

Transforming School Library Services in Secondary Education: Status, Challenges, and Future Prospects

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the status, challenges, and opportunities of school library services in Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal. A survey method was adopted to collect primary data from higher secondary schools located within Jalpaiguri Municipality. A structured questionnaire was administered to librarians or library in-charges of selected schools, and field visits were conducted to observe the existing library infrastructure and services. The study revealed that a significant variation in the availability of library collections, infrastructure, and management practices among the surveyed schools. While a few libraries possess relatively large collections and rare materials, most suffer from limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and the absence of modern information technologies. The study further identifies several challenges faced by librarians, including lack of administrative support, financial constraints, shortage of professional staff, insufficient space, and declining reader interest. The absence of computers, internet connectivity, and automation systems indicates a major gap in integrating information and communication technologies into school library services. The study suggests improving infrastructure, strengthening collections, recruiting qualified librarians, and adopting digital technologies to enhance the effectiveness of school libraries and support the academic development of students in the district.

Keywords: School libraries, library services, Jalpaiguri district, library infrastructure, library challenges, information resources.

INTRODUCTION

School libraries play a crucial role in the educational system by supporting teaching, learning, and students' overall intellectual development. A well-organized school library provides access to a wide range of information resources, such as books, reference materials, digital content, and other learning aids that cater to the diverse interests and academic needs of students and teachers. These resources help foster reading habits, independent learning and critical thinking among learners. In the modern education system, the school library is no longer considered merely a repository of books; rather, it functions as an essential learning resource center that supports curriculum activities and encourages lifelong learning (IFLA, 2015) [1].

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School libraries contribute significantly to students' academic, social, and cultural development. It provides opportunities for students to explore knowledge beyond the classroom and develop information literacy skills necessary in the information age. According to the IFLA School Library Guidelines, school libraries support the development of students' reading culture and enable them to become informed and responsible citizens by providing equitable access to information resources (IFLA, 2015) [1]. Furthermore, effective school library services help students enhance their research skills, creativity and problem-solving

abilities. Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, the father of library science in India, emphasized the importance of the relationship among users, documents, and staff, often referred to as the “trinity of librarianship.” In this structure, librarians or library staff act as mediators who facilitate access to information and guide users in finding relevant resources. Library staff play an essential role in organizing resources, maintaining collections, and assisting users in fulfilling their information needs (Ranganathan, 1963) [2]. Therefore, the presence of trained library personnel is a key factor in ensuring effective school library functioning.

In addition to human resources, the quality and relevance of library collections are crucial for the effective operation of school libraries. The collection should be regularly updated and developed according to the educational requirements of the institution, considering the recommendations of teachers, students, and librarians. A well-developed collection supports classroom learning and provides students with access to supplementary reading materials that enhance their knowledge and academic performance (Sharma and Tripathi, 2022) [3]. School libraries are important spaces that promote reading culture and intellectual curiosity among students. By providing a comfortable environment for reading and studying, libraries encourage students to develop regular reading habits and engage with various information sources. In the digital era, school libraries are also expected to integrate information and communication technologies (ICT) to facilitate access to electronic resources and digital learning platforms, thereby enhancing the overall educational experience (Ryan, 2018) [4].

Despite the recognized importance of school libraries in the education system, many school libraries, particularly in developing regions, face several challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, lack of professional staff, and limited resources. These challenges often hinder the effective utilization of library services by both students and teachers. Therefore, assessing the current status and functioning of school libraries is essential to identify gaps and develop strategies for improving their services.

