

2.53 Sports Information Needs in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Information is a crucial factor in all human endeavors including sports. Today sports has become an academic discipline surpassing its original definition which is solely based on physical exercises and skills. Now it is connected to many other fields of studies in Social Sciences, Sciences, Medicine, Management and Humanities.

Presently in Sri Lanka too, sports has been recognized as an important academic discipline. Hence a variety of academic courses, activities and research are being conducted in national institutions including universities. As a result the provision of required information for those who engaged in both practical and theoretical sides of sports has become a necessity.

Despite this need and demand for information, library facilities to cater to the purpose are inadequate in the few sports schools and institutes in Sri Lanka.

The objective of the research is to find the sports information needs of those who are engaged and interested in multiple areas in the discipline of sports in Sri Lanka.

A qualitative and a quantitative survey was done to gather data in the areas of (1) objectives of sports information searching (2) types of needs (3) expected information (4) preferable formats (5) available sports publications in Sri Lanka (5) problems of information searching and (6) effectiveness of existing sports information system in Sri Lanka. Questionnaire was administrated among selected sports personnel, trainers, administrators, coaches, sports officers, lecturers, doctors, sponsors and other interested people and the method adopted for data collection was non – probability convenience sampling method.

Out of 200 respondents, responses were obtained from nearly 60% people.

Data analysis revealed that a large number of respondents sought sport information mainly to develop their knowledge of professional guidance for entertainment, research and education. They were generally interested in current sports information on theoretical background of practice, rules and regulations, sports medicine, available especially in electronic formats. It was also revealed that most of the users encountered with problems related to information searching, mainly due to the non – availability of guidance in searching and retrieving information. Among other problems disorganized and outdated collections, lack of reference sources, lack of computers and internet facilities were who observed.

The need for well organized special sports library systems, updated collections of printed and electronic resources and professional guidance to improve information skills and information literacy of users are among the major suggestions of the study.