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Information Literacy of Mysore South Block Students: Status and Perceptions

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Abstract

The present study attempts to explore and analyses the role of the school library in reinforcing inclusive education. School library is essential to the growing children as it motivates the inner strength of the younger minds. This paper looks at the perceptions of the secondary school students towards utilizing the school library in Mysore South Block. During the preparation of this paper, an attempt was made to collect the required data from all available sources. The study uses sampled secondary school students in Mysore South Block. The questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. 200 questionnaires were distributed among secondary school students for collecting relevant data. The study discovers that changing the ICT environment has affected the information-seeking behavior of students and henceforth Professional Librarians should initiate an Information Literacy program to make the students and teachers aware of the library resources and services. This paper advocates that the school library professionals reflect on changes in the library environment and more assistance from the Professional Librarian can significantly change students' perceptions about utilizing the school library.

Keywords: School library, Status, Perceptions, Information literacy, ICT skills, Mysore south, Mysuru.

Introduction

Education is one of the most important weapons in a country. To transform education into an instrument we can use for the development of the school library. The school library exemplifies the voyage transverse and exhibits the hidden talent and literary skills of the students. Even in a school with shrinking resources for students, libraries are the backbone of students around the school. For children with hungry imaginations, retirees with newfound time on their hands, and neighborhoods in need of meeting space, the school library is an invaluable, irreplaceable resource. It's not just about books, though of course books are a big part of the magic.

The School library is committed to giving its students a solid foundation in a nurturing environment, the environment that will facilitate their natural potential to unfold and make learning a pleasurable experience. Character building by instilling the qualities of initiative, drive, and leadership amongst the students has always been the focus and is done through reading several characters and understanding diversified activities so that the students fit effectively into any walk of public life. Indeed, the school library always serves as a beacon of light, guiding the destiny of its students as it continues its pursuit of excellence and in the fulfillment of the school motto.

Objectives of the Study

The core purpose of the study is to unearth the status of secondary school libraries in the Mysore South Block. The other objectives are:

- To identify the status of secondary school libraries in Mysore south block
- To assess the library services of the secondary school libraries

- To put forward suggestions as remedial measures for upgrading the status of secondary school libraries

Hypotheses

- The growth of library collection is directly related to the extended use of information resources.

- Access to digital resources depends on the motivation and orientation programme of the school.

Review of related literature

The review of the related literature presents the descriptive account of similar studies made by others and forms the basis for the study. It revealed that many studies have been undertaken in this area shows the importance of academic excellence is not the only thrust; the school library is also devoted to preparing its students for life.

Hay and Todd (2010) indicated that the school library offers the academic environment for acquiring knowledge and further argued that school libraries develop advanced thinking skills that students require for deep knowledge and deep understanding. Because the school library is fundamental in an educational system, it should be well established and developed as an essential part of the physical resources of the school; well-resourced to offer quality teaching and learning as well as support the curriculum of the school. It should promote and improve students reading skills and learning achievement. Hoskins (2006) described the value of the school library as such that it must be established in every basic school and should be well-resourced to be beneficial to the teaching and learning of the school. Including the use of school libraries in the school program, facilitate teachers teaching, and improve the value of time that students devote to the library as well as enhancing their teaching notes. Bleidt