Review of Related Literature

A study conducted by Dent (2006) [5] examined the relationships between a few student academic engagement metrics, including academic performance, reading and study habits, and library use patterns, and the existence of libraries at two rural Uganda schools. The study revealed that the existence of a school library influences students’ reading habits, use of materials for extracurricular activities, and academic performance, among other areas. Huysmans et al. (2013) [6] conducted a study on the effects of the Dutch policy program, the library at school, on the reading habits and attitudes of primary school students. For this purpose, a survey was conducted on 284 teachers, reading media consultants, and 4682 students in grades 2 through 6 from 229 classes of 68 schools through online questionnaires in the year 2011-2012. This study revealed that although modestly positive univariate effects were discovered, the impact of school libraries on reading attitudes and leisure reading could not yet be discerned in 2011-2012. Owate and Iroha (2013) [7] examined a study that examines whether secondary school (high school) students can access and use school library resources in Rivers State. The results showed that the majority of secondary schools either had no school library services or none at all. The study found that none of the secondary school libraries satisfied the requirements for officially recognized secondary school libraries. The study also revealed that in cases where libraries were given spaces, the resources inside were not only few but also ill-organized, making it difficult to provide library and information services efficiently.

Moreillon et al. (2014) [8] conducted a study on the Instructional Partner role of educating pre-service school librarians. This mixed-methods case study examined program ranking responses and questionnaires from nine universities and colleges to prepare this candidate for practice. The findings of this case study revealed that the preparation of school librarians involves different priorities and five roles identified by the AASL. The findings of this study suggest that the preparation of pre-service school librarians was not taught with a unified voice. A study conducted by Shenton et al. (2014) [9] examined the goals of school libraries from the perspective of teens enrolled in a northern English high

school. The findings revealed that the school library was often recognized as housing books for both academic and recreational use. Neither the work of librarians nor the importance of libraries in helping users locate information to support their interests was mentioned by any participant. Subramaniam et al. (2015) [10] revealed that in American elementary and secondary schools, school librarians are essential to the learning process for all disciplines, but their potential to advance science has not been fully investigated. They conducted design-based research, where comprehensive and continuous data collection was performed, and the data were regularly evaluated and integrated into the program's iterative design. This study discovered that librarians are a valuable resource for science education because they encourage young people to participate in real-world inquiry activities and connect science to their interests. Loan (2017) [11] studied the tastes and reading habits of teenagers related to literature, as well as the marketing strategies used by authors to get these students to pick up books. This study found that teens of both sexes enjoy reading on electronic media (69% of girls and 65% of boys). Teenagers have a wide range of reading preferences. The most popular literacy genre among red-light responders was fiction, with non-fiction coming in second. That being said, girls seem to like fiction more than boys. Similarly, boys tend to choose non-fiction over fiction.

Tabassum et al. (2019) [12] conducted a study on public high school libraries for girls to highlight the state of those libraries, including their personnel, collection, budget, infrastructure, and information services. The results showed that the general state of school libraries was inadequate. Many obstacles plague libraries, including inadequate staffing, financial constraints, location, and infrastructure problems. It was also discovered that the educational leader of the school had a greater influence over the improved state of the libraries than the economic location of the schools. Hossain (2019) [13] conducted study on examined the current state of Bangladesh's secondary school libraries and librarians. This study found that the lack of governmental and non-governmental initiatives has resulted in a slowdown in the development of libraries and the hiring of skilled school library personnel. When they do exist, school libraries provide very little in the way of resources and assistance, and they are not integrated into the curriculum. Bagdi (2022) [14] studied how library services impact the academic performance of pupils in Bankura, West Bengal, secondary schools. The study found that the academic accomplishment of secondary students in the Bankura District does not exhibit a significant relationship or difference with library service. Chandrashekara (2023) guided a study on the problems facing the information science and library profession in the Mysuru division of school administration. For this purpose, all the school headmasters received a questionnaire to investigate and evaluate the function of school libraries in the execution of inclusive education and determine if there are full-time school librarians and qualified support staff in the school. This study revealed that only 117 of the 764 schools had librarians.

Based on the literature reviewed, it is evident that school libraries face numerous challenges across different regions and educational levels in India. Studies reveal that while some school libraries, such as those in developed countries, may have a positive impact on students' reading habits and educational outcomes, others, particularly in developing regions, struggle with inadequate resources, poor infrastructure, and lack of professional staffing. There is a consistent theme of underutilization of school libraries, with many students and teachers not fully benefiting from the resources available, if they exist. Additionally, the role of school librarians in supporting educational outcomes, especially in specific fields such as science, is often underexplored and undervalued. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to enhance the effectiveness of school libraries, ensure equitable access to resources, and integrate library services into the educational process.

