ALL INDIA SEMINAR ON SCHOOL LIBRARIES

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Gives the objective and the finding of the All India Seminar on School Libraries (1962). The points covered are: Creative Vs Transmissive Education; Correlation of Classroom Work and Library Work; Stimulation of Reading Habit; Group Library Work; Library Extension Work; Initiation of Pupils; Library Requirements—Reading Materials, Staff, and Finance; Library Co-ordination of Children's Books; Library Room and its Equipment; Establishment of a Book Bank for free use of poor pupils; Inclusion of Library Science in the training course for teachers; Proper Classification and Cataloguing of the books in a school library; Progressive reform in the examination system; and immediately beginning with some papers allowing use of books while answering them.

1 INTRODUCTION

An All-India Seminar on School Libraries was organised by Prof T K N Menon, Director of Extension Programmes for Secondary Education (National Council of Education Research in Training) of the Ministry of Education of the Government of India. At his invitation Dr S R Ranganathan worked as the Director of the Seminar. The Seminar was from 6 to 15 March 1962. It was held at the Documentation Research and Training Centre, 696, Malleswaram, Bangalore-3. There were 33 participants made up of 19 Graduates, 7 Intermediates, and 7 School Finals. Twelve of the graduates had a Degree in teaching. The group included 9 other teachers and 9 certified librarians of whom one was a Drawing Master and another a Drill Master. Fourteen of the Constituent States were represented.

2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Seminar were taken to be:

1 To examine the effect, on teaching technique, of the proposed policy to bring into school all the children of school-going age;

2 To examine the part to be played by the school library in the new situation created by bringing into school all the children of school-going age;

3 To examine the part to be played by the school library in the attempt to eliminate the wastage and the ineffectiveness of school education even for the children now in school;

4 To examine the possible methods of correlating classroom work and library work;

5 To explore the ways and means for lifting the famine of children's books in the language of the country;

6 To explore all that should be done to make the school library function up;

7 To consider the steps to be taken to have an adequate number of trained librarians

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for school work and to suggest the methods for tiding over the difficulty of shortage in trained school librarians.

3 FINDINGS OF THE SEMINAR IN THE VARIOUS AREAS OF DISCUSSION

31 Area A
Creative Vs Transmissive Education

A1 To educate one and all, it is necessary to replace mass teaching by individual instructions. This will have to be done in progressive stages, in view of the re-adjustment in outlook need.

A2 "Individual Instruction" does not necessarily imply teaching each pupil by himself. Groups of three to six may be possible. Again, each group may have to be homogeneous for certain learning contexts and heterogeneous for others.

A3 As a first step towards achieving individual instruction, the teaching in the classroom should abstain from giving all the facts to children in the form of notes, but should stimulate their curiosity and make them find out in the library the facts and information needed to satisfy their curiosity.

32 Area B
Correlation of Classroom Work and Library Work

B1 The prescribed text-books should be only the starting point, and the pupils should be trained in reading a variety of books covering the range of knowledge covered by the prescribed text-books.

B2 Pupils should be made to use the library in preparing for the formal work in the classroom, in making a parallel study of the subject in diverse books, and in the follow-up study after classroom work.

B3 To make the finding in B2 yield the intended result of making education effective, the practice of fixing the quantum of the syllabus for each formal period of 45 minutes or so in such a way that the entire syllabus is covered within the year, should be given up.

B31 The syllabus should be divided into weekly or fortnightly quanta instead of daily quanta. In other words, a week or fortnight should be used as the unit of time instead of a period. During the first 30 minutes of the periods assigned to the subject in a week or fortnight, the quantum of the week or the fortnight should be presented to the pupils in an inspiring talk suggesting the points which the children should pursue in the library individually or in groups, as the case may be, under the guidance of the librarian and the teacher.

B32 During the last 30 minutes of the periods assigned to the subject in the week or the fortnight, the facts gathered by the pupils in the intervening part of periods and the results obtained by them should be digested collectively in the class and the final clinching of the findings should be made.

B33 In the intervening of the periods assigned to the subject in the week, the pupils should be made to work in the library in homogeneous or heterogeneous groups according to the nature of the subject, the teacher and the librarian helping them but largely keeping themselves in the background.

