Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) and the provision of library service in Tanzania: a Case Study of Sumbawanga Municipality

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Abstract

This article examines the status of school library service provision after the establishment of the Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) in Sumbawanga Municipality, Tanzania. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews and observation from four secondary schools. Findings show that the surveyed schools had libraries, with various materials, like books, magazines, video and audio tapes. CD-ROMs and computers were rarely found. Findings also revealed that although there were some improvements in the quality of library collections after the introduction of SEDP, the library services offered did not meet learning and teaching needs. There were few books, and space and furniture were inadequate. It is recommended that school library services should be prioritized with a variety of resources in print and electronic formats. As a long-term measure school libraries should be managed by professional staff. Lastly, Education programmes like SEDP should include all education stakeholders, including library experts, who would advise the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MOEVT) and the government in general on issues concerning school library services.

Introduction

A major component of education for self-reliance was improving the education sector, both qualitatively and quantitatively, by increasing the number of schools as well as libraries. It was a requirement by the Ministry of Education that no school should be built without a library (Jefferson, 1978). A major contribution to school libraries in the country was initiated by the acceptance of the Hockey report of 1960 on the development of library services in East Africa. At that time school libraries were poorly organized with poor collections of books. Most books were obtained as gifts and were irrelevant to the education curriculum. The report recommended that school library development should be an integral part of the total school development plan. Since the late 1990s there has

been a mushrooming of both private and government secondary schools, especially after the introduction of the Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) which aimed at expanding and improving the quality of secondary school education in the country (MOEC, 2004). This paper examines the status of secondary school library service provision after the implantation of SEDP.

Education and training in Tanzania was by then the responsibility of two ministries. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training was responsible for basic secondary and teachers' education. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology was responsible for higher education. In 2007 the two Ministries were merged into one. Since 1995, when the Education and Training Policy was issued, the education sector has undergone several reforms which have been geared towards improving access, equity and quality capacity building. To achieve this, a sector-wide approach to education was adopted, as a result of which the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) was designed. The programme was later translated into two development plans, namely: Primary Education Development Plan 2002-2006 and Secondary Education Development Plan 2004-2009. The SEDP started to be implemented in July 2004 (Sekwao, 2004). The overall goal of SEDP is to increase the proportion of Tanzanian youths completing secondary education with acceptable learning outcomes. The programme has several specific goals, which include:

- Improvement of access to education which is achieved through:
    o Optimum utilization of teacher's physical facilities
    o Expansion of school facilities, especially to underserved areas
- Quality improvement that aims to raise the pass rate of division I-III, to 70%. This can be attained through:
    o In-service courses for upgrading and continuous professional development of teachers
    o Curriculum review
    o Improvement of school libraries
    o Increasing capitation grant for teaching and learning materials and other charges

o   Management reforms and devolution of powers.

The aim is to increase efficiency and responsiveness in the operation of secondary education.

Literature Review

In Africa, libraries were introduced during the colonial period. However, it was not until the period after World War II that the colonial government took responsibility for the establishment of university, school, and public libraries (Rosenberg, 1998). In Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa), the concept of the school library service was introduced to Anglophone countries at the time of independence and was linked to the establishment of public library systems (Rosenberg, 1998). This followed the examples provided by the United Kingdom (UK) and South Africa. Until the 1950s, school libraries were seen as an integral part of the public library service (Rosenberg, 1998). In recent years governments in Africa have moved towards the attainment of equitable access to basic education. The countries have committed themselves towards achieving the millennium development goals (MDGs) by 2015. The consequence of the above commitment is the provision of quality education, which includes quality library services (Batambuze, 2003).

Efforts towards school library development in East Africa, including Tanzania, can be traced back to the Hockey Report of 1960. Since that time Tanzania (at that time Tanganyika) has made some efforts to develop libraries by establishing the school library service under the arm of Tanganyika Library Services (TLS). Towards the end of 1960, UNESCO sent a library expert, Emma Frost, who was attached to TLS, with the aim of establishing a model school library to guide the establishment of school libraries for the teachers, school administrators and educators. They were expected to provide assistance to teachers in the selection of library materials and in the operation of school libraries. Schools selected for demonstration were Mzumbe, Mazengo and Kihesa. The introduction of a mobile library service also helped in the development of school library service provision (Ilomo, 1972). The importance of school library services is being recognized, albeit at a slow pace. Different organizations are now investing in school

libraries. For example, CARE International, a non-government organization, provides support to school libraries in the country. A good example can be seen in several primary schools in the Lake Zone.

