

ABUSE OF LIBRARY MATERIALS IN MAIN LIBRARY UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA SRI LANKA: PERCEPTIONS OF THE FINAL YEAR STUDENTS

B.N.G.S. Premarathne

*Library, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
sp12386@gmail.com.*

The abuse of library materials by marking, underlining, removing pages/parts of the pages, binding, barcodes, call number labels and damaging or defacing library materials is a threat to library collection. According to stock count carried out 2008, 35 books (out of 3360 books) which were highly abused were removed from the Arts and Archaeology collection in the Main Library. This is tremendous challenge to protect the collection. Therefore this survey was conducted to find possible solution to protect the collection. The objectives of the survey were to identify various forms of abuse, to identify the reasons for the abuse and to identify the possible solutions to protect the library collection. The survey was conducted by using questionnaires with close ended questions. All final year students of the following Departments were selected for the study as they use the Arts and Archaeology collection especially to preparation of their final year dissertations. From Department of Archaeology 15 students were selected and 12(80%) responded, from Department of History 48 were selected and 44(92%) responded and the Department of Fine Arts 11 students were selected and 07 (64%) responded. The results of the survey were as follows. Respondents have found various forms of abusing library materials. 68% of students selected removing of pages, 79% indicated that writing notes in the text books and 68% selected highlighting /underlining the sentences. Reasons for abuse of the library materials: 60% of students said that rare materials not allowed to be photocopied, 68% claimed that inadequate number of copies and 49% indicated high cost of photocopying charges. The respondents proposed a variety of strategies to minimize the abuse, 92% expressed that to charge the full cost of library materials, 65% said that to cancellation of membership and 25% said to suspension of membership. Responses for the collection protection strategies: 90% suggested to user education and awareness, 87% suggested developing collection ownership attitudes, 84% said that installation of security cameras and 90% indicated providing electronic information resources. Suggestions of respondents to protect the library materials: 90% said that to conduct regular library orientation programmes. 88% expressed that digitization of rare materials, 96% said that it should be improved competence in security officers. 79% suggested to installation of electronic checking system. The study recommends that proper orientation to users. The number of copies should be increased and improve the photocopying services of the library. Recruit more trained security personnel. Regularly reviewed set of library instructions should be drawn. Campaigns against abuse of library material should be launched: Posters containing warning against theft and mutilation should be conspicuously pasted on the notice boards inside and outside the library, Introduction of an electronic checking system like CCTV camera.