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Guidelines vs. Reality: a Comparative Study on School Libraries of Different Boards/Councils

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Abstract

School is a gateway to knowledge world and school library plays an important role to love for reading. Library is heart of any educational institution and takes part as the key element in educational process. Indian school boards and councils drafted the various guidelines to organize the school libraries and made recommendations for the betterment of library services. This paper highlights the guidelines and the real scenario of the school libraries of three different school boards/councils. A comparative study has been made among the libraries of different board/ council affiliated schools in the light of standard school library guideline. The study was conducted recently among the six school libraries in reference to Haldia town area. The result reflects that the actual picture is much differ from the policies and guidelines. Library collection is not enough, quality and quantity of the library services are very poor and financial support from the concerned parent body or Government is very woeful. So some recommendations have been made in this regard and it has tried to draw the attention of the concerned authorities to organize the school libraries attractive to the students and teachers.

Keywords: School Library, Library Guideline, Comprehensive Study, Library Reality.

Introduction

"Catch 'em Young" is therefore the motto of the school libraries. Young readers find themselves in the world of knowledge in their school libraries and feel free to read the books in their choice. The school library provides physical or virtual space to access the library resources and offer them various services for encouraging reading habit.UNESCO, Delor's Commission Report,1995 recommended in the education policy as "Education throughout life is based on four pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be." The school library fulfills these aims and objectives by developing policies and services, selecting and acquiring resources, providing physical and intellectual access to appropriate sources of information, providing instructional facilities, and employing trained staff.The Indian school Boards have been prepared guidelines for organizing school libraries. The school should organize their library following the policies and guidelines. But the real situation is differ from the guideline.

Objectives of the study

The study is conducted to focus the condition of the school libraries of different board in Haldia Municipal area. The objectives of this study are:

1. To discover the state of school libraries in Haldia Municipal area;
2. To investigate the key issues affecting the use of libraries in different schools affiliated by different boards/ councils;
3. To ascertain whether these libraries meet their aims and objectives of a school library;
4. To make a comparison among the libraries of different school boards and councils;
5. To assess the school library collection, budgets and staffing;
6. To make recommendations for organizing library collection and betterment of library services.

Review of Literature

A number of policy and guideline drafted at national and international level to provide the pathway of organizing school libraries. In

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India, Organizing School Library Guidelines by CBSE and Library Policy 2012: Equipping the Learners for 21st Century by KVS are the pioneers in this concern. At international level, School library Guidelines, 2008 by the IFLA/UNESCO and The IFLA School Library Guidelines (2nd, completely updated and enlarged edition), 2015 are the makeable guideline. IFLA (2015) states "It is important that the standards and guidelines that school IFLA School Libraries Guidelines librarians might use to guide their practice and that might be used in advocating for future improvements in school library services and programs are applicable to the local situation. Standards and guidelines should "resonate" with the people who best know that local situation". Several studies have been conducted in India or abroad to assess the condition of school libraries and pointed out the woeful sides in this regard. IFLA/UNESCO emphasized on the fundamental and functional role of the school library in today's information and knowledge based society. It also opined "The school library equips students with lifelong learning skills and develops the imagination, enabling to live as responsible citizens" (IFLA/UNESCO, 2008).The recommendations on school library of the Radhakrishnan Commission (1952-53), Kothari Commission (1964-66), National Policy on Education (1986), National Knowledge Commission (2005) etc. are not properly implemented in the schools till today. Mahajan (2010) acknowledged that there is a great need for the upliftment of school libraries in India. He also added that if the reading habits of the students have to be changed, the conditions of the school libraries have to be improved and the government of India must ensure that the school library has a well-stocked active collection managed by a qualified librarian. Snowball (2008) indicated that traditionally school libraries offered conservative lending services and reading room facilities. Kumar (1994) stressed the importance of school library in all stages of education especially in secondary and senior secondary education. He also reported that the libraries in schools are the natural supporting center for individual's intellectual development and heuristic learning. Ahmad (2009) conducted a study on senior secondary school libraries in Jammu and Kashmir and the study recommended "The existing senior secondary library facilities in the state of Jammu and Kashmir are far from being satisfactory. The essentials like proper physical facilities, adequate collections, professional manpower, proper organization and basic services are lacking. It does not even fulfill the minimum standards of library". A study highlighted that a school library with adequate staff, resource and fund can lead to higher student achievement regardless of the socioeconomic or educational levels of the community (Idiegbeyan-Ose, 2006). Eghosa (2008) commented that the school library is a rentable instrument for actualizing the desired educational reformation. Singh (2013) comments in his study "School libraries in India, wherever they exist, face a multitude of problems ranging from inadequate space for keeping books and reading space in school buildings to less

