which National Library of Peru faced the pandemic situation.

A study based on content analysis by Alajmi and Albudaiwi (2020) to identify how public libraries used Twitter in the initial months after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors carried out content analysis on a dataset of 9,450 tweets published by 38 public libraries in New York City (NYC). Public libraries' respond to COVID-19 pandemic in USA has been studied by Goddard (2020). The paper published by Public Library

Association (2020) deals with a broadcast survey of 2545 responses in USA on how public libraries are responding to pandemic.

The impact on libraries and library services during COVID-19 pandemic with the past economic crises was discussed by Jones (2020), and in order to respond proactively to the current crisis, the author proposed significant paradigm shifts for the role of public libraries. Role of public libraries in Australia during the post COVID-19 has been described by Smith (2020). Online activities of Croatian public libraries during pandemic has been detailed by Solis and Kear (2020) and the impact of COVID-19 on the public libraries in Finland by Haasio and Kannasato (2020). Mestri (2020) suggested different strategies, methods of operation into four different levels based on the number of COVID 19 cases.

Yet another relevant study based on content analysis of library announcements related to the COVID-19 pandemic was carried out by Wang and Lund (2020) and selected 50 public libraries of varying size and service population demographics. Those libraries' announcements regarding the COVID-19 pandemic were collected and analyzed based on the date of the announcement was first posted as well as eight types of important information they provided. The information included the status of the library functioning, suspension of the library's programmes, information about COVID, hygiene guidance, links to health resources, guidance on finding reliable information about the pandemic, information about library's remote resources and whether the announcement included a statement "signed" by the library's director.

3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

i) To study the library functioning during COVID-19 pandemic.

ii) To discuss the safety measures taken in the libraries to combat novel Coronavirus.

iii) To assess the type of facilities and services provided to the users during the pandemic.

iv) To analyse the modes of dissemination of library services during COVID-19 pandemic.

v) To examine the challenges faced by the library professionals during the pandemic.

4. Hypotheses of the Study

H1: The status of working of the library is highly dependent on the location of that library.

H2: There is no association between the procedures followed for returned documents and the zones to which the library is situated.

5. Methodology

The study is primarily based on questionnaire data as well as content analysis of DPL web presence (Website, Blog, Facebook and Twitter). To investigate how public libraries responded to the recent situation, the investigator framed a structured questionnaire and distributed to the library professionals of the respective libraries under DPL system. Due to COVID-19 restrictions in the libraries, data collection was done through online survey. A total of 33 public libraries (including Central library) under DPL system were identified in Delhi. Out of these, 20 public libraries (Central library, Branch libraries-3, Sub-branches/units-16) were randomly selected based on stratified random sampling method (table 1). The data collected through online survey were exported to Microsoft Excel 2013 and SPSS 28.0 for analysis.

Table 1
Sample Selection and Response Rate

Zone	Library	Response Rate (%)
Central Zone	DPL Central, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Marg, Delhi	10
	DPL Ashok Vihar, Delhi	
South Zone	DPL Sarojini Nagar, New Delhi	15
	DPL R. K. Puram, New Delhi	
	DPL Vinoba Puri, New Delhi	
North Zone	DPL Bagh Kare Khan, Delhi	45
	DPL Bawana, Delhi	
	DPL Qadi Pur, Delhi	
	DPL Katewara, Delhi	
	DPL Narela, Delhi	
	DPL New Rohtak Road, New Delhi	
	DPL Aruna Nagar, Delhi	
	DPL Sangam Park, Delhi	
	DPL Shakurpur, Delhi	
East Zone	DPL Shahdara, Delhi	10
	DPL Seelampur, Delhi	
West Zone	DPL Patel Nagar, New Delhi	20
	DPL K. G. Marg, New Delhi	
	DPL Tri Nagar, Delhi	
	DPL Janakpuri, New Delhi	

6. Data Analysis and Discussion

The study was based on the 20 public libraries under DPL system. The analysis was done in accordance with the opinion given by the library professionals working in the respective libraries.

