



**ROLE OF LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS IN SCHOOLS
UNDER BLOCK RESOURCE CENTRE, THRITHALA,
PALAKKAD DISTRICT: A STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

It is quite known that reading habits play a major role in the character building of students. School libraries in turn play a vital role in bringing the reader and the documents together. Another important but unnoticed or rather forgotten role of libraries in student's life is teaching them the importance of references and the method of referencing. This can only be achieved if the students are in ease of access of various documents related to their taste and need of use. This is where a trained librarian becomes an asset to any education system. The paper emphasizes on a direct link between the role of the school librarian and good teaching practice and achievement. There is evidence that school librarians who take a professional and proactive approach to their role within the school can cite evidence of their impact on teaching and learning. There has to be a continuing research into the current trend of utilizing teaching staffs in lieu of professional librarians in the schools. The development of primary teaching staff should also be considered which will give a clearer indication of whether library provision can be effectively delivered without on-site librarian input.

Key words: Education, School Libraries, Library Professionals, Librarian



INTRODUCTION:

School is something all of us have to go through, it is the formal education we need to receive in order to be able to have a place in society. Although we can find a lot of faults in the way education is implemented, there are a lot more benefits, and what each and everyone will do with that education is much more important. So what does education start with? To answer that, we have to answer another question: what is elementary school?

Elementary school is the first stage of education, which means it is an essential step in children's education. Here is where they form some of their first values, and where they are introduced to basic knowledge that they'll use for the rest of their lives. Because most children learn to read and write at this stage, it is very important for every school to have an elementary school library. This is so because, the children can be encouraged from an early age to read and study, and to realize that knowledge is more valuable than anything else. The habit of reading, and the pleasure of reading a good book should be discovered early on, and this is how they become part of who we are.

The reason why the elementary school library is a subject to be debated is that not all schools have them; although all schools have libraries, not all of them are prepared to meet the needs of very young children. So even if they would want to read, there would be nothing to attract them, nothing at their level of interest and education. Without this incentive, lots of children never get the reading bug, and later on when they are forced to read books, don't enjoy them. Another reason why an elementary school library is important is because it can erase social differences; a child with well-to-do parents can get them to buy books for his/her age, but a child whose parents don't have the material means won't be able to satisfy these needs. Thus, even if the two children go to the same school, the first will get a much better education because they had better access to books and information. The elementary school library will make those differences disappear because it will give both children access to the same information and the same books. Moreover, today the library can also offer access to computers and internet, and even though they are sometimes abused, they can also be an important source of learning.

School Libraries

School libraries serve elementary schools, middle schools, junior high schools and high schools. The main function of a school library is to support various educational programs and to develop student's skills in locating and using information. Teachers use school libraries to access information needed to develop and support their classroom instruction. Students use the materials in school libraries to perform their class work. School libraries usually maintain collections in a variety of media. In addition to books, magazines, and newspapers, school libraries may contain photographs, films, sound and video recordings, computers, CD-ROMs, games, and maps. Some school libraries contain real artifacts such as various types

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of stones for the study of geology. An increasing number of school libraries have computer labs with computer workstations, software, and Internet connections. Because school libraries often emphasize the variety of media in their collections, they are sometimes referred to as library media centers. Most school libraries further enhance their collections by becoming members of school library networks; this allows them to share resources with libraries in other schools.

The conclusion is that all schools should have comprehensive and complete libraries; it is true not all of them can afford it, but the school system should place an emphasis on it and utilize some of its budget to improving the situation.

Role of Librarian in School Education

The role of Librarian or Library professional or Teacher-Librarian in education is extremely important. Major role identified are listed below:

Function as partners in educating individuals, developing curricula, and integrating resources into teaching and learning

- Teach the skills individuals need to become effective users of ideas and information
- Seek, select, evaluate, and utilize electronic resources and tools and instruct individuals and educators in how to use them
- Select resources to meet the learning needs of all individuals
- Assure that technology, teaching, and learning are integrated seamlessly
- Select resources that support learning standards
- Select resources that enhance leveled collections
- Provide imaginative materials that promote learning motivation
- Provide for free voluntary reading, individual reading selection and reading guidance
- Manage information by providing intellectual and physical access to information in print, media, and online resources, either local or web based
- Collaborate with educators to meet the intellectual needs of individuals
- Collaborate with lecturers, teachers, educators regularly to provide resources and activities for course, unit, and lesson integration
- Assist educators and individuals to search out their information needs, critically evaluate the materials they locate, and use technological means to synthesize their findings into new knowledge
- Organize, manage, and maintain a collection of valuable resources

