



CHAPTER 1

SCHOOL LIBRARY AS A RESOURCE CENTRE

The word 'library' is rich in tradition, meaning, and usage. The definitions of 'school library' given by various library scientists and associations reflect this heritage. Throughout the world, the library of a school is considered as part and parcel of its academic set-up. It is created and maintained to serve and support the educational activities of the school. The recommendations of numerous commissions and committees established by the Government of India and various other states for the improvement of school education can bring in desired results provided the school has the full complement of library resources, personnel, and necessary infrastructure. So far, the school library has not been given its rightful place in the scheme of things. Nevertheless, it can play a very important role and help the schools in achieving their educational objectives. If we recognise the value and importance of informal system of education, then the library method of self-education is sure to secure its due place.

The school library provides information, foster ideas, and develops knowledge that is so essential to function successfully in today's information and knowledge based society. It is fundamental to a school library to equip students with lifelong learning skills, and develop in them creative thinking and imagination, and thereby enabling them to live as ideal and responsible citizens. Hence, the school library must be made the hub of all the activities planned and executed in the school.

The library can be used by students to prepare for their next subject period, home examination, general education, information, competitions, recreation and inspiration. To cater the wide range of demands of students and teachers, the library staff has to judiciously select and procure the prescribed or recommended text-books and other reading material from different sources, technically process them by making use of a standard scheme of classification, catalogue them to provide various access points, organise the collection on scientific lines, circulate the documents and disseminate the information in



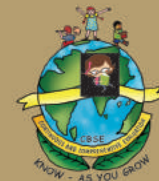
the manner most liked by the students and teachers. In addition, the school library has to serve as a **resource centre** as well.

In Europe and quite a few western countries, a great emphasis is laid on the library method of teaching. The school library staff supports the use of books and other information services which range from the fictional to documentary, from print to electronic, within the four walls of the library as well as outside. This is all done to enthuse the young minds of learners to unfold their innate abilities and discover their potential. A lot of assignments are given to learners for which, they have to work in the library itself. This method of teaching renders them skillful and discerning users of library resources and services.

Although the school library has been recognised as an essential component of a good school, yet many schools in our country lack even basic library facilities. From the prevailing picture of the schools in our country, it can be seen that much remains to be done in providing them with well-organised libraries, particularly so in far flung rural areas. Currently, the situation is such that a few books locked up in a classroom, are given the status of a library. Millions of our school children, other than those studying in public schools, are being deprived of the full complement of library resources and services, which they need and are entitled to. Even in schools where library facilities exist, the picture is not very bright. The condition of these libraries is below the required standard when compared with their counterparts in developed countries.

In the education of young learners, the printed and other audio-visual resources are essential and needed in abundance. These resources are the basic tools, which are required for effective teaching and learning. Our educational planners and administrators have rightly stressed the point of view of quality education. It is through the library that the materials needed by teachers and students can be supplied efficiently and economically, with their adequacy and quality assured. Merely stocking reading material in schools is not enough. Care must be taken to get these materials properly organised and make the same easily available to students and teachers. All schools, irrespective of the number of students registered, should be provided with a library organised, on modern lines and supervised by a qualified, trained librarian. The provision of adequate supporting staff is very essential in achieving excellence in library and information services.

The provision of the school library service must be open to the whole school community, regardless of gender, race, economic and social status, religious faith, nationality, language, and physical disabilities. The school librarians should see to it that specific services and materials are provided to those who for some reason, are unable to use the mainstream library services.



All schools have a library period in their time table per classes. Students go to the library during this period to get the books issued or returned. The time available to each group is so less that the librarian hardly gets an opportunity to do anything else other than normal 'issue and return' of books. The school authorities will do well to relieve the librarian from any formal teaching work and encourage him/her to take extra interest in promoting library use for the benefit of students. The Head of the school should ensure regular and timely release of funds for the purchase of reading material. Necessary tools required to technically process the reading material such as the latest edition of classification scheme, cataloguing code, and the list of subject titles should be made available to the Librarian. Full cooperation needs to be extended to the librarian in the timely dissemination of such information.

SCHOOL LIBRARY OBJECTIVES

It is needless to emphasise that the School Library is essential to every long-term strategy for

- ❖ Literacy
- ❖ Formal Education
- ❖ Information Provision
- ❖ Economic, Social and Cultural Development.

Thus it must be supported by the local, state and national governments of the day.

In conceptual planning and development of school library services, the librarian is guided by the stated objectives of the school. These objectives mostly pertain to the provision of reading material, guidance in reading, reference service, instructions in the use of library catalogue and reading materials, personal and social guidance to students etc. With a few modifications, different school libraries decide on the priorities of services to be offered and frame a set of objectives to be achieved. The major objectives of a school library are to

- ❖ Effectively participate in the teaching-learning programme of the school.
- ❖ Provide students with appropriate library materials both printed as well as audio visual and services for the overall growth and development of the personality of the students as individuals.



- ❖ Develop reading ability and interest, and inculcate love, enjoyment and pleasure of reading among students.
- ❖ Assist students to become skillful and discriminating users of the library.
- ❖ Offer opportunities for experiences in creating and using data for knowledge, understanding, information and enjoyment.
- ❖ Support all students in learning and practising skills for evaluating and using information, regardless of form, format or medium, including sensitivity to the modes of communication within the community.
- ❖ Stimulate and guide each student in the selection and use of books and other reading materials for building of taste at appropriate level of maturity.
- ❖ Work out a programme in consultation with teachers for the effective use of all types of library resources.

These objectives focus upon the most important functions of the school library.

In order to achieve these objectives, the School Librarians need to

- ❖ Provide the students equal access to all library resources.
- ❖ Arrange for high quality customer service to students organised on modern lines.
- ❖ Be familiar and aware of popular books and magazines, the students enjoy most.
- ❖ Arrange for reading sessions of popular books and magazines and talks by the celebrity authors.
- ❖ Make the library inviting and pleasing with comfortable furniture.
- ❖ Involve teachers and students in making the collection up-to-date.
- ❖ Draft student friendly library rules.
- ❖ Sign a MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with sister / sahodaya cluster libraries for mutual help and cooperation.