

# USE OF LIBRARY RESOURCES BY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OSHODI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Adequacy and purpose of use of library resources by teachers and students of selected secondary schools in Oshodi Local Government Area of Lagos State was surveyed. Questionnaire and interview were used to elicit data. Findings showed that students and teachers made inadequate use of library resources; students used the library resources to do their classroom assignments, copy notes and seek storybooks and newspapers; the library does not satisfy the information need of the users; the libraries lacked qualified librarians and user education. Recommendations include stocking the libraries with materials that appeal to students and teachers, engagement of qualified librarians to man the libraries, and teaching of library user education/instruction in schools.*

**Keywords:** *Library resources, library facilities, use of library*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Library provides a most important educational service. From the beginning of learning, the library has been a handmaiden of scholarship. Libraries foster informed citizenry.

A school library is that part of the school where a collection of books, periodicals, magazines and newspapers, films and film-trips, video-tapes, recordings of all types, slides, computers study kits, and other information-bearing resources are housed for use by teachers and pupils for learning recreational activities, personal interest and interpersonal relationships for children in school. School libraries are found in pre-primary, primary and post-primary schools. They evolve into school library resource centers (Edoka, 2000).

This range of information resources enable the school library fulfill its function and primary purpose of transmitting accumulated knowledge, skills and social values from one generation to another. The modern school child is taught to explore the world of knowledge through books and non-book materials.

The school library lays the foundation of good library usage in children and helps in fast intellectual development. It is set up to support the educational programme of the school, this purpose can be viewed in two ways – by providing users with the means of finding the information they need, and by encouraging them in the habit of reading books both for information and for pleasure.

Beside having adequate library resources such as current books, visual-aids, and furniture, there is also the need to have a capable librarian who plays a vital role in organizing the library so as to provide maximum services to its clientele. Even when these needs are available and well organized, the users need library use education to effectively or adequately use them.

In the knowledge economy, the situation in school libraries call for investigations. This study set out to investigate the situation in secondary schools in Oshodi Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. The

main objective of the study was to interrogate the availability of library resources and their use adequacy and purpose by students and staff of secondary schools in Oshodi Local Government Area of Lagos State. The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. Investigate the adequacy of school library resources.
2. Interrogate the school library user purpose.
3. Find out the types of materials that make up the collection of the school library.
4. Find out if the school libraries satisfy the information needs of the users.
5. Identify the problems that hinder the effective use of the library.

#### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Literature is rich with information on library and its development in Nigeria, school library, and librarianship (see Nwameme, 2004; Dike, 2003; Omclayole, 2001; Opeke, 2001; Akanwa, 2000; Edoka, 2000; Nwosu, 2000). *Webster Dictionary* defines library as a room or building given over to a collection of books kept for use and not for sales; also an institution for managing such a collection. It is an organized collection of books and other information materials kept for reading, study and reference.

Library helps in effective teaching and learning. It is referred to as a lifewire of any institution. It helps in the attainment of educational objectives by enriching both teachers and students with appropriate knowledge.

School library is the power house of the school, an institution that enables the educational system to thrive. Students need library user education to reduce the trial-and-error approach, maximize time and effectiveness. Knowing how to use a library is an essential part of education for life process. It prepares the student for a continuing self-

education, once the formal education is completed. To be independent, a student needs the knowledge and skills to find his own way in the library and beyond the four walls of the school.

Library development in Nigeria has no statistics, dates, laws or regulations. The first library legislation in English speaking West Africa was passed in Ghana in 1949. It created a central library board that was responsible to the Minister of Education and was authorized to provide public library services on national basis. The result stimulated similar legislation in the Eastern Region of Nigeria in 1955, but school libraries were not mentioned in the two legislations, except in the relatively recent Bendel State Library Edict which specifically mentions services to schools. In some countries, the board also provides services to schools, and up till now, some countries in the region are still without library service.

