

Dynamic School Libraries; Activities to Foster Library Skills

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Abstract: *This paper attempts to bring out the importance of learning activities conducted in School Libraries in the overall progress of students. A school library as strong pillars supports the pursuit of excellence and wholesome development of students. A survey has been conducted among School Librarians all over India to analyse the awareness about such activities during their library instructions. The variety and pattern of activities done also was studied. Although it is comparatively a new concept for school libraries in India, the learning activities in libraries give students an opportunity to review, remake and tinker, and thereby widening the horizons of their creativity. Such blended learning environs give School Libraries a more prominent role in the knowledge and skill building process.*

Keywords: Library Activity, Learning Activity, Creative Skills, School Libraries

1. Introduction

Libraries can be defined as heart of an educational institution, where students take control of their learning by discovering, analysing, and sharing information. When it comes to school libraries, they are a crucial element that give children the opportunity to explore the world of knowledge and acquire the key skills of reading, organising knowledge and basics of research. Learning activities conducted as part of school library instructions, help students to get accustomed with their library resources and procedures. Library activities are helpful to integrate a learning culture, secular values and manifest idea in their minds. The inquiry based learning facilitated by such activities helps to engage students as they formulate questions conduct further research on it and analyse the results to reach their own conclusions. In this process they are trained to inquire, generate ideas, conduct investigations and explain what all concepts and information they gathered. It may take some time for the school libraries in India to embrace this new concept of 'activity oriented library instruction', but it is high time that we need to reconsider this transition of libraries from silent zones to active learning centres.

2. Literature Reviews

The want of research papers related to school library activities prompted this research study. This paper aims to fill the gap in this area and can form a good baseline for future research studies in this realm. Those available published papers related to this study were reviewed and a questionnaire was formulated based on the information gathered.

Diana Rendina (2016) in her article '6 Active Learning Spaces Your Library Should Have' says that active learning spaces in school libraries facilitates an engaging learning atmosphere. She differentiates the types of activity spaces like small group activity areas, community activity areas,

maker space areas, technology rich activity spaces, solitary activity spaces etc.

Mirna W. Lotfy et. al. (2022) specifies the importance of academic libraries as informal learning spaces. The article analyses the challenges faced by libraries to meet the needs of contemporary academic community.

Savita N. Nayak (2016) in her paper 'Foster with School Libraries: Impact on Intellectual, Mental, Social and Educational Development of a Child' brings out the necessity of school library as a centre for developing inquiry learning which in turn builds knowledge and confidence in children. She also points out the impact school libraries can have on a child's achievements and holistic development.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) through its publication 'Library as a Resource Centre' provides its insight on School Libraries. The material provides a description about the various activities that could be incorporated to motivate students to utilise library resources fruitfully.

3. Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to create awareness about the significance of library activities among School Library professionals in India. In most of the schools abroad library activities are mandatory part of their School Library curriculum. It is high time that School Libraries working under national and state boards recognise the impact these activities can make in moulding our younger generation. Such activities during their School Library hours help to give a strong foundation for communication, reading, literary, research and knowledge building in children.

4. Methodology

This research is intended to bring out the importance of activities in school libraries that can support the pursuit of

excellence through knowledge and skill building in younger generation. A survey using Google form was conducted among School Librarians all over India. The questions in the survey covered the following aspects:

- 1) Awareness of School Librarians about the significance of activities done as part of library instruction.
- 2) The impact of school library activities in supporting learning and knowledge building.
- 3) The variety of activities done in School Libraries at various levels

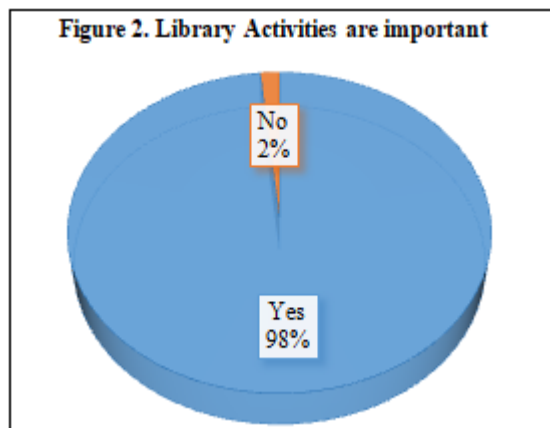
The survey was totally online and the data collected was stored digitally for further studies. A few telephonic conversations also were done for the survey. The questions given were selected after consultation with School Librarians across different educational boards in India. Analysis of data, interpretation and the concluding points were derived with the help of Microsoft Word and Excel tools.

