

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

School Resource Centres (SRCs) were known as school libraries before 1983. The SRCs are generally equipped with teaching and learning materials in the form of printed, non-printed and electronic media. The main printed materials available in the SRCs are the fiction and non-fiction books, reference books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, dictionaries, encyclopedias and serials. Non-printed materials include maps, globes, pictures, graphs, charts and flash cards, while the electronic materials include television, radio, computer, audio-visual aids. The use of SRCs by teachers and students can create an environment that is suitable for pupil-centred and resource-based learning (Abdul Rahman 1990).

The School Resource Centre plays an important role in the learning process of a child. The role of the SRC is to develop an individual's ability to learn independently, to enjoy learning and to continue to learn throughout life. The SRC also provides opportunities to pursue lifelong learning. The skills and attitudes towards SRC are best developed at schools than at home. A child who grows up to enjoy and appreciate libraries is more likely to become a lifelong library user than one who has never been exposed to libraries during the early stages of his or her life. A good foundation provided by school resource centres would ensure that students become better users of academic libraries, public libraries and special libraries in their later years (Diljit 1996).

For a long time, use of SRC in schools had been mainly associated with reading and language learning, especially in primary schools. This rather limited role which it

has hitherto assumed in support of the curriculum has caused it to be valued more for its recreational rather than educational contribution. Changes in education which brought about innovations in the concept of learning as well as teaching-learning strategies in the 1960's and 1970's have provided opportunities for SRCs to be more directly involved in teaching-learning activities (Zaiton 1993).

In Malaysia the introduction of New Primary School Curriculum [*Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah (KBSR)*] and Integrated Secondary School Curriculum [*Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah (KBSM)*] was a step to improve the standard of education in this country. One of the main aims of the KBSR and KBSM is to develop the reading interest among the students. The schools should inculcate interest in reading and an information seeking habit among the students by using materials other than the text books. It is hoped that this habit will guide the students to be more confident in expanding their general knowledge, improve their intellect and implement lifelong learning. To achieve the above purpose, schools have established SRCs as a learning centre for the students (Jamaldin 1986).

Malaysian Indians

Malaysia has a multiracial community. The three major communities are Malays, Chinese and Indians who have contributed much to the development of the country since the colonial era. The Chinese and the Indians came to Malaya (as the country was known before 1963) as immigrants and made Malaya their home by becoming citizens of this country. However, the presence of Indians in Malaysia is not a recent phenomenon for they have been in contact with this region before the Christian era. Early Indians came to Malaya as rich traders and ambassadors of a superior civilization. The significance of the early Indians lay not in their settlement here, but in

their influence upon and the indianization of the inhabitants both before and after they became Muslims in the 14th century. Their number as settlers was too small and is therefore of negligible importance (Verghese 1965/66).

Penang was founded in 1786 by the British. A large number of Indians came to Malaya to serve as labourers in the plantations, the Public Works Department and the Railways (Rajeswary 1969). The British had planted spices including pepper in the 1820s, sugar in the 1830s, coffee in the 1870s and rubber in the 1890s in Malaya. All these required an abundant supply of labour as their cultivation was labour intensive (Sandhu 1969). So, the British turned to India to meet the need for labourers in these plantations. Apart from the plantation workers, a more skilled labour force was also brought in from India to build up the administrative and communication structures of the country (Manjit and Wiswanathan 1977).

The British brought more uneducated Indian labourers into Malaya to work in the plantations (Netto 1961). The British felt that the uneducated Indians were easy to control and train to work in the plantations (Paul and Mariappan 1966). More than 98% of the labour migrants who came to work in the plantations were from South India. They were predominantly Tamils (Verghese 1965/66).

Groups of Indian intellectual also came to Malaya. These were the English and Tamil educated intellectuals who were brought in to meet the requirements for administrative staff and skilled workers (Sinnappah 1970). Among the educated Indians were some businessmen, journalists, professionals such as doctors, lawyers, teachers etc. (Rajeswary 1969). However, the educated groups who came to Malaya were very few compared to the non-educated ones (Sinnappah 1970).

From 1844 to 1941 a total of 3,704,226 Indians came to Malaya. Out of these 2,237,918, i.e. 73.6% were labourers and 26.4% were non-labourers. The majority of the South Indians who came to Malaya were from Madras or the areas surrounding it. About 76.8% of them were Tamils. The early Indians were concentrated in Penang Island, Singapore and the agricultural towns such as Kuala Lumpur, Seremban, Ipoh and Taiping (Sandhu 1966).

