

Chapter - 7

Recommendations to Design a Standard for School Library in West Bengal

7.1 Introduction

Based on the findings of the analysis (vide Chapter – 4 and Chapter – 5), expert's comments and empirical observations a standard for the school library is intended to be proposed here to overcome the vulnerable situation of the school library system in West Bengal. The implementation of this standard may establish an equilibrium among the school libraries in West Bengal and as a result, every student belonging from any region can avail a uniform infrastructure and service from their school library.

There is no doubt that the school library is for school students. Therefore, it is always the student population of any school that represents the prime demand-side as per any kind of library services are concerned. Hence, there exists a proportional relation between the number of students, total collection, seating capacity and the number of books issued per day. If a school is having a higher number of students, then the total collection, seating capacity and the number of daily issuing books must go higher proportionally. On the contrary, if there is less number of students then the corresponding attributes will also be changed accordingly. The standard proposing here is a dynamic as well as a data-driven standard. The knowledge as gathered from the surveyed 400 schools becomes the primary basis for this quantitative standard formulation. The novelty of this kind of standard is that in every situation the ratio that is being calculated will be fixed and the magnitude that has been fixed will also be the same as well. It is needless to say that though the standard intended here to propose a desirable limit the higher number is always preferable for the betterment of the school library.

7.2 School Library Standard

The recommendations for standard are furnished below:

7.2.1 Standard 1: Librarian

Librarians are responsible to render services to the students and the teachers and responsible to increase the reading habit among the students (Figure 1 in Appendix 4).

Recommendation: Every school library must have a full time permanent credentialed librarian.

7.2.2 Standard 2: Supporting Staff

One skilled staff can assist the librarian in the library housekeeping operations as well as help the students in using the library properly (Figure 2 in Appendix 4).

Recommendation: At least one supporting staff is mandatory and more than that is always preferable.

7.2.3 Standard 3: Reading Room

The reading room is an indispensable part of a library. A reading room may either be with the library or adjacent to the library. It is a place which promotes the heading habits within the students and teachers (Figure 3 in Appendix 4).

Recommendation: Every school library should have a separate reading room.

7.2.4 Standard 4: Collection of Documents

According to Dr. S.R. Ranganathan's Second Law of Library science 'Every Reader His/ Her Book', a library should possess a collection that can satisfy the need of its user. School library system is mainly student-centric. According to the analyzed data, the average no. of the student is 1500 and the average no. of collection of books is 1900. There is no parity/ pattern in the student- book ratio. So, to make it a convenient quantitative rule is being fixed. The standard proposing here is a dynamic standard. It is recommended that Per one student two books are required. Though the number is

always preferable, it is desirable to maintain 1:2 ratio for student and collection (Figure 5 in Appendix 4).

Recommendation: The student - book ratio should be **1:2**.

7.2.5 Standard 5: Books Issued Daily

As the present data shows, the average ratio of students and books issued daily is 150:1, that means per 150 students 1 book is allotted for issuing in a day. After analyzing the collected data, a ratio of students and books issued daily has been fixed to provide a baseline standard to establish uniformity. the ratio being fixed is 10:1 that means per 10 students one book should be there for issuing daily. Say for example, if the number of students is 1000, there the number of books will be 2000 (following 1:2) and per day (following 10:1) 100 books should be issued in a day. Along with this rule, a seven-day book return policy should also to be introduced. As a result, after a week a total of 700 books will be out of the library and 1300 books will be there in the library to fulfill further requirements. And as it is a linear relationship, with the increasing number of students, the number of issuing books will also increase automatically. As the standard is dynamic, it is not fixing the limit rather it is proposing a desirable baseline (Figure 6 in Appendix 4).

Recommendation: The Student and Daily issued books ratio should be 10:1.

7.2.6 Standard 6: Seating Capacity

As per the present status, the ratio of student and reading room seating capacity is 90:1. This is the average status but somewhere student count is high along with collection but without any seating arrangements. That means no pattern is existing. According to the collected data, more than 80% schools possess less than 2000 student, and the highest number of students is around 5000. When formulating the standard, special attention was given to formulate the ratio in such a way that it can afford the maximum allotment. As in the present study, the highest number of students is around 5000, so if the ratio is fixed as 50:1 then maximum 100 seats needs to be arranged making

resemblance with a affordable standard classroom for a school. As it is a dynamic standard with the increasing number of students, the seating capacity will also increase accordingly (Figure 7 in Appendix 4).

Recommendation: The student and Seating capacity ratio should be 50:1.

Based on the above three standards a simple generalization is depicted in the following table.

