Strategies for the Effective Utilisation of the School Library Resources by Junior Secondary Schools in Ilesa West Local Government Education Authority, Ilesa in Osun State, Nigeria

Gbotosho, Ajibola Sunmade[1] (Ph.D) & Adejumo, Adetola Anu[2]

Abstract

Education can be viewed as an inviolable concept needed to make an individual develop culturally, morally, technologically, religiously, economically and politically. School libraries are considered as learning laboratories whose equipment include all instructional materials required for educational purposes and development. These instructional materials should be managed with the assistance of well-trained school librarians and other library staff. School librarians are as well saddled with the responsibility of educating students and assisting them to develop the ability of solving problems associated with their Information needs. This paper focuses on examining the strategies for the effective utilisation of the school library resources by Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) in Ilesa West Local Government Education Authority (LGEA), Ilesa, Osun State. The schools in this Local Government Area had a total population of 10,210 students. Purposive sampling method was used where only seven (7) JSS were purposively selected for the study out of the ten (10) JSS. Again, purposive sampling technique was used to determine the class and number of students to be used in each of the sampled schools thus eliminating classes with no resources. The total number of JSS3 students stood at 674. Questionnaires were designed for both students and staff to collect pertinent data.

1.0 Background to the Problem

It is wildly acknowledged that education is the springboard for societal and global development, as it brings about substantial and meaningful changes throughout the world. Scholars opine that the greatest investment a nation can make, particularly with reference to national development, is the one committed to the education of its citizens (Adeyemi, 2010, 2011). He further asserted that, like other nations in the world, Nigeria too had come to appreciate the focal position of education as an instrument par excellence for achieving individual and societal development. This has been established in the provision on basic education in the National Policy on Education (NPE) by the (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2014). All successive governments have been emphasizing the provision of basic education since 1977. The acquisition of sound education helps one to contribute greatly to the development of the society of where he/she belongs. The aims and objectives of secondary education cannot be achieved without availability of physical facilities. These facilities include provision of library and other essential services that are needed to implement the contents of school curriculum. It is the availability of these that have made the school to be regarded as a place for receiving quality education. Because education is the process of cultural transmission and renewal, the library is provided within a school to safe-guard knowledge; preserve the cultural heritage and provide adequate Information for education and research purposes to students and other users (Abdullahi, 1998; Ayaz, Ali, Khan, llah & Ullah, 2017; Botool & Webber, 2017; Godfrey, Rutledge, Mowdood, Reed, Bigler & Soehner, 2017; Kleijnen, Huysmans, Ligtvoet & Elbers, 2017) as cited by (Suleiman, Hanafi &Thanslikan, 2018).

[1] Principal Librarian, Sola Akinrinade Central Library, Osogbo, Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria.
Email: gbotoshoajibola@gmail.com, Phone No: 08165718942
[2] Senior System Analyst, Sola Akinrinade Central Library, Osogbo, Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria.

The importance of school Libraries in the socio-economic and technological development of a developing country like Nigeria cannot be over emphasized, yet Nigerians, both young and old seldomly use libraries for life-long education regardless of libraries being social agencies that promote scholarship and therefore enhance human and national development. Studies of Nigeria education system revealed several factors affecting library service in the school system. Ajegbomogun and Salaam (2011) as well as Ogbonna (2015) observed that some libraries were stocked with literatures that were not only out of date, but also unrelated to the Information needs and interests of the students. Moreover, collection development has become more difficult with escalating book and publishing costs. Studies by Onadiran and Onadiran, (1977, 1989) as cited by Ogunronbi (2001), showed that there were almost no libraries in the classrooms at primary and secondary schools in Nigeria, and that the provision of useful supplementary literary materials was virtually non-existent. Contrastingly, where libraries exist in our primary and secondary schools, they are limited to elite and private schools which are often models that cannot be replicated on a national scale. The development of school libraries in Nigeria has been described as "accidental" because, though almost all the secondary schools had libraries, books were not there (Adeyemi, 2009; Anyawu, Obichere and Ossai, Onah, 2013)as cited by (Sulieman, Hanafi & Thanashkan, 2018).

