

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study aims to examine the present status of SRCs in Malaysian Tamil schools. The result of this study can help the Ministry of Education and others concerned in the field of SRCs in the planning and development of programs and activities. The result can also assist universities in conducting further research in the area.

The search for literature on Tamil schools and Tamil education was mainly done in the Indian Collection section of the University of Malaya main library. A search was also made on the collection on theses and dissertations at University of Malaya Library.

A search was also made on the CD-ROM network at the University of Malaya Library of the following databases: Educational Resources Information Centres (ERIC), Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) and Dissertation Abstracts OnDisc (DAO). The Index Database (INDEDB) at University of Malaya Library was also searched for conference papers presented in Malaysia or outside the country by Malaysians on school resource centres

The keywords that were used to retrieve the literature were "school resource centres", "school libraries", "Indian schools", "Tamil schools", "Indian studies", "Tamil education", "national surveys" and various combinations of these.

Surveys of SRCs in Malaysia

Other than the surveys carried out by the local and foreign students on SRC in Malaysian Schools, four official surveys of SRCs have been carried out and have

been published by the Ministry of Education. They are the survey of 247 English medium secondary schools in 1964, a survey on 919 primary and secondary schools of all language media in 1969, a survey of 4592 schools in 1973 and survey of 3794 primary schools and 582 secondary schools in 1977. Of these surveys, the most comprehensive was in 1977, jointly undertaken by the Ministry of Education and the Library Association of Malaysia in connection with the compilation of a Blueprint for School Library Development in Malaysia (Yong 1997). Yong (1997) had surveyed the current status of the SRCs in Malaysian Chinese schools.

The findings of the 1977 survey showed that there was an uneven development among the schools. On the whole, secondary schools were better equipped with facilities and resources than primary schools. According to this survey, the major problems faced by the SRCs were lack of time for teacher-librarians to manage their libraries, inadequate book collection, ineffective use of resources and insufficient funds for the purchase of materials (Yong 1997).

The collection of statistics on the status of SRC in the developed countries overseas is a normal phenomenon. The main reasons for collecting data are to assist in financial planning and justification and to compare the situation of libraries. From time to time, statistics are collected nationwide to keep track of the changes that take place (Williams 1989).

The journal *Current Research in Libraries and Information Schools* (1997), provides information on the recent research carried out on school libraries in Ghana. The survey of school libraries in Ghana was carried out from April 1997 to September 1997. This is a review of school library development in Ghana against the background of a new educational system that was put in place a decade previously. The future

expectations of school libraries are discussed and recommendations made to ensure facilities are properly put in place for libraries to play their full role.

The discussion in this chapter will be on the development of Tamil education in Malaysia, the role of SRCs, the use of SRCs in teaching and learning process, the facilities provided, budgeting and the management of SRC.

The Development of Tamil Education in Malaysia

The literature on Tamil schools and Tamil education in Malaysia were examined. Most of these articles were written by locals who were concerned with the education of the poor Indians in the country. These articles discuss the poor conditions of the Tamil schools and the low rate of academic achievement of the Tamil school students. Most of these articles provide suggestions to overcome the problems faced by the Tamil schools. Many of these articles were written in English language but a few were also written in Tamil language.

However, there is not much literature on the development of Tamil education in Malaysia. Also, there was no literature on urban Tamil schools. There was no particular book to refer to on the development of Tamil schools and Tamil education in Malaysia. No literature on the development of Tamil schools and Tamil education was found in the CD-ROM search.

There is evidence to show that Tamil education existed in Malaya even before 1816. It is recorded in the "Tamil Nesan" that Munshi Abdullah (1796-1854) studied Tamil by writing Tamil characters with his fingers on the sand. Munshi Abdullah had written in the *Sejarah Melayu* the following:

My father sent me to a Tamil teacher to study a language known as Tamil. Our ancestors in Malacca used to send their children of high birth. This language was useful for the transaction of business as in adding and subtracting money and in general accounting. In those days in Malacca there were lots of Tamil merchants. Many in Malacca prospered through trade. Therefore, the names of Tamil merchants were glorified. All of them had their children to study Tamil. (Dass 1972).

The above quotation is a reference to the existence of "*Tinnai Palli*" which refers to classes held in the verendahs of probably Tamil speaking merchants' houses (Dass, 1972).