(2011) demonstrated that most students are using the school library in a variety of ways. An overwhelming majority of students also felt that the school library played a critical role in their learning. More importantly, this study indicates that school students have good ideas about what constitutes a good library and how to make libraries more effective. Lonsdale (2003) study reported the nature and extent of the evidence that has linked school libraries to student achievement since 1990, identifying the strengths and gaps in existing data as it might relate to an Australian setting, and suggesting some strategies for developing further research in Australia. Feng (1979) noted that the heart of the library lies in its collections and collections have to be built continuously. Budgetary constraints stress the need for a better-defined collection development policy, although the ultimate goal should be an improvement of library service rather than any reduction of library cost. A written collection development policy facilitates a consistent and balanced growth of library resources and a dynamic policy is one that evolves as the institution grows. Such a policy is based on the understanding of the user community it serves and it seeks to define and delimit the goals and objectives of the institution. Ogunrombi and Sanni (2005) summarized that the effectiveness of a school library is accessible to the total school community. It is cost-effective because one book is used by many, it provides flexible scheduling and timely access to the collection by all students, a broad range of materials, add new resources throughout the school year to keep collection dynamic, create a sense of ownership that is shared by the entire school community. Fayose (1995) mentioned that the school library contains educational material of all kinds that enhance teaching and learning development in a school. Resources such as books, periodicals, magazines and newspapers, films and filmstrips slides, videotapes, audio recordings of all forms, maps, charts, computers, and other information bearing resources. School libraries are essential in the educational process since they provide the needed materials to support the school's curriculum. They are established to be used by both students

and teachers in the teaching and learning process. The role and functions played by the school library are well documented by a wide array of associations in librarianship. Anderson and McDonald (2013) focused on research related to Information Literacy. The research aims to determine the ability to access information and apply critical thinking on the information thus retrieved. According to the research, high school students faced difficulties in applying their knowledge of Information Literacy in the pre-entry course at a University in Great Britain. Smith *et al* (2013) examined how high school student's Information Literacy skills prepare them for academic work in the Digital Age. The study indicated a gap between the expectations of high school students and their skills. Findings indicated that students lack the Information Literacy proficiency required to succeed in the post-secondary educational environment, and the libraries are not prepared to effectively address this gap. Dorvlo (2016) investigated the Information Literacy levels among Post Graduate students of tertiary institutions, specifically at the University of Ghana revealed that the majority of the Post Graduate students were not Information Literate. The study recommends that Library Orientation Programmes, Language study, and Information Communication Technology (ICT) skills should be introduced by the University of Ghana to ensure student's Information Literates. Bailey, Hall, and Gamble (2007) suggested that the presence of libraries and qualified librarians in schools can exert a positive effect on young people's literacy learning, with the promotion of reading attitudes and frequency part of the core role of the librarian in schools.

Research showed that the lifeblood of outstanding school libraries is aimed at proving that students benefit from accessing and analyzing information. Despite the research, the word has not reached decision-makers regarding the relationship between quality school libraries and student achievement. There is still a need to give information about the value of school libraries and the qualities of school libraries that students find important to their

learning to decision-makers such as Legislators, School Board Members, and School Administrators, as well as to Teachers and Teacher-Educators.

Methodology

The data was collected through a questionnaire method from students in 20 secondary schools functioning of Mysore south block in Mysore district. The questionnaire has been distributed to 10 students in each school on a simple random basis. 186 students responded to the questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered by the researchers themselves and were equally completed on the spot by the respondent, thus the return rate was 93%. An unstructured interview/ discussion was also conducted to collect the data.

Limitation

There are Seven Revenue Administrative Blocks and Nine Educational Blocks in the Mysore district. Mysore Block is divided into Three Educational Blocks that is Mysore North, Mysore South, and Mysore Rural. The present study is limited to the Secondary School Students of Mysore South Block in the Mysore district.

Data Analysis

Responses were fairly evenly divided class-wise, with boys having a slight majority. A majority of respondents were from 10th Standard students. This could be the result of the availability of students at the time of the study.

Table - 1: *Gender-Wise Standard of the Students*

Class	Gender-wise	No. of Students (n-186)	Percentage of respondents
9th Standard	Boys	48	25.81%
	Girls	42	22.58%
10th Standard	Boys	50	26.88%
	Girls	46	24.73%

Table 1 showed that out of the total number of 186 students, 98 students (52.69%) of the respondents were boys and 88 students (47.31%) of the respondents were girls.

