

PLANNING ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH IN LIBRARIES

** Aishwarya Joshi-Patil*

** Diploma in Air travel and Hospitality management.*

Abstract:

The American author and screenwriter Mr. Ray Bradbury once said, "I discovered myself in the library and I went to find me in the library." In today's hustle and bustle, the library offers a unique sanctuary for peace. Furthermore, as everyone needs motivation at times, books serve as one of the best sources for it.

However, not everyone is aware of how to utilize the library to promote mental health. This research will investigate strategies to effectively promote mental well-being in library environments. The study aims to answer the following questions:

- What is the role of libraries in mental health?
- What are the benefits of libraries for mental health from a psychiatric perspective?
- What activities can promote mental health in libraries?
- What are the ways to reduce depression and its effects through reading and the proper use of the library, from a psychiatric viewpoint?

Keywords: Library, reading benefits, mental health, Books to promote mental health

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Introduction:

Health is one of the most important aspect of human life. Health can be define in two aspect one is visible which defines physical and tangible health condition and another is invisible and intangible which defines psychological state and mindfulness to lead the life.

Physical health conditions can be cured with modern and advance treatments, however it requires great efforts to cure mental illness in which library can definitely play a significant as well as effective role.

Objectives :

- To know the importance of library in mental well-being.
- To identify the role of reading in human life.
- To know the psychiatrist perspectives about reading in mental disorders.
- To help the society to know the importance of reading.

Research Methodology:

Research is an organized, systematic and scientific method. Research methodology is decisive because it provides not only systematic composition for a research paper but also the detailed roadmap to the researcher for the study.

It include the methods used for the research and data analysis and also helps the researcher clearly to define research questions, objectives, and hypothesis before starting the work.

As per the paper true website, research methodology refers to the systematic approach, techniques and processes used by scholars to conduct research which encompass everything from data collection methods to analysis strategies. It serves as a blueprint to guide the entire research process ensuring the study is reliable and valid.

Research methodology can be differentiate in three methods. Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed research methodology.

In this research paper we have collected the data with the help of interview. Also the descriptive method has been used to study the details.

Research Paper:

What is library?

A library can generally be defined as a place that houses a collection of books and texts.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, a library is a building or room with a collection of books, periodicals, and other materials, such as films and recorded music, for people to read, study, or borrow.

Generally, the library is used for exchanging books, providing books for students and teachers for their use. Researchers use the books and texts in the library for reference while writing their research papers and theses.

Along with academic books and texts, the library also has periodicals, newspapers, encyclopedias, poetry collections, novels, autobiographies, etc.

We all know that libraries are used in the educational field, but in this research paper, we will try to understand how libraries are useful in raising the mental level of society and improving mental health.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Over 1.1 billion people worldwide were living with a mental disorder as of 2025, which is nearly 1 in 8 people. Approximately 13% of world's population is suffering from mental disorder. Anxiety and depression is the very common types of mental illness and affecting people of all ages and every background. Survey says, depression affects approximately 4.5% of India's adult population, though rates vary by demographic, with higher prevalence in urban areas, women, and the 40-59 age group. Recent estimates suggest around 57 million people in India had depression in 2015, and this rate is a significant public health concern.

Along with this old aged people are also suffering the mental disorders like Alzheimer where most people are in age group of 65 and above. Recent survey estimates globally there are approximately 57 million people with dementia, with Alzheimer's accounting for 60–70% of cases. Nearly 10 million new cases of dementia emerge annually, and the number of people affected is projected to rise significantly, with estimates suggesting 139 million people will be living with dementia by 2050. Dementia is the seventh leading cause of death worldwide, and in 2019, the global economic cost was \$1.3 trillion.

In today's technological era, devices like mobiles and laptops are not only useful for entertainment but also for education. The increasing use of mobile phones by children is leading them to diseases like irritability, excessive anger and problems in brain growth which is termed as ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyper Activities Disorder). The term virtual Autism arise from excessive screen time in young children.

I had opportunity to discuss in depth on the relevant subject with psychiatrist Dr. Vrinda Parne pertaining to the role of libraries in addressing these issues, we got answers to the following questions:

This interview highlighted the importance of libraries for the mental health of the community.

Questionnaires:

1. What is the role of libraries in mental health?

Life has become very stressful these days. When we are constantly in touch with our laptops, mobile phones or any gadgets, the library is the best place for peace of mind. The peace we get in the library removes the stress from our mind. While we are living in the world of technology, we have forgotten to communicate with ourselves. The peace in the library allows us to disconnect from the world for some time and meet ourselves.

2. What are the benefits of libraries for mental health from a psychiatric perspective?

Patients with depression are advised to use the library more. If a patient is fond of reading, then some inspiring books are suggested to them. If a person is depressed, then most of the time they do not even have interest in doing their favorite activities, then they are told to read two to three times a day for ten minutes.

In the elderly, Alzheimer's disease is coming, if a person makes a habit of reading, then this problem can be reduced because reading is considered a form of mental stimulation that can improve memory, increase brain connectivity, reduced stress and reduced risk of cognitive decline.

Also, now due to excessive use of mobile phones, we can see the disease of virtual autism, so if children develop a love of reading, this risk can be avoided and children will get used to books and this is very good for their intellectual development.

3. What activities can promote mental health in libraries?

Mental illness is not just about anxiety or depression. Sometimes the events happening around us distract us and we start feeling sad, even if it is temporary, but it is necessary to find a solution. While studying in school and college, sometimes students choose the terrible option of suicide due to failure in exams or getting low percentages. To prevent such incidents, we can keep some books in the library that will teach us to control our mind. We can put up some inspirational thought boards in the library to encourage students. Color psychology states that colors affect a person's emotions, mood, and behavior. The colors around them can affect a person's response and decision-making ability. In the library, we can create a positive atmosphere by using the color wheel.

4. What are the ways to reduce depression and its effects through reading and the proper use of the library, from a psychiatric viewpoint?

Reading can relieve depression, and provide emotional relief through inspirational or humorous stories. Reading can be a comforting friend when you are feeling down or lonely. It has been observed that patients suffering from depression often feel better by reading some inspiring autobiographies, humorous books, comic stories, etc. Reading is a good habit to stimulate the brain or even to get a good night's sleep. Books like Yoga, Meditation, Pranayama are useful for our peace of mind. Nowadays, big buildings have many facilities like gym, swimming pool, garden, but we do not see a library. While giving a small gift to each other, we can definitely give a book.

Findings:

While studying this research paper, we saw the importance of reading and the benefits of libraries for the mental health of the society. Books make a big difference in our lives. Dr. Vrinda Parne says that some patients with depression feel positive just by the touch and smell of a book.

Reading books is one of the best ways to overcome loneliness and library is very helpful to cure mental illness this will definitely help to improve physiological condition of a person. This research paper can be helpful for library science student to bring some new ideas to set up the library in new and creative ways which can promote mental health of student.

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