

## **Use of Library for Promoting Students' Learning**

**Surya Sigdel<sup>1</sup>, Mani Ram Sharma<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup>Mahendra Ratna Campus, Kathmandu, Nepal

Corresponding author e-mail: [suryasigdel41@gmail.com](mailto:suryasigdel41@gmail.com)

Article History: Received on 25 November 2022, Revised on 30 December 2022

Published on 30 January 2023

**Abstract:** Library practices in schools exert significant influence on students' learning attitude and behavior. This paper explores the existing situation of library practices in community and institutional schools of Nepal. Despite a number of options to educate students in school from library-use, library provision and its existing practices in community and institutional schools in Nepal are still unsearched. In context students study only during the time of their class, assignment and examination preparation, how the schools make use of library for the promotion of students' learning is the main concern of the study. Information for the study was collected from field notes and lived experiences of eight participants: one teacher and one student from each of four schools: two institutional and two communities. The study found that teachers in community schools occasionally visit the library and rarely encourage their students to benefit from the library. However, some students were found to borrow books from the library. As students in institutional schools have library period once a week, they enjoy reading books or doing something in the library. Overall library practice in Nepal lacks adequate proficiency in management, administration, and provision of study materials; and ultimately has not motivated students' hearty participation.

**Keywords:** Library-use, e-library, Athenaeum, School Education, Makers Pace

### **A. Introduction**

A library is a collection of study materials that are physically or digitally accessible for learners. It is also called an athenaeum or information center. As Malik (n.d.) states, "A library's collection can include books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, films, maps, prints, documents, microform, CDs, cassettes, videotapes, DVDs, Blu-ray Discs, e-books, audiobooks, databases, and other formats" (p. 61-62). In the library, students including anyone interested can enjoy peaceful study environment; utilize available sources for assignment and carry out research work; promote their literacy skills and professional or career development; and update themselves with latest development through newspaper, magazine and periodicals. Malik (n.d.) argues, "Now the user needs not to wait a lot for its information. They can get information at their working place from internet accessing" (p. 70). With such fabulous potentiality, library if managed appropriately and run efficiently can

modify students' learning in schools. Library study as an academic effort can break students' repetitious teaching-learning activities in the class and promote their learning. As library-use is an option for enhancing students' holistic development, this study focuses on existing situation of library-use in the community and institutional schools and how they have utilized library materials and facilities to promote educational activities in the school.

## **B. Literature Review**

Although people traditionally visit library for borrowing books, making notes, preparing for examination and also for peaceful study environment, it, in this 21<sup>st</sup> century era has been a place to visit for personal development, free stuff, different events and programs offered by the library, unusual discoveries, joining with like-minded people, and for quiet personal space. The library user in earlier time could get information and knowledge from the book they had, from someone else or from a library because the library at that time was physically-only available. Now-a-days, people can access to library both physically and virtually in their own computer or mobile. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century era, due to advanced development of information communication technology, digital library has brought a significant change in library use. Wu, Written, Edwards, Nichols, and Aquino (2006) mentioning ELLE, an extensible digital library for language learning claim, "provides diverse kind of interactive practice exercises, and draws teachers into the learning experience by allowing them to submit materials for exercises" (p. 1). In such type of library, both the teachers and students can add or share their creation such as their contribution or responses openly or maintaining privacy.

The study materials, study environment, and events and programs organized in the library can bring a drastic change in students' way of learning and their confidence build up. The students' library-use is proportional with the facilities and materials of the library. When the library manages learner-friendly materials and organizes different events and programs as per the students' level, need and interest, they will be better motivated to benefit from them. In other words, learner friendly environment, events and programs, and materials in the library can inspire learners to visit and make use of it. In short, inspiring environment, learning materials and programs can motivate the students in the way musical environment sways people's feelings and lead them to move along with the music in a party. It can motivate the students who have less than average intelligence and grow with their pace.