The 1957 census shows that 300,000 Indian labourers were in Malaysia, while the 1970 census shows an increased to 933,425 Indians in Malaysia. In 1970 over half of the Indian population was found in two states, Selangor and Perak, which consisted of 32% and 23.9% of the entire Indian population respectively. Four other states, Penang and Province Wellesley, Johore, Kedah and Negeri Sembilan consisted of approximately 8% of the population each. The three east coast states of Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang together consisted less than 5% of the total Indian population (Manjit and Wiswanathan 1977).

In 1980 there were 1,087,561 Indians in Malaysia (Population Census 1980). As the majority of the Indians came to work in the plantation sector, it was obvious that a large percentage i.e. 59% of the Indians were rural based. The majority of the plantation workers settled in the West Coast of Malaysia. The Indian labour force predominated the plantation sector, for in 1980, out of 253,770 workers in the plantation sector, 48% were Indians (Labour and Manpower Report 1980). In 1990 there were 1,483,966 Indians in Malaysia (Peninsula Malaysia 14,700,48, Sabah and Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan 9310, Sarawak 4608) (Population Census 1990). Based on the 1990 census there were 839,391 Indians in the urban areas and 476,695 in the rural areas. This census showed that most of the Indians had migrated to the urban areas in the last ten years.

The Development of Tamil Schools

During 1800-1900 Tamil schools were established by Protestant Missionaries in Penang and Malacca. These were Anglo Tamil Schools which used English as the medium of instruction and Tamil was taught as a subject only.

In 1900 the first Tamil school was established by the British government in Bagan Serai in the Krian District of Perak. In the same year government Tamil Schools were also established in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan and in Penang (Dass 1972). Almost all the schools in estates were Tamil schools, reflecting the majority of residential work force - Indian Tamils (Selvakumaran 1994).

At the same time as Tamil schools began in estates, other Tamil schools sprang up in the towns. Community leaders in the important town centres who were interested in Tamil Education met and started to organize themselves into committees. Having collected sufficient funds, they began schools for the beleaguered Tamil children who were unable to benefit from the highly costly English education at that time. By 1922 there were at least 6 Tamil Schools in the Strait Settlements. A few of these were under the Labour Department. In the Federated Malay States (FMS) there were 122 Tamil schools (Annual Report 1922). These schools were few but were well taken care of by the government. In places where more Tamils settled, Tamil Schools were established, eg. Kuala Lumpur Tambusamy Pillai School (1906) and Vivekananda Tamil School (1910). In Penang, the Indian Sangam established a Tamil School. The Ramakrishna Mission also established Tamil Schools in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur (Dass 1975).

The number of Tamil schools rose in FMS from 235 in 1925 to 333 in 1930 and 535 in 1938. The enrollment of pupils too grew from 8153 in 1925 to 12,640 in 1930

and 23,098 in 1938 (Sinnappah 1970). By 1938, there were 13 government schools, 511 estate schools (most of the Indians worked in the rubber estates), 23 missionary schools and 60 private schools in Peninsula Malaya (Chan 1980).

Tamil schools in Malaya were of three types: Government schools, Government-aided schools and the private schools. In 1953, about 4,204 Indian pupils were enrolled in the Indian vernacular schools, 4,813 in government schools, about 25,226 in government aided estate schools and 11,518 in government aided schools operated by committees of Indian citizens from religious, primarily Roman Catholic organizations. About 480 Indian pupils were enrolled in private schools (Federation of Malaya Annual Report 1953).

The number of Tamil schools has gradually declined in the country. In 1956 there were 918 schools, in 1960 there were 811, in 1988 there were about 549 and in 1998 there are 529 schools only. Within a period of 42 years Tamil schools underwent a reduction of about 40 percent (Morgan Raj 1995). Ungku Aziz found that 44% of the Tamil Schools were closed down as a result of subdivision in 52 estates (Marimuthu 1971).

School Resource Centre Development in Malaysia

The school library concept became the SRC in 1983 when the Ministry of Education directed school library collections of printed materials to be integrated with audio visual materials which had previously been kept separately.

