

EDN-A-Ja(1)-5/2025  
Government of Himachal Pradesh  
Department of Higher Education

From

The Secretary (Education) to the  
Government of Himachal Pradesh.

To

✓ 1. The Director of School Education,  
Himachal Pradesh, Shimla-01.

2. The State Project Director (SSA)  
Himachal Pradesh, Shimla-01.

Dated: Shimla-02,

17-04-2025

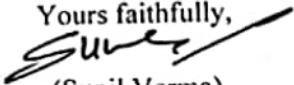
Subject: Regarding guidelines for setting up, Development, Maintenance and Use of  
Vibrant Libraries in the Government Schools in Himachal Pradesh.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to the subject cited above and to enclose herewith comprehensive guidelines for setting up, Development, Maintenance and Use of Vibrant Libraries in the Govt. Schools of Himachal Pradesh. You are requested to upload the above guidelines in official website of Education Department for information of general public. Further, the same be circulated widely through field offices and other channels for their wide publicity.

It is also requested that compliance and regular monitoring of implementation of these guidelines be ensured and given priority.

Yours faithfully,

  
(Sunil Verma)

Joint Secretary (Education) to the  
Govt. of Himachal Pradesh  
Dated: Shimla-02,

Endst. No. : As above

Copy for information and further necessary action to :-

1. The Director of Higher Education, Himachal Pradesh, Shimla-01.
2. All the Deputy Directors of Higher Education, Himachal Pradesh.
3. All the Deputy Directors of Elementary Education, Himachal Pradesh.
4. Guard file.

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Joint Secretary (Education) to the  
Govt. of Himachal Pradesh

## READ HIMACHAL:

### Guidelines for Setting Up, Development, Maintenance and Use of Vibrant Libraries in the Government Schools in Himachal Pradesh

*"The only thing that you absolutely have to know, is the location of the library,"*  
- Albert Einstein.

1. All research related to learning levels and personality development of school students establishes beyond doubt that school-going children must read something other than their syllabus books and/or the prescribed textbooks.
2. Over the years, with the support under *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) (earlier under *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* and *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan*), each and every Government School in the State (including all the stand alone Government Primary Schools) has a "library" with sufficient age appropriate books.
3. A large number of schools are making an excellent use of these books and they are making students read books. This is very encouraging. However, we need to universalize good practices and make school library a lively and engaging place.
4. Unfortunately, in a sizable number of schools, the usage of these books is below expectation. This is mainly due to **wrong understanding** of what a library means. A large number of teachers and students think of library only as a "separate physical space" preferably a dedicated hall, with rows of bookcases and a qualified and dedicated person acting as "librarian".
5. **However, library is not just about having books in school.** Unless and until books are read and re-read by the students and teachers,

having books is meaningless. Wrong understanding of a library-merely a room/hall with a person (preferably a person posted as librarian) as the in-charge- has led to a situation where in a large number of schools the invaluable supplementary reading material which can enrich students remains locked in dust-filled dark and dingy rooms.

6. Field visits by the resource persons and feedback given by the teachers have highlighted following points:

6.1. Books are there, but students do not get to read these as the teacher-in-charge (or the librarian) fears that she/he will have to pay from her own pocket in case of loss of books.

6.2. Books are lost/damaged by the students and the teacher-in-charge of the library is held responsible for this. When students damage/spoil the books, the teachers restrict issuing books and gradually the use of books stops.

6.3. On transfer, the successor of the library in-charge refuses to take charge if there is shortage of books. In order to avoid being questioned, the teachers end up not using library books. Most of the teachers feel that since these books are to be handed over on transfer to the next teacher or shown to the Audit, or to the superiors when they visit the school, therefore, all books must remain in good condition and no book should be lost/misplaced/spoiled. The result is that the books are there but these are stored in locked bookcases or trunks or kept safely in the store.

7. Even though some of the concerns of teachers are genuine like absence of comprehensive guidelines regarding library books yet it seems that,



the message (both formal and informal) that has trickled down in our "cascade mode" of training and meetings seems to be this: **keep books safe, so that you are not troubled.** This "safety saves approach" is making our libraries ineffective and we are losing a great opportunity to inculcate reading habit amongst the students. Books broaden children's horizons; refine their outlook; enhance their learning levels and make them better thinkers. A good use of library will help in developing essential skills often termed as "21<sup>st</sup> century skills" such as *Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration and Communication.*

3. The focus of library should be to improve reading skills of children, resulting in improved learning levels, which is an imperative to develop reading culture. There is a need to connect children with books. Access to age/grade specific reading material is essential. In addition, it is equally important that the children become competent, independent and aware readers by the time they complete their primary education.
9. In order to clarify key issues concerning library usage, these Guidelines are being issued. These are **mandatory and shall be followed by each Government School.**
10. Each school shall follow these Guidelines in letter and spirit and shall specifically ensure the following:
  - 10.1. There must be a library in each school. If the school has a separate room, separate storage facility or dedicated space for the library, then it is a welcome situation. However, absence of these is no excuse. A school needs a few books other than text books (*age specific supplementary reading material is the best thing to have but story books, comics, newspapers, second hand books- fiction/ non-fiction-*