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The school library system plays a critical role in supporting educational outcomes by providing students and teachers access to a wide range of learning resources. However, the status of school libraries in many regions, including the Jalpaiguri District of West Bengal, remains unexplored. There is growing concern that these libraries may be under-resourced, inadequately staffed, or not fully integrated into the educational process, thereby limiting their effectiveness. This study investigates the

current status of school library systems and services in the Jalpaiguri District, identifies the challenges they face, and explores potential improvements that can be made to enhance their contribution to student learning and development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Every study has particular aims and objectives. The major aim of this study is to comprehensively evaluate school library systems and services in higher secondary schools within the Jalpaiguri District of West Bengal. Through this evaluation, this study intends to identify areas for improvement and provide recommendations for enhancing the overall effectiveness and accessibility of school library services. Notably, to achieve these goals, the researcher makes some specific objectives, which are as follows:

1. To examine the availability of reading materials and collection development practices in school libraries in the Jalpaiguri District.
2. To investigate the physical infrastructure and overall facilities of school libraries in Jalpaiguri District.
3. To assess the availability and role of library staff in managing school library services.
4. This study aimed to identify the challenges faced by librarians in managing school libraries and understand students' expectations from their school libraries.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey method to collect relevant data regarding the status and functioning of school libraries in Jalpaiguri Municipality, West Bengal. A structured questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire was designed to gather information on various aspects of school library services, including the availability of reading materials, infrastructure, staffing, library usage, and challenges faced in managing library services. The target population of the study comprised senior secondary schools located within the Jalpaiguri Municipality, West Bengal. Initially, the researcher intended to include all schools in the Jalpaiguri District as the overall population. However, owing to limitations of time, resources, and feasibility, conducting the study across the entire district was not possible. Therefore, a sample of 18 schools within the Jalpaiguri Municipality was selected for this study.

During the field investigation, it was observed that only nine out of the 18 schools had functioning library facilities, while the remaining schools did not have any organized library system. Consequently, the scope of the study was limited to these nine schools with operational libraries (Table 1). The researcher personally visited each selected school library to administer the questionnaire and collect the necessary data from the librarians or responsible staff members. Personal visits also helped the researcher observe the physical infrastructure and general conditions of the libraries. The collected data were analyzed manually using simple descriptive techniques such as classification and tabulation to interpret the findings and evaluate the overall status of school library services in the study area.

Table 1. List of survey school.

S.N.	Name of school	Location	Year of established
1	Central Girls' High School	Ukil Para, Jalpaiguri	1954
2	Fanindra Deb Institution	Babu Para Road, Jalpaiguri	1917
3	Ananda Model High School	Nutan Para, Jalpaiguri	1922
4	Begam Fayzannessa Balika Bidyalaya (H.S)	Bose Para, Jalpaiguri	1950
5	Deshbandhu Nagar Girls' High School	Ward No-14, Jalpaiguri	1964
6	Deshbandhu Nagar Madhyamik Vidyalaya (H.S)	Ward NO-14, Jalpaiguri	1964
7	Jalpaiguri High Secondary School	Jayanti Para, Jalpaiguri	1959
8	Sonali Girls' High School	Tumol Road, Jalpaiguri	1954
9	Sunitibala Sadar Girls' High School	Ward No-5, Jalpaiguri	1871

DATA ANALYSIS

Profile of the Surveyed School Libraries

In Jalpaiguri, a district in West Bengal, there are approximately 11 administrative blocks, with all schools distributed across these blocks. For this study, the researcher focused specifically on higher secondary schools within the Jalpaiguri municipality in India. Of the total 18 schools in this area, half (nine schools) participated in the research, resulting in a 50% response rate. The other half (nine schools) did not respond, reflecting a 50% non-response rate.