In Malaysia there are English, Malay, Tamil and Chinese medium schools. The formation of school libraries was mainly based on the medium of language taught in the school. The development of school libraries in Malaysia started in 1950s when some

individuals exposed reading materials other than text books to their students. In the Malay secondary schools, books such as *Sejarah Melayu* and *Hikayat Abdullah* were exposed to the students apart from text books. In the English medium school, classical texts like *Gulliver's Travels*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were given to students as additional reading materials. In the Chinese and Tamil medium schools, books were imported from China and India which were based on the countries of origin and were used as additional materials (Leong 1972).

In 1955 the Malayan Library Association was set up. This association prepared a memorandum for public library services in the Federation of Malaya. The memorandum gave a bleak picture of the school libraries in Malaya at that time. In the bigger schools, a classroom was modified and transformed into a library. However, these libraries did not have sufficient books for the students to refer to (Zorah 1995). The Library Association of Malaysia prepared and published a set of minimum standards for secondary school libraries which assisted school libraries through its preparation. The Association also published selected titles of books suitable for school libraries (Abdul Rashid Ismail 1961).

After independence, the development of school libraries was different and based on the initiative of the school management. Educational developments after independence which made the Malay language as the official language, setup a common curriculum for all types of schools, implemented common examinations, and stimulated the setting of school libraries. All these developments have guided the formation of school libraries positively. Schools were supplied with reading materials which helped in the curriculum and examinations (Zaiton 1993).

In 1962, the Ministry of Education recruited the service of Professor Nelle McCalla from Indiana State Teachers College to train teacher librarians at the Specialist

Teachers Training Institute (STTI) in Kuala Lumpur for a year (Abdul Rahman 1965). In the same year, the Ministry of Education introduced a one-year full time training course in school librarianship for 13 selected teachers at the STTI. The course was designed primarily to enable the participants to acquire sufficient skills and knowledge so that they could organize libraries and help to train other teacher librarians (McCalla 1962). The curriculum of teacher training was reorganized with Library Science as a subject. The Ministry of Education sent officials to USA and UK for courses in library science so that they could specialize in their field of interest and train other teacher librarians in school library management.

After McCalla, the Ministry of Education received the services of Margaret Walker from Georgia State Department under Fulbright scholarship. She also conducted courses for teacher librarians. She surveyed the status of school libraries in Malaysia. Her School Library Manual provided useful guidelines for the development of school libraries in Malaysia (Wijasuria 1979).

Walker also established the School Library Advisory Board in the Ministry of Education for the development of school libraries and long term planning and guidance of teacher librarians. As a result of this Board, standards for primary and secondary school libraries were established which showed the beginning of quality in school libraries. The Board also published Basic Book Lists of Malay, English, Tamil, Chinese and Punjabi Books for school libraries (Bahagian Teknologi Pendidikan 1994).

In 1964 a survey on English school libraries was carried out by Walker. The survey suggested a guide book for all school libraries and was accepted by the Ministry of Education. In the introduction of the book, the Ministry of Education states:

"This publication is an indication of the importance the Ministry attaches to the role of school libraries in the education of children (Walker 1964).

In 1964, based on Walker's research, the Ministry of Education published a School Library Manual - guidelines which should be followed by school libraries, and consisted of qualitative and quantitative data on number of books, physical facilities such as space, furniture and also the personnel needed for a school library. She also recommended two newspapers and seven magazines for every school library. Also, each class in the school was to be given two to nine library periods per week (Wijasuria 1979).

Following Walker's report, the School Library Advisory Committee (SLAC) was set up in May 1964 to advise the Ministry of Education on the development of school libraries. Due to the lack of financial aid, the SLAC was not very functional and effective. After three years the Board was dissolved (Wijasuria 1979).

In 1965, Marion B. Wiese from Baltimore City Public School, Maryland, was asked to help in the development of school libraries in Malaysia. She published handbooks of library instruction for teachers to guide them in managing school libraries efficiently. She also prepared Basic Book Lists to be distributed to all school libraries in Malaysia.

In 1965, Wiese reported that the development of school libraries needed to be based on effective use of the resources in libraries which would encourage and motivate students to explore them for their enrichment. Many recommendations in the report were considered by the Ministry of Education (Wong 1991).