Data Collection and Analysis

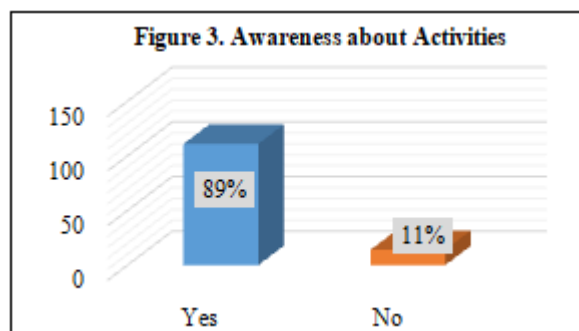
To conduct a study researchers have created a Google form with close and open ended question. Google form link was shared among school library professionals at India level on different platform such as WhatsApp groups, Facebook, e-mails as well as personal talks and messages too. Total 125 responses have been received from library professions working in schools all over India under different educational boards. Researches considered all the 125 responses for their study and based on that analysis have been carried out.

As Google form for data collection was sent to school librarians irrespective of the boards under which they are working, the above figure reflects data from different school affiliation boards in India. Here it is revealed that, It is revealing most of the responses (98 out of 125) were from CBSE schools. It counts to about 78% of the responses received. 11% (14 out of 125) were from ICSE/ISC boards

while responses received from different State Government boards, IB, IGSCE/GSCE together computed less than 5%.



The figure 2 indicates that 123 (98%) school library professionals believes, activities done during the library periods are helpful to enhance reading and library skills.



This figure shows that around 90% library professionals are aware about the different kinds of activities which can be conducted during school library periods and they are incorporating such activities in their library curriculum.

Table 1: Activities conducted for grade I to V

SN	Name of Activity	Description	No.
1	Digital Citizenship	Introduction to cyber space, ethics, manners and safe practices	1
2	Pre & Post Story Activity	Students do a pre - story activity that is linked to the story and a post story activity to check for understanding.	1
3	Story Telling	Students will tell a story on given topic like Kindness, Friendship, and Honesty.	30
4	Word Search	Words will be given to all the students and they will find meaning from dictionary.	3
5	Book - Mark Making	Students will make different types of book - marks.	9
6	Collage Work	Students do collage work using images, photographs, magazines or newspapers as well as with words.	1
7	Favourite Book Character	Students write, draw or play the role of their favourite character.	12
8	Pick - up and Read	Pick - up and read with any topic/concept given.	1
9	Finding Words	Finding similar words and new words from their book and write in their note book.	1
10	Book Review	Students will review a book.	4
11	Spellathon	A spelling game to see how many words you can make from a given set of alphabets.	1
12	Dictionary Pairs Challenge	A group activity where each pair of students are given a worksheet with 5 words and they need to write guided words or phrases, meanings, and plurals.	2
13	Making Word Ladder	Making small words from bigger words or sentences.	1
14	See - Think - Wonder	Display artefacts or facts generally unknown to kids, which they see, read and write. If they want to know more, they need to search books or other resources.	1
15	Book Talk	Discuss about their favourite books.	6
16	Read - aloud	Read a book and discuss words, their meanings, synonyms, making new sentences.	14
17	Poetry/Song/Story Writing	Keep 2 to 3 objects and ask students to create short stories, poems or songs based on that.	6
18	Flip / Bend the End	Ask students to tell a story with flipping/bending the end.	2
19	Readers' Theatre	Children are allotted different characters of a play and are provided with the script of that	2

		play. Each child reads his/her dialogue with relevant expressions.	
20	Author Meet/Talk	Arrange meeting with well - known children litterateurs.	1
21	Crossword/ Puzzle/ Quiz	Crosswords / puzzles to improve language skills.	3
22	Collective Story Making	Each student contributes one line to build a story.	1
23	Memory Game	Students are shown some books arranged in a separate room. When they come back they have to recall the titles of those books.	1
24	I Know My Author	Making a chart or a big dice with the information written on each side with author's photo.	1
25	Book Charade	Enacting or expressing to find out title of the books.	1
26	Cover Page Designing	Design a cover page for your favourite book.	1
27	Book Wish list	Students have to prepare a wish list of the books which they would like to read.	1
28	Picture Description	Students describe the picture according to their imagination and create a story with that.	1
29	Story Pyramid	Students have to write the storyline in the form of a pyramid.	2
30	Book Challenge/Club	Students read and challenge others to read.	2
31	Making Story Face	Student have to draw a big face and write the name of the author, title, moral of the story etc. inside that.	1
32	Seal the Feelings	Discussion about character's feelings and how the author has expressed the characters' feelings in the story.	1
33	Reading Partner	Students from two different classes form a group and help each other to read.	1
		Total	116

