

SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HIGHER SECONDARY EDUCATION SECTOR IN THE STATE OF KERALA

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Abstract: - *The school libraries play a central role in helping children to gain knowledge, skills and attributes needed for learning, life and work. A well equipped and well managed school library is the foundation of modern educational structure. The higher secondary education acts as the bridge between elementary education and higher education. The higher secondary school libraries play a major role in fostering reading habit among the children. It is also an integral part to the cultural and social life of the school. It inculcates the habit of using the libraries among the students. It also provides a wealth of curriculum-based resources as well as opportunities for students to learn at a personal level of inquiry outside the assigned curriculum. This article aimed to assess the role of library facilities and services offered by the Central Government Higher Secondary School Libraries especially Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas.*

Keywords: Central Govt. Higher Secondary School Library, Curriculum-based resources, Higher secondary education, School library.

1. Introduction

Education is one of the most crucial factors in empowering people with skill and knowledge and in giving them access to productive employment in the future. Educational quality is absolutely essential for the steady progress of a nation. Libraries are the inevitable part of education. Library education starts from the school level especially higher secondary schools. A school library serves as the center and

coordinating agency for all material used in the school. School Libraries have a very important part to play in the future development of the social, cultural, educational life and progress in a country. A well-equipped and well managed library is the foundation of modern educational structure. The school library assists with literacy development and promotes the concept of reading as a pleasurable, voluntary activity, which contributes to an individual's quality of life.

Traditionally school libraries offered conservative lending services and reading room facilities wherein students used to borrow books and browse through some newspapers and magazines. There was no concept of innovative personalized services. This state of affairs usually resulted in children's lack of interest in libraries. However, with the advancement of technology, school libraries came up with innovative programs and services for children that aimed at reversing this trend (Snowball, 2008).

The integration of various school programs into school libraries have developed in to innovative hybrid library classrooms where students take full advantage of the library facilities and the resources (both technological and informational) for their course work. This activity/program brings the concept of school library in to school culture and increases student motivation with their active involvement in learning process (Houston & Spencer, 2007). The implementation of models like a community based school library has proved to be a success in relation to factors such as school participation, learner's participation in school activities during and after the school especially in areas where there is dearth of school libraries (Le-Roux, Hendrikz & Francois, 2006). The information and communication technology revolution has helped every organization to improve its efficiency/productivity both qualitatively and quantitatively.

2. School Libraries

Academic libraries constitute libraries of schools, colleges, universities and similar educational institutions which cater to the needs of different levels of academic community and supplement academic institution. They play an important role in the dissemination of knowledge. The purpose of school library is to attain the objectives and motives of educational programme. It is concerned with the development of thinking capacity and intellectual growth. The Secondary Education Commission says: "Library is the hub and centre of the intellectual activity in the literary life of the recognized school and plays the same part, viz., as the laboratory plays for the science subjects or the workshop for technical subjects".

The school library equips students with lifelong learning skills and develops the imagination enabling them to live as responsible citizens. The school library facilitates the work of the classroom teacher and ensures each student has equitable access to resources, irrespective of home opportunities or constraints. School is a gateway to knowledge and plays an important role in building up a love for reading. The school library is integral to this educational process. Encouraged at the right age, the children are sure to develop a love for books. According to IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) School Library Manifesto, the school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today's information and knowledge based society.

3. Review of Literature

Gogan and Marcus (2013). Studied school libraries that adapt to the digital needs of their community not only continue to build a reading culture in the school, but facilitate the divergence and convergence in media needed to support motivation, differentiation, a variety of platforms, collaboration and connections necessary for the new learning ecology of the twenty- first century.

Gorman (2012). analyzed the emergence of slides, filmstrips, audio and video began the move away from a bibliocentric approach to school library collections, leading to the current diversity of digital video and educational TV services, online encyclopaedias, lending platforms for audio and ebooks, online literacy subscription products, and educational website and fiction directories. This paradigm shift included change of format in reference products from print serials collections to proprietary databases, with seamless remote access to the libraries' electronic products. This change in format fundamentally changes use and school libraries are proactively adjusting to these changes.

Williams and Wavell (2001) pointed out that traditional evaluations of library services have focused on outputs relating to expenditure, resources and use rather than on service outcomes. If performance indicators have been identified in relation to student achievement, these have often been framed in terms of performance on reading tests rather than curricular goals or broader learning outcomes, hence the need to gain a better understanding of the nature of

contribution of school libraries to student learning more generally and information literacy more specifically.

Rasaq (2000) studied that school libraries in the educational institutions such as pre-primary, primary and secondary schools are important to the life and foundational up-bringing of children. This is because they primarily stock materials that are of interest and developmental growth for young, teenagers and youth of the era.

The IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto (2000) emphasizing the creation of strong and effective school libraries mandates that “for each country there should be work on developing links between school objectives and its library services.” Thus, the contemporary school library has moved beyond the concept of mere an isolated facility for housing of books and other materials which has no role to play in the teaching-learning process in a school.