As we have seen in the first chapter, the Indian labourers were brought to Malaya by the British to work in the coffee and rubber plantations from the time of the establishment of Penang in 1786. The majority of these Indians were Tamils from Southern India who were poor and illiterate. Together with these Tamil labourers also came few educated Indians who could not find jobs in their mother country (Sandhu 1969).

While most of the illiterate Indian labourers were employed in the plantation sectors, some were employed in the railways and public service departments in the urban areas. Also, some of the educated Indians found jobs in the urban areas. These educated Indians were the people who cared for the education of the poor Indian labourers' children in the urban area at that time. This led to the establishment of Tamil schools in the urban areas (Rajeswary 1972).

However, the Tamil schools established by them were mostly one-room and one teacher schools wherever there were "coolie-lines" or labour quarters. These labourers

wanted their children to go to these schools since they could not afford to send them to the English schools. The teachers were men of some knowledge of Tamil and had migrated to the British colonies. Having been jobless, they were forced to take up this kind of occupation (Dass 1972).

Besides individuals who established Tamil schools in the urban areas, the Roman Catholic Missionaries also established some Tamil schools such as the St. Xavier Malabar School and Methodist Girls School in Malacca (Chan 1980). The first of the girls' school for Tamil pupils was started by sisters of St. Mary in Penang Convent Tamil School in Penang Road in 1920. It was housed in Reverend Father Riboud's workshop until 1937. Later boys were also admitted into this school (Dass 1972).

In the plantations, the government began to see its responsibility to educate the children of labourers. However, the demand for Tamil schools in plantations only grew after 1910 with the growth of rubber plantations in the interior and the consequent rapid increase in the South Indian Tamil labour force in Malaya. A labour ordinance was introduced into the FMS in 1912 which required that if there were 10 pupils between the age of seven to fourteen, a school would be started. The Labour Department took charge of these schools which were supervised and visited by its officers. The Government supplied the teachers. Thus, a large number of estate schools began to spring up all over the Strait Settlements and FMS (Sandhu 1969).

Later, the Labour Code of 1923 made it obligatory for the management of plantations to provide educational facilities if there were ten or more resident children of school-going age of six to twelve years. Though some planters started Tamil schools voluntarily in their plantations, the planters as a whole did not like the obligation to this

enactment since its inception and made certain that the schools remained ineffective (Sandhu 1969). To check the management of schools and lesson plannings a Tamil educated officer was appointed as Inspector of Indian schools in 1930. In 1937 this Inspector was sent to India to learn about the methods of teaching Tamil language (Pakirisamy 1972/73).

Tamil education provided in the estate schools was rudimentary. Most of these schools were single teacher and multi-class affairs. There were only primary schools. The quality and content of education in these schools were far from satisfactory. The curriculum had a rural bias and the textbooks were imported from Southern India. In many estates, clerks, conductors, dispensers, Kanganies or even labourers took charge of these schools for a few hours (Sinnappah 1970).

The main aim of the early Tamil primary schools was to provide functional literacy. Many schools were providing only a basic four year course. Attendance was not compulsory. Many pupils left school after a few years and took jobs, like their parents. The only job aspiration that some parents had for their children was that of a school teacher in the estate Tamil school. Except for a few who became teachers there were very few other job opportunities available other than to tap and weed, to build roads, to clean cars and to clear the malarious jungles (Gordon 1970).

Tamil schools grew with the Labour Code 1923. The government provided teachers and expected the plantation management to establish and maintain the schools in the plantations (Sinnappah 1970). The first teacher training program for the Tamil school teachers was started in 1938. To overcome the shortage of teachers in Tamil schools, Standard Seven students of Tamil schools were included for teacher training (Pakirisamy 1972/73).

From the early 1920s, and especially in the early 1930s, there was a growing realization among planters that they had to provide welfare facilities, including schools, in order to stabilize and retain the work force in the plantations. Therefore Tamil schools in plantations grew in quantity but not in quality (Selvakumaran 1994). 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 Peninsular Malaya. However, the education provided by these schools was of relatively low social and economic value and the curriculum was orientated towards India. Teachers for the schools were recruited from India. Also, the Tamil schools were limited in scope and designed to keep the labour force stable and largely confined to the rubber plantations which paid for their maintenance (Chan 1980).

In the case of the Unfederated Malay States (UFMS) each state was responsible for its own schools. There are no records to show the number of Tamil schools in Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu. However, Johor had the largest number of schools specially in the Northern region (Dass 1972).

