Secondary School Library Resource Centres in Tanzania: their status in Resource-Based Learning

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Abstract

The article examines the status of secondary school library resource centres in resource-based learning in eight districts of Njombe and Iringa regions of Tanzania. The study is grounded in the vital role of secondary school resource centres in providing infrastructure, information resources, technology and professional expertise to enable teachers and learners to effectively use the resources and services to foster resource-based learning and consequently improve the quality of education secondary school learners receive. The study used a pragmatic paradigm with a survey design. The results of the study reveal that the status of most secondary school resource centres is on the whole dismal. Very few secondary schools have functional resource centres. In order for School Library Resource Centres to contribute to resource-based learning and quality education, the study recommends that the government must make School Library Resource Centres a priority and provide them with the necessary human, infrastructural and financial support. A mechanism should be in place to reinforce the implementation of the Education and Training Policy of 2014 and the Education (School Library Resource Centres) Regulations of 2002.

Keywords

School library resource centres, status of school libraries, policy and legal framework for school libraries, staffing for school libraries, school library collection development, and Resource-based learning.

Introduction

The education sector in Tanzania has undergone radical reforms aimed at expanding access to education and the provision of quality education as the key overall reform objective (Sumra and Rajani,

2006). Access to and provision of quality education is essentially dependent on availability and access to teaching and learning materials. The provision of resources is a major portion of providing a decent education. A key component of the proposed educational reform calls for the establishment of school library resource centres (SLRCs) to give all teachers and learners access to materials that would enhance their teaching and learning experiences. Kargbo (2000) asserts that functional and effective school library programmes are potent factors in providing quality education. School libraries are learning support system pillars in schools to enhance the quality of education that learners receive. The increasing demand for secondary school constructivist student-centred learning (SCL), in which the provision of information resources becomes central to the education process, requires that secondary schools have in place functional libraries.

Given the Government of Tanzania's recognition of the centrality of SLRCs in the learning process and its importance to the educational system, the Education Act of 1978 (as revised in 2002) and the Education (SLRC) Regulations of 2002 were enacted. The Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 1995 was also formulated and a new policy of 2014 developed to lay down the functions of and guidelines for establishing and managing the SLRCs. This was done to formalize the significant role the SLRCs play in the education process in the country. The Education (SLRC) Regulations of 2002 require every school to have a well-resourced library resource centre, managed by a professional librarian. The regulations stipulate the function of the resource centre to be:

- providing support for curricular work and acting as an instructional tool;
- providing support, organization and maintenance of technical equipment for the school;
- providing opportunities for teachers and learners to learn how to use the relevant educational materials, and training in the exploitation of the facilities of a resource centre;

- providing a comprehensive collection of learning materials in different formats, so as to satisfy educational and informational needs and supplementary materials;
- facilitating consultation by the teaching staff on how to select the appropriate materials to achieve their instructional objectives;
- stimulating independent study, developing initiative and creative skills; and
- helping incorporate members of the community into the cultural life of the school (URT, 2002, Section 4)

Context and Scope of the Study

The study focusses on secondary school resource centres in Njombe and Iringa regions, Tanzania. Njombe region was formed in 2012 from Iringa region. The regions (Njombe and Iringa) are located in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania. Iringa region has four administrative districts: Iringa urban, Iringa rural, Mufindi and Kilolo. Njombe has five administrative districts: Njombe urban, Njombe rural, Makete, Ludewa and Wanging'ombe. At the time of the study, Wanging'ombe district was not well established and so the management of secondary schools in the district were done by the Njombe rural education department.

The education and training in Tanzania is undertaken by several ministries, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), communities and individuals. However, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) has the legal mandate for policy formulation, coordination, monitoring, setting standards, quality assurance and quality control of the whole education system (URT,1995). The MoEVT has a school inspectorate unit that ensures adherence to the set policy, laws, regulations and standards of the education system by owners of schools. The Tanzania Institute of Education is responsible for curriculum development. The Institute prepares the programmes, syllabi and pedagogical materials such as handbooks and laboratory manuals (UNESCO-IBE, 2010/2011). The Local Government Authorities (districts, towns, municipal and city councils), through