In Nigeria, the history of library is just about a century. The oldest library in Nigeria is the Justice Library of 1904. In the 1920's, a handful of expatriate civil servants formed the Lagos Book Club in order to have a few books circulated among them.

By the time Nigeria got her independence in 1960, school libraries were in indifferent state of development. The few libraries available in secondary schools were in a handful of government-owned secondary schools and a few of the older voluntary agency-owned (Mission) institutions. This situation seems to be changing now because of the increasing awareness of the importance of libraries in schools.

In 1952, with Nigeria's first representative government at the center, it was decided that the development of libraries should be the responsibility of the regional governments. These account for why in 1955 the East Regional Government, stimulated by Ghana's example, passed a library legislation.

In 1961, the Banjo Commission set up by the then Western Nigerian Government to renew the educational system of the Western region observed that that lip service was being paid to provision of school

libraries. Some of the secondary schools and teacher training colleges featured small collections but only few of them had anything that looked like a library either in collection or accommodation. The primary schools not only were without libraries but were remarkable for their bareness, and the general absence of any classroom book collection or teaching apparatus.

That same year in Lagos, UNESCO, acting upon the request by the Federal Government sent a school library adviser in the person of H.V. Bonny to advise the Federal Government on the establishment of the school library service. The report was received in 1962. After a careful consideration, it was decided to establish a centralized school library service in Lagos federal capital territory, which has now developed into school library in Lagos State.

In the defunct Northern region of Nigeria (of which present Kwara State, and Oyun/Offa Local Government Areas were part), reading rooms were established and run by Local Government Authorities (native administrations, N.A.S). These reading rooms received books boxes distributed by the British Council. The scheme was a colossal failure.

In 1962, the government of the Northern region took advantage of the Commonwealth technical assistance programme to secure the services of Mr. F.A. Sharr, a librarian of the state of Western Australia to survey library needs of the region. The report, entitled 'the library Needs of Northern Nigeria', recommended the development of school libraries in the region.

With the acceptance of the Sharr report in 1964, school libraries were developed in government secondary schools, teacher training colleges, technical training schools and draft schools throughout the region. Examples of such schools in Kwara State today are the Queen Elizabeth School, Ilorin, Government Secondary School, Ilorin, and Government Secondary School, now Abdul Azees Atta Memorial College (AAAMC), Okene.

With the creation of state in 1967, the same trend continued, but

with little or no grant from the government. Without government attention, the school libraries began to deteriorate. In 1967, school library association was formed in Northern States, following a workshop for teacher librarians and library clerks to organize short courses and workshops. This only filled a gap, and was short-lived, and the condition and situation of school libraries returned to its former bad shape.

Secondary education could be said to have started in Nigeria by the Christian missions, notably the Wesleyan Methodist Mission, the Anglican Mission (CMS), the Baptist, and the Roman Catholic Mission as far back as 1859, when Lagos Anglican Grammar School was opened, followed by the Lagos Methodist Boys High School in 1878, and Methodist Girl's High school Lagos in 1879. No school library was mentioned in connection with these institutions, until after 1960, a gap of about one hundred years. Up till now, the attention given to development of school libraries is still not enough. Existing school libraries are not funded and there are no personnel to man them. In some cases where library fees were being paid to maintain the libraries, for political reasons, they have been stopped and these school libraries are now facing acute financial problems. It is hoped that with the slogan or policy of qualitative education, school library will be accepted and recognized as an integral part of the education process, as in many advanced countries.

The print materials in the library include fiction, non-fiction, reference books, textbooks and supportive textbooks. Akanwa (2002:60) defines them as follows:

*Fiction:* These are folklores, fairy tales and fantasy, romance books, Africa prose fiction adventure books etc.

*Non-fiction:* These consist of biographies, poetry, picture books etc.

*Reference books:* These are books not meant to be read from page to page like other information books. They are consulted for definite pieces of information. Some reference books such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, yearbooks, handbooks and guides are published for general use.

