Enhancing Quality Education in Bangladesh: The Role of School and College Librarians

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify critical skills, roles, challenges, and viable solutions to maximize librarians' contributions to enhance quality education in Bangladesh. Data were collected from 47 purposively selected librarians working in secondary schools and colleges in the northern regions of Bangladesh through a structured questionnaire comprising closed-ended questions. The findings identify a comprehensive set of technical skills, including digital literacy, information retrieval, and resource management, as well as soft skills such as communication and the ability to organize workshops or training programs, all of which are essential for librarians to effectively contribute to students' academic success and the broader goals of quality education. The study identifies the key roles of librarians in promoting independent learning and critical thinking among students. Roles identified also include collaborative practices with teachers, aligning library resources with curriculum objectives, and providing supplementary materials to support instructional development. Key challenges identified include inadequate technological infrastructure, insufficient funding, and limited professional development opportunities in digital literacy. Respondents recommended targeted training, effective collaboration, and sufficient investment in modern library technologies to address these issues.

Keywords: Quality education, School and college librarians, Bangladesh.

Introduction

Education is regarded as one of the most powerful and effective tools for enlightenment and social transformation (Thangeda, 2016). Quality education is a strong foundation for every nation's development, shaping the future of its people (Rashid, 2019). In the context of rapid technological advancements, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT), educational systems worldwide, including those in Bangladesh, are facing significant changes. As a result, providing quality education has become a critical challenge that demands attention and action.

The librarian plays a crucial role in promoting quality education. They assist by improving academic performance, promoting literacy, managing educational resources, and making information more easily accessible. VVOB (Vlaamse Vereniging voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Technische

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Bijstand) the Flemisch Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance, disclosed that quality education must ensure literacy, numeracy, scientific knowledge, life skills, and capacity building to enhance teachers, librarians, and other stakeholders, even though educational outcomes differ depending on the context. Quality education is a crucial factor in human life, and not everyone has access to quality education (Padhai, 2017). The responsibilities of librarians in schools and colleges have expanded in response to the evolution of educational demands. School and college students, who are significant recipients of quality education, depend on effective library services to improve their learning. However, Bangladesh still underutilizes school and college librarians' (SCLs') potential to enhance educational outcomes. Many students do not receive sufficient academic support due to the library's poor performance and the lack of librarian integration into the educational process (Hussain, 2019).

The importance of SCLs is highlighted by the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which is to ensure inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education for all. These experts support knowledge and lifelong learning in addition to maintaining educational materials. Nonetheless, they encounter several obstacles, including insufficient funding, technological disruptions, and a lack of recognition for their contributions in academic institutions (Okwu & Opurum, 2021).

As quality education continues to gain importance as the cornerstone of national development, the roles of school and college librarians (SCLs) have become increasingly important. International literature highlights the value of librarians in fostering information literacy, managing resources, and enhancing learning outcomes (Smith, 2019; Johnson & Lee, 2020; Lincoln, 2002). However, there is limited knowledge about the responsibilities, skills, and challenges faced by school and college librarians in Bangladesh. A knowledge gap that has been formed due to lack of targeted research on this subject, prevents well-informed policymaking and the development of practical plans for enhancing educational practices.

Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining the skills, roles, challenges, and strategic solutions of SCLs in ensuring quality education in Bangladesh.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the role of SCLs in enhancing quality education in Bangladesh. To achieve this, the research sets the following specific objectives-

  i.   to explore the essential skills required by SCLs for supporting quality education effectively;
  ii.   to examine how librarians assist students in accessing quality education;
  iii. to identify significant challenges faced by SCLs in fulfilling their education role; and
  iv.   to recommend strategic suggestions for overcoming these challenges.

Methodology

The study employs a quantitative research approach and utilizes a survey method as its primary research strategy. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising closed-ended questions aligned with the research objectives. The questionnaire was based on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The study used a purposive sampling method to select librarians from school and college libraries in the Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions of Bangladesh. These divisions were chosen because they offer

comparatively better-quality education than other districts in the northern region and have a diverse representation of educational infrastructure (Dhar, 2025; Hossain, 2017), as well as library practices (Hossain, 2019; Roy, 2025), which help provide a more thorough understanding of the research issue. Initially, 55 librarians were contacted, and 47 of them were deemed suitable for the study. Since many school libraries lack librarians, the criteria for inclusion focused on individuals holding active library positions and showing adequate knowledge and involvement in library practices. This purposive sampling approach ensured that the selected respondents had relevant experience and insights into the operations and challenges faced by school and college libraries. The responses from these 47 participants were analyzed to gather rich and meaningful data. The data were analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel, and the results were presented in a tabular format.