It is disheartening that despite the acceptance of the need for, and value of libraries by the government, as expressed in the NPE (1981), no funds have been appropriated to implement this policy decision at primary and secondary school levels. In the same vein, public library support for primary and post-primary schools is severely limited and only lip service is paid to the training of teacher librarians who could lead students on to growth and pleasure, as well as on to new understanding and discovery (Ogunrombi & Adio, 1993). Because of under-funding by the Nigerian government, current periodicals, books, magazines, non-fictions and fictions that can support teaching and learning were not there. School libraries these days, are viewed as warehouse for old books and magazines; some of which are covered with mosquitoes and dust that had gathered over time, usually with mismatched tables and chairs which are mixed with the ageing shelves. This study has been carried out to investigate the strategies for the effective utilisation of the school library resources by JSS in Ilesa West LGEA, Ilesa, Osun state, Nigeria.

2.0 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are to:

    I. Identify the major factors militating against the use of school library resources by students,
    II. Ascertain the available resources (both human and materials) in the school library,
    III. Determine strategies to enhance effective utilisation of school library resources by students,
    IV. Find out the extent to which students utilise the available library resources in JSS in Ilesa West Local Government Area (LGA) of Osun state, and
    V. Investigate the roles of the school library in facilitating learning in JSS.

3.0 Research Questions

    I. What is the perception of students, of the school library education?
    II. What are the strategies to enhance their effective utilisation by students?
    III. What are the available resources (human and materials) in the school libraries?
    IV. What are the major factors militating against the use of the school library resources by students?
    V. To what extent are school library resources utilised by students?

4.0 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the strategies for the effective utilisation of the school library resources by JSS in Ilesa West LGA, Ilesa, Osun state, Nigeria and to adjudge the level of use and for what intention. It is noteworthy that a nation's investment in educating its citizens for national development is the greatest commitment of its government to its citizens. On this note, the school library is committed to the development of the basic education sector, which is the foundation of any education set-up. Meeting the need for adequate provision of Information materials, staff, infrastructural facilities, accommodation becomes essential for the school library to perform its roles effectively. School libraries are established to support the educational curriculum of schools, which could only be achieved through various means such as the provision of library resources, which are relevant to the school curricula, provision of various Information services ranging from technical to readers' services to aid the quality of education of students and other users in the community.

If the school library is well organised, it will help the students to effectively utilise the resources in the school library. Also, it will be of great interest to the students, librarians and library patrons in the JSS. Similarly, library patrons, governments and the Ministry of Education will use the data from this study as adjuration for improving the use of school library resources.

5.0 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to ten public JSS in Ilesa West LGEA, Ilesa in Osun State. The Schools are as follows:

- Agunlejika Junior Secondary Grammar School,
- Arimoro Junior High School,
- Aromolaran Junior Grammar School,
- Ajimoko Junior High School,
- African church Junior Grammar School,
- George Burton Memorial Junior College,
- Ife-Oluwa C&S Commercial Junior High School,
- Methodist Junior High School 1,
- Methodist Junior High School 2, and
- Methodist Junior High School 3.

6.0 The Study Setting

The empirical setting of this study was limited to JSS in Ilesa West LGEA, Ilesa in Osun state, Nigeria, to enhance effective utilisation of the school library resources by the JSS. The locations of these schools enjoy felicitous and robust climate with its aesthetic atmospheric condition. The schools are accessible by road from all parts of the country. There is regular road transportation among the communities, towns and all parts of the study area in Osun state.

7.0 Literature Review

The school library promotes the love of reading and provides a service for this purpose. One of the functions of the school library is to educate learners on Media and Information literacy skills such as: to identify, select, organise and evaluate Information. Hoskins (2006) used the following definition: that the name "school library" is used in its generic form to incorporate all types and models of collection development and delivery that provide materials in favour of a resource-based teaching and learning approach to learners and teachers in schools. Kwazulu-Natal Department of Education, as cited by Boelens and Dam (2012), pointed out that a teacher librarian could be described at the international level; to identify what qualifications a person has, and what his/her specific functions are within the school. Thus, as published by the (Australian Library and Information Association [ALIA], 2011), teacher librarians support and implement the vision of their school communities through advocating and building effective library and Information services and programmes that contribute to the development of life-long learners. A teacher librarian holds recognised teaching qualifications and qualifications in librarianships. This is defined as eligibility for an associate (i.e. professional) membership for the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). Within the broad fields of education and librarianship, teacher librarians are uniquely qualified. This is valuable because curriculum knowledge and pedagogy are combined with library and Information management knowledge and skills (ALIA, 2011 and Australia School Library Association [ASLA], 2002). It should be possible or even ethical to apply this, or a similar definition from a developed country, at international level to school library staff in developing and emerging countries. The authors agreed that for school libraries to be accorded their proper standing, the school/teacher librarian must be contributing to quality teaching and authentic learning.