*anything will do) and a motivated teacher to function as the nodal person or "in-charge of the library". This in-charge can be any teacher posted in the school or any member of the non-teaching staff or can even be a retired teacher who lives near the school or she/he can also be an interested member of the SMC or from the community. The school with the consent of the SMC can make such a retired teacher or a member of the community in-charge of the school library.*

10.2. One reason why libraries are not used is that teachers do not love books themselves. So, the first step is to get a motivated teacher/staff/retired teacher or any member of the SMC or community member to come forward as volunteer to become keeper of the books. If there are more teachers who are interested in books and want to be part of the READ HIMACHAL MOVEMENT, a Group/Team can be formed to make children love books. If no one volunteers then also any teacher posted in the School shall be made in-charge of the library. She/he will be the nodal person and shall function as the *library in charge* to co-ordinate the activities centered on the school library.

10.3. Library MUST be used: there is no fun in having books if these are not read, re-read by children. For example if a school has ten students and one book, IT IS NOT ONE BOOK, BUT TEN BOOKS AND HUNDREDS OF STORIES.

10.4. Many books will get lost, misplaced, torn and spoiled in the process. **Never mind.** Each book is meant to be read again and again, so it will get old/damaged/lost/torn/stolen. We have full faith that teachers and students will keep the books safe and in

good condition and the students will not steal or spoil books and they will not damage the books or tear the pages. In fact, we are sure that the teachers and the students, together, will take care of each and every book. Books are a priceless treasure that is meant for generations of learners. So, the inherent value of having a library is to make sure that books are read and re-read by the generations of students and teachers. While we expect that teachers and students will keep the library book in good condition always and will take care that these are not stolen, misplaced, lost, torn or spoiled yet it may happen sometimes that some books are not returned or get lost/misplaced/spoiled due to various reasons.

10.5. Each School is authorized by virtue of these Guidelines to make Working Rules regarding number of books to be issued/loaned at a given time; the period for which these will be issued/loaned for home reading; how to make use of these books within the school time (by having special book reading period/session/library time/reading sessions etc.); how much fine (in cash or kind: several innovative methods can be thought of for this also) will be imposed on defaulters or those who misplace the books etc. The suggestive points are only indicative. The list should, however, be short and simple; the fine should also not be excessive.

10.6. It is expected that the schools shall come up with innovative practices and out of the box methods to make the library books a valued treasure that belongs to the school and that has to be passed on to the next generation of students. The State Project Office, SSA shall create online feedback mechanism to document innovative



methods/practices devised by the schools to set up and use library books. These methods, ways and techniques will be shared with others so that all schools implement these.

10.7. So, these Guidelines are being issued to give this message to the teachers of all schools:

Don't panic if books get damaged/lost etc. Books, if used, will become dog-eared, stained and weathered over a period of time. Some of these will be torn (if there is a really good and popular book, then every child will want to read it.)

We need to believe the child if she/he says that her goat ate the book or her jealous brother tore it. We must encourage the children to tell the truth about the book and we will get a feel about the real issues that the child faces: *maybe her parents don't like that she reads books other than text books, maybe she is so much in love with the book that she does not want to return. It can be anything.*

Teachers must explore the reasons along with the child and this is going to be fun.

10.8. So, these Guidelines mandate that books should be issued/loaded to every student for home reading as well. The goal is to make every child love books not to keep books safe and in the same condition in which these were handed over to you.

10.9. Display books and make these accessible: Books are like any other object of desire (sweets/toy/clothes), a good display that make the books "visible" and "accessible" makes a lot of difference. If the students "see, touch, feel and flip through" the books on display (these are not be locked in trunk/boxes/almirah) they would want to read these. If the children can touch, feel and smell

books and they browse through them the teacher has done a great job.

10.10. **Make Active Book Clubs:**

- Schools should form Book Clubs/Reading Clubs where children talk about the book(s) they like. The Book Clubs can organize following activities (only suggestive):
  - *Reading Day* (all students read from the book of their choice and discuss why they like the passage/story/excerpt that they choose to read).
  - *Writing Day* (all students write something: a story/a poem or anything they wish to share).
  - *Speaking Day* (all students speak on the topic of their choice).
  - *Quiz* (on books/authors/characters)
  - *Words are Fun* (word making, scrabble)
- Involve students in management of library.
- The members of the book club must have at least one activity (either formal or informal) in a week (this may also be organized on the bag-less day). Children can recite a poem/story; discuss what they have read; write book reviews; a message board can be created where students can pin poems/drawings/sketches/quotes. Let children "own" the library, then only they will value and take care of books.
- Morning Assembly should be made use of to encourage book reading and various other reading-related activities.



- The schools may hold several competitions under the Book Club and, may give books as prize. Funds under school grant and TLM grant should be used for this purpose. Funds can be arranged by way of donation also.
- Acquire Books/Magazines/other reading material from the community: Every school should make an effort to acquire books/supplementary reading material for the library from community by way of donation or through active contribution of teachers.
- Several activities can be done through book clubs, for example: teachers and students can make **scape books** by taking out interesting articles from newspapers/old/used books and compiling these in age appropriate files which can be used as reading material; engage **parents and community members** to make vibrant libraries; organize competitions such as debates; declamations; poetry recitation and create a book loving culture.

