

Prevailing Status of School Libraries in South Africa: Challenges and Suggestions

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ABSTRACT School libraries are the backbones of the mother body, which is a school. They are also regarded as the hub in which a wide range of library collections are made available in order to meet the information needs of learners, students and teachers. There are more challenges that are associated with libraries in South Africa. The research method employed to collect data concerning school libraries in South Africa, their challenges, and the current status of school libraries in South Africa, is a literature review along with narrative and integrative approach. Considerable literature exists on various aspects of a school library and the challenges faced by them in South African schools. The aim of this conceptual article is to highlight the school libraries in South Africa as well as the current status of school libraries in South Africa. Based on the literature review, this study brings to light the different aspects of the school libraries. The study recommends that a school library should be a place that is conducive to learning. The library should also provide both teachers and learners with a location that encourages individual study, group cooperation and a big group exhibition.

INTRODUCTION

According to Paton-Ash and Di Wilmot (2015) and Echedom and Anyira (2020), school libraries have undergone a tremendous transformation. The school libraries are no longer regarded as a place where books are stored or as “repositories of information but as transformational places” (Erikson and Markuson 2007: ix). The shift of school libraries into the school transformation core has assisted in speeding up the reformation of the library space, furniture, and collections. Moreover, the school library should be a core or backbone of the school, a dynamic and inviting place, which is safe for learners and conducive to learning. It should also provide the space to accommodate a large class and be able to accommodate a small class. As a result, the school library is supposed to serve as a multipurpose centre in a school where digital media can also be utilised, and teachers and teacher librarians can collaborate in assisting learners to learn effectively (Bolan 2009; Erikson and Markuson 2007; Echedom and Anyira 2020; Moruwawon 2020).

The school is responsible for equipping the school with a library collection, which is diverse in as far as the subject matter is concerned, to address the information needs of all the learners and the school community. As far as the library collection is concerned, there needs to be a wide

range of formats in order to inspire the learners to use the collection. Both print and electronic resources should form part of the library collection. Reading books should be printed in the correct font required for learners, as it should not be too small, but big enough for learners to be able to read. Very important is that the books or the collection should be at the level of the learner’s comprehension. Books donated by firms and special libraries should not form part of the school libraries because they are way above the understanding of the learners and they should rather be donated to colleges and universities (Bolan 2009).

The LIS Transformation Charter (2014: 24) asserts, “If indeed school libraries are important for quality learning, then the principles of redress and equity, which are enshrined in the South African Constitution and educational legislation, mean that ways must be found to provide them to all schools. However, the backlogs are daunting, and the information and reading needs of our school-going children are urgent, as will be shown in a later section. It is clear that fresh approaches are required that cut across traditional divisions within librarianship and between it and other sectors. Once the focus is on the needs of our youth rather than on the provision of libraries, then shifts in mindset occur toward an understanding of the connections across the broader ecosystem”.

Moreover, the LIS Transformation Charter (2014: 24) emphasised, “Resources such as books, periodicals, magazines and newspapers, films and filmstrips slides, video tapes, audio recordings of all forms, maps and charts, computers and other information bearing resources. School libraries are essential in the educational process since they provide the needed materials to support the school’s curriculum”. They are established to be used by both students and teachers in the teaching and learning process. The role and functions played by the school library are well-documented by a wide array of associations in librarianship.

The ideal school library is developed to provide the opportunities for the development of the following in a school, and as a result the school library is supposed to work as a:

- dedicated physical and digital space in a school that is open and accessible to all
- information space providing equitable and open access to quality information sources across all media, including print, multimedia, and curated digital collections
- safe space where individual curiosity, creativity, and an orientation toward learning are encouraged and supported and where students can explore diverse topics, even controversial topics, in privacy and safety
- instructional space where students learn the capabilities and dispositions for engaging with information and for creating knowledge
- technological space providing a diverse range of technology tools, software, and expertise for the creation, representation, and sharing of knowledge
- literacy centre where the school community nurtures reading and literacy development in all its forms
- centre for digital citizenship where the learning community learns to use digital tools appropriately, ethically, and safely, and learns strategies to protect identity and personal information
- information environment for all in the community through equitable access to resources, technology, and information skills development that are not always available in homes
- social space open for cultural, professional, and educational events (for example, events,

meetings, exhibits, resources) for the general community. The LIS Transformation Charter (2014: 24) asserts, “If indeed school libraries are important for quality learning, then the principles of redress and equity, which are enshrined in the South.

