COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTED SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTRES IN SRI LANKA

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Perpustakaan SKTM

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Library and Information Science

Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology
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This dissertation presents the study on the collection development of selected school resource centres in Sri Lanka. The survey method is employed and the instruments used are two questionnaires. The first questionnaire was administered among selected fifty school resource managers and the second was administered among two hundred school children in the Colombo district in Sri Lanka. Out of 50 school resource managers sampled, only 48 usable responses were used. Only 182 students' responses out of 200 are usable. The study revealed that the majority of school resource centres did not follow a collection development policy guideline. The most common information resource in the resource centres are books. Most school resource centres do not possess electronic resources and the majority of school resource centre collections are mainly print based. The current resource collection is not balanced among the various disciplines. More than ninety percent of resources are obtained and selected by the Ministry of Education. The majority of resource managers do not agree with the practice of central selection of materials by the Ministry of Education. The majority prefer greater involvement of the Special Book Selection Committee or cooperation between school teachers and resource managers in selecting materials. The results also indicated that the current collection generally does not meet the students and teachers learning and teaching requirements and is in poor condition. However, the collections in the school resource centres are comparatively current. The age of the majority of the books in the collection are less than ten years, and more than fifty percent of books have been published between 1990-2000.
There is a need for the school resource centre to follow a proper collection management system in order to build up an ideal collection.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. 1 Collection Development

Demand for a wide variety of new topics, the influx of newer technologies, expanding new curricula, changing roles of school resource centre, are a few of the factors which have had a resounding impact upon collection development process in the school resource centre. The evolution of the school resource centre's collection from a book-centred to an electronic resources collection, have changed the contents of the collection.

The school resource centre has much in common, in principle, with any other field of library provision, but it has its own particular needs. A successful school resource centre has to establish a relationship between its resources of staff and materials. The resource centre needs to consciously build collections as well as services and bind this to students' needs. The traditional school library or resource centre encompasses books, printed materials, some audiovisuals, and electronic materials to be used by both school children and teachers.

Traditionally, the term collection described the resources, mainly print items, housed in a single room in a school. This room, called the library, contained books, a few magazines, and perhaps a newspaper rack. A student or teacher searching for information would go to the collection confined to the printed materials within the library. Today however, the
collection includes electronic items. *Harrods's Librarians' Glossary* explains that the school resource centre "...may include books or other library materials for example, (but not exclusively) manuscripts, pamphlets, photographs of one kind of or another. A collection could also consist of materials about a particular person, subject or period, or gathered for a specific reason- such collection may include local studies collection and special collections (but not exclusively), while the size of the collection (in terms of the numbers it contains) is not important, the collection ought to be suitable for inclusion in national strategy" (Prytherch, 1995, p. 9). *The Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science* (ELIS) (1971) contains an essay on "collection building". This essay gives a general definition of collection development and remarked that "building a collection may occasionally involve the selection and acquisition of materials, but in most cases it is likely to mean the planned, systematic development of an already existing collection" (p. 260). Evans (1979) however proposes that, the process of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a library materials collection in terms of patron needs and community resources require the constant examination and evaluation of the library's resources and the constant study of both patron needs and changes in the community that serves the library. Buckland (1995, p. 155) suggests that the library collection can be viewed in terms of four roles.

1. Preservation: If a document is to be available now and in the future, then at least one copy needs to be collected somewhere;

2. Dispensing: The principal reason why libraries acquire most of the materials that they add to their local collections is not for preservation but because of
the need to provide convenient physical access to materials where and when users want them;

3. Advisory (or bibliographic): The array of materials on the shelves can itself alert the reader to what is available, just as any bibliography or catalogue can. Certainly the array on the shelves is a selective, incomplete guide. It is limited to what has been added to that collection and, within that, is biased towards the less popular material that happens to be on the shelves at any particular time. The library collection plays an advisory role like that of a selective bibliography, drawing attention to material that has been identified as worth adding to the collection. Browsing a book has some attraction over browsing in bibliographies or among catalogue cards. It is largely for this advisory role that the materials are arranged by a subject classification scheme; and,

4. Symbolic: It can also be argued that the acquisition of extensive collections and, especially, rare and prestigious materials adds status to a library and its parent institution.

