

Utilization of Library Resources by Students at Secondary Schools in Batticaloa District, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Library is a vital instrument for academic enlargement. A healthy stocked library is a store house of information, or a documentation of human experience to which users may turn for records or information. Therefore, the proper use of library and its resources are very essential to develop the knowledge of students. Nowadays almost all the schools in Sri Lanka have school libraries in order to improve and entertain the students. With this background the objectives of this study are (1) to identify the purpose of visit to the library; (2) to show the frequency of visits to the library by students; (3) to determine whether the library resources of the schools satisfy the information needs of students; (4) to examine the type of the library resources used by the students; and (5) to identify the problems regarding the use of the library. Hundred and eighty advanced level students were randomly selected from different national schools in all four educational zones in Batticaloa district of Sri Lanka. All students were employed with the pretested structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using simple frequency counts, percentages and descriptive statistics. This research concludes that 40% of the students used the library to study their own notes, 70% of the respondents satisfied with the available information and most of the students used the books and magazines in the library. Finally the most significant problem was lack of exercise books for relevant subject. The study suggests that the utilization of library can be enhanced by adopting the modern formats like audio-visual materials and electronic resources. It also recommends that adequate fund is necessary for the provision of current information resources and also for the employment of qualified trained teacher librarian.

Key words: Information resources, Library, Schools, Sri Lanka.

INTRODUCTION

Library is an essential instrument for intellectual enlargement. A healthy stocked library is a store house of information, or a documentation of human experience to which users may turn for records or information. The definition of a "school library" is given by various library scientists and associations of this heritage. Throughout the world the Library of a school is believed as part and parcel of the academic set-up. It is generated and continued to serve and carry the educational activities of the school. According to, ^[1] school library is the part

of school where a collection of books, periodicals, magazines, newspapers, filmstrips, videotapes, recording of all types, slides, computers, study kits, and other information resources are housed for use by teachers and students for learning, recreational activities, own interest and inter personal relationships of children in school. ^[2] confirms this when he addressed out that school library is an essential ingredient in learning at any stage of education, pointing out that it is the intellectual center of the school containing records not only of the intellectual but also cultural and social products. The Federal

Ministry of Education's minimum standard for school libraries identified the following types of books (library resources) which school libraries should acquire to include reference books, non-fiction including text books, supplementary orders (materials) (easy to read book) and fiction (story books, novels, cartoons). The establishment of school libraries stock with variety of reading materials is one thing but the exploitation of such resources to achieve one's ends is another. Clients' use the library for many and varied reasons namely; to prepare for examination; for leisure; recreation for serious academic work, to see friend and people and so on. [3] Posits that the usefulness of any school library depends on its maximum utilization by students otherwise it is as good as wasted.

Therefore, the proper use of library and its resources are very essential to develop the knowledge of the particular person. Nowadays almost all the schools in Sri Lanka have school libraries in order to improve and entertain the students. With this background the objectives of this study are (1) to identify the purpose of visit to the library; (2) to show the frequency of visits to the library by students; (3) to determine whether the library resources of the schools satisfy the information needs of students; (4) to examine the type of the library resources used by the students; and (5) to identify the problems regarding the use of the library.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

There are four educational zones in Batticaloa district namely Paddiruppu, Batticaloa Central, Batticaloa and Kalkudah in Batticaloa district which were selected for the study. Three national schools from each zone were randomly selected. Fifteen advanced level students from each school, altogether hundred and eighty (180) students were employed with the pretested structured questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered by the

researcher herself and were regularly completed on the spot by the respondent thus the return rate was 100%. Data were analyzed using simple frequency counts, percentages and descriptive statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: The reasons for the use of library resources and library

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To borrow subject matter books	36	20
To borrow other matter books	18	10
To read subject matter books	45	25
To read other matter books	09	05
To study their own notes	72	40

Almost all the students in the school know that there is a library in the school, since all the students were informed about the library in the general assemblies as well as in the classrooms. Forty percentages of the school children were using the library in order to sit and study their own notes in the schools (Table 1). They have stated that the library is a very quiet place to study their notes and to work out on relevant subject. Twenty five percentages of the students used their library to read subject matter books for their additional references in order to fulfill their teacher's request. Only five percentages of the students used their library to read other matter books.