The creation of the Textbook Bureau in the Ministry of Education in 1969 brought further development to school libraries in Malaysia. Although school libraries were part of the responsibilities of the Bureau, a higher priority had to be placed on textbook provision (Wijasuriya 1979). This Bureau was responsible to check on the development of school libraries. This Bureau conducted a survey on school libraries.

The results showed little development since Walker's survey. Only 4.9% primary schools and 18.8% secondary schools had a separate library. The facilities too were not satisfactory. Only 0.42% primary schools and 0.75% secondary schools had trained library teachers. The two main weaknesses of school libraries were similar to those mentioned by Wiese, i.e. low use of school libraries and no interest among students (Winslade 1979). Many projects and activities were carried out by this Bureau. One of it was the publication of Book Lists for school libraries. The Bureau also managed the UNICEF Library Pilot Project which consisted of 80 country schools (Wong 1979). From this project, schools were given 950 titles and advice to manage them by cataloguing and classifying correctly by using a proper system.

Since library development was rapid, the Ministry of Education setup a special unit in 1973 known as the School Library Unit under the Schools Division. This unit was responsible for planning, co-ordinating and supervising the development of school libraries in the country (Wong 1991). The formation of the Library Unit was a very important step as many projects were carried out to develop the school libraries as a whole. In 1974, the Ministry of Education allocated a sum of RM3.8 million for the development of SRC in Malaysian schools to increase the library collection. This was after the Dropout Study Report of 1973 which stated that,

We are of the view that the school library plays a vital role in upgrading the standards of education. We regret to note that the school libraries today are badly neglected in many schools, particularly those in rural areas. This may lead to a lack of reading interest which rest in poor scholastic achievement and further demoralization (Ministry of Education 1973).

School library programmes began to gain increasing support and acceptance in the 1970s. A significant development during this period was the provision by the

government of an annual grant, beginning in 1974, to all primary and secondary schools for the purchase of library books (Wong 1991).

In 1979, a school library development programme was introduced. The Blueprint for School Library Development in Malaysia was produced by the Library Association of Malaysia with the assistance of the British consultant, Mr.B.A.Windslade. The blueprint made an exhaustive analysis of the existing conditions of school libraries and made detailed recommendations for their progressive development (Oli Muhammed 1980).

The Ministry of Education circular KP(BSS)8752 - officially announced the term School Resource Centre on 1 March 1983 when the Ministry of Education directed that all printed and audio visual materials to be kept together in one room. With the introduction of the term SRC, the terms school library, media centre, audio visual room and media library were abolished. Earlier a seminar on SRC Towards Quality Education was conducted in 1982 to discuss in detail the concept, function, role and management of SRC. State School Library Organizers and the Educational Media Officers in every state education department were placed under a single unit, the Educational Technology Unit. The new organizational set up was intended to provide better co-ordination between library book services and the educational media services. Schools were advised to use the new term SRC. The term SRC Co-ordinator and SRC Teacher were also recommended (Wong 1991).

The 1980s saw significant changes in the development of SRC to fulfill the needs of the KBSR and KBSM which were launched in 1982 and 1989 respectively. The concept of school libraries as SRC was generally accepted and increasingly practiced among primary and secondary schools in Malaysia (Wong 1991). Group teaching was emphasized by KBSM and KBSR which needed various materials and

aids for teaching. This stimulated the role of SRC as an important unit for successful teaching and learning.

To popularise the concept of SRC, the Ministry of Education undertook a Project to Encourage the use of School Libraries which was launched for school libraries in 1981. In three years, the Ministry of Education spent RM409,000.00 to help 25 selected primary school libraries in the country to set up SRCs consisting of printed and non-printed materials (Laporan Pelaksanaan Projek Menggalakkan Penggunaan Perpustakaan Sekolah 1984). The function of the project was also to guide, train and give financial aid to encourage reading and use of SRCs. Teachers were given awareness of the use of overhead projectors and production of teaching aids such as transparency making. This was a positive and innovative measure in the united development of school libraries in Malaysia (Vias 1989).

To support the formation of SRCs, the Fourth Malaysian Five Year Plan (1981-1985) suggested the formation of State Educational Resource Centres (Pusat Sumber Pendidikan Negeri) to help the development of SRC. Four State Educational Resource Centres, one each in the states of Pahang, Terengganu, Kelantan and Kedah were setup in the 1980s to provide effective educational support to schools within designated areas or districts (George 1988).