The responsibility of collection development is to create a decision process wherein selection comprises a set of goals that are collection-based but are library wide (Budd, 1998). Budd emphasizes that the collection is seen as the primary resource that enables access and success of services provided.

Atkinson (1989, p.518) simplifies the problems of choice facing collection development, "there are really only two ways to build a collection; on the basis of publication, or on the
basis of use. Selection based on publication seeks to acquire a broad share of what has been published on the subject, while the use-based method imports only materials specifically applicable to current user needs”.

The collection of the school resource centre aims to meet the informational, instructional and personal needs of users. Materials may be designed to instruct, inform or appeal to the interests of individual users. Individuals use the collection for many reasons. Administrators require materials for in-service programme, publicity and speeches. Teachers need professional information, including up-to-date ideas about teaching methods. Non-teaching personnel use the professional collection to aid them in their work -with students (Van Orden, 1995). Collection development policy therefore, must aim to meet the appropriate needs of its client population, within the limits of its fiscal and personal resources. To reach this goal, each segment of the collection must be developed with an application of resources consistent with its relative importance to the mission of the library and the needs of its patrons. (Bryant, 1987, p. 118)

Collection development is a dynamic process that should involve both the information professional and the community the library serves. Evans (2000) suggests that the following statements are the philosophical foundations of collection development.

a. Collection development should be geared primarily to identify needs rather than standards of the quality;

b. Collection development, to be effective, must be responsive to the total community needs, not just to those of the current or the most active users;
c. Collection development should be carried out with knowledge of and participation in cooperative programmes at the local, regional, national, and international levels;

d. Collection development should consider all information formats for inclusion in the collection;

e. Collection development should always be subjective and unbiased. Selection process is the best check against developing a collection that reflects personal interests rather than customer interest; and,

f Collection development is not learned entirely in the classroom or from reading. Only through practice, taking risks, and learning from mistakes will a person becomes proficient in the process of developing a collection.

1.2 Collection Development Policy

Every library should have reasons for selecting materials for its collection. Collection development policy provides the necessary guidelines for selecting library materials. Collection development policy, selection policy and acquisition policy have been used interchangeably. Selection and acquisition policy may contain guidelines found in a good collection development policy. Gorman and Howes (1989) suggests separating policy and principles from procedures and practices, and recommends three levels of statement; collection development policy; selection procedures statements, and acquisitions procedures statement. In this model, the latter covers specific practices, including how the process is organized and who carries it out, with example of forms used. The collection development policy statement contains general principles for the collection as
a whole and also specifies collection levels by subject and/or form. The detailed content of a collection development policy includes the following features.

a. **The philosophy of the institution and the collection** — indicating overall purpose, overview of needs and priorities;

b. **The parameters of the collection** — who are the user groups, define subject boundaries, material types, form restriction, and cooperative arrangements;

c. **The collection levels** - subject by subject, typically arranged by a classification scheme, showing collection *density* — the extent of existing collections; collection *intensity* — the extent of current collecting activity; and collection *policy* guides the desired level for future collecting.

Collection development policy should be a written statement and yet most school resource centres do not have such a policy for their collection development. Written policy helps to guide decisions as to what subject areas should the library resource be collecting. Gardner (1981) defines the collection development policy as a written statement that is planned. The statements clarify the objectives of the policy and facilitate coordination and cooperation. It may also be used in the day-to-day working tool that provides the necessary guidelines for carrying out the majority of tasks within the area of collection building. Evans (2000) concurs with the above definition, and regards collection development policy as a written statement that provides details for the guidance of the library staff. A policy statement is a document representing a plan of action and information that is used to guide the staff’s thinking and decision making,
specifically, when deciding what subject areas to consider buying and how much emphasis each area should receive.

