

An Assessment of the Need for School Librarianship Courses in India

SEEMA TARE*

Abstract

School librarians as partners in education, contribute to the educational goals of their schools, effectively performing multi-faceted roles. They manage the library's physical facilities, develop and organise its varied collection and utilise human resources to provide a range of services to the school community. They also play the role of instructor to students and faculty, teaching information and digital literacy, inquiry-based learning, use of technology for teaching and learning and inculcating a habit of reading and lifelong learning. They collaborate with school administrators and teachers in curriculum development, and provide information and library resources for teaching and learning activities. Such librarians have to be nurtured through adequate targeted training to respond to the unique environment of the school library.

School libraries have not been given due recognition in India. A few schools have good libraries and librarians trained in school librarianship are lacking. This paper advocates introduction of specialised school librarianship courses at various levels throughout the country for new and practising librarians in schools.

Contents and the subjects or skills of such proposed courses are discussed. It is suggested that legislation mandating trained school librarians in all urban and rural schools that will increase the employability aspect of these courses.

**Former Technical Officer, Information Centre for Armament Technology, Armament R & D Establishment, DRDO, Pune.*

INTRODUCTION

For professionals in any field to serve their roles adequately and contribute to the progress of that profession, it is necessary that they receive suitable training and education in theory, and practice of that profession. Then it follows that for librarians in schools to play specific professional roles expected of them, and for school libraries to contribute to the mission and objectives of school education, specialised training in school librarianship is necessary.

The author's recently completed doctoral research on the status of school libraries in Pune city (Seema Tare, 2022) was based on a comprehensive survey of 47 English medium secondary schools. It comprised interviews with school principals, and a questionnaire-based survey of representatives of the teacher-student-parent communities to gauge their expectations from the school library and their ideas about the role of the library. Another part of the survey addressed the school librarian and library-in-charge, who administered an interview schedule which sought information about various aspects of the library, including manpower and services.

It is the librarian who must build and utilise the physical facilities, resources of the library, design and provide various services and activities which will influence students and staff to become good readers and

learners. The school library's role cannot be realised without the efforts of the library manpower. There is no doubt that a trained librarian is needed to achieve an effective school library service. This is well supported by global literature on school librarianship.

However, despite recommendations of several educational committees, the importance of libraries in school education has not been given its due recognition in India. Consequently, well-established libraries are found in a few schools and they are not necessarily managed by a trained librarian. Moreover, the trained librarian cannot be expected to possess a school librarian qualification, since schools and departments of Library and Information Science (LIS) in Indian universities rarely offer such a specialised course.

The present paper aims to highlight the important role of the school librarian and the need for specialised training in school librarianship, while suggesting means by which such training can be imparted.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the role of the school librarian.
2. To justify the need for a qualified school librarian.
3. To assess the need for specialised training for school librarians.
4. To suggest means for providing specialised training in school librarianship in India.

METHODOLOGY

Survey Method

This paper is based upon the findings and conclusions set forth in the author's doctoral research entitled 'A critical study of the status of school libraries in Pune city'. Survey Method was used to study a stratified random sample of 47 English medium secondary schools in Pune city, belonging to various categories (aided-unaided) and examination boards.

Data Collection Techniques (Primary Data)

- (i) Interview using interview schedule, was administered to the school principal, eliciting opinions about role of the library and expectations from the library.
- (ii) Interview using interview schedule, was also administered to librarian and library manager to obtain descriptive and statistical information about all aspects of the library—budget, manpower, size and location, furniture, book collection, IT infrastructure, and also usage and circulation statistics.

Qualitative data was also sought regarding library procedures and services.

Reflecting the importance of the librarian in providing effective library services and global expectations regarding the role of the school librarian, questions were also framed to elicit the following information:

- Initiatives taken to increase library usage.
- Provision of additional services other than circulation of books to market the library image.
- Involvement of the librarian in the important annual events organised in the school.
- Decision making powers vested in the librarian.
- Problems in library management.
- Future plans for the library.
- Involvement in library networks.
- Interaction with other school libraries and resource sharing.
- Membership of professional associations.
- Participation in meetings, conferences relating to school librarianship.

Observation and Visual Recording Technique

Observation and visual recording technique was used to record researcher's impressions about library appearance and functioning, and about librarian's attitude to various aspects of library service.

