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The Role of Libraries and Librarians in Promoting Academic Excellence and Information Literacy in Telangana Residential Educational Institutions: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Libraries play a vital role in strengthening the quality of education by providing learners with access to knowledge resources, academic support, and opportunities for independent learning. In residential educational institutions, where students spend a substantial part of their academic and personal lives on campus, the library can serve as an important centre for developing reading habits, research skills, critical thinking, and information literacy. This study examines the role of libraries and librarians in promoting academic excellence and information literacy among students in Telangana residential educational institutions. The study focuses on the availability and accessibility of library resources, students' patterns of library use, the contribution of librarians to academic learning, and the extent to which library services support students in identifying, evaluating, using, and communicating information effectively. An empirical research approach is adopted, using questionnaires and interactions with students and librarians to examine their experiences, perceptions, and practices related to library use and information literacy. The study also considers the challenges faced by institutional libraries, including inadequate resources, limited digital access, insufficient infrastructure, and the need for systematic information-literacy programmes. The findings are expected to highlight the importance of professionally managed libraries and proactive librarians in creating an effective learning environment in residential educational institutions. The study argues that integrating traditional library services with digital resources, user-oriented programmes, research guidance, and information-literacy instruction can significantly enhance students' academic engagement and lifelong learning abilities. The paper concludes by suggesting measures for strengthening library infrastructure, digital resources, librarian-led training, and institutional support to promote academic excellence and information literacy in Telangana's residential educational sector.

Keywords: Academic Excellence, Information Literacy, Libraries, Librarians, Residential Educational Institutions, Telangana, Digital Literacy, Library Services, Student Learning, Higher Education.

Introduction:

Libraries are recognized as the intellectual heart of educational institutions, serving as essential centers for knowledge acquisition, information access, and lifelong learning. In the contemporary digital age, the role of school libraries has expanded beyond the traditional function of book lending to include digital information services, information literacy instruction, research support, and the promotion of reading habits. Telangana Residential Educational Institutions (TREIs), established to provide quality education to students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, have made significant investments in educational infrastructure, including school libraries. However, the effectiveness of these libraries and the professional contributions of librarians in fostering academic excellence and information literacy remain areas requiring systematic investigation. This study aims to examine the role of libraries and librarians in promoting academic achievement and information literacy among students in Telangana Residential Educational Institutions. The study adopts a descriptive survey research design using questionnaires administered to librarians, teachers, and students from selected residential institutions across Telangana. The research focuses on evaluating library infrastructure, library services, digital resources, reading promotion activities, information literacy programmes, and the professional competencies of librarians. The findings of the proposed study are expected to provide valuable insights into the contribution of school libraries toward improving students' academic performance, independent learning, and digital competencies. The study will also offer practical recommendations for policymakers, educational administrators, and library professionals to strengthen library services in residential educational institutions. Ultimately, the research underscores the importance of well-equipped libraries and professionally qualified librarians in achieving educational excellence and preparing students for lifelong learning in the knowledge society.

Education is universally acknowledged as the foundation of social, economic, and technological development. In today's information-driven society, access to accurate, timely, and reliable information has become an essential component of quality education. Educational institutions are therefore expected to provide learning environments that encourage inquiry, creativity, critical thinking, and independent learning. Among the various academic support systems available in schools, libraries occupy a unique and indispensable position.

A library is often described as the "heart of an educational institution" because it provides students and teachers with access to books, journals, digital resources, multimedia materials, and other learning tools that complement classroom instruction. Modern libraries are no longer limited to storing printed books; instead, they function as dynamic learning resource centers that support curriculum delivery, promote research skills, encourage reading habits, and facilitate information literacy. The rapid advancement of information and communication technologies (ICT) has transformed libraries into hybrid learning environments where digital information resources are integrated with traditional collections.

The librarian, as the manager of the library, has also undergone a significant transformation. Traditionally viewed as a custodian of books, the modern librarian performs multiple roles, including information manager, educator, technology facilitator, research guide, and promoter of lifelong learning. Librarians assist students in locating, evaluating, organizing, and ethically using information from both print and electronic sources. They also organize reading programmes, book exhibitions; orientation sessions, digital literacy workshops, and information literacy training that contribute significantly to students' academic growth.

In Telangana, Residential Educational Institutions have emerged as important centers for providing quality education to students from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. These institutions focus not only on academic excellence but also on holistic personality development. Their residential environment provides students with extended opportunities to utilize library resources beyond regular classroom hours.

