

Identifying Potential Roles for a School Library in the Achievement of School Education Goals

An Analysis of National Curriculum Framework 2005

SEEMA TARE*

Abstract

The paper presents the hypothesis that the potential of a school library to become a true partner in education has not been duly recognised in the Indian scenario. It analyses the educational guidelines propagated by NCERT's National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF) to identify areas where the school library can make substantial contribution to achieve school education goals. The paper recommends a fresh appraisal of the role of the school library in India in light of the global recognition of its importance in education. It suggests supplementary and complementary informational and educational roles for the school library, including contribution towards information literacy, value and peace education, development of reading habit among children, fostering art education, and imbibing socio-cultural awareness in school children. For effective functioning of the school library as a partner in education, the paper advocates introduction of the Teacher Librarian concept in the Indian school scenario, and the creation of a national workforce of such Teacher Librarians through the introduction of specific school librarianship courses / optional papers in the curriculae of University Departments of Library & Information Science.

*Technical Information and Resource Centre, Armament R & D Establishment, Pune-411021

INTRODUCTION

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

The Programme of Action (POA) of National Policy on Education 1992¹ is based on the cardinal principle that 'education is a unique investment in the present and the future.' It describes education as being fundamental to an all-round development, both material and physical. Education helps to build a scientific temper and develop independence of mind and spirit. It refines sensitivities and perceptions towards others, thus facilitating national integration, engendering feelings of unity in diversity, and peaceful and productive co-existence among persons of different cultures, castes, gender, economic strata, linguistic communities and religion. Work-related professional education develops manpower resources for all levels of the economy. Education lays the foundation for Research and Development (R&D) activity which leads to the achievement of national self-reliance. Education thus proves to be an invaluable national investment.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK 2005 (NCF)

The NCF document² corroborates this educational policy by specifically identifying the broad aims of education: "...independence of thought and action, sensitivity to others' well-being and feelings, learning to respond to new situations in a flexible and creative manner,

predisposition towards participation in democratic processes, and the ability to work towards and contribute to economic processes and social change."

The scope of NCF ranges from elementary school education to higher secondary school. It strives to redefine educational aims and suggests guidelines for curriculum development which will improve the quality of school education. It deals extensively with all the factors which come into play in this area— the students, the teachers, the academic and non-academic subjects, teaching methods, the physical school environment and other school facilities. Thoughtful consideration has been given to students' requirements at various levels. Room for improvement in the teaching of the four academic subjects— mathematics, languages, science and social sciences has been identified. The importance of values and peace education in school curricula and ways of teaching non-academic subjects such as arts and crafts, sports, etc. have been emphasised. Guidelines for the development of an ideal curriculum are extensively spelt out.

EDUCATIONAL CONSTRAINTS IN THE MODERN SCHOOL SCENARIO

However, in the actual school scenario as it exists today in both the rural and urban environments, the NCF guidelines in totality might appear to be a 'tall order', difficult to

implement in practice owing to certain genuine and unchanging constraints, such as a massive syllabus difficult for both teachers and students to handle, short attention span of students, constraints of space and time, large numbers and diversity of students, absence of teaching aids, compulsions of examinations and so on. Moreover, a tightly packed school schedule leaves very little room for NCF-suggested novel progressive ideas to be implemented.

THE SCHOOL LIBRARY SOLUTION

In view of this difficult scenario, the development and proper use of one hitherto neglected player on the school stage can significantly alter the school education system, bringing it nearer to the achievement of the goals as set down in the National Education Policy and the NCF. This new player is none other than the school library, which, if exploited to its full potential, can prove to be a decisive game-changer in the school education arena.