Data Analysis of Information about Manpower-Related Aspects

Availability of trained manpower. (with a post-graduate Bachelor's or Master's degree in Library Science):

- 28 schools (71 per cent of schools having libraries) in the survey had one or more trained librarians to run the library—14 librarians

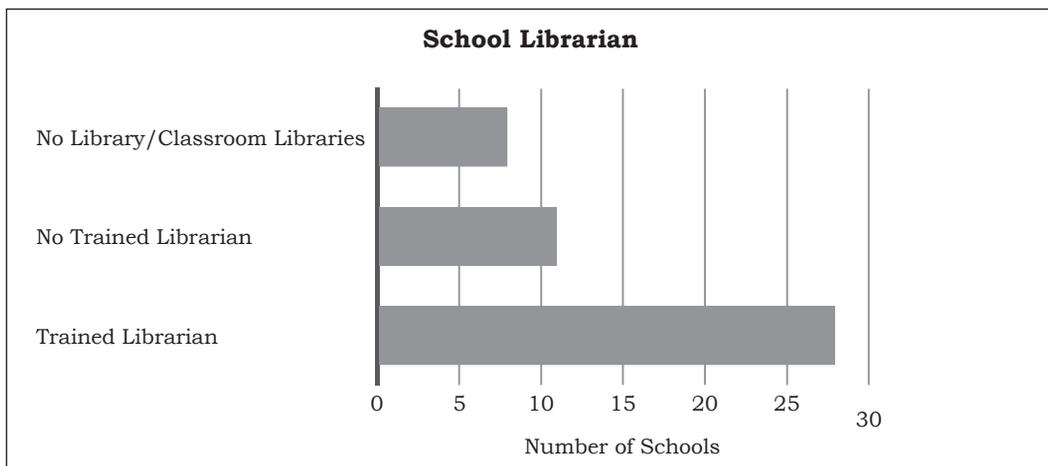


Fig.1: Trained library manpower in surveyed school libraries

with B.Lib. and 17 with M.Lib. qualifications, while one had M.Phil. qualification.

- None of these librarians are trained in the specific area of school librarianship, since such training is not commonly available in India. Inculcating the characteristics required in a school librarian, viz. a combination of librarianship and teaching skills then rests upon their personal skill and professional attitude.
- Libraries in 11 schools were managed by teachers, in addition to their teaching jobs in the absence of a trained librarian.

Review of Literature

Review of literature was extensively undertaken for secondary data related to school librarianship training, including curricula of courses in school librarianship in India and other countries.

FINDINGS

- (i) In Indian schools, qualification for a librarian implies a Bachelor of Library Science or Master of Library Science degree.
- (ii) A post-graduate librarianship course leading to the award of a Bachelor of Library Science or Master of Library Science degree in Indian universities generally teaches the following subjects:
 - Foundations and philosophy of library and information science.
 - Library management (human and resource management).
 - Information sources, systems and services.
 - Knowledge organisation – classification and cataloguing (theory and practice).
 - Basics of information and communication technology (theory and practice).

- (iii) Such a course trains the candidate in the management of a library. This work includes collection development (selection and purchase of printed books and publications and resources in other electronic media), processing the collection (accessioning, subject classification of books using specified schedules and cataloguing books to make them accessible to users through manual or computerised listings), collection arrangement in library storage areas, circulation (issuing, return or reservation of books), reference service to users and other supportive user services.
- (iv) It is presumed that armed with this knowledge and skills, the graduate will be capable of handling management of different types of libraries—public, academic and research or any other type of special library having unique subject-specific requirements relevant to the parent institute.
- (v) Librarianship courses in Indian universities rarely offer elective papers or specialised courses teaching management of libraries dealing with specific subjects or specific types of librarianship, such as Law Librarianship or Medical Librarianship or Business Management Librarianship. The reason could be lack of sufficient job opportunities for subject-specialised librarianship courses or insufficient number of candidates interested in selecting these courses or lack of interest among institutes to employ such specialised librarians. Therefore, Library Science courses in India concentrate on laying a basic foundation for handling the management, and operation of any kind of library. Hence, all advertisements for trained library manpower in Indian libraries specify only a general Library Science degree, not any other specialised Librarianship qualification.
- (vi) The lack of specialisation in librarianship in India is also reflected in the lack of specialised courses in school librarianship. In comparison, it is found that in developed countries such as, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand, specialised School Librarianship courses are offered by colleges and universities, and schools have a practice of employing candidates trained in this professional area for the post of School Librarian.