The conventional practice in Nigerian primary and secondary schools is for the school library to be under the charge of a teacher-librarian. Usually, this teacher is a senior one, without library qualification. In the northern part of the country, some school libraries are managed by diploma holders. In other cases, libraries are kept open by a library assistant, clerk and student prefects. In some cases, teacher-libraries are given a reduced load or even full-time assignment in the library. But most often, they have a full teaching load in addition to their library duties. Nigerian school libraries therefore have problems of both quality and quantity in personnel. There is need for the position of the school librarian and for appropriate training to equip people for the position (Boelens & Dan, 2012).

Policies are written agreement meant to be followed to the letter for accomplishment of specific tasks such as it is demonstrated in the provision of basic education in the NPE of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to which all successive governments have been referring till date. Also, these are standing plans that provide guidelines for decision making. Most especially, policies that have to do with libraries, need to be written down with adequate and accurate Information with all institutions involved, drawing up the policies that will be beneficial to all as cited by (Itsekor, Jegbefume & Oyebola, 2019). Omagbemi, Odunewu and Osifeso (2015) cited O'Reilly and Robert (1977) to state that a system must accurately sense its relevant environment to process Information, hence make policies, coordinate and control its sub-units and its members for it to survive. They concluded that policy makers, most especially in education, in an ideal situation would select Information from those sources perceived to offer the highest quality of Information. They also postulated that there is positive correlation between the quality of Information needed by policy makers and policy effective performance. In most African countries, primary and secondary schools that have libraries stocked with enough books, periodicals and Internet access to read and study for their students are considered a rare superfluity. The concept of school library is often unknown to the students, and the more common scenario is that a student is not likely to visit the library until he/she is able to pursue higher education. For a university to be accredited, one of the conditions to be fulfilled is to have a library on the campus. However, for schools, it is not compulsory to have a library on their premises yet.

In 2007 and then in 2010, school libraries were included in the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)/Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) World Reports Series (Bothma, 2007, 2010). United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2010) and the World Bank (2011), both confirmed that 21.4% of all illiterates and adults live in sub-Saharan Africa. International data suggest that school libraries play important roles in promoting reading and literacy. Furthermore, it is possible to do a comparative research among schools with and without a library. We may even conclude that the lack of libraries (and by extension books) throughout the African continent, is contributing to the lack of a reading culture. According to Boelens (2010), the school library should be the beating heart of a school that is supporting learning and teaching for the entire school community. He as well emphasized that a school library is a function, not a place. It is neither merely a book collection centre nor only an e-library. It is a service centre, offering advice, professional development and knowledge of appropriate learning and teaching materials in digital and non-digital formats. Chiefly important among service resources are human resources. In addition, Phillipe (2011) stated that a teacher-librarian contributes to quality teaching and authentic learning. They are qualified to enable all members of the school community to become critical thinkers, independent learners, enthusiastic readers and global citizens who can participate in a democratic, culturally-diverse and just society.

