EXPLORATION ON THE STRENGTH OF INFORMATION RESOURCES AND AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN SELECTED SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN VAVUNIYA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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Abstract

In this technological era, exploitation of information resources has inevitable extent of impact on learning and teaching in schools. However, schools in Northern Province of Sri Lanka have downfalls with respect to sophisticated library facilities and ICT infrastructures which are gradually paid attention to with educational development by the government. It is understood that before the education reforms in 1998, the usage of library resources was very inconsequential. The study discovers as to how this scenario is changed at present with respect to technological invasion and library usage.

In this study, eighty (80) schools falling under the Education Zone of Vavuniya District South were considered of which 1AB schools were selected for collecting data. Teacher librarians and students were the subjects in the survey whose hypotheses were: 1) usage of school library resource centers was low before 1998 education reform, 2) With the amended reform, school libraries have positive impact on teaching and learning, and 3) Usage of school libraries has increased with new technological invasion.

The results reveal that there is a drastic difference between urban schools and rural schools, in terms of library facilities and usage. Regardless of the location, school libraries keep their collection behind locked doors of cabinets, and many school library resource centers are used as a meeting place for teachers. Students read the entertainment from the materials they are given therefore; the collection should be redefined with relevant titles according to their age and requirement. Students complain that they do not have proper guidance from their teachers to use the library. Lack of materials on the shelves and poor reading habits are noticeable drawbacks in the school libraries in this district. Though the education reform has considerable impact on teaching and learning, the usage of school libraries is yet to be improved, especially in rural areas. However, technological

advancement has little effect on learning and teaching in the schools of Vavuniya South Education Zone.

The author insists on allocating finance to school library resource centers and substantial importance should be given for library utilization on students' timetable. Next, importance for incorporating appropriate information resources in the curricula should be considered. Further, author has identified the gaps in competency should be filled by giving training to school librarians before their placements. The study substantiated that diplomas and degrees in library science or IT are not mandated in the appointments of school librarians / teacher librarians.

Keywords: School Libraries, Resource Centers, Information Literacy, Northern Province