the District Education Officers (DEOs) for secondary schools, assume full responsibility for the management and delivery of education services within their areas of competence. To meet the education goals of the country, the focus of the secondary school curriculum is competence based. The syllabi emphasize a learner-centred approach of teaching and learning with the view of enhancing participatory methods of learning. A learner-centred curriculum requires a synergy of all the key educational elements including a state-of the-art resource centre, laboratory, infrastructure and qualified teachers (Kafumu, 2010; UNESCO-IBE, 2010/11). The Education (School Library Resource Centres) Regulations of 2002 stipulate that every school shall engage a full-time, qualified librarian to manage the Resource Centre (URT, 2002). While Library and Information Studies (LIS) education in Tanzania is offered in several institutions, none of these institutions offer school library education as a professional programme. Instead they offer school librarianship as a course within a broad spectrum of LIS courses for certificate, diploma, bachelor and master's programmes. Teachers' education, according to the syllabus, focusses on the development of basic skills in understanding of the subject matter to be taught and inculcating pedagogical skills and competence to be able to teach in a learner-centred approach (Kafumu, 2010). Teachers' education with respect to the role of LIS is rarely emphasized for it is not part of the syllabus.

Statement of the Problem
Libraries are hubs for any learning environment, be it an elementary school or university. The SLRCs are critical to participating fully in supporting teaching and learning and facilitating access to information to enable learners to develop their individual potential. A critical look at the ETP of 1995 and 2014, the Education (SLRC) Regulations 2002, and the implementation of the first phase of Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP) 2004 to 2009 demonstrate that SLRCs are an important part of school life. Furthermore, SLRCs are required in secondary schools to allow learners to reach their full potential. Evidence indicates that learners do better when they have access to a library and use it (Newman,

2003). However, personal observations of the school system in Tanzania show that SLRCs are not doing well; their value in most schools is not clearly understood and their role in the learning process is undermined. Often school libraries are not considered important by school administrators and teachers, even though significant literature on their value exists (Hart & Zinn, 2007). The status of school libraries suggests that not much attention and priority has been placed on the development of SLRCs. The general objective of the study upon which this article is based was to explore the status of secondary school library resource centres in resource-based learning in Iringa and Njombe regions of Tanzania. With this general objective, the specific objectives were, first, to determine the status of school libraries in terms of infrastructure. Second, to explore the status of staffing in school libraries. Third, to find out the status in terms of use and services offered in school libraries. Fourth, to determine the status regarding the information resources. It was assumed that the study would reveal the status of secondary SLRCs in resource-based learning (RBL). The understanding of the status of secondary SLRCs in RBL is fundamental when gauging whether school libraries are instrumental in the educational process.

Policy and Legal Framework for SLRCs in Tanzania
The former Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 1995, the Education Act of 1978, and the Education (SLRC) Regulations (2002) form the basis for the establishment and management of SLRCs in Tanzania. The first ETP of 1995 was formulated to respond to shortcomings inherent in the provision of quality education. It was adopted to provide education that is responsive to the challenges of the day and suitable for the 21st century. Since its adoption in 1995, the policy had been a road map for achieving sufficient and effective education and training in the country. The policy was thought to be capable of guiding, synchronizing and harmonizing all structures, plans and practices; and ensuring access, equity and quality of education provision at all levels. It was also considered a proper and efficient mechanism for the management, administration and financing of education and training (URT 1995: xiii-xiv). In

recognition of the importance of SLRCs in enhancing quality education, the ETP of 1995 states that 'every secondary school shall have a library, adequate stock of books, well trained and competent library personnel' (URT 1995, p. 43). The current ETP of 2014 was a result of improvement and finally removal of all previous educational policies (URT, 2014). Unfortunately, the new ETP of 2014 does not have decisive statements on the provision of school libraries.

The enactment of the Education Act 1978 as amended in 1995 and revised in 2002, the development of the Education (SLRC) Regulations 2002, and the Secondary Education Development Programmes (SEDP) I 2004-2009 (URT, 2004) and II 2010-2015 (URT, 2010) were efforts to activate the policy. They were also important initiatives to address the emerging challenges in the education provision, and manage the implementation of the policy demands. These efforts indicate the willingness of the government to refurbish the secondary education provision and improve the state of secondary education in the country. The Education (SLRC) Regulations of 2002 specify that the funding for SLRCs should be done by the owners of schools through gifts, loans, fees, and grants (URT, 2002). For public schools, in addition to the funding mode described above, the capitation grants are provided by the district governments of which 50% is for teaching and learning materials (SLRCs).

