

AN OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper is emphasizing the importance of school libraries in learning, teaching and research activities. While emphasizing the importance of School Libraries, it traces the changing scenario in which school libraries provide information to their users. It also explores the glimpses of library development in India. This is also gives the information about the collection of school libraries, library services, facilities and staff of the library. This made a key attempt to state the collaborative role of the central as well as state government, school authorities, librarians and teachers for the implementation of efficient school library services in India. Lastly this paper attempts towards the aim at analyzing and evaluating the prevailing conditions in school libraries in India.

KEYWORDS: School Library, Libraries in India

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INTRODUCTION

The present day system of education at school, college and university level has evolved over the past 150 year. It was initiated and established by British rulers. This education system was changed after the country became independent. Since, independence the education system has been reviewed by the commissions appointed by the government, appropriate measures have been suggested to improve the quality of education at all levels. India adopted a new educational policy in 1986 in order to provide a better education to our children, where it is tuned with our national heritage. It also emphasizes the teaching of science and technology to the students. In all these efforts to revive our educational system libraries have been considered as vital components and integral parts of the entire educational process. Libraries are also essential for information education process and self-learning

activities. Libraries are now called “Learning Resource Centers” and The Librarians as the “Learning Resource Center Managers”.

In India, the school education is at 3 levels, primary level, (classes 1 to 5), middle level (classes 6 to 8) and higher/secondary level (classes 9 to 12). The Education is in the concurrent list of the Indian constitution. These schools are governed and controlled by a number of different bodies such as State Governments, Central Boards of the Government of India, Local boards, Panchayats, Municipalities, Corporations etc. private bodies:- societies, associations and Individuals, public sector undertaking etc. In our country, the State Governments play an important role in the developments of school education.

MEANING OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES: A school is a center of learning and personal development of children. A School Library is a library with in the school premises, where students, staff and often parents of a public or private school have access to a variety of resources. The school library equips students with life-long learning skills and develops the imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens.

In many schools libraries are staffed by librarians, teacher-librarians or school library media specialist or media coordinators who hold a specific diploma courses or library science degree. The trained librarians have either a Diploma in Library Science or a Bachelor’s degree in Library and Information Science.

The school library is an essential partner in the local, regional and national library and information network. The school librarian has to be professionally qualified because he is responsible for planning and managing the library. The role of school librarian as a teacher is to analyse the information needs of his clients for which he seeks help from the teacher.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY: The School Libraries to provide a wide range of learning opportunities for students, teachers, individuals as well as other small and large groups of learners. Its main focus is intellectual content, information literacy and the learners. With the support of teachers, the school library also serves as a learning space for students, use computers, equipment and research materials. The school library functions as a resource center for the students to be able to safely access the internet for both school work and interacting with each other. The school library media center program is a collaborative venture in which school library media

specialist, teachers, and administrative work together to provide opportunities for the social, cultural and educational growth of students.

THE COLLECTIONS OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY: The School Libraries collections are books, films, recorded sounds, periodicals, charts, maps and digital resources. These items are not only for the education, enjoyment and entertainment of all members of the school community, but also to enhance and expand the school's curriculum.

SERVICES: The library services in a school should be closely integrated with the learning and teaching process. The school library should render following services to its users. They are, Reference services, narration of stories by the professionals, newspaper clipping services, film shows, conducting quiz programmes and book exhibitions and also taking children to visit other libraries located within the city or town.



ROLE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN INDIA

Schools play a very important role in building up an interest for reading among the children. Library is a gateway to knowledge. The School library is the heart of the school. These libraries encouraged the children at the right age, the children are sure to develop a love for books and other reading materials. According to IFLA/UNESCO School library manifesto, "the school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today's information and knowledge based society". The School Library develops lifelong learning process among the students and increased the thinking capacity. It plays this role by selecting, acquiring and providing access to appropriate sources of information. The school library offers print and non-print materials. Behalf of this, the school librarian helps the students in finding the books/information on the topics of their interest. The School Librarian along with the teachers work together to achieve higher levels of literacy. Dr. S.R. Ranganathan stated that "the school libraries should act as laboratories for students and the librarians should function as guides to help the

students in learning and using the books for improvement of knowledge and scholarship”.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN INDIA:

According to the Fifth All India Education Survey (1992) there are 7,35,771 schools in all over India, out of which only 2,93,427 (39.88%) have libraries. Level wise analysis indicates that 26.18% primary schools, 66.97% upper primary schools, 90.12% secondary schools and 94.08% higher secondary schools have their libraries. In the same survey, it was reported that only 15% of rural schools and 8.28% of urban schools have full time librarians at the secondary school level. At the higher secondary school level only 29.58% rural schools and 46.10% urban schools have full time librarians. However, the average of trained librarians is about 65% only in all schools.

