

## **Strengthening School Libraries to Improve Quality of Education in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In relation to quality of education, academic libraries are expected to supply reliable and up to date scholarly information. In this connection, a preliminary survey was conducted in 26 school libraries (known as School Library and Learning Resource Centres (SLLRCs)) attached to the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, in view of strengthening SLLRCs as learning resource centres. Libraries in the schools selected through purposive sampling were assessed based on a checklist prepared for the purpose and Key-Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted with the respective school principal, library in-charge and students. Results revealed that 27% of the SLLRCs are functioning with inadequate physical resources. Further, compared to printed materials, electronic, audiovisual and other non-print resources are very limited. Scarcity of funding and qualified human resource, non-availability of library policy and procedure manual, and lack of support from school community are also observed. Hence, it is recommended that school administrations should consider SLLRC as an integral component of the education system and explore the funding opportunities, collaborate with other libraries in the region, improve the human resource status, and enhance the involvement of school community in the development of SLLRCs. In addition, Provincial Ministry of Education (NP) should take necessary steps to establish a School Library Development Unit (SLDU) to strengthen the SLLRCs as a centre for resource based learning and information literacy development.

**KEYWORDS:** School libraries, Quality of education, School Library and Learning Resource Centres, Academic libraries, Sri Lanka

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