Tamil schooling in plantations was disrupted during the Japanese occupation. However, with British reoccupation, the Tamil schools reemerged. New trends in Malayan education system emerged in the 1950s. The Barnes Report of 1950 advocated a nationalistic approach to education through the use of Malay language and English language. The primary goal of this report was to create national consciousness by making Malay the official language and English the language of administration. The Barnes Report on Malay education was followed by the Fenn-Wu Report on Chinese education and The Memorandum of the Indian Education Committee Report. Both the Fenn-Wu and Indian Education Committee Reports

accepted Malay as the official language, but strongly stressed that the first six years of a child's education should be in their mother tongue (Ponniah 1970).

The Government brought all schools under its jurisdiction on the recommendation of the Rahman Talib report, 1960. As their running expenses were to be paid from public funds, the Government established an independent inspectorate on the British model, to inspect and supervise all schools and advise the Ministry of Education on all aspects of education (Selvakumaran 1994).

The Malaysian government spent a large amount of money on primary education which helped in the development of primary education in the country. These development brought about many positive changes in primary education in Malaysia. However, even though some of these development filtered through to the Tamil schools in urban areas, the large number of Tamil schools in plantation lagged behind because the government refused to take responsibility for the Tamil School in plantations claiming that since plantations were private property, schools in the plantation were also considered as private property, it was therefore not the government's policy or duty to construct school buildings on private property (Selvakumaran 1994).

In 1975, there were 612 Tamil schools in Malaysia with a total enrollment of 80,404 students, served by 3,448 teachers. Nearly 85 percent of these schools were in plantations. The conditions in these schools were pathetic. The enrollment rate was very low and 87.5 percent of the schools had an enrollment of below 200 (majority of them below 100). The schools were inadequately equipped. Many of these schools had been condemned as unsafe and unsuitable by the authorities. The teaching staff was under-qualified, under trained and with little motivation. In some schools a single teacher was in charge of several classes. The library existed only in name and teaching aids were inadequate (Subrayan 1982);

However, the progress of these schools is carefully monitored. In every one of the 11 states in which Tamil Primary schools are established, there is a supervisor of Tamil Primary Schools, who is directly under the State Director of Education. The Ministry's Schools Division has an experienced Co-ordinator of Tamil Schools who further ensures that all goes well. There are no Tamil schools in Trengganu, Sabah and Sarawak, where the Tamil community is very small (Mun 1992).

In the case of Tamil higher education, the University of Malaya in Singapore started a Tamil Studies Department in 1957. In 1959 this department was moved to the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. It is still active.

Those who passed Tamil as a subject in School Certificate and Higher School Certificate have a chance to continue the Tamil education in university. In Malaysia Tamil language is taught in the primary schools till the university level.

The teaching of Tamil language in the Malaysian secondary schools and national primary schools is not satisfactory. There is a need for minimum fifteen students to start a Tamil Class known as The Pupils' Own Language Classes (POL). Many Tamil students show no interest in these classes. Even where the POL classes exist, they do not have trained teachers. There is a need for trained teachers to teach POL classes in these schools. The authorities concerned should take the necessary action to improve the teaching of POL classes, especially in the secondary schools. If this is done, then the quality of Tamil educated students in the varsity could be improved too. Then, the standard of Tamil language would be improved in the country (Pakirisamy 1972/73).

There were 540 Tamil schools in Malaysia (1972). More than 50% of these schools had multiple classes where one teacher needed to teach more than one class at a time. These caused students from Tamil schools to reach a very low educational

level and were unfit for the secondary education. This is seen clearly in the achievement of the UPSR and PMR examinations. Majority of the Indian students who fail in the PMR examination are from Tamil schools. Many steps needed to be taken to improve the standards of Tamil education in the country (Pakirisamy 1972/73).

In the field of education, the Indian position is unfavorable compared to other social groups in the country. As a whole, the Indian youths have the highest drop-out rate, attended the "poorest and smallest" schools, and achieved a lower level of educational attainment. As a result, their share in the secondary and tertiary educational institutions was low - that is, it did not reflect their proportion to the population (Marimuthu 1978). There are many reasons for this conditions which should be studied and the necessary remedial steps be taken to ensure the future of Tamil schools and Tamil education in this country.

