

The State of Secondary School Libraries and Librarians in the Mysuru District

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Abstract

The present article focuses on the challenges of the library and information science profession in the Mysuru division school management. This study examined the current literature on secondary school libraries' management status in the Mysuru district by reviewing governmental documents and institutional efforts. This paper presents the findings of a survey that was distributed to secondary school headmasters in the Mysuru district to determine if there are full-time school librarians and qualified support staff that provide high-quality, school-integrated library services. A questionnaire was distributed to all the school headmasters. It is the aim of this study to explore and analyse the role of school libraries in the implementation of inclusive education. From the study, it was found that out of 764 secondary schools, 117 have school librarians. This cohort study faces the current challenges of the school librarian and focuses on the school library as a driving force for development.

Keywords: School Education System, Secondary School Libraries, School Librarian, Mysuru District

Introduction

Education is dynamic, and as society changes and advances, so does education, reflecting global, national and regional trends as well as those of society at large. The educational system impacts the quality of life for future generations of children and youth and thereby the whole society. Holistic education should include the all-around development of a student. Mehrotra and Delamonica (1998) noted that a country's educational policies have substantial and long-term effects on its

people and therefore, on its future as a whole. Shahzad (2007) asserted that countries around the world recognise that secondary school education is a pillar for national development. Vavrus (2009) stated that secondary school education is important for educating the needed workforce in different sectors in member countries. Mysuru is one of the most prestigious districts in Karnataka, having an excellent quality education system with a wide range of schools, colleges and universities. However, the school education system in Mysuru is facing many challenges and opportunities. These can be resolved by conducting a study of schools and their status.

Statement of the Research Problem

The present study is conceived under the title "The State of Secondary School Libraries and Librarians in the District."

School Education in Karnataka

Education is the complete, all-around development of a person from a child into a complete individual. The school education system in Karnataka is making continuous and constant efforts to shape individuals who will be future citizens of this country and an asset to society. Thus, education, as an institution in modern democracies, can catalyse harnessing one's cultural capital so that one can eventually experience other benefits (Srikakolli, 2017). Samson (2016) reported that in Karnataka, the education system is mainly governed by three boards, namely the Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board, the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE), and the National Institute of

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Open Schooling (NIOS). Moreover, there are various international and national boards, such as the Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) board, the International Baccalaureate and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). All of these institutions cater to primary, secondary and higher secondary education.

The Karnataka State Board, or Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board, is a board of education governed by the state itself. The schools affiliated with this board offer primary and secondary education. The students of standard 10 are required to write a state-level examination at the end of the year, and after passing the examination, the student is awarded the Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC). The Government of Karnataka has initiated and implemented various programmes to encourage, motivate and promote students and teachers to improve the quality of education for all, as well as to make it accessible and use technology for learning and teaching.

School Education System in the Mysuru District

Mysuru is one of the larger districts in the state, encompassing 3.17 million people and representing 7% of the state's total population. Mysuru city is also experiencing a proliferation of schools and colleges, along with the many IT companies. Josephine (1999) depicted that school education needs to be improved to ensure efficiency. The efficiency of the school is critically important to meet students' basic learning needs, especially when resources are scarce. Further, the author emphasised that schools with an efficient internal system distinguish themselves from schools with inefficient systems. Currently, the state government is looking into improving the infrastructure of the city to enhance the quality of life. Mysuru's education system is specifically focused on enhancing the available IT infrastructure. The majority of schools in Mysuru are affiliated with CBSE, ICSE and the State Board. The city of Mysuru provides a large number of both English- and Kannada-medium schools. A richly historical and heritage district, Mysuru has an excellent system of schools and a highly efficient teaching staff.

In the last two decades, the education system in the Mysuru district has undergone structural changes and adjustments. The school education in the Mysuru district is divided into four levels namely primary (Classes 1–5), elementary (Classes 6–8), secondary (Classes 9–10) and higher secondary (Classes 11–12). The secondary school management system in Mysuru is divided into five categories. These are Department of Education schools, Tribal/Social Welfare Department schools, private aided schools, private unaided schools and central government schools. The two main mediums of instruction at most of these schools are English and Kannada. A school may teach a curriculum based on CBSE, ICSE, NIOS or State Standards.

Administrative Organisational Structure in Mysuru District Educational System

The district of Mysuru comprises seven revenue administrative blocks and nine educational blocks. Each school in the district is divided into several blocks.