The NCF document deals with the role that a school library can play, through short discussion on Libraries at Para 4.6.2 and scattered references to library usage throughout the document. School libraries have been described as 'an essential component of the school at all levels, a resource for learning, pleasure, and concentration, an intellectual space providing the means to deepen ... knowledge and imagination, and an access point to

new global information technology.' It recognises that creating such resource libraries would support teachers, complement and strengthen curriculum renewal, and provide information for various class projects. NCF also suggests amalgamation of block-level or cluster-level libraries, community and government libraries in a school library network to be monitored by Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation. Regarding the physical requisites of a school library, NCF recommends a separate room for the library, good lighting and seating arrangements. It views a school library as a place for holding discussions, art/skill demonstrations or story sessions.

The concept of the school library is discussed in NCF as an additional facility in schools, rather than as a partner in education. The important role of a school library in teaching and learning as documented by internationally recognised bodies such as UNESCO and International Association of School Libraries (IASL) and reflected in the progress in school libraries in the developed countries is not adequately acknowledged in NCF.

GLOBAL RECOGNITION FOR THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

1. School Library Manifesto Published by UNESCO in 1999³

describes various attributes of an ideal school library:

The school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental

to functioning successfully in our increasingly information- and knowledge-based present-day society... equips students with lifelong learning skills and develops their imagination, thereby enabling them to live as responsible citizens.

It has been demonstrated that, when librarians and teachers work together, students achieve higher levels of literacy, reading, learning, problem-solving and information and communication technology skills.

The school library is essential to every long-term strategy for literacy, education, information provision and economic, social and cultural development.

The school library is integral to the educational process. Its goals include supporting and enhancing educational goals as outlined in the school's mission and curriculum; developing and sustaining in children the lifelong habit and enjoyment of reading and learning; offering opportunities for creating and using information in all forms and mediums for knowledge, understanding, imagination and enjoyment; providing varied resources and opportunities that expose learners to diverse ideas, experiences and opinions; organising activities that encourage cultural and social awareness and sensitivity; promoting intellectual freedom and access to information not only to the school community but to the whole society, thereby enabling effective and responsible citizenship and participation in a democracy.

2. The IASL Policy Statement on School Libraries⁴

also reaffirms that the school library is a vital part of free and compulsory education as proclaimed in the United Nations declaration on the Rights of the Child⁵. It states that the school library is essential to the development of the human personality as well as the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and economic progress of the community. It functions as an integral part of the total school programme, being involved in the teaching and learning process. It fulfils informational, educational, cultural and recreational functions– providing access to information independently and as part of networks, making available facilities for learning, encouraging development of arts and cultural appreciation, and enabling productive use of leisure time through provision of a variety of recreational material and programmes.

3. The International Guidelines formulated by the Research Team of IASL (2012) also

- assign specific functions to the school library⁶:
- Promoting the love of learning and reading, and assisting in literacy development on all platforms.
 - Supporting the school curriculum by providing a variety of resources in digital and non-digital, traditional and emerging forms to support teaching and learning.
 - Teaching learners media and information literacy skills, supporting inquiry and ensuring

that all learners are effective and ethical users and producers of information.

This global acceptance of the indispensability of school libraries for education needs to be adequately reflected not only in the National Education Policy but also in NCF's treatment of libraries in schools, incorporating many of the attributes and roles of school libraries spelt out by IFLA, IASL and such international bodies of repute. Both NEP and NCF could strongly recommend that the school library model found in the developed countries be replicated in Indian schools, whereby libraries would become an integral part of school education. A school librarian is most suited to provide additional and reliable assistance to education, enabling the implementation of new educational ideas and teaching techniques.

POTENTIAL ROLES FOR THE SCHOOL LIBRARY IN INDIAN SCHOOLS

Certain specific thrust areas in education, indicated in NCF, where substantial contribution can be made by a progressive school librarian, are discussed here.

1. Development of Knowledge Base for Students and Teachers

(i) Knowledge Base for Students

School libraries can make available the "input-rich communicational

environments" propagated by NCF by building a treasure-house of knowledge, which is an 'accumulation of human culture and knowledge, and ways of knowing and doing things ... a valuable part of the inheritance of human society.' NCF further emphasises the children's right to 'access this knowledge, to educate and enrich their common sense, to develop and discover themselves and the world of nature and people, through these lenses and tools.'

