
Role of School Libraries in Education: Case of Eastern Ethiopia

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Abstract:

School libraries are part and parcel of educational institutions. School libraries play a pivotal role in selecting, collecting, organizing and disseminating information. It support to meet the vision and mission of the institution by assisting in teaching learning activities. The main concern of modern libraries are to provide right information, to the right person, at right time and in the case of school libraries to serve and support the educational activities. Also it helps in the preservation of information too. The school library help to achieve the educational objectives. Without the full complement of library resources, infrastructure and personnel it is difficult to improve school education in countries like Ethiopia. In today's information and knowledge based society libraries have a greater role to play by providing information, inculcating ideas and developing new knowledge. School libraries are vital to create reading habits among school children there by helping to mould their character and behaviour. School libraries act as an important instrument in providing first hand-knowledge to use the library resources most effectively in their future career. It helps the staff and students to get information in variety of medias such as print, microforms and electronic. Libraries organize the resources using efficient classification scheme and also preparing catalogue to help the users. Although school libraries have been recognised as essential in schools but only few schools provides better library services to its users.

Studies are lacking in Ethiopia regarding the role of libraries in school. This study help to throw some light to the contribution and also the problems faced by school libraries in Ethiopia. In addition this study will create an awareness among students and teachers about the role of libraries in their teaching and learning environment.

Key words: School Libraries-Ethiopia, Education and School libraries, School library services, Teaching and learning-School libraries, Lifelong learning-School libraries.

Introduction

The mission of the school library program is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. The school librarian empowers students to be critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers and ethical users of information (American Association of School Librarians, 2009). The goal of education is to prepare children to live fruitfully in the society. Schools play a major role in creating productive and competent citizens. Libraries are the life blood of any community especially school community. The teaching and learning activities depends on efficient and effective libraries. School libraries help to develop reading habit and thereby increasing the knowledge of the school children. Reading could influence how children think and act. It helps to improve the attitude of the children, which help to mould the character and behaviour too. Neuman (2002) mentioned that libraries are vital for children's achievement and developing information needs. Children need libraries in their classrooms, schools and communities. It is not a new idea and even about 5 decades ago Havighurst (1967) opined that the schools have the responsibility of educating children for this life-long learning process, teaching them to learn to use libraries, laboratories, and the resources of the community as sources of information. Krolak (2005) expressed that libraries assist in finding, using and interpreting appropriate information that opens up

opportunities for lifelong learning, literacy enhancement, informed citizenship, recreation, creative imagination, individual research, critical thinking, and ultimately, empowerment in an increasingly complex world. Over all school libraries assist in attaining academic excellence.

Background of the study

Bush (2002) mentioned that books, information technology and school librarians who are part of the schools' professional team are basic ingredients for student achievement. She also said that a good library launches young children on a journey of exploration and discovery, teaching them how to ask questions and find answers. And the wonderful thing is that once you learn to use a library, the doors to learning are open to you throughout your life. These words of Mrs. Bush shows the importance of school libraries for children.

In 1967-68 under the UNESCO participation programme Paton (1968) was appointed to conduct a general survey of library facilities in the Empire and to formulate proposals for future development throughout the country. His studies revealed about library provision in Ethiopia, mainly centred in the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. There was a Directory of Ethiopian Libraries compiled by Miss Géraldine O. Amos and sponsored by the Ethiopian Library Association. 94 separate libraries were listed in the directory with a wide range of subject interest. Paton's study shows that outstanding amongst all these was the library of the Haile Selassie I University, with a stock of some 100,000 volumes, 2,500 periodicals and 1,000,000 documents. Also of importance are the separate departmental libraries covering law (12,000 volumes), medicine (2,500 volumes), science and engineering (22,000 volumes), theology (4,500 volumes) and the very attractive Institute of Ethiopian Studies, with a stock of 11,600 volumes and 500 manuscripts. Attached to the university

though distant in space are the splendid library of the College of Agriculture at Alemaya near Harar(22,000 volumes) and the Public Health College Library at Gondar (7,000 volumes). Although these libraries were intended for the use of staff and students of the university, borrowing facilities were also granted to any responsible member of the public on application.