Analysis of library collections across various schools revealed notable differences in resource availability. As shown in Table 2, Sunitibala Sadar Girls' High School stands out with a significantly large collection of text and reference books, totalling 6,174, while lacking newspapers, magazines, and maps. In contrast, Deshbandhu Nagar Madhyamik Vidyalaya (H.S) has a substantial number of text and reference books at 1,917, but does not have newspapers or maps. Ananda Model High School has a diverse collection of 1,250 text and reference books, three newspapers, 40 magazines, and three maps, indicating a well-rounded resource base.

Jalpaiguri High Secondary School offers a robust collection of 1,300 text and reference books and has a considerable number of maps (30), but only a few newspapers and magazines. Central Girls' High School and Fanindra Deb Institution provide a smaller range of resources, with Central Girls' having 355 text and reference books and no magazines or maps, while Fanindra Deb Institution has 520 text and reference books and two magazines, but no maps.

Deshbandhu Nagar Girls' High School has a relatively modest collection of 40 text and reference books and 20 magazines, but only one newspaper and no maps. Sonali Girls' High School maintains a small collection of 250 text and reference books and 25 maps, but only one newspaper and no magazines. Begam Fayzannessa Balika Bidyalaya (H. S.) has a limited range of resources with 550 text and reference books and 25 maps, but no newspapers or magazines.

Rare/Valuable Collections

A survey of rare collections across various schools reveals a clear disparity in the availability of unique and valuable resources. Table 3 shows that Central Girls' High School houses notable rare collections, including the *North Bengal Explora*, *Pabitra Bibel*, and *Mahabharata*, highlighting its commitment to preserving significant historical and cultural texts. The Fanindra Deb Institution also boasts rare items such as the 9th edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and *Puthi*, indicating a focus on historically important and educational materials. Similarly, Ananda Model High School possesses rare works such as *The Discovery of India*, *Sanchayita*, and *The Indian Struggle 1920-1942* by Subhas Chandra Bose, showcasing its collection of influential historical and political texts.

Available Library Collections

Table 2. Library collections of selected school libraries in Jalpaiguri.

S.N.	Name of school	Text + reference book	Newspaper	Magazine	Maps
1	Central Girls' High School	355	1	Nil	Nil
2	Fanindra Deb Institution	520	1	2	Nil
3	Ananda Model High School	1250	3	40	3
4	Begam Fayzannessa Balika Bidyalaya (H.S)	550	Nil	Nil	25
5	Deshbandhu Nagar Girls' High School	40	1	20	Nil
6	Deshbandhu Nagar Madhyamik Vidyalaya (H.S)	1917	2	Nil	Nil
7	Jalpaiguri High Secondary School	1300	2	10	30
8	Sonali Girls' High School	250	1	Nil	25
9	Sunitibala Sadar Girls' High School	6174	Nil	Nil	Nil

Table 3. Available rare collections.

S.N.	Name of school	Rare collection	Specifications
1	Central Girls' High School	Yes	North Bengal Explora, Pabitra Bibel, Mahabharata
2	Fanindra Deb Institution	Yes	9 th edition of Encyclopedia Britanika, Puthi
3	Ananda Model High School	Yes	The Discovery of India, Sanchayita, The Indian Struggle 1920-1942 by SUBhas Ch. Bose
4	Begam Fayzannessa Balika Bidyalaya (H.S)	No	Nil
5	Deshbandhu Nagar Girls' High School	No	Nil
6	Deshbandhu Nagar Madhyamik Vidyalaya (H.S)	No	Nil
7	Jalpaiguri High Secondary School	No	Nil
8	Sonali Girls' High School	No	Nil
9	Sunitibala Sadar Girls' High School	No	Nil

Table 4. Available infrastructure in the schools.

