

Recent Trends and Challenges in the School Libraries of Delhi

Geetika Khattar^{1*}

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to determine and investigate the challenges faced by the librarians at school level in the state of Delhi. Recent trends in the school libraries are also listed. For the purpose of the survey an online questionnaire was prepared and spread across the school librarians of Delhi through various means. The findings of the survey were quite unexpected. It was found that the libraries at school level still following the old methods of work and it needs to be modernized to meet the sustainable development goals.

Keywords: School Library, Delhi, Librarians, Development, Changes, Challenges, Improvement, Library Infrastructure, School Librarian Introduction

1. Introduction

“The better the school library the better the reading scores”
– Stephen D. Krashen

The above stated quote is very well said and describes the importance of the School Library in a student's life. The school library is the first interaction of a child to the world's best reading material. The school system in India has four levels: lower primary (age 6 to 10), upper primary (11 and 12), high (13 to 15) and higher secondary (17 and 18). The lower primary school is divided into five “standards”, upper primary school into two, high school into three and higher secondary into two. It has been observed that each level of education has its own importance. Students need various educational resources at different levels. Therefore, the need for a library in the school arises for the staff members and for the students also.

Now, if we talk about the type of schools in Delhi, on the basis of their management, schools in Delhi are classified as follows:

- Government
- Local Body
- Private unaided
- Private aided

Majority of schools in Delhi, provide library facilities to their members. Some Private schools even have two libraries named as Junior and Senior, catering to the needs of their members according to their age group. The status of school libraries has been improved a lot recently, but still in some schools the condition of libraries is still distressing. There is no adequate infrastructure provided for the same.

Although the College and University libraries have been developed a lot, due to the efforts of UGC and INFLIBNET, the school libraries have been neglected a lot because of the absence of a strong legislative committee at this level. There is a need to work a lot in this area.

2. Role of a School Librarian

According to Dr. S.R. Ranganathan “Library is the heart of educational institutions. Well-functioning heart keeps the body healthy and lively. Efficient library creates a healthy educational atmosphere.”

To justify the above stated quote a librarian works to his/her full extent to provide a top-level service to its users. The librarian in a school not only works as a librarian only, but as a facilitator to help students in being a prolific reader. He/ She work hard to inculcate the habit of reading in the students at a tender age. They are the only one who create love for the books in the young hearts of the children.

As said by the great author J.K. Rowling “If you don't like to read, you haven't found the right book”. At the school level, a librarian introduces the right book to a child, so that he/she may develop interest for reading. A librarian works in continuous coordination with the teachers for this purpose. It is their task to not limit the library resources to print resources only, but to provide e-resources as well if the need arises.

3. Standards for school libraries

According to CBSE guidelines, minimum standards that will enable School Libraries play their role more meaningfully and effectively are listed below:

1. Librarian, Presentation Convent Sr. Sec. School, Delhi-6
* Corresponding author ✉ geetika.im@gmail.com

i. Space (Accommodation)

Adequate and suitable space is the first and foremost requirement of a School Library be it a Primary/Middle level or Secondary/Senior Secondary level.

Primary/Middle: A minimum of a Standard Classroom for 40 pupils should be marked as ‘Library’ in all Primary/Middle Schools.

Secondary/Senior Secondary School: A minimum of three Standard Classrooms be designated as Library by removing the inner partition wall to organise Library and Reading Room in all the Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools, though the ideal is to have a separate building built for the purpose

ii. Staff

The following structure of Library Staff is required for different levels of schools having Student Strength of 2000 or less.

Primary/Middle School: A minimum of two members of library staff is required in a Primary/Middle School.

- Librarian (Assistant Teacher Grade)– One
- Library Attendant– One

Secondary School: The Library Staff of Secondary School should consist of:

- Librarian (TGT Grade) – One
- Assistant Librarian Asstt. Teacher Grade)– One
- Library Attendant– One

Senior Secondary School: The Library Staff of a Senior Secondary School should consist of:

- Senior Librarian (PGT Grade)– One
- Librarian (TGT Grade) – One
- Assistant Librarian Asst. Teacher Grade)– One
- Library Attendant– One

In case the number of students crosses 2000, there should be corresponding increase in the number of Library Attendants for every 500 Students or part thereof.

iii. Size of Book Collection

As per the guidelines of CBSE a standard library should have 5 titles of books over 1 Student.