The Fifth Malaysian Five Year Plan (1985 -1990) also strengthened the SRC situation. A sum of RM39.5 million was allocated for buying books and RM40 million for audio visual aids for all the primary school libraries in the country. This program also suggested the formation of 350 Teachers Activity Centres for guiding teachers in the use of SRCs. This was designed to help the Ministry of Education to help SRCs to function fully and to upgrade the education of the country in the 1990s.

Also, a four-day conference by International Association of school Libraries (IASL) was held in 1989 to provide ideas and the latest views on the importance of SRCs and their role and contributions to the school curriculum (Zorah 1995).

The SRC was seen as an integral component of the school system which could contribute immensely to the achievement of educational objectives (Oli Muhammed 1980).

The Ministry of Education has taken many steps to improve the status of SRCs with long term and short term planning. Courses are conducted to train teachers to be teacher librarians and SRC co-ordinators. Courses, such as the Certificate in Educational Technology at the Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and the Certificate in Library Management at the Specialist Teachers Training Institute (STTI) represent positive developments in the effective management of SRCs.

Statement of Problem

The SRC is an important unit in the education system and contains various resources for an effective teaching and learning process. The SRC also plays an important role in creating a learning culture among the students. KBSR and KBSM require students to use various resources to carry out projects, assignments given by their teachers. This leads to students seeking information available in the SRC in order to complete their projects and assignments. Students read, refer to and borrow materials available in the SRC for their use.

The SRC also provides a place where students can choose and explore materials of interest to them beyond the classroom subjects, expand their imagination, delve into areas of personal interest, and develop their ability to think clearly, critically and creatively about the resources they have chosen to read, hear or view.

However, the situation in the SRCs of Malaysian Tamil Schools is not up to the expectation of the Ministry of Education. Also, it is not certain if the SRCs really play their role as a learning centre (Vias 1989). This is because there have been no studies on SRC in Malaysian Tamil Schools.

In Malaysia, there have been four surveys of SRCs that have been carried out and published by the Ministry of Education. They are the survey of 247 English Medium secondary schools in 1964 by Walker, the survey of 919 primary and secondary schools of all language media in 1969 but excluding the Independent Chinese secondary schools, a survey of 4592 schools in 1973 and a survey of 3794 primary schools and 582 secondary schools in 1977 (Yong 1997). The survey carried out in 1977 was at macro level. In this survey a total of 519 Tamil School Resource Centres were studied. This survey was a comprehensive one and jointly undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Library Association of Malaysia in conjunction with the compilation of a Blueprint for School Library Development in Malaysia. The findings could not give a good account of the status of the Tamil School resource centres separately because most of the Tamil Schools did not have a SRC at that time (Wijasuria 1979).

Other than the above surveys, there were few more surveys carried out by university students and students from Teachers' Training Institutes. These surveys were at micro level only. Their findings will be discussed in the literature review in Chapter Two.

Since the 1977 survey, there have been no surveys on SRCs in Malaysian Schools, either on primary schools or secondary schools at a macro level. There have been no survey on SRCs in the Malaysian Tamil Schools too. Thus, we do not really know what is the present situation of the SRCs in the Malaysian Tamil Schools.

If one wants to study the development on the Tamil school resource centres, there is no data to refer to and also there is no way of comparing the development of SRC in Tamils Schools. This is because to date, no survey has been carried out on SRCs in Malaysian Tamil Schools by any of the authorities including students of university and teachers' training institutes. The reasons for not carrying out such surveys are unknown. This study is aimed to give some information on SRC in selected Tamil schools which could be used as a base line data for further studies.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to examine some areas related to SRCs in the Malaysian Tamil Schools. Information was collected on 11 aspects of SRC,

1. The existence of SRCs in Tamil Schools.
2. The management of the SRC.
3. Services provided by the SRC.
4. Physical facilities available in the SRC.
5. Availability of the technological aids in the SRC.
6. Collections in the SRC
7. Use of the SRCs by students and teachers.
8. The personnel involved in the management of SRC
9. The use of the fund in purchasing library materials.
10. Professional assistance obtained by the SRC
11. The major problems faced by the SRC

Research Questions.

Some of the related questions to be answered by this study are,

1. How are the SRCs in the Malaysian Tamil schools administered, in terms of :
 - a. Personnel and staffing
 - b. Services
 - c. Physical facilities
 - d. Technology
 - e. Use
 - f. Budget
2. What are the main problems faced by the SRC in Tamil schools?

