

Chapter – 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The prime need of society is education because it nourishes the knowledgeable and responsible citizens. It reflects the condition of any country be it social, political and economic. A man educates himself from the mother's womb and continues it till the life ends. The actual meaning of education lies within the word 'Educare' from which the word was derived, i.e., 'to bring up' or 'to nourish' (Safaya; Shaida). Education actually is to acquire knowledge, to develop skills, that will help to do the right in life. Indian National Education Commission (1964-66), Education can be formal, informal, non-formal. In the case of formal education that is imparted through the academic institution, the library plays a great role. As we know that the library is an organized collection of books and other non-book materials. This is the storehouse of knowledge. Library consists of four elements, i.e., the collection, the building, furniture, and the staffs and the prime one is the readers.

1.1.1 Necessity of Library

Library is indispensable for society. It is absolutely essential for society because without a library the society cannot function properly. It is an organic adjunct to society. It has a great role in literacy movements. It is not only the storehouse of knowledge rather it is a place where people can exchange their views and ideas, irrespective of their social, educational status. Library accepts its every user equally be him a child or aged or be him a research scholar, semi-literate or illiterate one. Generally, education is of two types, formal education, and informal education. In the case of formal education, the academic institution, school, college, the university acts the main role (Kent et al.). So, every academic institution should have a library. Academic library should have a relevant collection of documents as it has to serve the

particular types of users. In academic libraries, the users are the students, teachers and research scholars. The book relevant to their course encouraged them come to library and read extensively for acquiring knowledge in depth, which help them to develop their critical thinking, as well as their enhance intellectual development. In informal education, library plays an important role. A well-equipped library with its enriched collection always inspires the researchers to start a good beginning towards research work. A good library possessed various books on different flavors, some books perceive the cultural heritage of a society. Some books fulfill the rigorous and ideological needs and inculcate the users' ideological and spiritual upliftment. Library can give its user a recreational leisure period as it contains novels, popular magazines. Reading habit develops the imaginative skills of students (Apeji).

1.1.2 History

Libraries had always been considered as a place of worship of knowledge. In ancient times, specially in Egypt, it was the part of every temples. The idea of establishing a library at first came in the mind of Romanions who introduced the library after acquiring considerable collections after successful wars. But after the invasions of Barbarians the libraries were demolished. For the first few centuries of the medieval period there was a very few people who cared for the libraries. But gradually the monk of the Buddhist Mones took the responsibility of collecting various valuable manuscripts, instead of Papyrus vellum was used. Thus they made it possible of making a book in its present form. Then came the middle age where the college libraries were formed along with the Buddhist monasteries. The monasteries and the college libraries jointly formed an organization which became known as 'chained libraries'. It was named so because there the extremely valuable and rare books were laid on desks and chained to a bur (Wikipedia contributors).

In Ancient India Buddhist Monasteries were the library centres. Some renowned centres were Nalanda, Tokshyashila and Varanashi. A good collection of books and manuscripts were maintained by the kings of different states. They also found the

scholars and sheltered them to write books. The ‘Gurukul’ had the rich collection of books (Banerjee).

In Assam at the time of Vaisnavite Movement the cultural and educational life of Assam came into the light. In different places of Assam new library system had grown. Besides, the library centres the renowned Panditas had their own collection enriched with valuable manuscripts those were written in bhujapatra or in sashipatra in kaithale scripts. In that time the right to education was confined to a particular section of society. The people belong to the lower class rather labor class did not have the right to take the education. These people did not have the right to worship to God and as the books were regarded as the Holy Scriptures, writers occupied the special position in the society, taking education was also confined to a special class in the society. Writing of books was not so easy at that time. The copper plates and stone inscription were used to record the history and civilization of different periods. Then from the British Rule the library started getting the concrete shape and after independence the academic libraries have grown up in the higher educational institutions and gradually with the time public libraries, industrial libraries, research libraries were also set up in the society. Academic libraries are mainly of three types: university libraries, college libraries and school libraries (Ray).

The idea of having a library in the school stage came from European Countries. New York Governor Mr. Dewitt Clinton in 1800s visited Europe and became surprised to see the role of school libraries. After visiting Europe, he emphasized of school library system.