Moreover, this knowledge should be made available in all genres – the conventional print forms and other audio-visual and digital formats. The print resources could include fiction and non-fiction, magazines and newspapers, parallel books and materials such as workbooks, co-curricular and popular science books, and children's encyclopaedia with rich visuals in more than one language, reference books (dictionaries, encyclopaedia, fact books, etc.), maps and posters. The audio-visual material could incorporate CDs/DVDs on a variety of academic subjects, on music, on sports and health, on the plant and animal world. Other material resources in the library could include mathematical games, models explaining scientific and geographical phenomena, three-dimensional replicas of ancient equipment/tools and musical instruments.

The library resources would need to cater to a wide range of

informational needs of children of varying intellect and mental ages - from the kindergarten pre-primary school children to the higher secondary students, reflecting various stages of growth and development, and also of fundamental shifts and changes in interests and capabilities.

As a novel initiative, the school library could also encourage the children to generate knowledge resources in the form of useful databases such as a cumulative, ever-expanding database of scientific innovations, by utilising their information retrieval and organisation capability to harvest physical resources of their library and digital / online resources such as the Internet facility.

(ii) Knowledge Base for Teachers

A basic academic requirement of teachers from a school library is the availability of all textbooks prescribed by school's examination board, along with a choice of textbooks of various other boards / publishers/textbook bureaus, since no one textbook can cater to the diverse needs of different groups of students, and the same content/ concept can be taught in different ways.

Besides, the school library could provide a vast resource of supplementary material for teachers for an input-rich curriculum. Such material would include teachers' manuals/handbooks and other publications such as subject dictionaries, supplementary books,

workbooks, and extra reading, audio-visual materials, photographs, charts and maps, replicas of archaeological and material cultures, and atlases and posters of the natural and human habitat. Based on the requirements of the syllabus and specific needs of teachers, relevant internet sites can be identified and selective material can be downloaded by the librarian for dissemination to the teaching community. Such added services form an integral part of the duties of the school librarian, and provide the stimulus for teachers to 'devise activities, projects and studies, both drawing from textbooks and going beyond them, to encourage children to explore, investigate and construct knowledge.

NCF emphasises the need for documentation and research in teaching practices. Individual teachers often explore new ways of transacting the curriculum in addressing the needs of students within their specific classroom context, overcoming several inescapable constraints. The sharing of teaching experiences and diverse classroom practices within the same school and among different schools can encourage new ideas and facilitate innovation and experimentation in teaching methodologies. The school library's role would be to initiate the maintenance of an audio-visual database of good teaching practices, comprising not only textual documentation of innovation and experimentation in teaching

techniques but also good quality educational video-recordings of teachings on a variety of subjects. When advanced IT infrastructure in a digital India makes it possible to conduct 'tele-teaching' classes by expert teachers on a nation-wide basis, recordings of such teaching sessions could also be maintained and disseminated by the school library through a school library network.

(iii) Knowledge Base of Arts and Crafts

NCF points out the void in art education, lamenting that the visual and performing arts, which include folk and classical forms of music and dance, theatre, puppetry, clay work, visual arts, and crafts from every region of India, have not been duly recognised or given their rightful place in the curriculum. The school library can make adequate attempts to fill this void through procurement and dissemination of authentic resource material for arts education teachers for the popularisation and encouragement of the arts and heritage crafts – textual information resources such as design books, samplers, source books, tool guides, and crafts maps and copies of art works by famous Indian and international artists, as well as audio/video-recordings of vocal / instrumental / folk music by other performing artistes, and recordings of crafts and trade practitioners at work. Virtual tours of important

museums of India would be another contribution of the school library to nurture artistic capabilities and familiarise students with the Indian artistic and cultural traditions.