Frequency of Library Services
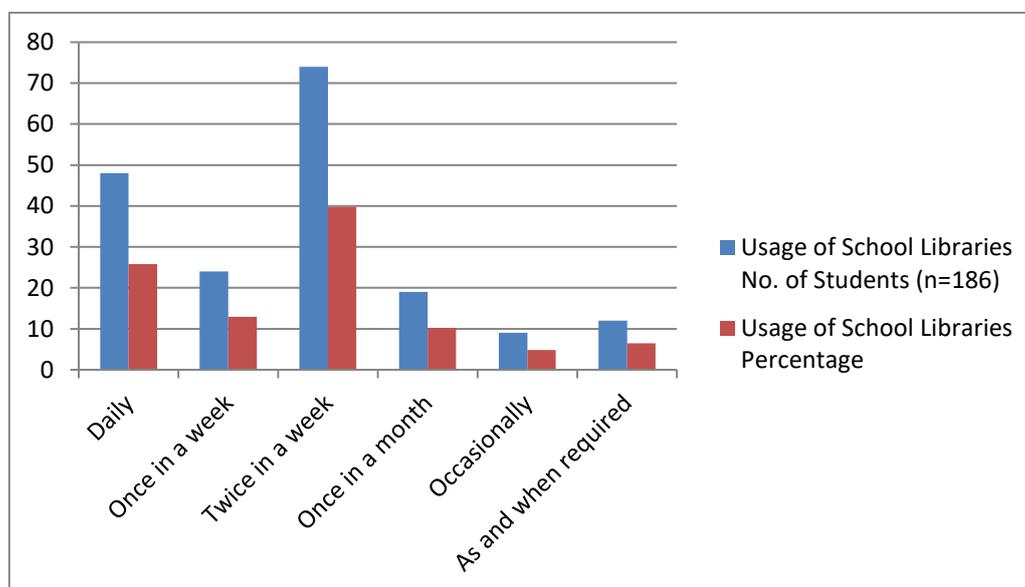
Figure - 1: *Usage of School Library*

Figure 1 recognized that 39.78% of 74 students visit the school library twice a week, 25.81% of 48 students agreed that they visit daily to the library, 12.90% of 24 students visit once in a

week, 10.22% of 19 students visit once in a month, 6.45% of 12 students visit the library as and when required and 4.84% of 9 students replied that they visit occasionally to the school library.

Table - 2: *Main Purpose of Visiting the School Library*

Purpose of visit	No. of Students (n=186)	Rank
To borrow/return books	74	1
To read newspapers/magazines	48	2
To refer reference books	24	3
To prepare class notes	19	4
To browse the Internet	12	5
To obtain photocopy	9	6

Table 2 conceded that the main purpose of visiting the library according to their school time table schedule is for borrowing books by 74 students which have been ranked 1st, Secondly, 48 students to read newspaper/magazines daily before the school rings a bell, to refer reference books has been ranked 3rd by 24 students, to prepare class notes has been ranked 4th by 19 students, to browse the internet has been ranked 5th by 12 students as and when required and finally to obtain photocopy has been ranked 6th by 9 students occasionally.

Table – 3: *Perceptions of the Secondary School Students towards School Library*

Student's Perceptions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
To be open before school rings the	42	48	35	32	29

bell	(22.58%)	(25.81%)	(18.82%)	(17.20%)	(15.59%)
A quiet place to do the work	54 (29.03%)	85 (45.70%)	13 (6.99%)	26 (13.98%)	8 (4.30%)
To keep current and up to date resources	46 (24.73%)	67 (36.02%)	25 (13.44%)	28 (15.05%)	20 (10.75%)
Allow to suggest new books	40 (21.51%)	86 (46.24%)	20 (10.75%)	15 (8.06%)	25 (13.44%)
More assistance from the library staff	22 (11.83%)	64 (34.41%)	28 (15.05%)	34 (18.28%)	38 (20.43%)
To conduct library orientation programs	48 (25.81%)	96 (51.61%)	12 (6.45%)	8 (4.30%)	22 (11.83%)

