

Subject: Library and Information Science

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Paper No : 11 Academic Libraries

Module : 18 Academic Library System: Objectives and Functions of School Libraries



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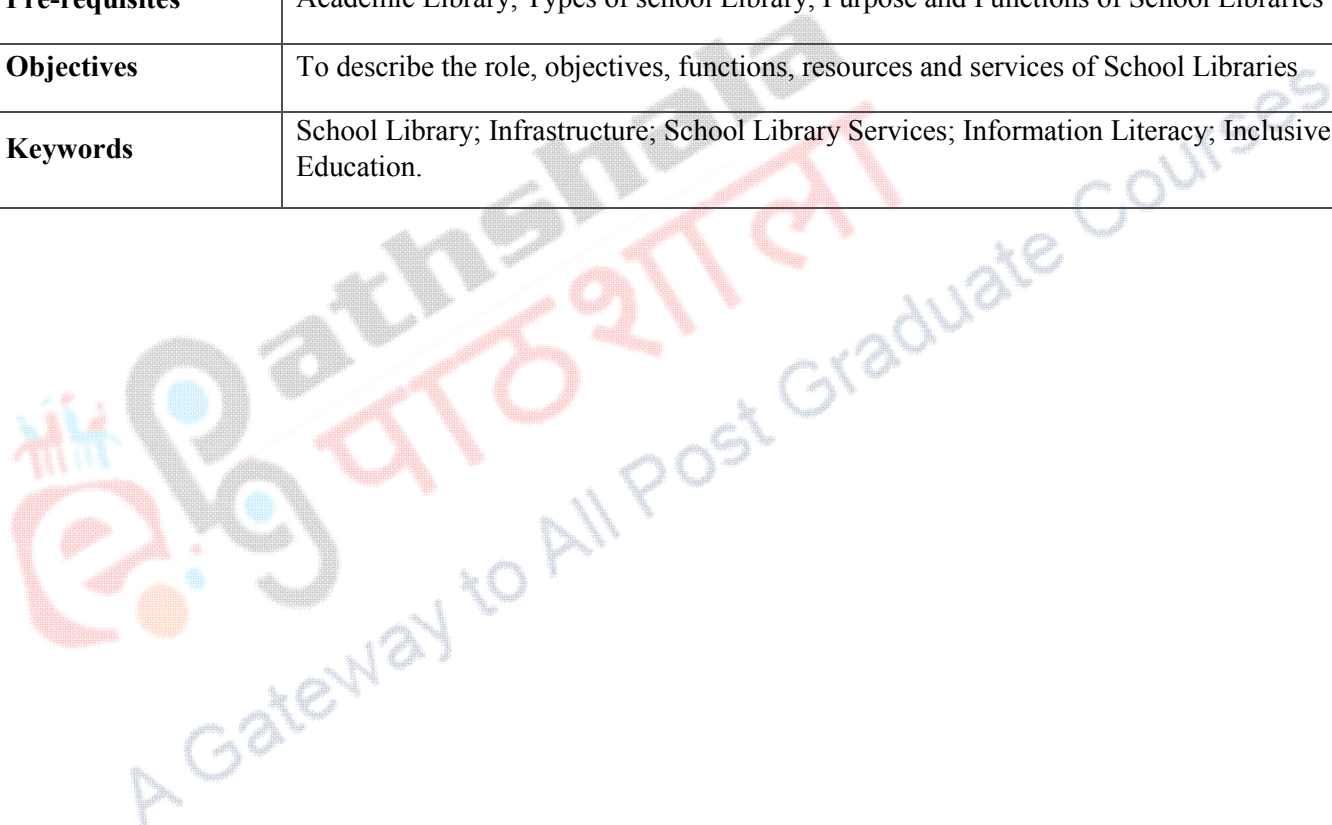
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Description of Module	
Subject Name	Library and Information Science
Paper Name	11 Academic Libraries
Module Name/Title	Academic Library System: Objectives and Functions of School Libraries
Module Id	LIS/AL-A/18
Pre-requisites	Academic Library, Types of school Library, Purpose and Functions of School Libraries
Objectives	To describe the role, objectives, functions, resources and services of School Libraries
Keywords	School Library; Infrastructure; School Library Services; Information Literacy; Inclusive Education.



