

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the summary of the study significance of finding and conclusions resulted from the study. It concludes with a discussion on recommendations for further research.

Summary of the study

It is significant that in those countries where school libraries are well-established, the people who man the library should have knowledge and skills obtained through successful teaching experience, training foundation areas such as library management and in-service experience in areas directly related to the library. Therefore it is a very important task to educate and train teacher librarians to perform their duty effectively and efficiently in the schools. Studies on teacher librarians are very rare in Sri Lankan context, mainly because the teacher librarian profession was established quite recently. Thus to seek information, that can be of help towards achieving excellence in the management and service in the school libraries, this study was conducted to look into the education and training aspects of teacher librarians in Sri Lanka.

The purpose of this study was to examine the education and training needs of teacher librarians in Sri Lanka. The study compared three groups of respondents to reveal

needs and requirements of appropriate training programmes. Hence, this study attempted to answer the following research questions.

- i. What are the duties of the teacher librarians in Sri Lanka?
- ii. What types of training programmes currently provided for the teacher librarians in Sri Lanka?
- iii. Are there any drawbacks in the training programmes of the teacher librarians?
- iv. If so, what are the suggestions to enhance the training programmes for the teacher librarians in Sri Lanka?

A review of the literature related to the problems of the study was conducted. However there was very limited literature found on the topic, especially on the local sense, which have been conducted in last two decades.

The study employed a survey research method to address the research objectives and problems. A likert-scale questionnaire was designed as the research instrument to collect the data. The sample was selected to launch the study in the Sabaragamuwa Province of Sri Lanka. The sample consisted of 50 teacher librarians, 50 school principals, and eight education officers. Sixty questionnaires were accepted for data analysis. The data was analyzed using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) 10.0 for windows. Descriptive statistics and cross-tabulated data were used to obtain the results. Results were described in seven areas. It is very important to examine the existing situation and draw the attention on designing training programmes for teacher librarians at the grass-root level of the teacher librarians' career in Sri Lanka profession.

Summary of the findings

The principal findings of the study are as follows:

Firstly it was found that teacher librarians perform very limited activities within the schools. The only two activities conducted are lending books and inventoried materials. The activities of acquisition and cataloguing of materials are not conducted by teacher librarians. Besides teaching, they are also involved with the projects on development of reading habits. It can be concluded that most of the library tasks are not operating within the school libraries. On the other hand there is no guidance or direction to promote such creative activities on school library. The school library appears to be an inactive organization in the active school organization. The school library heads are doing other duties in the school library, due to the lack of staff and resources.

The study also found that respondents highly rated intensive / short courses and degree level courses. A high majority disagreed with training programmes that include only library science areas. They insisted more computer education to extent their knowledge and skills in computer and Internet usage.

The study revealed that there are vast differences between current training programmes available and training needs of teacher librarians, on comparison of current training programmes in Library and Information Science education in Sri Lanka. The traditional training programmes have not helped teacher librarians to practise essential

skills. Most of the respondents did not agree with available training areas because it's not suitable to achieve the current training and education requirements of the teacher librarians.

It was also found that the current training programme do not adhere with the teacher librarians training needs because of the drawbacks it has. It is recommended that the current training programmes be revised immediately.

To enhance the current training programmes, the respondents suggested the followings to be included in the programmes:

- i. Collection development skills for teacher librarians.
- ii. Traditional library work such as cataloguing and acquisition.
- iii. Library management skills.
- iv. Resource management skills.
- v. User education activities.
- vi. Professional ethics for the teacher librarians.

The study also revealed other suggestions by respondents. Among others; to train more young people, retraining and feedback, to conduct training in small groups, and to get training support from the Ministry of Education were indicated. Further more they noted to coordinate with library experts and responsible institution at the training programmes based on the existing social environment. Conducting performance appraisal at the training programmes is very essential. Training programmes should be flexible and friendly.

Conclusion

As a result of the data findings from the study, the following conclusions appeared to be warranted.