4. Roles of School Libraries in the Central Government Higher Secondary Education Sector

The central government has made libraries a priority to help raise the literacy rate, yet these are not receiving the right attention even though the resources in terms of staff and funds are scarce. The school libraries are able to inculcate the reading interests among the children and help in achieving information literacy. Now majority of the school libraries use library software in all library routines. The Central Government school libraries have qualified librarians and they select

the documents in consultation with the teaching staff and the demand of the student’s community. The library acquires the magazines on current affairs and sports magazines besides a number of daily newspapers in English, Hindi and other regional languages. The students of the higher secondary classes have library hours on the weekly basis when they are given subject books and general books so as to inculcate the reading habits. Schools Libraries are continuously improving their collections and access to resources for the students for the betterment of their education and reading habits. Although the number of school libraries in secondary and the higher education is growing, yet there are many problems to overcome. The government has left the responsibility of school libraries to the school themselves for providing the resources and funds to establish well-equipped libraries. Most of the Central Government schools have appointed trained librarians and the libraries are computerized also. Most of the Central Government Higher Secondary schools have their websites giving academic information, infrastructure available, virtual space about their libraries and the services provided by them. In the current IT scenario, the central govt. higher secondary school libraries are being used as “school library media centers” with computer resources that enable children to access a wide variety of information.

Table1
Total Number of Central Government and Private Higher Secondary Schools in Kerala

Sl. No.	Districts	Central Govt. Schools			Private Management Schools	
		Kendriya Vidyalaya	Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas	CBSE affiliated Schools	ICSE affiliated Schools	
1	Trivandrum	5	1	89	4	
2	Kollam	1	1	58	2	
3	Pathanamthitta	2	1	36	2	
4	Alappuzha	1	1	54	2	
5	Kottayam	2	1	69	1	
6	Idukki	1	1	33	0	
7	Ernakulam	6	1	131	3	
8	Thrissur	3	1	68	4	
9	Palakkad	3	1	51	2	
10	Malappuram	1	1	43	1	
11	Kozhikode	3	1	40	1	
12	Wayanad	1	1	13	0	
13	Kannur	5	1	42	2	
14	Kasargod	3	1	20	1	

In Kerala there are 747 CBSE senior secondary schools, 25 ISC schools, 37 Kendriya Vidyalayas and 14 Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas. All higher secondary schools in Kerala have well equipped libraries. Besides the general libraries, class room libraries in charge of class teachers are functioning in certain schools, particularly in Christian mission schools and Kendriya Vidyalayas. The school library collection is properly classified and catalogued by the presence of qualified librarians in most of the Central Govt. Higher Secondary Schools. Several information seeking programs were made to draw the attention of the students to the usefulness of library books and facilities. Most KVs and Navodaya Vidyalays have one or two period for library in class timetable per week. Also unaided central schools which are affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) have libraries. Most of the schools run by the private agencies particularly Christian Missionaries are also having good libraries.

5. Functions of Central Government Higher Secondary School Libraries

The most important functions of higher secondary school libraries are:

- Supporting the school curriculum by expanding resources to support teaching and learning.
- Developing information literacy skills by introducing and integrating information and communication technologies.

- Supporting inquiry and ensuring that all learners are effective and ethical users and producers of information.
- Promoting literacy Supporting learning and teaching for the entire school community;
- Functions as a learning environment that provides physical or virtual space access to resources and services to encourage and support student and teacher learning.
- Effectively participate in the teaching-learning programmes of the school.
- Providing intellectual access to information through learning activities that are integrated into the curriculum and that help all students to achieve information literacy by developing effective cognitive strategies for selecting, retrieving and analyzing, information in all areas of the curriculum.

6. Services offered by Higher Secondary School Libraries

The different sections of higher secondary school libraries motivate both students and teachers for regular visiting of libraries and use of different books and non-books materials. This will strongly affect their curriculum based learning and carrier advancement. All the Central Govt. Higher Secondary Schools strictly follows Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science. Various services

provided by higher secondary school libraries are listed in the table.

Table 2

Services Provided by Central Govt. Higher Secondary School Libraries

<i>Services</i>	<i>Activities</i>
Circulation Section	Issue and Return of Books
Periodical Section	Display of news papers, magazines, Indian and foreign periodicals
Reference Section	Reference Service
Information Technology Section	CD-ROM search, E-Journal services, Internet services, OPAC search
Maintenance Section	Display and maintenance of books

The central Government Higher School Libraries is offering various services for the benefit of the students and teacher communities for the upliftment of the education and teaching respectively. They offer various services like issue and return of books, reference service, CD-ROM search, E-Journal services, Internet services, OPAC search etc. for the students and teachers in the Higher Secondary Schools. These services are included in the Circulation Section, Periodical Section, Reference Section, Information

Technology Section and Maintenance Section of the Libraries with the help of qualified librarians.

Conclusion

There is a great need for the upliftment of school libraries in India. If the reading habits of the students have to be changed, the conditions of the school libraries have to be improved. For this purpose, the central as well as the state government, the school authorities, the school librarian and the teachers will all have to work together. Firstly, the government of India must ensure that the school library has a well-stocked active collection managed by a qualified librarian. For this purpose, school library legislation should be passed as soon as possible Secondly, the positive attitude of the school principal is very important. He should clearly lay down policies regarding the school library services including its goals, priorities and services as well as its relation to the school curriculum. The higher secondary school libraries have a positive impact on people learning and development. The existing Central Govt. higher secondary school library facilities and services in the state of Kerala are being satisfactory. The library collections, physical facilities, professional manpower and proper organization of Central Government Higher Secondary School Libraries are very important for the upliftment of the student’s community and also the teaching staffs.

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