President Zilla Panchayat has headed the establishment issues and general administration of all the departments of Zilla Panchayat (ZP) in the Mysuru district. The state government appoints a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) on behalf of the Zilla Panchayat office to ensure smooth functioning and administration of the office. Deputy Director of Public Instruction (DDPI) oversees district education administration at the Mysuru district level. It is under DDPI that Educational Officers (EO) and Subject Inspectors (SI) work. Each block is assigned a Block Education Officer (BEO) who is responsible for administering block education. At the cluster level, Education Coordinators (ECO) report to the BEO. The School Development and Monitoring Committees (SDMCs) govern the development and monitoring of schools. In addition to the administrative unit, the district academic structure is called the District Institute of Educational Training (DIET) and is headed by DDPI Development. Under BEOs, Block Resource Co-ordinators (BRC) and Block Resource Persons (BRPs) work at the block level, while Cluster Resource Persons (CRPs) work at the cluster level. Fig. 1 depicts the administration structure in Mysuru district educational profile.

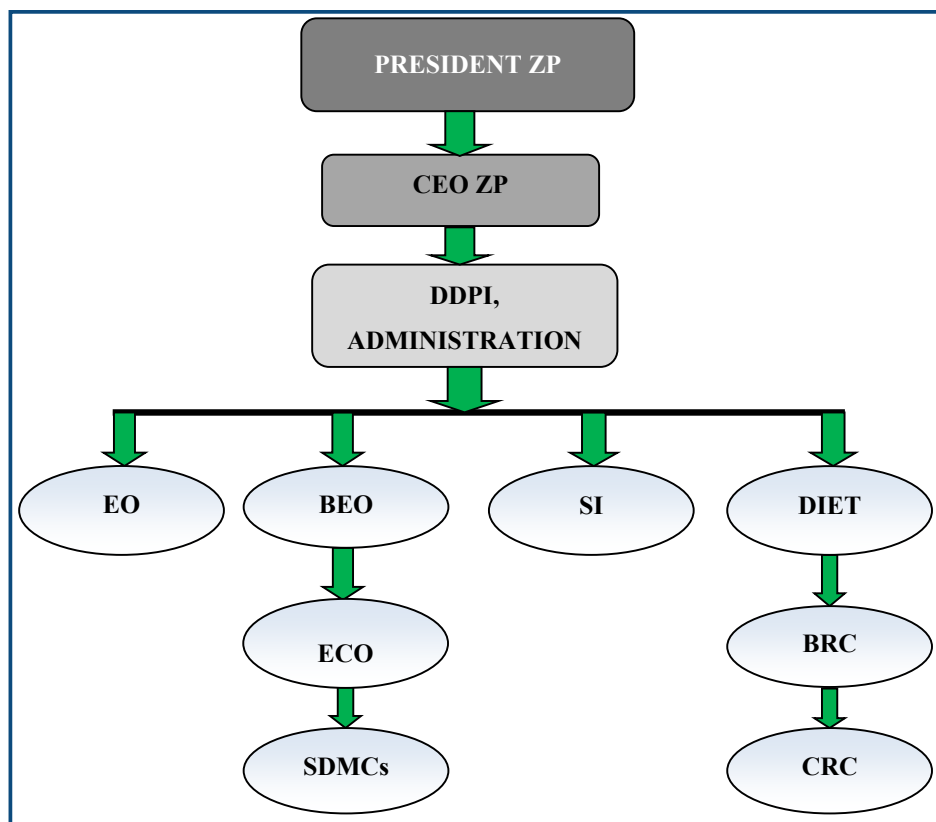


Fig. 1: Administrative Structure in Mysuru District Educational System

Methodology

In the beginning, the researcher collected the list of secondary schools from the Deputy Director of Public Instruction (DDPI) Mysuru district and sought permission to gather data from the respondents. The distribution of questionnaires and data collection for the main study was carried out from June 2020 to June 2021. The researcher sent questionnaires through registered post or e-mail and visited schools with a letter of introduction briefing the research objectives and the purpose of the study. To meet the objectives of the study, several follow-ups and requests had to be made to the study participants due to the shutdown in the Mysuru district.

It was found that there are 764 secondary schools in the study area. These were taken into account for the study to know the status of libraries in the schools. Here, the researcher has distributed questionnaires to all the headmasters/principals serving in 764 schools. Out of 764 schools, only 117 have professional librarians that have been taken for the study.

Once the data collection process was complete, the duly filled-out questionnaires were scrutinised and checked for completeness and the results were fed into the spread sheet for statistical analysis. To achieve the study objectives, descriptive and inferential statistics were employed.

