A Study of Public Libraries Distribution Inequality in the Provinces of Iran

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Abstract

Purpose: As the world rapidly moves into the new era of information and wisdom, the needs of human beings to use books and libraries continue to grow. With this in mind, in addition to increasing public library services, it's important for planners to distribute library facilities equitably across the country. In this paper we will study the distribution of public libraries in the Provinces of Iran to find out whether they are distributed equitably and the services in which some provinces rate lower than others in relation to country averages. Methodology: The level of analysis is provincial; hence the data are collected from the provinces and include the number of public libraries, the number of books, the number of study places for individual people, the number of library clients and the number of library members. Inequalities in provinces are analyzed using the Lorenz Curve and the Gini Coefficient and the Location Quotient (L.Q) is calculated for comparing and sorting the provinces.

Findings: The results show that the distribution of public library services in Iranian provinces is relatively equitable. The Gini Coefficient is between 0.065 to 0.191that are close to zero. A Gini Coefficient of zero expresses perfect equality, whilst a Gini Coefficient of 1 expresses maximal inequality. Thus, the Lorenz Curves are near a straight diagonal line which demonstrates that public library services are distributed relatively equitably. In 10 provinces the L.Q is lower than the average figure, and 20 provinces have a figure greater than average. Sistan Va Baloochestan province has the lowest figure of L.Q, while Yazd province has the highest.

Originality/value: In recent decades, development planners have focused more attention on equal access to living facilities and especially equal access to cultural services, because they found that inequalities may cause to serious problems. Any of the 5 I.R.I development plans pay attention to spatial and social justice, too.

Keywords: Public library, spatial inequality, equitable development, Lorenz Curve, Gini Coefficient, location Quotient.