CHAPTER II

Importance and Utility of Libraries, Utility and Purpose of School Library, Objectives of the Thesis and Methodology
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IMPORTANCE AND UTILITY OF LIBRARIES, UTILITY AND PURPOSE OF SCHOOL LIBRARY, OBJECTIVES OF THE THESIS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

The modern society has various needs. The most important need is education, which enables to nourish knowledgeable and responsible citizens. The economic well being of the society depends on technological developments brought about by research scholars providing ample necessary information. There are some finer needs like spiritual, ideological, cultural and aesthetic that refines the society. In addition to all these needs there is also necessity for recreation, and it is said that proper recreational activities divert the negative and destructive attitudes. In fulfilling all these needs different libraries play important role. A library means an organized collection of books and other reading and audiovisual and non-book materials, and the services of a staff able to provide and interpret such material as are required to meet the informational, needs of its users. There are four basic elements in a library (a) a collection of reading and audiovisual materials, (b) building, furniture and other equipment to store the materials, (c) trained staff to process, organize and serve the materials and (d) the readers (clients, customers or users).

2.2 Necessity of a Library

A library is an organic adjunct to the society. It can serve every human being from a child to an aged person, from the research scholars to semi literate person. It can take very active part in literacy movement. It can be used as a place for exchange of views and ideas. It is a place where every human being can get equal treatment irrespective of social, cultural or educational status.

2.2.1 Library and Research Work

A library plays a vital role in research work. It disseminates existing knowledge and information and also newly generated information through various journals, research reports and other similar types of publications. Every university and research organization
should have a well-equipped library. Public libraries may also play a vital part in research work.

2.2.2 Library and Cultural Activities

A library contains books that preserve the cultural heritage of a society. It should possess and lend books that would develop creative talents of individuals. It should also organize cultural programmes to cater to public needs.

2.2.3 Library and Ideological and Spiritual Upliftment

Each library possesses some books that fulfill religious and ideological needs of the readers. Biographies of eminent persons and classics inculcate high values and ideals in the readers.

2.2.4 Library and Recreation and Leisure

Public (and also academic) libraries contain novels, books of travels and popular magazines for meeting the recreational needs of the readers. Reading habit improves the imaginative skills and enhances the vocabulary. A public library also organizes programmes like art competition etc, music competition for recreation.

2.2.5 Library and Informal Education

In informal education due to absence of teachers the library plays a major role. The students must acquire knowledge by self-study. They may use the libraries attached to the formal institutions. The public library system plays a major role in supporting informal education as every one has access there as a matter of right. A well-developed public library system is very much essential for development of informal education.

2.2.6 Libraries and Formal Education

Every educational institution be it a school, college or university must have a library attached to it. It must have a collection of books relevant to its courses of study and the students must be encouraged to read the books. It is through extensive reading of number of books in a subject that the student acquires in depth knowledge and becomes able to analyze and compare different view points as expressed in different books. This helps develop his / her own view point and capacity for analytical and critical thinking. Hence, the role of libraries in intellectual development of students can never be denied.
2.2.7 Libraries and School Education

The objective of school education is to enable the students to have an idea about the society and surroundings in which they live, to inculcate values in them necessary for character building, to mould them into good citizen and to find out the field in which each student excel so that they can continue their study in that field at the later stage. A school library has a very positive part in fulfilling all these objectives.

2.3 Types of Libraries

A library is often classified and designated from the point of view of needs or objectives and the category of users intended to be served. National Libraries, Academic Libraries, Public Libraries, Research or Special Libraries are some of the major categories of librarianship. These may be subdivided into smaller sectors considering the subject areas, target groups and geographical location. Whatever may be the type of libraries, collection, and organization and dissemination of information are the primary purposes and functions of all libraries.[1]

2.3.1 National Library

A National Library is known by the functions it performs. It may be a single library like Library of Congress in U. S. A. or a library complex like the British Library, U. K.. The essential functions of a National Library are – to acquire and conserve copies of all significant publication published in the country and to collect and hold a large and representative collection of foreign literature including books about the country. It also serves as a permanent depositary of all publications issued in the country and publishes the national bibliography. It also serves as the leading reference library of the country.