The Role of SRC in Teaching and Learning

UNESCO stressed that teaching and learning strategy depend not only on text books but also on the use of technology and media which make SRCs more important. The SRC need to have various media and educational resources needed by teachers and students. These materials should be organised systematically and centralised for the users. The SRCs are used to provide appropriate and timely information, programmes and services to pupils and teachers of the school. The SRC also play an important role to strengthen the methods used and opportunities provided for the mastery of basic skills. In addition they should assist in improving the quality of education provided so that firm foundations may be laid for the creation of an informed society that will consider life-long learning as part of its life skills. So, SRCs exist to provide a dynamic teaching and learning environment (Vias 1992).

The SRC is an organised facility which serves the entire school community. The SRC is integral and supportive of the school curriculum, for it provides a wide range of resources and services to meet the educational, informational and recreational need of the students, teachers and administrators. The SRCs today are no longer traditional reading rooms and study halls; they are evolving to become facilitators of information services and gateways to the wider information world (Diljit 1996).

Also, SRC is a place where students can explore classroom subjects in greater depth, expand their imagination, investigate areas of personal interest, and develop their ability to think clearly, creatively, and critically about the resources they have chosen to read, hear and view (American Association of School Librarians 1990).

Kamaruddin (1983) in his seminar paper *Peranan Pustaka Sumber dalam konteks kini – KBSR* (The Role of SRC in present context - KBSR) says library involvement in the process of learning is not directly but by became secondary importance in our educational system. This is done by educational programs and library programs which are inter-related and cannot be separated. The SRC needs to play the role as a learning laboratory, for the aim of the enrichment of knowledge, view and student thinking. The SRC has an important role to produce students of critical thinking (Raja Abdullah & Norma 1994).

The SRC is an important learning centre for the students. The materials available in SRC encourage students to read and expand their knowledge (Wong 1990). The SRCs can help in the achievement of educational objectives. This could be done by having the teaching and learning process in the SRCs by using the resources available in the SRCs. To confirm this, SRCs resources availability must be of quality and suitable for school curriculum needs (Oli Muhamed 1981). SRC should be made a place of skillful learning. To make this happen, SRC should be managed efficiently. The

teacher as a technician should to know the up-to date information. The student should be able to use the educational resources available in the SRC to get the up-to-date information too. In other words, teachers need to get prepared for various educational resources for the benefit of the students (Mat Jihad 1983).

SRC plays an important role as a place for collecting and distributing various types of information and resources which can improve teaching and learning standards. Based on the services provided, SRC can expand cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects of students. The SRC collection need to be integrated so usage is more vast and management of it more systematic because the role and importance of SRC redesigned for the achievement of KBSR and KBSM (Abdul Rahim and Ismail 1990).

The SRC is set up to increase the educational standard, create teacher profession and educated students who are dynamic, creative, innovative and disciplined (Kassim 1989). So, the role played by SRC is very important and steps should be taken to make the SRC proactive in its role. However, the effect of educational technology towards teaching and learning made its role a challenging and teachers need to manage media to implement more effective school curriculum (Rohana 1989).

Nor Azimah (1993) says the SRC face many problems and still not able to play an active role in the teaching and learning process.³ SRC should play an important role in the teaching and learning process.

Administration and Management of SRC

In Malaysia, standards for SRC was set up by Ministry of Education with the aid of Library Association of Malaysia by preparing and publishing "Secondary Schools Library Standards" which proposed minimum requirements for school libraries.

(Malaysia Library Journal 1963). The suggestions of this standards were based on the status of school libraries at that time and the expected developments in 10 years. In 1964, Margaret Walker carried out a survey on school libraries in secondary English schools in Malaysia. The result showed that the school libraries in the country need to be improved and developed (Walker 1964).

To achieve the aim of establishing a SRC, it must be managed and equipped as far as possible for the benefits of the users (Hashim 1986). The Teacher Librarians should play a role as an information specialist and consultant with having discussion section and problem solving to guide students in the SRC (Raja Abdullah & Norma 1994). Management skills is important and confirm the achievement of SRC organization (Thornbury 1979). Professional education of library management has a significant effect on the use of SRC. This means professional librarians could give efficient guidance to the users (Shoham & Yitzhaki 1991). So, to increase the use of SRC among the students it is best to be employ full time trained personnel (Nalon 1989).