It should subscribe at least 5 local or national newspapers. And minimum subscription of 15 different titles of magazines.

Now the question arises here is whether the schools in Delhi are following these standards or not. To find the data on the above stated query a questionnaire has been created and circulated to the maximum number of schools possible.

4. Findings of the Survey

An online questionnaire for the data collection on the issues mentioned above was created and spread across the

school librarians. The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions, both open ended and multiple choice. The analysis of the data collected was quite disheartening. It was found that in this digital age, where on one side we talk about Web3.0 and Web4.0, there are libraries which are not capable of providing basic amenities to the users. The details of the finding are as follows:

1. *Categories of the participating institutions in the survey*

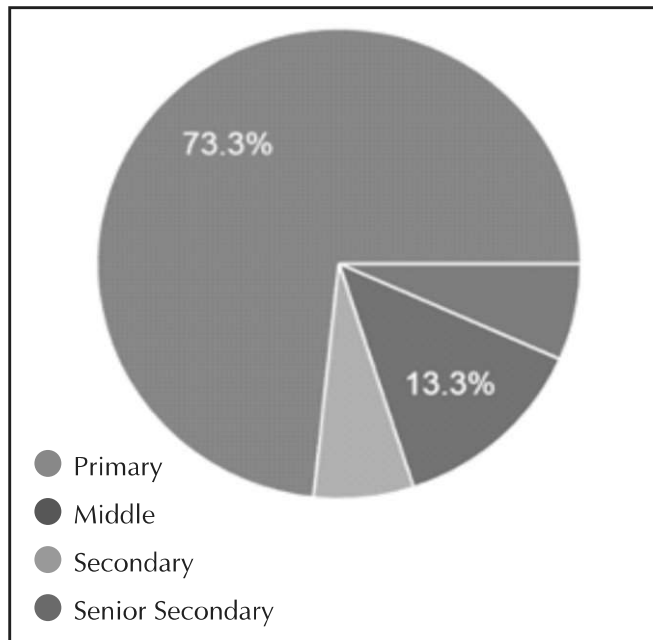


Fig.1: Categories of Participating Institutions

2. *Types of Institutions participated*

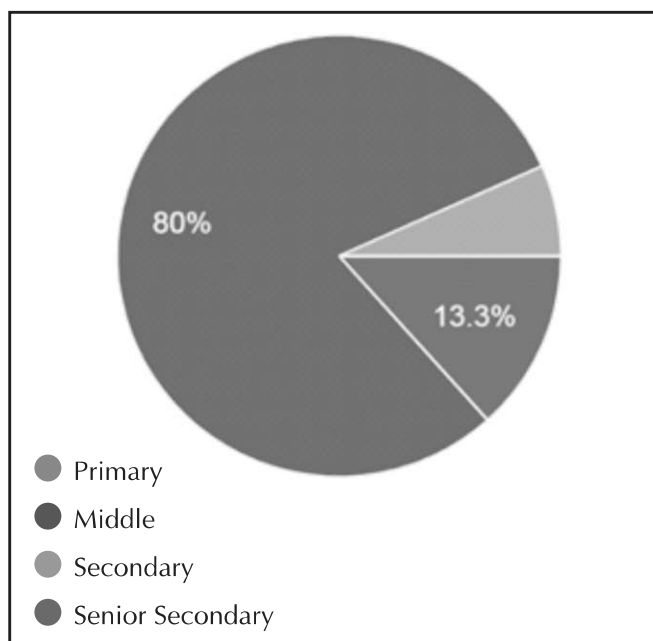


Fig.2: Types of Institutions participated

3. Number of students (Approx.) in the school

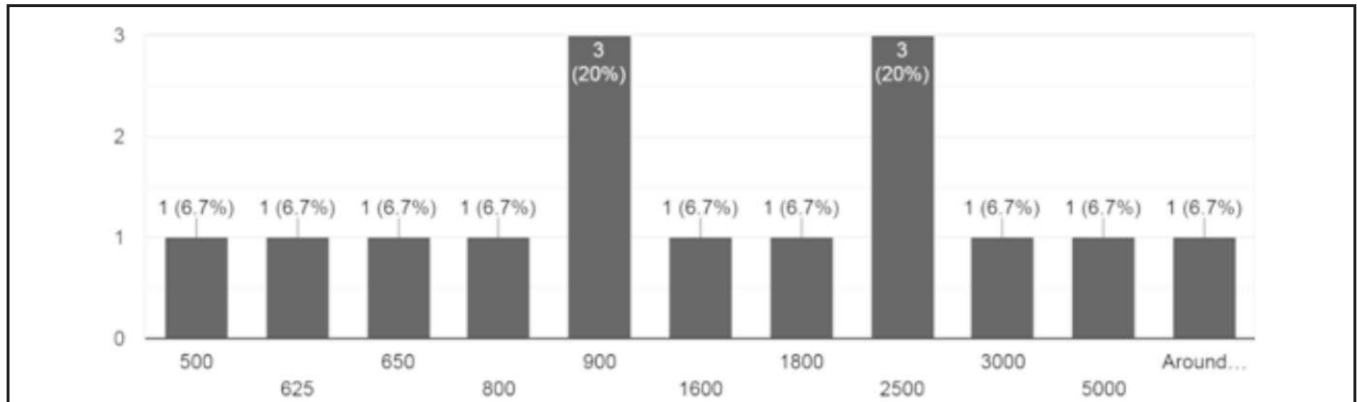


Fig. 3: Number of students in the school

4. Number of libraries in the school

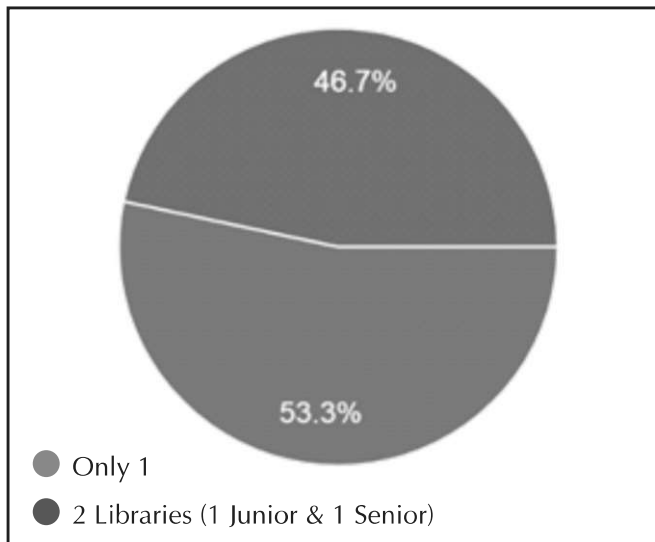


Fig. 4: Number of libraries in the school

6. Number of Books (Approx.) in the library

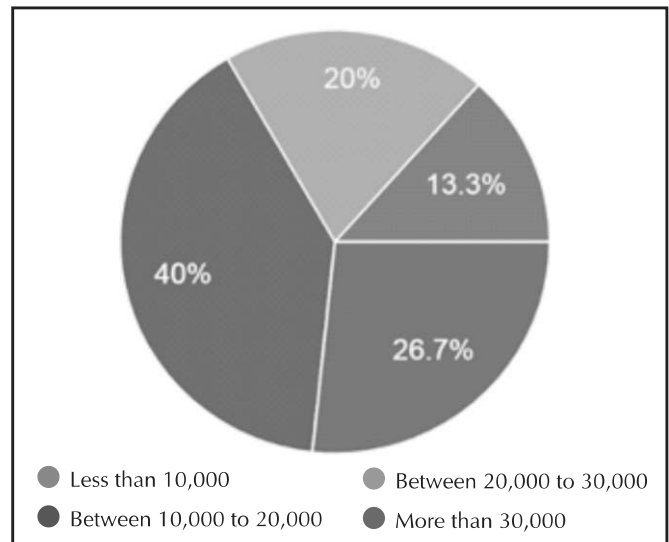