B4 Before the inspiring and initiating talk mentioned in B3 is given, the pupils should be given previous notice of the quantum of the subject to be pursued in the week or the fortnight and they should be encouraged to read for themselves and come prepared to follow the talk intelligently and participatively.

B5 The work of the pupils in the library between the initial talk and the final clinching talk in the week or the fortnight constitutes the parallel study.

B6 After the clinching is done at the end of the week or the fortnight, the pupils should be encouraged to pursue the subject further for themselves in the library. This is follow-up work.

B7 The teachers and the librarians should consult each other as often and necessary in:

1 The selection of books for the school library;
2 The formation of special topical sequence of the books in the library; and
3 Making the preparatory, parallel, and follow-up study of pupils pleasurable and effective.

B71 It will be helpful if the selection of books is made at least at the end of each of the three terms in the year, to enable the librarian to procure the books and make them available at the beginning of the succeeding term. In this selection of books, the teachers should anticipate the possible requirements in developing the lessons in the next term. The librarian should have a good comprehension of the books available in the market in the diverse subjects and in the several standards likely to be needed for use by children.

B72 By the formation of topical sequence is meant bringing together the books bearing on any particular topic likely to engage the attention of the pupils in a given week or month, as the case may be, depending on the local, national and international events occurring during the period. The topical sequence should be kept in a prominent place in the library and be fitted with an arresting bay-guide. When the use of the books in the sequence wanes out, they should be restored to the normal place in the stack-room.

B73 The librarian and the teacher concerned should draw up a list for preparatory, parallel, and follow-up study, depending on the stimulus to be given in class-room work. Such a list should be duplicated. The library staff should be alert in giving access to the pupils to these books as and when they come. To satisfy the needs of all the pupils as many different books as possible should be included in the list on the subject concerned. Whenever, only a few pages of a book are relevant, those pages should be indicated.

33 Area C
Stimulating of Reading Habit

C1 To give the pupils capacity for self-education all through life, ample opportunity should be created by the school for the formation of reading habit for getting information and knowledge for recreation, and for inspiration, as may be needed from time to time. Books variegated in style and standard and form of exposition should be provided on each subject, for this purpose.

C2 To facilitate full use of the school library, it should be kept open outside the formal working hours of the school and on all holidays including the vacation.

C21 The argument that children will be deprived of plays and games by keeping the library open outside school hours on working days is not totally valid, as only about 10% will go to the library on any day, and no pupil need come more than once a fortnight. This is a statistical finding.

C22 During a vacation, the school library of each locality should admit pupils of other places holidaying in that locality to use its resources. This should be done by all localities on a reciprocal basis.

C3 Till individual instruction replaces mass teaching, provision should be made in the formal time-table for library hours for each class, so that the pupils can learn in the atmosphere of the freedom of the library, instead of being continually restricted by the regimentation incidental today in the formal teaching hours.

C4 The pupils should be trained in the maintenance of library diaries in a suitable form. Three diaries are possible: One may be for a record of the books read and the number of days and hours taken to read them. Another diary may contain new words, phrases, and terms of expression which he likes to use in his own talks and writings. This diary may also give the names of the characters or the ideas or the scientific facts which impress the pupil and which the pupil would like to make use of at a later time. The third diary may contain extracts from literary pieces, from inspired writings and from classics which the pupil thinks are worth possessing. This diary will be a life-long possession of value. It is not meant that all the diaries would be written by all the pupils at all times. But it will be conducive to good habit to insist upon the first
diary and leaving the maintenance of the other two diaries to the discretion and the mood of each pupil.

C5 One of the methods for stimulating the habit of purposive reading in pupils is to conduct a reading habit competition for each class based on each pupil writing out a tiny book as it were, after pursuing the approved subjects, with the aid of library books and observation outside the school, during the first half of the year and the preceding vacation. The authors of the best note-books may be given prizes in a splashy public function.

C6 Preparation and maintenance of scrap books made of cuttings of illustrations and text-matter from discarded magazines may also help pupils to read purposively and to assemble what they read into a meaningful whole.

34 Area D
Group Library Work

D1 Till individual instruction replaces mass teaching, each class should be given an opportunity to do at least one project each term by team-work.

D2 The pursuit of work in groups in the library in the process of completing an assigned project will be of immense help in developing the habit of purposeful reading among the pupils. It will also accustom them to share among themselves equitably the task of collecting the different facts and information from the library resources. This group-work in library will foster team-spirit among the pupils, even as groups in the play-field do.