The research carried out by Strang (1989) revealed that 82% of parents, students and teachers think that SRC should have full time library trained teacher to manage all the works in the SRC. So, shortage of trained personnel disturbs the proper management of SRC efficiently. Management guidance is necessary to organize SRC efficiently. This guidance should be on the type of furniture to be used, management systems need to be followed, equipment to be procured, to guide teachers and students on the resources available in the SRC and experience in carrying out their duties (Halimah 1993). The skill will benefit the students and guide subject teachers. The role of SRC and role of teacher librarian are stressed that effectiveness of SRC rely much on initiative of teacher librarians who have the skill other than educational

knowledge because SRC management needs technology skill specifically for the confirmation of resources that are easily acceptable in time of needs (Woolis 1988).

Vias (1989) says SRC are not managed systematically and rarely gets the support of the school administrator. Teachers who understand the concept of SRC have different knowledge and development. The SRC has problems like unstrategic area, dissatisfactory management of resources and unsystematic use. So, the facilities provided are also insufficient for the SRC to function effectively and efficiently (Nazaruddin 1989).

The SRC's management must be dynamic and follow school curriculum and establish learning situation productively and allow freedom for students to read individually (Alan 1974). Also, studies showed that the head teachers hold many responsibilities and they cannot allocate time to observe the management of SRC. So, this has jeopardised the proper management of the SRC and influenced its usage (Cruzeiro 1991).

So, a systematic administration of the SRC is necessary in order to ensure that it functions effectively for the benefits of teachers and students in the teaching and learning process in order to produce students who are sensitive to the importance and significance of information and knowledge.

Use of SRC

The main aim of establishing a SRC is not only preparing physical facilities and resources but most important of all is the encouragement of constant usage by students and teachers. The critical issue in every SRC is the usage. Using materials in the SRC contributes to the encouragement of reading habits and understanding of

information. Skill of understanding information is very important because it helps to create individual thinking about what has happened or one's own thoughts or on what is happening and thoughts of others (Irving 1980).

Educational information and information age has made teachers as a vehicle of information distribution which is insufficient. Text books and teachers are not able to convey all the information. So, students need to be supplied with skills for searching, analyzing, assessment and use of information effectively. SRC as a store of information in education has a role to confirm effective usage and to absorb education technology in the process of teaching and learning as a whole for establishing quality education (Faridah & Subahan 1993). Less information on resources and facilities available in the SRC seems to be an important factor to the misuse of SRC by teachers and students (Beh 1983). Wong (1977) carried out a pioneer project for UNICEF on SRCs in the rural areas of Peninsular Malaysia found out that the main usage of text books in the teaching and learning process disturbed the usage of reading materials in the SRC. Teachers used text and never encouraged students to use SRC. He also found out that the usage increased as facilities were increased.

Malaysian primary school children do go to the SRC at least once a week mainly for borrowing and returning books. Some also do make use of SRC for learning purposes which are mainly confined to the language classes and making reference to dictionaries. The teachers considered class teaching more important than the use of library in teaching and learning so sending the students to SRC only once a week. SRC is not used often for teaching and learning process by the teachers (Zaiton 1993).

Halimah's (1985) study shows that the art stream students use the SRC more often compared to the science students in the secondary schools. Her study also shows that the girls use the SRC more often than the boys. Sabsay's research

concludes that the use of SRC by students, 35% of them never used the SRC whereas 86% of them said teachers never encouraged them to use the library or search for information in the library (Sabsay 1976). Whereas, research carried out on the use of SRCs by Laic (1984) says that 45% of the students never borrowed any book from the SRC and 70% of them never used the SRC to solve their academic problems.

Azarina (1993) stated that the use of the SRC among the Chinese students are more frequent than the Malay and Indian students of Form Four. However, there is no difference in the selection of media among the students. Arshad (1992) says the use of SRC among the vocational school students and teachers too are not satisfactory.

Baharudin (1991) stated that there was no correlation between their academic achievement with the use of SRC among the PMR students. Johan (1991) surveyed the use of SRC among the urban and rural students. His survey showed that there is no difference in the tendency of using SRC among the students. Also, there is no difference between the frequency of use among male and female students. He also showed no difference between science and arts students, and showed that there is no correlation between teachers, parents and friends encouragement with the frequency of using the SRC among the students.