Significance of Study

This study will provide two types of information,

First, it will give a picture of the present status of SRCs in Malaysian Tamil Schools. This picture, although a snapshot, will overcome the problem of lack of information and data on SRCs in Malaysian Tamil schools. This data will provide information on SRCs in Malaysian Tamil schools which could be used by the Ministry of Education, State Educational Departments, the Library Association of Malaysia and local universities for further surveys.

Secondly, this study will produce a set of baseline data which could be used to monitor the development of SRC in Malaysian Tamil Schools in the future. This data could be the basic information to be used to study the development levels reached in the future. Also this data could be used to build a data base which will be the baseline data for a management of information system on SRC.

A lot of money and effort had been put into the development of school libraries in Malaysia. Whether or not the libraries are up to the expectation with these investments has been a matter of concern. Since there has been no survey

undertaken to date by the Ministry of Education, especially on SRC in Tamil schools, it is hoped that this particular study would provide the Ministry of Education with an insight on the value and returns on the investments and into the role that Malaysian SRCs can play in the education process of the students.

This study hopes to provide a clearer picture of the SRC in Tamil schools. It also, hopes that the authorities concerned will take the necessary measures and action when planning and developing the SRCs in Tamil Schools.

The researcher's personal interest in the field of SRCs also led to a survey to study the present status of SRCs in Malaysian Tamil schools. Being a SRC co-ordinator for the past 20 years, the researcher has managed a SRC in an estate school situated in a rural area, as well as in one of the largest Tamil schools in the country. The personal interest of the researcher has encouraged her to do this study which will provide some information on SRC in the Tamil Schools currently.

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this study:

School Resource Centre (SRC) - is a systematically organized collection of carefully and purposefully selected books and non-books teaching-learning materials in particular, and information carrying materials in general, that are used to provide appropriate and timely information, programmes and services to pupils and teachers of the school, and also to promote a centre for life-long learning (Vias 1992). It is also known as the school library, media centre, learning resource centre or reading room.

Tamil School - is an educational institution where Tamil language is used as the medium of instruction and examination for all subjects, except for Bahasa Malaysia and English Language.

Teacher-librarian - refers to a teacher who manages a school library, whether full time or part-time.

Abbreviation

The following abbreviations are used in this study:

FMS: Federated Malay States (Selangor, Perak, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang).

KBSM : Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah (Integrated secondary School Curriculum)

KBSR: Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah (New Primary School Curriculum)

SRC: School Resource Centre.

SRP: Sijil Rendah Pelajaran (The Lower Secondary Achievement Examination)

STTI: Specialist Teachers Training Institute

UFMS: Unfederated Malay States (Johor, Malacca, Penang, Kelantan, Terengganu, Perlis, and Kedah).

USM: University Science Malaysia

Limitation of the Study

There are 528 Tamil schools in Malaysia. A sample of 186 schools were selected from all the states where Tamil schools exist. View, decision and problems were given by the Tamil SRC co-ordinators based on their school situation.

The findings of this survey are based on responses to the questionnaire. Most of the questionnaires were answered satisfactorily. Only a few schools did not fill certain parts of the questionnaire. Schools with telephone facilities were contacted to get the necessary information. However, some of the schools do not have telephone facilities, so doubts on the questionnaires could not be cleared.

This survey only gives the base line data on the management of Tamils school resource centres and some of the major problems faced. This survey was carried out by using questionnaires. The data given by the SRC co-ordinators is assumed to be correct since the researcher could not visit all the selected schools. However, the researcher did visit two urban schools and two rural schools in the Klang District, Selangor. The purpose of the visit was to observe and get an actual picture of the SRCs in rural and urban Tamil schools in the country. Since the researcher was a part-time Master's degree student, it was difficult to visit schools in other districts of Selangor and also in other states of the country.

Some schools did not provide certain statistical records since they do not keep any form of records in their SRCs.

This is the first survey of this kind on Tamil SRCs. Since there is no other survey on Tamil school resource centres in 1980s and 1990s, no comparison could be made. However, this survey does show some development in SRCs in Tamil schools compared to Winslade's survey in 1977.

The next chapter provides a background to the study through a review of the existing literature on Tamils schools in Malaysia and resource centres in Malaysia and also overseas.