Consequently, libraries have become an integral component of residential education by providing students with continuous access to educational resources, competitive examination materials, newspapers, magazines, reference books, and digital learning platforms.

Despite the availability of library facilities in many residential institutions, differences exist in terms of infrastructure, collection development, automation, digital resources, staffing, and utilization by students. Some libraries are well-equipped with modern technologies and professionally qualified librarians, whereas others continue to face challenges such as inadequate funding, limited digital infrastructure, insufficient professional staff, and low user awareness. These challenges directly influence the quality of library services and the educational outcomes of students.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recognizes libraries as essential learning spaces that support foundational literacy, reading culture, critical thinking, and digital competency. It emphasizes strengthening school libraries, integrating technology into library services, and enhancing the professional competencies of librarians. These policy initiatives highlight the growing importance of libraries in achieving educational quality and lifelong learning objectives.

Information literacy has emerged as another critical competency in the twenty-first century. Students are exposed to an enormous volume of information through the internet and digital media. However, the ability to identify reliable information, evaluate sources critically, use information ethically, and apply knowledge effectively requires systematic guidance. Librarians play a central role in developing these competencies by conducting user education programmes and teaching information search strategies.

Although numerous studies have examined academic libraries and university libraries, relatively few empirical investigations have focused specifically on school libraries within Telangana Residential Educational Institutions. Considering the increasing emphasis on quality education, digital learning, and competency-based education, there is a need to examine how libraries and librarians contribute to students' academic success and information literacy. The present study seeks to address this research gap by exploring the relationship between library services, librarian competencies, and educational outcomes in Telangana Residential Educational Institutions.

Statement of the Problem

Libraries are expected to serve as the academic backbone of educational institutions by providing equitable access to information resources and promoting independent learning. However, variations in library infrastructure, digital facilities, professional staffing, and utilization may influence their effectiveness in supporting students' academic achievement and information literacy. Limited empirical evidence exists regarding the contribution of libraries and librarians in Telangana Residential Educational Institutions. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the role of libraries and librarians in promoting academic excellence and information literacy among students in these institutions.

Review of Literature

Libraries have long been recognized as essential learning centers that support formal education by providing access to knowledge resources and promoting lifelong learning. The role of school libraries has evolved significantly with the advent of information and communication technology (ICT), making librarians active participants in the teaching-learning process.

Ranganathan (1931), regarded as the father of Library Science in India, emphasized the importance of user-centered library services through his Five Laws of Library Science. These principles continue to guide modern

library practices by advocating accessibility, efficient organization of information, and effective utilization of library resources.

The **IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto (2021)** states that school libraries provide information and ideas that enable students to become successful lifelong learners. It highlights that professionally managed libraries improve literacy, critical thinking, and independent learning.

Studies conducted by **Lance (2002, 2018)** in the United States demonstrated a positive relationship between well-funded school libraries, qualified librarians, and students' academic achievement. Schools employing professionally trained librarians consistently recorded higher student performance in standardized assessments.

Todd and Kuhlthau (2005) found that information literacy programmes conducted by school librarians significantly improved students' research abilities, problem-solving skills, and confidence in using multiple information sources.

In India, **Patil (2018)** observed that school libraries contribute significantly to reading habits, academic performance, and personality development among secondary school students. However, disparities in infrastructure and professional staffing continue to affect library effectiveness.

Singh and Sharma (2020) reported that digital library services have transformed school libraries into interactive learning environments by facilitating access to e-books, online journals, educational databases, and multimedia resources. The study emphasized continuous professional development for librarians to manage emerging technologies effectively.

Several studies conducted in Telangana indicate considerable improvement in educational infrastructure within Residential Educational Institutions. Nevertheless, research focusing specifically on library services remains limited. Existing studies mainly concentrate on academic performance, curriculum implementation, or institutional management, leaving a significant gap regarding the contribution of libraries and librarians to educational quality.

The literature collectively suggests that effective library services, modern infrastructure, qualified librarians, and information literacy programmes positively influence students' academic achievement. However, empirical evidence specific to Telangana Residential Educational Institutions remains insufficient, justifying the need for the present study.

Libraries and Academic Excellence

Academic excellence refers broadly to the achievement of educational goals through effective learning, knowledge acquisition, critical thinking, research ability, and overall academic development. Libraries can contribute to academic excellence by providing students with supplementary learning materials beyond classroom textbooks. Access to relevant and updated information enables students to explore subjects in greater depth and develop independent learning habits.