Questionnaire Design and Validation

The questionnaire for this study was carefully designed based on measurement items developed by the researchers, drawing from a thorough review of relevant literature. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the measurement items were derived from an established framework and empirical findings from previous studies in four key areas: the skills of librarians, their roles, the challenges they face, and the strategies to overcome those challenges.

For instance, to measure skills needed for librarians, we examined contributions from Wine (2020) and Lonsdale (2003), who emphasized the importance of both technical skills and interpersonal abilities in today's library environments. For the measurement of the role of the librarians, insights from several experts, including Wright (2022), Aharony (2012), Mandal and Dasgupta (2019), Perez (2010), and Momoh and Folorunso (2019), were utilized. They highlighted how librarians balance traditional responsibilities with new demands in the digital age, effectively managing knowledge. The researchers gathered measures on the challenges librarians encounter from works by Sanjeeva (2018), Thomas et al., (2010), and Ullah and Usman (2023). They discussed significant issues, including limited resources, the need for greater professional recognition, and the ongoing necessity to adapt to rapidly changing technology. Lastly, the questions about strategies for overcoming these challenges were influenced by Lonsdale (2003), Ullah and Usman (2023), and Momoh and Folorunso (2019), who provided practical suggestions and policy ideas to boost librarians' effectiveness and resilience. The questionnaire was reviewed by two faculty members from the Library and Information Science Department of Rajshahi University and one professional from the library of East-West University in Bangladesh.

Ethical Consideration

The study's ethical considerations include voluntary participation, confidentiality, and informed consent. The objective of the study and the participants' freedom to leave at any time without facing any consequence were explained to them. Confidentiality, anonymity, and the fact that information would only be displayed in aggregate form were ensured.

Review of literature

Quality Education

The concept of quality education has garnered significant global attention and has been extensively studied in developed and developing countries, with scholars emphasizing its multidimensional nature and the critical role of educational resources, including libraries. Quality education is a right. However, one difficulty is that, although most people intuitively understand what they mean when they say "quality of education," there may not be a universal definition of the phrase. This is

particularly true in the early 21st century, when education is perceived as encompassing more than just reading, writing, and mathematics and includes the expanded vision of education (Jomtien, 1990). International education network VVOB defines quality education as that equips all students with the skills they need to become economically productive, create sustainable livelihoods, support democratic and peaceful societies, and improve their own well-being. According to the UNESCO Executive Board (2003), it encompasses life skills, reading, and numeracy and is closely related to important elements, including curriculum, teachers, material, methods, testing procedures, policy, planning, management, and administration. Nowadays, various organizations are working on quality education both nationally and internationally, and they explore a range of agendas to achieve this goal. Mashlekar (1964) proposed a five-point agenda for national development in the 21st century, highlighting child-centric education, woman-centered families, human-centered development, knowledge-centered societies, and innovation-centered progress as foundational pillars.

UNESCO (1996) further brought the issues to the forefront of learning discourse by introducing four foundational pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to coexist, and learning to be. These pillars create an integrative view that education is broader than academics, encompassing vocational, social, and personal self-development. Complementing this, the Tbilisi Conference (1997) emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary environmental education and called for learning opportunities that engage both rural and urban communities beyond formal schooling.

Library and Quality Education

The library is one of the significant contributors to this educational ecosystem. Libraries not only provide access to diverse resources but also promote self-directed study and critical thinking. Lincoln (2002) pointed out that students heavily depend on librarians to help them make sense out of the large information world, both in books and online. This indicates that librarians are now serving more as guides to learning rather than just information providers. As further outlined by Lance et al. (2003), academic libraries and school libraries have a direct correlation with academic success. This is evident in media centers that are well-funded and supported by practicing teachers, which have a positive impact on student achievement. The integration of the library program into the educational environment enhances the academic performance of learners. Similarly, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of India (2005) has critiqued conventional approaches that compartmentalize learning in the classroom, which are devoid of real-world dynamics. It proposed stimulating curiosity and critical thinking and providing holistic development with special emphasis on the library's contribution to interdisciplinary knowledge integration.