6.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The analysis in table 2 shows that more than half of the respondents (55%) were found to be female professionals and the remaining were male professionals (45%). Among the 20 respondents, 16 (80%) were Library and Information Assistants (LIA), 3 (15%) of them were Assistant Library and Information Officers (ALIO) and only one Library and Information Officer (LIO) responded to the survey. It was also identified that most of the respondents (50%) possessed 1-5 years of experience followed by the professionals with more than 10 years of experience (35%) and 3 of them (15%) with 6-10 years of experience. Moreover, more than half of the respondents (60%) claimed that their working institution is located in the urban area.

Table 2

**Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Socio-Demographic Details		No. of Respondents	%
Gender	Female	11	55
	Male	9	45
Designation	LIA	16	80
	ALIO	3	15
	LIO	1	5
Experience	1-5 years	10	50
	6-10 years	3	15
	More than 10 years	7	35
Location of the Library	Rural	8	40
	Urban	12	60

6.2. Library Functioning during COVID-19 Pandemic

At the time of lockdown, several libraries have taken steps towards lifting restrictions. The working hours and working days remains uncertain, in such a way that safety should be a top priority. Figure 1 displays how COVID-19 pandemic affected the normal functioning of the public libraries in Delhi.

From the analysis, it is observed that majority of the library professionals (80%) opined that COVID-19 pandemic was highly affected the normal functioning of their libraries and the remaining (20%) affected moderately.
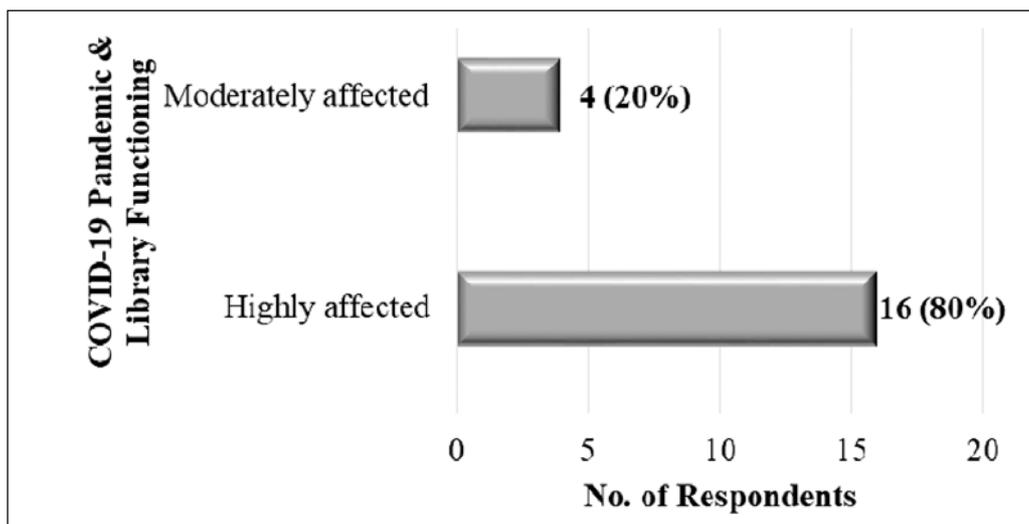
Fig. 1: Impact of COVID-19 on Library Functioning

6.3. Status of the Library during Pandemic days

Based on content analysis of the DPL website, the central library and all the branches/sub-branches/units remain closed at the period of lockdown. Unusually, the library professionals had to work from home for more than a month during the nationwide lockdown (25 March 2020 to 31 May 2020). The responses regarding the status/accessibility of the library during the pandemic is depicted in table 3.

Table 3

Location Versus Status of the Library

Location of the Library	Status of the Library		Total	Pearson Chi-Square	p-value
	Partially Opened (not all the sections were working)	Physically Closed			
Rural	3	5	8	1.65	0.199*
Urban	8	4	12		
Total	**11 (55%)**	**9 (45%)**	**20 (100%)**		

p-value (probability value) is significant, if p < 0.05; Not significant, if p>0.05

The analysis indicates that more than half of the respondents (55%) opined that their libraries were partially opened (not all the sections were working) during the pandemic days and the remaining (45%) were commented as their libraries were physically/fully closed. In addition to this, eight public libraries in the urban area were found to be partially opened when compared to the libraries in the rural area. When analysing

statistically, the Chi-square value is seen to be 1.65 and p-value is 0.199. The result is not significant at $p < 0.05$. This implies that the status of working of the library is not dependent on the location of that library. Hence, the given hypothesis such as 'the status of working of the library is highly dependent on the location of that library' is not substantiated.