trained staff. Non availability of regular funds for acquiring reading materials is a major problem faced by school libraries in government and semi-government sector". Bhandarkar(2013) conducted a survey in the state of Chattisgarh and remarked that the existing secondary library facilities are far from being satisfactory. He stressed on the proper physical facilities, adequate collections and professional manpower. "The overall condition of school libraries in India as well as in Kerala is far from satisfactory. The library professional in the state should aware of this unfortunate state of affairs" (Singh, 2015). Another study at Karur District of Karnataka shows that the majority of the school librarians in India do not provide any other service except the circulation of books in the absence of good library infrastructure. Teravainen (2017) opined that the well stocked collection of good-quality reading materials related to the curriculum and support the general interest of pupils' reading.

Scope of the Study

In a limited time and scope the study was conducted in six school libraries in Haldia Municipal area in the year 2018. The study is connected to the survey of school library and impact of school library services on student success in school. The study cover six school libraries of three different school Boards e.g. Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Indian Certificate of Secondary Examination (ICSE) and another from West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE). The study covers a small Metropolitan city Haldia and socio-economic, educational and cultural condition of this city is far better than many other cities of Eastern India.

Research Design

The technique of data collection is questioning the librarians. A set of questions were prepared to take the interview of the librarian or in charge of the library. The librarians were asked these prepared questions during the interview session. In the interview session the librarians provided data related to their libraries to the surveyor. Collected data are presented using various types of tables and graphs e.g. column, pie, bar, line etc. The data are analyzed by using percentage and displayed by using various chart in MS-Excel software package.

Research Methodology

Survey method is followed to prepare this article. The libraries were visited physically and data was collected directly from the librarians and persons in charge, A set of questions was prepared to take librarian's interview for collecting data related to their libraries. The question paper was divided into few parts- the first part is about library collection and technical processing of library materials. The second part is about library users. The third part is about technical processing of the library resources. The forth part contains about the area of library stack room and reading room. The fifth part is about the different sections and the sixth part is about the maintenance operations. The seventh part is related to various library services and eighth part is about size and qualification of library personnel. The questions of the ninth part are related to the library finance.

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Findings
Library Collection

Collection	Boards		
	CBSE (%)	ICSE (%)	WBBSE (%)
Text books	6967 (67.31)	2238 (21.62)	1146 (11.07)
General Books	21006 (62.40)	5937 (17.64)	6724 (19.97)
Reference Books	1395 (67.29)	684 (24.29)	237 (8.41)
AV Collection	1407 (80.90)	332 (19.09)	00 (00)
Other	162	00	00

Collection	(100)	(00)	(00)
Total (%)	31437 (64.50)	9191 (18.85)	8107 (16.63)

Table 1: Size of collection

From the board/council profile (table-1) we see that maximum collection holdings posess by the CBSE board schools. 64.50% of total collection under this study holding the CBSE schools, 18.85% collection holding the ICSE schools and 16.63% collection holding the WBBSE schools. All types of library collection of CBSE schools are richer than the other schools. The following figure shows the comparison of library holdings of different boards and councils.

Figure-1: Comparison of the boards by size of collection
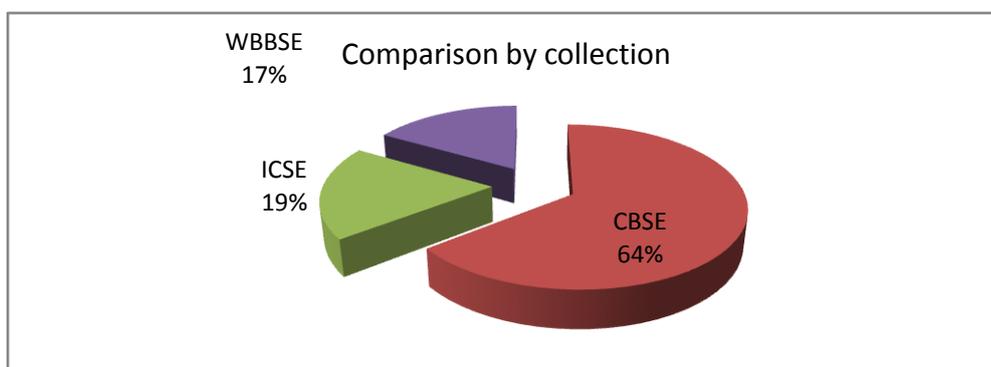
Reference Collection
Table-2: Reference Collection