2.3.2 Public Library

A public library is a library which is generally established or sponsored or aided by the Government of a country either based on legislation or administrative rules and which remains accessible to all sections of the public. Governments, Local Bodies, Societies, Trusts and Institutions may organize such libraries. The Public Libraries may be free libraries or subscription libraries.[2]
2.3.3 Special Libraries

According to UNESCO, libraries attached to various bodies such as Parliament, Government Departments, Scientific or other research institutions, learned society, professional association, museum, industrial association, chamber of commerce and so on which are primarily designed to serve a limited number of experts, scientists or research workers and which are not coming within any other categories of libraries are to be regarded as special libraries. The special libraries are so called because of their specialized nature of stock, services and clientele.\[3\]

2.3.4 Academic Libraries

An academic library, on the other hand, is a library which is attached to an academic institution university, college or school. It caters to the needs of different groups of academic community students, teachers and research workers. It is an integral part of an academic institution, and it contributes to the attainment of the objectives for which the institution has been established. There are different grades of academic institutions. There are universities, deemed universities and other institutions of higher education. Similarly, there are intermediate colleges and degree colleges. We have primary schools, secondary schools and higher secondary schools. Each standard academic institution has to maintain a library.\[4\]

In reality, no university or college can function without a library. But as far as schools are concerned there are instances of many schools – particularly many primary schools functioning without libraries. Though the importance of standard school libraries cannot be denied, size, resources and service of school libraries are not uniform.

2.4 Necessity of School Libraries

In every country the academic libraries particularly the school libraries have been considered, at least in principle, the part and parcel of education system. Without properly functional school libraries, the national aspirations cannot be achieved. The great strides in technological and scientific advances in erstwhile Soviet Russia in the last century are attributed to the universal and effective school education. Indeed, in Britain there was a saying that England's win over Napoleon's France was originated in the fields of English Public School (Battle of Waterloo was won in the fields of Eaton and Harrow). It is also said that the French Revolution was a product of schoolteachers of France of that time. In Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science, volume 26, it is found that “In
contemporary American education, the school library is respected and valued as a vital, integral support component of school's instructional program. The concept of school library should be directly involved in the school's instructional program and should serve, as a learning laboratory is a unique of 20th Century development. This concept is the direct result of America's determination, following the spectacular success of Russia's sputnik in October 1957, to upgrade the quality of education Kindergarten through graduate school. This thrust, generated by America's deep concern for equaling or surpassing Russia's scientific excellence, propelled the traditional school libraries from the peripheral fringes of instruction, into the main stream of learning program.\textsuperscript{[5]} The importance that was given to school education in post sputnik era is evident.

2.4.1 Importance of a School Library

The importance and the utility of school libraries have been felt by education commissions, educationists and every person linked with education. The students are the builders of the nation and development of a country depends largely on the educational development of the students. A school library has a very major role to play in this field. In order to satisfy the thirst for knowledge and to establish the foundation in each subject the school library is very much essential. Since the number of students in a class room is increasing day by day the classroom teaching may not be sufficient for a student; moreover an intelligent student may want to complete his lesson with several books of the same subject in addition to class room teaching. This leads to independent reference work, which is achieved by successful use of school library.

2.4.1.1 School Library Developing Reading Habits

A school library develops independent reading habit of the student. A paper presented at the UNESCO'FCDA (Educational Department) seminar / workshop on Libraries and Promotion of a Reading Culture, August, 2000, named "The Role of the School Library in Promoting a Reading Culture" written by Dr. E. Adeche Apeji, Deputy Director of Research & Head, Library and Informatics Centre, Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, published in Library Herald says that the school library plays a leading role in learning process – a process that emphasizes inquiry - discovery methods. A clear point that has emerged from this method is that students must necessarily develop a love for voluntary reading culminating in a reading culture. It is
argued in this paper that the school library is in a vantage state to promote such a reading culture.\footnote{6}

2.4.1.2 School Library and Character Building

School going age is a very tender age. For the children of lower classes the stories with morals or the biographies of great leaders will inculcate the necessity of values in them and will thus help in character building. The classics will develop their writing skills and strengthen their knowledge in the language. The mere storybooks of adventures and fairy tales will develop their imagination skill and will help them to be good writer in future. The dictionary and encyclopedia will teach them to do reference work. Thus, school libraries can have a very positive impact on its clients from a very tender age.

2.4.1.3 School Library in Increasing General Knowledge

A school library helps to increase the General Knowledge of the student. It contains newspapers, magazines along with various encyclopedias and General Knowledge books, which help the student, expand the horizon of knowledge and understanding.