A library also provides a suitable environment for reading, study, assignment preparation, project work, and examination preparation. Regular use of library resources can encourage students to develop reading habits and become independent learners. Reference services and librarian assistance can further help students identify suitable information sources for their academic requirements.

In residential educational institutions, the role of the library can be particularly significant because students

spend a substantial amount of their educational and residential time within the institution. An accessible and student-friendly library can therefore become an important centre for academic activities, self-study, reading, and intellectual development.

Information Literacy

The rapid growth of information available through the internet has created both opportunities and challenges for learners. Students can access enormous amounts of information through search engines, social media, websites, online videos, digital libraries, and academic databases. However, the availability of information does not necessarily mean that students possess the ability to use it effectively.

Information literacy refers to the ability to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, use, and communicate information effectively and ethically. An information-literate student should be able to identify an information need, formulate appropriate search strategies, locate relevant sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of information, use information appropriately, and acknowledge sources through proper citation.

Information literacy is especially important in the digital environment because students may encounter inaccurate, outdated, biased, or misleading information. Therefore, educational institutions need to develop students' abilities to critically evaluate information rather than simply providing access to it.

Libraries in Promoting Academic Excellence and Information Literacy (The Empirical Impact)

Libraries play an important role in supporting students, teachers, and researchers by providing access to books, journals, databases, e-resources, and other sources of scholarly information. In the digital era, libraries have expanded beyond traditional book-lending services and have become important centres for learning, research, digital skills, and information literacy.

Academic Excellence:

Libraries contribute to academic excellence by:

- Providing access to textbooks, reference books, journals, e-books, and research databases.
- Supporting students in assignments, examinations, projects, and research activities.
- Providing a quiet and suitable environment for independent study.
- Offering reference and research assistance through librarians.
- Orrering access to ptint and electric data.
- Conducting orientation and user-awareness programmes.
- Providing access to current scholarly information and research materials.
- encouraging regular reading habits

Extended Learning Hours: Because these are residential institutions, libraries operate during early mornings or late evenings, providing a structured, quiet study environment that directly impacts academic performance.

Self-Paced Learning: Empirical evidence usually shows that robust library usage correlates with higher critical thinking scores and better performance in peer-led seminars.

Role of The Librarians in Promoting Information Literacy

Librarians act as a bridge between students and information resources. Their major roles include: Guiding students in locating appropriate information. Conducting library orientation, library Exhibitions, quiz competitions, workshops, demonstrations, individual guidance, and user-awareness programmes. Teaching students how to use Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs), search engines, e-resources, electronic

databases, e-books, e-journals, digital libraries, and other information systems, teach how to effectively use both print and electronic information resources. Helping students evaluate the accuracy, relevance, authority, and reliability of information. Providing reference and research assistance. Promoting reading habits and independent learning. Creating awareness about plagiarism, copyright, citation, and ethical use of information. Librarians are well positioned to promote information literacy among students. .

Another important responsibility is developing awareness of academic integrity. Students need to understand plagiarism, copyright, citation, referencing, and ethical use of information. Librarians can contribute significantly to this area by organizing information-literacy and academic-integrity programmes.

The Active evolving role of the librarian:

Librarians in residential schools are no longer just cataloging staff; they act as primary co-educators. Their responsibilities focus heavily on

Information Literacy Instructors: Librarians in these societies do not just issue books; they teach students how to search online databases, avoid plagiarism, and identify fake news/unreliable sources.

Curriculum Support: Working closely with TGT/PGT/JL lecturers to align library reading materials with weekly schedules and competitive exams**.** Teaming up directly with subject teachers to organize reference material for projects.

Academic Counsellors: Supporting residential students who lack home access to technology or reference libraries.

Digital Navigation Guidance: Fostering digital onboarding for portals like the National Digital Library of India (NDLI) or N-LIST

Simple Conceptual Framework

Library Resources & Services

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Librarian Support & Information-Literacy Training

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Improved Information Skills

↓

Better Learning, Reading & Research Habits

↓

Academic Excellence.

Residential Educational Institutions in Telangana

Telangana has a significant network of residential educational institutions designed to provide students with education, accommodation, and related facilities within an integrated residential environment. Such institutions serve students from different social and economic backgrounds and aim to provide opportunities

for academic and personal development.

Within these institutions, the library can serve as an important academic support facility. Since students have opportunities for self-study beyond regular classroom hours, the availability of adequate library resources and effective librarian services can play an important role in supporting their educational needs.