The 2002 Education (SLRC) Regulations have been prepared on the basis of best practices and in line with the IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto (2000) and School Library Guidelines (2002), to underline the Education Act 1978 and ensure appropriate development and management of the SLRCs (URT, 2002). The Education (SLRC) Regulations give directives and guidelines on how to manage the SLRCs in Tanzania. The Education (SLRC) Regulations 2002 are a huge step forward in the development of school libraries in the country. However, the regulations are rarely used because not all schools have libraries and those with libraries are in a lamentable state (Mgina & Lwehabura, 2011). The SEDP I was a major step

towards improving the quality of education. Some of the quality aspects of education include having adequate and appropriate teaching and learning materials in all schools and training librarians to manage schools and college libraries (URT, 2004). A review made of the SEDP I implementation has shown that the programme was successful in equity and access of secondary education (URT, 2010). But, crucially, there appears to be significant shortfalls in the implementation of the quality scenarios of the programme. Specifically, the secondary school library facilities continued to dwindle despite the implementation of the SEDP I (Ntulo & Nawe, 2008; Mgina & Lwehabura, 2011). The development of SEDP II can best be described as another attempt to redress the implementation shortcomings of its predecessor SEDP I. Nevertheless, my experience as education stakeholder shows that since 2010 nothing substantial has been implemented regarding school library development. This situation may lead to the conclusion that despite the ETP and the Education Act 1978 being the frameworks for the establishment of SLRCs in Tanzania, their implementation through the regulations and development programmes has remained a challenge due to a deficit of human and financial resources and lack of political will.

Review of Related Literature
This section aims at putting the study in context and providing an integrated overview of the field of research (Plowright, 2011). This section covers the status of SLRCs in Tanzania and other countries in Africa regarding infrastructure, staffing, and collection development.

School Library Infrastructure
The SLRC needs to have a dedicated building for its services. It should for convenience be located where it is easily accessible by the learners, teachers and communities who would like to use it. It needs to be accessible by everyone including people with disabilities. The size of the SLRC should be determined by the number of users and current and future planned activities in it (Healthlink Worldwide, 2003; Morris, 2010). In resource-based learning (RBL), the library facility is essential for it provides learners and teachers with adequate

teaching and learning materials, equipment used for instructional programmes and flexible space for learning in all aspects of the school curriculum. Most studies point to the centrality of infrastructure and equipment to effectively operate and manage school libraries in Africa (Ajegbomogun & Salaam 2011; Akporhonor, 2005; Hart & Zinn, 2007). A study by Ntulo and Nawe (2008) shows that the school library services in Tanzania do not meet teaching and learning needs due to inadequate, among other things, space and furniture. The same situation was observed ten years back by Rosenberg (1998) whose findings revealed that government-owned secondary and primary schools in Tanzania had no libraries and those that had were almost non-functional. The few existing school libraries were owned by private organizations.

Mgina and Lwehabura (2011) study in the Dodoma region of Tanzania portrays a similar status of school libraries. The study explicitly indicates that there are no decisive efforts to improve the poor conditions of school libraries in the areas of infrastructural development and equipment. Research done by Ajegbomogun and Salaam (2011) on the state of school libraries in Nigeria show that libraries face many problems ranging from declining financial support from the government to inadequate infrastructure and equipment. In the same vein, the World Bank (2008, p. 72) observes a "lack of adequate library premises, which were usually just converted classrooms with insufficient space, shelving, furniture, equipment or security" in francophone countries. A dedicated building for library services is essential to house the equipment, facilities, furniture and space for library staff and users. The location of the building for library services, the design and layout attract users to the library. The IFLA/UNESCO School Library Guidelines (2002, p. 6), emphasising the importance of location and space of SLRCs, state:

> *The strong educational role of the school library must be reflected in the facilities, furniture and equipment. It is of vital importance that the function and use of the school library is incorporated when planning new school buildings and reorganizing existing ones.*

In view of the reviewed literature, particularly that of African studies; one may conclude that the status of school libraries regarding infrastructure and equipment is on the whole gloomy. In the light of this situation, the role of SLRCs in supporting teaching and learning becomes obscured and hence the quality of education is undermined. The bottom line is that a lack of purpose-built SLRCs buildings or absence thereof suggests that the role of school libraries in RBL in the African context is undermined.