2.4.1.4 School Libraries and Teachers

The teachers are very much needed in proper utilization of school library resources. They must be aware of library resource not only to exploit them themselves to improve the quality of teaching, but also to direct the students towards them and thus increasing the usefulness of library. Margaret Hayes Glazier, Associate Professor, Department of Library Science, Wayne State University, Michigan, in an article named "Effects of change on Education for School Libraries" (Library Trends, 1969) states, "... two marked weaknesses in the professional preparation of the teacher and the librarian – the librarian's ignorance of curriculum, learning theory and instructional method and teacher's ignorance of libraries and their resources for students. This is considered as a major setback of school libraries."\footnote{7}

2.4.1.5 School Library – A Stepping Stone to Other Libraries

A school library develops library-going habit and inculcates library civics in the students. A student attracted to a library at a very early age will remain attracted to libraries throughout the life. Moreover library-going habit makes them acquainted with
the library civics – how to behave in the library, how to search a book by author, title or by subject, how to gather information from encyclopedia and many more. It helps them to learn to use the catalogue cards (presently to use computerized systems) and the art of selecting the required book from many other books. Thus a school library acts as a stepping-stone to other libraries. These social and academic functions of a school library are summarized below as goals of a school library.

2.4.2 Goals of School Library

1. School library creates library habits and a sense of library civics in students.
2. School library work influences the classroom work and vice versa.
3. It develops recreational and inspirational reading habit among the students.
4. It teaches the art of note taking and bibliography building.
5. A school library attracts all students to itself based on every possible stimulus.
6. It helps in character building.
7. It acts as stepping-stone for using other libraries.

The school library develops independent reading habits of the students, improves the quality of teaching, makes the students acquainted with different library materials like dictionary, encyclopedia, catalogue cards etc. It also trains the students to a life-long self-learning skill through utilization of library resources in any situation. It helps the students to be a good citizen, which ultimately supports towards national development.

2.4.3 IFLA / UNESCO Library Manifesto

The IFLA / UNESCO School Library Manifesto was first published in 1999. This was followed by IFLA / UNESCO School Library Guidelines in 2002. The Manifesto was lastly revised in 2006. In expressing the role of “The School Library in Teaching and Learning for All” the Manifesto says that “the school library offers learning services, books and resources that enable all the members of school community to become critical thinkers and effective users of information in all formats of media.” It specifies the following as the goals of school library –

♦ supporting and enchanting educational goals as outlined in the school’s mission and curriculum;
developing and sustaining in children the habit and enjoyment of reading and learning, and the use of libraries throughout their lives;

- offering opportunities for experiences in creating and using information and knowledge;

- supporting all students in learning and practicing skills for evaluating and using information, regardless of form, format or medium, including sensitivity to modes of communication within the community;

- providing access to local, regional, national and global resources and opportunities that expose learners to diverse ideas, experiences and opinions.

- organizing activities that encourage cultural and social awareness and sensitivity

- working with students, teachers, administrators and parents to achieve the mission of the school;

- proclaiming the concept that intellectual freedom and access to information are essential to effective and responsible citizenship and participation in democracy;

- promoting reading and resource and services of school library to the whole school community and beyond.

The school library fulfils these functions by developing policies and services, selecting and acquiring resources, providing physical and intellectual access to appropriate sources of information, providing instructional facilities, and employing trained staff.\[10\]

2.4.4 Observations of Education Committees and Commissions

The necessity of school library was felt by different Education Committees and Commissions formed in post independent India. The Education Commission (1952) has considered the necessity of library in all subjects, as laboratory is essential for science subjects.\[11\]

The Kothari Commission (1964) has made comments about the overall development of the academic libraries.\[12\]

The National Policy on Education (NPE) has emphasized on provision of libraries with every educational institution.\[13\]
The National Policy on Library and Information Science (NPOLIS) has stated that no school or college should be established without a library and properly qualified librarian.\textsuperscript{[14]}

2.4.5 \textit{In the Eyes of Educationist, Education Policy Makers and Library Scientist}

S. R. Ranganathan the acclaimed father of modern Library Science in India and himself a noted educationist wrote: "The school library is a field of global experience of many students: it should have the hum of a beehive with the difference of its being not characterized by monotony of work of repetitive kind. For students growing day by day physically, mentally and spiritually – there will always be a fresh work to do in the school library."\textsuperscript{[15]}

According to John Dewey, a well known philosopher and educationist, "Library is a place for the students to bring their individual and varied experiences, the problems and the questions, and to discuss and pursue them so that new light may be thrown on them--particularly new light from experience of others, the accumulated wisdom of the world garnered, arranged and displayed in the library."\textsuperscript{[16]}

According to Earnest Grimshaw, a western educationist – "education is a continuous process and the library work must be planned so that the child turns to public library before losing contact with the school library."\textsuperscript{[17]}

P. N. Kaula, an UNESCO Expert on Library Science speaking about "Education and School Libraries in the New Age", said, "Library services should be available in full measure to all sections of society irrespective of any distinction and to all age-groups of the population." This will inculcate the habit of reading which unfortunately does not exist among our students in all levels.\textsuperscript{[18]}

2.5 \textbf{Need of Survey}

A school library is part of a dynamic ever-changing system largely depending on the local socio-economical and cultural environment and over all educational systems prevailing in a country.