Secondary Schools in Mysore District

Fig. 2 attempts to present information about all the secondary schools' academic years 2019–2020 that had been collected by the researcher from the Deputy Director of Public Instruction (DDPI), Mysuru district. As per the school statistics provided by DDPI, there are 764 secondary schools established in the Mysuru District. Out of which, 136 (17.80%) schools are located in the Mysuru North educational block, 124 (16.23%) schools in Mysuru rural, 106 (13.87%) schools in Mysuru South, 74 (9.69%) schools in Hunsur, 71 (9.29%) schools in K.

R. Nagar, 70 (9.16%) schools in Nanjangud, 67 (8.77%) schools in T. Narasipura, 62 (8.12%) schools in H.D. Kote and 54 (7.07%) schools in Periyapatna.

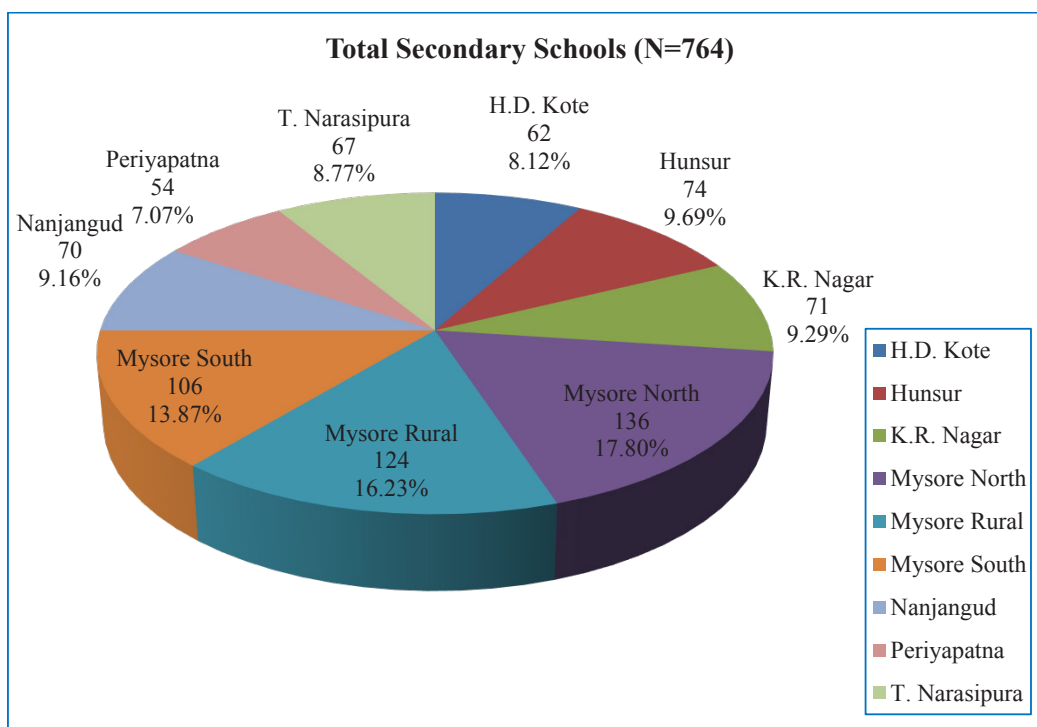


Fig. 2: Secondary Schools in Mysuru District

Educational Blocks and Clusters in the Mysuru District

Mysuru district is comprised of nine educational blocks. Each school in the taluk educational block is grouped into different clusters of schools. It is found from Table 1 that there are 27 clusters in Nanjanagud taluk educational block, 26 clusters in Hunsur taluk educational block, 23 clusters in Periyapatna taluk educational block and 20 clusters are present in H. D. Kote, Krishnarajanagara and Mysore Rural taluk educational block in the Mysuru district of Karnataka. Mysore North educational block has 10 clusters and the Mysore South block has six clusters in the Mysuru District, Karnataka.