1. Most of the teacher librarians are in very poor level of LIS qualification. Some of them have computer skills, but they do not use those abilities for information retrieval or library activities. The result revealed by the research shows that all of them need to be trained in library and information science subjects to perform their duty well. It also appeared that training programmes are not available island wide for teacher librarians. It can be concluded the teacher librarians do not have enough LIS education equally with their profession.
2. The researcher examined the duties of teacher librarians in Sri Lanka. The study revealed that the teacher librarians are limited to very few library activities in their school libraries (the highest percentage of the duties involving are only circulation and inventoring the materials). Apparently they are involved with basic library activities. It is discovered that most of the Sri Lankan school libraries are inactive in Sri Lankan schools because of despite by the higher authorities (most of the teacher librarians did not involve with the acquisition activities). The school libraries are sinking and isolating themselves by the policy makers in the education sector. Other than the circulation activities (it is better to address as lending books) and inventored materials, teacher librarians have vast capacity of work in and out of the school library. The research result revealed that they were not able to setup those activities in the school library. Most of the teacher librarians

are teaching specific subjects in the classrooms other than teaching information skills or involving in the library works. It is the result of the inadequate teachers in Sri Lankan schools. This situation directly affected school libraries and automatically school library activities are going away from the school curriculum. Some times school library is closed during school hours because the teacher librarian is performing his teaching duties. When the researcher visited some of the sample schools, a teacher librarian was teaching in a classroom based on the school timetable. It seems that 'the school library is dead' in the school premises. Most of the schools did not have enough space or separate building facilities for the library. Very few book racks or a cupboard contained the whole library in small schools. This has resulted to the teacher librarian performing limit, basic and very few activities in the school library. Thus they lack experiences and skills in the library activities.

3. The survey revealed that the respondents rated intensive or short courses as essential and they rejected on the job training programmes. However the LIS and computer based programmes were appreciated. Obviously the respondents were unable to understand the concept of on the job training. Another separate body, other than the school, should organize the training programmes. It may help to change participants' attitudes from the traditional thinking to creative thinking. According to the research result the training programmes should be integrated with the school curriculum, practical, and in-service training programmes. Trainees too need to change environment when undergoing training programmes.

4. The most significant finding of the research is that the current training programmes do not fulfil the training needs of the teacher librarians. All respondents indicated that current training courses were not enough for them to perform their duties well. Some of them indicated they could not be able to rate the statement, due to ignorance in teacher librarians training programmes. One of the respondents indicated that it is very difficult to note responses, because of having not participating in the training programme yet.

Responses from the respondents reflected that current training programmes are not giving enough knowledge and skills to the teacher librarians. On the other hand most of them were not able to participate in those training programmes. It is very clear that the training programmes have it own weaknesses, among others. Some of them are as follows: the existing training programmes cannot give enough skills for teacher librarians; they are not available at any time for the teacher librarians, and do not satisfy the current requirements of teacher librarians. Insufficient content, disorganize pattern and training methods are further limitations. It can be concluded the current training programmes are not enough to develop existing level of the school libraries and the skills of the teacher librarians.

5. The research revealed future requirement of teacher librarians training programmes, according to the result related to the training needs of teacher librarians. Most of the respondents accepted the requirements mentioned in the survey. According to the research findings teacher librarians involved with collection development activities *without any guidelines. The collection development procedures varied from one school to another.* There is no established guideline for selecting or developing the collection.

According to the survey findings, school libraries are not practicing even traditional library work. The training of traditional library work also has to be modified to suit current requirement.

The very important part of the skill needs for a teacher librarian is library management and the resource management skills. The lack of training in these areas resulted weak management performance in the school libraries. Most of the school libraries are not well organized, not well planned and not properly arranged. Schools are very poorly equipped with library resources. Some times the school library is situated in one of the corner of the school or is limited to a very few book cupboards or racks. To avoid these restrictions, training programmes should be able to accelerate development of school libraries.

6. To promote the teacher librarians personal qualities, training programmes should be modernized according to the current requirements. Leadership styles and professional ethics can change teacher librarians attitudinal framework related to professional and personal values. This may be the most valuable part of any training programme, unconsciously to get more advantages. This subtle of training needs could not be explained accurately, because of unlimited meanings of professional ethics and personal qualities. It can be concluded from the findings that these professional and personal skills developed by the training programmes may change negative attitudes of the participants.

Finally, it can be concluded that current training programmes do not adhere the teacher librarians' professional requirements. Those training programmes should be revised or reorganized to get proper benefit for the school library and the achievement level of the school education.