*Text books:* These are non-fiction books that are used for classroom

instruction, sometimes, they are recommended by Secondary Education Management Board for the schools.

*Supportive books:* These are supplementary books that compliment what is taught or learned in the classroom. They are not necessarily textbooks but books, which have relevance to the curriculum and are used to enrich it.

*Non-print media:* Information records in non-book media, such as computer diskettes, flash, video tapes, motion pictures, audio tapes, filmstrips, slides, regalia, transparencies, educational games, models, instructional posters, and opaque still pictures.

Every school is expected to stock its school library with both print and non-print media, so that the students and their teachers can benefit from them. Since the library is a place for quiet learning and enjoyment where students and teachers can become experts in using materials, school libraries are supposed to stock materials that will attract them to the library and make them permanent users of it. To play the role of encouraging reading habit and developing students, school libraries should provide books and other information materials that will assist students in their study, instruct students in the use of library resources and encourage recreational reading by providing newspapers, magazines, books on sports, adventure, hobbies, folklore and fiction (Akanwa, 2002; Apotiade, 2001).

Opeke (2001) notes that the school librarian has the professional obligation to deal realistically but humanely with each student, to provide learning resources and to design learning experiences which will be compatible with the needs, interests and abilities, goals and learning styles of each student. Therefore, the school, librarian must be accessible, approachable, and responsive, must establish a climate conducive to where his disabilities are not on public display, where he can work at his own speed in his own private way.

The teacher - librarian must hold and demonstrate authentic concern for the intellectual, moral, spiritual, social and cultural well-being of each student, no matter how rich or poor or how brilliant.

Teachers and librarians must strive to remove certain barriers if

library resources are to be effectively utilized. One of them is the teacher attitude of seeing the note of lesson as the be-all and end-all in a teaching-learning situation. No teacher can be a walking resource center, no matter his qualifications and knowledge. Teachers ought to believe in resource-based learning and see the library staff and library resources as partners in the teaching-learning process. If children see their teachers go into the school library frequently, they will do likewise. Profitable use of library resources by children depends very much upon guidance given by both the classroom teacher and the teacher-librarian. The first step is to teach the children how to read. The second is how to use the books and the third is how to use the library. Teachers and teacher-librarians should co-operate to effect all these. Other barriers include much emphasis on external examination, the need to complete set syllabuses in the upper primary, and throughout the secondary school.

For any library to function efficiently it must be adequately housed and be furnished with suitable furniture. A library building constitutes an essential aspect of any good library. A school library offers a place to learn, to think, to use the library materials, absorb and synthesize their content. The physical facilities go a long way to make the users appreciate the opportunities the library offers them in making effective use of the library and advantages accorded to them. A separated ideally shaped and equipped library building with the architect, the librarian and the interior designers co-operation, should be the best and goal for any school. For the building, a rectangular shaped building can easily be expanded without damaging other parts of the structure. There should be provision for a workroom, a store and space for display and exhibition. Other important facilities are toilets, light, water, conference and audiovisual rooms, reading room, and shelving space. The building should be at least the size of two classrooms. The spacing should be at least 2-3 square meters for readers.

The standard furniture for secondary school libraries are chairs of between 43cm and 46cm high with study carrels, and tables of between

71cm and 76cm high. Other furniture are shelves, catalogue cabinets, bulletin boards, file cabinets, circulation desks and periodicals stand. There should also be space for storage of reserved books, past periodicals, pamphlets, equipment and materials not in use.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The study adopted the survey design which is considered appropriate for the study. Oshodi Local Government Area (LGA) of Lagos State had ten (10) secondary schools. Five of them had what can be regarded as school libraries. These schools were, therefore, selected for this study.