It is very clear from the above information that even in 1967 itself some studies were undertaken regarding the library facilities. But these studies were concentrated in the field of higher education. For life long learning library use is necessary and at the same time library use habit should be developed in the school itself. Daniel (2004) observed that the library remains the power house of educational institution and that an education institution without a library is like a motor car without an engine and a body without a soul. Smith (2002) opines that the school library is the backbone of functional education without which academic excellence cannot be achieved. Obviously speaking, both the library and the school are inseparable twins that one ceases to function well without the other. However, even in this information era some of the schools in Ethiopia has been functioning without libraries.

Statement of the problems

School libraries plays a pivotal role in the character building and better career selections. It is necessary to have libraries with good number of quality books and also modern facilities such as computers and internet to support the teaching learning activity of the schools. Although extensive research has not been done in Ethiopia yet, research conducted in other countries have demonstrated that access to a library has a significant positive impact on the academic development of learner. There is a need to study the importance and existence of school libraries in Ethiopia. Also it is very essential to find out how well these libraries are organizing their materials and

helping the young generation to have access to the right information at the right time.

Objective of the study

The major objective of this study was to find out the role of libraries in the empowerment of school children in Ethiopia.

Specific objectives

- To find out the existence of libraries in schools and the resources available in them.
- To have an idea about the organization of documents and their access in school libraries.
- To enquire about students awareness regarding the importance of library in their education.
- To know where do the students look for information and what purpose they make use of the libraries
- To find out the use of library by students and how do they rate different facilities of the library.
- To see student's level of satisfaction in the use of their school library

Population of the study

Ten School libraries from Harar, Alamaya and Dire Dawa were taken for this study.

Sample of the study

Ten schools were selected conveniently for this study. Two schools from Alamaya, five from Harar, one each from Arathanya, Jegol and Dire Dawa . Again on the basis of existence of library and also based on convenience of the researcher three schools from ten schools were selected to find out the influence of libraries on school children.

Methodology:

Personal observation and unstructured interview method was used to collect data from the school libraries. Based on the existence of libraries structured questionnaire was distributed to 60 students each in three selected schools. Information was gathered from 8th, 9th and 10th grade students about the use of libraries. 20 students from each grade were selected using simple random sampling method.

Limitation of the study

This study covers only ten schools. User study was conducted only in three schools. Due to limitation of time, money and also other responsibilities the researcher was not able to visit many more schools of Ethiopia. The Schools in urban areas like Addis Ababa may provide different result than this study.

Review of literature

According to the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Libraries support the curriculum, promote literacy development, and foster lifelong reading habits among children through the development of carefully selected print collections and the infusion of educational technology. American Association of School librarians (2009) mentioned that 21st century school library programs continue to undergo momentous changes that have heightened the importance of technology and evidence-based learning. The focus has moved from the library as a confined place to one with fluid boundaries that is layered by diverse needs and influenced by an interactive global community. Guiding principles for school library programs must focus on building a flexible learning environment with the goal of producing successful learners skilled in multiple literacies.

Kuhlthau (2009) opined that school libraries are an essential component and dynamic learning centers of information age schools. School librarians are vital partners in

creating schools that enable students to learn through vast resources and multiple communication channels. Teachers cannot do this alone. School librarians are primary agents in schools for 21st century learners.

Murdoch (1968) expressed that the school has the primary responsibility for instruction and guidance of children and youth in the community in the use of libraries. The program of library instruction directed by the school librarians has the broad purposes of teaching library skills adaptable to all types of libraries and for encouraging pupils to use libraries for continuing self-education. School librarians, teachers, and public librarians should cooperate in planning instructional programs in the use of libraries for educational and recreational purposes. Even after 45 years this ideas hold good in case of school libraries.

The first school library in Ethiopia was established in the Tafari Makonnen School in 1925, most were founded after the Italian occupation, when major secondary schools were equipped with book collections. Problems plague school libraries today: cramped quarters in overextended buildings; severe shortage of books in English (the language of instruction in secondary schools); inadequate, often outdated, collections; and lack of professional staff. These problems cannot be adequately addressed until the country grapples with the dramatic increase in school enrollment and the need for more schools. From 1974/75–1985/86, primary school enrollment increased two-and-one-half times to nearly 2.5 million students; during that same time the number of junior and senior secondary schools nearly doubled (Ofcansky, 1993).