The following recommendations are proposed for consideration to design the training programmes for the teacher librarians.

Recommendations

Based upon the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were suggested.

1. The higher authorities that have responsibilities in policymaking should pay attention to the teacher librarians training requirements due to new technological change in the world. Failure to provide the right training programmes may result low achievement of the school education. It should be better to revise the existing training programmes to catch the teacher librarians' needs and new worlds' changers.
2. It is very important to note that the training programmes should be reorganized immediately; otherwise expected results may not be obtained from the teacher librarians.

3. The major parties to provide training and education of teacher librarians can be identified. They are the National Institute of Library and Information Science (NILIS), Sri Lanka National Library Services Board (SLNLSB), Ministry of Education, and the Provincial Education Authorities (PEA). Those parties should be collaborating to organize suitable training programmes.
4. The training programmes for the teacher librarians should be based on teacher librarians training requirements, with the flexible changers according to the social environment.
5. It should be better to establish teacher librarians' duty list to direct and guide them in proper way to perform their duties.
6. The teacher librarians should be able to get their training on the areas such as library and information science, information technology, management of library, teaching methods, government rules and regulation in acquisition, financial management, and personal management.
7. Training programmes should be organized all over the country and reach the teacher librarians very easily. That may help teacher librarians to get their trainings at their regions. Most of the time teacher librarians have to go to the capital city for their training and education. According to the social, economic and transport problems faced by them,

they are unable to participating training and education programmes held at the capital city of Sri Lanka. This results in poor training and education in teacher librarians' profession.

8. It is better to recruit young bloods, which have degree certificates to develop the school libraries. Some of the respondents noted that the young teacher librarians could work long time period after they get the training. It helps the library field for good service to the patrons. On the other hand, young people can obtain good knowledge at the training programmes, because of their positive attitudes and good level of the understanding in training concept.

9. It is better to organize the practical training programmes to practice the library skills. Most of the respondents indicated that training programmes should be practical. Some of the library procedures such as cataloguing, computer based activities, and web based activities should be practiced.

10. Retraining and feedback should be included when designing training programmes for the same participants. Training should be provided as pre-service training before placing the teacher librarians in school libraries.

11. The education authorities should provide the higher education financial facilities for the teacher librarians. University education courses (Master or PhD) are expensive. Education authorities can make a plan to provide financial assistance for teacher librarians' further education.

12. The training programmes should include 60 % of library science subjects and 40 % of other subjects relevant to the library management, curriculum development, etc. The teacher librarians have to coordinate school curriculum, other subject coordinators and school activities other than library management and also library activities such as library management, user education, and library routine action etc. teacher librarians have to get knowledge at the training programmes to cover all these duties at the school library. It is suitable to organize library subjects and other subjects at the training programmes for teacher librarians.

13. The training programmes should be organized in different levels for different groups. For example, education officers, library assistants, and other related people in the libraries should participate in the library training programmes.

14. Training programmes should be flexible and easy to follow. Teacher librarians could not get good knowledge in rigid training programmes.

15. The trainers should identify the essential skills and training programmes. It should be based on those requirements. It should be helpful for the teacher librarians to perform their duty well. On the other hand, users will get an excellent service by the teacher librarians.

Recommendation for further research

As a result of the observation made in this study, a few suggestions are offered for further research.

1. A study with comparison of training programmes between developed and developing countries can be conducted to get an idea about well-planned training programmes.
2. A study should be conducted to determine suitable training methods for the teacher librarians. Most of the time training programmes which are not designed with appropriate training methods, failed in achieving its objectives.
3. A similar study can be conducted and include more samples and different categories of respondents.
4. The content of training programmes needs to be evaluated to determine its strengths and weaknesses.
5. A study should be better conducted in other areas to check for local or regional differences e.g. rural vs. urban.

Summary

This chapter has presented the summary of the research study and the findings, followed by conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study. It clearly noted the current situation of the teacher librarians' profession in Sri Lanka. There are some weaknesses in current training programmes, because existing training programmes do not satisfy teacher librarians training needs. Essential skills for the teacher librarians to develop at the training programmes are also recommended. The chapter concludes with the discussion on direction for further research that could point the ways to the development of teacher librarians' education and training.