6.4. Safety Measures

A pivotal issue for many professionals in the library field is facing the risk of infection through contact with substances bearing coronavirus. All the staff members in the library should take necessary steps to combat the virus. The precautions taken by the public libraries to control the virus is presented in table 4.

Table 4
Preventive Measures Taken by the Library during COVID-19 Pandemic

Sl. No.	Safety Measures	No. of Respondents*	%
1	Thermal screening provisions (checking of body temperature of users/ staff members at the library entrance)	16	80
2	Provision of hand sanitizer at the library entrance	20	100
3	Social distancing norms were strictly followed	20	100
4	Use of masks was mandatory	20	100
5	Visitors were not allowed	14	70
6	Proper cleaning and frequent sanitization of the workplace, particularly of the frequently touched surfaces were ensured.	13	65
7	Meetings/ gatherings were restricted in the library	20	100
8	Posters on preventive measures for COVID-19 were displayed prominently at the library entrance	19	95

Multiple responses were allowed

Based on the respondents' opinion, all the 20 public libraries have taken the precautions such as provision of hand sanitizer at the library entrance; social distancing norms were strictly followed; use of masks was mandatory and meetings/ gatherings were restricted in the library. Furthermore, the lion's share of the respondents (95%) opined that posters on preventive measures for COVID-19 pandemic were displayed prominently at their library entrance. Among the total respondents, 16 of them claimed that thermal screening provisions available in their libraries for both users and staff members. A few libraries (70%) did not permit visitors inside the libraries. More than half of the respondents (65%) opined that their libraries ensured proper

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cleaning and frequent sanitization of the workplace, particularly of the frequently touched surfaces during those pandemic days.

6.5. Library Facilities

The website of DPL shows the list of general library facilities such as free membership, lending of books & DVDs/CDs, reading room, reference section, newspaper section, revamped children section with internet terminals and games, and outreach activities. Table 5 displays the library facilities/restrictions by the public libraries under DPL system during those pandemic days.

Table 5

Library Facilities/Restrictions during COVID-19 Pandemic

Sl. No.	Library Facilities/Restrictions	No. of Respondents*	%
1	Extended borrowing and membership card renewal period	3	15
2	Updates through library websites	18	90
3	Limited entry of users in the library	17	85
4	Closed access to the book collection	4	20
5	No access to library computers for users	18	90
6	No browsing through shelves, search in web OPAC was possible	6	30
7	Limited working hours	16	80
8	Library book fines have suspended	20	100

Multiple responses were allowed

From the study, it is identified that all the libraries under investigation is found to be suspended the book fines during the pandemic days. It is also observed that a greater part of the respondents (90%) opined that their libraries providing information on the latest updates through DPL website. Moreover, during these pandemic days, 90% of the libraries did not provide access to library computers for users. Most of the public libraries (85%) allowed limited entry of users inside the library. Merely three respondents (15%) commented that their library extended the period of borrowing facility and membership card renewal during COVID-19 pandemic.

As libraries shifted to interacting with their users through online, the library website is the bridge that furnishing information on the latest updates on re-openings, virtual events, and real-time updates to collections. The DPL website provided instructions to both staff and readers during those pandemic days. The main instructions/guidelines/orders regarding:

For Staff:

● Awareness of COVID-19 vaccination.

● Returning of issued books and exemption of fine.

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- Closing of entry for members/
readers in the library premises until
further orders.

- Re-opening of Newspaper Reading
Rooms for Senior Citizens and
Readers.

- Suspension of biometric attendance
until further orders.

- DPL officials getting infective with
COVID.

For Readers:

- Closing of entry of users in the
library premises.