The organizational structure of the school library resource centre should be designed to serve the needs of the school community, which can be cultural, recreational as well as educational. It can vary, depending on the existing resources in the school, the location and arrangement of resources, the use, selection, and acquisition of resources as well as creation and withdrawal of materials. The relevant learning materials should be centrally recorded in whatever physical condition they are and there should be a clear guide to the physical arrangement of items in the library. The central catalogue should be organized in such a way that it can be easily used. This has been simplified by the use of ICT, which facilitates the effective use of the library, as advocated by Lonsdale (2003) and Whelan (2004).

The success of any school library, no matter how well designed, depends on the quality and number of library staff present (ALA, 2006). The amount of staffing resources present in a library determines its quality. Thus it is essential to have well-trained and competent staff, depending on the size of the school library collection and services. The school librarians should be professionally trained in educational theory and methodology (IFLA, 2002). They should have the knowledge and skills regarding the provision of information and the use of all sources, including both print and electronic, and should guide students in finding and using a wide variety of materials. A school librarian is a key in service provision (Whelan, 2004). A study conducted by Lance (2004) shows that when a library is served by professionals and has a good collection it tends to attract more people to use it. But a study by Nawe (1989) in Tanzania shows that most schools do not have librarians. They are served by teachers who are not qualified as librarians and have other school responsibilities and so they cannot work for the library properly. Another study by Mwashiga (2005) in Tanzania reveals that most of the school libraries are still under-staffed.

Methodology

The research design involved a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Primary data for this study were collected through the survey method. The instruments used are: questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions, interview schedules and focus group checklist. A sample for this study was drawn from four secondary schools selected randomly in Sumbawanga Municipality. The sample consisted of 84 respondents comprising 60 students, 15 teachers, and 4 librarians/library attendants. Five education stakeholders were selected from MOEVT.

Findings and Discussions

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Fifty nine (98.3%) respondents were aged between 15 and 20 while one (1.7%) respondent was between 21 and 25 years. Twenty four (40%) students were female and 36 (60%) were male.

Awareness and use of Library Services

Out of 60 students 53 (88.3%) were aware that their schools had libraries while 7 (11.7%) did not know that their schools had libraries. The respondents who said that there was no library at their school were required to indicate where they obtained library services. The results showed that these consulted departmental libraries, subject teachers, regional public library and neighbouring school library. Every school involved in this study had a library. All the teachers and library attendants who were asked about the presence of a school library confirmed that they had a school library. However, the libraries differed from one school to another, in terms of the services offered, collection of the library materials and lending services. All the surveyed schools also had departmental libraries (this is in addition to the main library where library materials were stored).

Services Offered in School Libraries

According to student respondents library services offered by school libraries included lending (88.3%), reference (48.3%), newspapers (68.3%), fiction (80%) and magazines like *Femina* and *Cheza Salama* (86%). Details are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Library Services Offered by School Libraries (N = 60)

Service	Yes	No	Total
Library lending services	53 (88.3%)	7 (11.7%)	60 (100%)
Reference services	29 (48.3%)	31 (51.7%)	60 (100%)
Newspapers	41 (68.3%)	19 (31.7%)	60 (100%)
Fiction	48 (80%)	12 (20%)	60 (100%)
Magazines	52 (86.7%)	8 (13.3%)	60 (100%)

Source: Field Data (2006)

Interviews conducted with teachers and library attendants revealed that the services offered in school libraries were similar to those mentioned by the students. However, the teachers claimed to use subject-based video cassettes and audio tapes which were available in their departmental libraries. It was observed that some of the important and modern library services were not offered in school libraries. For example, computer and Internet services, information skills training, provision of journals and subject-based CD-ROMS were not available in some school libraries.

Purpose of Using the Library

Sixty eight percent of the respondents used libraries for borrowing, 15% (9) for reading and 8.3% for consulting newspapers. It was also noted that library services were used by 3.3% (2) for entertainment and 1.7% (1) for examination preparation. This pattern of use could be attributed to inadequate reading space and furniture, and lack of modern facilities like computers, CD-ROMS, video tapes and audio tapes for information processing and retrieval. Also it could be attributed to users' lack of knowledge of the libraries' collection composition as it was observed that most of the reference books were not used by the students. Three students were asked if they had ever used an encyclopedia (a few encyclopedias were held in these libraries) but none of them knew what it was.