35 Area E
Library Extension Work

E1 By library extension work is meant, the library stepping out into the fringe outside its traditional activities and service, in order to attract the pupils to the use and resources in the library.

E2 For the lower age-groups, the dominant form of library extension work is story-hours at convenient intervals. Stories should be so told that the pupils are stimulated to read books giving those stories.

E3 For the upper age-groups, the dominant forms of library extension work are library talks, discussions, debates, etc. This should be so conducted that the pupils are stimulated to use the library effectively both in preparing themselves for the extension work and in the follow-up work likely to be suggested by the extension work.

E4 For all the classes taken together, the school should arrange for at least one drama each term. In the preparation for its performance, the pupils would be given full opportunity to make use of the library in order to find out all the knowledge and the facts needed to make the drama a success—theme, the words, costume, putting up the stage, management problems such as sale of tickets, accounts, etc.

E5 The school library should at convenient intervals arrange for book-exhibitions, so as to enable each pupil to find his favourite books. The exhibition may include new books as well as old books which have been forgotten but which are still of value. It may also be an auxiliary to any other form of extension work.

E6 The school library should utilise the occurrence of local, state, national, international, and scientific events in the course of a year to prepare reading lists on them, to arrange exhibition of books on them, and to bring in all other forms of library extension work pertinent to them.

36 Area F
Initiation of Pupils

F1 The school library should familiarise the pupils with the make-up of a book, the library catalogue, the shelf arrangement by subjects according to a preferred scheme of classification.

F2 The school library should familiarise the pupils with the library civics, library hygiene, and respect to the library rules both by enforcing them in a kind but firm manner and by explaining the value of them at opportune stages.
F3 The initiation of pupils in the use of the library should be done on the concentric plan of teaching. Perhaps, three or four cycles may be necessary in the school career of a pupil. The contents of each cycle should be suited to the level of maturity of the pupils taking the instruction in that cycle.

F4 The school library should utilise the innate urge of children to do and to imitate their elders by taking their help in the arrangement of books on the shelf, in the circulation, and in replacing the used books on the shelf.

37 Area G
Library Requirements—Reading Materials, Staff, and Finance

G1 Each school library should endeavour to provide not less than 20 books—other than the prescribed text-books—per pupil.

G2 Each school library should acquire each year not less than 2 books—other than the prescribed text-books—per pupil.

G3 The annual expenditure for each school on its library staff should be equal to that on reading materials.

G4 For a school of 560 pupils—with 2 divisions for each of 7 classes—the minimum full-time library staff to work the library in single shift during the days on which the school works should be:

1. One graduate-librarian with B Lib Sc Degree or Post-Graduate Diploma in Library Science;
2. One semi-professional; and
3. One unskilled person.

If the library works—as it should—in 2 shifts a day and all the days of the year, the above staff should be multiplied by $2\frac{2}{3}$.

G5 The status of the trained graduate-librarian should be the same as that of the trained graduate teacher. He should be a member of the teaching faculty of the school and his salary-scale also should be the same as that of the trained graduate teacher.

Similarly, the semi-professional librarian in the school should be on par with that of secondary trained teacher.

G6 Until there is a sufficient number of trained school librarians, it may be useful for a visiting librarian with a Bachelor's Degree in Library Science to be appointed to have charge of the school libraries in each specified areas, each of which may employ for the time being semi-professionals or part-time teacher-librarians.

G7 Whenever a teacher is employed as a part-time librarian, half his time should be released for work in the library and he should be paid a special allowance.

G8 To give efficient library service to school children, to cultivate in them reading habit, and to make individual instruction possible, a school library should provide a minimum of Rs. 14 per pupil per year—Rs. 7 for reading materials and Rs. 7 for service personnel.

G9 In the present tax-pattern in our country, the annual library fund of a school should be borne by the proceeds of the library fees collected from the pupils, the annual contribution of the Management, and the annual grant from the State Government in the ratio of one:one:four (1:1:4).

G91 In the present tax-pattern in our country, the Union Government should provide all the capital expenditure of a school library.