Staffing for School Libraries
Most African countries are moving from teacher-centred learning to learner-centred learning (Kafumu, 2010). This mode of teaching and learning requires not only adequate availability of multiple formats of teaching and learning resources but also qualified school librarians to support the learning process. Having a professional school librarian to manage a school library is a must. Morris (2010) points out that school library staff are the basis for a dynamic and effective library and the mainstay of a library programme. The primary role of the school librarian is thus to ensure that the SLRC is an integral part of the curriculum of the school and assumes the role as teacher, instructional partner, information specialist and library programme administrator (Morris, 2010; Woolls, 2010).

In contrast to what is most desired and recommended, in most African countries, the status of staffing for school libraries is a concern. Some studies suggest that the situation is relatively promising in high-cost privately owned schools, where school libraries employ qualified librarians with competitive salaries (Rosenberg, 1998; Otike, 2004). Otherwise, staffing is a great problem. Many schools are run by inadequately trained people and relatively few professional librarians with certificates and/or diplomas in library science (Mgina & Lwehabura, 2011). Poor staffing or staffing a school library with unqualified personnel has a detrimental impact on the use of school libraries and their resources. This is due to the fact that in RBL, where the resources are central to learning, such staff will

not be able to assist teachers and learners to utilize the resources and services of the library. This is because they are not equipped with the requisite education and expertise to fulfil such a responsibility (Ajegbomogun & Salaam, 2011). In the 1990s, this very point was stressed by Bawa (1996) as she says, by not having enough qualified librarians, the work of facilitating and integrating the resources and the curriculum effectively would be halted. The importance of school libraries having appropriate staff to manage the resource centre and offer programmes that are responsive to learners' needs is further stressed by IFLA (2002, p.11) in IFLA/UNESCO's school library guidelines:

> *The richness and quality of the library provision depend upon staffing and resources available within and beyond the school library. For this reason, it is of paramount importance to have a well-trained and highly motivated staff, made up of a sufficient number of members according to the size of the school and its special needs for library services.*

The unsatisfactory staffing conditions in SLRCs in Africa make school libraries fail to support the curricular needs of schools and supporting teaching and learning. In RBL, qualified librarians are a prerequisite not only for effective collection development but also for assisting in the curriculum development, and provision of instructional programmes aimed at learners' information skills development. A professional librarian is the mainstay for engaging learners with resources and assisting teachers in accessing information resources and teaching aids that would enhance teaching and learning. A professional librarian in a school environment is a vital link between learners and teachers and resources. The absence of professional school librarians in secondary schools where RBL is the focus means compromising the quality of education.

School Library Collection Development
School libraries are not just good-looking buildings with staff therein. The beauty and usefulness of school libraries are demonstrated by

adequate and accessible information resources contained in them and user-centred programmes and services. An appropriate, comprehensive collection is one of the attributes that contributes to quality services in any type of library. The collection needs to be balanced in terms of grade level, subject areas, and formats to meet the needs of all users, not just some. The collection and the format should aim at meeting the needs of all users within the school (Healthlink Worldwide, 2003; Simba, 2006).

According to Ajegbomogun and Salaam (2011), the majority of African school libraries have empty book shelves. Where books are available, they are foreign, outdated and irrelevant to the information needs of the learners. Such libraries are considered as warehouses for old books covered with dust. A study by Hoskins (2006b) also revealed that school libraries in KwaZulu-Natal did not provide a wide range of resources, both print and non-print. Emphasizing the poor state of school library collections in Africa, the World Bank (2008, p. 72) in its working paper highlights that:

> *Where library stock exists, it is generally old and often irrelevant to current curricula and teacher/learner interests. More often than not there is virtually no appropriate stock available at all and there are rarely budgets for stock upgrading or replenishment.*

School libraries are seen as a potential place for children to develop the habit of reading and perhaps eliminate illiteracy (Dent, 2006) and support child-centred learning (Magara & Nyumba, 2004). With most school library collections being obsolete (Adeyemi, 2010) the purpose of the creation of libraries in schools is defeated by the poor collection. This state of affairs makes school libraries marginal to the teaching and learning process. Schools are better placed for children in their early years to develop a culture of reading and acquire literacy skills, especially where there is no tradition of reading in the home. However, when school libraries are underfunded, inadequately staffed and poorly stocked, it cannot be expected that

children will develop a love of reading (Anderson & Matthew, 2010). It is unfortunate that the situation is further exacerbated by the dwindling budgets of schools due to government failure to provide funds for school library development (Magara & Batambuze, 2009).