The assertion that a strong library contributes to a strong education is supported by empirical evidence. The KZN Department of Education (2009) observed that "dysfunctional" libraries lack reference, fiction, and even digital materials, all of which students outgrow as they advance to higher grades. Yang (2011) corroborated this, noting that underbuilding education fosters creativity and overall developmental growth of an individual and that libraries serve as secondary pedagogues working towards these goals.

Librarian and Quality Education

The role of librarians in supporting quality education has also undergone a drastic transformation in the information age. Rader (1997) emphasizes librarians as major contributors to building information literacy among students, which prepares them for addressing the demands of a knowledge society. The librarian is now not merely a book custodian but an instructor who supports the learning of critical thinking, research skills, and a culture of lifelong learning. Nimon (2002) expands on this perspective, examining the role of the academic librarian in fostering lifelong

learning. She identifies a tension between traditional library roles and the new educational role; and argues for stronger connections between librarianship and pedagogy to support student learning outcomes. Nimon (2002) stated that the educational function of librarians has become a frequently discussed topic. Some faculty and administrative members are concerned that viewing librarians as educational partners might impact their approach. When librarians are not allowed to share knowledge, they cannot effectively support learning in collaboration with teachers and others.

Corrall (2010) explains that librarians today are required to utilize information science, teaching methods, and technology skills in conjunction. It demonstrates the need for librarians to possess skills from several fields to help them remain important in higher education. Wahid et al. (2020) study how librarians contribute to e-learning. The researchers demonstrated that librarians contribute to quality education by designing online materials, providing online access to information, and promoting digital literacy, all of which are very important today.

Farmer (2020) examines how high school librarians facilitate the transition for students to college life. Data suggest that students who use library programs early in high school perform better in college courses, displaying the lasting benefits of early help from librarians. Levitov (2016) notes that school librarians play a significant role in supporting students' learning through research and in teaching them how to be critical readers. Because of their contribution, students can ask meaningful questions and search for answers backed by evidence, which plays a vital role in quality education.

According to Tella and Ojo (2012), librarians facilitate user satisfaction steps by addressing their information needs. Nicholas and Perpetual (2015) have posited that libraries are very vibrant knowledge centers. Slade (2016) associates quality education with developmentally appropriate instruction that enables learners to make valuable contributions in society, thereby recognizing librarians' transformative impact on nurturing shifting educational paradigms. Nevertheless, these libraries face significant challenges in achieving this particular objective. Mirtz (2010) and Ojedokun (2000), as cited in Bhatti and Jumani (2012), have identified the most significant challenges: inadequate funding, insufficient staff numbers, poor interdepartmental collaboration, low information literacy levels among users, outdated materials, and weak information technology (IT) systems. These challenges have to be addressed if libraries are to support quality education. More recent studies reinforce the need for information professionals to take more initiative. Among these studies, Mahwasane (2017) and Samantaray (2017) emphasized that librarians should be the ones to bridge the information divide by providing both high-quality print and digital resources.

Challenges Faced by Librarians in Ensuring Quality Education

Although librarians are crucial, they still face challenges in ensuring quality education. Malekani and Mubofu (2019) investigated the challenges encountered in Tanzanian school libraries, which included insufficient funding, inadequate staff training, outdated books, and substandard building conditions. Due to these issues, librarians are limited in their ability to support teaching and learning. According to Corrall (2010), academic librarians often feel that their roles are not clearly defined and that they are less valued within the institution. As the demand for blended skills grows, many institutions that train librarians struggle to keep pace, resulting in librarians being underprepared for their increasingly complex roles. According to Wahid et al. (2020), specific problems facing e-learning include issues with technology, limited digital infrastructure, and a lack of online training for librarians. These issues stop librarians from providing fair support for students in online or hybrid settings.

Marginalization of school libraries and the fact that some school librarians are not adequately qualified are problems discussed by Farmer (2020) that weaken the support provided to students entering university. Levitov (2016) further notes that in many cases, librarians are assigned tasks that

are not closely related to libraries, which limits the time they can spend engaging students in inquiry-based education.