Materials Available in School Libraries

Materials available in libraries included books (all schools), newspapers (2 schools), magazines (all schools), video tapes (3 schools) and audio tapes (2 schools). It is evident that most of the school libraries were still traditional and were providing traditional materials and services. The libraries were stocked with fiction and non-fiction books, reference materials and newspapers. Modern electronic materials, such as video tapes,

audio tapes, CD-ROMs and computers were rarely found, and were missing in some schools such as Itwelele Secondary School. This is because Itwelele was one of the newly established schools under SEDP. It had no electrical power supply. Some educative materials like gazettes, maps, posters, photos and educational games were rarely found in the schools.

Adequacy of library services and resources

Forty (66.8%) respondents reported that the library services and resources do not meet their learning needs, while 20 (33.3%) respondents observed that the services met their learning needs. The major reasons for failure to meet learning and teaching needs included: inadequate space for reading, few books compared with the number of students, inadequate furniture, absence of school librarian, information illiteracy and the absence of modern facilities for accessing information like computers and Internet services. The students who said that the library services provided meet learning needs attributed their answers to the presence of more books to borrow. As a result their academic performance improved.

Interviews with teachers also revealed that, although the size of the collections had increased, it was still not adequate to meet the teaching and learning requirements in terms of quantity and quality. It appears that, although SEDP has provided an avenue for growth of library collections very little has been done to improve the management of school libraries. Interviews conducted with four library attendants revealed that, although some changes have taken place in terms of increased library collections, these are yet to meet the information needs of the school communities, whether for teaching or learning purposes. The library attendants attributed the shortage of books to the rapidly growing number of students, especially after the establishment of SEDP.

Involvement of Stakeholders in the Programme

People involved in different educational programmes should be made aware of the importance of school libraries. Some of the officials involved in important educational

programmes do not see the importance of libraries. For example, among the top SEDP officials, one of them argued that:

"Libraries are just like laboratories, a student can learn science using the environment without using a laboratory, and similarly a student can learn, read and pass well without using the library."

Such attitudes impede efforts towards the development of school libraries in the country. Students should be encouraged to use library services not only for passing examinations, but to be independent learners, knowledge seekers, knowledge creators, as well as lifelong learners. To become lifelong readers, students must have access to extensive collections of quality and current books and other print materials in their school libraries.

Selection of Library Materials

The findings show that students were not involved in the selection of library materials, especially books, which is undertaken by teachers. Most of the teachers involved in the selection were heads of departments. The teachers revealed that, when they have funds for buying teaching and learning materials, they conduct meetings in their departments, where the classroom teachers make their requests for the materials to be bought. The requests are then sent to the academic master who approves them and sends the requests to the head of school. The head of school then selects the kind of materials to be purchased depending on the availability of money. In all the schools involved in the study it was the storekeeper who purchases the books. The teachers did not like this practice. One teacher complained:

"I don't like the way the storekeeper treats our department. He always changes the books he was sent to buy, and buys books which are not useful to the students and teachers."

Interviews conducted with four library attendants revealed that they were not involved in the selection of library materials. Books were selected in their respective departments and bought by the storekeeper. Orders were sent to the academic master, then to heads of schools and finally to the storekeeper who purchase the books. Like teachers, the library attendants did not like this procedure for acquiring books. One library attendant

suggested that the books should be selected by library attendants in collaboration with teachers. He observed:

"Book selection and purchase should be done by us, because we understand the needs of our users and the frequently used books. The storekeeper is interested in the quantity and not the quality of the materials and he changes the decision made by teachers depending on his own interest."

Figure 1: The Cycle of Book Purchase at the Surveyed Schools
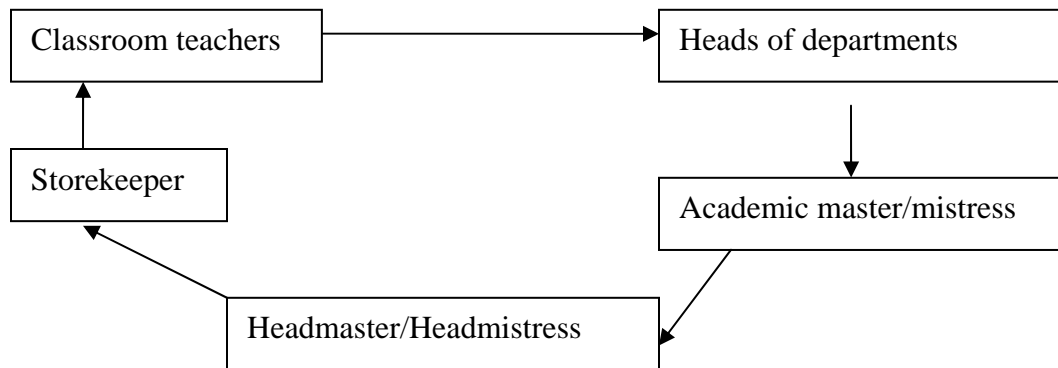
Source: Field Data (2006)