10.11. Stock Taking and Managing Books: Books are not desks, benches or other furniture in the school. Books are fragile, therefore, repeated use will always render some books unusable and as mentioned above some books may be short, due to various reasons, at the time of annual stocktaking.

- Stock taking of the books should be done every year or at the time of the transfer of the in-charge.
- If there is a shortfall at the end of the year the teacher in-charge (or the committee of teachers) shall record a Certificate in the book stock register indicating the total

books at the start of year, new additions, books lost/misplaced and total books available at the end of the year.

- This Certificate shall be the ONLY REQUIREMENT for the purpose of record and Audit. There shall NOT be any explanation required from the teacher (or committee of teachers or committee of students and teachers) regarding the shortfall due to loss/damage.
- The same practice (of recording the Certificate) shall be followed if the teacher has to hand over the charge of the library during the year due to transfer/retirement/any other reason.
- It is emphasized that Schools Library is different, as the school students start their journey in the magical world of words and stories at the primary level. Therefore, prime objective is to get them excited about books; to develop reading habit amongst them; to make them love books.
- The head teacher/senior most teacher and in case the senior most teacher is the in-charge of the library as well then any other teacher (in case of single teacher schools no such requirement will be there to countersign the Certificate) of the institution shall countersign this Certificate and record her/his satisfaction that the books have been lost/misplaced/spoiled as result of regular usage by the students. These books shall be written off accordingly. This stock taking and writing off shall happen once in a year or

when the teacher-in-charge is transferred, retires, or leaves the school permanently due to any reason whatsoever.

- Everyone going for purpose of monitoring/inspection to a school shall not question the authenticity of the Certificate and the teacher/in-charge concerned shall not be made personally accountable for such loss which happens as a result of using the library.
- These Guidelines shall also be applicable to the books already available with the schools. So, each teacher-in-charge/staff member responsible for the library shall do the stock taking in the month of December 2025 with respect to all the books actually available with the school and compare this to the entry of the total books entered in the stock register since the register was started. **The difference shall be written off.**
- Thereafter this should become annual exercise.
- The "Year" for this purpose shall be the calendar year.

11. The Education Department and the State Government is also setting up Digital Libraries in schools in phased manner. A large number of schools have been equipped with Smart Class Rooms, which are great learning tools, and the number of such schools will increase in future. These smart classrooms and digital libraries will function as **Knowledge Centers for Future**. The schools must use these assets to inculcate reading habits amongst the students.

12. It is further clarified that books in the library are not to be confused with normal stock and store items available in the school. It is agreed that the misuse of books should be checked and each school shall devise its own mechanism for this but the teacher-in-charge of library (staff in-charge and/or the committee of teachers and/or students) shall not be held responsible for loss of books for whatever reasons. If a school buys the books at its own level, *it has to be understood by*



- everyone that books are not purchased by inviting quotations on L-1 basis.* It is interesting that such incidents have come to light where the school was asked as to why three quotes were not called for a book title. While higher discount can be negotiated with the publisher or supplier, the guidelines issued by the Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation may serve the purpose. The online purchase of books should be encouraged as the online portals offer huge discounts.
13. It is worth repetition that our wrong understanding of the library has resulted in a situation where books remain locked in trunks and almirahs as teachers "fear" that they will be held accountable for loss of books and they will be made to pay for the loss from their own pocket. If required the schools can impose fines (but these should be nominal), but the better course will be to make every school student realize the value of books by following innovative mechanisms to check misuse.
14. The State SSA shall develop a grading system for schools where the libraries are assessed annually on the basis of objective criteria including usage, new acquisitions, donations for library, activities related to reading habit; how many books were issued to the teachers- it is an important test that how many teachers are using library books (if teachers read then only they can motivate the students to use library books), how many children used the library, how are the best readers amongst the children are identified and rewarded, which is the favorite book of the children, innovations by the school, community involvement, whether the library is a "public library" or not, timings of the library, does it remain open on the holidays as well, etc.
15. One important part of the process should be to make every school library a "public library", that is to open it to the members of public. The SMC Members, school alumni and other members from the community may be requested to take lead in this initiative. The Schools shall be free to create a mechanism in this regard.
16. The schools should document how reading library books helped improve learning levels. Such micro researches can be funded under SSA and the teachers can send such proposals directly to the Mission Director SSA any time during the year.

17. The best libraries shall be rewarded by special grants and the best teachers and the best students shall be honored at levels: cluster, block, district and state every year and their experiences will be documented and shared.

18. The **AWARD SCHEME** will function broadly in the following manner: schools will apply for award, there will be assessment by a team from DIET (assessment criteria will be made available to school in advance and will be outcome based). This scheme shall aim to active libraries and make them vibrant institutions rather than dull store houses. The best teachers and the best schools will be rewarded annually.

**Let us all join hands for a healthy book reading culture in our schools.**



**Rakesh Kanwar, IAS**  
**Secretary (Education) to the**  
**Govt. of Himachal Pradesh Shimla-2**