Any institution which seeks to have its centre of information as more than a warehouse for documents must have a policy for selection, ordering, storage and access to the materials that are vital to its existence (Devette, 1996). A collection development policy can be a set of theoretical goals or a statement of actual practice. It should be a day-to-day working tool, something that provides the answers to most of the problems. A successful collection development policy requires input from both the school resource centre staff and students. A collection development policy can serve as a tool for meeting the objectives of individuals or groups concerning the purchase or rejection of specific titles. A selector or resource manager occasionally has the authority to make final decisions. However, if the resource center has a policy outlining the fields which needs to be covered, it can serve as a basis for making decisions.

Van Orden (1995, p. 84-85) suggests that the collection development policy for school libraries should consider the following factors.

A. *The clientele to be served.* This statement identifies students, teachers, staff, and others who will use the collection;

B. *The general subject boundaries.* This statement describes the subject coverage, for example, limiting coverage to subject within the curriculum or expanding coverage to subjects useful in extra-curricular programmes;
C. The kind of programmes or user needs supported. This statement addresses the specific types of coverage in the collection. The collection may include instructional, informational, and recreational materials as well as materials supporting particular teaching methods, student organizations, and user groups, including individuals with special needs;  

D. General priorities and limitations governing the selection. This section provides an overview of the selection policy.

(i) Sources of funds designated for the collection programme. A statement should specify the role of external institutions in providing funds or materials. Is the collection the sole source of materials to meet the needs of the school? Are instructional materials bought with separate funds? Are funds available from sources outside the regular budget?

(ii) Forms of materials to be collected or excluded. This statement identifies which formats should be in the collection.

(iii) Languages and geographical areas collected or excluded. A statement should specify foreign-language materials or special geographic areas included in the collection.

(iv) Other exclusions: Statement about other conditions or factors that will exclude materials from the collection.

(v) Duplication of materials: This statement describes the circumstances under which duplicate materials may be obtained.
Participation in resource-sharing plans, such as networks, interlibrary loan, and coordinated collection development. This section identifies the resource sharing programmes in which the school participates and specify the school's responsibilities in those programmes.

E. Other policies appropriate to the general management of the collection.

Additional statements could address local authors' publications; multiple copies; formats (print, CD ROM, or online) for reference works; government publications; acquisition procedures affecting collection policies; expensive purchases; and replacements (p. 84-85).

Loertscher (2000, p. 208-209) also suggests some collection development principles for the school resource centre.

a. The collection of the school resource centre must be appropriate for the community it serves. There is a need to know the types of young people who come to the school, their background, their socioeconomic levels, their parents' occupation, and the cultural mix of users. This information is used to serve users' needs rather than just to buy the best of what is published in diverse topical areas;

b. The collection should be a curricular-oriented collection with the accompanying policies, staff expertise, and realistic budgeting practices. Principals, teachers and school resource managers should plan what areas of the collection need to be strong, who will select the materials, how could the
best materials be selected to meet curricular targets, and how collection building will be financed;

c. **The acquisition system should match the curricular priorities of the school.**
School resource managers should be able to show that the selection system for new materials is accountable for the collection building plan;

d. **The materials included in the resource centre.** Each type of media included in the school resource center should consists of the materials to be purchased, the accompanying equipment, the support staff, and facilities;

e. **The collection in schools should be dynamic to meet current needs.** The collections are supplemented from local, regional, and national networks and meet the curriculum needs of the school and students; and,

f. **The collection should reflect democratic ideas, intellectual freedom, and cultural diversity.** In spite of the pressures from certain individuals and groups, the school resource managers recognize the principles upon which a democratic society is built and purposely build diversity into the collection.