Quality of library collections

The quality of library collections is essential in ensuring maximum and efficient library service provision and serving the purpose of the school community in knowledge utilization and academic performance.

Table 2: The Quality of Library Collection (N=60)

Library Materials	Good Frequency	Satisfactory Frequency	Poor Frequency	Total
Reference books	31 (51.7%)	8 (13.3%)	21 (35%)	60 (100%)
Textbooks	37 (61.7%)	9 (15%)	12 (20%)	60 (100%)
Periodicals	36 (60%)	14 (23.3%)	10 (16.7%)	60 (100%)
Newspapers	40 (66.7%)	6 (10%)	14 (23.3%)	60 (100%)
Video tapes/Audio tapes	4 (6.7%)	1 (1.7%)	44 (73.3%)	60 (100%)

Source: Field Data (2006)

Almost two-thirds of the respondents noted that the quality of the library collection was good. The quality of reference books, textbooks, periodicals and newspapers was reported to be good and ranged above average, that is, by 31(51%), 37(61%), 36(60%) and 40(66%) respectively. The situation was attributed to the presence of new materials, especially books, as a result of SEDP. However it was noted that library materials were not well managed. Libraries also lacked photocopiers and bindery units to repair worn-out books. Some of the books were locked in lockers and cupboards. Video tapes and audio tapes were in good condition, though they were not properly stored because they were kept in boxes in academic offices and departmental libraries. Poor storage of these library materials was a clear indication that teachers lacked the required knowledge for the management of electronic media.

Among the four schools visited only two schools had computers which were kept in the headmasters' offices. Shortage of electronic media like computers was attributed to inadequate funds to purchase them. However, Kantalamba Secondary school had solicited help from the Japanese Embassy in Tanzania. It helped them to build a library and computer laboratory.

Organization of Library Materials

Forty (63.4%) respondents agreed that the materials are well organized to facilitate access to information, while 15 (28.3%) respondents said that the materials were poorly organized and they do not facilitate easy access to information. Five (8.3%) respondents said that they did not know whether the library collection was well organized or not probably because they do not use the library or they use their friends to locate the materials they needed or they rely on their notes. However, the researcher observed that library materials, such as those covering the fields of biology, geography and English, were not organized and classified professionally. In one school the library attendant decided to arrange the books according to the frequency of usage, the most frequently used books being arranged in the same place. Due to lack of professional training the library attendants used their commonsense to arrange the materials in the ways they considered convenient to them and the users.

Empty library shelves were observed in Kantalamba and Mazwi secondary schools. Library attendants and teachers fear theft and rough handling of books. The books are locked in cupboards in departmental libraries, which lead to poor access to library materials. A school library is a service library and one should not worry too much about mutilation or loss of books. It is the function of a library to maintain a sound collection to cater for the needs of the school community (Kumar, 1987).

Locating Materials in the Library

Forty (66%) respondents use library attendants to locate the materials in the library, 10 (16.7%) respondents go directly to the shelves, while 1 (1.7%) respondent locates materials using a friend. It was observed that none of the school libraries used a library catalogue for locating the materials (except Kantalamba Secondary School and this was in the past). Using a library attendant to locate books could be attributed to staff's inadequate skills to organize the collection professionally. According to officials from MOEVT there were plans to conduct training on library management to equip staff with the necessary skills.

Staffing

All school libraries were managed by teachers. Out of the four library attendants interviewed, three had an ordinary diploma in teacher education and one had a Degree in Fine and Performing Arts and a Diploma in teacher education. This is a clear indication that the Ministry for many years has forgotten about school librarianship. Interviews conducted with MOEVT officials revealed that through the SEDP they had planned to provide some training on library issues for teacher library attendants to equip them with the necessary library skills. If SEDP wants to improve the quality of education it should reconsider the status of libraries and library staff to reflect the importance of libraries in improving the quality of education.