RBL demands that SLRCs have in place adequate and curriculum based print and non-print information resources and qualified human resources. It is the resources and facilities that are capable of supporting learning and enhancing active involvement in the learning process by learners. Schools that are inadequately stocked with reading and learning materials of various formats, or schools that have irrelevant and obsolete materials for learning, end up not meeting the demands of the resource-based curricula. Undoubtedly, the education of the learners would be undermined.

Methodology

The current study used a mixed method approach to exploit the insights and strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods and thus increase the overall confidence in the findings of the study (Ngulube, 2010). A cross-sectional descriptive survey design was employed to investigate the status of secondary SLRCs in resource-based learning in Njombe and Iringa regions. Four districts from each of the region were included in the study. The districts for Iringa region were Iringa urban and rural, Kilolo and Mufindi. Njombe region had the following districts: Njombe urban and rural, Makete and Ludewa. These regions and districts were chosen because they had all categories of schools and they had schools located in urban, semi urban and rural areas. The descriptive survey design was instrumental to describe and portray an accurate profile of the problem under investigation (Connaway & Powell, 2010) and thus served as a direct source of valuable knowledge (Singh, 2006). A stratified sampling technique was used to draw 148 participants from a population of 245 heads of schools. The population and the sample sizes for each stratum are shown in Table 1 below. Seminary schools are non-government schools but in this study are placed into different

stratum from non-government schools because it is believed that they are better placed in terms of library facility.

Table 1: Population and sample size of heads of secondary schools

District	Government		Community		Non-Government		Seminary		Totals	
	Population	Sample	Population	Sample	Population	Sample	Population	Sample	Population	Sample
Iringa Urban	2	1	10	6	12	7	1	1	**25**	**15**
Iringa Rural	3	2	24	15	4	2	-	-	**31**	**19**
Kilolo	-	-	24	15	10	6	-	-	**34**	**21**
Mufindi	1	1	43	26	6	4	3	1	**53**	**32**
Njombe Urban	1	0	12	7	13	8	1	1	**27**	**16**
Njombe Rural	-	-	31	18	5	3	1	1	**37**	**22**
Makete	-	-	16	10	2	1	-	-	**18**	**11**
Ludewa	-	-	18	11	2	1	-	-	**20**	**12**
Totals	**7**	**4**	**178**	**107**	**54**	**33**	**6**	**4**	**245**	**148**

Source: Researcher 2020

Of 148 heads of schools from community, government, private and seminary secondary schools surveyed, 140 completed the questionnaires yielding a high response rate of 94.6%. A census was used to draw District Education Officers (DEO) for secondary schools. All eight DEO for secondary schools from eight districts were interviewed. Two data collection instruments, semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire were used to collect data to answer the research question. Prior to the administration of the instruments to the sample population, they were peer reviewed and pre-tested to ensure clarity of instructions, layout of questions. The process helped also to identifying ambiguous and unclear questions, determining if relevant questions had been omitted, eliminating difficult questions for respondents, and collecting comments from the respondents (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). As a result of the pre-test, changes were made to the questions. While the self-administered questionnaires were directed to the heads of secondary schools, the

semi-structured interviews were orally administered to DEOs for secondary schools. The qualitative data were analysed using content analysis. The data collected were reviewed and preliminary codes were assigned to the data in order to describe the content. Patterns or themes in the codes across the data were sought. The themes were reviewed, defined and named. For numerical data the analysis was done using descriptive statistics to describe and summarize data.

The Results and Discussion of the Survey
This section discusses the findings from the cross-sectional descriptive survey design.

A General Condition of SLRCs
A sample of 140 heads of secondary schools drawn from all categories of schools for the study was asked to indicate whether they had a SLRC. A high percentage of heads, 87 (62.1%), indicated that their schools had no library resource centres and 53 (37.9%) indicated that they had. The results further showed that a majority of community secondary schools (80; 57.1%) had no library resource centres, and private secondary schools had the highest number of schools with libraries (26; 18.6%). The number of schools without libraries is alarming, suggesting that SLRCs in Iringa and Njombe regions are not prioritized. Further questions asked to the heads of secondary schools without SLRCs included: reasons for not having SLRC; about any plan to set up a school library; and how soon did they intend to set up the library. Table 2 indicates the results.