Fig. 6: Number of Books in the library

5. Number of people working in the library

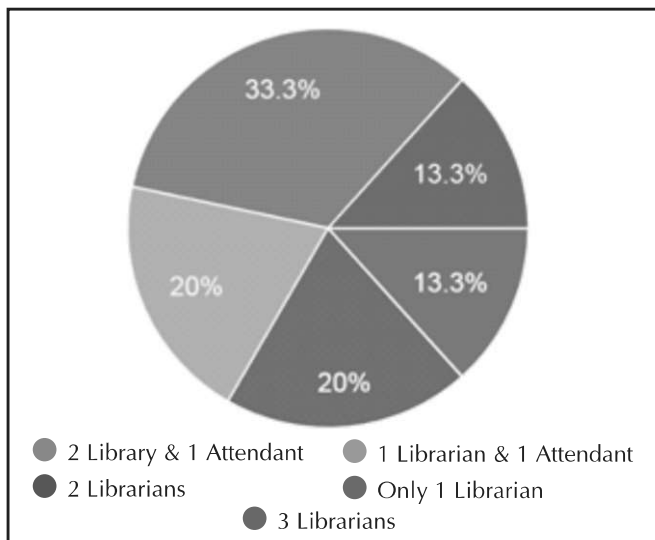


Fig.5: Number of people working in the library:

7. Do you have enough space for sitting in the library?

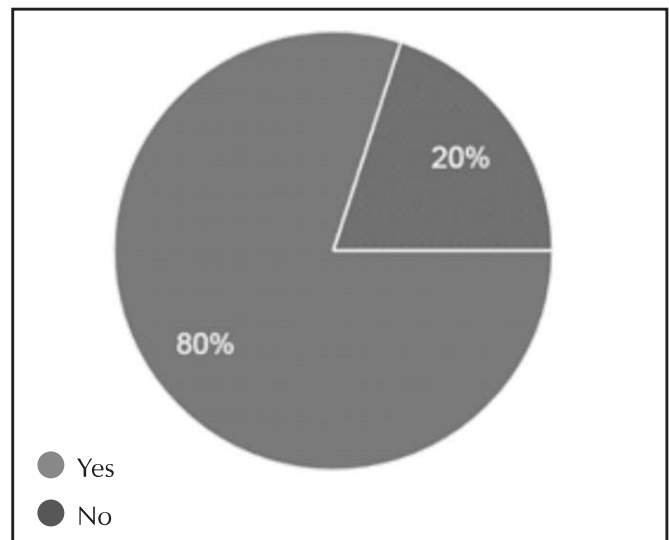


Fig. 7: Availability of sitting space in library

8. Circulation method in use in the libraries

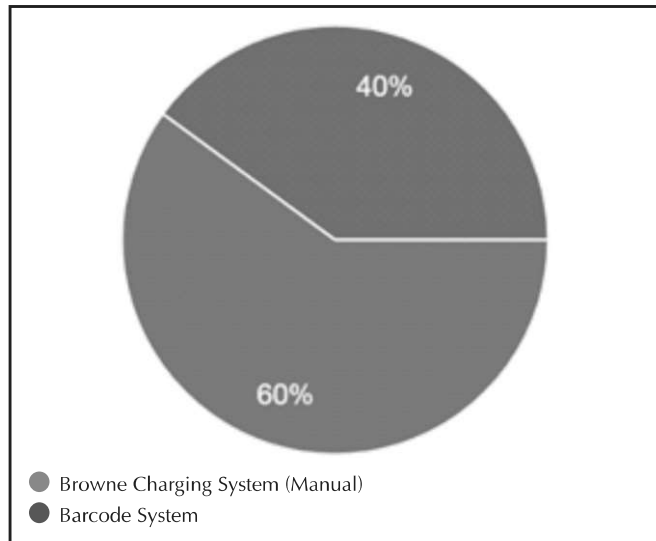


Fig. 8: Circulation method used

9. Are you satisfied by the facilities provided to the library by the school management or is it neglected?

Asking about the satisfaction level of librarians by the facilities provided to them by the management, only 28% of the total population gave a positive feedback. Rest of the people were not satisfied.

