



Introduction

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THE DISADVANTAGED person is an important part of the population. Librarians are more and more aware of the opportunities to serve him and the need to extend their professional understanding of the more deprived groups in society. New concepts and practices in this area are evident in the field of librarianship, as they are in the fields of sociology, anthropology, reading, and education. Trends are indentifiable which indicate new directions, guides for decision-making, and the potential for innovative policies and practices.

What is meant by disadvantaged? Disadvantaged in what way? Economic, social, cultural, and educational disadvantaged present problems of definition and lead to controversy. Disadvantaged has several meanings even within the dictionary definitions. Significantly, *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language*, second edition (1935), does not include the word. The third edition (1961) defines disadvantaged as "lacking in the basic resource or conditions (as standard housing, medical and educational facilities, civil rights) believed to be necessary for an equal position in society." Disadvantaged also means the absence or deprivation of an advantage, an unfavorable, inferior, or prejudiced condition. Compare the meanings of disadvantaged with the terms underprivileged and deprived. Underprivileged is defined as "deprived through social or economic oppression of some of the fundamental rights theoretically belonging to all members of civilized society." Deprivation means "the act of depriving or the state of being deprived." Deprived "implies a taking away of what one has, owns, or has a right to." Deprived also is "marked by deprivations especially of the necessities of life or of healthful environmental influences." Underprivileged and deprived are in certain respects more accurate terms than disadvantaged. These terms give a different emphasis and a broader dimension to the concept of what it

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means to be disadvantaged because they encompass the concept of individual rights.

Being disadvantaged implies a comparison with a standard of being advantaged. It can mean economically impoverished, culturally deprived, or culturally different. It can include an unfavorable environment, physical handicaps, language obstacles, and expectations and values different from the norm. Who is to judge? What is the measure? Standards frequently used are amount and type of education, amount of income, status of the individual or the group to which he belongs, housing conditions, and value of possessions.

Actually the terms "disadvantaged," "underprivileged," and "deprived" themselves often raise doubts and hostilities. Their use seems to be patronizing and presumptuous. The user often fails completely to recognize assets of the so-called disadvantaged person or group. Authors in this issue present various definitions which add depth and insights to the subject while recognizing the problems inherent in definitions and warning against them.

Among the country's various deprived groups, usually minority groups, are the American Indians, Appalachians, Spanish-speaking (primarily Mexican Americans or Chicanos), and the blacks. Others include the white urban poor, the rural disadvantaged, and the ghetto populations, all of whom have deprivations and needs for services yet to be explored. The numbers of persons involved and the many differences among the deprived groups present complexities and opportunities which are discussed throughout this issue.

Nearly 10 million persons of Spanish origin are identified in a 1969 Bureau of the Census survey. They include five major groups, of which 55 percent are of Mexican origin, 16 percent of Puerto Rican origin, 6 percent of Cuban origin, 6 percent of Central or South American origin, and the remaining 17 percent of other Spanish origins. According to the 1970 census, blacks comprise 11 percent of the total population of the United States. In 1970, about 50 percent of the blacks lived in the South, 40 percent in the North, and 10 percent in the West. Three of every five black persons in the population lived in the center of a major metropolitan area. In his article in this issue, Jordan points out that there are five types of American citizens among the disadvantaged population: the young, particularly the school dropouts under twenty-one years of age; the old persons over sixty-five; those who are functionally illiterate and who may be of any age; the new immigrants from rural and small towns; and the blacks, who make up the majority

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in each of the other four groups. Half of the black population is in desperate, deteriorating circumstances.

The literature about the disadvantaged population and about poverty problems of minority groups in today's society is voluminous. Sociologists, anthropologists, economists, psychologists, and ethnic group representatives have focused on the subject. An almost obsessive preoccupation with the subject in the last two decades has created various interpretations and many attempts at solutions. Relevant research literature expands, and rapid change in this field brings new ideas.