Table 2: Reasons for not having a SLRC and a plan to set it up
N=87

Statement	Response	Category of school				Total
		Com	**Gov**	**Priv**	**Sem**	
Reason for not having a SLRC	Not a priority	2	0	0	0	2
	Inadequate funds	77	1	6	0	84
	Under construction	1	0	0	0	1
Do you have a plan to set up a SLRC?	Yes	77	1	6	0	84
	No	3	0	0	0	3
How soon do you intend to Set up a SLRC?	Starting this year	2	0	0	0	2
	When funds are available	66	1	4	0	71
	Next year	4	0	2	0	6
	I do not know	8	0	0	0	8

Key: Com - Community; Gov - Government; Priv – Private; Sem - Seminary

Of 87 respondents, 84 (96.6%) indicated that the reason for not having SLRCs was inadequate funds; a majority of them were community schools (77; 88.5%). Two (2.3%) heads indicated that a SLRC was not a priority. A total of 84 (96.6%) respondents were planning to set up a school library and only three (3.4%) had no plan to set up a school library. The findings further indicate that 71 (81.6%) respondents were planning to set up a school library when funds were made available and 8 (9.2%) respondents did not know. Given that the major constraint facing schools is inadequate funds, secondary schools' plans to set up SLRCs when funds are made available are unrealistic.

Status of SLRCs Regarding Infrastructure and Equipment
Three questions were asked to heads of secondary schools with libraries. The questions focused on the status of SLRCs in terms of the type of a SLRC, furniture and equipment that facilitated access to information. Table 3 reflects the results.

Table 3: Status of SLRCs regarding infrastructure and equipment
N=53

Statement	Response	Category of school				Total
		Com	Gov	Priv	Sem	
Type of a school library	Purpose built	6	3	16	3	28
	Classroom	12	0	6	0	18
	Storage	1	0	3	1	5
	Teacher's office	1	0	1	0	2
The SLRC has all furniture for users, staff, shelving and displays	Strongly agree	1	0	3	1	5
	Agree	10	1	17	3	31
	No opinion	0	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	9	2	5	0	16
	Strongly disagree	0	0	1	0	1
The SLRC has computers, TV set photocopiers, Videos and printers	Strongly agree	0	0	1	0	1
	Agree	2	0	5	3	10
	No opinion	1	0	2	1	4
	Disagree	9	2	14	0	25
	Strongly disagree	8	1	4	0	13

Infrastructure such as library buildings, furniture and equipment are prerequisites for the provision of school library services in secondary schools. The findings indicate a few of schools with libraries: (28; 52.8%), had purpose-built libraries with space for library staff, users, shelving and other services, and 18 (34%) used classrooms as libraries to keep books and provide learners with reading space. Also, the findings indicate that private schools (16; 30.2%), had more purpose-built libraries than other categories. A few respondents (31; 58.5%), agreed that the library had all the required furniture. The findings further show that the largest proportion of respondents (38; 71.7%), either disagreed or strongly disagreed that their libraries had equipment such as computers, printers, photocopiers, video machines and televisions to facilitate library services. 11; 20.8% of the

respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that their libraries had such equipment to facilitate library services. This study argues that the use of classrooms, teachers' offices and stores for libraries do not conform to the requirements for libraries and cannot house all library services required for learners and teachers in secondary schools. It is clear that the use of these structures contravenes the Education (SLRC) Regulations 2002 which require that every school library to be established in premises exclusively set aside and designed for such purposes (URT, 2002). This practice hampers the effective operation and management of the school library and undermines RBL in secondary schools. Lack of essential equipment such as computers, printers, photocopiers, video machines and televisions in most schools implies that school libraries are lagging behind as far as technology is concerned. This prevents learners from engaging with technology and accessing information in diverse formats.

Status of SLRCs Regarding Staffing
The heads of secondary schools were asked three questions regarding staffing for SLRCs. Table 4 below shows the respondents' description of the type, number and qualifications of staff managing the SLRCs.

Table 4: Status of SLRCs regarding staffing for SLRCs N=53

Statement	Response	Category of school				Total
		Com	Gov	Priv	Sem	
Who manages a SLRC?	Full time Teacher-librarian	1	0	0	1	2
	School librarian	3	2	12	2	19
	Teacher chosen by school	14	1	11	0	26
	Temporary employee	2	0	1	1	4
	Staff other than a teacher	0	0	2	0	2
Number of staff working in a SLRC	One staff	16	3	19	3	41
	Two staff	4	0	7	1	12
	Three	0	0	0	0	0

	More than three	0	0	0	0	0
Qualification of staff working in a SLRC	No library qualification	14	0	12	1	27
	Elementary in LIS	6	2	8	1	17
	Certificate in LIS	0	1	6	2	9
	Diploma in LIS	0	0	0	0	0
	Bachelor in LIS	0	0	0	0	0