However, the effectiveness of a library depends on several factors, including the quality and adequacy of its collection, availability of digital resources, infrastructure, internet connectivity, library timings, staffing, librarian competencies, and students' awareness and utilization of available resources. Therefore, it is important to examine the actual situation through systematic empirical investigation.

Libraries in Residential Educational Institutions

Residential educational institutions have a distinctive learning environment because students spend more time of their educational life within the institution. Consequently, the library can become an important place for self-directed learning, reading, academic support, and development of information skills.

However, there may be differences among institutions in terms of:

- Library infrastructure
- Collection size and quality
- Internet and computer facilities
- Availability of e-resources
- Librarian staffing
- Library timings
- Information-literacy programmes
- Student awareness and utilization

Challenges Faced in the Residential Ecosystem

- **Budgetary & Space Constraints:** Varying levels of funding across older vs. newly established residential campuses.
- **Digital Literacy Gaps**: Students entering from remote areas often require fundamental digital literacy before they can achieve information literacy.
- **Staffing:** The need for fully qualified, professional librarians who are treated as core academic faculty rather than administrative staff.

Need for the Study

Education in the twenty-first century extends beyond classroom teaching. Students require access to diverse information resources, digital technologies, and independent learning opportunities. Libraries fulfil these requirements by providing organized information resources that support curriculum delivery and personal development.

The present study is necessary because:

- Libraries play an important role in supporting academic excellence.
- Information literacy has become an essential competency in the digital era.

- Residential Educational Institutions provide unique learning environments where library services can significantly influence students' learning outcomes.
- There is limited empirical research on school libraries in Telangana Residential Educational Institutions.
- Policymakers require evidence-based recommendations for strengthening library services.
- The study aligns with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes reading culture, digital learning, and library development.

Research Gap

Although numerous national and international studies have examined the impact of school libraries on academic performance, very few have investigated the specific context of Telangana Residential Educational Institutions. Most existing studies focus on university libraries or public libraries rather than residential school libraries.

Furthermore, limited research has explored the relationship between library services, librarian competencies, information literacy programmes, and students' academic excellence within Telangana's residential education system. This gap provides the rationale for conducting the present empirical study.

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the current status of libraries in Telangana Residential Educational Institutions?
2. What roles do librarians perform in supporting teaching and learning?
3. How do library services contribute to students' academic excellence?
4. To what extent do libraries promote information literacy among students?
5. What challenges are encountered by librarians in providing effective library services?
6. What measures can improve library services in Telangana Residential Educational Institutions?

Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

1. To examine the present status of libraries in Telangana Residential Educational Institutions.
2. To assess the role of librarians in promoting academic excellence.
3. To evaluate the contribution of library services toward developing information literacy.
4. To study students' utilization of library resources and services.
5. To identify the challenges faced by librarians.
6. To suggest suitable measures for strengthening library services in residential educational institutions.

Research Hypotheses

The study proposes the following hypotheses:

- There is no significant relationship between library services and students' academic performance.
- There is a significant relationship between library services and students' academic performance.
- Information literacy programmes conducted by librarians do not significantly influence students' information literacy skills.

- Information literacy programmes conducted by librarians significantly influence students' information literacy skills.
- There is no significant relationship between library utilization and academic excellence.
- There is a significant relationship between library utilization and academic excellence.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopts a **descriptive survey research design**, as it is appropriate for collecting information regarding the existing status of library services and the perceptions of librarians, teachers, and students.

Population

The population comprises librarians, teachers, and students from Telangana Residential Educational Institutions.

Sample

A representative sample may include:

- 30 Librarians
- 150 Teachers
- 600 Students

Selected from different Residential Educational Institutions across Telangana using a stratified random sampling technique**.**

Sources of Data

Primary Data

Primary data will be collected through:

- Structured questionnaires
- Personal interviews
- Observation of library facilities

Secondary Data

Secondary data will be collected from:

- Books
- Research journals
- Government reports
- NEP 2020
- Library policy documents
- Published research articles
- Institutional reports

Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire consisting of demographic information and Likert-scale statements will be used to assess respondents' perceptions regarding library resources, library services, information literacy programmes, digital facilities, and librarian competencies.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission will be obtained from the concerned authorities of selected Residential Educational Institutions. Questionnaires will be distributed to librarians, teachers, and students. Responses will be collected, verified, coded, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Statistical Techniques

The collected data may be analysed using:

- Frequency Distribution
- Percentage Analysis
- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- Independent Sample t-test
- One-Way ANOVA
- Chi-square Test
- Pearson Correlation
- Multiple Regression (if required

Expected Outcomes and Discussion

Based on the review of literature and the proposed empirical framework, the study is expected to demonstrate that libraries and librarians play a significant role in enhancing academic excellence and information literacy among students in Telangana Residential Educational Institutions. Modern school libraries are no longer confined to book circulation; instead, they function as knowledge and learning resource centers that support curriculum delivery, independent learning, digital literacy, and research skills.