Reference Collection	Boards					
	CBSE	(%)	ICSE	(%)	WBBSE	(%)
Dictionary	925	(71.48)	317	(24.32)	61	(4.66)
Encyclopedia	812	(75.53)	221	(20.55)	42	(3.90)
Yearbook	111	(53.88)	95	(46.12)	0	(00)
Biography	47	(36.43)	51	(39.53)	31	(24.02)
Total	**1895**	**(69.80)**	**684**	**(25.19)**	**136**	**(5.01)**

Table 2 shows 69.80% collection holding the CBSE schools, 25.19% collection holding the ICSE schools and 5.01% collection holding the WBBSE schools. The libraries of CBSE schools are comparatively better placed with regard to reference collections as about all sample schools claimed to possess dictionaries, encyclopedias, biographies and yearbook.CBSE schools possess 71.48% dictionaries whereas ICSE schools possess 24.32% and WBBSE schools possess 4.66% dictionaries only. Picture is same in collection of encyclopedia in the schools. CBSE schools have 75.53% encyclopedias,ICSE schools have 20.55% encyclopedias and WBBSE schools have 3.90% encyclopedias only. No WBBSE schools holding any type of year book.

Serial Collection
Table-3: Serial Collection

Serial Collection		Boards					
		CBSE	(%)	ICSE	(%)	WBBSE	(%)
Magazine	General	21	(65.67)	9	(28.12)	2	(6.25)
	Subject	24	(63.16)	12	(31.58)	2	(5.26)
	Children	8	(57.14)	5	(35.71)	1	(7.14)
Newspaper	Local	4	(44.44)	2	(22.22)	3	(33.33)
	National	5	(41.67)	5	(41.67)	1	(16.67)
Total		62	(62.04)	33	(31.42)	10	(9.51)

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The guideline shows "The school library should subscribe to local and national daily newspapers and magazines in adequate number. At least a minimum of 25 magazines and 5 daily newspapers suitable for students and academic recreational needs of teachers should be subscribed to" (CBSE, 2013). "The library should subscribe at least 5 newspapers of which 4 should be national and one should be regional in scope" (KV, 2012). Table 3 shows the percentage of periodical collection of different Boards. CBSE schools subscribe 62.04% periodicals, ICSE schools subscribe 31.42% periodicals and WBBSE schools subscribe only 9.51% periodicals.

Collection per Pupil

Table-4: Books per Pupil

	Boards		
	CBSE	**ICSE**	**WBBSE**
Total Enrollment	2330	1651	3654
Total collection	31437	9191	8107
Books per pupil (%)	13.49	5.57	2.22

"As a standard Library should have at least 5 titles of books (other than textbooks) per student in its stock subject to a minimum of 1500 books at the beginning. It should be continuously strengthened" (CBSE School Library Guideline, 2008). This falls within the provisions of most of the available school library standards in India. However, when comparisons are drawn among different school libraries of various board, the picture becomes more visible. It is observed that CBSE schools possess student book ratio of 13.49% books which has inflated the collective ratio because of the higher values of variables. ICSE schools have greater library collection and in spite of its inverse relation with student enrolment; the books per pupil ratio of 5.57%. The WBBSE schools are poor in their collection and the books per pupil ratio of 2.22%.

Technical Processing

Table 5: Technical Processing

	Boards		
	CBSE	**ICSE**	**WBBSE**
Classification	√	√	X
Cataloguing	√	√	X
Cataloging form	Card	Card	X

Area of Library

Author number	√	√	X
Circulation System	Newark	Ledger	Ledger

Classification

The library collection of school libraries must be organized according to a standard classification scheme. **"**Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) scheme, Edition 22 (or the latest), should be followed for the classification of library books." (KV, 2012). The library collections in schools of Haldia municipal area are generally not organized according to standards. The collected data supports this viewpoint. It reveals that only the CBSE and ICSE school libraries collections are classified by DDC scheme. WBBSE school libraries virtually do not classify their collections.

Cataloguing

"Library maintains a catalogue of all the books procured. All the entries in it are arranged in a single sequence in alphabetical order" (CBSE, 2008). The school libraries of WBBSE board do not have any catalogue of their collections. Only CBSE school libraries use standard catalogue code (AACR2) and the ICSE school library use a local method of cataloguing books in absence of a standard cataloging manual.

Cataloguing Format

As the maintenance of a library catalogue is a rarity in school libraries, the collected data shows that the WBBSE school libraries do not maintain any catalogue in any form. Only the CBSE and one ICSE school libraries maintain the catalogue in card form.

Author Number

Author number is one of the important parts of call number. It is used after the subject number for arranging the books in the shelf. The current study reveals that all CBSE and ICSE schools use author number; WBBSE schools do not use any author number because they do not make any catalogue of the library resources (Table 5). It is possible due to lack of professional and qualified manpower.