The many groups represented in the disadvantaged population, the complexity of the social and cultural aspects, and the institutional responses in library programs have all determined the range and scope of the topics and contributors to this issue. The authors of this issue bring valuable professional knowledge and experience while presenting significant information and critical interpretations which identify and propose unique solutions and directions.

In this issue a sociologist, an action anthropologist, reading specialists, library consultants, library science educators, and leaders in the public and private sector of library administration review and identify significant research and bibliography in their areas of concern. They interpret findings and developments from various and, frequently, contradictory points of view. They examine various responses to the interests and needs of the disadvantaged user by the agency and staff who serve him at academic, public, school, state, and institutional libraries and at library schools in the light of past, present, and future patterns and trends.

This issue's authors synthesize relevant research in areas related to library programs and service to the disadvantaged population; report research findings and trends in communication media; identify necessary institutional changes in the library field; identify new concepts and directions in programs and service to various groups within the pattern of American society, including the traditional age ranges of children, young people, and adults; and review and evaluate research and trends in education and training for this special area in librarianship.

This issue on library service to the disadvantaged contains twenty-one articles which are grouped in seven major areas: Background (Lyman and Ennis); Minorities and the Library (Borman, Smith, Coskey, Haro, and Jordan); Multi-media Approaches (Rogovin and Roberts); Research in Reading (Robinson, Korn, Winters, and Lyman);

Changing Environments and Agencies' Responses (Casey, Frantz, Cunningham, and Davis); *The Library's Responsibility to the Young and Students* (Tate, Frary, Manthorne, and Josey); and *Education and Training for Service* (Monroe and Vale).

New concepts and trends in library services to the disadvantaged reflect change and development. Ennis analyzes dimensions of social change with warnings against uninformed and hasty judgments that mislead. He discusses and illustrates with examples the cases of market mechanisms and marginal institutional exhaustion which are most relevant to librarianship in that they open new lines of thought.

Minorities and the library are the focus of the five articles by Borman, Smith, Coskey, Haro, and Jordan. In this section many of the myths and misconceptions surrounding minorities and national immigrant groups are dispelled. Borman looks at misconceptions, social issues, and action in the light of research knowledge and presents a philosophy of action. He suggests that the major issue before the profession may be whether action librarianship is to be achieved. He asks if the roles of learning and helping can be merged with those of scientist and citizen and whether the goals of administration can be turned to aid human welfare.

The wrongs and injuries to Indians, Appalachians, Spanish-speaking groups, and blacks arouse fierce protest. Several authors analyze this situation and review trends to demonstrate how librarians are or could take active responsibilities in library service to promote human welfare, not only to help the groups directly concerned, but also to refute and help dispel misconceptions about them. The need for understanding and the achievement of greater understanding of these minority groups are documented by Smith, Coskey, Jordan, Haro, Josey, and Cunningham.

Coskey's account of progress made against almost insurmountable obstacles in the southern Appalachian region creates a rich background for greater understanding of these admirable people. Her factual report about one of the least understood areas of the country is as valuable to librarians in urban centers where Appalachians have moved as it is to those in Appalachia.

Although Haro focuses on Mexican Americans in his discussion, the same ideas he expresses are applicable to other Spanish-speaking groups. He points out that indiscriminate generalizations about Mexican Americans prevent recognition of important differences among them. Library programs must reflect bicultural and bilingual aims both in collections and services.

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Jordan, in his review of library services to black Americans, stresses that the most relevant role librarians can play is that of helping blacks help themselves, and, above all, of accepting them and gaining acceptance for them.

Two authors discuss and demonstrate multi-media approaches. The photographic essay on Appalachia makes a unique contribution to the topic. These beautiful and poignant photographs taken in the West Virginia hollows, where the poor and forgotten people live, reveal a strong and sturdy people. Rogovin's deep involvement and artistry add a new dimension and bring an individual comment in an other-than-print medium.