S.N.	Name of school	Library building	Area (Sq. ft.) approx
1	Central Girls' High School	Shared	322
2	Fanindra Deb Institution	Shared	308
3	Ananda Model High School	Shared	300
4	Begam Fayzannessa Balika Bidyalaya (H.S)	Shared	150
5	Deshbandhu Nagar Girls' High School	Shared	400
6	Deshbandhu Nagar Madhyamik Vidyalaya (H.S)	Shared	600
7	Jalpaiguri High Secondary School	Shared	300
8	Sonali Girls' High School	Shared	150
9	Sunitibala Sadar Girls' High School	Shared	1200

In contrast, Begam Fayzannessa Balika Bidyalaya (H.S), Deshbandhu Nagar Girls' High School, Deshbandhu Nagar Madhyamik Vidyalaya (H.S), Jalpaiguri High Secondary School, Sonali Girls' High School, and Sunitibala Sadar Girls' High School do not have any rare collections, reflecting a lack of unique historical or special-interest materials in these institutions. This variability in rare collections highlights a significant gap in the preservation and accessibility of unique educational resources across schools.

Library Infrastructure

The analysis of library building spaces across various schools revealed a range of sizes, all classified as shared facilities. As shown in Table 4, Sunitibala Sadar Girls' High School has the largest library space at approximately 1,200 square feet, indicating a substantial area that may support a more extensive collection and a larger number of users. Deshbandhu Nagar Madhyamik Vidyalaya (H.S) follows with a significant area of 600 square feet, which can accommodate a sizable collection and multiple functions within the library.

Deshbandhu Nagar Girls' High School also provides a relatively spacious library of 400 square feet, offering ample room for its users to study. In contrast, Fanindra Deb Institution and Central Girls' High School have smaller library spaces of approximately 308 and 322 square feet, respectively, which may limit their capacity compared with larger facilities. Ananda Model High School and Jalpaiguri High Secondary School each have library areas of approximately 300 square feet, reflecting moderate space availability. Begam Fayzannessa Balika Bidyalaya (H. S.) and Sonali Girls' High School have the smallest library spaces, at 150 square feet each, which might restrict the scope of their library services and resources.

Table 5. Library technical processing.

S.N.	Name of school	Scheme	Cataloguing code	Book arrangement	Stoke classification verification
1	Central Girls' High School	No	No	Subject Wise	Yes
2	Fanindra Deb Institution	DDC	AACR - 2	Accession No	Yes
3	Ananda Model High School	No	No	Accession No	Yes
4	Begam Fayzannessa Balika Bidyalaya (H.S)	No	No	Subject wise	No
5	Deshbandhu Nagar Girls' High School	No	No	Subject wise	No
6	Deshbandhu Nagar Madhyamik Vidyalaya (H.S)	DDC	No	Subject wise & class wise	Yes
7	Jalpaiguri High Secondary School	No	No	Subject wise	Yes
8	Sonali Girls' High School	No	No	Subject wise	Yes
9	Sunitibala Sadar Girls' High School	No	No	Subject wise	Yes

Library Technical Processing

Library technical processing practices across different schools exhibit a range of approaches to classification, cataloguing, and book arrangement. Table 5 shows that the Fanindra Deb Institution utilizes the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system and the AACR-2 cataloguing code, with books arranged by accession number, and conducts stock verification. This reflects a systematic approach to the organization and management of library resources. Deshbandhu Nagar Madhyamik Vidyalaya (H.S) also employs the DDC system but does not use a cataloguing code. Books are arranged both subject-wise and class-wise, and stock verification is conducted, indicating a robust method of organization.

Central Girls' High School, Ananda Model High School, Jalpaiguri High Secondary School, Sonali Girls' High School, and Sunitibala Sadar Girls' High School do not use formal classification schemes or cataloguing codes. These schools arrange their books subject-wise and conduct stock verification, showing a basic yet functional system for managing their collections. Begam Fayzannessa Balika Bidyalaya (H.S) and Deshbandhu Nagar Girls' High School also do not use classification schemes or cataloguing codes, arranging books subject-wise but do not conduct stock verification. This might suggest less systematic management of library resources than others.