Out of eight type of libraries described by Malik (n.d.): academic, children's, national, public, reference, research, especial, and electronic libraries, academic, children's and electronic libraries are mainly practiced in schools. Academic library includes the study materials to support school's curriculum, students' study, and faculty's research work. Malik (n.d.) further claims, "Academic libraries must determine a focus for collection development since comprehensive collections are not feasible" (p. 65). Such types of libraries collect materials as per the need of students and faculty. On the other hand, children's library has books and reading

materials to encourage them to visit and enjoy reading and participate in different activities organized in the library. According to Malik (n.d.), "Children's libraries are special collections of books intended for juvenile readers and usually kept in separate rooms of general public libraries" (p. 65). In order to cultivate a love of reading and creating stories in children, such libraries organize different child-friendly events and programs. Teachers, using library can educate their children through a number of learning fun activities. Although Harisanty (2019) in his research carried out in an Indonesian high school states, "Most school libraries provide only a collection of school material only and provide no other collection that can encourage students to like reading and improve their literacy" (p.1), the school libraries also have books donated by some organizations or people that are neither sufficient nor as per the students' level, need and interest. Ardianingsih's (2016) research on 'Students' Motivation in Utilizing Elementary School Library' found out the causes of positive and negative reinforcement of the library. The existing situation of school library and its utilization for promoting students' learning in Nepal, which is still unsearched, is explored in this study.

ICT with its advancement has served all sorts of information in a catchy and real way to everyone in their electronic devices such as mobiles and computers so children including all-aged-people are fond of digital world. Using this plus point, we can motivate our students to learn better by serving them digital learning materials. On the other hand, children are brought up with digital world so they enjoy the digital libraries rather than the traditional ones which include tedious and lingering process. Shanmugam, Ramalakshmi, Sasthri, and Balachandran (2020) talk about Library Management System (LMS) which, "acts as a tool to transform traditional libraries into digital libraries" (p. 743). Using digital libraries, schools can motivate students to learn more from library-use particularly from the library makerspace, a place for collaborative and creative learning both inside and outside school. In a library makerspace as Daley and Child (2015) assert, "...information is stored, accessed, shared, explored and wondered over" (p.43). If the leadership in the school introduces the ideas of makerspaces to their library, they can involve their students in different learning activities and enhance their outcome. They further claim, "School libraries are the natural home of makerspace environments within a school community as they house and share information and are staffed by information-finding teacher librarians" (p. 44). Library can organize different programs for different groups of students. For example, a library teacher can invite a group of students to select a book from the list given and suggest for display. While suggesting, they will be asked to mention why they liked it and why they think others should read it. For another group, the librarian can ask to create something new that may be a poster or a creation and post it in makerspace for voting. In this way, library can organize different student-friendly learning events and promote their learning.

### **C. Methods**

In this hermeneutic phenomenological study, eight participants: four from community schools and four from institutional schools, each school consisting one teacher and one student were selected purposively for gathering information. The student participants were pseudo-named as ST1, ST2, ST3, and ST4. Similarly, Teacher participants were pseudo-named as TP1, TP2, TP3, and TP4. I collected information from in-depth interview with participants, fieldnote, and informal talks with other teachers and students in the schools. Meaning making process in the study follows four steps. Firstly, I collected and studied information from participants. Secondly, I connected the text with the context. Persistent observation, in-depth interview with participants and informal talks with other teachers and students in and outside the school supported me to link the information with that of purposively selected participants. This step helped me to identify basic themes. And finally, I categorized the basic themes into organizing and global themes.

### **D. Results and Discussion**

Library-use is a viable option to create curiosity in students. The environment, study materials, the events and programs that library organizes, and available facilities can arouse curiosity in students. The attempt of both community and institutional schools to familiarize their teachers, students, and parents with the benefits of library-use is insufficient. Besides, community schools are found weaker to promote students' learning through library-use in compared with the institutional schools. They have congested library rooms, insufficient study materials, uncomfortable furniture, and inconvenient environment. It is because of lack of budget, consciousness and visions in the leadership. Schools have no or limited budget for managing library as Siwakoti (2009) claims, "Even a minimum regular budget is not allocated for each school to cover library expenses and remuneration of the teacher cum librarian" (p. 18). The students occasionally visit the library and make use of it since they rarely see their teachers visit and study in the library. Their unfamiliarity with the advantages of library-use and belief that library-use is a burden and only genius students make use of it proves that they have not cultivated library study in their schools.

