

Present Scenario of School Libraries in Punjab with Special Reference to Mohali and Rupnagar: An Overview

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ABSTRACT

The school library provides information, inculcates ideas, and develops knowledge that is so essential to functioning successfully in today's information and knowledge based society. It is fundamental to school library to equip students with lifelong learning skills and develop in them creative thinking and imagination, and enabling them to live as ideal and responsible citizens. This paper attempts towards the aim at analyzing and evaluating the prevailing conditions in school libraries of Mohali and Rupnagar. It also explores the Glimpses of library development in Punjab and suggestion for improvement of school libraries.

Keywords: Academic libraries, Disseminate Knowledge, Education Department, Library facilities, Library Services.

INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries have a pivotal role in providing equal access to information. This aspect has been emphasized in Radhakrishnan Commission Report as well as in Kothari Commission Report. UGC India attaches great importance to the strengthening of library facilities, and to their efficient administration. If the purpose of education is learning, then the library is an indispensable source of learning and there is no replacement of it. Academic libraries include school, college, university and research libraries. All these cater to the needs of academic community for supplementing the study and research programmes of the institution and help conserve and disseminate knowledge.

As the condition of school libraries in all districts of Punjab is similar, so the study has been confined to school libraries of Mohali and Rupnagar. If we see Government school libraries then the condition is not much good as they have no proper library budget and trained librarians, proper space and building. It is a common scene in Punjab especially in Mohali and Rupnagar districts. These days also you can see books are kept under locks and keys. On the other hand private school libraries are in good condition and also trained librarians are there. They are managing the libraries very well.

GLIMPSES OF LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN PUNJAB

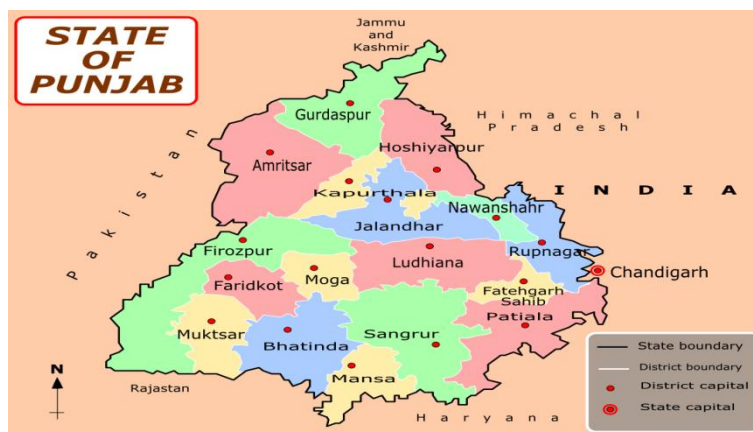


Fig 1: Areas of Punjab

The history of the development of libraries in Punjab begins after the partition of the country in 1947, the Punjab Education Department functioned from the camp office setup in Shimla's Metropole Hotel. At that time, the Education Secretary was also Director of Public Instruction. On February 15, 1959, the office was shifted to Chandigarh, the new capital of Punjab. In 1966, when the southern districts of Punjab were constituted as the new state of Haryana, the department was recognized with some staff going to the new state. At present, four Directorates function under the Punjab Education Department, namely the Directorate of Public Instruction (colleges), Directorate of Secondary Education, Directorate of Primary Education and Directorate of State Council of Educational Research and Training.

If we go through the educational development in Punjab, we realize that the progress is there, but not so rapid. The growth of different type of schools is shown in the table below:

Table 1. Year-wise growth of Schools in Punjab

Sr. No.	Year	Total
1	2001-2002	19487
2	2002-2003	20037
3	2003-2004	19735
4	2004-2005	19835
5	2005-2006	19815
6	2006-2007	19817
7	2007-2008	39996
8	2008-2009	56443
9	2009-2010	62371
10	2010-2011	23399
11	2011-2012	30158

It is clear from the table that our state will do more and more progress in the field of education. If such was the progress of education in Punjab, the development of libraries is even more recent phenomenon. In fact, the progress of education or literacy depends more and more on libraries. The place of Punjab as regards literacy is very honored in India.