1. Introduction:

Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body ----- Sir Richard Steel.

Academic institution is of utmost importance for every country as it forges way for development and progress, and moulds the mindset of people to look forward towards



modernity and Cultural Revolution. Every academic institution has an important role to play. School, the cornerstone of academia, is perhaps the most indispensable place to intellectual progress, and a minor setback or ineffectuality in dispensing basic education can wreck and mar an entire generation.

2. School Library:

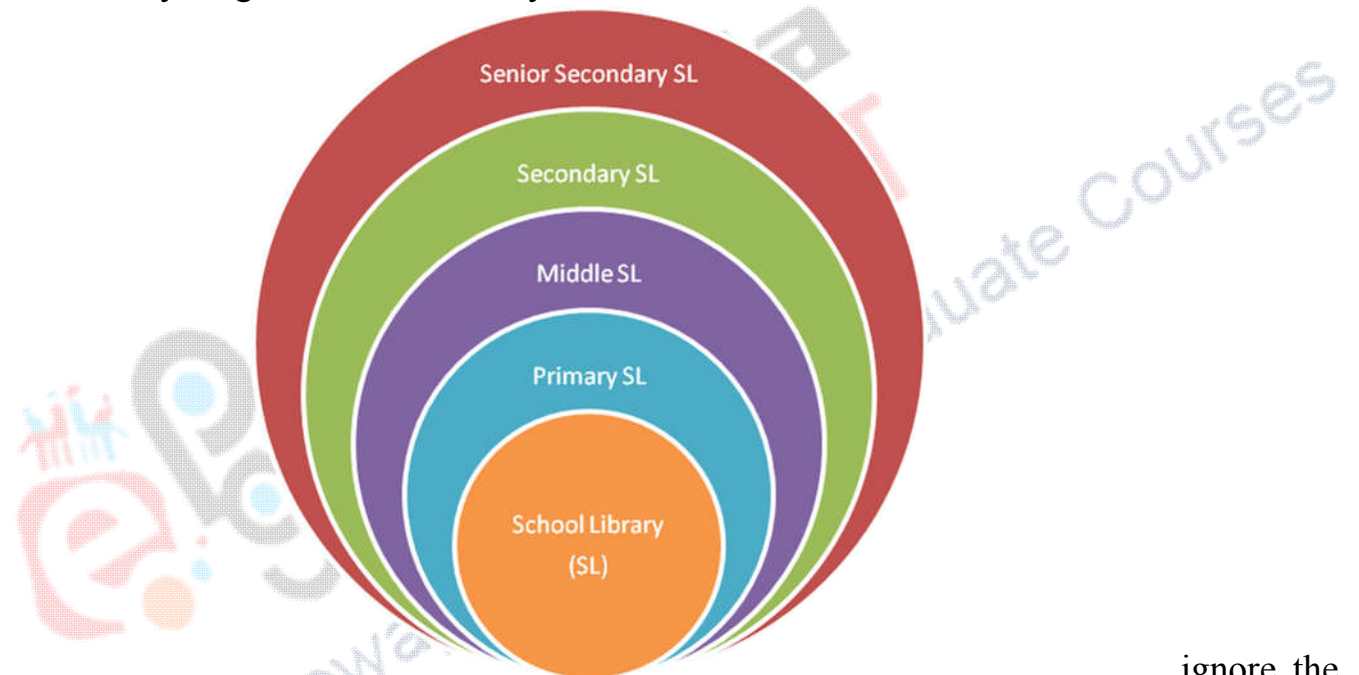
Every school is a teaching learning centre which is incomplete without a library. It facilitates to provide resources for classroom teaching making it more and more effective and innovative. The services of a school library must be available to the entire school community regardless of nationality, gender, race, religion, caste and creed. It



must cater to different intellectual pools and various interests of its users. It is the flesh and blood of every academic institution. However, more than half the schools in our country make do without the services of library or in some cases they have a small repository of books in disorganised manner, and even many of them, without library professional. No effort or time is devoted to inculcating reading habits in schools.