The school library is regarded as a hub that hosts and makes available resources in various formats. It is a backbone of the parent institution in which it exists. In a school, the school library has a crucial role to play, that of supplementing the school curriculum. It also supplies the school community, that is, learners, teachers, administrators and the community in which the school exists with library resources to meet their information needs. The library space should be expanded so that it can accommodate all learners in the class at the same time. In school libraries, there should be sufficient reading space that can accommodate shelves for books, chairs and tables for learners as well as associated facilities to speed up reading habits. A library should provide learners with surroundings that are encouraging to their orientation and learning procedures surrounding them. It is taken into consideration that the impression of a profoundly functional library should be encouraged. A school library should be a place that influences seat and area for details and literatures, leisure and information and into the inconceivable. The library should also provide both teachers and learners with the location that encourages individual study, group cooperation and a big group exhibition. This is supported by Paton-Ash and Di Wilmot (2015: 8), who found that, “The school library is peripheral to as opposed to central to teaching and learning. The role of a school library is outdated and needs to change if the library is to play a pivotal role in promoting literacy and learning, facilitating and enabling quality education for all South African children.”

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

- To provide a basic understanding of school libraries
- To equip with sufficient information to be aware of the challenges of school libraries
- To highlight the importance of library policy.

The Current Status of School Libraries in South Africa

Library Challenges in South Africa

“Any discussion of South African school libraries has to acknowledge upfront the socio-economic challenges confronting the country and its education system. Apartheid’s Bantu education policies calculatedly under resourced the schools designated for black learners, and their schooling is perhaps where the heritage of apartheid is most evident. Advocacy for libraries has to confront the disturbing reality that many schools still lack basic facilities” (Hart and Zinn 2015: 22).

Information literacy school libraries have the main responsibilities of providing the learners, students teachers and the school community as a whole with information in a wide range of format like, for example, print, non-print material should include magazines, newspapers, computers, audio-visual items such as audiobooks, ebooks, DVD’s, music in order to support the school curriculum (Mahwasane 2017a: 44). The IFLA/UNESCO School Library Guidelines Draft (2015:7) opines that, “The goal of all school libraries is to develop information literate students who are responsible and ethical participants in society. Information literate students are competent self-directed learners who are aware of their information needs and actively engage in the world of ideas. They display confidence in their ability to solve problems and know how to locate relevant and reliable information. They are able to manage technology tools to access information and to communicate what they have learned. They are able to operate comfortably in situations where there are multiple answers or no answers. They hold high standards for their work and create quality products. Information literate students are flexible, able to adapt to change, and able to function both individually and in groups”.

Moreover, the condition of roads, especially in the rural communities of South Africa are very bad in such a way that they hinder most developments. Even library service provision is failed by the type of roads available in rural communities. Mahwasane (2008) added and emphasised the following, “Therefore, poor infrastructure has a negative effect on library and information service provision to the rural areas, since even a mobile library service

cannot be introduced as a result of poor roads and unstable bridges. Most of the rural areas are poverty-stricken and as a result most people cannot afford taxi or bus fees for transportation to the location of the libraries in town. The result is that children in the remote areas grow up not knowing what a library is because they have not been to one unless teachers organise special trips for school children to enable them to visit the public library so that they may be exposed to the resources of a library”.

“In most instances, libraries are compromised for other purposes. In some schools, the library was used as the Head of Departments’ (HODs) office. Others used libraries as staff rooms while others as storerooms for tools. The space left was so limited that it was difficult for the teacher to pick books for learners, which is also an indication that books in libraries are not used. For those who set aside a classroom for library purposes, the bookshelves took up a large space, leaving a small space for use by learners and teachers” (Mahwasane 2017d: 116).