The result found that 48 (25.81%) of students agreed that the school library should be opened before school rings the bell so that they can spend time daily in the library by reading newspapers and magazines. Libraries are wonderful places that the school library will continue to be a place of research and study using all aids to the student's success and this study showed that 85 (45.70%) of students believed school library as a learning environment and a quiet place to do the work. The result also found that 67 (36.02%) students agreed that to keep current and up to date resources. Furthermore, 86 (46.24%) of students agreed that they are the users of the books and therefore the school authority should take their opinion regarding suggest new books. In this study, it was also found that 64 (34.41%) of students agreed that they need more assistance from the library staff. Interestingly, in this study, the researcher reported that the perception of students to conduct library orientation programs received the highest responses showing that 96 (51.61%) of students do agree that librarians

make a difference in the lives of all students through both resources and spaces and hence libraries have a hugely positive effect on teaching and learning.

Frequency of ICT Skills

Figure - 2: *Usage of ICT skills*

No. of Students (n=186)
- Use of Internet
- Use of social network
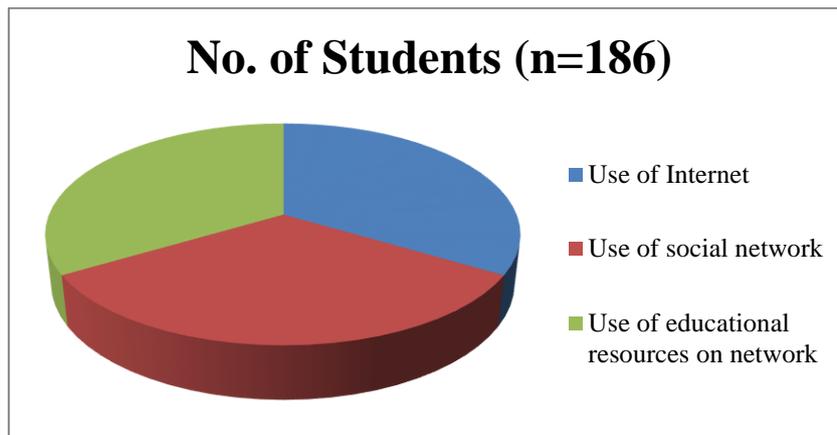- Use of educational resources on network

Figure 2 revealed the usage of ICT skills of students. Most of all students (100%) responded that they use the internet, 182 (97.84%) of students surveyed indicated that they use the social network, and 186 (100%) of students replied that they use ICT for academic purposes by using various educational resources. Researchers reported that the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in the overwhelming majority of the students surveyed in an unprecedented push to online learning.

Table - 4: *Internet Access Point*

Access Point of Internet	No. of Students (n=186)	Percentage
School	8	4.30%
Internet café	6	3.23%

Friend's house	12	6.45%
Own house	160	86.02%
Total no. of Students	**186**	**100%**

Table 4 pinpointed that 160 (86.02%) of students access the internet from their own house, 12 (6.45%) of students from friend's house, 8 (4.30%) of students from the school, and 6 (3.23%) of students from Internet café.

Table - 5: *Awareness of Educational Resources available on the Internet*

Educational resources	No. of Students (n=186)	Percentage
CBSE link	84	45.16%
NCERT link	52	27.96%
e-pathshala	24	12.90%
NROER	15	8.06%
34 DTH channels for education	11	5.91%
Total no. of Students	**186**	**100%**

As the coronavirus crisis has put up a bar on going outside, Table 5 observed that 84 (45.16%) of students use CBSE link, 52 (27.96%) of students access NCERT link, 24 (12.90%) of students use e-pathshala, 15 (8.06%) of students use National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER), 11 (5.91%) of students use the SWAYAM PRABHA, a group of 34 DTH channels which is devoted to telecasting of high-quality educational programmes on 24x7 basis using the GSAT-15 satellite.

