

## **Status of Secondary School Libraries under the Secondary Education Development Plan: A Case Study of Dodoma Municipality, Tanzania**

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### **Abstract**

*This study was undertaken in Dodoma Municipal, Tanzania in order to assess the development and status of school library services under the Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP). The study involved 44 secondary schools, 186 teachers, 44 heads of schools, 16 school librarians, one Regional Education Officer, and one Region Librarian. Data were collected through a survey method using a questionnaire that has both closed and open-ended items, as well as through interviews and observation. The study found that only 16 (36%) out of 44 secondary schools had libraries, while during SEDP implementation period, no public school and only one private school established a library out of the 27 schools that did not have libraries at the beginning plan period. In the schools with libraries, only 11 (69%) of them had separate buildings for the library, while only seven (44%) had trained librarians. The study concluded that, despite SEDP, school library services were generally poor as most schools lacked libraries, or lacked information resources and staff. It is recommended that in order to improve the quality of school library services, the Tanzania government should enforce its regulation requiring every registered school to have a library.*

### **Keywords**

Education, School libraries, Tanzania, Resources, Evaluation

### **Introduction**

Education is a crucial aspect of the development in all countries because it is an empowering tool to equip people with skills to overcome various social, political and economic challenges that they encounter in their lives. Because of the importance attached to education, Tanzania has since its independence implemented a number of education policy measures and reforms intended to achieve quality education. These include the enactment of the Education Act of 1962, Education for Self Reliance (ESR) programme in 1967, and Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy of 1974. In 1995, the government introduced an Education and Training Policy (ETP) in order to guide and harmonize education structures, plans and practices at all levels. In 1998, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) initiated an Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) and a Secondary Education Master Plan (SEMP) as part of ESDP (URT, 2004). The ESDP produced other two programmes – the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) 2002– 06 and the Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) 2004– 09. The overall goal of the SEDP

was to increase the proportion of Tanzania youths completing secondary education with acceptable learning achievements.

The SEDP had five strategic components and priorities, namely: improvement of access, equity, quality, management of education system, and management reforms (URT, 2004). The quality improvement component addresses the provision of high quality competences, required aptitudes and right attitudes in all subjects with particular attention to competences in the sciences, mathematics and the languages. Specifically, the quality improvement component outlines the following aspects (United Republic of Tanzania, 2004):

- (i) Improvement of qualifications and quality of teachers and tutors;
- (ii) Review of curricula for secondary and teacher education to make them more relevant;
- (iii) Improvement of school libraries;
- (iv) Increase of capitation grant for teaching and learning materials and other charges;
- (v) Enhancement of quality of examinations and assessment systems;
- (vi) Increase of graduates of diploma and first degree teachers;
- (vii) Sensitization and Education on HIV and AIDS, gender and environment.

Under SEDP, a number of achievements have been realised. These include increase in students enrolments from 99,744 in 2003 to 243,359 in 2006, improvements of infrastructure in terms of school buildings rehabilitation and increases in the number of new schools from 1,083 in 2003 to 2,289 in 2006, and improvement in secondary school enrolment gender at entry from 46.6 per cent in 2003 to 47.4 per cent in 2006 (United Republic of Tanzania, 2010). In terms of policy, one achievement was the reduction in school fees for day students from 40,000 Tanzanian shillings (Tshs) in 2004 to 20,000 (Tshs) in 2005 and up to date, and the devolution of authority and responsibilities to lower education administration levels. These education policies and reforms provide evidence that Tanzania has achieved significant progress over the years. The country is also poised to continue its efforts to transform and improve its education quality. It is this understanding that the Government of United Republic of Tanzania acknowledges the country's Development Vision 2025 in the following words:

*Education should be treated as a strategic agent for mindset, transformation and for the creation of a well educated nation, sufficiently equipped with the knowledge needed to competently and competitively solve the development challenges which face the nation (United Republic of Tanzania, 1999:19).*

However, despite the above policy, reform and plan achievements and commitments, it is of concern whether educational planners took seriously the SEDP quality improvement commitment concerning the improvement of school libraries. This concern also relates specifically to effective implementation of provision of section 5.4.6 of the Education and Training Policy that “*every secondary school shall have a library, adequate stock of books and well trained and competent library personnel.*” (United Republic of Tanzania, 1995:43)

This concern motivated this study, which was conducted in Dodoma Municipal, Tanzania in order to achieve following two main objectives:

- (i) To establish the extent to which SEDP framework has addressed school library services for improving education quality.
- (ii) To assess the status of school libraries in terms of their building structures, information resources, staffing and coordination in general.