2.1 Types of School Library:

At school level- either primary or secondary- proper library facilities are essential to nurture young minds. Library works as a nation builder. One cannot



ignore the importance and significant role of school libraries in extending classroom teaching, guiding teachers and students, providing relevant literature to them, helping them in selecting recreational material, supporting them in preparing projects, models, etc. Hence, school is the right place for multidimensional development which can only be achieved through a library.

‘Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act’ is an Indian legislation, passed by the Parliament of India which states that every child is entitled to free



primary and secondary education. But there is a discrepancy between the law and its implementation as indicated in ‘Census of India’ by the number of drop-outs in this age group. Who takes responsibility for the inefficaciousness of the law?

In a school, teacher as well as librarian can help a child realize his passions and dreams and nudges him on to fulfil them. He inculcates a sense of responsibility and reliance in his ward so as he can work diligently towards a better future for himself.

3. Definition of School Library:

"The only thing you absolutely have to know is the location of the library." ---
Albert Einstein

According to Harrod’s Librarians Glossary, academic libraries are “those of universities, polytechnics, colleges, schools and all other institutions forming part of, or associated with, educational institutions”. It further defines school library as “an organized collection of books placed in a school for the use of teachers of pupils, but usually for pupils. It may comprise books of reference and/or books for home reading, and be in the care of a professional librarian, teacher, or teacher-librarian. Variously called an Instructional Material Centre, a Learning Resources Centre or a Media Centre”



“No school can function without a good library which will be the hub of the intellectual and literary activities of the school and play the same role as a laboratory or workshop plays in a science or technical institution” (Secondary Education Commission, India, 1952-53, Appointed by Ministry of Education). “A school library is the most strategic point in an institution and it compensates for poor or bad teaching” (B.S. Kesvan). According to IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto, “the school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today's information and knowledge-based society. The school library equips students with life-long learning skills and develops the imagination enabling them to live as responsible citizens”.



According to National Curriculum Framework (2005) of the National Council of Educational Research and Training, India, ‘The school library should be conceptualized as an intellectual space where teachers, children and members of the community can expect to find the means to deepen their knowledge and imagination’ (http://schoollibraries.in/school_libraries_project.html accessed on 29-12-13). Thus, school library cultivates students to become responsible and socially conscious citizens with a stake in the progress of their community. Dr. Ranganathan hailed school library as ‘A Live Workshop’.

4. Purpose of School Library:

I cannot live without books----- Thomas Jefferson

Following are the major purposes of school libraries:

- To inculcate the habit of reading among children;
- To provide documents to supplement teaching and learning;
- To motivate students towards learning new things;
- To provide them with comfortable furniture conducive to learning;
- To provide guidance to them in every sphere of their life;
- To sensitize them towards social issues of the country so as to shape a civil and altruistic outlook;
- To provide light reading material for recreational purposes;
- To help them in becoming creative writers as well as critical thinkers;
- To provide advanced books to bright students;

- To encourage them to use e-documents while facilitating e-learning;
- To assist them in finding relevant information towards making them independent learners.
- To be the hub of cultural, traditional and intellectual activities;

5. Functions and Services provided by School Library:

- Selecting, acquiring, processing, maintaining and disseminating library collection;
- Providing Current Awareness Service;
- Application of ICT in Library;
- Bulletin board;
- New Arrival Corner;
- Preparing and displaying news clipping and bulletin;
- Lending services to staff as well as students;
- Preparing and implementing Library Rules;
- Initiate Information Literacy Programmes e.g. InfoLit India;
- Preparing budget;
- Stock rectification and verification;
- Preparing special programmes and services for vacations;
- Reference services e.g. Ask a Librarian;
- Guidance to staff as well as students in selecting and finding documents;

6. Types of Reading Material in School Library:

Following is the list of documents generally available in a school library:

- Reference books- Dictionaries, Encyclopaedias, etc;
- Recreational books;
- Inspirational books like Biographies and autobiographies;

- Books with illustrations;
- Adventure and travel books;
- Classics;
- Braille and sound books;
- Audio-visual collection in CD-ROMs and DVDs;
- E-resources like e-books, e-journals etc.
- Maps, charts, models, atlases;
- Popular fiction.