School libraries are vital educational institutions, requiring an appropriate management system to enable them to achieve the goals for which they were established. The success of school library services or programmes, regardless of how well designed, depends on the quality and number of staff responsible for such programmes (American Association of School Libraries, 2005). Morris (2010) asserts that library staff are the basis for a dynamic and effective library and mainstay of a library programme. Secondary school libraries need to have in place a well-educated professional librarian to manage the library and deliver quality service to users. In the same spirit, the Education (SLRC) Regulations of 2002, in recognition of the importance of staffing the school library, state that every school library should engage a full-time qualified library staff to [man] the resource centre (URT, 2002).

Contrary to the regulations, the findings revealed that of 53 heads, 26 (49.1%) indicated that their school libraries were managed by teachers chosen by schools and allocated some hours to manage libraries. 19 (35.8%) heads of schools stated that their school libraries were managed by school librarians. The majority of school librarians, 12 (63.2%), were from private schools. The findings also show that a majority of SLRCs, 41 (77.4%), had only one staff member and 12 (22.6%) had two staff members. A few of heads, 27 (50.9%), described the qualification of persons working in the school library as having no library qualifications. Seventeen (32.1%) had elementary studies in Library Science, and 9 (17%) had a certificate in Library Science. The findings show that no staff held a Bachelor or Diploma in Library

Science. Therefore, many SLRCs were managed by unqualified staff and their number in every library does not suffice. Low library qualifications among staff, and the shortage of library staff working in the school libraries are arguably indicators that schools accord a low priority to libraries and that library services are considered unimportant in secondary schools. Secondary school libraries require knowledgeable, skilled and enthusiastic staff to ensure that they remain integral to the education process (Morris, 2010).

Status of SLRCs regarding the use of SLRCs and services offered
Four questions were asked concerning the users, extent of use by the students, days the SLRCs were opened, and services offered. Table 5 provides the results.

Table 5: The use of a SLRC and services offered
N=53

Statement	Response	Category of school				Total
		Com	Gov	Priv	Sem	
Users of a SLRC	Students	0	0	1	0	1
	Teachers and students	19	3	25	3	50
	School community and others	1	0	0	1	2
Extent of use of SLRC by students	Not at all	0	0	1	0	1
	Used occasionally	3	0	2	0	5
	Used moderately	12	2	14	1	29
	Excellently used	5	1	8	3	17
	Not sure	0	0	1	0	1
Days a SLRC is opened per week	Once per week	0	0	1	0	1
	Twice per week	1	0	0	0	1
	Three days per week	1	0	0	0	1
	Four days per week	1	0	1	1	3
	Every working day	17	3	24	3	47
Services offered (multiple response)	Lending	18	3	26	3	50
	Reference	13	1	19	4	37
	User education	0	1	8	3	12
	Audio-visual	1	0	1	1	3
	Computer (Internet) access	1	0	0	1	2

The main objective of a school library is to enhance information access and improve the learning process for learners (Morris, 2010). Therefore, school libraries are critical institutions to facilitate RBL by not only collecting materials of various formats to support the curriculum, but also in making them available and accessible to learners and teachers through library information services and the provision of user education. Of the 53 respondents, 50 (94.3%) from all categories of schools responded that the school library was mostly used by teachers and learners. Regarding the extent of use, while twenty-nine (54.7%) of respondents indicated that the school library was used moderately, 17 (32.1%) indicated that the library was well used. Regarding the number of days their school libraries operated per week, the findings indicated that 40 (88.7%) responded that libraries were opened every working day and three (5.7%) said they were opened four days per week. The results further indicated that the services that were mostly offered by school libraries were lending, 50 (94.3%), and reference, 37 (69.8%).

Status of SLRCs Regarding Information Resources

The heads of schools were asked about the resources available in their SLRCs, adequacy, quality and currency (timeliness) of the resources. Table 6 reflects the results.