The NPE (2014), from the first, to the present seventh edition, had stated that school library shall be established in all schools. This is very important because the place of school library in providing a good foundation for inculcating a good knowledge base for both staff and students has longed been acknowledged. Unagha (2008) asserted that a library is more than a building, but appropriate buildings are necessary because it is difficult to develop a library without a location. A school library is part of a school. It should have space for the collection and should not share space with other things. He additionally noted that effort by government to promote education and library in Nigeria have failed because there was no provision for school libraries implementation of these programmes. There is need for the policy to emphasize the planning of library infrastructure and provision of Information resources. In Nigeria, the school library and Information services in the education system are in three levels, namely: federal, state and local government. These levels must work in synergy to ensure access to quality library and Information services for all. Ugbona (2007) noted that school libraries are few and unevenly spread over the country. Similarly, Iseteor (2011) stated that amongst the different types of libraries in Nigeria, the school library is the one faced with more challenges in the nation and it is also the most crucial, as it forms the basis on which other knowledge are built. School library and Information services should support dynamic learning programme in the Information age. The early concept of library was that of store house of books and librarian being custodians of them (Omera, 2008). But the concept has changed over time with changing trends in educational reform to assume its present status to match with the present realities. Today, the school library serves as a centre for a wide variety of education media. According to him, the World Book Encyclopaedia (1995) spells out these educational media to include books, magazines, newspaper, pamphlets, recordings, maps, films, photographs, and paintings. In addition, some have computer terminals with access to audio and visual materials from a main Information storage centre, cameras, projectors, tape recorders, textbooks, audio-visuals and reference materials in various formats.

Adetoro (2006) affirmed that books and audio-visuals supplement and enrich the teaching and learning situation in the schools. Etim (2010) stated that, generally, the policy-makers in Nigeria exhibited inadequate recognition of Information as a vital component in the process of policy analysis and the lack of a tradition of integrating Information analysis into policy analysis.

8.0 Research Methodology

The population of the study consists of students in Junior Secondary Schools in Ilesa West LGA. There are ten (10) JSS in the local government with the students' population of ten thousand two hundred and ten (10,210). Besides, a survey method was used for the study which was concerned with generalised statistics that resulted when data were abstracted from a number of individual JSS within the area in cross sections, to determine the prevailing condition of this research work in the area selected. Similarly, a purposive sampling technique was used where only seven (7) JSS were purposively selected for the study. The choice of these schools was premised on the fact that they had, to some extent, certain level of Information materials in their libraries which the researchers considered could constitute a sample with reference to the research purpose. Purposive sampling technique was used to adjudicate the class and number of students to be used in each of the sampled schools. The JSS3 students that were said to have been properly introduced to the school library and at the same time better placed to respond to the researchers' inquiry were purposively considered and selected by the researcher. The total number of JSS3 students in the sampled schools stood at six hundred and seventy-four (674).The major instruments that were used in this research to explicate facts from relevant data were oral interview and questionnaire. The questionnaire administered on both the students and library staff were designed and used to collect Information for pertinent data. The items in the questionnaire were divided into five (5) sections. These were A, B, C, D and E. The first instrument was the questionnaire used to collect data from the respondents in the sampled schools. The researchers administered the questionnaire personally with the assistance of some of the teachers. This was done through direct contact with the six hundred and seventy-four (674) students. Nevertheless, copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the schools according to the number of JSS3 students in the sampled schools. The researchers, with the assistance of some of the teachers in each of the sampled schools distributed the questionnaire to the students and waited for them to fill after which they were collected from the students. Likewise, the same method was used for the library staff in each of the sampled schools. On the other hand, oral interview was used in gathering and collection of data for analysis. This tool/instrument was the technique employed for collecting Information from others personally where questionnaire could not be used. The data obtained from the questionnaire and oral interview were coded to facilitate analysis. The researchers analysed and interpreted the data from respondents using statistical tools such as frequency, mean and percentages.

9.0 Presentation of Results and Analysis of Data

Table 1: This table shows the availability of human resources in the school libraries.

S/N	Personnel	No of Personnel	%
1	Clerical Officers	5	31.25
2	Library Prefects	7	43.75
3	Cleaner(s)	1	6.25
4	Library Assistants	-	0
5	Library Attendants	-	0
6	School Librarians	-	0
7	Teacher-Librarians	3	18.75
	TOTAL	16	100

The analysis of the result above shows that there are only three(3) teacher librarians, one (1) cleaner, seven(7) library prefects and five(5) clerical officers, while there were no library assistants, library attendants and school librarian. This indicates inadequacy of human resources, most especially well-trained librarians in the libraries in the LGA.

Table 2: This table shows the available Information Material Resources in the school libraries across the LGA.