Information Technology

The analysis of information technology resources across schools shows a significant lack of digital infrastructure. None of the schools—Central Girls' High School, Fanindra Deb Institution, Ananda Model High School, Begam Fayzannessa Balika Bidyalaya (H.S), Deshbandhu Nagar Girls' High School, Deshbandhu Nagar Madhyamik Vidyalaya (H.S), Jalpaiguri High Secondary School, Sonali Girls' High School, and Sunitibala Sadar Girls' High School—have access to computers, Internet connectivity, scanners, or library automation systems. This absence of technological resources indicates a significant gap in the ability to utilize modern information and communication technologies for library management and student support in the region. Consequently, these schools may face challenges in efficiently managing library operations, providing digital resources, and supporting students' information needs in the digital age.

Challenges faced by the Librarian/library in-charge

At the end of the survey, the researcher asked an open-ended question regarding the problems they faced in managing the school library system. Interestingly, it has been observed that all 9 librarian/library-in-charge indicated some significant issues which barriers for managing school libraries.

Lack of Administrative Support

Administrative support is essential for the development and smooth functioning of library services. In many institutions, library activities are not given adequate importance by administrative authorities. Consequently, decisions related to library development, resource acquisition, and technological advancement are often delayed or ignored. This lack of institutional support limits librarians' ability to implement modern library practices and improve services for users.

Lack of Space

Space constraints are common issues in many libraries. Insufficient space affects the proper arrangement of books, reading areas and digital resources. Many libraries do not have adequate seating capacity, separate reading rooms, or dedicated sections for different types of material. Limited space also restricts the expansion of collections and the introduction of new services, such as digital learning spaces or multimedia sections.

Financial Constraints

Adequate funding is necessary for acquiring books, journals, electronic resources, and modern technologies. However, many libraries suffer from insufficient financial support issues. Due to limited budgets, librarians cannot regularly update collections or subscribe to important academic resources. Financial constraints also affect infrastructure development and staff training.

Lack of Professional Skills

In some cases, librarians or library staff may lack the updated professional skills required for modern library management. Rapid technological developments in library and information science require continuous professional development. Without proper training in digital tools, automation systems, and information management techniques, librarians may face difficulties in providing efficient services to their patrons.

Shortage of Professional Staff

Another major problem is the shortage of qualified library staff members. Many libraries operate with minimal personnel, which increases the workload of librarians. A lack of professional staff affects cataloguing, classification, circulation services and user assistance. Consequently, the efficiency and overall quality of library services are reduced.

Non-interest of Readers

Declining reader interest in traditional library use is also a challenge. With the increasing availability of information on the Internet and digital platforms, many students and users prefer online sources to visiting libraries. This shift in user behavior reduces library footfall and affects the relevance of traditional library services in the digital age.

Lack of Proper Infrastructure

Proper infrastructure is necessary to create a conducive learning environment in libraries. However, many libraries lack essential facilities, such as adequate lighting, ventilation, Internet connectivity, and modern furniture. Poor infrastructure negatively impacts both library staff and users, making it difficult to maintain effective learning spaces.

Technophobia

Technophobia, or fear of using modern technology, is another challenge faced by some librarians and library staff members. The transition from traditional library systems to automated and digital environments requires confidence and training in the use of technological tools. Without adequate technological exposure, librarians may hesitate to adopt new systems, such as library automation software, digital catalogues, or online databases.

Inadequate Library Collection

A well-developed library collection is essential for meeting users' academic and informational needs. However, many libraries suffer from inadequate and outdated collections and limited budgets. Owing to financial constraints or poor collection development policies, libraries may fail to acquire relevant and updated materials. This affects the library's ability to effectively support teaching, learning, and research activities.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Another question was asked of the librarians/library in-charges of the selected school libraries, who provided various suggestions. Based on their input, as well as the survey findings and discussion, the following recommendations are proposed for improving school libraries in the Jalpaiguri District:

- Increase the variety and quantity of books across different subjects to meet students' diverse interests and academic needs. Consider conducting regular surveys to keep the collection relevant and up to date.
- Invest in upgrading the physical aspects of the library, including better shelving, improved lighting, and comfortable furniture. The library should be well-maintained and welcoming.
- The collection of newspapers and magazines should be expanded to include more titles and cover a wider range of topics. This will help students stay informed and support their research and learning efforts.
- Designate and furnish separate rooms for group studies and collaborative work. Ensure that it is equipped with the necessary resources, such as whiteboards, projectors, and comfortable seating.
- Automation systems for cataloguing, checking out books, and managing inventory are introduced. This will streamline operations, improve efficiency, and provide students with better access to digital resources.
- Review and adjust the library's working hours to better align with students' schedules and needs. Consider extending hours during peak study periods, such as during exams.
- Reevaluate and improve seating arrangements to increase comfort and capacity of the space. Ensure that seating areas are conducive to both individual and group studies.
- Increasing awareness of available library services and resources through marketing and outreach. Workshops or training sessions should be hosted to familiarize students with library offerings and how to utilize them effectively.
- Regularly gather feedback from students to identify their ongoing needs and preferences. This input can be used to continuously adapt and improve library services and resources.
- It is recommended that every school have a dedicated librarian, and in cases where the library collection or student population is large, at least one additional support staff member should be employed to ensure effective library management.
- The introduction of information and communication technologies has caused a significant shift in students' reading preferences. Multimedia resources should be kept up to date in the library to meet students' needs. The Internet is a requirement for school libraries to provide pupils access to multimedia resources. Funding shortages prevent school libraries from purchasing large quantities of books. The National Digital Library (NDL) initiative was launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) as part of its National Mission on Education via Information and Communication Technology. NDL users can access educational materials ranging from primary to postgraduate levels. Therefore, if school libraries have access to the Internet, they may readily provide their students with a vast library of literature.

CONCLUSION

A school library is an essential component that supports learning, encourages pupils to read for pleasure, and ignites their creative potential. School Library Standards serve as a benchmark for assessing the state of libraries and offer guidance on certain activities that can be implemented to improve them. In practically every nation on earth, adherence to standards is a prevalent practice. The Mudaliar Commission (1953) was the first in India to shed light on school libraries and offer

recommendations for their advancement. However, India did not have a standard that was being followed. The situation is the same in our state and district (Jalpaiguri). As a result of inadequate facilities and services, pupils suffered.

The current study shows that there is variation among the school libraries in Jalpaiguri with respect to infrastructure, procurement policy, organization, and services. Most school libraries lack adequate infrastructure, which is concerning. Notably, 44% of schools do not have a librarian. As a result of all schools operating without any support personnel, the librarian is left to handle all library services independently. The lack of a distinct reading room in school libraries means that pupils cannot use the resources provided by reading rooms. The main issue facing all of Jalpaiguri's school libraries is the lack of sufficient document collection. Among the nine schools, none had a library committee, a computer, or a reprographic service offered by the library.

The survey revealed significant areas for improvement in the library's resources and services. While students generally appreciate the book collection and library infrastructure, there is a strong consensus on the need to expand the book collection and enhance the physical facilities. The demand for more newspapers and magazines, as well as a separate discussion room, highlights students' desire for a more comprehensive and versatile library environment. The introduction of automation and adjustments to library working hours also reflect a push towards modernizing and improving accessibility. Overall, these findings underscore the need for targeted enhancements to better support students' academic and research needs.

The study revealed several pressing issues within the school library system in Jalpaiguri, such as inadequate staffing, insufficient resources, and outdated material. These challenges hinder the effective utilization of libraries as vital educational tools. In light of these findings, this study strongly recommends that the West Bengal government prioritize the recruitment of qualified school librarians. Librarians play a crucial role in fostering information literacy and supporting students and teachers in their academic endeavors. Furthermore, the government should increase funding specifically earmarked for the development and modernization of school libraries, including acquiring new books, digital resources, and infrastructure improvements. These actions are essential for revitalizing the school library system and ensuring that students have access to the knowledge and resources they need to succeed in the 21st-century learning environment.

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