- Opening of library for readers.

- Invitation for Online Speech Compe-
tition.

The website also gives a list of new
arrival of books in the Delhi Public Library.

An Online Book Suggestion Form is available
for users to recommend books and other
documents they want. The Tweets from DPL
(https://twitter.com/delhipublibrary) and
posts from DPL Facebook page (https://
www.facebook.com/librarydpl/) during those
pandemic days shows that they organized
awareness programme through mobile library
vehicles, COVID-19 awareness campaign was
organized in 10 mobile library centres through
its mobile library vehicles.

6.6. Procedures Followed for Documents Returned

Many libraries are ensuring that staff
members are wearing gloves and masks when
handling recently returned documents, while
some libraries implemented quarantine
policies on returned books. The steps taken
for the documents when returned to the DPL
during COVID-19 pandemic is represented in
table 6.

Table 6

Procedures Followed for Documents Returned to the Library during Pandemic Days

Procedures	Zone					Total	Pearson Chi-Square	P
	Central	East	West	North	South			
Books were kept in quarantine for 2-7 days	1	1	2	4	0	8 (40%)	14.453	0.936*
Sanitized them immediately	2	1	3	6	3	15 (75%)		
Instructed the users to make use of Book Drop Box near library entrance	1	1	2	7	3	14 (70%)		
Notified the users to keep the books with themselves till everything gets back to normal	0	0	0	2	0	2 (10%)		
Use of automated machine to return the books (Kiosk system)	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0.00%)		

*p-value (probability value) is significant, if p < 0.05; Not significant, if p>0.05

The analysis reveals that three fourth of the respondents (75%) opined that they sanitized the documents immediately when returned to the library during the pandemic days. A few public libraries (70%) instructed the users to make use of Book Drop Box near the library entrance for returned books. Furthermore, 40% of the respondents suggested that the returned books were kept in quarantine for 2-7 days. It was also observed that 6 public libraries at the North zone were frequently sanitized the returned books immediately and 7 libraries at the same zone instructed the users to make use of Book Drop Box near the library entrance for returned books.

By applying the Pearson Chi-square test, it is evident that there is no association between the procedures followed for returned documents and the zones to which the library is situated. Since, the Chi-square value is found to be 14.453 and p-value is 0.936 (greater than 0.05). Hence, the given null hypothesis is accepted.

6.7. Library Services

DPL provides several library services to the users such as lending service, reference service, mobile library service, reading room service, Braille library service, social education service, community library service, service to prisoners, guidance and training, and reprographic service.

Table 7
Library Services Offered during COVID-19 Pandemic

Sl. No.	Services	No. of Respondents*	%
1	Lending Service (Issue/return of documents) for limited number of users	15	75
2	Digital Library Service	5	25
3	Virtual Reference Service (Ask a Librarian)	2	10
4	Online Document Delivery	0	0
5	Mobile Library	0	0
6	Dissemination of health information through library website/ social media	18	90
7	Braille Library	0	0
8	Social education and extension activities through online (eg., Virtual exhibition)	17	85
9	Service to weaker sections of the society	1	5

Multiple responses were allowed

It is noticed from the analysis (table 7) that the lion's share of the respondents (90%) opined that DPL disseminated health information through library website/ social media, followed by the public libraries offered social education and extension activities through online (85%) and lending Service (issue/return of documents) for limited

number of users (75%). In addition to this, only a quarter of respondents (25%) replied that their library offered digital library services to the users. It was also noted that only 10% of the respondents claimed that DPL offered Virtual Reference Service (Ask a Librarian) to the patrons during these pandemic days.

From the DPL website, it is identified that the library is keeping direct communication using the 'Ask a Librarian' service, which enables to save the users' time. DPL professionals search the information from reliable and authoritative library resources or other external sources based on the queries. They claim that they will provide answers in the right direction to get what the users need and the replies would be sent within 3 days. Moreover, DPL offers social education and extension activities through online platforms and organising virtual exhibitions also. DPL website provides remote access to subscribed e-resources, and furnishes external links to open access resources and e-learning portals.

