

ABSTRACT

This is an exploratory study of the leisure reading habits and interests among secondary school students and their use of the school library facilities. Using simple random sampling, three hundred male and female students were selected from ten secondary schools. The survey instrument was designed in the form of a structured questionnaire comprising a series of sequenced questions. The findings highlighted some of the factors related to reading habits and interests in Sri Lanka. It is also hoped that this study will stimulate further in depth studies which may help to improve the reading habits and interests and to increase the value of school library and reading materials in general to students in secondary schools in Sri Lanka. The findings showed that the students read regularly outside school hours, but their reading appears to be confined mainly to text books. They preferred to read nonfiction over fiction material. Reading, therefore, was undertaken mainly for acquiring knowledge or for study purpose. Consequently they used the library mainly to study rather than read for leisure. Most have positive attitude towards the library but did not use the tools the library offered and expressed dissatisfaction with their library's collection. The results of this survey indicate several problems which need to be solved if the habit of reading is to extend beyond "reading to learn". Students also need to be made aware of the importance of the school library resources in their education and in leisure time. Library instructions need to be enforced to enable students to become more familiar with library utilization techniques so that the library resources could be more fully utilized for their own benefits.