A UNESCO/ADEA survey for the 2000 Education for All assessment revealed that “as the decade came to a close, school libraries were said to have the lowest of priorities in educational spending. The majority of schools possessed no library. Where some semblance of a school library did exist, it

was often no more than a few shelves of outdated and worn-out material and inadequately staffed (Montagnes, 2001).

The Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development in 1992 came up with minimum standards for school libraries in Nigeria based on the facts that students without access to supplementary reading materials as provided for in a library will be seriously handicapped. His academic success will be based largely on his ability to memorize lecture notes. On the other hand, the student with access to a good school library can learn and be judged on his own skill in clarifying problem collecting information relative to its solution and formulating conclusion. This student will have acquired the foundation for independent, purposeful and life-long learning. (Busayo, 2011)

According to Baird (1994) school libraries are very essential to -

- give students knowledge (both general knowledge and specific information from set textbooks)
- provide explanations
- satisfy students' curiosity and interest in life
- offer art, craft, music, dance and cultural information.

From the review of literature it is very clear that school libraries have a special place not only in providing knowledge but also the overall empowerment of the student life.

Data Analysis and Discussion

From personal visit of the researcher to the schools in Harar, Dire Dawa, Alemaya, Arathanya and Jegol one thing was very clear that there are school libraries in Ethiopia. Haramaya model school library had recently shifted to a beautiful building which is very spacious. Another school library in Dire Dawa too are having good number books even though the library is not that spacious and the principal of the school said that they are planning to shift the library to another hall as the present

library is not sufficient to hold the documents and also to provide seating facilities for the students. In Harar too out of five schools visited by the researcher four schools were having libraries. In Alemaya out of two school visited only one school had library. Other one even though it was more than 50 years old just now constructing a building to start a library.

Present situations in Ethiopian school libraries

Personal visit and observation is an important method to gather information from the library. The data recieved from personal observation and also unstructured interview was analysed here with the help of tables.

Table 1: Information regarding existence of Library, Librarian, his/her qualification and working time of the library

Is there any Library?	Yes			No	
	6 (60%)			4 (40%)	
Librarian to manage the library	Yes			No	
	6 (60%)			-	
Librarian's qualification	10 th	12 th	12 th and Diploma	Degree	
	-	4 (66.67%)	2 (33.33%)	-	
Library opening hours	8.30 a.m to 12 noon		2.00 p.m to 4.00 p.m		3.00 p.m to 5.30 p.m
	6 (100%)		4 (66.67%)		2 (33.33%)

The table given above shows that out of 10 schools only 6 (60%) were having libraries. There were personals to manage the school libraries. Personal interview with the librarian revealed that the qualification of the librarians were 12th class plus Diploma or certificate given after a short training. In four (66.67%) of the libraries the library incharge did not have any training at all. This is also true in the case of the study made by Udog-Ilomechine (2008). According to this study more than three quarters (76%) of the respondents said that there is no professional librarian in school libraries. Libraries are very important in schools and at the same time there should be

professional librarians to acquire, organize and disseminate information.

The libraries were opened in the morning from 8.30 to 12 noon which constitutes 3 and 1/2 hours opening. Where as in the afternoon four school library is opened only for 2 hours and remaining two opened for 2 and 1/2 hours. One of the school principals informed that the students were free to use the library even after the school hours. If the libraries are opened only at working time the students won't be able to access information from the library as they have to attend their classes. It is necessary for the libraries to be opened before the class hours, during lunch break and also even after the class hours.

Table 2: Availability of number of documents, periodicals and newspapers in the library

Number of volumes available in the library	Below 5000	5000-10000	Above 10000	Do not know
	1	-	-	5
Number of Periodicals	Below 5	5-10	Above 10	Nil
Number of news papers	English	Amharic	Any other language	Nil
	1	1	-	1

In five of the school libraries under study librarians were not able to say the total volumes and number of titles available in the library. There was no accession register maintained in the library. Where as in one of the school's elementary school library had library incharge who was keeping the documents in the library according to subjects and he informed that there are 3000 documents available in that particular library. This indicates the responsibility of library staff in maintaining the documents in the library.

Periodicals are not subscribed by the libraries. One of the school library had many old magazines. To know about the recent development in different subject field it is essential to provide access to periodicals. As the periodicals are costly the school libraries avoid subscription to periodicals even though

they are very important in different field of study. The study made in Pennsylvania school libraries(Pennsylvania State Board of Education, 2011) has also revealed that almost three-fourths of libraries subscribe to 20 or fewer magazines and newspapers, and 14% of the libraries have no magazine or newspaper subscriptions.