PRESENT SCENARIO OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN MOHALI AND RUPNAGAR

The progress in any field of life would have not been possible without active research work. In fact we can understand properly about true result with the help of research work in any field of life.

The paper is based on the findings of the study. The investigator has arrived at, and suggestions she has made on the basis of her insight through the present survey. The investigator finds the following results:-

1. From the data collected we can infer that a very small number of schools have a specific room for library, for which the library cannot function properly.
2. In most of the schools, there is librarian, who does two types of work, such as teaching as well as library work. This results in lack of proper attention to library work.
3. The qualification of school librarians is also not encouraging. Most of schools have teachers working as librarians and most school librarians have done certificate course in library science.
4. Some schools have even untrained teachers, who work in libraries.
5. In some Govt. schools, the rooms of libraries are not well decorated and mottos are not written on the walls. The rooms of libraries are also not clean and attractive.

6. A number of schools have partitioned of an ordinary room by placing almirahs in the middle of the room. There are only a few Schools that have specific rooms for libraries. In fact in private have provided good rooms for libraries.
7. As for as the furniture is concerned there are only a few schools that have provided furniture in order to meet the requirements of school students properly. In fact most of the schools have only a few almirahs and nothing else. There is comparatively better furniture in private Schools.
8. In some of the cases, the room provided for the library is small, that can adjust only a table, a chair and a few almirahs.
9. Regarding books in libraries, the condition is not honorable and desirable. The books in libraries are less, old and are not able to meet the needs and interests of the students at present.
10. In fact the system of the selection of books is not good in our school libraries and the books are selected without taking care of the needs and interests of pupils, teachers and other members of the schools.
11. There is also the lack of good books of literature such as poetry, drama, essay, stories and one act plays etc., because due care is not given in this direction.
12. There are very few periodicals in various schools. Some schools get only two or three periodicals because of the lack of proper funds.
13. The total amount sanctioned for subscription of periodicals is very less. So because of the lack of proper funds, the schools fail to get all periodicals according to the needs and interests of pupils.
14. In Mohali and Rupnagar where the books have been classified, but not in proper way. In fact books are classified only in rough and simple way. So, for this reason it is essential that there should be a good system of classification of books in school libraries.
15. The number of books issued in various years is also less than satisfactory. The present position does not give an encouraging view.
16. Time for issuing books does not appear to be the very best. Some schools have a provision of issuing books in the recess. Some have after and before school hours which cannot be of much use to the students.
17. There is not a proper arrangement in libraries for the issue/ return of books to the members of community and only a few schools issue books to the members of community.
18. The budget provision for improvement of school libraries is not honorable and desirable. In fact there is not any fixed and specific budget provision in schools.

Thus I can say that the library facilities in Govt. and Private Schools of Mohali and Rupnagar are not satisfactory and honourable. There is, therefore, a great need to improve the different facilities of libraries in schools.

SUGGESTION FOR IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES

After assessing every phase of the problem in hand critically on the basis of analyzed data, the investigator would make the following suggestions for improvement in the existing conditions regarding the library facilities in the govt. and private schools of Mohali and Rupnagar.

In fact, library plays a very important role in the field of education and some educators called it as the heart of school. In fact, the powers of thinking, reasoning and the knowledge of pupils can develop only if there are good libraries in our schools. So in order to make our libraries better, the investigator gives the following suggestions:-

1. In order to establish good libraries in schools greater care should be given to location of the library. In fact, the location of the library should be as central as possible, within easy reach from any part of the building. A centrally located library is convenient to the largest number. It should also be located in a quiet area, not too near the physical education or the music class, the cafeteria or the administrative office of the school.