The survey study design was chosen for the research. This survey method is basically an exploration research method in which the investigator is interested in identifying and choosing the variables, subjects, elements, incidents, etc., considered relevant to the inquiry, and for making a broad and provisional decision. The method enabled the researcher survey the availability and adequacy of use of library resources in the selected secondary schools.

Random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample size and the population of the study. The study population included six thousand and forty (6,040) students, one hundred and forty-two (142) teachers, and five (5) teacher-librarians of the five selected secondary schools in Oshodi LGA of Lagos State, totaling six thousand, one hundred and eighty-seven (6,187).

Out of the 6,187, a total of 305 respondents were randomly selected as follows: 250 students (50 from each school), 50 teachers (10 from each school) and 5 teacher-librarians (one from each school). A random sampling technique was employed in selecting respondents.

Questionnaire and interview instruments were used for data collection. A total of 250 questionnaires (Questionnaire A) were distributed to students. Also, 50 questionnaires (Questionnaire B) were distributed to teachers. And, 5 questionnaires (Questionnaire C) were distributed to teacher-librarians.

The interview was a face-to-face interaction in which oral questions were posed by an interviewer to elicit oral responses from the interviewee. The schedule was flexible and the session comfortable and permissible. The questions contained in the interview schedule were used to corroborate and explain those contained in the questionnaire. The instruments for data collection were validated by experts and corrections were accommodated in the final copies.

Data generated are presented in tables and figures, showing simple percentages and frequencies. The questions were grouped and analyzed.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

*Table 10.1.1: Rate of return of completed questionnaire*

SCHOOLS	NO. DISTRIBUTED	NO. RETURNED	PERCENTAGE
AZ Secondary School	61	61	20%
Gbolaham Sec. School	61	61	20%
Command Sec. School	61	61	20%
St. Victoria Sec. School	61	61	20%
Ajao Estate Sec. School	61	61	20%
Total	305	305	100%

Table 10.1.1 indicates that all the 305 questionnaires distributed to respondents (students, teachers and teacher-librarians) were completed and returned.

*Table 10.1.2: Qualification of library staff*

QUALIFICATION	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
B.Ed/Lib. Sc.	0	0%
B.Ed./B.A./B.Sc.	3	60%
HND/Dip. Lib. Sc.	1	20%
NCE	0	0%
WACS/SSCE	1	20%
Others	-	-
Total	5	100%

Table 10.1.2 shows that one respondent (20%) has HND/Diploma in

Library Science, 3 respondents (representing 60%) have degrees in other disciplines, and 20% of respondents has just WASC/SSCE. Thus, only 1 respondent is a qualified librarian. Four of them acknowledged that they had no formal training or experience in librarianship. One of them had attended a workshop and seminar once. The experience was rewarding, but the duration was inadequate to learn what was needed to manage a school library.

*Table 10.1.3: Utilization of school library resources by students*

OPTIONS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Yes	120	39.3%
No	185	60.7%
Total	305	100%

Table 10.1.3 indicates that out of 305 respondents, 120 students (39.3%) used the school library, while 185 (60.7%) did not. Furthermore, some of the students used the library to read their personal textbooks and copy notes, while others borrowed books from the library. A lack of library instruction or orientation was fingered by a majority of students who did not use the library, beside obsolescence of the library books that were relevant to school curriculum. Again, the library was too hot to sit in and read because there were no fans or air conditioners. Besides, the few good books were kept away in the Principal's office.

*Table 10.1.4: Utilization of the school library resources by teachers*

OPTIONS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Yes	13	26%
No	37	74%
Total	50	100%

Table 10.1.4 shows that out of 50 teacher respondents, 13 (which represent 26%) used the school library resources, while 37 (that is 74%) did not. However, most of those who used the library went there to borrow

textbooks or to chat with the teacher-librarian as a friend. Those who had no time to prepare their lesson notes at home sometimes used the library for such a purpose. Those who did not use the library resources said that they felt more comfortable reading and making their notes in the staff rooms. Some stated that they had government-approved textbooks and did not need those ones in the library. Some others added that their school libraries had nothing to offer. It was also observed that the library was too hot, noisy and small. There were also complaints about the library books being too old and not appealing to both the staff and students. Many of those books were obsolete, while others were torn and had faded in colour.