Libraries in institutional schools are friendlier than those of community ones. They have satisfactory study materials, spacious space for study and regular use of library. However, they are repetitive, limited within certain activities, and have not attempted to run academic activities as per students' need and interest. Library period is less pressurizing than the regular class so the students choose it. Because of regular visit to the library, they students are familiar with the rules and operating system of the school library. Their talk about the book they studied even outside the school indicates that library-use has done something to motivate students to benefit from library-use. The programs like book review and quiz-contest have encouraged both the students and teachers to study more. They can plan and organize more such programs for the promotion of library-use in the school.

Library can play significant roles to bring sea-change in students' learning activities if all stakeholders can perform their own role as duty appropriately (such as government, teachers, students, parents and stake holders have their own roles from policy, platform, and program to control the mechanism). As "TU Central library and information center has already established information literacy as a taught subject in their degree level" (Siwakoti, 2009, p. 18), we can educate students through library-use involving them in different events and programs.

### **Existing library-use practices in schools**

Children learn from others: from what they see others do; from what they experience in the society; and from what they are told to do. Schools have focused on textbook and pay less attention on library study. As a result, students usually work hard in their study during the time of their examination, home assignment and classroom activities. Schools, for motivating students to study outside these situations, require to link library-use with student-friendly activities, assessment and life skills. It is possible by making teachers, students, and parents familiar with the opportunities and benefits of library-use. In addition, development of library-study-habit in teachers, students and parents is necessary. As the adage, 'First you make your habit, then the habit makes you', students' library-study-habit formation is necessary. As Harisanty (2019) claims that students' motivation to use library depends on the facilities and environment around the library, creation of study environment by managing and providing facilities for the visitor in the library is foremost important. Moreover, it is not possible to buy all the books and create study environment at home as well as in the society all the time. Formation of library-use habit and learning culture can be promoted in schools through different events and activities if planned perfectly and run efficiently. As Clark (2016) states, "no two curiosities are actually aroused in the same way" (p. 416), library is an option to create curiosity in the students. Encouraging children to visit the library refreshes them and provides many more insights and learning opportunities. In the library, children, following the library rule, have freedom to do: either to choose a book from a library and read or to read/work in computer, or do their assignment. Selecting a book from their own choice rather than from others' choice better motivates children to read. A teacher's talk about a book with the students after they read it can work even better. The opportunity to perform from in front of others motivates them to study more as a preparation and enhances confidence. If the children are provided chances to show their creation from the stage or on the notice board of their school or web page or somewhere else, they can further broaden their learning.

Libraries plan and organize different learner-friendly learning activities. Game-like activities which can be developed and arranged in the library and students can enjoy and learn. Wu et al. (2006) state, "Quizzes are the most popular type of resource. Puzzles and games add fun and help motivate learners; many reflect classic games such as pinball, hangman, crossword, and memorization" (p. 2). TP1,

one of the participants says, "Library period is for fun and entertainment for the children. I let them select a book or play in computer but they have to share what they have done in the library". ST1's voice, "We have library period now; let's go; today, I have to say about the book, 'The horse and the snail'", shows that they are interested in library study. The students who visit library from time to time are found to enjoy talking about the book and events in the library even outside the time of their classroom activities, assignment, and examination. TP3's saying, "the course itself is difficult, how they can study other books", reflects that they are unfamiliar with the use and plus side of library-use. They lacked the fact that library is not a burden but a part to refresh and motivate students and need to be awaked with it. As libraries intend to give pleasure of various sorts to the readers with different areas of interest and level, they are for reviving lethargic mind, for self-respect, and ultimately for enhancing level of understanding. Clark (2016) mentions, "It should also be thought of as a place of pleasurable relaxation. It is fun to read completely outside one's immediate academic purposes, and in the end, it is profitable, even academically profitable" (p.419). School management, teachers and students have a belief that library is for those who are extra-ordinary and want to study more. Library is for everyone who wants to learn something in the field of their interest. Some go to library to read newspaper, some to read magazine, some to read novel and so on. TP1 says, "I go to library to read newspaper; ST1 says, "I sometimes visit library to see colorful pictures in the book"; ST2 says, "I want to go to library to do homework during the break". Whatever the purpose one has to visit library, it, ultimately, is academic growth.

Teachers, using library can educate their children encouraging them to select and read books. As TP1, a participant says, "I sometimes ask students to choose a book and read it for saying something about the book; sometimes, I ask them to share their experiences. When they read a book or share something, I ask them to write what they read or share and put it on the notice board". In short, library-use breaks monotonous that students frequently experience in the class.