2. Development of Language and Reading Habit

NCF lays great emphasis on language and other forms of expression as a basic capability to be nurtured in children as it 'is synonymous with development of understanding and identity, and also the capability of relating with others.'

The library in its traditional form, as a storehouse of books, has always been the ideal source for reading material. Inculcating reading skills and fostering a lifelong taste for reading should be the school library's prerogative. Concerted efforts need to be taken to collect the right books to suit the range of age groups in a school. Multilingualism should be encouraged through a rich print collection of dictionaries and selective literature in a variety of Indian languages, including folk tales, prose collections, anthologies of poems, novels, drama in the original vernacular and also translated versions wherever available. Audio-visual material in regional languages such as recordings of songs, plays and poetry recitals would expose children to the rich Indian literary traditions.

Reading is an important component in language education. School syllabi 'burdened with information-absorbing and memorising tasks' take

the pleasure out of reading. Libraries could be the ideal promoters of a culture of reading, which includes silent, individual reading of fiction/non-fiction as well as 'reading aloud' activity.

Storytelling or narrative discourse has proven useful for all ages, laying the foundations of logical understanding, expanding imagination and enhancing the capacity to participate in situations distant from one's life. Reading out or storytelling by a competent reader with appropriate gestures and dramatisation can provide the right thrust to the generation of reading skills. Such reading sessions can also be conducted in the literature-rich environment of the school library.

Reading clubs conducted by the school library can encourage school children to present their views on a popular work of fiction or a new bestseller or share a story they have enjoyed with other children. This would serve the dual purpose of improving both linguistic skills as well as oral presentation skills.

3. Value and Peace Education

NCF lays particular emphasis on the cultivation of values and peace education, which are essential factors in individual character development and also societal development. Education should aim for 'a commitment to democracy and the values of equality, justice, freedom, concern for others' well-

being, secularism, respect for human dignity and rights.'

The school library can take special efforts to procure literature facilitating such a value-based and peace-loving culture. Biographies, speech collections, essays of world leaders who have successfully propagated feelings of universal brotherhood, non-violence, peaceful co-existence and who have fought for the abolition of social injustice in all forms, are a rich source of positive inputs for the formative minds of children. The library's collection could also hold audio recordings of speeches/interviews of such eminent social personalities.

NCF suggests various peace activities for practice by teachers which could easily be carried out by the school library. It could arrange for procurement and screening of films and documentaries promoting values of justice, peace, tolerance, and healthy and mutually rewarding relations among individuals belonging to varied cultural-social-economic backgrounds. Besides, the children could be encouraged to select news clippings on specific socially relevant topics for the school notice boards. The school librarian could arrange for children's views and articles to be regularly published in local newspaper editions under the Newspapers in Education scheme. Resource persons from the media could be invited for lectures or talks with children. The rich resources of the school library could be utilised to

extract interesting information about the cultural and religious diversity of India, and a display or exhibition of textual matter and photographs/ images could be arranged in the library, with the active participation of school children of all ages, on the occasion of any festival or cultural/ religious event or on internationally proclaimed days such as Women's Day, Labour Day, days highlighting the plight of physically and mentally challenged individuals, and other days of special significance. This would promote in the children an attitude of respect and responsibility to lesser privileged or neglected social components, and foster peace and value education. Discussions and dynamic interactions among children would encourage them to comment upon, compare and think about elements that exist in their social and physical environment, as reflected in print media (books, magazines, newspapers) or audio-visual forms (Television programmes, movies, advertisements, songs, art works, etc). This would also strengthen their psychological and social foundations, while increasing their emotional intelligence quotient.

4. Creation of Institutional Repositories

Institutions with requirements to store, preserve and provide access to digital materials created by their own members benefit by creating their own repositories. A school too could have its own repository built up of one

or more sub-repositories as indicated below, comprising a variety of material having long-term use, recorded in the digital format for better preservation and access. In this area, the school library could play an important role by identifying such material, recording it, preserving it and making it accessible to potential users of this information, thereby accepting the responsibility of management and dissemination of such locally generated digital material.