Table 1: Educational Blocks and Clusters in Mysuru District

Sr. No.	Taluk Educational Block	Clusters
1	Schools in H. D. Kote block	20 Clusters
2	Schools in Hunsur block	26 Clusters
3	Schools in Krishnarajanagara block	20 Clusters

Sr. No.	Taluk Educational Block	Clusters
4	Schools in Mysore North block	10 Clusters
5	Schools in Mysore Rural block	20 Clusters
6	Schools in Mysore South block	6 Clusters
7	Schools in Nanjanagud block	27 Clusters
8	Schools in Periyapatna block	23 Clusters
9	Schools in T.Narsipura block	20 Clusters

Management-Wise Distribution of Secondary Schools in Mysuru District

School is the foundation and the core of any educational system. The educational blocks in Mysuru are divided into five categories based on school management, namely Department of Education schools, Tribal/Social Welfare Department schools, private-aided schools, private unaided schools and central government schools. All the Departments of Education, Tribal/Social Welfare Department, private-aided, private unaided and central government schools within the particular taluk educational block have been split into different clusters

of schools. The information provided in Table 2 was collected from the Deputy Director of Public Instruction (DDPI) Mysuru district. As per the school statistics

provided by the DDPI office, there are 764 secondary schools in the Mysuru district.

Table 2: Management-Wise Distribution of Secondary Schools in Mysuru District

Taluk Education Blocks	Department of Education	Tribal/Social welfare Department	Private Aided	Private Unaided	Central Government	Total
H.D. Kote	31	5	7	19	0	62
	13.36%	11.11%	5.15%	5.49%	0.00%	8.12%
Hunsur	32	6	8	27	1	74
	13.79%	13.33%	5.88%	7.80%	20.00%	9.69%
K.R. Nagar	35	6	14	16	0	71
	15.09%	13.33%	10.29%	4.62%	0.00%	9.29%
Mysore North	13	5	33	84	1	136
	5.60%	11.11%	24.26%	24.28%	20.00%	17.80%
Mysore Rural	33	4	11	74	2	124
	14.22%	8.89%	8.09%	21.39%	40.00%	16.23%
Mysore South	9	0	26	70	1	106
	3.88%	0.00%	19.12%	20.23%	20.00%	13.87%
Nanjangud	27	8	18	17	0	70
	11.64%	17.78%	13.24%	4.91%	0.00%	9.16%
Periyapatna	23	6	7	18	0	54
	9.91%	13.33%	5.15%	5.20%	0.00%	7.07%
T. Narasipura	29	5	12	21	0	67
	12.50%	11.11%	8.82%	6.07%	0.00%	8.77%
Total	232	45	136	346	5	764

The number of schools indicates the size of a system. Out of the total 764 secondary schools in the Mysuru district, 232 schools are run by the Department of Education, 45 schools are managed by the Tribal/Social Welfare Department, 136 schools are managed by private aided management, 346 schools are managed by private unaided management and 5 schools are managed by central government. Schools run by the Department of Education and Tribal/Social Welfare Department are managed by Karnataka State Government. Private aided schools are managed by private management but teachers' salary is given by the Karnataka State Government. Private unaided schools are fully managed

by private management and central government schools are managed by central government.

Secondary School Librarians in the Mysuru District

Table 3 shows how many employability chances are lost for library and information science graduates in school libraries. Since there are no government-employed school librarians, all Department of Education and Tribal/Social Welfare Departments lack qualified school librarians. Additionally, an effort has been made to establish a road map for the development of the school libraries.

Table 3: Distribution of Secondary School Librarians in Mysuru District

<i>Taluku's Education Block-Wise</i>	<i>Private Aided</i>	<i>Private Unaided</i>	<i>Central Government</i>	<i>Total</i>
H.D. Kote	1	1	0	2
	12.50%	0.96%	0.00%	1.71%
Hunsur	1	6	1	8
	12.50%	5.77%	20.00%	6.84%
K.R. Nagar	0	0	0	0
	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Mysore North	1	14	1	16
	12.50%	13.46%	20.00%	13.68%
Mysore Rural	0	37	2	39
	0.00%	35.58%	40.00%	33.33%
Mysore South	3	37	1	41
	37.50%	35.58%	20.00%	35.04%
Nanjangud	1	4	0	5
	12.50%	3.85%	0.00%	4.27%
Periyapatna	0	4	0	4
	0.00%	3.85%	0.00%	3.42%
T. Narasipura	1	1	0	2
	12.50%	0.96%	0.00%	1.71%
Total	8	104	5	117

Table 3 shows the number of secondary school librarians in taluk educational block-wise/school management-wise. Out of 117 secondary school librarians, 41 (35.04%) school librarians in Mysore South, 39 (33.33%) school librarians in Mysore rural, 16 (13.68%) school librarians

in Mysore North, 8 (6.84%) school librarians in Hunsur, 5 (4.27%) school librarians in Nanjangud, 4 (3.42%) school librarians in Periyapatna, 2 (1.71%) school librarians from H. D. Kote Taluk's education block-wise and the same in T. Narasipura.