Shamsudin (1981) concluded that the use of English materials among the primary school students (standard 4 to 6) was that only 11% used English as first language and 28% as second language in their homes. So, to improve standard of English among primary school students, librarians are advised to cater for more English materials and market them among the students and teachers and also to have more activities based on English language. Fatimah (1982) found that students used less English materials because their ability to use the language was very poor so they

avoided English materials. Also there was less exposure, less materials and no suitable English materials in the SRC.

Samsiah (1991) showed positive result between the interest of students with the use of SRC and usage of information skills. Her survey explained more Malay students use the SRC than the non-Malays. There is no distinction between the smart and weak students in the usage of SRC. Motivation from teachers, friends, and parents shows a strong influence on the use of SRC. Her survey showed 27% users said the arrangement of SRC is unsuitable, 41.3% said less collection of reference and fiction, 27.6% have no information skills and 27.1% on time being unsuitable. Her survey also shows the use of SRC in teaching Bahasa Malaysia is one of the methods to teach the norms such as courage, co-operation, responsible, willing to give their views, smart and also careful in doing things.

Yew (1993) said there is a difference between the urban students and rural students in the use of SRC. Yew's study also revealed that there is a significant difference between the urban students and rural students in their achievement in the PMR examination based on the use of the materials in the SRC.

Roseli (1993) surveyed that SRC does not play an important role in educating the students in selecting materials in the SRC. There is no encouragement from the SRC to promote reading habits among the students.

Ong (1994) said that the use of the SRC by the teachers for teaching and learning process is unsatisfactory. The cost of effectiveness in the provision and use of SRC in Malaysian primary schools are not as acclaimed as expected. Ooi (1994) said the interest in reading is unsatisfactory among the students and if the reading ability does exist, it is at the lowest level of achievement. Encouragement from teachers does

not play a part to improve the situation, that is, to motivate the students to use the SRC more frequently.

Importance of Information Skills

KBSR and KBSM implement now stress on the concept of life long education. It needs students to be exposed to various information sources so that they can explore various skills. Teaching and learning process with the use of various educational sources can guide students in becoming active mentally and physically and give importance to knowledge (Shahril 1993). These needs have caused SRC to improve so that students can master information skills as needed to be implemented by the students. The role and service of this kind should be prepared by SRC.

Malaysian students who are sent overseas to further their studies face problems in using reference materials and difficulty in retrieving information needed by them. These students face this kind of problem because they do not possess the information skills so they must be taught these skills before they are sent overseas for studies (Ahmad 1988). Also, students were not given prior exposure to library skills such as classification of books and catalog card usage. Most of the students get the books by searching direct from the rack (Lim 1974). Wan Ilias (1988) says that at least 50% of the Form Four students do not have basic knowledge in library skills. For those who use the library, most of them know very little about the simple step and system to get information (Wan Ilias 1988).

Halimah's survey showed that 25% of the students do not want to search suitable materials for their studies. She suggested that library orientation program and library guidance program be given to solve the information seeking skill among the students in the SRC (Halimah 1986). Actually, students fail to get resources which they

wanted because they do not have basic skills in information skills. Although students have attended library skill lessons program, they still lack basic skills because their learning is at the known stage and not doing stage (Brake 1980). However, the information seeking skill to know based on constant practice by students who never emphasise on studies they will go through constant practice. So, their achievement stage will be erupted (Feinberg & King 1988). Students need to have information skill in the process of training them to think critically. School library need to prepare this facilities. The teachers should play the role as an information specialist and consultant having discussion sessions and problem solving sessions (Raja Abdullah & Norma 1994).

Students too need to possess and be exposed to information skills on the use of the library and should have confidence and know how to search materials, also should be smart in discussing information which was retrieved by using these skills and also could use them to produce an assignment or report of quality (Goodin 1991). To confirm this, the teacher is responsible to develop the skill and experience in the use of SRC effectively. The need of media specialists or SRC co-ordinator is important when teachers want to confirm educational resource which could be used for integration with media and the skill of students in the class room activities which are related to the topic to be taught (Montgomery 1991).

To develop critical thinking of students through literature, students need to be taught about reading analytically which will create students with cognitive skill. This skill is an asset to the students because it is a method used in the learning (Markle 1987). Reis and Renzulli (1992) in their research have given the necessary steps to guide students to value, retrieve and confirm interest and plan and conform resources suitable for aim of research. This will stimulate the students to use SRC and teach

them with thinking skill. Educational reformation stress skill of thinking needs to be established among students who are giving importance to culture of education as a starting point towards search of knowledge (Wan Mohd Zahid 1993). However, Wan Illias (1988) survey concludes that most students do not have basic information search skills which hinder them in retrieving materials in the SRC efficiently.