## Literature Review

### **Contribution of School Libraries to Academic Performance**

The availability and services of school have significant influence on students and their academic performance in general. According to Arko-Cobbah (2004), four objectives of school libraries include providing resources for wider and deeper understanding by students of various subjects in the school, promotion of reading habit among the younger generation, initiation of career interests among the youth, and insurance of feeding philosophical and social values into the community. The regular reading by students of the diverse information resources provided by adequately stocked school libraries enables them to develop their familiarity with different philosophical ideas and professions, and economic and socio-political developments.

School libraries support the students' learning process by equipping them with some of the essential skills to succeed in a constantly changing social and economic environment. Through the use of various information resources, students develop and acquire skills to search for, identify, collect, critically analyse and organise information, solve problems and communicate their understandings. Consequently, students enrich their intellectual, cultural and emotional growth. It is through those aspects that a number of studies have confirmed that students in schools with good school libraries learn more, get better grades, and score higher on standardised test scores than their peers in schools without libraries (NCLIS, 2008). School libraries also provide teachers with access to materials relevant to the curriculum they are expected to teach and to their professional development. IFLA (2006) confirms these benefits when it points out that libraries are essential to every long-term strategy for literacy, education, economic, social and cultural developments.

In recognition of the importance of school library services, IFLA adopted in 1999 the School Library Manifesto that defines and advances the role of school libraries and learning resources centres in facilitating students' acquisition of learning tools, ideas and services such as books and other resources that enable learning and allow them to develop their full capacities, to continuously acquire life-long learning skills, and to make informed decisions in today's information and knowledge-based society (UNESCO, 2009).

For effective school library operations, among others, the Manifesto encourages the following policies and actions:

- School libraries services be supported by specific legislation and policy so that it is clearly defined, what are the goals, priorities and services in relation to school's curriculum.
- School libraries be run by professionally qualified librarians.
- School libraries be organized and properly maintained according to professional standards (IFLA/UNESCO, 1999).

It is therefore important for every country to recognise the importance and potential role that can be exerted by school libraries towards education quality improvement. School library services should therefore be given priority in various government plans. However, as observed by Dzandu (2007), the school library can only perform its academic functions as the hub for academic work in schools if it is adequately resourced. This means a school library must be supported with appropriate buildings, infrastructure and information resources, and managed by qualified library staff.

### **School Libraries in African Countries**

Several studies on school libraries in most developing countries indicate that school libraries are poorly managed and neglected (Amaral, 2000; Sidibe, 2000; Obajemu, 2002; Dike and Amucheazi, 2003; Bello, 2004; Olafinaswe, 2006; Dzandu, 2007). According to Obajemu (2002), findings from a study done in some secondary schools in Oshodi/Isolo Local

Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria showed that school libraries were under-staffed, improperly organised and had inadequate and obsolete library facilities. In the same vein, Bello (2004) and Olafinsawe (2006) also note poor school library standards in terms of their collection, staffing, building space and furniture. Similarly, Dzandu (2007) observed that at the basic level of education, school libraries in Ghana were the least developed and most neglected.

## Methodology

Dodoma Municipal is one of the six districts of Dodoma region located in the Central Zone of Tanzania (Fig. 1). Other districts in Dodoma region are Chamwino, Bahi, Mpwapwa, Kondoia and Kongwa. The Dodoma Municipal has since 1974 been serving as the official capital of Tanzania, and it hosts a number of government offices including the office of the Prime Minister. During the time of the study, Dodoma Municipal had a total of 51 secondary schools of which 36 were public schools while 15 were private schools. In addition, out of the 51 schools, 43 offered only ordinary level secondary school education, seven offered both advanced and ordinary level secondary school education, while one school offered advance level education only. Like other regions in Tanzania, Dodoma has one public library (REO, 2008).