*Table 10.1.5: Teacher visit to the library with the students*

SCHOOLS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS		
	OFTEN	OCCASIONALLY	NEVER
AZ Secondary School	0	0	10
Gbolaham Secondary School	0	1	9
Command Secondary School	0	3	5
St. Victoria Secondary School	0	0	10
Ajao Estate Secondary School	2	4	6
Total	2	8	40

Table 10.1.5 indicates that in most of the schools, forty (40) teachers (out of the 50) did not take their students to the library for lack of library periods in their school timetable. Schools lacked modern facilities such as audiovisual materials and computers, and therefore, did not appeal to teachers and students. However, Ajao Estate Secondary School had a well-stocked library and a professional librarian to man the library, who did his best to educate the users. Command Day Secondary School had library materials, but lacked a professional librarian. St. Victoria Secondary School had a WASC holder as the librarian with attendant low rate of use of the library. The few books they had were packed in cartoons and some of them were kept in the Principal's office. Similarly, AZ Secondary School lacked library user education.

*Table 10.1.6: Types of library collection*

MATERIALS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Textbooks	36	11.8%
Magazines	25	8%
Journals	36	11.8%
Newspapers	64	21%
Reference books	34	11.1%
Audio visual	47	15.4%
Fiction	63	21%
Total	305	100%

Table 10.1.6 clearly shows that textbooks, magazines, journals, newspapers, reference books, audio visual and fictions make up the school library collection. Fictions were acquired more frequently, maybe because they cost less, followed by newspapers for the same reason. Respondents used textbooks in the library. About 8% (25 of respondents) said they used magazines, 36 respondents used journals, 64 respondents came to the library to use newspapers, 34 used reference materials, 47 students visited the library to use audio visual materials, and 63 respondents came to library to read story books. The schools had a lot of fiction books that were cheap. More students could have been interested in them, had they been exposed to all the resources of the library. Most of the novels were packed in boxes or were loaned out to students.

The information needs of the library users are contained in Table 7.

*Table 10.1.7: Information needs of students*

INFORMATION NEED	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Information self-development	24	7.8%
Information need of examination	41	13%
Information need of recreation	65	21.3%
Information need of class assignment	102	33.4%
Information need of class work	73	23.9%
Total	<b>305</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 10.1.7 shows that 24 (7.3%) of student respondents had information

need for self-development, 41 (16.4%) had information need for examination, 65 (21.3%) had recreational needs, 102 (33.4%) had the need for class assignment, and 73 (23.9%) had the need for classroom work.

*Table 10.1.8: Information needs of teachers*

INFORMATION NEEDS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Information need of self-development	10	20%
Information need of career matter	10	20%
Information need of social activities	10	20%
Information need of recreational activities	10	20%
Information of educational matters	10	20%
Total	50	100%

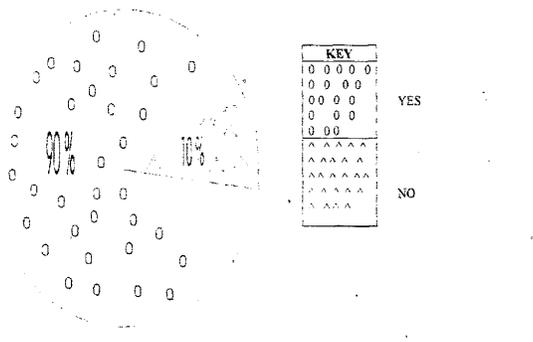
Table 10.1.8 indicates that the teachers had the same information needs. Ten (10) teachers (20%) had the information need for self-development, 10 respondents had the need for career matters, 10 teachers also had the need for social activities, 10 teachers had educational matters need. The other teachers have the recreational need.