7. Activities Conducted in School Library:

‘The school library should be conceived as the training ground for nourishing library habit in each student by actual practice. The school librarian should device various methods for attracting students to the library and making them read books with pleasure and profit (Dr. Ranganathan in ‘New education and school library’)’. Some of the activities are listed below:

- Formation of book club;
- Quiz competitions;
- Declamation and debate competitions;
- Story writing competitions;
- Vocabulary and word finding games;
- Library week celebrations;
- Celebrating all the festivals in the region while making a special corner of books depicting it;
- Play-way methods to develop skills in time management, communication, etiquettes and manners;
- Story telling;
- Spelling Bee/contest;
- To encourage students to write book reviews;

- To celebrate special days i.e. World Book Day, International Literacy Day, Environmental Day, etc.

8. Information Literacy (IL):

Information Literacy is the ability to define one's information needs and then to access, process and use the retrieved information strategically for obtaining one's personal, professional and educational goals. It must lead the stakeholders from learning to understanding and from understanding to action. Unfortunately, the concept and practice of IL has not gained ground at grass root levels in the developing countries (Lecture by Prof. Jagtar Singh, PUP).

The US Presidential Committee on Information Literacy defined information literacy as “a set of skills, which require an individual to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information”.

InfoLit India is a pilot project on Information Literacy for new generation learners to make them effective users of information available in any format. The project is aimed at developing the essential 21st century literacy skills (Information, Media and Library) through a number of pre-planned technical sessions/activities/programmes, which will make them expert users of information available in any format and become lifelong learners. This project is for the students of Kendriya Vidyalaya Pattom, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India, in which they learn through instruction, training and research. The project is conceived on a basic information literacy curriculum developed according to the needs of students in an Indian education environment (<http://infolitindia.org/>). This is a beacon of hope and a reference point for schools all over the country to guide young minds to become info-literates.

9. Components of Library:

Library is a trinity of Readers, Staff and Documents, which are the three essential components that imbricate to function efficiently. New documents must be added regularly to meet the users' demands. Apart from this, innovative library staff can reach out to readers, pursuing them to become members of library.

9.1. Readers:

Reader is the backbone of every library. Without him, existence of library is in threat. In a school, its students and staff are its users. In most of the private schools, there's a weekly library period that allows students to issue and renew books from the school library thereby inculcating reading habits



among them. Students should also be trained to peruse and sift through information in a library and also be taught basic skills of information technology that can prove useful in locating documents, books and magazine, etc.

9.2. Staff:

Competent staff is the hallmark of an excellent library. Library professional bridges the gap between user and information. Trained library staff provides and interprets material to meet informational, cultural, recreational or educational needs of its users. Now the librarian is not a mere custodian, but he's also an information scientist. He is a leader of innovative ideas who understands the mechanism of a library and works towards improving its potential. Besides, administrative functions related to staff, building, finance, and collection, he is also responsible for satisfying his patrons and meeting their informational requisites.



At school level, intelligent and tech-savvy library professionals with high social and intrapersonal skills should be selected as they have to deal with motley of users, ranging from primary kids to young adults. He should strive to create a relaxed environment favourable to reading and learning. The greatest task of a librarian is to convert a potential user into a regular user. A proactive library professional can also help teachers to plan creative and entertaining modules that will improve the overall quality of teaching. Collaboration between teachers and librarians can affect teaching and learning in classes. He is a real asset to a school, if enthused and motivated to work competently.

9.3. Resources:

A vibrant collection of books speaks volumes and attracts more and more readers. Users visit a library to consult, use and borrow reading material. A library without adequate and update resources will be of mere archival value. Hence, it is incumbent on a library to replenish its depository of print books and e-documents at regular intervals and it should also take out subscriptions to prominent newspapers, magazines and journals.



Every library serves to a specific clientele. For example, a school library houses dictionaries, popular fiction, self-help books and other documents with illustrations. Charts, globes, maps, atlases, classics, text books, general books, magazines, story books, popular children series, etc. are also made available. A trained library professional can also avail e-resources and provide digital information to the members of the library.



10. Infrastructure:

A school library without proper infrastructure defeats its purpose. From stacks to chairs, tables and step stool, etc. every item should be selected according to the age and height

of its users. Improper selection of furniture is adequately depicted in the following picture:



Moreover, for primary school library, furniture as well as the interior of its building should be aesthetically attractive and vivid so that it can offer an energetic and interesting environment to its users. Pictures of popular cartoon characters, quotations, etc. can also be painted on library walls.