Only one library was getting both English and Amharic newspapers. This is a major drawback of school libraries as newspapers provide current information to the students and this also will help the students to be aware of economical, political, social and cultural situation of the country.

Moreover to know about the world and its environment, a child helps himself through reading books, newspapers and other magazines. It is the responsibility of the librarian and school authorities to make it available to the school children.

Reference resources

A reference resource is something that one refers back to for information. Common examples are dictionaries, encyclopedias, and thesauri. These are tools that people want on hand to find quick information, to check a fact, or to gain background knowledge of a topic.

Table 3: Types of reference sources available in the library

Reference sources	Yes	No
Encyclopedia	6 (100%)	-
Dictionaries	6 (100%)	-
Handbooks	6 (100%)	-
Almanacs	6 (100%)	-
Year books		6 (100%)

School libraries were getting reference sources such as Encyclopedia, dictionaries, handbooks and almanacs. Observation revealed that many of these reference books were very old editions. In the schools the text books are given to each students and the school authorities feel that these are sufficient

for the students to get knowledge. To get retrospective information it is very essential for school libraries to provide good reference resources to its users.

Table 4: Organization of material, Method of access and inclusion of library hours in the class schedule.

Document organization	Yes	No
	6 (100%)	-
Classification system used	4 (66.67%)	2 (33.33%)
Dewey Decimal	2 (33.33%)	
Library of Congress	-	
Subject headings	2 (33.33%)	
Existence of Catalogue	-	6(100%)
Type of catalogue		
Book catalogue	-	6 (100%)
Card catalogue	-	-
Document Accessing method		
Open access	4 (66.67%)	-
Closed access	2 (33.33%)	-
Library hour	2 (33.33%)	4 (66.67%)
Once a week	1 (16.67%)	
Twice a week	1 (16.67%)	-
Availability of issues books	3 (50%)	3(50%)

Documents are organized to facilitate for easy retrieval and access. The users are able to find out the availability of necessary document with the help of catalogue and classification numbers assist the users to find the location of the documents in the shelves.

Observation revealed that 2 (33.33%) of the libraries were using Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme. At the same time many books were without classification numbers. In other school libraries no classification system were followed. Documents were just kept on the basis of subject and also forms.

Regarding catalogue, catalogues were not available in all 6 libraries. Catalogue is an important tool in the library as it helps the user to find the documents according to its author, title or subject. Also catalogue act as a surrogate to the actual

document. It reveals to the user the holdings of a particular library.

Interviewing the library staff helped to understand open access method was used to get the document from the shelves in 4 (66.67%) libraries. The users were free to go to the shelves for browsing the documents and to make their own selection. Whereas in 2 (33.33%) library closed access was used where user have to request for the books and it will be searched, retrieved and disseminated by the library staff.

2 (33.33%) of the school were given library hour in their class schedule. That too for once or twice in a week. One of the school allowed their students to visit the library during leisure hours and also after school hours. There is a need to provide library hour in the school schedule so that students can get enough time to make use of the information available in the library.

Table 5: Library automation and Internet facility in library

	Yes	No
Automation of library activities	-	6 (100%)
Use of software for automation.	-	6 (100%)
Internet in library	-	6 (100%)
Information literacy training	-	6 (100%)

Interviewing the library staff revealed that no automation activities were done in the school libraries. Even softwares are not being used in the library. One of the library was having computers but there was no power supply. Where as in the case of others there were no computers available in the library.

At the sametime students do not have internet facilities in the library. In the information communication technology era there is a need to automate the library activities which will help the users to access the information without wasting time and energy.

Observation and unstructured interview by the researcher found that Information literacy training was not given to the users by the library staff. Students may not be able to make use of the materials in the library unless the library staff explain to them how to make use of the catalogue? What is the function of classification numbers and how to make use of it to locate documents in the library? etc. Especially in school libraries the students should be given training in the use of different information sources. Librarian can assist the students in the use of modern information technologies to access information.

Use of library facilities by school students

Without the user study one cannot make any conclusion about the use of library facilities by its users. So structured questionnaires were distributed in three of the selected schools. The responses of the students were analysed to see how far libraries were helping the student community by providing access to library materials.