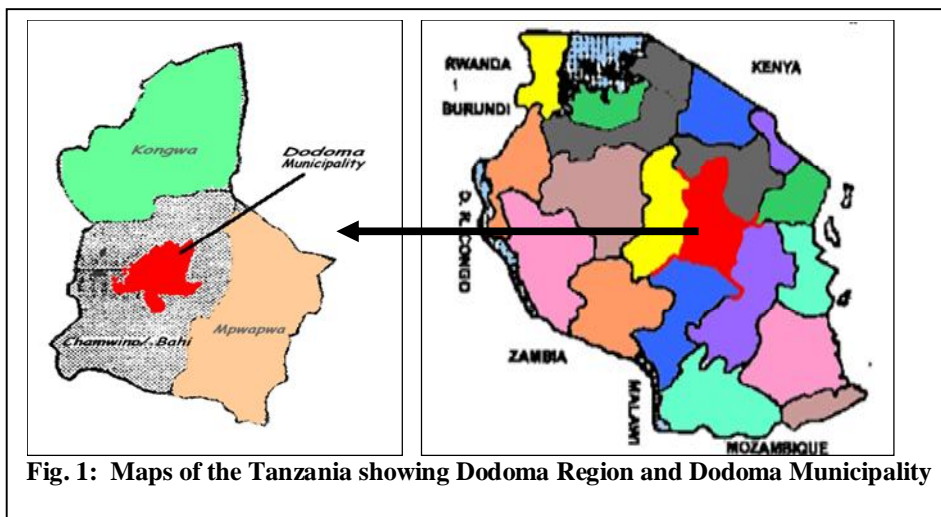


Fig. 1: Maps of the Tanzania showing Dodoma Region and Dodoma Municipality

## Sampling

The study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Data were collected through survey method, while both probability and purposive sampling techniques were used to select samples. Under probability sampling, the stratification technique was used to sample from the population of teachers in the Municipality stratified by gender. Simple random sampling was then used to select teachers within each stratum. Again, under probability sampling, the systematic sampling technique was used to sample from the population of schools by listing their names alphabetically and selecting every fourth school. Purposive sampling was used to select the Regional Education Officer (REO) (only one person), heads of the selected schools, (all of them) and the librarians of the selected schools that had libraries (all of them), in view of their administrative roles.

The sample sizes for schools, students and teachers were based on their population sizes. A table of recommended survey sample sizes by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was applied to come

up with the sample sizes during the survey where the exact populations were established. In the end, in addition, 44 secondary schools were sampled from the 51 schools, and 248 respondents from five categories participated in the study, as summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1: Sample of the Study for various Respondent Categories**

<i>Population</i>	<i>Population size</i>	<i>Selected sample size</i>
Teachers	368	186
Heads of Schools	44	44
School Librarians	44	16
Regional Education Officer	1	1
Chief Region Librarian	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>248</b>

### **Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

*Teachers:* The study involved 186 secondary school teachers, 54 (29%) of which were from private secondary schools and 132 (71%) from public secondary schools. Their qualifications were as follows: five (3%) had a master's degree; 41 (22%) had a bachelor's degree; 131 (70%) had diplomas; seven (4%) were form six school leavers; and two (1%) had no teaching professional qualifications, but possessed a diploma in accountancy. With regards to gender, 110 (59%) were males while 76 (41%) were females. In terms of teaching experience, 94 (51%) of the teachers had an experience of between one to four years while 92 (49%) of the teachers had five or more years of teaching experience.

*School Librarians:* Only 16 of the 41 schools had a library, and the study involved all 16 librarians, of which nine (56%) were from private secondary schools while seven (44%) were from public secondary schools. In terms of their qualifications, nine (56%) had no professional training; five (31%) had certificates; while two (13%) had diplomas. In respect to their work experience; 12 (75%) had worked as librarians for five years or more; four (25%) had had four years or less of work experience.

*Head of Schools:* Forty-four heads of schools were involved in the study, of which 11 (25%) were from private secondary schools and 33 (75%) were from public secondary schools. In terms of education qualification two (4%) had master's degrees; 10 (23%) had bachelor's degrees; and 32 (73%) had diplomas. In terms of their working experiences, 23 (52%) had had working experience of four years or less while 21 (48%) had had working experiences of 5 years or more. Nine (20%) of them were female while 35 (80%) were male.

*Regional Education Officer (REO):* The study involved one REO who had worked as a primary and secondary school teacher for seven and nine years respectively since 1978. He also worked as District Education Officer for five years before being appointed as REO in 2001.

*Regional Librarian:* Like other regions in Tanzania, Dodoma region has only one public library which is headed by a Region Librarian. He had been working in public libraries since 1987 and worked at Dodoma public library for 6 years. He had a diploma in librarianship.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected using questionnaire, interviews and observation. A self-administered questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions were administered on the teachers, while interviews were conducted with the Regional Education Officer, Regional Librarian and the heads of schools. In addition, non-participant observation was used to observe library facilities and resources, including buildings, books and other learning resources, storage facilities, etc.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Improvement of School Library Services under SEDP**

In order to assess the improvement of school library services that had been made under the SEDP, the 44 school heads were asked about their awareness of SEDP and its roles and achievements. It was found out that 34 (77%) of the respondents were aware of SEDP while 10 (23%) were not. In terms of library services improvement, out of 34 respondents, 20 (59%) reported that their schools were supported with some resources and facilities, especially text and reference books. Eight of them (24%) reported that SEDP provided staff training and their allocation while six (17%) mentioned construction of buildings as the support that their schools got from SEDP.