Circulation System

The data collected reveals that all libraries in the sample use a manual system of circulation. Further analysis shows that all CBSE schools follow Newark circulation system. All ICSE schools and all the WBBSE schools follow ledger circulation system to issue library materials to the users.

Table-6: Floor Area

Physical facility		Boards		
		CBSE	**ICSE**	**WBBSE**
Library area	Reading room (Sq. Ft.)	2200	2300	2000
	Total area (Sq. Ft.)	3900	3400	2500
Total seat capacity		102	104	110
Area per unit in reading room (%)		21.57	22.11	18.18

Table 6 shows that CBSE school libraries accommodate 21.57 sq. ft. floor area per pupil in the reading room; ICSE school libraries accommodate 22.11 sq. ft. floor area per pupil in the reading room and WBBSE school libraries accommodate 18.18 sq. ft. floor area per pupil in the reading room. The guideline shows "A provision of 10 sq. ft floor area per pupil in Reading Room is considered adequate. On

the basis of these considerations a Library should provide accommodation for at least 50 students of a class at a time plus 10% extra space for other group activities, projects and reference service beside room for librarian, circulation counter, reference desk, books / periodicals display, committee/conference room, property counter, catalogue enclosure." (CBSE, 2013).

Sections of Library

Table-7: Multiservice Infrastructural Provision

Infrastructure	Boards		
	CBSE	ICSE	WBBSE
Separate Stack Room	√	√	X
Reading Room	√	√	√
Circulation Counter	√	√	X
Reference Section	X	X	X
Periodical Section	X	X	X
Audio-Visual Section	X	X	X

The data collected for the study shows a quantitative improvement in the overall library infrastructure which complements the above stated facts. However, observations show almost all CBSE and ICSE schools have separate stack room, reading room, circulation section and reference section. Further analysis reveals that the idea of having a school library with multiple sections is almost non-existent in WBBSE schools. It was observed that no school has separate audio-visual section (Table 7).

Maintenance Operations

Table 8: Housekeeping Operations

House keeping	Boards		
	CBSE	ICSE	WBBSE
Stock verification	√	√	X
Stock rectification	√	√	X
Weeding out/Discarding	√	√	X
Book binding	√	X	X

Table 8 shows the various library house-keeping operations of the libraries.

Stock Verification

The collected data reveals all CBSE schools take stock verification annually, all ICSE schools take stock verification occasionally and all WBBSE schools never take stock verification. This shows an interesting trend of inconsistency.

Stock Rectification

The collected data reveals all CBSE schools rectify its stock annually, all ICSE schools rectify its stock occasionally and all WBBSE schools never rectify stock.

Weeding out/ discarding

The collected data reveals all CBSE and ICSE schools weeding out/ discarding the damaged and useless stock annually, all WBBSE schools never weeding out the damage collection.

Book Binding

The collected data reveals a majority of schools of CBSE and ICSE board send their frequently used books for binding occasionally and all

WBBSE schools never bind its loose or damaged books.

Library Services

Table-9: Different Library Services

Library services	Boards		
	CBSE	ICSE	WBBSE
Circulation service	√	√	√
Initiation/Orientation service	√	√	X
Reference service	√	√	X
New book display	√	√	X
Press clipping service	X	X	X
Bibliographic service	X	X	X
Reprographic service	X	X	X
Internet service	√	√	X
Inter-library loan	X	X	X
Career guidance	X	X	X
Extension service	X	X	X

The above table (Table 9) reveals the various library services. All schools under this study provide circulation service. Only CBSE & ICSE schools provide initiation/orientation service, reference service, new book display and internet service to the users. No school gives press clipping service bibliographic service, reprographic service, inter-library loan service, career guidance service and extension service.

Library Staff

Table-10: Size of Staff

Boards			
	CBSE	ICSE	WBBSE
Professional	2	2	2
Non-professional	2	0	0
Total staff	4	2	2
Staff ratio (%)	50.00	25.00	25.00

CBSE guideline recommended the size of library staff for school library "The following structure of Library Staff is required for different levels of schools having Student Strength of 2000 or less….. Senior Secondary School: The Library Staff of a Senior Secondary School should consist of Senior Librarian (PGT Grade)- One, Librarian (TGT Grade)- One, Assistant Librarian (Assistant Teacher Grade)- One, Library Attendant- One. In case the number of students crosses 2000, there should be corresponding increase in the number of Library Attendants for every 500 Students or part thereof." Comparison between boards by staff size shows (Table 10) that CBSE schools have 50% of total staff strength, ICSE and WBBSE Schools each have 25% of total staff strength. CBSE schools possess maximum staff because these are run by private management or aided by companies.