Table 6: Grades of the respondents

Grade	8th	9th	10th	Total
Questionnaire distributed	60	60	60	180
Number of Respondents	53 (88.33%)	51 (85%)	54 (90%)	158 (87.78%)

Total 180 questionnaires were distributed in three schools to 8, 9 and 10 grade students. 158 (87.78%) filled questionnaires were returned to the researcher.

Table 7: Requirement to use the library

Use library for assignment, exams, study etc	Yes	No
	97 (61.39%)	61 (38.61)

School libraries support the teaching and learning activities. To prepare assignments, exams and also to study students have to utilize the library facilities. Table 7 clearly depict that 61.39%

of the respondents make use of the library for preparing assignment, exams and study. Where as 38.61% said they do not use the library for the above mentioned purpose. Study made by Udog-Ilomechine (2008) also shows that 81% of the students use the library.

Table 8: Purpose of using the library

Purpose of use	Reponse of the Respondents
To find information (books, magazines, online) for assignments	78 (49.37%)
To study or to do homework before or after school	61 (38.61%)
To find information for personal reasons or for pleasure	35 (22.15%)

Students may visit the library for various purposes. Table 8 reveals that 78 (49.37%) use the library to find information from books and magazines to prepare assignments. Where as 61 (38.61%) make use of the library for study purposes and remaining 35 (22.15%) mentioned that they use the library to find information for personal reasons or for pleasure. To make use of the materials in the library they should be qualitative and current. At the same time students should have time to read the documents from the library. May be the information found in the library is not updated and up to the mark of requirement and moreover students lack time to read the documents may be the reasons for poor use of the library for the assignments, study and entertainment.

Table 9: Visits to the library

Ofeness in visiting the library	
Once per day	21 (13.29%)
Once per week	63 (39.87%)
Once per month	14 (8.86%)
Rarely	60 (37.98)

The students were asked how often they visit the library. Table 9 shows that majority 63 (39.87%) of them visit once in a week and 60 (37.98%) of the stdents rarely visit the library. Only 21 (13.29%) visit once in a day and at the same time 14 (8.86%)

visit once in a month. The number of students who visit the library daily is very less. This may be due to lack of time or the library does not provide materials of interest to the students and also reading text book alone provide necessary information to the students.

Table 10: Reasons for not visiting the library often

Reasons for not visiting the library regularly	
Not required to use the library or its services	15 (9.49%)
Don't enjoy reading	5 (3.16%)
Buy what I read	26 (16.46%)
Libraries are too difficult to use	17 (10.76%)
Never open when I need them	30 (18.99%)
Don't have time	29 (18.35%)

Table 10 gives an idea about the reasons for not visiting the library by students. 30 (18.99%) mentioned that libraries were not opened when they need it. Where as 29 (18.35 %) felt that they had no time to visit the library and 26 (16.46%) buy what they read. 17 (10.76%) of the students consider it was difficult to use the library and at same time 15 (9.49%) felt that it was not required to use the library or its services and only 5 (3.16%) do not enjoy reading. If the library is kept open during break time students may get time to visit the library. Many of the students may be interested only to read their text book to pass the exams rather than reading other materials to improve their knowledge. Students should be taught in information literacy so that it will be easy for them to understand the way documents are organized in the library and make use of it in more better way.

Table 11: Importance of library

Importance of library for personal and school work	
Very important- can't do without them	57 (36.08%)
Somewhat important- only use occasionally	94 (59.49%)
Not important – never use them	8 (5.06%)

Table 11 clearly expresses the importance of library for personal and school work. 94 (59.49%) of the respondents considered library as some what important and only use occasionally. Where as 57 (36.08%) opined that libraries were very important and cannot do without them. Only 8 (5.0%) felt it is not important and never used the libraries. There is a need to create awareness among students about the value of school library. Instead of textbook based learning the students should be encouraged to seek information from the library for assignments and other school works. This will make them more dependable on library resources.

Table 12: Currency of information found in the library

Information found in the library are -	
Up to date	41 (25.95%)
Too old	75 (47.47%)
Undecided	42 (26.58%)

Table 12 reveals about the currency of information found in the library. According 75 (47.47%) felt that the information found in the libraries were too old. Where as 41 (2.95%) mentioned that the information found are upto date and the remaining 42 (26.58%) were undecided about the information found in the libraries. School libraries should equip themselves with current information otherwise students may not have any interest in using school libraries.