S/N	Information Material Resources	Available	Not Available
1	Interactive Board	- - -	√
2	Film (16mm/18mm colour / Black & White with duration in minutes)	- - -	√
3	Tape (reel to reel, cassette, mono or stereo with duration in minutes magnetic pause)	- - -	√
4	Slides (number of slides in set)	- - -	√
5	Record (duration in minutes, revolution per minutes [rpm], mono or stereo)	- - -	√
6	Chalkboard	√	- - -
7	Textbooks	√	- - -
8	Dictionary	√	- - -
9	Globes	- - -	√
10	Atlas	√	- - -
11	Computer assisted in structural materials	- - -	√
12	Television Lesson	- - -	√
13	Radio	√	- - -
14	Picture, graphs and chart	√	- - -
15	Maps	- - -	√
16	Record and record players	- - -	√
17	Motion picture and related projection equipment	- - -	√

The analysis of the result above shows that available Information sources include: chalkboard, textbooks, dictionary, atlas, radio, picture, graphs and chart. Majority of them were not up to date. Furthermore, Information sources such as interactive board, film, (16mm/8mm colour/black and white with duration in minutes, tape (reel to reel, cassettes, mono or stereo, with duration in minutes, magnetic pause); slides (number of slides in the set); record (with duration in minutes, rpm, mono or stereo; globes, computer assisted in structural materials; television lesson and maps were not available. Arua and Chinaka (2011) found that students were unhappy with the lack of school library Information resources and that most of the library resources available in schools do not please their needs. This is due to unavailability of up-to-date library materials. From the researchers' observation on the schools visited, majority of these Information materials were not available not to talk of been up to date. Ajegbomogun and Salaam (2011) observed that library had been neglected in secondary schools most especially in public schools. They claimed that about 90 percent of secondary schools in Nigeria were largely government funded. This lack of funding is antithetical and retarded positive change in the school system. Therefore, the inadequacy or non-availability of Information materials and lack of funding for the provision of library services in JSS slowed down effective teaching and learning process in schools. The researchers also observed that instructional materials of hardware and software were not in existence in the JSS libraries investigated in Ilesa West LGA. The effect of the absence of these resources will lead to inefficiency in achieving the aims and objectives of the school and educational system in Nigeria (Omera, 2008).

Table 3: Factors militating against the use of these school library Information resources

S/N	Items	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	MEAN
1	We have no library at all	17	201	270	186	168.5
2	The Library is always locked	49	102	355	168	168.5
3	Lack of reading tables and chairs	208	360	69	37	168.5
4	Inadequate Space	19	83	362	210	168.5
5	Non-availability of relevant materials or instructional materials	215	290	107	62	168.5
6	Lack of qualified Librarians to access students	303	267	61	43	168.5
7	Textbooks	13	24	297	340	168.5
8	Dictionary	214	316	85	59	168.5
9	Globes	05	88	364	217	168.5
10	Atlas	365	290	10	9	168.5
11	Computer assisted in structural materials	282	301	54	37	168.5

Analyses of the above result showed that almost all the students agreed that numerous factors serve as hindrance to students' use of library resources. However, few of these were not as pronounced as others, such as items 4, 7 and 9. As observed by the researchers, other obstructing factors are: lack of reading tables and chairs, non-availability of relevant materials or instructional materials, lack of qualified librarian to guide students to access materials, most materials were outdated, lack of orientation on use of school library, and lack of relevant textbooks. In support of the fact that the above-mentioned factors are militating against effective provision of library services in JSS, (Adeyemi, 2009, Ajegbomogun & Salaam, 2011; Arua & Chinaka 2011; Bernard & Dulle, Ogbonna, 2015) confirmed that secondary school students faced challenges in using school library. The challenges include scarcity of up to date reading materials, dearth of sitting facilities, absence of Informational professional librarian for handling materials, as well as non-existence of instructional facilities. Adeyemi (2009) reported that students' inability to have access to library materials in the school library is a common trend in majority of secondary schools in Nigeria.