Research Gap

The academic and professional literature about librarians in Bangladesh remains limited and underdeveloped, despite librarians being widely acknowledged as essential to providing quality education. The studies collectively present a concerning image of Bangladesh's school libraries. Rahman (2016) establishes the benchmark by outlining the ideal library services, whereas Hossain (2018, 2019) demonstrates how inadequate the actual services are. These findings show that public awareness campaigns, capacity building, and research-driven policy initiatives are desperately needed. They also highlight a wider gap: although the link between librarians and quality education is well acknowledged worldwide, it remains under-theorized and under-investigated in Bangladesh, particularly in relation to inclusive education, student achievement, and digital literacy.

This gap is particularly notable given the rapid technological shifts and the pressing need to align educational practices with global standards. While studies from developed countries (e.g., Smith, 2019; Johnson & Lee, 2020) spotlight librarians' roles in promoting digital literacy and blended learning, the situation in Bangladesh presents unique constraints. Disparities in infrastructure and limited technological integration highlight the urgent need to redefine and strengthen the role of SCL in the national educational context.

This research aims to investigate how Bangladeshi SCLs address institutional limitations, identify critical competencies that SCLs possess, and explore viable solutions to maximize librarians' contributions to quality education in Bangladesh.

Results of the study

Response Rate and Respondents' Affiliation

In this study, 55 questionnaires were distributed among the librarians from the Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions of Bangladesh. 52 questionnaires were returned from the distributed questionnaires (response rate 94.55%). Of these, a total of 47 (90.38%) questionnaires were found suitable for the analysis. Among the 47 responses, Table 1 shows that 16 (34.04%) librarians were affiliated with secondary schools, 20 (42.55%) with technical schools and colleges, and 11(23.41%) with general colleges.

Table 1: Librarians' affiliation

Librarians' affiliations	N	%
Secondary Schools	16	34.04
Technical Schools and Colleges	20	42.55
Colleges	11	23.41

Essential Skills of Librarians to Support Quality Education

The necessity of developing a new set of qualifications and skills, openly and exclusively originating from the digital world. Even though librarians are facing challenges with new and emerging skills, the most important aspect of this change is to adapt existing skills, many of which are traditional librarianship skills, and to remain flexible in a constantly changing work environment. LIS professionals need to acquire emerging skills, such as marketing, evaluation, communication, negotiation, and collaboration, to effectively implement and teach new technologies in the evolving electronic information environment (Ashcroft, 2004).

The results indicate that librarians (M=4.13) agree that librarians should possess strong Information retrieval skills to assist students with research. The mean score (M = 4.00) suggests that librarians must possess the skill to evaluate educational materials and recommend the most suitable resources. The participants (M = 3.94) strongly agreed that digital literacy is a critical skill for librarians to facilitate modern education.

Table 2: Essential Skills of Librarians to Support Quality Education

SL No.	Statement	5	4	3	2	1	M	SD
1	Librarians should possess strong Information retrieval skills to help students with research	10 21.3	33 70.2	4 8.5			4.13	.536
2	Digital literacy is a critical skill for librarians to facilitate modern education	8 17.0	30 63.8	8 17.0		1 2.1	3.94	.734
3	Effective communication skills are essential for librarians to guide and assist students	8 17.0	28 59.6	8 17.0	2 4.3	1 2.1	3.85	.834
4	Knowledge of various educational resources (books, journals, databases, etc.) is crucial for librarians	5 10.6	29 61.7	12 25.5	1 2.1		3.81	.647
5	Librarians can evaluate educational materials and recommend the best resources	10 21.3	31 66.0	4 8.5		2 4.3	4.00	.834
6	Organizing workshops or training sessions for students is an important skill for librarians	13 27.7	23 48.9	8 17.0	2 4.3	1 2.1	3.96	.908

Contribution of Librarians in Facilitating Quality Education

Librarians serve as a link to knowledge and social development in society. The role of librarians in helping to shape a new education-based society can ensure quality education. Based on the mean score, it is evident that librarians help students develop critical thinking by providing access to diverse materials (M = 4.04). The results showed that the mean scores (Mean = 4.02) imply that librarians promote independent learning among students by offering self-paced resources. Librarians (M=3.89) agree that they collaborate with faculty members to align library resources with academic goals. Another statement indicates that they assist teachers by providing supplementary educational resources for curriculum development (Mean = 3.70) to meet the learning needs of students, and to helps develop their reading habits.

