

Chapter – 8

Conclusion

School library is the indispensable part of a school as it nourishes the students, promotes the habit of self-reading and stimulates the creative faculty in future. School Library Standards are used to measure and evaluate the status of the libraries as well as providing a guideline on specific library activities for its betterment. The practice of following a standard is very common in almost every country throughout the world. In India, Mudaliar Commission (1953) was the first which focused light on the school library and recommended few guidelines for its promotion. But no definite standard was formulated and being followed in India. In case of West Bengal, the scenario is the same. As no uniform standard is being followed, the school library system is in a vulnerable condition. As a result, being in the same state somewhere students got deprived for the poor infrastructure and service.

The present study was intended to propose a standard to bring uniformity among the school libraries and to make them properly functional. Formulation of a standard for school library is required for decision making and to enhance the quality of education. The general objective of this study is to prepare a standard for the school libraries in West Bengal so that a uniformity can be maintained in all the schools whatever it may be in a rural area, or semi-rural or in an urban area. However, to achieve the objective, this study has tried to accomplish the four tasks, viz., (i) to investigate the status of the infrastructure, procurement policy, organization and service rendered by the school libraries in West Bengal; (ii) to investigate the district-wise status of school libraries in West Bengal; (iii) to find out the barriers that effect in the smooth running of school libraries in West Bengal; (iv) and finally to design a standard for the school library in West Bengal.

A total 400 schools from 19 districts have been taken as the sample for this research. Twenty schools from each district are being considered for the survey. A structured questionnaire comprises both open and closed questions, was framed to collect the required data. Along with the print questionnaire, an online questionnaire was also framed with the help of Google Form for the convenience of this study. The validation of the primary data, i.e., data collected from the survey

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was being done by randomly cross-checking the data over the telephone. After the validation, the raw data was being tabulated. After tabulation frequency distribution was performed in order to display the number of observations within a given interval for a certain attribute. On the basis of the tabulated data, data visualization in the form of different graphs were plotted. Finally, on the basis of the tabulated data and the corresponding graphs, the final interpretation was given.

The present study reveals that a disparity in terms of infrastructure, procurement policy, organization, and service is prevailing among the school libraries in West Bengal. It is alarming that maximum school libraries do not have any appointed permanent librarian. In most of the cases the library is running by a teacher or only by a staff. A large number of schools are running without having any support staff and as a consequence the librarian becomes the only one to be responsible for providing library services. Very few numbers of school libraries have a separate reading room attached with the library, hence, the students are getting deprived from the opportunity of availing reading room facilities. Insufficient collection of documents is the major problems of most of the school libraries of west Bengal. In case of the book selection procedure, many schools do not have any book selection committee, even somewhere they do not involve the librarian also which in turn hindered the development of the library.

Many school libraries have close access shelves arranged subject wise, and as a result, the students have no opportunity to connect directly with the documents in the library. A very minimum number of schools have catalogued their books. The school libraries follow different physical form of cataloguing e.g. book, card, shelf list and computerized form of cataloguing. In many schools there is no catalogue cabinet, though card catalogue is being maintained there in the library. Maximum number of schools do not follow any classification scheme. The majority of schools are lending books through the circulation register, instead of issuing books through card. In the era of Information and Telecommunication, still majority of schools are lacking to provide Internet facility to the users. Even multimedia resources, Newspapers and magazines are not available in the library. There is no certain weeding out policy in school libraries, though the syllabi of the different subjects in different classes are being changed in last few years.

There is a limitation in the overall assessment of schools that it depicts general picture which is not sufficient for framing a standard unless measuring the disparity level among the schools

belonging to different districts. Therefore, GIS techniques were adopted as a spatial analysis tool to examine the inter district variations.