The above table gives different kind of activities which are often conducted by the respondents in grades I to V. Total 116 (92%) library professionals have suggested around 33 library activities. 116 responses out of 125 can be interpreted as, remaining ones may not be taking classes in 1 to 5 or they may not have primary grades in their schools. Story Telling activity is the most common. About 25% of the

professionals conduct this, while 'Read - aloud' is preferred by 12%, Favourite Book Characters by 10%, Book Mark Making, Book Talk and Poetry/Song Writing favoured by around 5%. Some other unique, creative and interesting activities which are carried out are also listed. But such activities are done by less than 5% of school library professionals.

Table 2: Activities which are conducted in grade VI to VIII.

SN	Name of Activity	Description	No.
1	Power Point Presentation	Power Point presentation on a given topic to enhance their speaking, listening, and creative skills.	3
2	Paraphrasing	Students have to paraphrase a given paragraph which will help them to improve their language skills.	1
3	Story Club	After reading a given story, children are divided into groups with different roles to perform like culture connector, word wizard, grammar finder etc.	1
4	Book Talk / Discussion	Discuss about their favourite books.	13
5	Story Character Sketch	Students describe about their favourite story character through posters.	4
6	Props Activity	Students will create different props on given books or authors.	1
7	Book Review	Students will review the book which they read.	37
8	My Favourite Author/Book	Write about their favourite authors and books.	1
9	Word Search/Dictionary Skill	Words will be given to all students and they will find meanings from the dictionary.	3
10	Information Treasure Hunt	Students will find the way or answers with given clues. They will search for the required information and quote the source of the information.	4
11	Flip / Bend the End	Ask students to tell a story with flipping/bending the end.	1
12	Circle Time Reading	Reading books from different genres in groups and each group will create 5 questions each for a treasure hunt/quiz.	1
13	Author Meet/Talk	Arrange meeting with well - known children litterateurs.	1
14	Skit Performance	Performing skit based on their favourite scene from a book.	4
15	Favourite Book Character/Role Play	Students write, draw or play the role of their favourite character.	5
16	Quiz	Quiz related to books and authors.	6
17	Letter to Character	Write a letter to the most liked character and the least liked character.	1
18	Crossword/ Puzzle	Crossword / puzzle to improve their language skills.	1
19	Read & Grow/Read My Buddy	Group reading activities.	3
20	Guess the Book	Plot is shared from books and students identify the title.	1
21	Information Literacy	Reading out to children from various books and magazines so as to make them aware of different kinds of information resources.	3
22	Smart Reader/Reading Challenge	Best reader is selected after giving a page/story to a group of students.	4
23	Cover Page Designing	Design a cover page for your favourite book.	5
24	Spine Story	Allow student to search titles given on the spines of books in fiction section. Student will choose book titles and arrange in such a way that when you read all spine titles, it look like a small story.	1
25	Book Creator/Story Weaver	Create and publish your own storybook using tools like Story Weaver or Book Creator.	2
26	Bookathon	The more reading, the more points.	1
27	Making of Book - Mark	Students will make different types of book - marks.	2
28	Become Author	Students have to create their own story using the given phrases.	1
29	Cheese the News	Prepare and publish school newsletter.	1

30	Book Week	Doing different book activities in connection with World Book Day/National Library Week.	1
31	Taste the Book	After reading a book students will remark it as Sweet, Yummy, Bitter, Sour etc.	1
		Total	114

Table - 2 shows the various activities carried out by school library professionals in grade VI to VIII during their library classes. Out of the total 125, 114 professionals suggested 31 different activities for this category. The rest are not taking class in these grades. Book Review is the most popular activity as 32% have chosen it for their students belonging to

this category whereas Book Talks or Book Discussion is the next activity preferred with 11% votes. Apart from these Quiz, Role Plays, Cover Page Designing, Reading Challenge, Treasure Hunt and Story Character Sketch are popular among school librarians.