Pensylvania State Board of Education (2011) mentioned that the number of items in a collection is important in determining if there are sufficient resources for students; the types of resources included in the collection are important for representation of different kinds of information as well as appeal to different types of students and the currency of the resources is important in determining their usefulness. According to Guidelines, titles should be “useful,” meaning current, accurate and meeting student needs. The Guidelines recommend that the average age of the book collection not exceed 10 years. More than three-fourths of libraries report

total book collections with an average copyright age within the past twenty-five years(Guidelines for Pennsylvania School Library Programs, 2011)

Table 13: Performance rating of the library

Rating the performance of the library	
Excellent	12 (7.6%)
Good	87 (55.06%)
Poor	35 (22.15%)
Very poor	24 (15.19%)

The respondents were asked to rate the performance of the library. Here 87 (55.06%) felt it is good and 35 (22.15%) rated the performance of the library as poor and 24 (15.19%) rated as very poor. Only 12 (7.6%) mentioned it as excellent. Unless and until the school libraries provide to its users with current information and also better services the users may not be happy.

Table 14: Rating the library based on facilities

Library facilities and the user opinion	Excellent	Average	Poor
Facilities (tables, chairs, climate, attractiveness)	70 (44.30%)	56 (35.44%)	32 (20.25%)
Accessibility (hours, pass system)	17 (10.76%)	97 (61.39%)	44 (27.85%)
Assistance provided by library staff	27 (17.09)	69 (43.67%)	62 (39.24%)
Collection (books, magazines, online, audio visuals)	27 (17.09%)	76 (48.10%)	55 (34.81%)

In table 14 the respondents' rating regarding different facilities available in the school libraries are shown. 70 (44.30 %) rated the the furnitures and other environment in the library is excellent. 97 (61.39%) felt that working hours and pass system used by the libraries were average. 69 (43.67%) rated assistance provided by library staff were average and 76 (48.10%) of the respondents rated the collections in the libraries were average. Except for the facilities such as tables, chairs, climate etc all other facilities are rated average. These too reveal that there is a need for improving the facilities in the libraries.

Table 15: Rating the library services

Opinion regarding Library services	
Adequate for my needs	11 (6.96%)
Very helpful/knowledgeable	33 (20.89%)
Good	46 (29.11%)
Need improvement	32 (20.25%)
Poor	28 (17.72%)
Very poor	8 (5.06%)

The respondents were asked to rate the services in the libraries. 46 (29.11%) mentioned it as good and 33 (20.89%) opined that it was very helpful. At the same time 32 (20.25%) feel that there was a need to improve library services.

Here those who said there was a need to improve the library services were asked to mention what type of improvement they expect. Most of the respondents expressed that there is a need to get new and recent documents in the library, space problem should be solved and also to provide internet access in the school libraries.

The respondents who rated the library services as very poor were asked why it is very poor? They explained that library timing and also the documents which were available in the library were not good.

Table 16: Simplicity of check in and check out system

Simplicity of Material Check in Check out system	
Yes	50 (31.65%)
No	69 (43.67%)
Haven't checked out any materials	39 (24.68%)

Table 16 clearly shows the opinion of the respondents about the check and check out system in the libraries. 50 (31.66%) felt the material check in and check out system was simple and at the same 69 (43.67%) did not agree with it. 39 (24.68%) of the respondents never checked out any materials from the library. This may be due to the poor collection in the school libraries and students do not feel the documents are good enough to take home for reading.

Table 17: Satisfaction regarding library hour

Library hour and user satisfaction	
Yes	57 (36.08%)
No	101 (63.92%)

Table 17 reveals about the respondents satisfaction regarding library hour and it clearly shows that more than half of the respondents are not satisfied with the library hour. In almost all school libraries are kept open during the class time and if there is no library hour in the class schedule libraries are not accessible to the students. Study conducted by Spreadbury, H and Spiller, D. (1999) shows that there are problems about access to school libraries, since many pupils only have opportunities to visit during breaks and lunch hours, and at both times there are other attractions – not least, the need to eat. The problems are compounded by the minimal staffing of many school libraries. Only 28% of pupils were happy with the existing opening hours.