### **Challenges and opportunities of library-use in schools**

Despite the development of concept of library in the schools, they have many more challenges to educate students through the use of library practice. One of them is inadequate physical space and insufficient material in the library. Siwakoti (2009) claims, "While many schools do not have libraries, those which have libraries, their collections are outdated or not of children's level or interest" (p. 18). As ST3, a participant says. "Library is neither has neither comfortable chairs/benches to sit and read there nor sufficient study materials from the areas of our interest". The congested and dark hall with inconvenient environment has dissuaded students to benefit from library. Similarly, the administration has their own problem as TP3's voice, "We have no budget and trained manpower for library management". It clearly depicts the condition of library in the school. Due to budgetary constraints (Siwakoti, 2009), schools have kept the books donated by a person or organization

and stored in a room. The second challenge is lack of trained and qualified librarian or library teacher to organize pleasurable and inspiring events and programs in the library. The problem that the students and the teachers have no library-learning attitude can be reversed. ST3, a research participant's voice, "I have never seen anyone study in the library; it is always closed" proves that the school has not encouraged its teachers and students to study in the library. Another participant named ST4 has similar experience. As she said, "I sometimes go to library but see no one study there. Moreover, there is no such interesting book either". TP3, a teacher participant argues, "Students have difficulty in reading their text book and have difficulty in doing assignment; how can we lead them to read other books?" The saying of TP4, "Why study in this retired-near-age. ... What should we study even now?" shows teachers' status quo and inept behavior. As Shein and Chiou (2011) mention Bandura's (1977, 1986) statement, "human behavior is transmitted largely through exposure to role models, that is, modeling phenomena" (p. 1097), students learn when they have the exposure of library study. They have neither seen others study in the library nor been encouraged to study there. "There is a general lack of awareness about the importance of school libraries among the parents, students, teachers as well as the concerned authorities" (Siwakoti, 2009, p. 18). The third encounter is outdated resources and technology in the school. School library consists of books gifted by someone or some organizations. The books are not collected and managed as per students' need and interest. Furthermore, the library lacks internet facility, self-access and recording system. ST1 says, "Library in our school has no story books, no comfortable furniture for sitting and reading there, and no internet facilities". ST4's saying above proves the same thing. The fourth challenge is misconception about library study and digital information. Here, TP1, TP2, and TP3 have same voice, "Our main aim is to lead them to score good marks in examination, so our focus is on text book not on unnecessary things". They are found to be unknown about the fact that exam-oriented teaching and rote learning limits students' learning capacity and kills their creativity. The last not the least is unfamiliarity about the plus side of library use. Teachers and students have a misconception that library-use is an unnecessary burden both financially and examination viewpoint. The teachers have a common voice that exposure of online access can divert students' mind and behavior and motivates them to weave affair. Schools require additional expenses in order to manage and run library-use appropriately.

Though schools have not practiced online sources in their teaching-learning activities, they have occasionally made use of them for students' learning. ST2 says, "We understood the lesson 'How to produce hydrogen in the lab when our science sir taught us showing the video on the projector in the lab". As the students say, "Such classes are more interesting than the teachers' teaching-only", online sources are quite supportive for better understanding. PT3 has similar experience, "We had learned a lot from YouTube when teachers told us to watch online videos for learning how to make origami products". Both of these experiences clearly prove

that existing teaching learning practices are moving towards electronic versions. We have no online course practices in school education as Wu et al. (2006) argue, "Online courses are more extended and formal than individual exercises" (p. 2). However, online sources are used occasionally.

As everything has plus as well as minus side, library-use too has many more opportunities and potentialities along with its challenges. Firstly, the teachers, with 21<sup>st</sup> century ICT facility, can identify transformative opportunities, improve library services, and provide more engaging activities. Schools can develop e-library and provide online access to library and connect classroom activities with the access. Moreover, developing apps, they can motivate students to enjoy learning, perform their work, participate in a webinar, and interact with their friends and teachers personally or in a group. ST1's experience, "Our classes during covid-19 lockdown was interesting as teachers show slides and explain everything clearly; later, sirs would send the notes and slides for us; we used to ask the questions writing in the message box to be answered" proves that virtual class was beneficial during lockdown period. However, the students who had no internet access had difficulty in covering the course only through the slides and notes provided later. The next opportunity is the insights from the library-use. When students visit library, they see others study; they experience peaceful study environment; they find the books of their interest; they participate in different activities organized in the library; and ultimately build-up confidence and enhance their level of education. Thirdly, library provides information for job search, career build-up, and further study. As library can have effective and influential role for educating children, government's role to control, monitor, and evaluate library activities; management, and awareness programs for teachers, students, parents, and concerned authorities can bring a significant change in learning from library.