Table 6: Status of SLRCs regarding information resources
N=53

Statement	Response	Category of school				Total
		Com	Gov	Priv	Sem	
Resources available	Reference collection	17	3	21	4	45
(multiple response)	Curriculum books	17	3	20	4	44
	Non-curriculum books	13	2	18	4	37
	Fiction	6	2	16	3	27
	Newspapers	4	3	13	4	24
	Journals (print)	6	1	7	2	16
	Audio-visual materials	2	0	7	1	10
	Electronic resources	1	0	0	0	1
The SLRC has adequate	Strongly agree	1	0	4	1	6

Resources	Agree	12	0	15	3	30
	No opinion	1	0	2	0	3
	Disagree	6	3	5	0	14
	Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0
Quality of library resources	Very good	0	0	0	3	3
	Good	18	2	20	4	44
	No opinion	1	1	2	0	4
	Poor	1	0	1	0	2
	Very poor	0	0	0	0	0
Currency of resources	Very up-to-date	0	0	4	0	4
	Somewhat up-to-date	14	2	17	4	37
	No opinion	3	0	3	0	6
	Somewhat out-of-date	2	1	2	0	5
	Very out-of-date	1	0	0	0	1

The potency of the school library lies in the comprehensiveness and currency of its collection. In order to determine the ability of a secondary school library to provide for the information needs of learners and teachers, the study explored the adequacy, type, currency, and quality of teaching and learning materials provided by the library. Resources described by respondents as mostly available in the school library were reference sources (45; 84.8%), curriculum books (44; 83%), non-curriculum books (37; 69.8%), fiction (27; 50.9%), and newspapers (23; 45.3%). The least available resources were print journals (16; 30.2%), audio-visual materials (video and sound tapes, CDs, DVDs and cassettes) (10; 18.8%), and electronic resources (One; 1.9%). Generally, a majority of respondents, 36 (67.9%), either strongly agreed or agreed that the SLRC had adequate resources for learners and teachers. Fourteen (26.4%) respondents disagreed that the SLRCs had adequate resources for learners and teachers. A comparison between categories of schools indicated that respondents from private schools had the highest response percentage of strongly agree and agree (19; 35.8%). The highest percentage of respondents, (47; 88.7%), rated the quality of resources available in the school library as either very good or good. A few respondents, (2; 3.8%), rated the quality of resources available in the school library as poor.

Of 53 respondents, 37 (69.8%) rated the currency of school library resources as somehow up-to-date and 6 (11.3%) had no opinion. While only 4 (7.5%) respondents from private schools rated the currency of resources in their school library as very up-to-date, 17 (32%) respondents from the same category of schools rated the currency of resources as somehow up-to-date. The findings suggest that the collection was not comprehensive and thus the adequacy of resource is questionable. However, the quality of resources in these libraries was relatively good and the currency of resources was somehow up-to-date. The findings are in line with other studies that describe the collection development in most African schools to be poor (Ajegbomogun & Salaam, 2011; Mgina & Lwehabura; World Bank, 2008).

The Status of SCLRs according to the DEOs
The semi-structured interview with the DEOs for secondary schools contained questions regarding the status of SLRCs in terms of infrastructure, staffing, services and information resources. All eight DEOs for secondary schools responded to the interview. Generally, the results of the interview with the DEOs for Secondary Schools revealed that the status of SLRCs was not good. Specifically, the responses of the DEOs regarding the status of secondary school library resource centres are summarized below: most secondary schools had no libraries; schools with libraries had inadequate teaching and learning materials; some government owned schools had old libraries which were in bad shape and needed renovation. Other responses included: schools with functional libraries provided lending services to learners; some school libraries did not have sufficient furniture, equipment and requisite technology for learners; most schools with libraries did not have qualified librarians to manage them; and while the results of the interview showed that the private and seminary schools were comparatively doing well; the community schools lagged behind in delivering quality library services.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, the purpose of the article was to explore the status of secondary school library provision as an integral part of the education process. The process of investigation highlighted the poor condition of SLRCs. Most secondary schools function without libraries and in schools where libraries do exist; they are staffed by unqualified librarians and are not well-resourced. Some secondary schools had no purpose-built libraries and had a shortage of equipment that facilitates access to information. The services provided to these schools were not responsive to learners' needs. In view of the results and discussion of data it was found that secondary SLRCs in Iringa and Njombe regions have not been excelling in providing responsive services and programmes to secondary school communities. Given the poor condition of SLRCs, their role as supportive systems in the education process in competently and effectively facilitating RBL is undermined. This phenomenon has a detrimental impact on the quality of education for learners.

Finally, in order for SLRCs to contribute to RBL and quality education, the government must make SLRCs a priority and provide them with the necessary human, infrastructural and financial support. A mechanism should be in place to reinforce the implementation of the ETP of 1995 and the Education (SLRC) Regulations of 2002, consequently improve the SLRCs provision in secondary schools.

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