Table 3: Contribution of Librarians in Facilitating Quality Education

SL No.	Statement	5	4	3	2	1	M	SD
1	Librarians help students develop critical thinking by providing access to diverse materials	16 34.0	20 42.6	8 17.0	3 6.4		4.04	.884
2	They assist teachers by providing supplementary educational resources for curriculum development	10 21.3	22 46.8	9 19.1	3 6.4	3 6.4	3.70	1.082
3	Librarians promote independent learning among students by offering self-paced resources	6 12.8	38 80.9	2 4.3		1 2.1	4.02	.608

		5	4	3	2	1	M	SD
4	They organize and manage events such as reading programs or educational seminars that enhance learning	3 6.4	5 10.6	12 25.5	18 38.3	9 19.1	3.53	1.120
5	Librarians collaborate with faculty team members to align library resources with academic goals	10 21.1	27 57.4	6 12.8	3 6.4	1 2.1	3.89	.890
6	They provide personalized research support to students to aid in their academic success	4 8.5	24 51.1	11 23.4	7 14.9	1 2.1	3.49	.930

Challenges Faced by Librarians in Enhancing Quality Education

Librarians are now more familiar with the skills required to handle new technologies related to the acquisition, processing, and dissemination of information. The challenges that are identified in this study are mentioned. The participants (M=4.51) agreed that professional development opportunities for librarians are limited, which hinders their effectiveness in supporting education, and librarians (M=4.04) agreed that a lack of sufficient funding and resources limits the library's role in enhancing quality education, which is a significant challenge. On the other hand, librarians (M = 4.02) strongly agreed that the increasing use of digital platforms and e-learning tools presents a challenge for librarians who lack technological knowledge. A mean score of 3.87 indicates a lack of collaboration between librarians and teachers, which negatively impacts educational outcomes. Librarians agreed that inadequate infrastructure and outdated technology make it difficult to provide quality library services (M=3.79).

Table 4: Challenges Faced by Librarians in Enhancing Quality Education

SL No.	Statement	5	4	3	2	1	M	SD
1	Lack of sufficient funding and resources limits the library's role in enhancing quality education	9 19.1	33 70.2	4 8.5		1 2.1	4.04	.690
2	Limited professional development opportunities for librarians hinder their effectiveness in supporting education	9 19.1	25 53.2	5 10.6	5 10.6	3 6.4	4.51	.985
3	There is a lack of collaboration between librarians and teachers, which affects educational outcomes	13 27.7	19 40.4	11 234	4 8.5	0.0	3.87	.924
4	The increasing use of digital platforms and e-learning tools presents a challenge for librarians who are not well-versed in technology	6 12.8	38 80.9	2 4.3		1 2.1	4.02	.608
5	Inadequate infrastructure and outdated technology make it difficult to provide quality library services	6 12.8	28 59.6	10 21.3	3 6.4		3.79	.750
6	Students' lack of awareness about the library's resources and services is a significant challenge	7 14.9	22 46.8	12 25.5	4 8.5	2 4.3	3.60	.992
7	Pressure to meet academic demands and administrative responsibilities reduces the time librarians can dedicate to improving library services	8 17.0	25 53.2	5 10.6	6 12.8	3 6.4	3.62	1.114

Strategic Suggestions to Overcome Challenges

The role of the librarian is expanding to meet the increasing informational needs of students. In the modern age, library professionals can design and offer a range of updated library services, including digital services, ready services, remote access facilities, and online searching and retrieval facilities, to students.

The results revealed that according to the librarians (M=4.02) creating better partnerships between librarians and educators would enhance student learning outcomes. Some librarians (M = 4.00) strongly agree that increased investment in infrastructure and technology would enhance library services. The mean value of 3.94 highlights that regular professional development programs for librarians would help them stay up-to-date with the latest developments. The mean value (M = 3.85) indicates that expanding digital training for librarians would benefit them and support students in a technology-driven learning environment.