4.1 Students Projects Repository

There is ample scope in the school curriculum for students' projects in various subjects. Due emphasis has been given by NCF to the knowledge generation aspect of such projects. The project material so generated can be preserved in the original format as posters and models for a limited period of time in the school library or a separate gallery or school museum. For long-term use, however, it could be further digitised by the school library in an appropriate manner and preserved in a digital form as photographs and audio-visual recordings, as part of a progressive digital database—a projects repository. The school library could also offer to prepare a roster of project ideas in each area of study highlighted in the NCF, to enable teachers to select relevant topics for students' projects, and make available all possible information resources to the students and assist them in their project development. Such students' projects

repository would prove useful not only to that particular school but also to schools across the country if and when a school network is developed. The following categories of students' projects repositories could be maintained by the school library:

(a) Environmental Projects

NCF makes a strong case for increasing the environmental awareness of children by involving them in study projects on various aspects of their physical environment (animals, forests, rivers, plants, etc.) acquiring information pertaining to naming and categorising plants, or ways of harvesting and storing water, or of practising sustainable agriculture, documentation of environmental history or creation of biodiversity registers containing people's representations of the environment through various forms of art, music, dance and craft, etc. All such environmental projects prepared by students would contribute to the richness of the projects' repository, and, if uploaded on a publicly accessible website, would create a comprehensive database on India's environment.

(b) Socio-cultural Projects

The school library could take special efforts to encourage and preserve students' projects on socio-cultural topics of interest, reflecting the immense socio-cultural diversity of India, its different ethnic communities, different social and

cultural traditions and practices, festivals, food-clothing-housing and lifestyles of local communities and tribes, including the rich cultural resources of local communities - local stories, songs, jokes and riddles, oral histories and art. Thereby it could develop a rich socio-cultural repository having immense scope for knowledge generation.

(c) Science Projects

Students are required to develop study projects on scientific topics discussed in their textbooks. They are encouraged to display scientific models or posters on particular themes as part of activities for the National Science Day or for science exhibitions. The school library could manage the science projects repository where the award-winning and good quality scientific projects can be appropriately preserved in the form of digital recordings for future use. The library with its knowledge resources could stimulate students' curiosity regarding common items and services they use every day, for example, machines of different kinds, and encourage them to prepare audio-visual presentations/projects on such scientific innovations, which would be a valuable addition to the scientific projects repository.

4.2 Resource Persons Repository

NCF has stressed the usefulness of learning from practitioners of knowledge, working professionals, artists, etc. Such resource persons

could be invited to school to let students experience 'living craft skills, techniques, designs and products' which are a rich source of knowledge for the curricular areas of art and work. Similarly, in other non-curricular areas such as work, health, yoga and physical education, specialists in these areas could be invited for demonstrative lectures. To introduce students to different career and study opportunities and skill development, resource persons (including parents and community members) belonging to a variety of disciplines, could make children aware of the multitude of skills and professions practised in society, developing their interest in disciplines outside their curriculum. It should be the school library's prerogative to record and preserve all such lectures/meetings/interviews/demonstrations with resource persons, as also recordings of study tours, in an ever-increasing Resource Persons Repository, having potential use for future generation of students.

PROVIDING AN ADEQUATE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Much importance has been given in NCF to the physical environment in school. However, in a school which may have more than 30 classrooms, developing the physical environment as recommended by NCF may not be feasible due to space and monetary constraints. On the other hand, all those ideas can be implemented within another learning environment,

viz., the school library— a single entity, occupying a few large rooms within the school building or existing as a separate wing or small building. This limited area can certainly be developed into a child-friendly space with a colourful, friendly, peaceful and welcoming atmosphere. Bright interiors, with adequate natural light, fresh and soothing wall colours, appropriate colourful wall displays, largely comprising children's art work, would attract children to a welcoming learning environment. The library could engage commercial artists or interested student artists to prepare a range of changeable, well-planned posters and charts to supplement textbook material in various subjects. Such posters could be displayed on soft boards outside classrooms, on corridor walls, library walls or moveable display boards.