Table - 6: *Main Purpose of using Social Network*

Purpose of using social network	No. of Students (n=186)	Percentage
It is easier and convenient to access information	42	22.58%
To connect with learning groups and other educational systems	82	44.09%
To improve learning methods	12	6.45%
To stay connected with friends and family	42	22.58%
To exchange ideas and boost the learning	8	4.30%
Total no. of Students	**186**	**100%**

Due to the ongoing coronavirus crisis, Table 6 identified that 82 (44.09%) of majority students using the social network is to connect with learning groups and other educational systems, 42 (22.58%) of students use the social network to stay connected with friends and family and it is easier and convenient to access information, 12 (6.45%) of students to improve learning methods, and finally 8 (4.30%) of students to exchange their ideas and boost the learning.

Summary of Findings

Library and education are sister services. The use of technology in education is one of those methods that will improve the quality of education. Libraries are especially important now when the whole idea of education is stressing more and more independent learning and acting. All citizens must be able to find and use information. It is the key raw material – but it is a zero resource, if there are no access points to it and if documents are in chaotic order.

Libraries have been identified as one of the key elements for open access to information. The role of the library in modern society pertains to continuing Education, Stimulation of Reading, Research, Cultural, Religious and spiritual pursuits, the citadel of Individualism, changing Dimensions and Recreation, and Leisure. Thus, the findings of this study demonstrate that most students are using the school library in a variety of ways. An overwhelming majority of students also felt that the school library played a critical role in their learning. More importantly, this study indicates that secondary school students have good ideas about what constitutes a good library and how to make libraries more effective. Findings suggest implications for decision-makers that would strengthen the effectiveness of school libraries in the Mysore district. Loertscher (2002), the first lady of the United States suggested that the widespread adoption of ICT has not only changed the role of libraries, but also school librarians as facilitators of learning resources. The Researcher further posited that books, information technology, and school librarians who are part of the school's professional team are basic ingredients for student achievements. Speed and accuracy guaranteed by the application of information technology have put the spotlight on libraries. Therefore, the government should confirm ICT facilities and Internet access to each school in the Mysore district. This is to ensure that every student has a future generation who are qualified in ICT skills.

The following recommendations are based on the findings of this research

- In the 21st century, the role of excellent libraries and school librarians in every school becomes compelling-even.
- Establishing the library as the hub of the school can have a dramatic effect on what learning looks like for students and teachers.

- Libraries take learning to a place that is more authentically connected to the world outside of school.

- Schools that implement digital libraries are more successful in a competitive environment.

- A professional librarian is effective in the development of ICT skills among empowering students.

- Student-driven spaces that support the development of lifelong learners.

- There is a need for collaboration across school networks that allow students to become thoughtful.

- School is not preparation for real life, school is real life. At least, it should be and the respective school librarian can help with that.

- Together, teachers and librarians can design and implement student-centered INQUIRY experiences and promote information literacy skills.

- Supporting certified school librarians in each school library makes good sense and cents.

- Impact of school librarian can have on a school and student learning.

- A School library is a space that enhances the social, cultural, and academic excellence in schools and wider communities.

- More principals and teachers need to be made aware of the enormous benefit of the school library.

Conclusion:

The school library is the ideal place for students. It creates readers. It also offers refuge to youngsters who want an alternative to the playground or the school canteen. As the world comes together to fight COVID-19, schools have taken different steps to ensure the well-

being of their students. Hence, there is a need for the reconstruction of the School Education System especially in the field of Digital Library in schools. COVID-19 taught a good lesson to the human being that ICT skills play a vital role in shaping human life.

School libraries are thus in a unique position to grasp the opportunities and play a useful role as torchbearers of the nation. The library, thus, affects society and is an acknowledged agency with which society must be concerned to educate every child, promoting a high-quality educational environment, holistic development, academic excellence, and responsible global citizenship.

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