38 Area H
Library Co-ordination & Co-operation

H1 It is uneconomical for each school library to deem itself to be an independent unit. It is conducive to national economy if a few libraries cooperate with one another in the following manner:

H11 Pool the annual book-funds together;
H12 Make book-selection jointly; and
H13 Determine the number of copies each book needed for the pool. It need not be the same for all books.

H14 Subject to each school having a certain permanent collection of reference books and
text-books, treat as a common property all the other books for general study.

H15 Classify, catalogue, and do every other processing of all the books in the pool in one of the libraries.

H16 Circulate the books other than the permanent collection among the libraries in the pool.

H2 The number of libraries forming the pool, as mentioned in H1, will depend upon the total annual book-fund increases. But even in the most favourable conditions, a pool may be obliged to have at least 5 libraries. Perhaps at present even about 20 libraries may have to form a pool.

H3 The pooling system should be so worked that eventually a Central School Library is established in each district and in each city with a population of 1,00,000 or more and is put in charge of the administration of the book-fund, processing, and circulation of the books for the school libraries in its area.

H4 As and when a state has got a library act and a State Central Library gets established, the classification and cataloguing of the books for all the Indian books to be bought for the schools in the state should be taken over by the State Central Library. This will secure for the state a saving of 79% in library personnel without loss of efficiency.

H5 Until the schemes of co-ordination and co-operation outlined in H1 - H4 are brought into effect, the schools which are near one another may have some scheme of central library loan.

H6 Until there is a sufficient number of trained school librarians, it may be useful for a visiting librarian with a Bachelor's Degree in Library Science to be appointed to have charge of the school libraries in each specified area each of which may employ for the time being semi-professionals only.

391 Area J
Stimulation of Production of Children's Books

J1 The experience gained in the survey of children's books in 1957 and of children's use of books in 1960 made in the Madras State indicates that the programme of production of children's books will be better done if it is based on similar surveys in each of the other States or linguistic regions, as the case may be.

J2 There is need to make an objective observation and an experimental study of the readability of children's books from the following angles:

1 Type size;
2 Proportion of white and black on each open page;
3 Margin;
4 Colour of the paper;
5 Format
6 Vocabulary to suit different psychological levels;
7 Length of sentence;
8 Proportion of illustrations—coloured and otherwise to the text for different psychological levels;
9 Provision of index;
10 Form of exposition, such as story-form and dramatic form;
11 Standard of exposition to suit different psychological levels; and
12 The number of words—length of the book—to suit different psychological levels.

J3 An experimental study should be made about the way in which a child picks up the idea in a printed book—is it letter by letter, or word by word, or in groups of words conveying an ultimate thought unit.

J4 An investigation should be made to find out whether any reform in the scripts of the different languages in the country should be made and can be made, giving due weight to easy reading for children, neo-literates, and adults, and the technological aspect of the production of types and of composition, particularly machine-composition.

J5 The National Book Trust should promote the production of children's books in the different languages of India, using the same blocks in view of the cost of making blocks, ineffectiveness of children's books without a profusion of illustrations, and the better return which well-illustrated books given on the national resources spent on the production of books.
J6 A possible method of accelerating the advent of the free play of supply and demand in the sphere of children’s books is for the Department of Libraries or Education, as the case may be, of each State buying in bulk the children’s books of approved standard and distributing them to the school libraries in lieu of part of the Government’s libraries grant.

J7 The teaching profession and the library profession should work out a scheme in which:

1 Individual schools probe into the subject-fields and the levels of standards which do not have a sufficient number of children’s books;

2. The results of such probing are cumulated by the professional-educational and library Associations of the States; and

3 The National Book Trust digests and consolidates the recommendations of the different State Organisations and promotes the production of children’s books in the subject-fields and in the levels of standards demanding them.

J8 The selection of books for the award of prizes is better done if the books are passed through three filters:

1 Firstly, the books that are sold most should be listed;

2 Secondly, out of this list, a reduced list should be made of the books that get circulated most from school libraries; and

3 Thirdly, in its turn, this reduced list should be examined by a committee of responsible persons to eliminate books of an objectionable nature.

The best of the books passing through all these filters may be given prizes. This involves a more objective and impersonal method than the practice of a few persons assessing the books at the manuscript stage or after it is printed.

