

Arulanantham, S.  
Navaneethkrishnan, S.  
PAPER

### **Impact of User Education Programs in the Library, University of Jaffna: An Appraisal**

S. Arulanantham, S. Navaneethkrishnan, Library, University of Jaffna

Libraries function as the driving force in achieving the target of the universities and other higher educational institutions in the world. User education is considered as an important element of the services provided by any library. It includes various programs of instruction, education and exploration provided by libraries to users to enable them to make more effective, efficient and independent use of information sources, services and facilities including formal and informal instruction delivered by a librarian or other staff member one-on-one or in a group. The goal of user education should be to improve the quality of users' research output and ensure lifelong learning.

User education programs need continuous revision to be up to date with the changing information environment. Also, it is expected that written objectives for instruction should be derived from the written profiles of the information needs of the users. Even though user education programs are carried out in Sri Lankan University libraries in the form of library orientation for first year students during the inauguration session of the faculties, lecturing is the most commonly used method applied by most of the Universities for this purpose.

User education programs are conducted by the Library, University of Jaffna in various forms. In general, library orientation lectures (with a library visit) are conducted for the newly admitted students. It was extended as session of three weeks covering 20 hours with support from the Faculty of Management. Information Literacy development program is conducted in the form of permanent exhibits at micro level in important corners of the reader services section covering user awareness, library orientation, bibliographic instruction and interest profiling which are the four components of user education programs. An exhibition named as 'Path to Knowledge' was held as a user education program at macro level in 2009.

The objective of this study is to assess the impact of user education programs in the Library, University of Jaffna. This research paper provides a basic understanding of impacts of the user education programs, based on the quantitative and descriptive analysis of the readers' visits, opinions, feedback and the developments encountered after the programs.

The findings of the study show that the remarkable (20%) increase in number of visits of readers, enrichment of their information literacy level, appreciation and collaboration of departments, development of library awareness and documentation culture are the major impacts of the user education programs of the Library, University of Jaffna.