There are 1441 full time trained librarians. Other include from a teacher incharge to a clerk or even personal assistant of the Principal of the School. The trained librarians have either a Diploma in Library Science or a Bachelor’s degree in Library and Information Science. The statistics about the collection of books are quite revealing. 17.8% schools have less than 100 books, 9.6% have 100 to 249 books, 5.3% have 250 to 499 books, 3.64% have 500-599 books, 2.55% have 1000 to 1999 books, about 2% has 2000 to 3999 books, and 1.5% has 4000-4999 books.

The book stock position of the libraries in India, are given below.

Number of Books	Library Stock in %
100	17.8
100-249	9.6
250-499	5.3
500-999	3.64
1000-1999	2.52
2000-3999	2.0
4000-4999	1.5

There are a number of variations in their perception of library priorities, facilities provided, funds allocated, appointment of trained staff etc, vary enormously.

In India, the library facilities are very poor, they have not even the sufficient trained staff, stocks, computer labs, laboratories and other facilities. The Indian

Government and State Governments also not concentrated much on the library facilities at school levels. Now a days this condition is changing gradually. Apart from this some school libraries are providing good facilities to its students. The survey report of facilities provided by schools at different levels as follows:

Types of Schools	Library Facilities
Primary Schools	31.41
Middle Schools	59.61
Secondary Schools	94.5
Higher Secondary Schools	95.75

Point should be noted that only 41.8% of these school libraries have some facilities.

At present school libraries are neglected in India. According to the fifth All India Educational Survey, only about 40% of the schools have libraries that too in public schools, moreover, the condition in rural areas is worse than the urban area. The number of trained librarians working in the schools is still less. Most of the libraries have no qualified staff in their schools. Our country's library resources also very scarce, because of lack of funds and staff. The documents in most of the school libraries are kept in cabinets under lock and are made available to the students on demand only.

Some school libraries generally where there are trained librarians, they provides good facilities for students. The situation in rural area where there are libraries, but the almirahs are mostly locked, books are not properly issued to the students and also other library service like computer and other film facilities also not given to students.

Following pictures shows the poor facilities of school libraries in India



In 1998, the school library committee of the Indian Library Association surveyed the school libraries in Delhi and found that most of the government schools

had no library at all and in secondary schools, the libraries were substandard. The report called for a fresh look at the way school libraries were organized. The committee also stressed that the library be made the hub of the school. Moreover, it was noted that the public (private) schools were better organized with better facilities like staff, collection and services as compared to the government schools. Such schools are continuously improving their collections and access to resources but the government schools suffer from lack of funds and staff. Majority of such schools does not even have a full time librarian and the teacher in-charge manages the library in the absence of the full time librarian.

Although the number of school libraries in primary, secondary and the higher education is growing, yet there are many problems to overcome. Most of the government schools do not have a separate room for library and do not appoint the qualified staff for its library. Until a few years ago, only a few secondary schools had libraries with qualified library staff. Moreover, they are not paid well and as a result the well trained librarians leave the school library. The status of school librarian in India is also low. Generally speaking, libraries in public schools are in a better position in terms of space, budget and staff rather than the government schools. Most of the public schools have appointed trained librarians and are giving computerized services also. Although, most of the public schools have their websites giving academic information, infrastructure available, etc. In the current IT scenario, when the school libraries in the developed countries are being used as “school library media centers” with computer resources that enable children to access a wide variety of information, almost all of the school libraries are far from such a reality in India.

CONCLUSION: A library is a store house of knowledge and information. But the era of information technology revolution has kept the users away from the library. Evolution of internet strongly influenced on the school library users. They are not come to library, always they wanted to brows on the web, so the reader of the print media is decreasing day by day. There is a great need for the upliftment of school libraries in India. The reading habits of the users have to be changed. For this purpose Central as well as state government, the school authorities, the school librarian and the teachers will all have to work together. From all the efforts of librarian, school authorities and governments we can change the user attitude then only we can reach our goals.

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