Table 4: Strategies to enhance effective utilisation of library resources by students

S/N	Items	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	MEAN
1	Provision of reading tables and chairs	206	362	73	33	168.5
2	Provision of relevant textbooks and current materials	280	303	55	36	168.5
3	Making library resources accessible to students	312	297	44	21	168.5
4	Provision of non-print materials in the school library	301	352	10	11	168.5
5	Employment of trained library personnel to assist students	366	297	7	4	168.5
6	Provision of enough accommodation and instructional materials	216	315	60	83	168.5
7	Organising library Orientation for students	210	288	100	76	168.5
8	Provision of Library period on the timetable	368	232	44	30	168.5

The result above shows that almost all the students agreed to the fact that the strategies should be put in place to enhance effective utilisation of the Information library resources by them. For instance, item 8 (provision of library period on the time table was already included, but it was used as a free period in majority of the JSS investigated in Ilesa West LGEA. Almost all the students agreed that if the items above were properly put in place, as in items 1 - 8, effective utilisation of library Information resources by the students will be enhanced.

10. Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it could be concluded that for the school library to run effective and efficient services, there must be employment of trained library personnel to assist students and provision of non-print materials in the school library. The school libraries should be fully equipped in all the JSS in Ilesa West LGEA, Ilesa in Osun state, Nigeria. The researchers' findings have consistence with the study of Ogbonna & Eze (2015), who opined that some school libraries were stocked with books that were not only out of date, but also unrelated to the Information needs and interests of the students. Thus, collection development has become more difficult with escalating books and publishing cost.

Correspondingly, because of underfunding, there were no provision of relevant current materials; non-employment of trained library personnel; no provision of reading tables and chairs; and no provision of non-print materials in the school library. Further, the school libraries, these days, are considered as store for old books and magazines, some of which are concealed with mosquitoes and dust that had met over time. On this note, they cannot function properly and effectively as an integral part of the total educational programme of schools. Under these circumstances, individualized instructions, which provide for individual differences in learning abilities would be impracticable. There is urgent need to improve the quality of school libraries in Ilesa West LGA of Osun state, Nigeria to take advantage of modern instructional techniques in the educational sector. Quality education delivery is made possible through Information Technology means. Through the proliferation of ICT, children and adult are being exposed to variety of Information sources, but they need to be properly guided in their choice of Information seeking and usage.

11.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested to policy in order to find solutions to the observed aberrations and enhance efficacious strategies for the effective utilisation of the school library resources by JSS in Ilesa West LGEA in Ilesa, Osun state, Nigeria:

i) Librarians should form consortium and partner with governmental bodies, departments, institutions and other relevant stakeholders like the association of book publishers and vendors and collaborate with non-governmental organizations to publicise and promulgate the services of the school media resource centre.

ii) Employment of trained, qualified and skilled librarians for school libraries is very essential and compulsory.

iii) Majority of school libraries in Nigeria lack basic library resources and services in public schools. It is important to provide allocation for school library services in the government budgetary allocations. Educational Trust Fund (ETF) grants and assistance should be peculiarly extended to school libraries.

iv) State library board or Nigeria Library Association (NLA) should organise development and training courses for school librarians, media specialists and media technologists to enhance their efficiency.

v) The issue of space has hindered the effectiveness of library services. Little space limits the resources and services provided by the school library. Therefore, for effectiveness of the school library and its numerous services, adequate room and not a store should be provided within the schools.

vi) The present stock is inadequate in number and quality as shown in the results. The data supplied relating to the collection in schools are below government recommendations that a school with environment of 500 students or less should have 1,500 titles of reading materials.

vii) Use of library should be included in the curriculum of JSS. The teaching of this subject will expose students to the importance of the library resources and services to their educational growth and academic achievement in their present school and beyond their present level.

viii) There should be efficient management maintenance and security policies for library resources. This will enhance preservation and protection of library resources.

ix) The stock of the library in schools should be good, adequate in number and quality and varied so that school's curriculum and programmes would be reflected.

x) Since findings revealed inadequate library materials and facilities in JSS as expressed by students, it is of necessity that government budgetary provisions are in favour of the procurement of up-to-date library materials(such as textbooks, newspapers, magazines, novels etc.) and facilities (such as tables, chairs, computers, Internet, printers, etc.)

xi) The state ministry of education should provide strategies to regulate the modes of operation, procedures and principles of administrative and management practices in all the JSS libraries in Osun state Nigeria.

xii) Government and library management should ensure the development of a multimedia-based collection. This enables individual learning and makes learning interesting. Multimedia collection will also attract the students to the use of the school library.

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