The library area could be compartmentalised into separate sections with flexible arrangement of furniture. The pre-primary and primary students could be accommodated into special nooks and corners, with pictures and models of animals, flowers, trees and toys for company. Simple and comfortable furniture for reading and discussions, appropriately designed to suit different age-groups, with floor mats for art and craft work would be a suitable seating arrangement in the library. Different learning materials could be placed in different corners of the library. A special section could

be reserved for TV and audio-visual presentations.

It would be feasible to ideally design the school library's physical environment to provide the right learning atmosphere, compensating for any limitations in the design and furnishing of the school classrooms.

ACHIEVING INFORMATION LITERACY

NCF states that the learning objective in a school can be achieved when the learner 'has also learnt where to find information, how to use information, and to analyse and evaluate the same.'

Technological advances have made available information retrieval tools like the internet and the mobile phone, which have proved a boon for education. Whether or not it is feasible to introduce a computer in each classroom for learning, for the school library it is possible to make IT tools available in the library premises. The school library can thus make students of all classes aware of websites of their interest, teaching them how to retrieve relevant information and use it, thereby arousing their hunger for knowledge for its own sake, as well as for the sake of supporting various school projects allotted to them.

The students can also have access to a multitude of databases procured or developed by the school library. The institutional repository of the school would be an additional source of interesting information. In future when tele-conferencing and tele-teaching facilities are introduced, the school library could be the central

IT access point for students to reap benefits of such a facility.

A good IT infrastructure could be developed to enable the establishment of a school library network at the local, district, state or national level, allowing sharing of resources between school libraries.

TEACHER LIBRARIAN

An essential component of an active school library is the librarian. In recognition of the immense potentialities of the school library, NCF needs to not only redefine its concept of school libraries but it should also strongly propose the development of 'teacher librarians' for fulfilment of educational goals. NCF stipulates that 'Training of teachers in library management and use is required to meet the demands of this situation'. Unfortunately, teachers are already working under severe constraints of time, hard-pressed to complete the existing syllabus, while being burdened with other obligatory duties. Therefore, instead of teaching them library management skills and weighing them down further with library duties, it would be more convenient to train professional librarians to become teacher librarians as is the practice in the U.S.A., Australia and other developed countries.

The Australian School Library Association (ASLA) defines a teacher librarian as follows:

- A qualified teacher librarian is defined as a person who holds

recognised teaching qualifications and qualifications in librarianship.

- Teacher librarians are uniquely qualified - curriculum knowledge and pedagogy are combined with library and information management knowledge and skills.
- Teacher librarians support and implement the vision of their school communities through advocating and building effective library and information services and programmes that contribute to the development of lifelong learners.⁷

ASLA identifies three major roles for teacher librarians: as curriculum leaders, as information specialists, and as information services managers. As curriculum leaders they work with Principals and senior staff to ensure information literacy. They are involved in curriculum planning. They plan, teach and evaluate collaboratively with teachers to ensure the effective integration of information resources and technologies into student learning. As information specialists they provide access to information resources through efficient and well-guided systems, and provide training and assistance to students and staff in the effective use of these systems. As information services managers they develop policies, procedures and criteria for selecting resources which meet curriculum, informational and student recreational needs. They develop information systems and services responsive to student

and teacher needs. They provide a stimulating, helpful environment which is a focal point and showcase for students' learning achievements, and promote the effective use of resources and information sources, systems and services both within and beyond the school, thus encouraging a lifelong learning process.