Table 5: Strategic Suggestions to Overcome Challenges

SL No.	Statement	5	4	3	2	1	M	SD
1	Increased investment in library Infrastructure and technology would improve library services	8 17.0	34 72.3	2 4.3	3 6.4		4.00	.691
2	Regular professional Development programs for librarians would help them stay up-to-date with the latest educational trends and tools	9 19.1	28 59.6	8 17.0	2 4.3		3.94	.734
3	Creating better partnerships between librarians and educators would enhance student learning outcomes	14 29.8	23 48.9	8 17.0	1 2.1	1 2.1	4.02	.872
4	Promoting library awareness programs for students would increase their engagement with library resources	8 17.0	20 42.6	9 19.1	7 14.9	3 6.4	3.49	1.140
5	Establishing dedicated time for librarians to focus on resource development and student support would improve the quality of library services	2 4.3	30 63.8	13 27.7	1 2.1	1 2.1	3.66	.700
6	Expanding digital training for librarians would help them support students in a technology-driven learning environment	9 19.1	28 59.6	5 10.6	4 8.5	1 2.1	3.85	.908

Discussion and Recommendations

Discussion

The results of this study examine the essential skills that librarians must possess to support quality education effectively. With a mean of 4.13 (SD =.536), information retrieval was the most highly rated skill, highlighting its importance in supporting student research. This result is consistent with earlier research that highlights the role librarians play in promoting information literacy (Julien & Genuis, 2011). Additionally, digital literacy was found to be crucial (M = 3.94, SD =.734), indicating the increasing necessity for librarians to manage and instruct digital tools in line with the requirements of contemporary learning environments (Huvila, 2012). The fact that respondents gave conducting training sessions or workshops a high rating (M = 3.96, SD =.908) suggests that they

view librarians as active facilitators of student learning outside of the scope of traditional services (Luo, 2011). Evaluation and recommendation of educational materials received strong agreement (M = 4.00, SD = .834), highlighting librarians' curatorial expertise in guiding resource use (Oakleaf, 2010). Meanwhile, communication skills (M = 3.85, SD =.834) and knowledge of educational resources (M = 3.81, SD =.647) were also considered crucial, which is consistent with earlier studies that emphasize subject-matter and interpersonal expertise for user support (Merga, 2019). The aforementioned findings reinforce the dynamic and diverse function of librarians in enhancing the quality of education, necessitating a combination of technical, pedagogical, and interpersonal abilities to address the needs of both institutions and students efficiently.

This study demonstrates the diverse contributions of librarians in supporting quality education. Supporting students' critical thinking by providing them with access to a variety of materials was the most highly rated role (M = 4.04, SD = 0.884), highlighting the critical role librarians play in fostering analytical skills. This result is consistent with earlier research that highlights the library's role in promoting information literacy and critical engagement (Julien, 2005). Strong support was also found for encouraging independent learning through the provision of self-paced resources (M = 4.02, SD = 0.608), which is consistent with the idea that contemporary libraries enable students to learn independently (Kuhlthau, 2004). Collaboration with faculty to align library resources with academic goals (M = 3.89, SD = 0.890) further reinforces the librarian's strategic function within the educational ecosystem (Farmer, 2011). The librarian's supportive role in curriculum designing was highlighted by the moderately high rating of support for teachers through supplemental resources for curriculum development (M = 3.70, SD = 1.082). On the other hand, planning educational activities, such as seminars or reading programs, received a lower score (M = 3.53, SD = 1.120), suggesting that even though these programs are effective in promoting a reading culture, they may not be as familiar or well-known (Elmborg, 2011). Accordingly, offering individualized research assistance was regarded as a moderate contribution (M = 3.49, SD = 0.930), indicating the potential for improving customized services that have a direct influence on academic achievement (Head & Eisenberg, 2010). All of these findings suggest the possibility of expanding librarians' responsibilities in event planning and providing specialized academic support, even though they already greatly encourage critical and independent learning.