10. Do you think there is a scope of doing better in your library? If yes, how?

Raising this question gave the librarians a platform to talk about the issues faced by them. Most of them talked about the provision of more funds and technology advancement by the management. More man power was demanded by them. And some suggested better physical facilities, like Acs and lighting.

11. Are you satisfied with the services provided by you to your patrons?

There were few librarians who accepted that they can do better in their service, if they get better facilities by the management. Manpower is the main issue which came forward in this research.

12. Any concern you have regarding your library and would like to mention here.

Most of the Librarians raised following concerns regarding the library system:

- Need of good furniture for libraries at school level
- Lack of space
- Need of Library Attendant
- Short term courses for working professionals are needed, so that they can update themselves.
- Deteriorating reading habits of students
- Need of technological advancement in the libraries, at school level.
- Lack of funds.

5. Conclusion

Libraries serve as a crucial source of information for children in schools. It helps in developing the essential habit of reading in students. Each school must have libraries. The library in schools is a major part of the lives of students, serving as a storehouse of information.

Updating our libraries with the change of time is the need of the hour. Here on one side, we are talking about great developments in the field of library science, but on the other side people from the same professions are asking for the basic facilities like staffing, furniture and space. The management at the school level of institutions is completely ignorant towards the libraries. Although there are schools, which have modernized themselves and hence proved themselves as a great example for others. I believe there is a big scope for improvement in this field and we should work together for the same.

6. Bibliography

- Alexandra, Paul (2022). Literary Competence from School Library, Research Gate, 27(1): 67-79
- Sudin and Sardar, Kumar (2021). The vibrant school library: Where dreams come true, SERLS Journal of Information Management, 58(2): 95-100.
- Awuah, Margaret Baffour (2021). Barriers to school library development, IASL Annual conference Proceedings.
- Ahuja, Sunish, Ehrlich, Ami and Maurin, Julie (2021). Fostering a culture of reading through school libraries: Room to Read's experience in India, IASC Annual Conference Proceedings.
- Awuah, Margaret Baffour (2021). Barriers to school library development, IASL Annual conference Proceedings.
- Saramah, Nitupam and Lahkar, Narendra (2020). Organization and management of Kendriya Vidyalaya Libraries of Assam: A pilot study.
- Research Section (2017) , "School Libraries in India – A statistical review (2017)"
- <https://indianschoollibraryassociationonline.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/school-libraries-in-india-statistical-review-2017.pdf>
- Ramaiah, Chennupati Kodanda and Pillai, K. Nallaperumal (2013). Training needs of school librarians in India, DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology, 33(5): 367-377
- CBSE, (2013), "Library as a resource centre." https://cbseacademic.nic.in/web_material/publication/cbse/25/LibraryasaResourceCentre.pdf
- Baird, Nicola (2012), "Setting up and running a school library." Peace Corps, Information Collection and Exchange, Pub. No. ED 204

12. Ahmad, Sofi Zahoor (2011). A survey of senior secondary school libraries in Jammu and Kashmir, India.
13. Mahajan, Preeti (2010). "School Libraries in India- Present day scenario." *Library Philosophy and Practice* 2010, ISSN 1522-0222
14. Singh, Jagtar, (2009). "Status of school library development in India", *Sri Lankan Journal of librarianship and information management*, DOI: 10.4038/sllim.v1i1.425
15. IFLA, "School Libraries - Gateways to development", School Library Section. *School Libraries – Gateways to Development* (ifla.org)