Regarding the responsibility of SEDP in the development of school libraries, the study established that although the establishment of school libraries is in the Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 1995, its implementation is the responsibility of the school community, while the government only provides matching fund to support the efforts made by each community and school. This arrangement applies to public schools only while private schools are expected to undertake the implementation of the policy on their own. Also, from the responses given by the REO and teachers, it appears that the actual responsibility and role of SEDP in the development of school library services is very minimal. However, from the interviews with the 44 school heads, 33 (75%) of them expressed the opinion that, as a mechanism for improving education quality, as well as ensuring access to reading resources and improving independent learning habit among students, the government should be responsible in order to ensure that all secondary schools have adequately stocked libraries.

This current situation is likely to lead to the stagnation or decline of school library services, thus negatively affecting the entire learning processes of the students. For example, in terms of assistance given to schools for development, improvement and organising school library resources under SEDP, the Chief Regional Librarian indicated that SEDP has done nothing important in terms of involving professional librarians on issues of staff development, book procurement, classification and cataloguing.

According to the SEDP, a number of standards were expected to be met by 2009, including the provision of textbooks by subject at a student-book ratio of 1:1. However, most of the targets have not been realised. It can therefore be concluded that although SEDP has attempted to support schools by providing fund to purchase books as reported by heads of school, it failed to develop an adequately professional and effective school library infrastructure, a situation that contributes to the poor status of secondary school library services.

### **School Library Buildings, Information Resources and Staffing**

The study examined the state of school libraries in terms of building structures, information resources and facilities in general, as well as staffing.

#### **Availability of School Library**

The study found out that the majority of the schools in the study area did not have school libraries. Out of 44 secondary schools, only 16 (36%) had libraries. The study also established that out of 33 public secondary schools, only seven (21%) schools had libraries while out of 11 private secondary schools, as many as nine (82%) had libraries. This indicates that the non-availability of school library situation in public schools is a serious problem in public schools, and much less so in the private schools. Furthermore, the study found out that, out of 44 secondary schools studied, 17 (39%) were established before SEDP implementation and that out of these schools, only two (12%) schools had no libraries. On the other hand, out of the 27 (61%) schools established during SEDP implementation period, only one (4%) school from private sector had established a library while no public school established a library (Table 2). These

findings clearly indicate that since 2004 when the SEDP implementation started, the establishment of school libraries in public schools stagnated compared to pre SEDP period.

**Table 2: Profile of School Libraries Established Before and During SEDP (N=44)**

<i>Type of School</i>	<i>Schools established before SEDP</i>			<i>Schools established after SEDP</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>With Libraries</i>	<i>Without Libraries</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>With Libraries</i>	<i>Without Libraries</i>	<i>Total</i>	
Public	7	1	8	0	25	25	33 (75%)
Private	8	1	9	1	1	2	44 (100%)
	15(88%)	2(12%)	17	1 (4%)	26 (96%)	27	

Source: Field Data (2009)

### **School Library Structures**

Appropriate library structures are very important because they facilitate good and comfortable library services and learning environment. In this regard, the study attempted to find out the status of the available library structures in the schools. It was found that 11 (69%) of the schools had their school libraries in dedicated buildings, while five (31%) schools had libraries as single rooms in buildings used for other activities. Almost two-thirds of the schools (28, 64%) lacked library buildings. The heads of schools that had no libraries were asked to mention the places where school books and other information resources were kept, the findings show that 13 (46%) of the 28 respondents said they used store rooms, eight (29%) used teachers' offices, five (18%) used teachers' residences while two (7%) said they used special boxes in staff rooms.

It was further noted that for those schools that had libraries, the quality was poor in terms of material organisation, ventilation and spacing. For instance, out of 16 schools with libraries, only six (38%) schools had favourable reading spaces, with the capacity to accommodate 40 students/users at a time while 10 had unfavourable reading spaces. Libraries with good quality structures are those that are likely to enable library staff to provide good services and motivate students to learn effectively in them (Poll, 2008).

### **Information Resources**

The availability of current information resources in various formats is very important for any school library (Banjo, 1998; Ray, 1990). The heads of schools were therefore requested to speak on the availability of information resources and the associated challenges in their schools. The study found out further that, book acquisition rate in the schools was much lower compared to what would have been expected during the SEDP. For example, between 2004 and 2008, only 16 schools acquired new books as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Books Acquisition Rate by Schools (N= 16)**

<i>Numbers of book volumes acquired between 2004-2008</i>	<i>Frequency by type of school</i>	
	<i>Private</i>	<i>Public</i>
5000-7000	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
2000-4000	1 (6%)	3(18%)
500-1000	4 (25%)	1(6%)
400-100	2 (13%)	2(13%)
99-0	1 (6%)	1(6%)

Source: Field Data (2009).