OVERVIEW

Roles assigned to a School Librarian justifies specialised School Librarianship Training. The multi-faceted roles expected from school librarians, as defined by important international and national bodies that justifies the need for designing of specialised training courses for this profession.

1. The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) in IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto 1999 attributes four key roles to a professional school librarian:
 - (i) The instructional role (justifying the title teacher librarian) encompasses being teacher to students and the teaching faculty, and teaching literacy and reading promotion; information literacy (information skills, media literacy, transliteracy); inquiry-based learning (problem-based learning, critical thinking); technology integration; and professional development for teachers.
 - (ii) The management role involves organising the library systems and processes for optimum use including management of the library facilities, material resources, human resources, and programmes and services.
 - (iii) The Leadership and collaboration role involves contribution to the mission and goals of the school in several ways:
 - Collaboration with the school's administrators and teachers to develop and implement curriculum-based library services and programmes that support teaching and learning
 - Contribution of knowledge and skills related to the provision of information and the use of resources for teaching and learning activities such as, information seeking and project work, problem-solving activities, literacy activities, reading engagement, and cultural activities.
 - Facilitation in integration of technology, planning and teaching different information-handling skills to both teachers and students using technological tools.
 - Contribution to professional development of teachers and administrators.
 - Direct interaction with the school's administrators to advocate understanding and support of the library's contribution to the school.
 - Participation in the school-wide planning and other leadership teamwork.
 - (iv) The Community engagement role encompasses programming, collection development and outreach efforts, providing and promoting programmes, services, and facilities to match the needs and preferences of different target groups, viz. the principal and the other members of the school administration, heads of departments, teachers, students, and parents.
 - (v) The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in its publication *Library as a*

Resource Centre (2013) states that 'The school librarian's job is one of the most difficult and challenging in librarianship' and lists out the following roles of the school librarian—

- Resource provision: Procuring and providing access to a comprehensive range of learning materials in different formats; maintaining contact with publishers, and booksellers to learn about new resources; providing access to resources outside the library through information networks, and liaison with outside agencies.
 - Information literacy: Collaborating with teachers in the integration of information skills in the curriculum and teaching information skills to students; promoting the effective use of the library learning resources by pupils and teachers.
 - Encouragement to Reading: Promoting and fostering the enjoyment of reading and cultivating a lifelong reading habit in students.
- (vi) The Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) in its publication *Guidelines for School Library and Procedure Manual* (2014), also elaborates the responsibilities and delegations of the school librarian: 'The Librarian is

a member of the school's total teaching faculty and as such is actively involved in collaborative teaching and learning, school curriculum planning and in programme development; involved in the provision of the information-related resources integral to the planning, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum of the school; and a specialist teacher who develops, manages and evaluates systems and procedures as detailed in the Guidelines.' KVS includes information literacy, reading enhancement and involvement in curriculum planning, and school activities among the wide-ranging duties of the librarian.

It is evident that the job of a school librarian makes unique demands, requiring performance of an all-encompassing role, not just limited to the confines of the library, implying duties and responsibilities of a special nature, demanded by certain peculiarities of school environment.

2. The unique aspects of a school library environment justifies specialised training. Some aspects of school librarianship, listed below, differentiate it from the other areas of librarianship, whether it is academic librarianship (generally referring to college and university libraries) or special

librarianship practised in libraries of institutions dealing with specific subject specialisations—

(i) User community of a school library:

- School librarians must be trained to handle a diverse user community—students, teachers, school administrators and technical staff, and sometimes parents and the larger community outside are also accommodated in the school library user population. The primary user community are the students, a population of minors, ranging from pre-primary kindergarten students to higher secondary adolescent students, representing varied stages of physical, mental, and emotional maturity.
- The school librarian must be trained to mould various aspects of library management to suit user needs:
 - Selection of furniture and its physical dimensions should suit the physical size of students, such as low tables, chairs, cupboards, and display boards for smaller children.
 - Layout could be adapted for the serious reading and discussion needs of senior students by providing partitioned cubicles or discussion areas.
 - Book selection must reflect different reading interests of

children of different mental ages, and the librarian must accordingly build a suitable and wide-ranging collection of books and other resources.