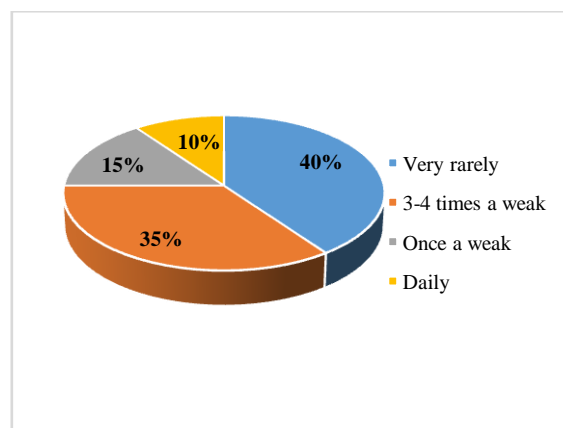


Figure 1: Frequency of visits to the library

Majority (34%) of the respondents used the library very rarely where 28% of the students visited 3 - 4 times in a week, 24% of the students used the library once in a week and only 14% of the students used the library daily (Figure 1).

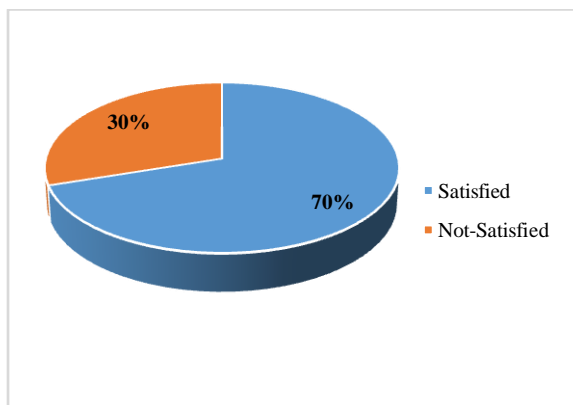


Figure 2: Satisfaction with the availability of information of library materials

The Figure 2 indicates that the majority of the respondents (70%) are satisfied with the information what they can get from the library while 30% are not satisfied with the information that they get from the library.

Regarding the type of library resources used by the students, results revealed that 70% of respondents used books only while 80.6% used books and magazines. Among the respondents, 39.4% were reading newspapers while 21.7% were using audio visual and 27.2% were using atlases and globe (Table 2). Most of the students were using more than one type of resources in the library.

Table 2: The type of the library resources used by the students

Type	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Books only	126	70.0
Books and magazines	145	80.6
Newspapers	71	39.4
Audio Visuals	39	21.7
Globe and Atlases	49	27.2

Table 3 highlights the problems which mitigate the use of library by students in Batticaloa district. Lack of exercise books for subjects (40%) was the chief problem against the use of library. This was followed by limited library hours (26.7%), poor e-resources (15.6%) and lack of support from the library staff to the students (12.8%). The least problem was

difficulty to find enough information in the catalogue index.

Table 3: The problems against the use of library resources

Problems	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Limited library hours	48	26.7
Lack of exercise books	72	40.0
Lack of support from library staff	23	12.8
Difficulty to find enough information in the catalogue index	18	10.0
E -resources	28	15.6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research concludes that 40% of the students use the library to study their own notes, 70% of the respondents satisfied with the available information and most of the students used the books and magazines in the library. Finally, the most significant problem was lack of exercise books for relevant subject. The study suggests that the utilization of library can be enhanced by adopting the modern formats like audio-visual materials and electronic resources. It also recommends that adequate fund is necessary for the provision of current information resources and also for the employment of qualified trained teacher librarian.

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