For those schools that acquired new books, nine (56%) were private secondary schools while seven (44%) were public secondary schools. Comparatively, this means that nine (78%) of the 11 private secondary schools and only seven (21%) of the 33 public secondary schools acquired new books during the 2004–2008 period. This was in spite of the SEDP that was expected to assist the public secondary schools in the acquisition of new books. As shown in table 4, several constraints were mentioned as responsible for the limited acquisitions of books.

**Table 4: Constraints on Books Acquisition (N=29)**

<i>Constraint</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Scarcity of text and reference books	9 (56%)
Difficulty of managing books and other learning materials	6 (14%)
Lack of specialists (librarians)	6 (14%)
Lack of space, tables and chairs	6 (14%)
Poor performance in library management	2 (5%)

Compared to schools with libraries, schools without libraries had fewer books bought through SEDP capitation grant. Public schools with libraries were stocked with books bought through SEDP grants while private school libraries obtained their books through various sources including school funds and donors. The situation suggests that students in schools with libraries services had a relatively good opportunity of acquiring quality education than those in schools without libraries. This observation is in line with William and Wavell (2002) who reported that where library provision is poor, students' ability in information handling, research and study skills are correspondingly under-developed.

### **School Library Staffing**

Training and availability of trained personnel to man school libraries is of paramount importance in the provision of effective library services in the school system (Egunjobi, 2003). However, adequate staffing is often neglected in most school libraries. Data collected in the study showed that out of 16 schools with libraries, only seven (44%) had trained librarians manning their libraries, while nine (56%) had no permanent trained staff. Of the seven trained librarians, five had certificate in librarianship (lower qualification) and two had diploma in librarianship (higher qualification). Also, out of the seven, five were employed by public secondary schools and two were employed by private secondary schools. Regarding the librarians with diplomas, all were employed by public schools while out of the five librarians with certificates, three were from private schools and two were from public schools. The findings of the study therefore show that private secondary schools often do not employ qualified librarians.

Furthermore, the study found out that in the nine schools whose libraries had no trained librarians, six (67%) were supervised by designated teachers while three (33%) were supervised by staff with qualifications and skills not related to library work, such as store keeper and school matron. It was therefore evident that the majority of the secondary schools had no trained librarians to offer professional library services. In this regard, the training and engagement of adequate school librarians is a challenge that should be seriously addressed by various education authorities in Tanzania as an imperative strategy for education quality improvement.

Finally, the study also investigated whether the teachers who participated in the questionnaire survey had received any kind of exposure to library and information work or if they studied a module or a course related to library and information services during their teachers' training courses. The study found that out of 186 teachers, 128 (69%) did not attend any programme related to library and information service during their teachers' training programmes. This means that in situations where schools had no trained librarians to manage their libraries,



they probably also had no teachers skilled in aspects of school library services to supervise their libraries. It does appear from these findings that, in general, it can be concluded that the curricula of teachers' colleges in Tanzania have neglected the development of library management skills in trainee teachers.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This study found out that, in general, the development of school library services under the Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) in Tanzania was unsatisfactory. Majority of the schools had no libraries and, where there existed, the libraries were in poor conditions in terms of inappropriate or inadequate buildings, inadequate information resources and lack of qualified librarians. Also where schools had librarians, they had low library qualifications. As a general conclusion, school library services have not been given its due status under SEDP. These findings and observations pertain to Dodoma Municipal that had served as the nation's capital since 1974, which makes one to wonder what the situation would be in other parts of the country with expectedly lower central government presence.

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are addressed to the political, administrative and educational authorities for consideration and implementation in order to improve school library services in Dodoma and other parts of the country:

- The government should reaffirm, enforce or implement its regulation that requires every registered school to have a library. In addition, school libraries should have qualified librarians.
- The library coordination unit in the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MOEVT) should be strengthened to enable it to deliver its services more effectively.
- The curriculum of teachers' colleges should include a module on school library services and its management. These will help to fill the gap for lack of trained librarians, and ensure that teachers have knowledge and skills for assisting students in the effective use of various information resources within and outside the school libraries.
- This final recommendation is addressed to educational, library and information researchers and professionals who should undertake and publicise studies similar to this one in various other parts of Tanzania.

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