If one school is having 1000 students, then

Following Standard 5 (1:2) = The collection of documents must be 2000.

Following Standard 6 (10:1) =The no. of daily issued books must be 100

Following Standard 7 (50:1) =The number of seats in the reading room must be 20

7.2.7 Standard 7: Classification Scheme

Any standard classification scheme should be followed to classify the documents so that the document can be arranged on the shelves maintaining a proper classified order. Classification helps to locate a book in its proper place, to find a book when the user asked for it, as well as re-shelving the book in its proper position at ease. So, if the fund does not permit to buy a classification scheme, at least the document should be classified in a broader class using any standard scheme (Figure 8 in Appendix 4).

Recommendation: The documents should be classified with the help of a classification scheme.

7.2.8 Standard 8: Arrangement of Books

Arrangement of the documents should be done in such a pattern so that the document can be found easily. If the documents are arranged in classified order, then it can satisfy the fourth law of Library Science, i.e, 'Save the time of the user'. As the documents are arranged under 'APUPA (Alien- Penumbral- Umbral- Penumbral- Alien)' in classified order, it enables a user to browse the relative subject, along with the core subjects.

Recommendation: The documents should be arranged in classified order.

7.2.9 Standard 9: Cataloguing of Documents

Catalogue is a list of documents which enables a user for identifying and locating a document. A library should catalogue all the documents to identify the number of total collections of the library also. Though there are various outer forms of catalogue, viz., card, book, shelf-list and computerized, keeping in mind the funding and manpower of the school library, the computerized catalogue is preferable (Figure 9 in Appendix 4).

Recommendation: The school library should catalogue all its documents.

7.2.10 Standard 10: Types of Shelves

There are two types of shelving method followed in the libraries, viz., open and close access. Besides these, the mixed method, i.e., both open and close has also been used in some libraries. In the open access system, as the documents are arranged in classified order in the stack the users have direct access to them which helps them to browse the books of their interest and enhance their reading habits (Figure 10 in Appendix 4).

Recommendation: Open access shelving is recommended for the school library.

7.2.11 Standard 11: Circulation System

Circulation is a mandatory service in any school library. It helps the students to issue the books for their home preparation. There are different types of book circulation system available in the school library, viz., through the register and through the card. Circulation through register is feasible only for the school with a minimum number of users. But when the user number is high, the complications may occur issuing books through a register. To avoid these situations, the circulation of the library should be done through the library card (Figure 11 in Appendix 4).

Recommendation: Circulation facility should be provided by the school library and this should be done through the library card.

7.2.12 Standard 12: Internet connection

The reading habit is changing remarkably among the students with the advent of information and telecommunication resources. The library should maintain a collection of multimedia resources to support the students need. Internet is a must for the school library to provide multimedia resources to the students. Due to the insufficient fund, school libraries have a limitation in purchasing a huge number of books. Now MHRD, Ministry of Human Resource Development has initiated National Digital Library (NDL) project under its National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology where the Educational materials are available for users from primary to post-graduate levels. So, if the school library has the facility of Internet connection, they can very easily facilitate their students with an enormous collection of books, study materials, etc (Figure 12 in Appendix 4).

Recommendation: School Library should have an internet connection.

7.2.13 Standard 13: Budget required to increase the collection

According to the responses of the librarian regarding the allotted budget for the school library, more than 80% recommendations range between Rs.30000 -Rs.50000, i.e., the dominant modal frequency varies within the above class range. Considering the data any amount greater than the mode value is recommended as the required budget for a school library. It is again being highlighted that this study is proposing a standard baseline to restrict the discrimination between the libraries and bring uniformity. The amount proposed here is desirable to do so but any amount more than it is always preferable for the betterment of school libraries.

Recommendation: Rupees 50,000/- is recommended to increase the collection.

Apart from the above standards, there are some important points to be discussed.

- **Library building and furniture:** During the survey, it has been noticed that the school libraries in the schools are actually the classrooms of the schools. Only in a few numbers of school have a separate library building. Classrooms

are not very spacious to fulfill the requirements of the library. So, a well-equipped, spacious Library building along with a reading room is recommended. The library should have the essential furniture i.e. book- rack, almirah, chair, table magazine display rack, etc. A calm and quiet place is always recommended for a school library.

- **Timing of Library:** School Library should be open during the school hour.
- **Book Selection Committee:** A book selection committee comprises with Librarian, Head Master and Teacher Representative should be formed for the purchasing of books for the library.

