

2.59 Information Literacy Skills Development Initiative at the University of Kelaniya Library : Findings of the Preliminary Survey of the New Student Intake: 2006/2007

L.A.Jayatissa
Library, University of Kelaniya

ABSTRACT

The Sri Lankan school education system is now paying attention to shift their focus from a teacher centered system to a more learner centered education system. However, due to the extreme competitive nature of the GCE (Advanced level) Examination, students have become more teacher dependent, rather than self learners. However, this situation has become a serious drawback for the university undergraduate at the higher education level. This is adversely affecting the proper utilization of the library resources and services.

The answer to these problems lies in user education in general and developing information literacy (IL) skills in particular. Initiatives have been made to address this issue at the University level by the Library. One of the primary requisites of initiating such a programme is to understand the present level of new students in terms of their library use and skills. As such, a questionnaire was sent to all new applicants (1,976) for registration for the 2006/2007 academic year to investigate their library behavior and related issues. 95% of the students responded and a random sample of 1,000 was selected for the investigation. This sample consisted of 560 Social Science and Humanities students, 305 Science students and 135 Commerce students. The summarized findings are given below:

Their school library according to the size of book collection

| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| Up to 1,000 volumes | 04.5% |
| 1,001 to 2,000 volumes | 24.0% |
| 2,001 to 5,000 volumes | 17.5% |
| Over 5,000 volumes | 18.1% |

This shows that 70.3% of students have come from a school where the library has a book collection of above 2,000 volumes. Although this figure is small according to international standards, it shows that there are somewhat significant libraries. This factor is specially important, as 99.8% of the respondents mentioned that their schools have school libraries and 98.3% said that there was a school librarian. Further, 43.4% mentioned that they have visited the school library at least once a week. In addition 49.6% said that they have used a public library.