In India the scenario is different during the British Rule. There was no noticeable development in library system. After the independence, the step to library movement started and in 1952, at first Mudaliar Commission realized the importance of library in a school and then in 1964 Kothari Commission gave the formal reorganization of school library. This recommendation is a guideline for improving the school library system. Though it is not followed in the Government aided schools, the central schools and the public schools followed the guidelines throughout the country (Kumar).

1.1.3 Types of Libraries

With time as society started developing the social, economic, intellectual and cultural improvement demands the development of different kinds of libraries. The basic function of library is to educate the community. The classification and designation of libraries is done on the basis of different needs and objectives of users to be catered. Libraries are broadly divided into four types, viz., academic library, public library, special library, national library. According to the mode of services, according to the users served libraries are divided. It is true that whatever the types of libraries may be, the primary objective is to collect, organize and disseminate of information. The four main divisions are:

1.1.3.1 National Library

National library is a library which is established by the Government of a country and which acts as the repository of every country. It is known for the functions it performs. National library performs its duty by collecting and preserving all the literature of the country produces. One of the prominent contributions of National Library is publishing the National Bibliography. Library of Congress of USA is a single library and British Library in UK is library complex. National Library plays the role of leading reference library in a country.

1.1.3.2 Public Library

The functions of a public library lie within its name, i.e., to serve the public. It is established by the Government; sometimes it is sponsored or aided by the Government. Public Library is accessible to all sections of public in a society. Sometimes it may be free or sometimes may be subscription libraries.

1.1.3.3 Special Library

From the beginning of the 20th century the concept of special library became popular. It is named 'special' because it is served a particular group of people. UNESCO has

defined special library as the libraries that are associated with different bodies such as Parliament, Department of Government, scientific and research institutions, which are mainly designed to cater special users with their special collection.

1.1.3.4 Academic Library

Academic Library is attached with academic institutions like school, college and university and serves specially the students, research scholars, teachers and staffs of the institution. Academic libraries are categorized as university library, college library and school library. It is an integral part of any academic institution and the main purpose of any academic library is to attain the objectives for which the institution has been established. Library is the sole of an academic institution. Each academic institution should maintain a library. The standard of an academic institution depends on its library. Basically without a library no college and university can function properly. But the scenario is different in case of the schools. There are several instances of schools that are running without a proper library. In these cases the sufferers are those students belonging to the schools. Because lack of a proper library the student could not get the facilities or resources they deserved. The importance of school library, though realized by the other countries, in our country especially in our state still it is neglected. It is a fact that until it is being taken care of, the education system of our state will not improve (Chakraborti).

1.1.4 Aims and Goals of School Library

A school library plays a pivotal role in a nation as because it nourishes the sprouts and makes them the Bunyans. The American Library Association Committee gave a brief on what is actually the aim of school library.

The utmost aim of Library is to acquire books and others materials for the effective use likewise the school library should acquire the document accordingly to the curriculum of the school. There was a time when library was meant for books only, but now library is not made up exclusively for books rather it is now the centre for books and non-book materials also including periodicals, pamphlets, ebooks, and some audio-visual aids

which is used for teaching in the class. The efficiency of a library depends not only on collection development but on the selection also which document is needed for the students and the teachers and which document not is to be decided first and this decision making should be carried on by the librarian and the advisory board that consists of Headmaster, Teacher Representatives and sometimes pupils also. Not only selection of the right resource, but the classification, cataloguing and filing should be done properly. These housekeeping operations of library increase the efficiency of service to pupils and teachers (Ahmed).

The school library is a place where for the first time the pupils come in close contact with books. The library teaches them how to use books, how to use the catalogue to find the required book. They learn the skill of using the reference tools like dictionary, encyclopedia from the school library. In school library they start knowing the part of the printed book fast, the table of contents, the index, the glossary. In future this knowledge helps them a lot.

The school library guides the pupils how to choose the right books and other educational materials for their personal use and for their curricular purpose. An efficient librarian should help the students to choose the appropriate books that will fulfill their requirement. Thus in school library they acquire the knowledge of choosing the books.