The study reveals several significant challenges that librarians in Bangladesh must overcome while working to enhance the quality of education. One major obstacle identified is the lack of adequate funding and resources (M = 4.04, SD = 0.690). A large majority of the respondents (89.3%) articulated that this funding deficiency constrains the library's effectiveness. This issue reflects a broader trend of underfunding within library systems in low- and middle-income countries (Alemna, 1994; Issak, 2000). Another pressing challenge perceived by the librarians (M = 4.51, SD = 0.985) is the limited opportunities for professional development. This indicates an urgent need for ongoing training and capacity-building initiatives. As noted by IFLA (2013), advancing professional growth is crucial for librarians seeking to make meaningful contributions to educational success.

The increasing integration of digital platforms and e-learning tools (M = 4.02) also presents significant challenges, particularly for librarians who may lack the necessary technological skills to adapt. A previous research has emphasized the importance of digital competencies in the evolving educational landscape (Cox & Corrall, 2013). Furthermore, inadequate infrastructure and outdated technology, rated at 3.79, further impede effective service delivery. To support quality education, especially in today's digital environment, well-equipped and modern libraries are essential. The study also highlights a lack of collaboration between librarians and teachers, which received a score of 3.87. This gap suggests that there are missed opportunities for providing integrated instructional

support (Mertes, 2014). Additionally, the finding that students often lack awareness of library resources (M = 3.60) indicates a strong need for improved outreach and user education. The pressure to meet academic and administrative demands (M = 3.62) also limits librarians' capacity to innovate and enhance their services. These findings emphasize the importance of addressing both structural and professional challenges to strengthen libraries' roles in promoting quality education. It's essential for libraries to receive greater investment, foster stronger collaboration with educators, and implement targeted strategies to build digital and teaching competencies.

The study highlights several strategic recommendations that can significantly enhance library services and support quality education. The highest-rated item was creating better partnerships between librarians and educators (M = 4.02, SD = 0.872), underscoring the importance of collaboration in improving student learning outcomes—an observation consistent with prior research emphasizing the collaboration between librarians and educators (Shannon, 2009). Increased investment in library infrastructure and technology also received strong support (M = 4.00, SD = .691), aligning with findings that modern facilities and technological tools are critical for effective service delivery (Kuhlthau et al., 2015). Participants rated regular professional development (M = 3.94, SD = .734) and expanding digital training for librarians (M = 3.85, SD = .908) as important strategies, reflecting the need for continuous capacity building in response to evolving educational technologies (Julien & Genuis, 2011). Establishing dedicated time for resource development and student support was moderately endorsed (M = 3.66, SD = .700), suggesting time management as a practical challenge for librarians. In contrast, promoting library awareness programs for students received the lowest mean (M = 3.49, SD = 1.140), indicating potential gaps in student engagement that need targeted interventions (Todd & Kuhlthau, 2005). Overall, these findings offer actionable insights for policymakers and educational leaders seeking to enhance library services in educational institutions.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, several crucial areas (as shown in Figure 1) have been identified as requiring careful consideration to improve the efficiency and applicability of library services, thereby enhancing the quality of education. The following recommendations are presented to address current issues and foster long-term advancement in user involvement, professional practice, infrastructure, and collaboration.

1. Infrastructure and Technology Enhancement

The findings reveal significant shortcomings in the current library infrastructure, particularly in terms of access to modern technologies. In order to rectify these shortcomings, library premises must be modernized through strategic investment, which includes the purchase of new equipment and digital tools. Better access to technology not only enhances service delivery but also facilitates digital transformation projects that meet the demands of modern academia.

2. Professional Development for Librarians

As the role of the library changes in response to pedagogical and digital changes, it becomes essential to pursue ongoing professional development. According to the report, librarians' current skill sets are lacking, and it calls for specialized training programs, workshops, and ongoing lifelong learning. Library staff will be better equipped to stay up to date with new trends and technology if lifelong learning is prioritized, which will ultimately improve the customer experience.

3. Educator–Librarian Collaboration

The study emphasizes the need for stronger collaboration between faculty and library staff. Collaborative educational program creation can be facilitated, and library resources can be more successfully incorporated into the curriculum through collaborative efforts. Librarians will be positioned as active participants in the teaching and learning processes if they are encouraged to communicate consistently and collaborate in planning.

4. Student Engagement and Awareness

One recurring issue was limited student awareness of the materials available in the library. To promote available services and encourage a culture of library usage, proactive outreach and orientation activities are necessary. These programs might involve interactive sessions, guided tours, and promotional campaigns to strengthen the bonds between the library and students.