Table 18: Locations where the students look for information other than the school library

Other locations used by the students to find information	
Public library	37 (23.42%)
Home	45 (28.48%)
Friends	40 (25.32%)
Other	36 (22.78%)

Table 18 shows that the respondents use any location to find information other than the school library. 45 (28.48%) of the students find information from their home itself and 40 (25.32%) depends on their friends to get information. Whereas 37 (23.42%) make use of public library and only 36 (22.78%) used other locations. As the school library is not accessible at other times students may use their home to study. Do they have a library at home or are they just studying from the text book or are they have access to internet at home is not sure.

Those who used other location were asked to mention about the other source and most of the respondents said that they use internet to gather information. Some students may having internet facility at home and others may be using from internet cafe.

Suggestions given by the respondents

The researcher was asked the student repondents to give their suggestions to improve the library and the responses were -

- Update the library with new books and journals
- The number of volumes should be increased to meet the needs of the students
- Provide library hour so that students will have time to make use of the libraries
- Keep the library open during the lunch break and also on Saturdays
- Avoid using library for other purposes like staff room.
- Internet access should be provided in the libraries.
- Students should be given training in using the library.

Findings of the study

Findings are drawn from the analysis of the data collected from the students. Which are as follows:

- 40% of the schools are lacking libraries.
- 66.67% of the School libraries are managed by untrained personnels and the remaining 33.33% has only diploma or some short training.
- There are no proper record keeping and also registers are not kept in most of the school libraries.
- School libraries do not have proper organization of materials. 60% of the school libraries do not use any Classification schemes. Remaining 40% school libraries the documents were partially classified.

- Catalogues are not prepared for the documents in the libraries .
- Open access is not provided in almost 66.67% of the school libraries.
- Library hour is included in the class schedule only 33.33% of the schools under study.
- Book lending services were provided in 50% of the school libraries.
- Library activities were not automated and also no internet facilities available in any of the school libraries.
- Majority of the students (61.39%) make use of the library for assignments, study and for examinations.
- Students visit to the library is mostly once in a week (39.87%) or rare (37.98%).
- The main reasons for not using the library was due to lack of time and also the library was not opened when the students needed it.
- 59.49% of the students feel that the libraries were some what important for them,
- 47.47% of the respondents felt that the materials available in the libraries were too old.
- The overall performance of the libraries are good but on the basis of facilities they are average.
- The services given by the libraries too were not that satisfactory.
- The users (62.92) were not satisfied with the library working hour.
- Many students are making use of other services outside the library for information mainly home, friends, internet cafe and public libraries.

Recommendations

Depending upon the findings following recommendations are given by the researcher.

- Policy makers in the country should make sure that every school in the country should have a well equipped library.
- The authorities should appoint professional staff in the school libraries. School librarian should have at least BSc degree in Information science. That will help them to organize the library in a better way and to retrieve the information to meet the needs of the user community.
- The school librarians should prepare proper record of the documents available in the library. Accession register should be maintained in the library which will help to know the number of documents available.
- Librarians should organize the documents by making use of classification schemes and also catalogue should be maintained for the easy retrieval and access to information.
- Open access method should be followed and that will help the users to find the documents in their feild of study.
- There is a need to weed out the old and worn out materials from the library and at the same time to make the collection good to meet the needs of the users.
- Library should be kept open not only at the school hours but also whenever the students are free.
- School library services should be improved and also there is a need to create awareness among the school children about the importance of the library. Use of library should be encouraged by the teachers.
- There should be proper environment in the library and also good facilities like internet.

Conclusion

On the whole school libraries plays an important role in the teaching and learning. It supports the lifelong learning activities and in developing reading habits among the school children. It helps the students to develop their strength and pursue their aspirations. It is the duty of the school authorities to encourage the young children and show interest in their academic, social and personal attitudes. To achieve this aim the school children should be directed in the right path. Libraries can provide knowledge to the young minds and show them how to reach out to their goals and attain their dreams. Even in the right choice of career libraries can assist the user community. Modern educational system calls for a shift from what teachers teach to focus on what student learn. Even though it encourages lifelong learning it does not have systematic program in using the libraries for self development and growth. In developed countries school libraries empower the children in their overall development. Developing countries like Ethiopia has a long way to travel to achieve this goal.

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