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- Maintain a supportive and nurturing environment in the library and network environment to increase individual satisfaction and achievement

Block Resource Centre

Block Resource Centre (BRC) is a Block level institution to carry out the academic activities related mainly to primary education. BRC carries out its academic programs under the guidance and supervision of District Institute of Education and Training (DIET). Under SSA, BRCs and Cluster Resource Centers (CRCs) were established to provide academic support to teachers and schools on a regular basis in each block of every district. At present 6472 BRCs and 69268 CRCs are operational in the country. In each block a number of CRCs were established. Each CRC covers a small number of schools within easy reach. The number of CRCs per BRCs varies considerably from state to state. The number of schools per CRC generally varies from 10 to 20, but the average number of schools per CRC is quite large in some states such as Rajasthan, Delhi, Puducherry and Karnataka.

Academic Support & Supervision

The responsibility of Block Resource Centre/Nyaya Panchayat Resource Centre (BRC-C/NPRC-C) is not to pay visits in schools to find faults but in fact, they have to go to schools for providing academic support to the teachers. Therefore during training workshop, efforts were done to make them realize that they are not inspectors but guide and friend to teachers. They do not have to conduct academic inspection of schools but conduct academic supervision visits to schools. They were made to understand that for effective academic supervision it is necessary that they stay in a school for a full day and participate in school activities. They must also organize different educational activities like organizing Balsabhas; holding classes, organizing competition, maintenance of school library, science kit, laboratory, etc.

The BRC at schools were made to understand that for effective academic supervision it is necessary that the block level and NPRC at cluster level provide regular academic support, conduct teachers training, follow up workshops, meetings and opportunities for peer learning as well as sharing of good practices.

Under Basic Education Project, DIETs have been entrusted with the responsibility of improving the quality of education and speeding up the educational activities at district level. The BRC at block level & NPRC at cluster level have also been set up with the sole aim of providing academic support & guidance to teachers & schools and to significant role in the management of wide variety of quality improvement interventions at school level. Under the Project, NPRCs are nothing but school clusters as envisaged by Kothari Commission.

School improvement is considered an integral part of the work of the BRC and CRCs.



Objectives of the Study

- To know the status of library in schools under the BRC Thrithala.
- To introspect the services provided.
- To understand the nature and types of collection of school libraries.
- To understand the working conditions or techniques of the staff in these libraries.
- To introspect the role of “librarians” in the development of students reading habit cultivation in these schools.

Methodology

We conducted a random survey of 15 schools under the Thrithala BRC. The data was collected through the questionnaire based survey method. A questionnaire designed for the purpose, which included questions related to the basic infrastructure, collection of books, working hours, method of circulation, services of staff, etc. was framed. The questionnaire was distributed to the Teacher - Librarians of the schools and the data collected was analyzed statistically.

Scope

BRC Thrithala comprises of 11 High Schools, 55 Primary Schools and 25 Schools that are a combination of Lower Primary and Upper Primary Schools. As stated above, the study included a random survey which included schools from High School and Upper Primary School category.

Study

The Schools identified for this survey were:

1	DIET Lab School Anakkara
2	GVHSS Vattenad
3	AUPS Malamakkavu
4	AMUPS Alur
5	GHSS Challissery
6	AUPS Irumbalassery
7	GUPS Kudallur
8	AUPS Njangattiri
9	GHSS Mezhathur
10	MCMUPS Thrithala

11	AUPS Chazhiyattiri
12	GUPS Kothachira
13	GHSS Kumaranellur
14	Dr. K.B. Menon Memorial Higher Secondary Sschool, Thrithala
15	HSS Peringode