The School Librarians

The school librarian is personnel in the school library whose main task is to organise and arrange the school library collection in such a way that it is accessible and appealing to both the learners and the teachers. As a result, the librarian has the responsibility of assisting the users, that is, learners and teachers in searching and finding relevant information and guide them on how to use it properly. Moreover, the librarian ensures that the needed information will also assist the learners in developing lifelong learning skills (Office for Standards in Education United Kingdom 2006). Moreover, collaboration between subject teachers and teacher librarians in a school is a crucial venture in consolidating guided inquiry in as far as children’s learning is concerned (Kuhlthau 2010).

Library Collection

IFLA (2015) suggests that library resources back-up their school syllabi by making use of information resources that are both physical and numerical in formats. Moreover, school libraries purchase resources for relaxation. These include popular or graphic novels, music, computer games, films, magazines, comics and posters.

The IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto (2006) specifies that a school library has to possess a minimum of ten books for every learner. Despite the tremendous scarcity of library materials in South Africa, Equal Education has as an alternative requested three books for every learner to increase upon the current specification of two books for each learner as laid down by the DoE's QIDS UP programme. The percentages of South African public schools that do not provide library resources are 92.77 percent on the whole (Equal Education 2011).

Learners have their information needs, and they need information to do their school projects, homework and assignments as a result. The school library collections should consist of a wide range of resources as far as the school curriculum is concerned to provide for the needs of all learners, both gifted and slow learners, as well as to draw existing and new users. Regarding books, fiction and nonfiction of different levels should be made available, in order to provide for the learners who are gifted and those learners who are reluctant to read. Moreover, books should be made available in various formats that are appealing to learners, particularly non-readers, such as graphic novels, comic books and e-books. The school library collection should also include non-book materials such as "magazines, computers, audio-visual items such as audio books, DVDs, music, online resources, digital resources, board games and electronic formats" (Bolan 2009; Moruwawon 2020).

"A school library is said to be functional if it has enough library collections. As a result, a school library can be seen as a library that is found in the premises of schools, housing both learning and teaching support materials to support the reading habits of learners as well as the school curricula" (Mahwasane 2017b: 84).

The value of the library has deteriorated in the last few years, especially the libraries in the rural areas. School libraries should support the curriculum, promote literacy, development and nurture lifelong reading habits among learners owing to the promotion of cautiously chosen print materials and the combination of educational technology. Learners should no longer depend on the textbook only but should also use library resources. As a result, the school library should be made available to provide access to a wide range of resources equally to all the learners. The

school library is entitled to provide the needs of the learners, teachers as well as the school curriculum in which it is situated (Shandu 2014).

According to The Association of College and Research Libraries (2018: 12), "libraries provide access to collections sufficient in quality, depth, diversity, format, and currency to support the research and teaching missions of the institution.

- The library provides access to collections aligned with areas of research, curricular foci, or institutional strengths.
- The library provides collections that incorporate resources in a variety of formats, accessible virtually and physically.
- The library builds and ensures access to unique materials, including digital collections.
- The library has the infrastructure to collect, organise, provide access to, disseminate, and preserve collections needed by users.
- The library educates users on issues related to economic and sustainable models of scholarly communication.
- The library ensures long-term access to the scholarly and cultural record."

Library Staffing

Changes that take place in the school libraries have had an intense influence on library staffing. This resulted in the reallocation of arrangements of staffing inside the libraries and also affected the number of library personnel that are needed. It is of paramount importance that the Department of Education see to it that a professional teacher librarian is employed to serve in the school library. Instead of schools hiring a qualified teacher librarian, a subject teacher is selected amongst other teachers and given the role of being responsible for library activities, without being provided with the period to teach learners on how to use the library. Moreover, the subject teacher is not trained to manage and develop the school library activities.