"Tomorrow's illiterates"—Who will they be? Why will they be? Are librarians unseeing and tradition-bound in ways that lead only to failure? Roberts asks and comments on the above questions while challenging clichés, the status quo, and traditions. He feels strongly that libraries must integrate multi-media services and materials or the result will be disadvantaged service.

Three specialists in reading, Robinson, Korn, and Winters, review research findings and trends in reading. They envision broad potentialities which the library could have for the disadvantaged reader. Their suggestions for library service are both practical and inspiring. Lyman discusses literacy, literacy programs and studies, and reading materials for the adult who is developing his reading skills and habits.

Changing environments and agencies' responses are shown in the significant facts and concepts discussed by Casey, Frantz, Cunningham, and Davis. One segment of the public library's vast untapped clientele is composed of the aged, the institutionalized, and the shut-ins, all of them persons who cannot come to libraries because they literally are locked up in mental hospitals and prisons, or because they are locked into their own immediate environments by physical or mental disabilities. Casey explores what libraries are doing and might do for this silent minority. Frantz convincingly shows that today the changing environment requires a goal-oriented and performance-related approach to bring about the substantial changes which will enhance and extend the usefulness of libraries. Cunningham's and Davis's discussions present examples of urban and rural situations which provide practical examples of problems raised by Frantz. Cunningham discusses a regional library response to changes as shown in the Indian project of the Northeast Kansas Library System. Here in microcosm are seen the current national economic and social crises. He concludes that the choice is between a structure which is meaningless to the needs of

the users and a running confrontation with the local power structure.

Davis shows why libraries and librarians must find ways to reach out to the core of the cities and to the centers of deprivation. The public library is unique in its capabilities for nurturing the self-education process. Only total commitment and strong administrative direction in organization and planning, financing, interagency cooperation and community relations, and staffing can achieve success.

The library's responsibility to the young and students is the focus of the articles by Tate, Frary, Manthorne, and Josey. Tate points out how formerly accepted methods of library service to children are being questioned, and she describes the responses and changes taking place in libraries. The librarian's role may be foreseen as that of helping to open the book of life to children and young people while recognizing their different cultural advantages.

Frary analyzes a number of developments which converged to make it possible for the school library to play a major role in educational programs designed to fill the needs of the disadvantaged. She identifies five major areas where objectives must be reached to insure that not only students but all young people have quality library service.

Manthorne reports there has been little research in the area of service to young adults. She identifies models for a new breed of librarians prepared to cope with an old breed of libraries. A key to creative resourceful response is youth's involvement in decision-making regarding policies and the programs that have impact upon them.

Academic libraries, Josey feels, must above all become client centered and provide disadvantaged students with new kinds of learning experiences. Reading guidance, reference information, a wide range of multi-media materials, and encouragement of the love of reading (all combined with innovative practices) are the reforms needed.

Education and training may well be the way to successful and continuing service to the disadvantaged part of the population. Universities and colleges, as well as all types of libraries, are centers for the preparation of men and women who will be leaders, practitioners, and teachers in this area of service. Monroe sees the role of library education in serving the disadvantaged as evaluating and institutionalizing innovation through research and education of personnel. She documents library education's current response to this role. She finds that education for service to special publics and to the individual is the major objective of library schools; the methodology for preparing librarians varies, however, as do the patterns of activity. She concludes that curriculum derived from practice is the approach now evident.

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Vale asks, and attempts to answer the question, Is the library profession capable of providing a meaningful response to the disadvantaged? The federal government's response to this dominant problem of meeting the library training needs of a mobile urban population requires national priorities. These are reflected in legislation, fellowship and institute programs, and program priorities for funding. The trends seem to be in the direction of a people-to-people and people-for-people orientation.

The single most significant factor in serving the disadvantaged person and groups may be the respect and understanding between the library user or potential user, the individual or community, and the library personnel. It is imperative to know and appreciate the life styles, cultural beliefs and values, motivations, desires, interests, and aspirations of various groups.