- The librarian must be trained in age-appropriate communication skills, and varied means of imparting library training to interact appropriately with students of different age groups.
 - The librarian must be trained to assume the responsibility of developing a love for books among children and inculcating a habit of reading for pleasure and for information, making the school library an active partner in the school's programme of laying the foundations of reading, writing, and understanding skills.
- (ii) Teachers – Library interconnection:
- The school librarian must be trained to understand the vital importance of the library-teacher interconnect in schools, which is not so evident in other higher academic institutions.
 - Teachers must be actively invited to contribute ideas for a suitable book collection for students of different grades.
 - As users of the library, teachers must also be provided a range of resources. This includes

- an adult collection of books for pleasure reading to foster and sustain their reading habit. They must also be provided with reference books and resources to use in the classroom or to allot projects and assignments to students. Moreover, for their professional enhancement, the library needs to procure books and resources in the subject of education, especially related to new materials and technologies, new curriculum, and new instructional strategies. The librarian must be able to provide teachers access to a broader set of resources through interlibrary loan facility, and also through personal and digital networks.
- The librarian must be able to use teachers as role models for inculcating a reading culture, and to promote library usage among the students.
 - The librarian should be taught the importance of collaborating with teachers to fulfil teaching-learning goals of the school, and to boost the library's information literacy efforts, by means of planned student assignments which will necessitate information searches in the library and maximise use of library resources.
- (iii) Technological advancements in Education:
- The school librarian needs training in technological competency to contribute to the technology integration in school education in the modern digital age. Only then can the school library play offer the physical space for technological infrastructure, promote and facilitate its use among students and teachers.
 - A technically competent school librarian is needed to make students familiar with developments such as digital libraries, which makes it possible for the library and its resources to be accessible beyond its walls, and to teach them online search strategies to make optimum, appropriate and ethical use of Internet resources, databases and a variety of e-resources.
 - The school librarian is also expected to act as technology facilitator for teachers, teaching them how to use educational technology in their classrooms, helping them in using online teaching platforms and tools, and creating online content for teachers to use in classrooms. For this too, special training needs to be imparted to school librarian candidates.
 - The school library led by a 'tech-savvy' librarian, is the best place to lay the right foundation for technological and digital literacy, teaching

the entire school community—how to make optimum use of digital resources and evaluate the reliability of digital content.

3. School librarianship education in India is inadequate:

- (i) At present a very few Departments of Library and Information Science (LIS) in Indian universities offer an elective course on school library system, which generally concentrates on operational aspects.
- (ii) General coverage about school libraries is inadequate in the Bachelor's or Master's courses—the subject 'Academic Libraries' in the LIS syllabus concentrates more on libraries of higher education institutes, viz. college and university libraries.
- (iii) A laudable effort in this matter has been taken by the University Grants Commission (UGC). Which has published a Learning Outcomes based Curriculum Framework for Bachelor of Library and Information Science Programme 2019, which includes a Discipline Specific Elective paper entitled School Library and Media Centre (SLMC). This deals with the basics of SLMC, collection development and management, library automation, resource sharing,

library networking, and various services. Incorporation of such a paper in B.Lib programmes of Universities is not yet evident.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Recognition of School Librarianship training for improvement of status of school libraries in India

As stated in the IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto 1999, 'more than 50 years of international research, collectively, indicates that a school librarian requires formal education in school librarianship, and classroom teaching that provides the professional expertise required for the complex roles of instruction, reading and literacy development, school library management, collaboration with teaching staff, and engagement with the educational community'.

2. School librarianship training in India and creation of teacher librarians

The school librarianship training should aspire to develop 'teacher librarians' defined by Australian School Library Association as 'a person who holds recognised teaching qualifications and qualifications in librarianship', a unique qualification, combining curriculum knowledge and pedagogy with library and information management knowledge and skills.