The new developments in the library that came as a result of the latest technology has shaped a situation, which is by far more challenging in as far as the librarians' professional skills, and as well as other challenges of customers' knowledge of the information resources currently existing is concerned (Ojukwu 2020). The library education conducted by the teacher-librarians is one of the increasing requirements for library education

presented by librarians. Regrettably, the budgeting procedures intended to stipulate staffing levels sufficient to provide library services have not given provision for all this (Smith 1987).

“Apparently, very few schools have a qualified teacher-librarian. Subject teachers confirmed that their schools do not have qualified teacher-librarians. This implies that there is no one who can take responsibility for the proper administration and management of the library service, or for the organisation of the library stock to make information retrievable. Nor is there a qualified person who knows how to provide structured guidance to both learners and teachers in seeking information for school tasks or preparation of lessons” (Mahwasane 2008).

Library (Types)

“These documents make a series of proposals for the development of standards for school libraries. It also recognises that because of inherited inequities in the provision of libraries in our schools there is unlikely to be much money for developing traditional school libraries in every school. A variety of models for school libraries to choose from and a generic standard to conform to are recommended. Some of the models outlined in the document include:

- One school, one library
- One cluster of schools, one library
- One community, one library
- One region, one library service
- One learner, one library
- One lifelong learner, one library” (Hell 2005: 10)

The Department of Basic Education (2012) published in the National Guidelines for School and Information Services Policy that the dual-use school/community libraries are provided as an alternative that schools can use for rendering library services to learners and teachers and the community at large. The strategic guidelines for collaboration between community libraries and schools in the 2013-2015 document is enlisted by the DBE and is presently waiting for contribution from all stakeholders in both the education and library and information science fields (Fraser 2013). However, the emphasis is placed on the use of a school library model that can be used effectively. As a result, the development of a relevant school

library model that will meet the information needs of rural learners is of paramount importance.

A school library should provide learners with a safe place where they can sit and study safely. It has to be conducive to learning by all types of learners, that is, those from poor backgrounds as well as those from well-to-do families. It is not surprising that the National Guidelines (DBE 2012: 17) affirms that, “The use of a centralised library must be incorporated in the planning of new library building or renovation of the existing one to ensure full utilisation of the facilities. In this regard, the following should be considered, that is, the physical building must be attractive and be sustainable to accommodate the needs of the school community, and the location must be central and be easily accessible to physically challenged library users. In addition, the library should have sufficient study spaces, reading areas, computer workstations, display areas, staff working areas and a circulation (issue) desk”.

Library System

A well-adjusted compilation of up-to-date and appropriate articles is needed to guarantee the retrieval of materials for users of different ages (Dewe 2007). “Subject teachers have insight into the fact that books should be arranged according to a specific system. The respondent said that the poor arrangement of books in libraries is a barrier to using the library by learners. Shelving and shelf rectification of reading materials in different collections must be done preferably every day to ensure that the shelf arrangement of books and other reading materials is in line with a recommended order. Shelf rectification is undertaken to ensure that books and other reading materials are kept on the shelves as per prescribed order. In case they are not in order, the necessary rectification should be done to restore their order on the shelves” (Mahwasane 2017b: 84).

Library Access

Benard and Dulle (2014) indicated in a study conducted globally concerning the reading skill of the learners indicate that the accessibility and user-friendliness of reading materials, that can be books as well as non-books resources in their immediate environments like for example, at

home, in the classroom and in the school library, is one of the important factors that definitely have an effect on learners' reading achievement. The environment in which learners are growing should be surrounded with print, it should be print-rich. Therefore, availability and employment of library collections are considered as the most important factors in the library service rendering of quality services in various kinds of libraries. It is not surprising that Abdulahi (1998) supported the above statement on the availability of resources in a wide range and said that effectiveness of a library rests on the appropriate arrangement, which incorporates the accessibility and availability of information resources, their arrangement, as well as the circumstances of the library. These opinions were supported by Daniel (2004), who maintains that the school library continues to be the core of the parent institution such as an educational institution and that an education institution without a library is like a motor car without an engine and a body without a soul.