K2 It is desirable that each school takes the advice of the Library Buildings, Fittings and Furniture Sectional Committee (BDC/27) of the Indian Standards Institution before giving sanction for putting up its library building and making all the furniture and fittings, in view of the experience gained already that in the present stage of our country the subtle but essential points in the standards prescribed by the Indian Standards Institution are often missed when they are implemented by individual agencies.

392 Area K
Library Room and its Equipment

K1 The library room or the independent library building, as the case may be, of a school should conform to the standards laid by the Library Buildings, Fittings and Furniture Sectional Committee (BDC/27) of the Indian Standards Institution, which is the statutory national body engaged in establishing standards and revising them from time to time, in order to secure national economy and to eliminate avoidable wastage.

K2 It is desirable that each school takes the advice of the Library Buildings, Fittings and Furniture Sectional Committee (BDC/27) of the Indian Standards Institution before giving sanction for putting up its library building and making all the furniture and fittings, in view of the experience gained already that in the present stage of our country the subtle but essential points in the standards prescribed by the Indian Standards Institution are often missed when they are implemented by individual agencies.

393 Area L
Withdrawal and Loss of Books

L1 Worn out books should be withdrawn from year to year, as books which have a frail body are bound to be worn out after being used for reading by about 500 persons.

L11 Before rebinding a well-thumbed book, care should be taken to see whether it is cheaper to rebind it or to buy a fresh copy.

L12 Books whose thought-content is outmoded either in its facts or in its appeal should be weeded out.

L2 Open access should be given to all books other than those which are declared to be rare or weak to fall off if jostled about as in open access.

L21 Kindness and genial help in the selection of books and the incidental presence of the library staff in the stack part of the library in order to help the children, will minimise mutilation of books in an open access library.

L3 A properly designed control region with gates controlled by the library staff and kept in good repair at all times will minimise loss of books in an open access library.
There is bound to be some loss so long as there is a trace of criminal urge in society. The book-thieves are negligibly small in number when compared with the honest child-readers.

It is wrong to penalise the many honest persons by denying open access to them, because of society having not yet found out any method to detect effectively and to eliminate persons with criminal habits.

It is wrong to make the librarian pay for the few books lost in an open access library, even as it is taken to be wrong to ask the police to pay for property stolen from citizens.

As the world's average stands to-day, loss of one book for every one thousand books issued out is written off, as it is considered to be adequately compensated for by the increased use of books by the citizens before the book goes out of date in its thought-content.

The provision in section L5 should not be taken by the library staff as a licence to slacken their vigilance work.

The provision in section L5 does not prevent a Local Library Authority from making the necessary investigation and punishing if found necessary any member of the staff suspected to be negligent or given to abusing the trust vested in him.

It is desirable for each school to establish a book-bank from which poorer pupils can borrow free of cost.

Library Science should be included as one of the optional subjects for teachers under training, both at the Post-graduate level and at the under-graduate level. The course should be such that the subject covers at least half of a question paper—requires 1½ hours for answering them.

Teachers in charge of libraries should be given sufficient relief from teaching.

Teachers who are in charge of libraries should be given facilities to undergo a semi-professional course in library science in some approved library schools.

Each school library should provide books and periodicals on library science.

Seminar for teachers or librarians of educational institutions should be conducted during the vacation and not during term time as the latter affects the normal work of the institution to the disadvantage of the pupils.

Each training college should establish, maintain, and give proper library service to the pupils in the model schools or the practising schools, as the case may be, attached to it.

The findings of this seminar should be implemented in school libraries without undue delay.

The reading and kindred material in each school library should be classified and catalogued according to a scheme of classification and a code of cataloguing which are capable of handling the universal knowledge with special attention to India's development in thought and to books produced and published in India.

It is desirable to promote the adoption of a uniform classification scheme and cataloguing code in each constituent state and in the country as a whole, if possible, in order to enable pupils to change over without unnecessary difficulty from one school library to another and from school library to any public library, higher academic library and any other kind of library.

In view of the necessity to change over from mass teaching and memory-filling to individual instruction and to the development of the pupils' capacity to read for themselves, to learn for themselves, and to meet new situations in life arising from time to time and in view of the need to give the proper place to library work in schools, it is desirable to change the present system of examination as the only method of measuring achievement. As a transitory measure part of the examination may be conducted in small groups who are allowed to make use of books or the library as a whole during the time of examination.