6.8. Mode of Dissemination of Library Services

Library services are disseminating through various channels such as social media, websites, e-mail, etc. Delhi Public Library enhanced public engagement by using social media platforms to promote its programmes.

6.8.1. Library Connect with Users

From the analysis, it is obviously understood that all the DPL branches/units under study were frequently connected with users through social media during the COVID-19 pandemic days. Besides, among the 20 respondents, 19 of them (95%) opined that they communicated with the users through webinars and library websites respectively. The other channels of communication preferred by the respondents were e-mail (80%) and virtual library meets (20%) during the pandemic situation.
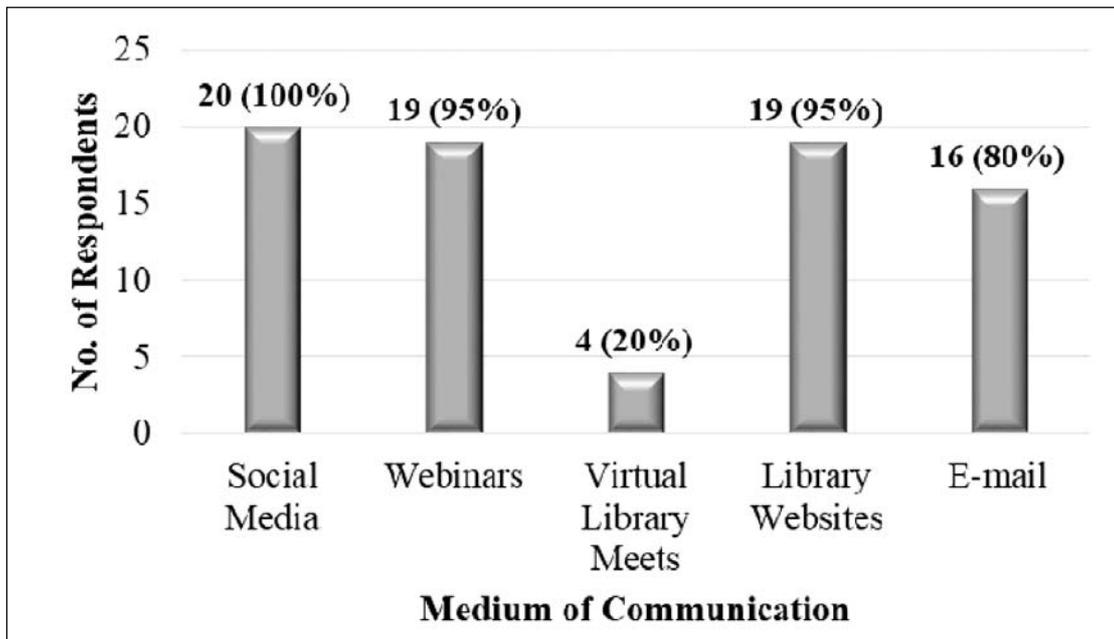
Fig. 2: Medium of Communication with Users

6.8.2. Social Media Platforms

Social media is widely used by the libraries to connect with their users during this pandemic. Billions of people turned to connected devices to help them cope with life and work under lockdown because social media were more appropriate for marketing information and delivering personalized information resources to groups of people or individuals (Okike, 2020). Table 8 indicates the social media platforms preferred for delivering new-normal services of Delhi Public Library.

Table 8

Social Media Platforms Preferred for Offering New-Normal Library Services

Sl. No.	Social Media	No. of Respondents*	%
1	WhatsApp	4	20
2	Facebook	19	95
3	YouTube	3	15
4	Blog	13	65
5	Telegram	2	10
6	Online meeting platforms (eg., Google Meet)	2	10
7	Twitter	19	95

*Multiple responses were allowed

The analysis clearly indicates that majority of the respondents (95%) preferred both Facebook and Twitter as the platforms for offering new-normal library services to the users followed by DPL blog (65%) and WhatsApp (20%). Based on the content analysis of the web presence, it was noticed that DPL gives regular updates through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Blog.

