

Development Information needs and issues of Estate Workers in Sri Lanka.

W.A Weerasooriya, Priyanwada Wanigasooriya, Rev.L Piyarathana, Manori Samarakoon
Department of Library and Information, Science, University of Kelaniya

ABSTRACT

People live in a divided world: between rich and poor, healthy and sick, literate and illiterate, democratic and authoritarian and between empowered and deprived. Human development is a process of enlarging people's freedom to do and be what they value in the life, empowering people as active agents in the development process. People are both the beneficiaries and agents of human development both as individual and as group in common sense with others. Information remains as the fountainhead for human development and the economic growth today. Information is a catalyst for the development, and it is classified in different contexts. 'Development Information' indicates the whole types of information that lead for the economic, social, political and cultural development of a nation or a country. This research discusses the information needs and issues of Estate Workers in Sri Lanka with special reference to Nuwara Eliya district, focusing the Development Information context.

The objectives of this study are to have a clear picture about Development Information, to identify development information needs, to identify the ways that the estate workers fulfill their information needs, to identify the information providers and public opinion makers in the community and to identify the issues faced by the Estate Workers in the information flow in Sri Lanka.

The research method adopted was the survey research of using questionnaires, interviews and observation as principal research techniques. The research was based on a field visits selecting 150 Estate Worker families as a sample in three *Gramasewa Divisions; Lidula, Watagoda and Talawakale*.

Primary data revealed that majority of Estate Workers are illiterate and they did not have rights to do their works on their own. *Talewar and neighbors* are the main information providers and they have less confidence with government officials such as Grama Sewaka, Midwife, Health Inspectors and Doctors. Further they were less entitled for the facilities such as good health conditions, nutrition, sanitary facilities, access to maternity services provided in other sectors. They live hand to mouth life and not custom to save a certain percentage of money from their fort night earning. To overcome these issues adult education is a prime necessity and audio visual teaching methods should be used to increase the awareness of information and its access for their day today life. It is essential to develop more infrastructure facilities among the Estate Worker communities.

Keywords: Development information, Information services, Information sources, Information needs, Estate Workers