Table 4: Management of Libraries by Professional Librarians, Teachers, and Non-Teaching Staff

<i>Managing Libraries</i>	<i>Department of Education</i>	<i>Tribal/Social Welfare Department</i>	<i>Private Aided</i>	<i>Private Unaided</i>	<i>Central Government</i>	<i>Total</i>
Professional Librarians	0	0	8	104	5	117
	0.00%	0.00%	5.88%	30.06%	100.00%	15.31%
Teachers	227	37	118	225	0	607
	97.84%	82.22%	86.76%	65.03%	0.00%	79.45%
Non-teaching Staff	5	8	10	17	0	40
	2.16%	17.78%	7.35%	4.91%	0.00%	5.24%
Total	232	45	136	346	5	764

$\chi^2 (8, N = 764) = 165.938, p = 0.001 < .05$

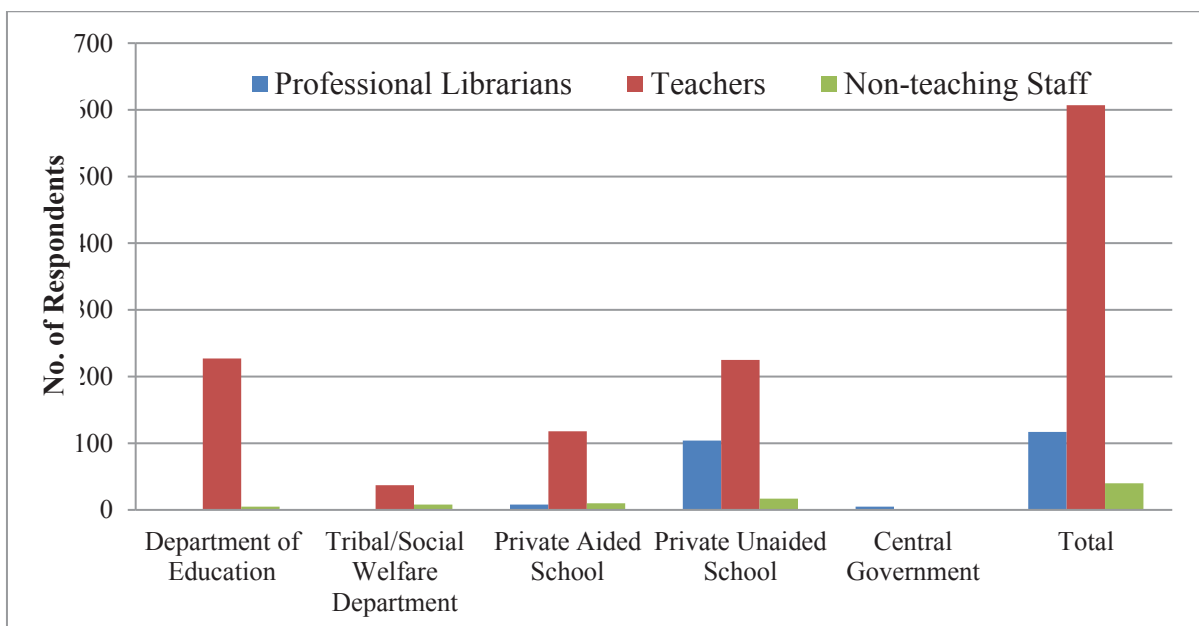


Fig. 3: Management of Libraries by Professional Librarians, Teachers, and Non-Teaching Staff

Respondents replied that out of 136 private-aided secondary schools in the Mysuru district, 118 (86.76%) private-aided secondary school libraries are overseen by teachers, 10 (7.35%) school libraries are managed by the administrative staff, and 8 (5.88%) secondary school libraries are superintended by professional school librarians. In 346 private unaided secondary schools, 225 (65.03%) secondary school libraries are taken charge of by the teacher who got lesser periods in the daily work schedule, 17 (4.91%) secondary school libraries by non-teaching staff, and 104 (30.06%) secondary school library by the professional school librarians. Table 4 notes that all 5 central government school libraries have professional librarians. A total of 227 (97.84%) department of education school libraries are managed by the teachers as there is no school librarian post in the state government cadre and 37 (82.22%) tribal/social welfare department secondary school libraries are likewise superintended by the teachers.

Major Findings

In light of the results of the data analysis, the following findings were developed.

The following findings have been generated from the responses of the head of the institution.

In all, 764 questionnaires were distributed to the headmasters/principals to determine if the institution possesses full-time, qualified school librarians and school library support staff that provide high-quality, school-integrated library services. Thus, filled-up questionnaires were received with a response rate of 100%.