7.3 School Library Information System

The standard has been framed on the basis of the result of the analysis of 400 school libraries. It is always recommended to include all the school libraries for any kind of decision making and policy framing. To implement a standard successfully the most essential requirement is effective monitoring of all school libraries. In this connection, it is urgently needed to have a central information system containing the details of all the school libraries in West Bengal. Hence a schematic operational layout of the School Library Information System has been proposed here (Figure 7.1).

As the schools are considered as the prime source of information, a library checklist (or questionnaire) containing all the relevant school library aspects should be framed first. The librarian, head of the institution, teacher-in-charge, and the students will be responsible for filling up the library checklist. On the contrary, the geographic information (locations in terms of Latitude and Longitude) of the schools can be collected either directly from the District Information System for Education (DISE) or can be recorded from the Google Map data and survey data. Conversion of the collected raw data into the processed data can be achieved through the processes of data refinement, data tabulation, and data validation respectively. After that, the processed data will be attached to the spatial data containing locations of the schools to create a Spatial Database Management System. In this way, all the relevant information

collected from different sources can be stored in a central database system which may be termed as the School Library Information System. The database thus generated and archived, will be accessible to the researchers, educationist, government organization and common users through the web services for their research and development activities. On the other hand, the policymakers may also use the information system for framing the school library development schemes. The entire process is to be done on a participatory basis where the bottom-up integration from different stockholders ranging from the library users to the policymakers is required.

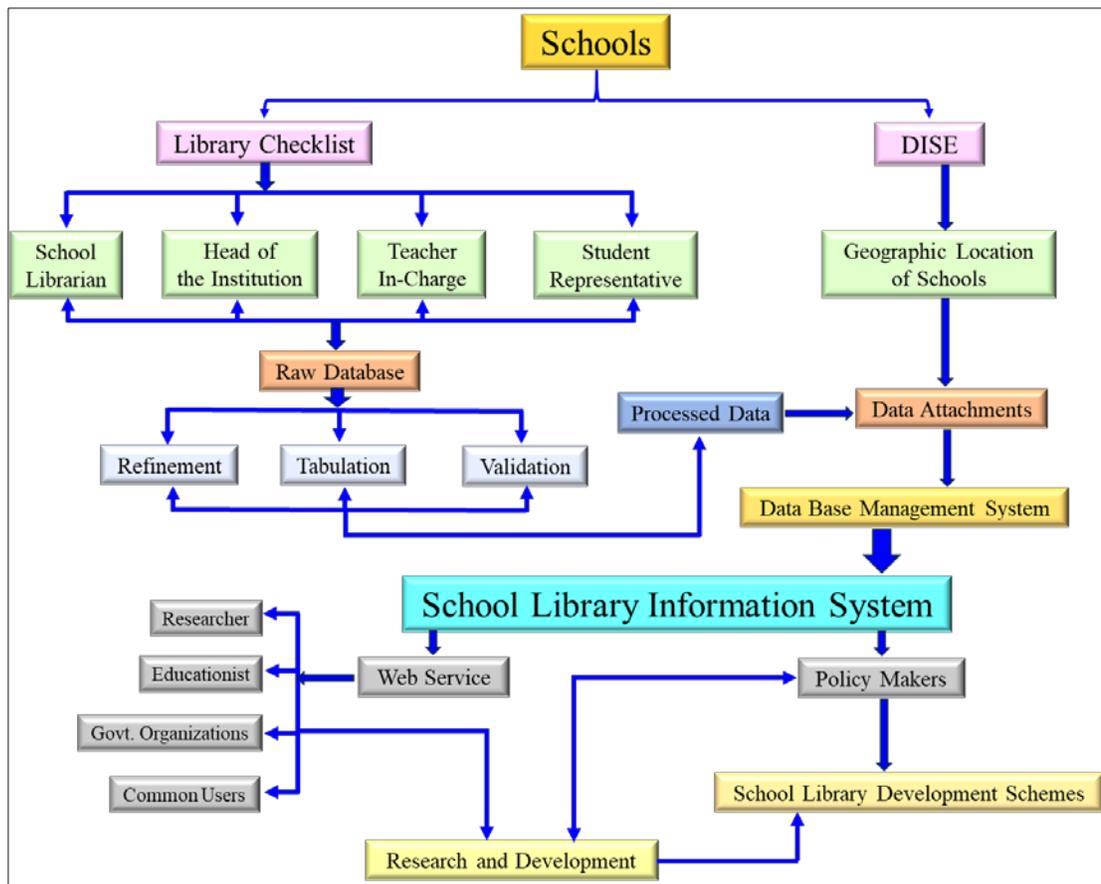


Figure 7. 1 Schematic layout of the proposed School Library Information System.