

ABSTRACT

This study which is on school libraries in Kenya and their role in the education process, traces the global process of change in the development of education. It identifies factors that have activated this change including studies in the psychology of education, information explosion, information technology and current socio-economic developments. An outcome of these changes is the shift from the traditional teacher-centered method to the more 'progressive' child-centered approach to learning. This shift has introduced new methods of learning which rely on the use of a variety of learning resources. For the school library, this has resulted in a major shift from the traditional marginal role to a new concept that is integrated with the curriculum. The study outlines the conditions of the new perception of the school library. The historical development of the education system in Kenya is analysed as an underpinning of the county's school library development. The salient features of Kenya's education system and which have influenced the role of school libraries include a phenomenal growth in enrollments, and efforts by the Government to improve quality and ensure relevance. A review of school libraries! development reveals that although some progress has taken place, this has been slow and has not kept pace with changes in the education system. Literature reviews, and a field survey based on a postal questionnaire to a sample of secondary schools in the Central and Rift Valley Provinces, interviews and observation were used to investigate the current role and provision of school libraries in Kenya. This showed that school libraries are still at the traditional level where they are distinctly isolated from the rest of the school program, thus limiting their contribution to learning. Some of the prevalent constraints identified by the study include a low perception of the role of the school library, poor resource provision, and poor accommodation. The study acknowledges the problems imposed by stringent financial resources, but despite these, there are still ways through which school libraries could be improved, and their contribution to the education process enhanced.