*Table 10.1.9: Student user satisfaction*

OPTIONS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Yes	91	29.83%
No	214	70.17%
Total	305	100%

Table 10.1.9 shows that out of 305 respondents, 214 (or 70.17%) said the library collection did not satisfy their information needs. Ninety-one (91) or 29.83% of respondents claimed that the few collection of the school library satisfied their information needs through borrowing books for use at home. Majority of those who said library collection did not satisfy their needs added that the library collection was nothing to write home about, claiming that there were no materials in the library to meet their information for self-

development. Others complained that their need for examination was not met by the library, as adequate books to help them for external examinations were not available. Majority of the students complained that the library did not meet their information need for assignment, as books to help them were never found in the library. Others said the library collection did not satisfy their need of recreation, while some students added that their information need for class work were not met by the library.



*Fig 10.1.1: Teacher user satisfaction*

Fig. 10.1.1 reveals that 10% of the respondents claim that the library collections satisfied their information needs, while a majority of the respondents complained that the library collection did not satisfy their information needs. The latter stated that the library collection could not satisfy their information needs for self-development, information needs for career matters, social activities, recreation activities and educational matters.

*Table 10.1.10: Hindrance to effective library use*

OPTIONS	SCORE	PERCENTAGE
Lack of library building	38	12.48%
Lack of information materials	68	22.9%
Lack of library instruction	70	22.9%
Lack of time	38	12.4%
Lack of interest	51	16.7%
Hostile attitude of librarians	40	13%
Total	305	100%

Table 10.1.10 shows that the major reason why students did not make effective use of the library was lack of library instruction or orientation (70 respondents or 22.9%). Lack of information materials had a lot to contribute towards ineffective use of library resources. A lack of interest had 51 respondents (or 16.7%). The hostile attitude of the librarians followed with 13% of the respondents. Although, a lack of library building and a lack of time had the same score, they were also significant reasons that hinder effective use of school library resources. A majority of the respondents said that they were not given library orientation/instruction, to enable them know how to use the library resources. Another set of students stated that the library did not have enough information materials to help them use the library, and other students said they did not have the interest of library at heart. Most students did not have reading culture, nor interest in books or reading. Most reading was geared towards passing one examination or the other. The students, especially the boys, prefer playing football to make them be like some of the prominent footballers they admired, rather than wasting their time trying to read one book or the other in the school library. The attitude of some teacher-librarians scared the students away from the library. A lack of sufficient space hindered effective use of library. Some students said the library was too small to accommodate up to 20 students at once, others said that they did not have time to use the library because their time-table was congested with lessons every day.