A total of 346 (45.29%) questionnaires have been obtained from the private unaided schools, followed by 232 (30.37%) department of education schools, 136 (17.80%) private aided schools, 45 (5.89%) tribal/social welfare department schools and 5 (0.65%) central government schools. In terms of response rate, the highest number of schools is private unaided schools, with 45.29%.

It is found from the analysis that the majority (647; 84.69%) of the schools do not have professionally qualified school librarians in the Mysuru district. It is noticed that more than half (607; 79.45%) of the schools are managed by the teaching staff who have fewer periods and are substituted as teacher-librarians to lend and receive the books from the students. A total of 40 (5.24%) non-teaching staff oversee the secondary school library and render library services to the user community. This shows that substantial numbers of secondary school libraries are managed by non-professionals, because of

which the quality of services provided in those schools is very poor.

Discussion

This investigation was designed to gain a better understanding of problems and prospects in secondary schools in the Mysuru district. Findings revealed the lack of professionally qualified librarians and the absence of proper library services according to existing conditions. School administrators, Department of Education, Tribal/Social welfare department schools and teacher-librarians seem indifferent to the implications of poor library services for students' lifelong learning and achievement. It is an issue that requires serious consideration.

It is not possible for teachers to adequately perform their duties as librarians in school libraries because they have been untrained. This can also lead to teacher-librarians failing to properly train students in library usage or how to search for information in library materials. There are also no library education programmes offered by the Department of Education and Tribal/Social Welfare department schools in the Mysuru district. Since, it does not fall under the curriculum or formal learning area.

Many teachers and students lack digital skills, as well as are untrained, unequipped, or uneducated to use digital education platforms effectively. The first-world concerns like professionally qualified school librarians could provide orientation programmes for teachers and students so that they can become accurate searchers to access the electronic sources that support the development of lifelong learners. In the Mysuru district, there is no library cooperation between schools, public libraries and community libraries. Most teacher-librarians are unaware of what library cooperation entails. Focusing on professional librarianship in schools will eventually benefit the education system, institutions, learners and the nation as a whole.

The state government must implement permanent, professionally qualified librarian quickly in times of crisis so that students and teachers can develop their ICT and library skills. Every school should select and appoint a professionally qualified librarian to aid students in learning and assist teachers developing essential skills to explore new ideas. Professional librarians are often

the original authentic intelligence in the knowledge and wisdom society and can often turn problems into opportunities for deeper learning. School librarians are the technology representatives in today's digitally-driven innovation era, and they are key components of the school's professional team for ensuring student success.

Conclusion

Education is the primary need of the people; it not only means having a degree but also the inculcation of skills and life values to make for a better society. School is a preparation for the rigours of the bigger school, the world. A secondary school is a pious place of learning. The secondary schools in the Mysuru district continue the quest of providing the best quality of education to students and motivation to face the challenges of modern society.

Nagaraja (2017) reported that an interested and motivated school teacher can be professionally trained to manage the school library. In this spirit, an Online Certificate Course in School Librarianship was designed, developed, and tested in RIE, Mysuru as part of a Political Action Committee (PAC) programme. Managing school libraries in the digital era requires school librarians to possess diverse skills and competencies. For example, professional librarians are expected to provide library services to users and share the responsibility of curriculum design, planning, teaching and evaluation with other teaching staff in the building.

In the Mysuru district, the majority of school libraries are under-utilised. Since almost all Department of Education and Tribal/Social Welfare Department lacks a professional cadre of school librarians. Thus, school libraries are either managed by the teaching staff or by the administrative staff. Consequently, the advantages of having a library and its services do not benefit school children. The professional librarian is the best-qualified person to manage school library services and activities. Qualified librarians are urged to enhance the role they play as information experts and providers of knowledge and understanding. The top challenge facing school librarians is changing information-seeking behaviour, followed by human resources, financial concerns, library/digital skills and improving secondary school

education. School libraries and professional librarians are subversive forces in education.

Challenges related to manpower, technological modalities and the library spaces were identified as potential obstacles. The best way to deal with these gaps is for all concerned parties—academics, government departments, library associations, top management, LIS schools and policymakers to come together and bridge available gaps. Otherwise, the dignity and worth of the profession will continue to be trampled. The School librarian profession is in a critical state of neglect in the Mysuru district, something that warrants urgent attention. The school education system and policymakers should invest in school libraries and dual-qualified teacher-librarians to improve the student's literacy outcomes.

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