The actual state of affairs of school libraries in many parts of the world is debatable. In the third world countries, the school libraries seem to be largely neglected. Specifications and standards for school library organization seem to be lacking. It is
always beneficial and potent for providing insight if a school library survey can be made. This is because the educational systems and information situations in particular cultural dimensions, and societal foci on growth and development of children in age group of 3 to 16 have been changing all the time. Surveying school library situations need to take place for every locality and at short intervals.

Moreover due to the third Information Communication Technology (ICT) Revolution (second by some opinion), the whole education system and particularly the libraries are under a revolutionary transition in the 21st century. In West Bengal, there is long tradition of school libraries, but no realistic picture either historically or statistically is available. These are the reasons for taking up the survey.

2.6 **Objectives of the Thesis**:

1. To examine the condition of school libraries in and around Kolkata and to find out the picture of school libraries in background of transition of education systems and the libraries under influence of the third ICT revolution (concentrating on the urban areas).

2. To understand the scenario of changes in a gap of few (say four to five) years.

3. To try to find out relations among the nature and activities with other parameters and functions of schools e.g., number of teachers, number of students etc.

4. To find if there is any hostel and the number of boarders in the hostel and if that affects school library functions.

5. To try to trace the student backgrounds — whether most students are local or outsider, religious or ethnic background of the students, economic condition of their family as far as possible (in a nutshell).

6. To study the number of schools having libraries, librarians, qualifications and the responsibilities of the librarians, number of books or non-book materials in the libraries, types of books, arrangement of books, cataloguing and classification system, etc.

7. To find out who looks after the library and the condition of the library in absence of librarian.

8. To find out whether the librarian is professionally trained, full timer and whether he gets the proper scale at per with the teachers.
9. To find out the extent of modern facilities in the school libraries such as use of computers, xeroxing, telephone, Internet, etc.

10. To try to trace whether the library has audio-visual kits and aids.

11. To find the number of books and whether they have any relation with number of students.

12. To find out number of non-book materials such as gramophone records, audiocassettes, CD ROMS, musical CDs, toys and any other documents.

13. To find out whether these book and non-book materials are arranged according to age, group, or level of reader and whether there is separate section for secondary and higher secondary schools.

14. To find out whether there is cataloguing and classification system.

15. To find out the major categories of books with numbers.

16. To find out the library use by finding out the library hours and whether library period is included in the class routine, also whether there is any system of user education and if the text-books and non text-books are kept separately.

17. To find out whether the library has reading room facility and whether it serves anyone other than teachers and students.

18. To find out the library budget for last five years and its effect on the number of books added and periodicals purchased.

19. To find out the source of financial support of the library.

20. To find out whether the library accepts gift or donation of books and if it purchases second hand book.

21. To inquire whether a library under survey ever received any prize or certificate from any agency in order to get an indication of the general standard of the particular school library.

2.7 Methodology

Schools as many as possible, both secondary (10 year: class I-X) and higher secondary (10 + 2 years class I - XII) in and around Kolkata city (Kolkata Municipal Corporation Area) but within the Kolkata Metropolitan District Area (KMDA) were randomly selected, approached and surveyed through a questionnaire. The questionnaire
was semi-structured covering the organization, collection, management, finance and source of finance of school libraries. An enquiry about the influence of modern technology on school libraries was also made. A survey on economic and ethnic background of students is carried on and the ratio of local students noted.

Both questionnaire and interview methods have been adopted in juxtaposition. First an appointment was made with the Head of the Institution and the questionnaire was shown to him / her and permission for meeting the librarian and for getting the questionnaire filled as far as could be practicable. After getting the permission and meeting the librarian / library-in-charge, the questionnaire was submitted and another appointment was taken for collecting it. While collecting the questionnaire an interview was taken and doubts, if there was any, from both sides, clarified. Sometimes in order to fill some portions like number of students, ratio of religious background of the students or their economic background help of office staff and office registers were taken. Often, in case of absence of school librarian, the questionnaire was filled up by the Head of the Institution. One hundred and thirty four schools within the Kolkata Metropolitan District had been surveyed between the year 2000 to 2002 (the first survey) and one hundred of those schools have been resurveyed in the year 2006 among which 4 schools are covered in the second survey (the second survey). The same procedure was followed in both the surveys. The obtained information from the questionnaire as well as information from interviews and other sources are tabulated, analyzed and used for drawing inferences.
Bibliography


4. Ibid.


16. Ibid.