SEDP and its impact on Library Services

Fifty four (90%) respondents confirmed that they knew about the SEDP, while 4 (6.7%) said that they had no knowledge of it. The results were attributed to many advertisements, posters, brochures and television programmes about SEDP. The researcher observed some of the brochures which were posted on classroom walls indicating the objectives and plans of SEDP regarding secondary education. Also the erection of new classrooms, increased enrolment of students and employment of new teachers raised students' awareness of the programme.

The majority (58.3%) of the respondents reported that there had been improvements in school library services after the introduction of SEDP. They noted that there were more books to borrow, which they had claimed improved their academic performance because of consulting the new materials which were available in their schools. Some students also revealed that they were encouraged to borrow books from the library because there were more books to borrow.

Students who said there were no improvements (33.4%) claimed that books and other library materials were insufficient compared with the increased student enrolment as a result of SEDP. They also observed that they did not have a professional librarian to help them use the library effectively. In addition, space was inadequate. The study noted that the additional materials acquired through the programme did not correspond to the number of users.

Interviews conducted with MOEVT officials revealed that SEDP provided funds for improving library service provision. The funds provided were basically for purchasing more books. This was observed in all the schools visited where the school heads reported to have received more funds for purchasing books. Students and teachers also claimed to have more books after the implementation of SEDP. The changes were notable in the area of textbooks but reference books were few. Other library materials were not included in the programme. For example, reference books like dictionaries, encyclopedias, directories and many more were not even thought of. The possible explanation is that

there are a growing number of children as a result of SEDP's implementation goals, which in turn leads to a shortage of books. This has led heads of schools to concentrate on buying more textbooks, which are suited to the curriculum and are greatly used by students, instead of buying reference books which are used for reference purposes only. Electronic materials were not purchased because most of the schools do not have facilities to support electronic materials, and because both teachers and students lacked ICT skills. Electronic materials were also expensive in terms of the required support system.

For the 2006/2007 budget year the government, through SEDP, planned to build 30 school libraries all over the country (SEDP, 2005). In-depth interviews with MOEVT officials revealed that some efforts are being made towards building new school libraries as stated in the latest SEDP document. According to the officials, each region will have at least one school with a library that would cater for several schools. The library will be located at a place where it is surrounded by many schools, because it is going to be a model library with adequate facilities and enough modern equipment to cater for the needs of the surrounding schools. According to the regional education officer a letter from MOEVT directing them to select a suitable school for serving that purpose has been received.

Through SEDP, library attendants and teacher librarians will be trained on issues concerning librarianship, at least to acquire some knowledge on library matters. According to the latest SEDP document, there is a fund for capacity building which will also include library training. However, some teachers and educational officials had this to say on the proposed training:

"We have enough money for training, but someone has to initiate the process so that the training could start. This is a five- year plan, and the years are passing by but the implementation is too slow."

The above quotation implies that the programme has very good goals and enough funds but the actual implementation is too slow. At the end of the day the goals will

not be realized or reached. The outcomes of the programme will not be as expected as observed by one teacher:

"The achievements of SEDP will not be as impressive as its sister PEDP. For PEDP we have seen a lot of changes in schools, but for SEDP nothing important has been done for the past two years, the changes are too slow and the years are passing by ……"

Conclusions

The study found that schools had libraries which are poorly stocked with books and dominated by lending services. There were no computers or Internet services provided, and electronic materials were rarely found. Library materials were found to be in good condition but they were not arranged professionally due to the absence of school librarians. Students use library attendants who are classroom teachers, for locating materials in the library. Finally, despite improvements in the library collections and library service provision after the introduction of SEDP, the library services offered are not commensurate with the needs of the growing school population.

Recommendations

In order to improve the quality of education in the country, the school library service should be prioritized. The building of classrooms and the opening of new schools should go hand-in-hand with the building of school libraries which are modern, well stocked, equipped, and adequately staffed. As a temporary measure teachers' education curriculum should include library education so that where a library lacks trained library staff the teacher librarian can assist in library management and in equipping students with basic information literacy skills. As a long-term measure school libraries should be managed by professional staff. Lastly, education programmes like SEDP should involve all education stakeholders, including library experts, who would advise MOEVT and the government in general on issues concerning school library services.

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