Table 3: Activities which are conducted in grade IX to XII

SN	Name of Activity	Description	No.
1	Speak About	Speaking on topics given during the library periods to improve speaking skills.	1
2	Citation lessons	How to cite reference sources.	1
3	Debates	Debates based on given topics.	6
4	Book Review/Critical Analysis	Students tell or write review about books.	25
5	Story Character Sketch	Students describe about their favourite story character through posters.	3
6	Authors collage	Students do collage work using images, photographs, magazines or newspapers as well as with words.	1
7	What next... story writing	Students will give new endings to stories.	4
8	Author of the Month	One author for each month will be selected and students should collect information about that author.	2
9	Story / Information Sharing	Students will share the information or story which they read.	1
10	Career Awareness	Guide the students about various career options.	2
11	Library Quiz	Quiz on various topics such as current affairs, books, science, history, popular culture etc.	2
12	Memory Game	Students are shown some books arranged in a separate room. When they come back they have to recall the titles of those books.	1
13	Explore Resources	Students may explore different kinds of primary and secondary sources of research.	4
14	Magazines Reviews/Reading	Do review/reading of magazine or periodicals.	3
16	Book/Group Discussion/Talk	Discuss/talk about their favourite characters/books within groups.	14
17	Reading Circle/Club	Children are divided into groups and given a short story to read. Each student has to play a specific role such as discussion leader, word master, culture connector, Summarizer etc.	3
18	Library Tours	Visit famous libraries nearby.	1
19	Research Activities	Students will do research work on given topics.	5
20	Skit Performance	Performing skits based on their favourite scene from a book.	1
22	Story/poem Writing/Weaving	Select few words from passages in the newspapers and create stories.	9
25	Plagiarism	Make the students understand about the plagiarism and various tools to check it.	2
26	Design Book Cover	Design a cover page for thier favourite book.	3
28	Comic Strip	Creating comic strips using various online tools.	1
29	Book v/s Movie discussion	Students will compare books and movies based on it.	1
30	Search Techniques	Teach them how to do effective search for any topic, how to find authentic sources and keyword search.	1
31	Applicative Conjunction	Correlating reading with their academics.	1
32	Teacher in Me	Students will be teaching basic English, local languages and basic maths through simple activities to school bus drivers, housekeeping staff and gardeners.	1
33	Author Meet/Talk	Arrange meeting with the well - known children literateurs.	2
34	Know Your Library	Students will be learning basics of classification, cataloguing, circulation and arrangement of books.	1
35	News Paper Clipping	Collecting important news and documenting it.	1
36	Refer - a - Book	Recommend a book to their friends and explain why it is recommended.	1
		Total	104

This table reveals a variety of activities shared by our library professionals which they practiced in grades IX to XII. Total 104 out of 125 professionals (83%) have cited their activities. Book Review or Critical Analysis of books is the most preferred one with 24% of professionals using it during their library periods. Group or Book Discussion is carried out by 13% and Story/Poem Writing is preferred by 8%. Other activities like Debates, What Next, Story Writing, Exploring Resources Online/Offline, Research activities etc. are employed by around 5% of the school library professionals.

5. Findings and Suggestions

- 1) 78% responses are received from library professionals of CBSE Schools. Hence this study mostly reflects the opinions and awareness about library activities in CBSE schools.
- 2) 98% of school library professionals agreed that conducting activities during library periods are helpful to enhance reading as well as library skills.
- 3) A good number of professionals (89%) are aware about the various library activities and they incorporate it in their library curriculum.

- 4) Story Telling and Read - aloud are the most preferred activities for students of grade 1 to 5. Many other amazing activities are also listed in this survey which can be experimented and implemented by our professional friends.
- 5) Book Talks or Discussions and Book Reviews are widely held activities among classes 6 to 8.
- 6) For classes 9 to 12, Critical Analysis and Book Discussions are widely accepted by library professionals.
- 7) Activities which train students in research projects, documentation of newspaper clippings, ethical use of information and creating awareness about plagiarism are highly useful during their higher education.
- 8) Activities like flipping the end of a story, cover page designing, character sketch and role plays are helpful to enhance the creativity, agility and imagination of students.

From of this study we found various interesting, inventive and novel activities which can be implemented during library hours. School Library professionals should always try innovative activities like those listed in the above tables to develop thinking, reading and writing skills of their students. All these activities facilitate the overall development of students by improving various life skills.

6. Conclusion

Library activities are very important to keep the students engaged. These activities are playing a significant role to equip students with skills and abilities to face the challenges offered by a highly competitive world. Sadly in many schools libraries are side - lined and library activities are not even considered as important elements of instruction. The innovative and creative abilities of students definitely require a nurturing environment to grow. Libraries make excellent learning environments for boosting such competencies. All the activities suggested by school librarians from different corners of our country are helpful to leverage the curiosity of students to explore more and make the maximum utilisation of their library. The ultimate aim of a school library should be to equip the students with the skills necessary to succeed in a constantly changing technological, social and economic environment.

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