"As a result, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) must develop regular workshops and short courses for teacher librarians to train them on how to arrange books to facilitate ease of access by both learners and teachers. Moreover, the Department of Education can invite professional librarians from the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture to check if books are arranged properly and to guide them to maintain the library in such a way that it is conducive for use by both learners and teachers" (Mahwasane 2017b: 86).

Funding

Most of the school libraries in the previously disadvantaged areas in South Africa are not functional as a result of lack of funding. Significantly inadequate funding, with little or no government financial support and only occasional donor support, leaves most of the burden of library financial support on parents who are already overstretched with the other costs of secondary education (World Bank 2008).

It is also important to understand what budget cuts entail for schools. In some districts, the budget cuts in schools compelled school managers to consider replacing the position of a librarian with that of a subject teacher because they undermine

the importance of school libraries in the learning of learners. On the contrary, the responsibilities relating to school libraries are given to the subject teacher. In some schools, this is the life orientation teacher, who is given the responsibility of library activities. For example, if school managers are compelled to select between an additional teacher in order to solve the problem of the shortage of teachers in a school, ironically the librarian goes, and with her an overabundance of knowledge and skills that could benefit every child in the school (Pascopella 2005).

"The budgets of most school library media programs cover expenditures on information resources (for example, books, audio and video formats, periodical and database subscriptions) and operating costs. Expenditures on salaries, wages, and employee benefits are part of the overall school or district payroll. The technology facets are updated frequently and can be very expensive to maintain" (Hughes 2008: 15).

National Policy

Free State. Department of Education (ELITS) 2002 emphasises that the school library committee should draw up the school library policy. "This policy should include, amongst others, library rules, loan periods, circulation procedures and collection development" (Nuku 2019).

"The first draft was presented to the Minister of Arts and Culture in July 2008, a few days before he opened the new building of the National Library of South Africa in Pretoria. The second draft was presented to the National Summit early in December 2008 for public scrutiny and deliberation. The sixth draft was presented in 2009, in the form of arguments and recommendations. In 2013 the Charter was revised and updated in alignment with new circumstances. The revised Charter has, however, maintained the form of argument and recommendations in its previous versions" (Nkondo et al. 2014 :6).

"The policy should make it clear that the library is for all. It should be developed by the school librarian, working together with the teachers and administrators (that is, principals, heads of schools, educational staff). The draft policy should be shared widely, throughout the school community, and supported by open discussion. The resulting policy should be widely shared in order that the philosophy,

concepts, and intentions for practice and development are understood, endorsed, and ready to be put into practice. The policy document and the plans developed based on the policy should specify the role of the library in relation to the following components:

- Formal and informal curriculum in the school
- Learning methods in the school
- National and local standards and criteria
- Learning and personal development needs of students
- Needs of teachers
- Raising levels of academic achievement
- Developing inquiry skills
- Promoting and motivating reading
- Open-mindedness and civic engagement” (IFLA 2015:22-23).

Policy development has been a long and frustrating process for the South African school library profession. The absence of a national policy has implications for the capacity of the profession to fill school librarianship posts. Since 1994, the number of school librarian posts has declined in South Africa as the responsibility for funding these professions also was passed to governing bodies. This was compounded by the closure of the school libraries unit in the Department of Education (DOE) in 2002 (Paton-Ash and Di Wilmot 2015; Nkondo et al. 2018).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology

The research method employed to collect data concerning school libraries in South Africa, their challenges, and the current status of school libraries in South Africa, is a literature review along with narrative and integrative approach. Considerable literature prevailing on various school library aspects and the challenges faced by school libraries in South African schools were reviewed.