Library is the place where a student nourishes the wide range of interests. Library helps pupils to cultivate several kinds of interests through different books, magazines. School library gives them the facility to pick and choose the books on their own interests and that flourishes their innovative character and opens up the way to lead a healthy and rich leaving in future (Chakraborti).

One of the prominent aims of school library is to influence the lifelong learning of a student, because in school the formal education of a human being starts. School library encouraged the students in the pursuit of knowledge in future. Reading gives them the aesthetic pleasure that strengthens their character in future.

School library teaches the necessity of co-operation. To work with the academic and non-academic staff co-operatively for the betterment of the education system of a school is the aim of a school library. Not only selection of books and acquisition of books, the school library aimed at participating the construction of different school programme, attending the faculty meeting activity. In a word with the instructional and administrative staff of the school, school library works with hand in hand for the betterment of the school.

The aim of the school library is also to give lesson on social attributes. It is a notable contribution of the school library to enrich the student's social awareness, group work, helpfulness, cooperativeness. School library enhances the sense of discipline and different library activity helps the students to acquire the necessary qualities of a good citizen (Ranganathan).

Moreover, the school library for the first time introduced in the students an aesthetic experience through the library room with bright books. This aesthetic experience develops in the students the appreciation of arts in their future life.

1.1.5 Functions

School library plays a very important role in a school. If the school be considered as a human body then the library is the heart of the body. Indeed it has various significant functions. Library is a place where the students for the first time experiences self-education.

School library promotes the habit of self-reading within the student from the very beginning of their career. The habit of self-education enables the pupils to study independently. Not only this, but the self-education stimulates the creative faculty of the students and instigates towards self-writing in future.

Library reading distracts the pupils from the hobbies and habits that are harmful for their future and gives them a healthy atmosphere and environment where the young

adolescent can spend a quality time in their leisure. Overall which is worth mentioning about the school library is its recreational importance in a student's life.

School library plays an important role in school education rather it will be more appropriate to say that library reading is not only a part of school education but it is a supplementary of the of the classroom. Library class should be the important portion of the curricular activities of the school (Kaula).

School library provides all the reference material not only for the students but for the teachers also for the enlightenment of both of them. Students get the reference documents for their educational problem from the library where as the teachers also for the professional growth the necessary extensive information collects from the school library which is very important for the educational system.

A school library can be named as a modern school library when it will be able to serve the interest of both the teachers and the students through methodical arrangement and systematic management. If it is followed then the libraries can make reading materials available properly and efficiently equip the individuals (Chakraborti).

1.1.6 Different Commissions about School Library

After the Independence the India Government started giving emphasis on the Secondary Education System. And as Library is the Integral part of education system it was felt that without improving the condition of library 'reorganization of education system could not be possible. The school education system needs libraries to support and strengthen school education. To achieve the goal, Government constituted commission and committees.

In 1952, secondary Education Commission was appointed by the Government of India to do research on the present Education System and examining the system suggests some measures for its improvement and after doing survey on the School Education System they came to the point that School Library is essential in school education system. According to the Commission library will act as the hub of literary life of

schools and play same role to all subjects as the laboratory acts for science subjects and workshop plays for technical subjects (Ministry of Education).

Kothari Commission was appointed on 14th July 1964 by the Government of India. The main responsibility of this commission was to give advice to the Government reforming or reshaping the prevailing system. This commission mainly gave emphasis on the development of college and university libraries. Though their main concern was for college and university libraries, there recommendations if followed would be very fruitful for the school libraries (Mukhopadhyay).

Committee on National Policy on Library and Information System (CONPOLIS) 1986 stated that no school or colleges could not said as a standard school or college until it possesses a standard library. They also emphasized on the role of qualified librarian for successfully running of library (Mukhopadhyay).

The National Policy on Education (NPE) has emphasized on provision of libraries with each and every academic institution.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The research problem of this study has been formulated in the following descriptive statement:

“Investigating the current status of the school libraries in West Bengal and designing a standard”

The statement of the research problem as furnished above along which a set following relevant questions to be resolved in during this research.