Education in school librarianship must incorporate both teaching and librarianship skills—the core competencies of librarianship, combined with an understanding of education theories of education, teaching and learning techniques, curriculum development, etc. Knowledge of digital technology and social media, and of youth, culture and literacies. Only then the professional school librarian will be qualified to act as a leader, as a change agent or catalyst, and as an important member of the school faculty, at par with other teachers.

A range of useful skills will need to be taught to enable the librarian to handle various situations arising during the interaction with the varied user community of a school library:

- (i) Library and Information management theory and skills will enable the librarian to build and organise a diverse library collection for effective use.
- (ii) Teaching skills, including history and theory of education and classroom teaching skills will be required to teach children how to use the library and its rich treasure of printed and digital knowledge resources, and to inculcate Information Literacy.
- (iii) The school librarian should be prepared to serve the assorted requirements of children of all ages and at times establish a personal relationship with students, as their confidante and counsellor, a role which

requires knowledge of child and adolescent psychology.

- (iv) Collaboration with teachers in the enhancement of student learning calls for curriculum development skills.
- (v) Communication and public relations skills are needed for participation in school activities, and interaction with not only the school administrators and faculty, but also with the larger community including parents.
- (vi) Advocacy and marketing skills must be taught to prospective school librarians, so that they can promote the image of the library in the school, and convince stakeholders of the important role of the library as a partner in education, while networking with co-professionals, and contributing to the progress of their profession.
- (vii) Technological skills are demanded by this technological age, whereby an adequate level of technological competence can be inculcated in school librarians to enable them to handle various kinds of hardware, library automation software and social media platforms. They can promote the use of digital tools for learning and teaching by acting as a technology facilitator for students and teachers, and using technology for improving library procedures and providing better services.

(viii) Above all, practical training should be imparted in any school librarianship training, by stipulating a mandatory requirement of internship to provide work experience in an established school library.

3. Standards for school librarianship curriculum design

ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Preparation of School Librarians (2010) lists five standards which any good school librarianship course can incorporate to teach and inculcate in candidates all the competencies expected from a modern school librarian.

(i) The first standard aims at training future school librarians to become effective teachers, who can facilitate learning. This requires that they become knowledgeable of learning styles and learner needs of diverse learners, stages of human growth and development, and cultural influences on learning, so that they can use teaching instruction methods that reflect best practices in education. They should be trained to design and develop digital-age learning experiences in collaboration with classroom teachers to encourage in students an active, and inquiry-based approach to learning. They should become Instructional partners, participating in curriculum development

as it relates to library and information use. Candidates need to be taught the use of emerging twenty first century technologies as a means for effective and creative teaching.

(ii) The second standard relates to teaching candidates how to promote literacy and reading for lifelong learning and personal growth, for pleasure and enjoyment, and for information. They need to be acquainted with a wide range of children's, young adult, and professional literature, in multiple formats and languages. They must learn to develop a rich collection of reading and information materials in print and digital formats, that supports the diverse developmental, cultural, social, and linguistic needs of the user community. They must be taught a wide variety of reading instructional strategies to ensure that students can comprehend and make use of what they read.

(iii) The third standard addresses the information and knowledge handling capacities of school librarianship candidates. They must be able to support the diverse information needs of students, teachers, and administrators, and help them to locate, evaluate and ethically use information for specific purposes. They must

design services and facilitate the effective use of current and emerging digital tools for easy access to library resources in print, non-print and digital formats.

- (iv) Standard four relates to inculcating advocacy and leadership capabilities in school librarians. They need to advocate for the importance of school libraries in education and student achievement, demonstrate this through dynamic school library programmes, drawing attention to library resources and services. Collaboration and interaction with stakeholders, within and outside the school community must be emphasised. The library trainees should be taught the value of networking with the library community to enjoy benefits of resource sharing and wider access to information. They must be committed to professional growth through membership in library associations, and keep abreast of developments in their profession by attending conferences, reading professional publications and exploring internet resources in school librarianship.
- (v) The fifth standard relates to developing programme management and administration abilities in candidates. This incorporates

practical methods and techniques required to manage the library and its services. Candidates must learn how to develop a diverse collection suiting the needs of the school community and how to organise it using classification and cataloguing standards. Training must include planning of physical facilities and infrastructure, human and information resources.

4. Technological competence enhancement training for school librarians

The IFLA School Library Manifesto 2021 states that 'in an increasingly networked environment qualified school library professionals must be ... competent in planning and teaching evolving literacies and digital competencies'.