### 1.3 School Resource Centre

The school resource centre is part of the facilities of the school which offer learning opportunities. Organization of the learning activities will be constantly changing based on particular requirements and developments of the curricular. The school resource centre is a service agency for all educational activities. *(School Library Resource Centres. 1972, p. 11). The New Encyclopaedia of Britannica (1998)* defines the school resource centre as school libraries that have been the scene of significant research and experiment with
many different media. Teachers accustomed to using visual aids, often expect the library to provide them with such materials as collections of photographs, videotapes, and artifacts for works in subjects such as history and mathematics (p. 955). The school resource centres or libraries are also expected to provide such resources as books, film, filmstrips, slides, prints, mounted illustration, discs, cassettes, software, and a wide variety of audiovisual apparatus (School Library Resource Centre, 1972, p. 9). Hence, the school resource centre not only supports the curriculum of the school, it also performs related services for the staff, administrators, and parents by giving access to materials in all formats, print and non-print (Stole, 1997, p. 67). The school resource centre should also record materials stored elsewhere in the school and provide an information service about the materials, its organizations, persons responsible, location outside the school, which would be helpful to users. In addition, the resource centre should include space and equipment for the development of learning materials by both staff and students (Edwards, 1973). Other resources often included in the school resource centres are newspapers, press cuttings, pictures, diagrams, maps, charts, photocopies and microforms, worksheets, slides, filmstrips, film loops, films, records, audio-tapes, radio, television programmes, videotapes, slide-tapes, multimedia kits, programmed materials, models, as well as fact sheets. Individuals and objects in the community. In addition, modern school resource centres comprise modern technological items such as computers with Internet facilities, various kinds of databases and CD ROMs.
1.4 Role of the School Resource Manager

The school resource manager is the principal person responsible for the school resource centre. Moving beyond the "warehouse concept' of traditional libraries, resource managers are also involved in classrooms in consultation with teachers. Kinnel, (1992) suggests that the school librarian or the school resource manager should:

e. Provide access to a comprehensive range of learning materials in different formats for use by students individually and in small groups, selected to satisfy curricular, cultural and individual requirements, and to offer the opportunity for borrowing;

f. Maintain up-to-date professional awareness of the availability and use of learning resources through regular visits to the school resource centre as well as through attendance, exhibitions, training sessions, contacts with publishers and other resource providers;
h. Acquire and disseminate comprehensive information to all staff to meet professional needs, and advise staff on the selection of appropriate material to achieve their learning objectives;

i. Provide facilities for the production of learning materials within the school by staff and students;

j. Promote and foster the enjoyment of reading from the earliest age, encourage the reading habit, enrichment of students' imaginative and creative life at all ages through a variety of resources, taking into account their interests and abilities.

The school student population exhibits a wide range of needs, abilities, and interests. Student's personal and demographic characteristics, learning style, and physical characteristics affect their use of materials. The resource manager needs to know the abilities and interest of each student. Some students develop high level of proficiency in computing, reading, listening or viewing skills, while others are sophisticated users of all types of media. Students from homes with video systems and microcomputers may be more familiar with the new technology than their teachers. Resource managers need to know the levels of students' skills and abilities in order to cater for needs at the various levels.

The school resource manager needs to work with teachers in curricular planning. Teachers also need to work with the resource manager in planning and evaluating the collection in the resource centre. Van Orden (1995) suggests that the resource manager should undertake the following activities.
a. The resource manager should identify the characteristics of the users of the collection and the demands of the curriculum;
b. The resource manager should involve the administrators, teachers and students in the development of policies. An effort should be made to invite others to participate in the selection of materials for the collection;
c. Resource manager should facilitate inter-agency borrowing and lending of materials; and
d. The effectiveness of a collection can be gauged by whether it meets the needs of the students and teachers.