1. What is the status of the infrastructure, procurement policy, organization and service rendered by the school libraries in West Bengal? How can these be known?
2. Is there any differences in district-wise status of school libraries in West Bengal? How it can be known?

3. What are the barriers that effect in smooth running of school libraries in West Bengal? How can these be known?
4. What methodology should be adopted to design a standard for the school library in West Bengal?

1.3 Objectives

The standards for the school libraries will maintain uniformity in the school libraries. The general objective of this study is to prepare a standard for the school libraries in West Bengal so that an equilibrium can be maintained in all the schools whatever it may be in a rural area, or semi-rural or in an urban area. However, to achieve the objective, this study tries to accomplish the following tasks:

1. To investigate the status of the infrastructure, procurement policy, organization and service rendered by the school libraries in West Bengal.
2. To investigate the district-wise status of school libraries in West Bengal.
3. To find out the barriers that effect in the smooth running of school libraries in West Bengal.
4. To design a standard for the school library in West Bengal.

1.4 Scope of the Research

The present study attempts to assess the existing conditions of school libraries as well as to design a standard for the school libraries in West Bengal. With regard to the total population of this study, all the schools of West Bengal should come under consideration. But it was not convenient and possible to cover such a large population for the study. Hence, total 400 schools from 19 districts have been taken as the samples. Twenty schools from each district are being considered except the Darjiling district. As the district, Darjiling covers both hilly region and plain land, twenty schools from both region, i.e., total forty schools were surveyed. The spatial random sampling technique was used for sampling of the schools. The schools from every district were picked up in such a way that the spatial distribution of the samples looks scattered throughout the district area. Only Secondary and Higher Secondary Govt. aided schools are being

considered for the study. The survey was performed in 2013 when West Bengal was divided into 19 districts. After that several new districts came into the picture namely, in 25th June 2014 Alipurduar was carved out from Jalpaiguri, on 4th April 2017 Jhargram was carved out from Paschim Medinipur, 14th February 2017 Kalimpong was carved out from Darjiling and finally, Barddhaman was divided in Purba Barddhaman and Paschim Barddhaman in 2017. Therefore in the present study, we followed the erstwhile 19 districts of West Bengal because sampling of the schools, base map preparation in Geographical Information System (GIS) and field survey were performed before Alipurduar being declared as the 20th district of West Bengal.

1.5 Significance of the Study

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

The findings of this study will be helpful to fill up the knowledge gap in the area. It may help to resolve the problem and to mark the achievements of research in the field of the State. The outcome may guide us to find the right direction in Library and Information Science (LIS) research. The study may also focus light on some other problems related to LIS research and accordingly suggest the further problem of research in the field.

1.6 Style of References

Process of referencing, followed for the purpose, is strictly according to the MLA (Modern Language Association) style, 8th edition, revised in August 2016. For referencing, Mendeley Referencing Manager has been used.

1.7 Conspectus

The chapter outline of the present study is furnished below:

Chapter – 1: Introduction: Provides an introduction to the work which includes problem of the research along with the specific research questions, objective, hypothesis, and the significance of the study.

Chapter – 2: Literature Review: provides a comprehensive overview of the literature in relation to the problem of the research.

Chapter – 3: Research Methodology: Describes the data collection tool, techniques, data preprocessing, method of analysis for statistical and GIS representation.

Chapter – 4: Data Representation and Analysis: The chapter includes Data Analysis and Interpretation. The data analysis has been carried out by applying suitable statistical methods.

Chapter – 5: District wise Assessment of School Libraries in West Bengal: A GIS-Based Mapping Approach: This chapter deals with district wise assessment of school libraries using GIS as a tool.

Chapter – 6: Findings of the study: It presents the summary of findings based on the analysis as accomplished in the chapter – 4 and chapter – 5 respectively.

Chapter – 7: Recommendations to Design a Standard for School Library in West Bengal: Suggestions and recommendations are made and a standard for school libraries in West Bengal has been proposed.

Chapter – 8: Conclusion: Implications of the results of the study have been pointed out. Besides, specific problem areas, that need attention for further research, are outlined.