For this, school librarians must first be adequately trained in the following aspects:

- (i) Basics of Information Technology—
- Computer hardware and software, multimedia tools.
 - Communication and networking technologies, web based tools and technologies.
- (ii) Technology in education—
- e-learning tools and technologies.
 - Creation of digital content, preservation of information.
 - Web 2.0 tools for school environment.

(iii) Technology applications for the school library—

- School library automation.
- Library networks; consortia.
- Design and delivery of web-based services over email, mobile, web and social media.
- Library web site designing, creating wikis, blogs, etc.
- Library 2.0 for teaching and learning.
- Case study-selected state of the art school libraries.

(iv) e-Resource Management—

- Database types.
- Web based resources.
- Digital libraries.
- Virtual library portals.
- Open educational resources.

(v) Information literacy—

- Information access and retrieval tools.
- OPAC.
- Search engines.
- Access to digital resources.
- Digital literacy.

5. International approaches to school librarianship training

The following selection of courses or papers taught in some school librarianship programmes abroad suggests subjects which can be incorporated in the curriculum of proposed school librarianship courses in India.

(i) Courses related to Library Collection:

- Literature and resources (library materials) for children and young adults.
- Information books and resources for youth.
- Youth literature in the digital realm.
- Children's materials: evaluation and use.
- Media for children and young adults.
- Getting to grips with developing and managing e-book collections.

(ii) Courses related to library management:

- Getting to grips with the school library; library management in Secondary Schools.
- Cataloging for small libraries.
- Administration of public library work with children and young adults.

(iii) Courses related to library promotion:

- Marketing and public relations for libraries.
- Motivating 21st century learning in school libraries.
- Promotion of school libraries.
- Information professionals in the makerspace.
- Great library...but where are the children?

(iv) Courses related to Information literacy:

- Information literacy for youth.

- Information literacy for teaching and learning.
 - Information literacy instruction.
 - Information behaviour of children and youth.
 - Library instruction and pedagogy.
 - Inquiry and information seeking in K-12.
 - There is a better way—information literacy—skills to empower.
- (v) Courses related to reading culture enhancement:
- One of them being—Putting the L(ibrarian) into Reading.
 - Literacy through school libraries
 - Reading for pleasure-for-everyone!
 - Getting them and keeping them—reading across the primary and secondary transition.
 - Reading for pleasure—edgy, cool, or just boring? make it infectious and survive.
 - Principles and techniques of storytelling.
 - Storytelling—art and techniques.
- (vi) Courses related to technology integration and digital literacy:
- Media literacy for youth.
 - Technology in the lives of children and young adults.
 - Social networking in libraries.
 - Social media for information professionals.
- Trends in educational technology.
 - Technology and learning.
 - Research issues in educational technology.
 - Technology in school media centres.
 - School technology leadership.
 - Digital age learning and technology leadership.
 - Copy and paste generation (ethical issues).
- (vii) Courses related to communication skills:
- Getting the best from young people and adults: managing behaviour in the secondary school library.
 - Youth services librarianship.
 - Engaging teens.
 - Engaging school-age children.
- (viii) Courses related to pedagogy:
- Instructional leadership for school librarians.
 - Developmental and psychological perspectives on education.
 - Library instruction and pedagogy.
 - Teaching skills for school library staff.
 - Maryland State Board of Education Regulations for Library Media Specialist, includes the following portion mandating the inclusion of Education theory in school librarianship training.

Professional education course work for certification as a library media specialist shall include:

- (i) History and philosophy of education;
- (ii) Student developmental levels, learning theory, and strategies for identifying student information and learning needs;
- (iii) Theory, principles, and methods of instructional design and delivery; and
- (iv) Inclusion of special needs student populations.

6. UGC's Discipline Specific Elective Paper School Library and Media Centre (SLMC)

In comparison with these international courses and AASL/ALA standards for teaching school librarianship, concentrates more on library management and reading enhancement roles of the school librarian, as evident from its Learning Outcomes reproduced:

After studying this paper, the students shall be able to:

- (i) Understand the nature and functions of School Library and Media Centre.
- (ii) Highlight the role of School Library and Media Centre in inculcating reading habit among school students.
- (iii) Select, acquire, organise and manage collection of School Library and Media Centre.
- (iv) Promote reading among children and young adults through the use of quality literature

that reflects and fulfils diverse developmental, cultural, social, and linguistic needs of school students.