NEED FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIANSHIP COURSES

Only a couple of institutes/universities in India have thought it necessary to introduce an optional paper on school librarianship, in spite of the fact that there is a specific requirement for such study by the very nature of the school librarian's work. For the professional librarian running a school library in India, resource development, database management, satisfaction of information needs and other extension activities are an integral part of good librarianship, as taught in Library Science graduate and post-graduate courses of Indian universities. However, what is not taught in these courses are education related subjects necessary for a practising school librarian-educational techniques, child psychology, educational psychology, etc. Knowledge of these subjects would be beneficial for a school librarian in order to better understand the requirements of school children of varying physical and mental ages as also the educational needs of the teachers which can be satisfied by the school library. This requirement of an

amalgamation of librarianship and educational skills can be satisfied by augmenting the curriculae of Library & Information Science Departments of various state and private universities to include not only an optional paper on Management of School Libraries but also short-term school librarianship courses of an interdisciplinary nature, which will teach relevant librarianship concepts and techniques with a slant to the school environment as well as school education philosophy and teaching techniques, thereby producing a new workforce of library professionals in India, *viz.*, Teacher Librarians.

THE ROAD AHEAD

There is a need to recognise the indispensability of a school library for a school, and acknowledge its undisputed potential for the achievement of educational goals as a vital partner in education. An important step in this direction would be for a premier educational body such as the NCERT to redefine its concept of school libraries in the NCF, and strongly lay down prerequisites for a school library – the physical space and infrastructural requirements, the range of services expected, the budget-manpower requirements, with special emphasis on the recruitment of trained school librarians or teacher librarians, who will be able to carry out the dual responsibilities of librarianship and teaching. The Raja Ram Mohan Roy Foundation has been recommended

in NCF as a nodal agency for establishing a national school library network. It could also be entrusted with the responsibility of producing trained school librarians through the introduction of specialised school librarianship courses at Library & Information Science Departments of state and private universities.

CONCLUSION

School libraries have great potential for contributing to education in a number of innovative ways. They can develop a rich knowledge base for teachers and students not only in conventional curricular areas but also in equally important peripheral areas such as arts and music, work and skill development, health and physical education. Development of non-conventional but useful databases and institutional repositories of school generated information such as students' projects, teachers' lectures, presentations of resource persons, etc. could prove to be unique initiatives of school libraries, with potential use not only for the parent school but also to other schools through school networks. Inculcating the reading habit in children and developing linguistic skills using novel ideas and techniques, and promoting value and peace education could be very significant contributions of school libraries to society. In the digital age of information, the school libraries are the ideal means of encouraging information literacy and the optimum use of information technology. By

providing an adequate physical environment for learning, school libraries can encourage children to become lifelong learners, a very useful asset to the progress of society.

The school library can seamlessly merge into the teaching and learning activity in the school through the practice of 'embedded librarianship', becoming a true partner in education. It can play both supplementary and complementary roles – supplementing what is taught and learnt in class by providing additional learning materials and information to both students and teachers, and

in its complementary role, it can make available NCF recommended resources and services which the teachers are unable to provide, thereby contributing substantially to the fulfilment of NCF guidelines for education. The possibilities for involvement of the school library in the education process are thus limitless. Recognition of its potential and governmental encouragement to the establishment of a well-equipped and adequately manned school library in every school is required in the interest of society and the nation as a whole.

NOTES

¹Government of India, *National Policy on Education 1986* (revised 1993). New Delhi.

²NCERT. *National Curriculum Framework*, 2005. New Delhi.

³IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto, "*The school library in teaching and learning for all*". 1999. The Hague, IFLA.

⁴"IASL Policy Statement on School Libraries". 1993. *International Association of School Libraries*. accessed November 19, 2014, <http://www.iasl-online.horg/about/handbook/policys1.html>.

⁵United Nations. 1959. "*Declaration of the rights of the child*". Geneva.

⁶International Association of School Librarianship. 2012. "*What is a school library?: International guidelines*". Research SIG, Chicago.

⁷Australian School Librarian Association, "*What is a teacher librarian?*" <http://www.asla.org.au/advocacy/what-is-a-school-librarian.aspx>, Accessed December 19, 2014.