1. 5 Importance of the Study

Collection development is an exciting and challenging area in which to work in and this incorporates selecting the right materials for the school resource centre. Most school resource centres in Sri Lanka do not have any collection development policies or system and use the annual allocation given by the government to build up their collection. The school administrators (principals) or resource managers do not follow any guidelines when selecting items for their resource centres. The materials are selected by the Ministry of Education Sri Lanka and most schools do not have a committee system to undertake resource selection. Normally, only printed materials, such as books are selected. This study aims to propose a suitable collection development policy for Sri Lanka. This is appropriate at this time when the Sri Lankan government is becoming more involved in the school library development project, financially backed up with funds from the World Bank. This would allow the school resource centre to be developed in the right direction.
1. 6 Statement of Problems

Most schools in Sri Lanka do not provide a suitable place for the resource centre. Some schools allocate small rooms for the resource centre. Some schools in the remote areas do not have electric supply and the school resource managers are unaware of how to use the electronic materials or find information via the telecommunication network. Most school collections are also out-dated. The little money allocated by the Sri Lankan government could not be spent on electronic materials. Also, because of the un-conducive environment, most students do not like to visit the resource centre. Most schools in Sri Lanka do not catalogue or classify their collections. The opening hours adopted by the school resource centre varies from a few days a week to few hours per day during school hours.

1. 7 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are three fold.

a. To identify the state of the collection in school resource centres in Sri Lanka;

b. To identify the school collection development policy used in Sri Lanka; and

c. To propose a suitable collection development policy for school resource centres in Sri Lanka.

1. 8 Research Questions

1. What is the current state of the collection in Sri Lankan school resource centres?

2. How are the materials obtained?
4. What is the average age of the book collection in the school resource centres?

1. 9 Limitations of the Study

This study concentrates on the collection development of school resource centres only in Sri Lanka. The findings will be applicable to government school resource centres in Sri Lanka. Private schools are not included in this study. Data needed for this study will be collected from fifty schools in the Colombo district in Sri Lanka. As a result, the findings apply to the situation in these schools only.

1. 10 Definitions of the Related Terms

Operational definitions of several terms used in the study are as follows.

Collection development

Collection development refers to the process of planning, building and maintaining a library's information resources in a cost efficient and user relevant manner (American Library Association, 1996). Collection development as a public service system is
Selection

Selection refers to the process of deciding which materials to acquire for a library collection. It may involve deciding between items that provide information about the same subject; deciding whether the information contained in an item is worth its price; or deciding whether an item could stand up the use it would receive. In essence, it is a matter of systematically determining quality and value. (Evans, 1979, p. 28-29)

Acquisition

Materials

School library

The term "school library" refers to an organized collection of books housed in a school for the use of students and teachers, and administrated by a librarian or a teacher. The school library services may enrich teaching by providing illustrative background
material; instruction and practice in the use of books, and reference sources.  
(Encyclopaedia of Information and Library Science, 1993)

School resource centre

School resource centre refers to an area or system of areas in a school where there is an organized collection of books and other media, related equipment and managed by a designated person and made available for pupils, teachers and other staff of the school. (Young, 1983)

Resource manager

The resource manager refers to the person in-charge and therefore need to be more than a librarian. The terms that have arisen to describe his function would be to co-ordinate and direct the selection, purchase, processing, storage and retrieval of all media and the monitoring of the use of the media by staff and students. All this is to be done in a systematic manner that takes account of the current and future needs of the school. (Edward, 1973)

Resources

Resources refer to resources, as well as the necessary equipment and technological systems to use these resources. The resources shall include a variety of formats, such as books, periodicals, and projected and electronic resources, selected according to an establish selection policy. (Van Orden, 1995)
Collection policy

Collection development policy is the written statement of that plan, providing details to guide the library staff. Thus a policy statement is a document that represents a plan of action and information used to guide the staff's thinking and decision making. (Evans, 2000)

1.11 Summary

Every library or resource centre needs to have a proper collection development policy in order to supply good service to their members. This study focuses on collection development of school resource centres in Sri Lanka. In this context, the school resource centre should comprise suitable collection for both students and teachers. This chapter also describes the functions of the school resource centre and the role of the school resource manager.