- (v) Provide various types of library services to school students.
- (vi) Organise library orientation programmes for school students.

It is suggested that a pedagogy and education component could be added to this paper to train the school librarian to play the role of teacher and instructor (including technology instructor to teachers and students), and to contribute to curriculum development through library activities aimed at fulfilment of curriculum objectives. This will produce teacher-librarians of global standards and enable the librarian to be considered at par with the senior teaching faculty of the school. After all, the school librarian is expected to be a teacher to students of all ages and classes, as well as teacher of teachers, teaching reading and information skills, learning skills, technology assimilation skills, etc.

7. Advocacy for school librarianship training

To serve the purpose of designing and introducing such elaborately planned school librarianship courses, it will be necessary to advocate for this specialised training, and draw attention to its benefits and the multiple purposes it can serve, as cited below:

- (i) These courses will ensure employability, becoming a source

of tremendous job opportunities for students, in view of the large school network spread across the rural and urban areas of the country (around 15 lakh schools).

- (ii) The courses will be able to produce a cadre of 'teacher librarians', by teaching the theoretical and practical aspects of librarianship as applicable to school libraries, while incorporating relevant aspects of educational theory and practice.
- (iii) The inclusion of internship requirement in the course will ensure that trainee school librarians gain useful practical experience to be able to do justice to their jobs.
- (iv) With the initiation of school librarianship elective courses at various levels (certificate/graduate/post-graduate), the knowledge base for school librarians in India will be strengthened, since the course curriculum will introduce them to important print and digital resources related to school librarianship, making them aware of the global advances in this professional field, relating to school library infrastructure, resources, services and activities.
- (v) Specialised school librarianship courses will help the candidates to identify with this specific work area, inculcating in them a professional zeal for managing school libraries, making them better motivated to fulfil the

specific educational expectations of the school community. Moreover, the sense of belonging to a specific profession will inspire the candidates to stay knowledgeable about global best practices in this field, and contribute knowledge in the form of ideas and experiences for the betterment of that profession.

In view of such obvious benefits of specially trained school librarians, education authorities at the district, state and centre, all school administrators and school principals, as well as bodies such as, UGC, CBSE, KVS and the Indian School Library Association should advocate the large-scale introduction of school librarianship courses all over the country. These bodies can offer valuable advice and guidance about the curriculum and content of such courses, in order to produce dedicated school librarians of good calibre, who can give a face-lift to the school library scenario in India.

8. Support of legislation for school library training

In the present situation, there is a strong need for legislation mandating the necessity of a library in every school in both the urban and rural areas, and stipulating the specifications regarding various aspects of school libraries, one aspect being library manpower. If legislation suggests school librarianship qualification as a preferred qualification for trained

manpower in school libraries, this will encourage universities, schools of library science and similar agencies all over the country, to start specialised school librarianship courses at various levels full-fledged school librarianship courses at certificate level and post-graduate level, or an elective course in school librarianship for students of existing Bachelor's and Masters programmes in Library Science, thereby increasing the employability potential of library science education.

9. Training courses for practising librarians

Legislation may also make it necessary for practising school librarians, who already hold a general library science degree, to attend in-service training or refresher courses on school librarianship during vacations, to qualify for and be assimilated in the trained school librarian's pay structure, and to ensure standardised quality of school librarianship practice. Such courses may be on the lines of State Government DIET courses

or ZIET courses of KVS, and may be conducted by school clusters, or schools of library science at universities, or by the School Library Association.

School principals too should encourage their librarians to attend such in-service training courses, for the betterment of their libraries.

CONCLUSION

The environment in schools makes special demands on the school libraries, which can be best satisfied by adequately qualified school librarians. This calls for specialised school librarianship courses on a national scale, for new library trainees and practising librarians. These courses can be modelled on the lines of similar courses in universities abroad. Such courses are required to produce dedicated school librarians and teacher librarians of good calibre, knowledgeable about their profession, and keen to develop well-resourced school libraries providing services, which can earn the library repute as a worthy 'partner in education'.

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