Results and Discussion

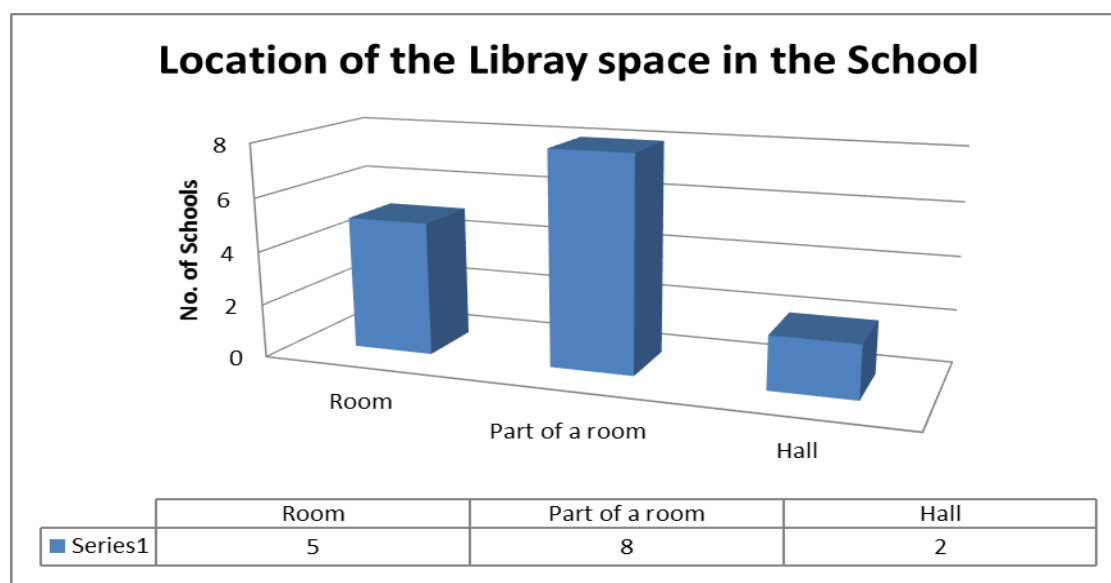
The questionnaire was distributed by hand to all the above school “librarians” and the result was collected on spot. Hence the response percentage is 100%. A detailed inference is as below:

Graph I shows the infrastructure availability among these schools.

Graph II shows the inadequate readers/ users facility.

Graph III shows the collection development in these schools.

Graph I

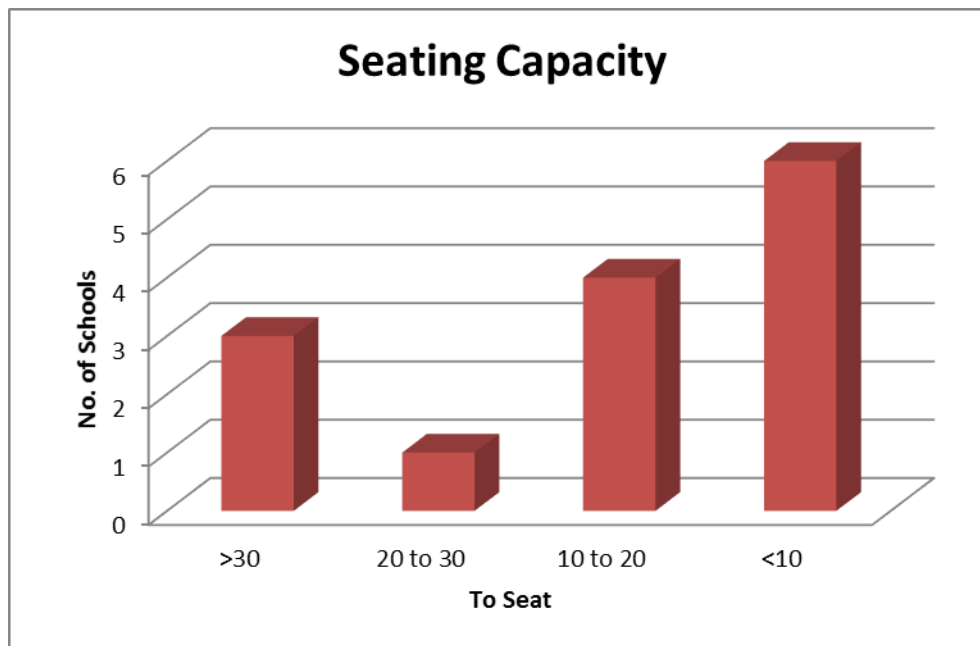


Inference

Location of the library in the school:

- Library in a part of a Room : 08 schools
- Room facility : 05 schools
- Hall facility : 02 schools

Graph II



Inference

Seating Capacity of the Library:

- Hall

The Two Schools with hall facility could seat more than 30 users.

- Part of a room:

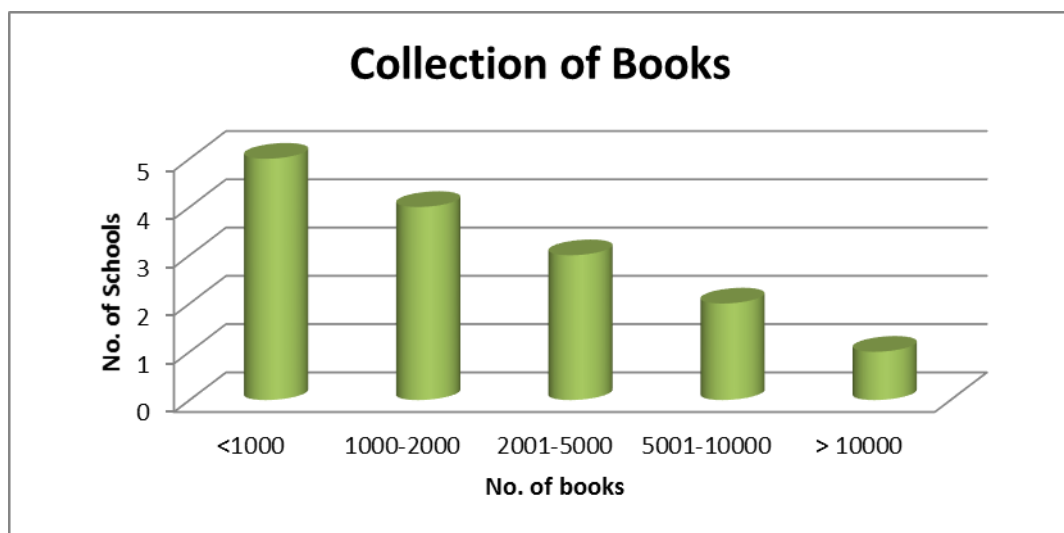
Three Schools functioning its library in a part of a Room could seat between 20-30 users.

Three could seat only less than 10 and one of the school (GUPS Kudallur) had no facility to seat at all.

- Room

One School (GHSS, Kumaranellur) with the room facility could seat 20-30 users, while another (HSS, Peringode) had the capacity to seat more than 30. The rest of the two schools in the same category had the capacity for less than 10 users.

Graph III



Inference

Collection of books:

The collection of books varied accordingly.

- 05 Schools had a collection of less than 1000 books.
- 04 schools had a collection between 1000-2000 books.
- 03 had between 2001-5000 collections
- 02 had between 5001-10000.
- 01 school (Dr. K.B. Menon memorial School, Thrithala) has the highest collection amongst these schools with books more than 10000 (exactly 11,987 books).
- The periodicals (newspapers and others) collection in these schools varied from 1-50.

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Librarians in the School and Working durations

The Librarians in these schools were subject teachers of who were handling different subjects.

Some of them handled only one subject while others had two or more than two subjects to handle. As such their working hours varied from 16-30 hrs, per week (excluding the responsibilities of that of a librarian). Working days of the libraries in these schools were different and varied from one day to five days per week.

Other Inferences

The most ironical data in our survey was that though these libraries had seating capacities, (though minimum), and also the facility of issuing of books, there were one period allotted to middle school students only for the library. Other students had no library periods so that, the very essence of maintaining a library as per the demands of BRCs, may be met.

As this survey finds that there are no qualified librarians in any of these schools, the quality of maintenance of these so called libraries was also very poor. None of the schools had any methods of classification schemes utilized, though the books were arranged according to the subjects. Cataloguing was reported in 06 schools though the schemes used were either AACR or CCC. The issue system utilized was either register or card and no use of computers in the library was indicated.

It thus becomes necessary that all schools should have comprehensive and complete libraries; it is true not all of them can afford it, but the school system should place an emphasis on it and utilize some of its budget to improving the situation

Recommendations

- Consideration needs to be given to ensure that pre -service training and professional
- development training of both teachers and librarians addresses the need for greater understanding of their professional contributions to learning in school libraries.
- Ideally all schools should have the funds to support the service of a qualified full-time librarian to manage well-resourced school libraries. However, as the situation stands, priority should be given to identifying appropriate models for:
- training for teachers in library management, resource integration within the curriculum and selection of reading material;
- training in curricular issues and resource integration for librarians working in Schools
- Library Services, Public Libraries and volunteers working in school libraries;
- ensuring that all primary schools have the support of a Schools Library Service;

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- establishing close relations between Schools Library Services and education departments.
- Since this is an age of automation of libraries, a library has to be managed by librarians. But as the present situation stands, measures should be taken so as to ensure that each and every library has a librarian who can successfully bring out the true importance of libraries.

CONCLUSION

It is thus articulated that though the BRC's have a thought for library service in schools, the facilities present were very poor.

Librarians can make a difference.

Why they seemed to make a difference? Several qualities stood out: Librarians made an effort to know the children develop a personal relationship that went beyond the child, to the family and the kin. Librarians did not just point to materials, but taught children how to use them, not in a formal way, but by showing, and demonstrating the activity themselves. They would do, "over the shoulder" teaching, taking the time necessary so that the child could succeed. These people are enablers, pushing children to reach beyond their current abilities.

In conclusion, libraries are vital for children's achievement and developing informational needs. Children need libraries in their classrooms, schools, and communities. But all children will not use the materials to their fullest extent without supportive adults and librarians who can develop an informational society that provides access to all lives forever.

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