## **E. Conclusion**

Community schools, though they have library, have focused on teaching learning from the textbook and have not encouraged teachers and students significantly to benefit from library use. However, some students, either motivated by some teachers or by their parents or self, have borrowed books for reading. Private/institutional schools have scheduled library period for library use in their class routine and motivated students to make use of library. It seems essential to acquaint teachers, parents and school management about the fact that library-use refreshes, provides insights, entertains and motivates students to read more. The concept that library study is a burden should be replaced with the benefit library has on students through awareness program from trained and skilled librarian or library teacher. The study has found three factors for the promotion of library-use in the school. Firstly, the concerned authorities should familiarize their students, parents, and teacher cum librarian with the use and benefits of library-use. Secondly, they have to manage library hall, sufficient study materials, and spacious study rooms



with comfortable furniture. Finally, they can promote library-use by organizing different programs and events in the library.

Every school has a library but their utilization for the promotion of educational activities is not sufficient. In other words, the libraries are not managed and developed as a library with sufficient facilities and study materials. This paper can be an eye-opener for the policy makers, for the school management and for the concerned local government to renew the vision of library-use in the school. It is equally useful for the teachers to use library not as burden but to refresh and break monotonous teaching learning activities. If we schedule a period every week as a library period for the students, they will go to library, experience peaceful study environment, see others study there, and learn a lot from or about library-use. When a school organizes student-friendly activities in connection with library, students will be better motivated to benefit from the library. Therefore, I would like every teacher to encourage ourselves and our students to do considerable reading for fun, not as a burden, in the field of your/their interest.

## References

- Ardianingsih, F. (2016). *Motivasi siswa dalam memanfaatkan perpustakaan sekolah pada sekolah dasar SD di Tulungagung: Studi deskriptif motivasi siswa dalam memanfaatkan perpustakaan sekolah pada SD Kampung Dalem 1, SD Negeri 1 Moyoketen dan SD Islam Al-Badar Tulungagung* [Students' motivation in utilising school libraries at primary schools in Tulungagung: A descriptive study of student motivation in utilising the school library at SD Kampung Dalem 1, SD Negeri 1 Moyoketen and SD Islam Al-Badar Tulungagung.]. (Master's Degree). Universitas Airlangga, Retrieved from <https://repository.unair.ac.id/54931/13/FEBRITA%20ARDIANINGSIH-min.pdf>
- Clark, E. M. (2016). How to motivate students go to library. *American Association of University Professors*, 39(3), 413-420. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40220972>
- Daley, M., & Child, J. (2015). Makerspaces in the school library environment. *Access*, 29(1), 42-49. Retrieved from <https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/INFORMIT.064530109882878>
- Harisanty, D. (2019). How to motivate students in using school library. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, 1-11. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>
- Malik, M. (n.d.). Historical development of libraries. *Bhartiya Bhasha, Shiksha, Sahitya evam Shodh*, 5(1), 61-71. Retrieved from <http://www.bhartiyashodh.com>
- Shanmugam, A. P., Ramalakshmi, A., Sasthri, G., & Balachandran, S. (2020). Library management system. *Journal of Xi'an University of Architecture & Technology*, XII(XI), 743-753. doi:10.37896/JXAT12.11/29777

- Shein, P. P., & Chiou, W.-B. (2011). Teachers as role models for students' learning styles. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 39(8), 1097-1104. doi:10.2224/sbp.2011.39.8.1097
- Siwakoti, S. (2009). Status of School Library Development in Nepal. *Sri Lankan Journal of Librarianship and Information Management*, 1(1), 13-19. doi:10.4038/sllim.v1i1.427
- Wu, S., Written, I. H., Edwards, A., Nichols, D. M., & Aquino, R. (2006). A Digital Library of Language Learning Exercises. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 1-7. Retrieved from [www.i-jet.org](http://www.i-jet.org)