Facilities

The Report of School Inspectorate (1987) stated that the usage of SRC by students and teachers in teaching and learning is not satisfactory because of physical factors and manpower. However, students will be motivated very highly with better facilities and suitable comfort if provided in the SRC. Problems of students not going to the SRC are that it is not located strategically, having less reading materials, its situation not encouraging and there is no information skill to search materials (Murni 1993). Of course, the facilities provided are not enough for the SRC to function efficiently. Halimah carried out research on the facilities provided by the Malaysian SRCs and found out that, 37.0% students complained of less printed materials and audio visuals when they want to use them in the SRC. The situation of SRC and shortage of facilities hinder them from using the SRC when they want to do so. However, they have positive attitude towards the use of SRC because 97.0% from the sample said they go to the SRC at least once a week (Halimah 1985).

SRC has limited reading materials, less reference books, not satisfactory physical facilities and the atmosphere is very boring. All these aspects do not encourage students to use SRC or do not create positive habit towards acquiring knowledge (Abdul Rahim 1988). The infrastructure of SRCs in Malaysian schools is not satisfactory and does not have specific usage (Mod Ali 1992).

Kaiser (1991) in his research suggested that use of reading materials and reference in SRC must be made simple because results of surveys show that students' achievement in studying is more if they feel satisfied with the facilities of resources available in the school.

SRC Collection

Most of the SRCs are not well equipped and do not meet the needs of the users. The collection is often not satisfactory (Ibrahim 1992). In the process of teaching communication to take place and to confirm this process takes place efficiently, the use of media is much needed. So, SRC needs to confirm the types of media that need to be in and market them or educate the students and teachers about the resources available for the achievement of school curriculum. One of the roles of the SRC is to confirm it has reading guide programs and stress on library skills (Lowrie 1989).

The importance of SRC and its role in teaching and learning is to confirm that SRC is managed properly, need integration of teaching with resource and need co-operation between subject teachers and SRC co-ordination in selecting suitable materials and confirm activities needed for students. The need of users information that is teachers' and students' need to be recognised so that what is available can be fully used (Kruger 1987). So, if there're changes in curriculum and need integration between teaching and resources in achievement of learning, SRC needs to prepare resource for the use of subject teachers. SRC co-ordinators need to have the latest knowledge about materials, resources which could be used in teaching. Co-operation between friends or subject teachers needed in selection and purchase of materials (Freeman 1985). Also the Malaysian School Inspectorate reported that the use of SRC by teachers and students in teaching and learning is very low due to lack of

physical facilities, lack of collection and manpower (Laporan Kementerian Pendidikan 1987).

Budget

Space looks like one of the limitation factors in steps to create effective reading/studying situation in the SRC (Beswick 1977).

The problem of less usage by users of SRC has connection with the lack of funds. Unsatisfied users and the librarians commented on minimal space, persons involved in the SRC, books which led to dissatisfaction and problems of disturbance among students for noise and stealing (Kee 1964). Most of the SRC in Malaysia do not get enough funds. This situation creates a strong negative effect. Lack of fund does not support SRC to give services as needed by users and this leads to dissatisfaction among the users. Unsatisfied users do not only enter SRC, they also influence the others.

Some researchers have paid emphasis on writing about the development of Tamil schools and Tamil education in the country. It was noted that some of these articles have mentioned that the Malaysian Tamil schools do not have proper SRCs. However, no literature was found on the status of SRCs in Malaysian Tamil schools until today. To fill this vacuum, the researcher decided to survey a random sample of Tamil schools to collect data to determine the current status of Malaysian Tamil SRCs.

It was noted that surveys on SRCs from various perspectives have been carried out by local and foreign researchers. These surveys do give some information on SRCs in Malaysian schools. However, no surveys were carried out by local students or foreigners in the 1980s and 1990s which could be considered as a national survey.

Most of these surveys studied specific aspects in the SRCs like usage, role of SRC, administration and management, collection, importance of information skills, etc.

Since there is no study on the SRCs in the Malaysian Tamil Schools, it is difficult to check on the development of the SRCs from time to time. So, a study on the SRC in Malaysian Tamil schools is necessary.

The next chapter discusses the methodology used in this survey.