The present study, along with the overall status of West Bengal, also depicts the district wise status of school libraries. It is revealed from the study that in the majority of the schools around the capital Kolkata and its surrounding have permanent appointed librarians. While at northern part of West Bengal the number of librarians in school libraries is minimum. In comparison with other districts libraries of Bardhaman district has highest number of schools where supporting staffs are there to assist the librarian. Kolkata district has highest number of schools where separate reading room is there. Schools having more than 5000 books are belonging from Kolkata, whereas Darjeeling has highest number of schools possessing less than 1000 books in their school libraries. In majority of districts, the librarians are not satisfied with their collection, except in Kolkata district where 30% school authorities are satisfied with their collection. Birbhum has the highest number of schools where open access shelving is followed; on the other hand, Darjeeling has the highest number of schools where close access shelving is followed. Besides, cent percent of schools in Birbhum arranged their books according to the subject. Kolkata district has highest percentage of schools where all documents are fully catalogued and in few instances only 30% schools in Kolkata district are maintaining the card catalogue and the card cabinet. The two districts Burdhaman and North 24 Parganas have highest percentage of schools where classification is done. Murshidabad district has highest percentage of schools where circulation is done through register, while Howrah district has highest percentage of schools where circulation has been done through card only. Purba Midinipur has highest percentage of schools where more than 50 books are being issued daily, while in Murshidabad the percentage is below ten. Koch Bihar has the highest number of schools where internet facility is available, while in Jalpiguri district, no internet facility is available in the school libraries. It is clearly observed that the school libraries in Kolkata and its surrounding district have enjoying maximum facilities, as they are getting support from their authorities. Districts like Purulia, Bankura, Darjeeling, Uttar Dinajpur and Dakshin Dinajpur are getting deprived from availing good infrastructure and services. The intervention of Government and the school authority are urgently required for the promotion of the school libraries belonging from the under privileged districts.

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The disparity among the school libraries in infrastructure, management and services are mainly caused by the inadequate fund and lack of initiative taken by the Government. The authority must appoint a librarian in every school. The authority should increase the fund, so that the school libraries can build sufficient collection. The authority should involve the librarian in book selection procedure. Besides the printed books, the library should develop their collection with multimedia resources. Newspapers and some children magazines should also be kept in the library. Librarians, somewhere are getting compelled to engage themselves in different other school issues as imposed by the school authorities and as a result, the normal library duties were being hampered and the students got suffered for this. The documents should be classified, so that the arrangement of the books will be in a classified order that helps the librarian and the other users to find their books easily. The biggest challenge for not being classified the books are the non-availability of classification schedule. It is understood that, for a school library, the budget is not sufficient to buy a classification scheme. Therefore, librarians should classify the books at least in third summary, which is available freely on the Internet. Lack of adequate fund, time management, staff management, co-operation from the administration and infrastructural facilities are the main barriers faced by the librarians during providing service. The school authority should consider the issues in a priority basis. Above all, this is really appreciating that despite many barriers, the librarians still want to deliver their services according to the demand of the students and the teachers with the co-operation from the school authority.

On the basis of the analysis and findings, a standard for school libraries in West Bengal is being proposed here. The standard has been framed on the basis of the result of the analysis of 400 schools only. It is always recommended to incorporate all the schools for a central database generation, information management and policy framing. In this connection, it is urgently required to have a central information system containing all the details of the school libraries in West Bengal. Hence a basic operational layout of the School Library Information System has been proposed. But for its implementation, interventions of the school authorities and the Government must be required.

The study tries to emphasize the current status of school libraries in West Bengal. It also enables the authorities of school libraries to be aware of the steps to be taken to improve the conditions of the libraries in the State. It may also give an idea to the policymakers of secondary and higher

secondary schools to implement a proper school library standard. The findings of this study provides insight into the importance of having a fixed school library standard for the development as well as promotion of the school library education in West Bengal and even in India. The outcome may focus light on some other problems related to LIS research and accordingly suggest the further scope of research in this field. The specific problems on which investigation have become crucial may be:

- i. Factors responsible for disparity among school libraries.
- ii. Promoting the use of the GIS technology in solving library related problems and issues.
- iii. Designing and development of a standard for college library in West Bengal.