Data Collection Method

Document Analysis

According to Leedy and Ormond (2010:144), “content analysis is a systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of materials. Its purpose is to identify specific characteristics of a

body of materials.” Various documents were used to gather data like, for example, the databases, internet, books and journals. Examples of databases used to search information on the topic include Google Scholar, Ebscohost, internet, Open Access resources, Eric and other databases. Themes derived from the specific objectives of the study were utilised in cautiously searching literature.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Literature by Mahwasane (2017a), Mahwasane (2017c), Braxton (2008) and Lance and Hofschire (2012) revealed that the school librarians in a school play a crucial role in assisting learners to develop the reading habits as well as improving their literacy. It is therefore not surprising that according to Mahwasane (2017c), the school librarian is considered as playing a vital role in the knowledge environment (school) where learning of learners and collaborating with teachers to ensure that learning is taking place. Similarly, Blachowicz and Ogle (2008) support this by pointing out that a print-rich environment both at school and at home are crucial in supporting the reading habits of learners. It is also stressed/emphasised that children from print-rich homes perform better in reading at school as compared to children who come from print-poor homes. However, “the economic status of South Africa is divided into two parts. With one part of South Africa being that biggest part of South Africa and is classified as the undeveloped world, and the other small part, which is classified as the developed world. With the industrialised world being information and resource-rich with the professional librarian assisting in the library, while on the other hand the larger part of South Africa, which is classified as the un-industrialised world, is information and resource-poor, and their libraries are not staffed with a professional librarian let alone the print material” (Mahwasane 2017c: 68).

It is therefore logical that in South Africa the country experiences two different worlds. One part of it is developed and rich, while on the other hand the other part is developing and poor. Examples of developing parts of South Africa are, the rural areas of the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. Seroto (2011: 140) adds that, “Three provinces in particular, namely the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo, are classified as predominantly rural,

as they have incorporated most of the former rural homelands. Moreover, homelands were predominantly populated by black South Africans, engaged in the production of crops and livestock mainly for own consumption or for sale on local, informal markets. Between 1960 and 1985, more than 3.5 million black people were forcibly relocated to homeland areas. It is also understandable that it is in these three provinces where the majority of learners are found. Out of 12.3 million learners in 2009, two million are in the Eastern Cape, 2.8 million are in KwaZuluNatal and 1.8 million are in Limpopo. The remaining provinces have relatively lower learner enrolment. These three provinces are characterised by areas, which can only be accessed with difficulty because they are geographically isolated and satisfy most of the criteria for rural education”.

It is therefore understandable that, “it is one thing for a library to fill vacated professional positions on an one-to-one basis, but quite another for those positions to be refilled in the same jobs that produced the vacancies. Libraries normally use vacant positions to do just that. A vacancy in cataloguing, for example, is usually used to recruit another cataloger. But each vacancy is also an opportunity to address new needs that can help the library adapt to changes on campus and the broader Association of Research Libraries external environment” (Wilder 2017: 4-5).

It is not surprising that literature by Hartzell (2002), Le Roux and Hendrikz (2006), and Mahwasane (2017b) stressed that the school principals are the ones who stand before the development of the school libraries because they are the ones who take decisions of the budget that should be used in as far as the school library collection and hiring of a professional teacher librarian is concerned.

Concerning the opinion on the accessibility of school library collection, for example, for those schools that offer languages to their students, each student is expected to read novels as part of their school curriculum, and this resulted in the school library resources being extremely accessed. It was also exposed that resources such as audiovisuals, newspapers/magazine, poetry and dictionaries were not available to most students of secondary schools under the study. This finding is consistent with those of Adeyemi (2009) who reported that students were found not to have access to the use of many resources in the school libraries. Therefore,

the government and other related education institutions are bound to make available extra funds to both the primary and secondary school libraries so as to enhance accessibility of such resources to students.

“In most instances, libraries are compromised for other purposes. In some schools, the library was used as the Head of Departments (HODs) office. Others used libraries as staff rooms while others as storerooms for tools. The space left was so limited that it was difficult for the teacher to pick books for learners, which is also an indication that books in libraries are not used. For those who set aside a classroom for library purposes, the bookshelves took up a large space, leaving a small space for use by learners and teachers” (Mahwasane 2017d: 116).