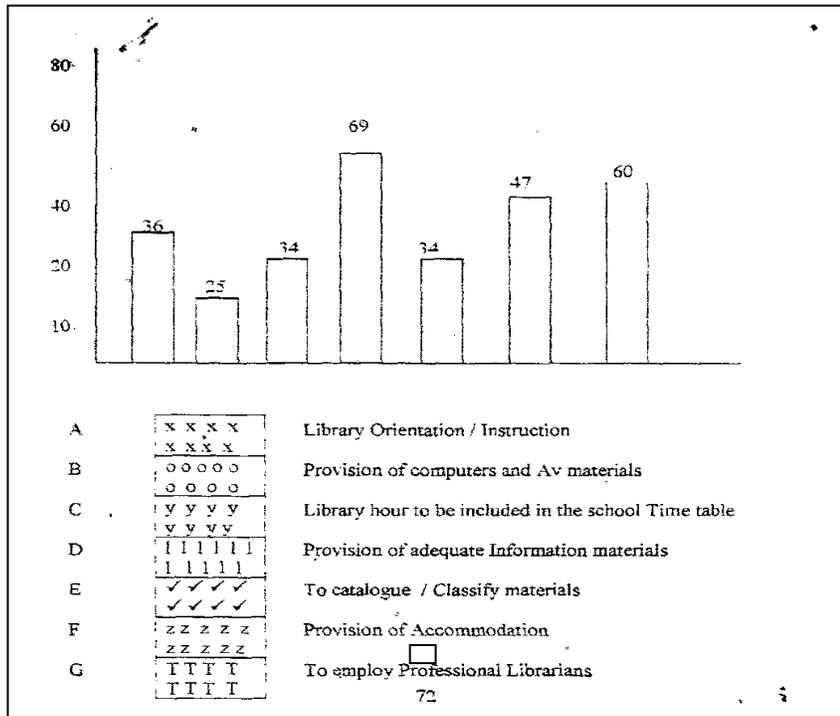


Fig. 10.1.2: Ways to improve the use of school library resources

Fig. 10.1.2 reveals different suggestions made by respondents to improve the use of library resources. Sixty-nine (69) respondents suggested the provision of adequate information materials. Sixty (60) students suggested employment of professional librarians. Thirty-six (36) respondents suggested teaching the use of library through orientation or instruction, while 47 students asked for more space in the library in order to accommodate both teachers and students. Some suggested proper cataloguing, classifying and shelving

of the library materials to help improve the use of library resources. Yet other students suggested inclusion of library hour in the school time-table, which should be made mandatory for every student to be in the library at that particular hour. Some students asked for computers and audio-visual materials to help improve the use of school library.

*Table 10.1.11: Difficulties encountered by the teacher-librarian*

OPTIONS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Teaching loads	10	20%
Lack of sufficient space	10	20%
Lack of skilled librarians	10	20%
Books not returned	10	20%
Poor security books	10	20%
Total	50	100%

Table 10.1.11 reveals the difficulties the teacher-librarians faced. Some of them had congested teaching loads that did not allow them adequate time to meet library user needs. Others complained of a lack of space and other facilities in the library. Few others did not have the skill of a librarian and could not help users adequately. Other teacher-librarians had difficulties with the students and teachers because they did not return borrowed books, thereby reducing the library collection. Some claimed that there was no security for the library materials; students stole and/or mutilated them. Others lost borrowed books, thereby further depleting library stocks.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The state of libraries investigated was unsatisfactory. In some of them, the library was a classroom with a few books, few tables, and some benches. Some libraries had no professional librarians. A teacher could be appointed to take charge of the library, combining this extra duty with normal classroom teaching. Such a teacher opened the library during break

periods or other convenient times. In some schools where everything was available, students and teachers did not make adequate use of the library resources. The poor performance of secondary school students at both internal and external examinations was connected with a lack of adequate library services and effective usage of available library services and resources.

The attitude of some of school principals towards library development was very disappointing. Most of them did not make any effort to develop their school libraries. It is sad to discover that none of the selected schools had what could be accepted as a standard functional library.

Findings could be summarized as follows:

- i. A majority of students and teachers of the schools did not make adequate use of the school library resources.
- ii. Use of the library was for inappropriate purposes, such as copying of notes, lesson notes preparation, visiting the teacher-librarians for chats as a friend, doing of assignments, recreation, etc.
- iii. Students and teachers did not visit the library regularly; some visited occasionally, a few visited often, and a majority of them did not visit at all.
- iv. Different materials made up the library collection.
  - v. The school libraries did not satisfy the information needs of users.
  - vi. Some problems hindered the effective use of the library resources.

Ways of improving the use of library resources were recommended as:

- a) Employing professional librarians.
- b) Provision of adequate accommodation.
- c) Provision of relevant and adequate materials.
- d) Inclusion of library hour in the school timetable.
- e) Teaching of how to use the library to students and teachers through

- orientation or instruction.
- f) Proper cataloguing, classification, shelving of library materials for easy retrieval.
  - g) Provision of other facilities like computers and audiovisual materials in the library.

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