2. To make libraries more popular in the school, book festivals should be arranged from time to time and local publishers should be invited to display books, maps, reference books and other standard works.
3. All the foregoing suggestions will be used, if whole-time librarians / part time librarians are provided in all the schools. Thus the post of librarian should be created in all the high schools at least. Hence the top priority suggestion is to create the post of a librarian, who can evince great interest and overhaul the school library.
4. The librarians of all the libraries of Mohali and Rupnager should meet at least once a year to discuss the causes of slow progress, if any, in respect of library services, new arrival of books and the new problems they are facing in schools.
5. The load of teaching of the library In-charge should be lightened. Teachers having love of books should be put in-charge of the libraries.
6. The librarians should be resourceful enough to contact the public library, the district library and, if possible, the mobile library to provide the readers with the greater number of books.
7. The teachers and the librarians should share with the students the knowledge acquired through books in the morning assembly or in the library class. They should refer to the books and journals etc.
8. Some brief questions pertaining to extra reading in the library should be put in examination to make it more effective, otherwise library will not be of much use.
9. To make the library place of attraction for the readers and the librarian, there is a dire necessity of having a specific room for the purpose.
10. The minimum accommodation required for the school library is a room large enough to seat a whole class at a time. The size and the seating capacity will naturally depend on the number of students, the school admits. The seats should be so arranged as to allow natural light to pass from one side to the other.
11. Rooms should be airy and well ventilated. There should be a good provision of light arrangement.
12. In every library the reading room should be well decorated, clean and big. The pupils can read and write properly only, if there is a good reading room in the school. This must be ensured by providing a well designed reading room. The atmosphere of the reading room should be quiet as well as hygienic.
13. Library room should be nicely decorated in order to create the interest of pupils in library work and activities. Its structure should be simple and inviting. It should have a good aesthetic, walls distempered in soothing color and tastefully decorated. The space below may either be left clear or fitted with doors to be used to store charts, roller maps and other flat material.
14. If there is lack of finance for the improvement of library, proper care should at least be given to make the library room more and more attractive. Books should be arranged in such a way that it may give an aesthetic outlook.
15. Furniture of the library should be comfortable and attractive. The standard dimensions of tables are 5' x 3' to accommodate six readers. The maximum height should be 3' but some may be as low as 2' to suit the younger pupils.
16. The chairs should be high, attractive and preferably arm-less, with rubber caps fitted to the legs to avoid noise and damage to the floor covering.
17. Other furniture in the library will include filing cabinets, a librarian's desk, a magazine rack, card catalogue, a charging desk, charging trays, atlas stands, pamphlet boxes, book supports and a wall clock.
18. In fact, books should be graded according to the chronological age and mental level of the students. The books of one library should be exchanged with those of different libraries. This will make the library more effective in its scope and purpose.
19. In building up the school library, it is important to remember that what is intended is selection, not collection. The school library serves a small and well defined group and generally operates on a small and fixed budget. The task, therefore, is to select what is most needed, most useful and most likely to be of permanent value. Every book must be carefully considered before it is purchased.

The school library which is designed to meet the demand of all classes and all stages generally has books of the following categories:-

- a. Text books.
- b. Books for inspiration, poetry, drama, religion, biography, philosophy and fiction.
- c. Books for information science, history, travel and useful arts.
- d. Books for recreation:- Fiction, drama, humour, essays and light reading in various fields.
- e. Illustrated books.

In the selection of books, the whole school staff must work together. Help from outside other schools, the public library, publishers and book sellers may also be sought. The following principles should be kept in mind in selecting books:-

Use:- Books should be purchased for the use of all grades of the school – primary & secondary.

Balance:- The total stock of the school library should be balanced one. The funds are to be spent keeping in view the demands of the readers as well as the needs of the school, satisfying the natural reading tastes of the children. A selection committee may also keep in mind the needs of encouraging pupils' reading habits.