The study is expected to reveal that institutions with well-developed library infrastructure, professionally qualified librarians, updated collections, and digital resources provide a more supportive learning environment than institutions with limited library facilities. Students who frequently use library resources are anticipated to show better reading habits, improved comprehension skills, enhanced critical thinking, and greater confidence in locating and evaluating information.

The professional role of librarians is also expected to emerge as a key determinant of effective library services. Librarians who organize book exhibitions, reading clubs, orientation programmes, information literacy sessions, and digital resource training are likely to contribute significantly to students' academic engagement and lifelong learning skills. Their collaboration with teachers in curriculum support and project-based learning may further strengthen educational outcomes.

The study may also identify several challenges affecting library effectiveness, including inadequate financial support, outdated collections, insufficient ICT infrastructure, shortage of professionally qualified librarians, limited awareness among students regarding available library services, and inadequate integration of library activities with classroom teaching. These issues may reduce library utilization and limit the educational impact of school libraries.

Overall, the study is expected to support the view that strengthening school libraries and enhancing the professional competencies of librarians will positively influence students' academic achievement, information literacy, reading culture, and digital learning skills.

Educational Implications

The findings of this study are expected to have important implications for educational administrators, policymakers, librarians, teachers, and researchers.

Educational administrators may use the findings to improve library infrastructure, expand digital collections, and ensure adequate financial support for school libraries. Policymakers may formulate guidelines for strengthening library services in accordance with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

The study may encourage school principals to integrate library activities with classroom instruction and promote collaborative teaching between librarians and subject teachers. Librarians may utilize the findings to design innovative information literacy programmes, reading promotion activities, and user education services that address the learning needs of students.

Researchers in Library and Information Science may use the study as a foundation for future investigations into digital libraries, artificial intelligence in libraries, library automation, and student learning outcomes in residential educational institutions.

Recommendations

Based on the proposed study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. **Strengthen Library Infrastructure:** Residential educational institutions should allocate adequate funds for library buildings, furniture, reading spaces, and ICT facilities.
2. **Appoint Qualified Librarians:** Every residential educational institution should employ professionally qualified librarians with expertise in Library and Information Science and digital information management.
3. **Promote Information Literacy:** Regular orientation programmes, workshops, and training sessions should be organized to enhance students' information literacy and digital research skills.
4. **Expand Digital Library Services:** Libraries should subscribe to e-books, e-journals, educational databases, and online learning platforms to support blended and digital learning.
5. **Develop Reading Culture:** Reading clubs, book review competitions, author interactions, storytelling sessions, and library week celebrations should be organized regularly to encourage reading habits among students.
6. **Integrate Libraries with Curriculum:** Teachers and librarians should collaborate in designing project-based learning activities that require students to use library resources effectively.
7. **Provide Continuous Professional Development:** Librarians should receive regular training in emerging technologies, artificial intelligence applications, digital library management, and information literacy instruction.
8. **Conduct Periodic Library Evaluation:** Institutional authorities should evaluate library services periodically using measurable performance indicators such as user satisfaction, library utilization, digital resource usage, and academic outcomes.

Conclusion

Libraries are indispensable components of educational institutions and play a vital role in promoting academic excellence, information literacy, and lifelong learning. In Telangana Residential Educational Institutions, libraries provide students with opportunities to acquire knowledge beyond classroom instruction and develop essential skills required in the twenty-first century. The role of librarians has evolved from custodians of books to facilitators of learning, information specialists, technology managers, and educational partners.

The proposed empirical study seeks to examine how library resources, services, digital technologies, and librarian competencies contribute to students' academic success and information literacy. It also aims to identify challenges affecting library effectiveness and suggest practical measures for strengthening school library systems.

The study is expected to contribute to educational policy, library management, and school administration by providing evidence-based recommendations for improving library services. It also aligns with the vision of the National Education Policy 2020, which emphasizes reading culture, digital competency, critical thinking, and equitable access to quality educational resources.

Investment in school libraries should not be viewed merely as expenditure on books and buildings but as an investment in human capital, intellectual growth, and national development. Well-equipped libraries managed by competent librarians can transform residential educational institutions into vibrant centers of learning, innovation, and academic excellence.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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