It is not surprising that on the view of library funding, Anderson (2002), Okogwu (2019) and Shonhe (2019) stressed that without enough funding, libraries are bound to cease to exist gradually because funds ensure the constant addition of library resources. This, notwithstanding the intentions of the government to improve the condition of schools, library collection in a wide range of formats and which is on the level of the learners is very important. School libraries should be of assistance to both the learners and teachers in addressing the precise challenging educational goals they are given, and therefore, libraries will be highly esteemed in the educational system. Furthermore, “school librarians can make very valuable contributions to their students’ academic success, but often their importance has not been publicised sufficiently. School districts are strapped for funds. Budget cuts are made regularly. For school libraries to maintain their relevance amidst continued declines in funding two areas must be pursued. One is for librarians to communicate what they can and will do to help support staff and students, while the second area involves finding new funding resources to help keep their libraries vibrant” (Hughes 2008: 26).

The development of library policy is indispensable in ensuring the functionality of the school library (Nuku 2019). Unfortunately, advancement, coordination and commitment in the development of the legal and policy framework for school libraries were lacking, so there was an increase in the number of schools without libraries. The implementation of a library policy in a school creates the opportunity to make the policy noticeable to

all the stakeholders, focusing on its establishment and utilisation (Marquardt 2011: 2-8). This means that when the policy is implemented, its benefit should be clear to all stakeholders. Policies are indispensable in the day to day running of the library by the entire school community as a whole. Policies are very crucial and as a result, policy making has much to do with “guidelines, procedures, rules and regulations” to adhere to when setting up a library to make certain that the library services are running smoothly (Mahwasane 2008:127). Furthermore, “the lack of a national policy and funding for school libraries has a negative impact on the establishment and the physical and human resources of school libraries” (Paton-Ash and Di Wilmot 2015: 8). It is the responsibility of the National Department of Education to see to it that the school library policy is in place as a matter of importance to give guidance in the development and preservation of school libraries as well as information services. The policies are the instruments used to get to the bottom of a described challenge (Nkondo et al. 2018).

Levin (2001:5) indicates that “at every step of policy making, multiple and conflicting influences come to bear, purposes change or are worn down by existing structures and processes, and circumstances alter in ways that require modification of plans and actions. He emphasises that the entire process of policy development and implementation takes place in a short-term context that is constantly changing, multifaceted, and very difficult to read and is also affected by long-term trends in government and society. “Frederic et al. (2020:24) share that policies serve as written contracts or lines of arguments rationalising the course of action of a government with regards to its dealings with state institutions and agencies”. Finally, Levin (2001:6) points out that most of the time, governments are operating under circumstances that are far from optimal due to pressures of time, lack of information, and multiple competing issues.”

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, there are different types of school libraries that are in use in different schools to meet the information and reading needs of both the learners and their educators. Information provision to school children is not smooth as a result of the challenges encountered

in various schools especially in rural areas of South Africa. It is the responsibility of the National Department of Education to see to it that the school library policy is in place as a matter of importance to give guidance in the development and preservation of school libraries as well as information services. The policies are the instrument used to get to the bottom of a described challenge. A school library is regarded as functional if it makes available information sources in the various formats. Moreover, the library should also provide both teachers and learners with a place that is conducive to learning and also encourages individual study, group cooperation and a big group exhibition. The library collection that is not arranged according to a type of system is as good, as having no collection because it is not easy to access it and this results in impacting destructively on the functionality of the library.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The library authority should consider the school library as being the heart of each and every school that plays an important role in assisting the school to achieve its goals. The implementation of a library policy in a school should create the opportunity to make the policy noticeable to all the stakeholders, focusing on its establishment and utilisation. The resulting policy should be widely shared in order that the philosophy, concepts, and intentions for practice and development are understood, endorsed, and ready to be put into practice. The library collection should be made by a wide range of information resources in various formats. The value and importance of the library cannot be overemphasised, and as a result the education authority should see to it that the challenges of funding, staffing, and the library policy are resolved so that the libraries can be used effectively. One must

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