6.8.3. Platforms Preferred for Conducting Webinars

The use of webinars for library activities has been a novel trend during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this COVID-19 pandemic, webinars are convenient for both presenters and attendees. The most frequently using online meeting platforms are Google Meet, Zoom, Webex, GoToWebinar, and Microsoft Teams. Figure 3 presents the most preferred online platforms by DPL for conducting webinars/online workshops during the pandemic days.
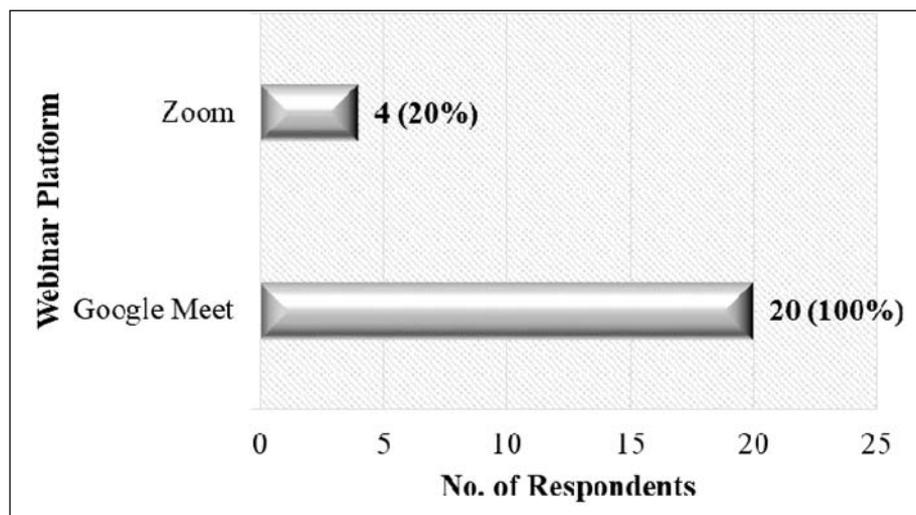
Fig. 3: Preferred Webinar Platforms

The analysis shows that all the respondents from DPL preferred Google Meet as the online meeting platform for conducting webinars. A few respondents (20%) also opined that they preferred both Google Meet and Zoom platforms for online meets.

While analysing DPL website, Twitter, Facebook and Blog, it is observed that Delhi Public Library frequently organised social/cultural/educational events/talks through online platforms.

6.8.4. Duration of Webinars/ Online Workshops

Most of the libraries are conducting webinars and online workshops during the pandemic days, the duration of the events may be held in a single day or more days. The duration of conducting webinars/online workshops by DPL is demonstrated in table 9.

Table 9

Duration of Conducting Webinars/Online Workshops

Sl. No.	Duration of Webinars/ Online Workshops	No. of Respondents	%
1	1 day	12	60
2	2-3 days	1	5
3	4-5 days	1	5
4	More than 5 days	6	30

From the study, it is observed that more than half of the respondents (60%) opined that DPL conducted for 1-day webinars frequently, and a few respondents (30%) commented that their library conducted several online workshops and online meetings for more than 5 days.

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6.9. Challenges Faced by the Library Professionals

Most of the libraries are in the process of developing digital collections and repositories during the COVID-19 pandemic. The major problem faced by public library professionals is the difficulty in managing users who lack digital literacy skills and are living in underdeveloped areas with poor internet connections. Table 10 depicts the challenges faced by the library professionals in DPL.

Table 10

Challenges Faced by the Library Professionals during COVID-19 Pandemic

Sl. No.	Challenges/ Difficulties	No. of Respondents			Total	Mean	SD*
		Always	Sometimes	Never			
1	Instability of internet networks	0 (0%)	17 (85%)	3 (15%)	20	1.85	1.304
2	Retraining librarians in new shapes of library services	12 (60%)	7 (35%)	1 (5%)	20	2.55	2.074
3	Service limitation in working hours	3 (15%)	14 (70%)	3 (15%)	20	2.00	1.517
4	Managing the budget for new-normal library activities	9 (45%)	10 (50%)	1 (5%)	20	2.40	1.924
5	Copyright issues while sharing information through online platforms	7 (35%)	7 (35%)	6 (30%)	20	2.05	1.673
6	Staff competencies (lack of technical skills, communication skills, etc.)	0 (0%)	16 (80%)	4 (20%)	20	1.80	1.265
7	Conducting proper user education programmes regarding access to digital information (Lack of digital literacy in several users need proper attention)	14 (70%)	5 (25%)	1 (5%)	20	2.65	2.168