Separate building, fully equipped with proper lighting, heating, cooling, drinking water facility, adequate space for library staff with essential infrastructure to perform their jobs, proper space for stack area, adequate sitting arrangements for students as well as for faculty, seminar room, audio visual room with latest technology are some of the necessities to establish an excellent library.



11. Finance and Budget of School Libraries:

“Several education committees and commissions were set up in the past, but unfortunately school libraries were not given due importance. There are states in which school libraries simply don’t exist. This has somehow impeded the process making education available to all. We are yet to achieve the goal of UEE (Universalisation of Elementary Education), which is a constitutional obligation” (http://schoollibraries.in/school_libraries_project.html accessed on 29-12-13). In India, there is still lack of implementation of rules on determining the finance of a school library. School libraries are at the mercy of government or school management and most of them have no will to spend on school library. Most of the recommendations regarding school libraries are still only on paper and hence there is an urgent need to carry them out.

12. School Library - Best Place for Inculcating Reading Habits:

I have always imagined paradise as a kind of library----- Jorge Louis Borges



Habits, acquired early on become a way of life. Hence habits like reading, writing, running, etc. must be encouraged in the formative years of an individual.

Reading offers a vivid adventure, one that can be lived, experienced and savoured to the fullest through literature. It opens new avenues and opportunities, brings together cultures and traditions, overcomes religious and national boundaries, and distils the history of mankind for careful scrutiny. In today's stressful world, although technology has geographically connected people, yet their immanent differences and superfluous traits often re-emerge to create discord and misunderstandings. Reading culture can protect us from the negatives of globalization and modernity. A constant and conscious reader always understands the fact that, on the surface people might be different, but intrinsically we all deal with similar problems and issues.



In our country, popularizing literature has not gathered momentum till date, and consequently, schools fall short in producing avid readers who spend time on critical thinking, analysing and assimilating knowledge. School libraries are expected to take responsibility of building a platform where students can identify their interests by providing them miniscule hardcover or paperback weapons to take any challenge head on. Libraries should take initiatives like forming book clubs, inviting writers to speak on their books, putting up book reviews on the notice board, and publishing a literary journal to tap the interests and curiosity of young minds.

13. Inclusive Education:

In national curricular framework, Inclusive Education aims at admitting children to the same school irrespective of caste, creed, color, intellectual and physical disabilities, economic insufficiency, lack of skills and capabilities, sensorial inadequacies, cultural differences etc. and educating them together. In this direction, school library should also sensitize itself by equipping with lifts in building, wheelchair to negotiate stairs, braille dots, sound books, text to speech devices, speech synthesizer, laser cane, Mowat sensor, page turners, calculators, language boards, spell check, semantic organizers and many similar ones.

14. Application of ICT in School Libraries:

School libraries should be automated and also be equipped with e-resources and digital availability of information. Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), web enabled OPAC, regularly updated website of school library are the basic necessities to cope with the present modern IT society.



School library, rendering traditional services only, is going to be declared obsolete in the 21st century. To survive and thrive, it must acclimatize itself to technological advancements in the field of ICT. Availability of e-resources and documents online will not only quicken the effectiveness and pace of dispensing services, but it will also result in simplification of organizing and classifying data. Students demand library services without the limitations of space and time which can only be met through e-library.



Access to information is more important than ownership. Libraries take pride in providing information to their users at a lightning fast speed which can only be possible online, through e-resources and digital documents. Hence, it is imperative for a library

to be fully equipped with latest infrastructure and technology to make the experiencing of browsing books and documents merely a click away.

15.Summary:

School is a temple of education and learning. In western countries, school library is not only treated like royalty but is also an agent that strengthens the objectives and aims of a school. In India, the immense importance and significance of school library has just been realized and efforts are being made by concerned authorities to change the nature of school library from a passive to a more active front in the education of young minds. Education has taken a backseat in the chaos of our country's political reformation and turmoil. But, it must be understood seriously that only the first step has been taken, still an entire journey to tread.

References of Pictures:

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