5. Time Allocation for Resource Development and User Support

The study indicates that due to regular administrative responsibilities, librarians often do not have time allocated for material curation and user assistance services. Planning, developing instructional materials, and participating in user-centered activities can all be done during designated time slots to enhance the quality and effectiveness of library services.

6. Digital Literacy and Training

Lastly, a noteworthy finding was the insufficient digital literacy among library staff and users. Utilizing e-learning platforms, navigating online resources, and receiving targeted training in ICT skills are essential. In order to assist patrons in acquiring the skills necessary for efficient information retrieval and digital interaction, libraries must also provide organized support mechanisms.
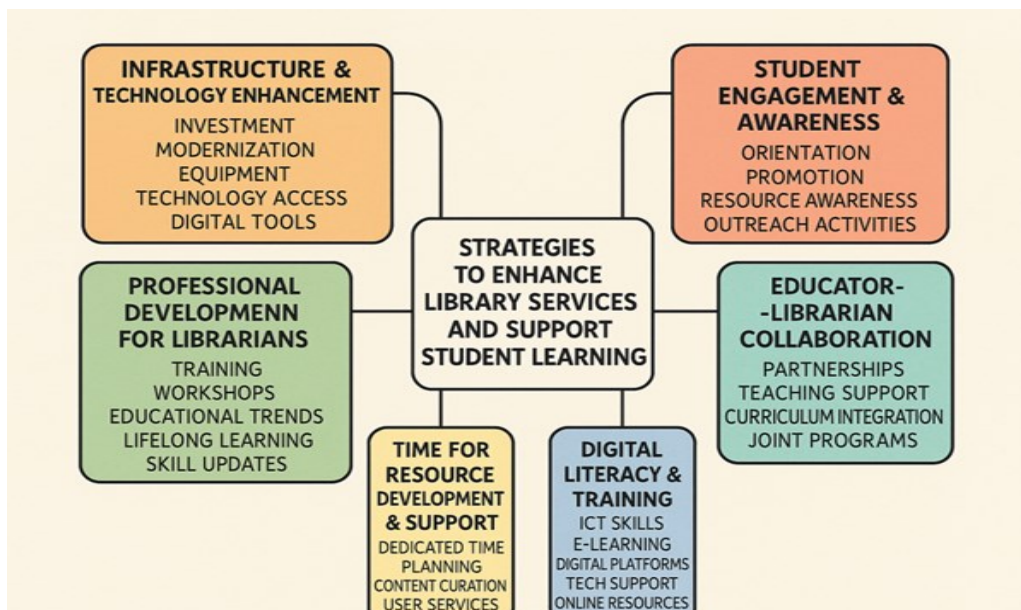

Figure 1: Strategies to enhance library services and support student learning (designed by using ChatGPT)

Conclusion

The study set out to investigate the fundamental skills, contributions, challenges, and strategic recommendations required for school and college librarians (SCLs) to promote quality education in Bangladesh effectively. The study uses a quantitative method that incorporates a structured questionnaire and descriptive statistics. The findings indicate that librarians play a crucial role in promoting critical thinking, autonomous learning, and aligning resources with curricular goals, which is supported by competencies in information retrieval, digital literacy, and collaboration with educators. However, significant challenges such as inadequate funding, limited professional development, insufficient technological infrastructure, and weak collaboration with educators continue to hinder their full potential. Strategic initiatives, such as expanding connections with teachers, investing in infrastructure, and enhancing professional development, were widely supported, reflecting both institutional needs and global trends in library service innovation. However, student participation through library awareness initiatives and individualized academic help was identified as an area for growth. The findings underscore the importance of continued investment in both human and technological capacities to ensure that librarians can meet the evolving demands of educational environments. Future studies may look at the effects of applying these techniques through longitudinal studies, as well as students' and teachers' perceptions on library services, to gain a better understanding of library efficacy in promoting educational outcomes. The research has some limitations, primarily because it relies on self-reported data from librarians in a single region of Bangladesh. This means it might not fully represent the views of other important stakeholders or account for the differences that exist in various educational settings across the country. Furthermore, comparative research across regions or educational levels may provide more detailed insights into context-specific issues and advances in library practice.

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