20. The books on all aspects in various languages should be purchased without any bias or prejudice or any other language. Books should be purchased on all the aspects of literature i.e. novels, stories, dramas etc.
21. In school library, there is a great need of good reference books. Knowledge of general reference books and how to use them is essential for effective learning. The reference books are separated from other books in the library and placed in special section. University and college libraries have reference rooms where such books are available on open shelves. School libraries which generally lack space can not possibly set aside a special room for this section, but may have a special almirah or cupboard for reference books. This may be as near the librarian's desk as possible to enable him / her to keep an eye on these books. These books are usually distinguished by addition of the letter 'R' to their call number and should be used in the library only.

The usual type of reference books, which are generally in use are

Encyclopedias; Dictionaries; Books of Quotations; Historical, Scientific and General almanacs; Gazetteers; Atlases; Biographies; etc.

22. Interchange of reference books is another remedy to make the same available to all the schools in Mohali and Rupnagar. In fact, the lists of the reference books should be prepared and circulated from school to school. In this way all the schools will be able to make use of the reference books. List of rare books may also be prepared so that all the schools may tap that source if need be.
23. Very few school libraries do technical processing of books. There is a great need of technical processing of books, so that the books can be found out easily by students as well as by the teachers.
24. Newspapers in Hindi, Punjabi and English must be purchased. Circulation of magazines from one school to another can be of much use. It will also encourage readers of those schools which do not subscribe to various periodicals.
25. Sources providing free periodicals should be tapped by the various schools to broaden the knowledge of all persons of that area.
26. If full co-operation of the panchayat is sought, the magazines and newspaper etc. for which panchayat contributes, can be put in the school reading rooms during the school hours. After school hours, all the periodicals can be placed in the local reading room. Thus more economy and more scope for giving knowledge can be secured with the co-operation of the community.
27. Every book decorating each shelf of the library must be in bound form. To speed up this work, every school must have the craft of book binding, where students doing such a service should be given normal wages as it will serve the purpose of earning while learning.
28. Catalogue or list of books must be provided in every school library to facilitate the readers.

29. Instead of the recess period, one zero period may be provided in the school time-table by reducing the time of the periods in school time-table. Until and unless we give due weightage to the library in the school programme it will not be of much help.
30. The number of books issued in the various years shows that the teachers themselves do not read sufficient number of books from the library. If we want that the students should read books in greater number, the teachers should put an ideal before the students to encourage them.
31. Book Bank scheme should be encouraged in all the schools, where the students and the teachers may donate the books.
32. To foster an interest in reading, the schools should start a library club to encourage the students to prepare fortnightly library bulletin and they should be guided to write book reviews.
33. Co-operation from community can be sought if we provide facilities to the community members to have books from the school libraries. If we want to get financial help from the community, we must give them facilities to read from the school libraries.
34. More provisions for library facilities should be made in the budget. Special grant should be given to them. The heads should tap different sources such as rich men of the locality, Panchayats and donors from other quarters. They should enhance funds by creating a library fund to which all the students and teachers should contribute.
35. To provide library room in the institutions, the heads of the institutions should tap all the sources, such as grants and donations. For encouraging donations, the names of the donors may be inscribed on the foundation stone of the library room.

In short, efforts should be made to equip the libraries of the school.

CONCLUSION

If the conditions and functions of the libraries are improved, India can be able to do more and more progress without any difficulty. If it is so, the intellectual horizon of the students will be widened and ignorance will be dispelled. The educationists all over the world have realized the value of the library facility in the schools. The investigator proposes to make a systematic study of the library facilities in the schools of Mohali and Rupnagar. The investigator intends to find out what library facilities exist at present in schools of Mohali and Rupnagar. How these library facilities are utilized and how the resources can be improved. This study might be helpful to throw light on the difficulties for active library services in Education Department of Mohali and Rupnagar.

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