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Library Finance

Table-11: Expenditure per user

Library expenditure	Boards		
	CBSE	**ICSE**	**WBBSE**
Annual Library Budget(Rs.)	170,000	90,000	40,000
Total Enrollment	2330	1651	3654
Ratio Per Unit(Rs.)	72.96	54.51	10.94

A standard guideline recommended "The total library budget for a year Rs150/- per student or minimum Rs 1, 50000/- for a 2 section school+ Rs 250/- per teacher. For schools having more than two sections, the same formula will be followed keeping in mind the upper sealing of Rs. 2.5 Lakhs… For a two section school having 1000 students and 25 teachers, the annual library budget (1000x150) + (250x25) Rs. 1,62500/-)" (KV,2012).Table 11 reveals the total library budget and expenditure per user**.** Total annual library budget of CBSE schools is 170,000/-, ICSE schools is 90,000/- and WBBSE schools is 40,000/-.Expenditure per student of CBSE school is 72.96% and ICSE school is 54.51% whereas WBBSE school is 10.94%only.The following figure shows the expenditure per user in different schools.

Figure 2: Comparison between Expenditure Per User
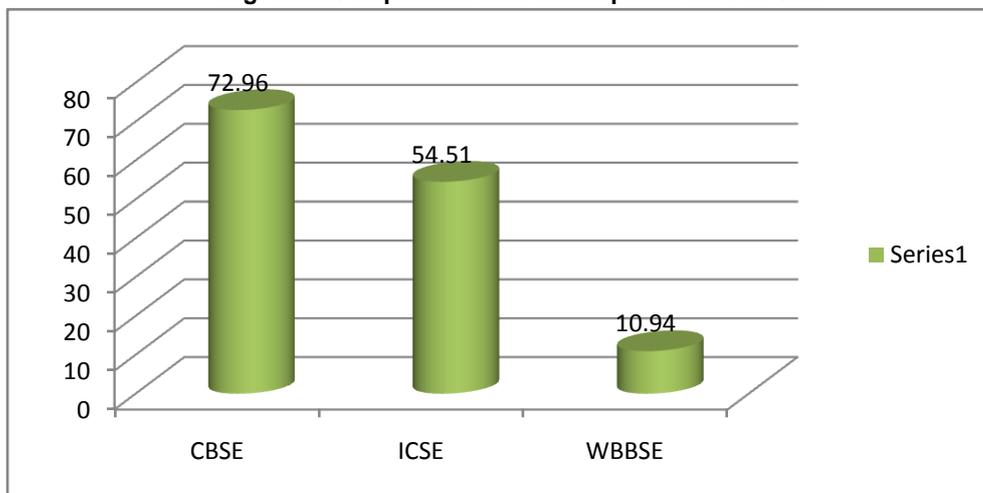
Recommendations

The planners, administrators and policy makers should pay their attention on the importance of the school libraries as these perform the most vital role in teaching-learning process. But the findings of the present survey yield some pessimistic pictures. In a nutshell, the recommendations include:

1. The school libraries of different school boards/councils should be provided with adequate and current reading materials in order to meet the needs of the users.
2. The school libraries should subscribe adequate number of current magazines and periodicals.
3. The libraries should be provided with the necessary facilities and services to the students to fulfill their requirements.
4. The owners of the schools and Government should employ sufficient professional library staff so that they can render quality services to its users.
5. There should be adequate annual budget for library development to meet the minimum standard for a school library.
6. The Principals of the schools should release the funds timely for the purchase of reading materials and necessary tools required for technical process.
7. The school library should be planned as per the standards. More area should allot for stack room and reading room.
8. Separate sections of the library should be organized for easy access of information.
9. Visit and inspection can be made time to time by the board representatives.

Conclusion

A school is a part of a large education system and functions independently as a small unit in learning programs and helps in the school curriculum. It has an unique identification in school community and serves more than its capabilities. In the digital and paperless society, libraries of all sectors have been faced greatest challenges. To some extend school libraries are also suffering from some crises. The findings of the study indicate that school libraries are not functioning according to the standard guidelines and resource materials are not sufficient to the users. The library facilities and services are far from being satisfactory. All essentials like proper physical facilities, professional manpower, proper organization and basic adequate funds are lacking far behind the optimum level. The WBBSE school libraries do not even fulfill the minimum standards of library. Secondary school libraries in Haldia Municipal area need urgent attention. Authorities have to come forward with open mind to solve the problems of school libraries. It is high time that the recommendations of various commissions, committees and standards regarding school library are revisited.

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