SD: Standard Deviation

It is evident from the analysis that most of the respondents always faced the problems such as difficulties in conducting proper user education programmes regarding access to digital information (70%) and difficulties in retraining librarians in new-normal library services (60%). In addition, majority of the respondents (85%) sometimes faced the problem of instability of internet networks, followed by the respondents faced problems related to staff competencies, i.e., lack of technical skills, communication skills, etc.

(80%), service limitation in working hours (70%) and managing the budget for new-normal library activities (50%).

The result inferred that the prevailing barrier faced by the library professionals in online activities is the low network speed. Nonetheless, DPL possesses a giant internet connection, needs more network speed to implement online practices. For instance, during the webinar, most participants felt slow internet speed amidst the meeting besides, consumed more internet data. According to Winata, et al. (2020), handling the nascent library management in the new-normal era required a new skill and new shape for library professionals to be experts. Unquestionably, it entails more training, workshops, and other learning discussing libraries in the new normal.

7. Findings of the Study

The major findings of the study are:

- COVID-19 pandemic highly affected the normal functioning of the public libraries.

- More than half of the public libraries (55%) were partially opened (not all the sections were working) during the pandemic days and the remaining were physically /fully closed.

- The status of working of the library is independent on the location of that library.

- All the public libraries have taken the precautions such as provision of hand sanitizer at the library entrance; social distancing norms were strictly followed; use of masks was mandatory and meetings/ gatherings were restricted in the library.

- Delhi Public Library had suspended the book fines during the pandemic days.

- DPL organized COVID-19 aware-ness campaign in 10 mobile library centres through its mobile library vehicles.

- Three fourth of the libraries had sanitized the documents immedi-ately when returned to the library during the pandemic days.

- There is no association between the procedures followed for returned documents and the zones to which the library is situated.

- DPL disseminated health information through library website/social media during the pandemic days.

- DPL offered Virtual Reference Service (Ask a Librarian) to the patrons.

- All the DPL branches/units under study were frequently connected with users through social media during the COVID-19 pandemic days.

- Lion's share (95%) of the library professionals preferred both Facebook and Twitter as the social media platforms for offering new-normal library services to the users.

- DPL preferred Google Meet as the online meeting platform for conducting webinars.

- Most of the library professionals faced the problems such as difficulties in conducting proper user education programmes

regarding access to digital information, difficulties in retraining librarians in new-normal library services and the problem of instability of internet networks.

8. Conclusion

The closure of several public libraries during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has prefaced new issues like barriers to access print materials, new ease of access to online materials, and additional resource limitations as libraries work with inadequate budgets and staff. Although the transition to online services during the pandemic has accelerated the shift to the increasing availability of online resources in public libraries, and urge for print materials persists. The study focused on the best practices in terms of services and facilities of Delhi Public Library during the COVID-19 pandemic days. The study was done based on 20 selected public libraries in Delhi under DPL system. The public libraries have taken several safety measures like provision of hand sanitizer at the library entrance; social distancing norms were strictly followed; use of masks was mandatory and meetings/ gatherings were restricted in the library. All the libraries under DPL system have omitted book fines during those pandemic days. The library system provided information on the latest updates through DPL website. Furthermore, the library professionals sanitized the documents immediately when returned to the library during those pandemic days. DPL disseminated health information through library website and social media. The library professionals mostly faced the problems such as difficulties in conducting proper user education programmes regarding access to digital information, difficulties in retraining librarians in new-normal library services and the problem of instability of internet networks. During this pandemic situation, the public libraries should take initiatives to provide the right resources to the right user at the right time. Moreover, the library professionals must establish an excellent communication with the users to satisfy their requirements.

9. Acknowledgement

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