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Use Microsoft Word to type out the manuscript on ISO A4 (212 x 297 mm), with margins of at least 25 mm (1 inch). Number pages consecutively, beginning with the title page and put the page number in the lower right-hand corner of each page.

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

It is my pleasure to present Volume 40, Issue II of the Sri Lanka Library Review (SLLR), the peer-reviewed scholarly journal of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA). Since its establishment in 1962, SLLR has served as an important platform for the dissemination of research and professional knowledge in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS). As an open-access, biannual journal available through Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL), SLLR continues to promote the sharing of scholarly work among researchers, practitioners, and students both nationally and internationally.

All manuscripts submitted to the journal undergo a rigorous double-blind peer-review process to ensure their academic quality, originality, and relevance to the LIS profession. The articles published in this issue reflect the journal's ongoing commitment to advancing research and fostering professional discourse on contemporary issues affecting libraries, information services, and knowledge management.

This issue comprises four research articles, all published in English. The articles address diverse aspects of Library and Information Science, including the use of Virtual Reading Rooms for learning and research, the role of the University of Jaffna Library in heritage preservation and academic development, a bibliometric analysis of LIS research in Sri Lanka, and the information needs and information-seeking behavior of senior secondary school students in the Vavuniya North Educational Zone. Together, these contributions offer valuable insights into contemporary issues and developments in the LIS field.

Collectively, these studies contribute valuable insights into research trends, user behavior, academic library services, digital learning environments, and the broader role of libraries in supporting education and knowledge development.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the authors for their valuable contributions and to the reviewers for their time, expertise, and constructive feedback, which have significantly enhanced the quality of the published papers. I also wish to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of the Editorial Board in bringing this issue to publication.

I trust that the articles presented in this issue will be of value to researchers, librarians, educators, and students, and I encourage continued scholarly engagement and future contributions to the Sri Lanka Library Review.

Editor-in-Chief

Sri Lanka Library Review

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Student Perceptions and Usage of Virtual Reading Rooms for Learning and Research at the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka

Ranawella, T.C.¹

Abstract

Advancements in technology have led to a rapid expansion of digital resources in higher education, transforming the role of academic libraries beyond traditional print-based services. Academic libraries have increasingly adopted digital strategies to ensure effective access to both print and electronic resources. Within this context, Virtual Reading Rooms (VRRs) have emerged as structured digital platforms that provide organized access to curated scholarly materials (Emory University Libraries, n.d.). In response, the library at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU), in collaboration with academic staff, developed faculty-based VRRs using open-access resources to support teaching, learning, and research. This study investigates students' perceptions and usage of VRRs at KDU, focusing on accessibility, resource utilization, and the influence of faculty-level promotion on student engagement. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining a structured online questionnaire administered to students across all faculties with semi-structured interviews conducted with library professionals to complement and validate the quantitative findings. Using the Krejcie and Morgan Table, a stratified sample of 515 students was selected from a population of 6,304 across all faculties. Students generally perceived faculty-based VRRs as valuable resources that support learning and research through access to digital academic materials. However, a gap persisted between awareness and actual usage, with institutional promotion and curriculum integration influencing student engagement. E-books and course-related materials were the most frequently accessed resources, while technical challenges, limited familiarity, and a preference for printed materials constrained usage. The findings underscore the need for increased awareness, enhanced user support, and greater academic integration to improve VRR utilization.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Digital Libraries, Kotelawala Defence University, Open Access Resources, Teaching and Learning Support, Virtual Reading Rooms.

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Introduction

Technological advancements have brought significant changes to higher education, particularly in resource management and student engagement in academic activities. The widespread adoption of digital platforms reflects the evolving expectations of Generation Z students, who are highly proficient with digital technologies and increasingly favor technology-mediated learning environments. Mashroofa (2012) found that Sri Lankan undergraduate students in the Net Generation preferred digital and web-based resources over traditional print materials. This finding underscores the importance of developing technology-enhanced learning environments that address the changing needs of contemporary learners. Despite the financial and operational challenges of implementing and maintaining digital systems, these platforms have become essential for promoting academic engagement and ensuring equitable access to scholarly information.

Opportunities to improve access to scholarly knowledge have been further expanded with the global movement for Open Science within this changing digital landscape. According to the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science (2021), Open Science aims to make scientific knowledge openly available, accessible, and reusable for the benefit of both the scientific community and society. Therefore, Open Science promotes transparency, collaboration, and the unrestricted sharing of research outputs, including open-access publications, research data, and educational resources, which have influenced scholarly communication systems and digital knowledge infrastructures worldwide, significantly increasing the adoption of open science practices. Accordingly, university libraries facilitate access to open-access resources, research data management, and open educational resources. By integrating archived, open-access materials and reliable web-based academic resources, digital platforms such as VRRs support the broader goals of open science, which provides students and researchers with reliable, freely accessible academic content and inclusive, equitable access to information (Liu & Liu, 2023).

To enhance access to academic electronic resources for undergraduate and postgraduate students, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU), a leading defense-focused higher education institution in Sri Lanka, has established faculty-based Virtual Resource Rooms (VRRs) tailored to each faculty's disciplinary needs. Library staff collaborated with academic faculty to design these virtual platforms, supporting structured learning, promoting research engagement, and providing organized access to selected open-access academic

materials. To inform further development, it is necessary to analyze students' perceptions and usage of VRRs in relation to academic engagement.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective is to examine student perceptions and usage of Virtual Reading Rooms for learning and research at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka.

Specific Objectives:

1. To assess students' awareness and usage of VRRs.
2. To identify the types of VRR resources used.
3. To examine students' perceptions of VRRs.
4. To identify challenges in using VRRs.

Conceptual Framework

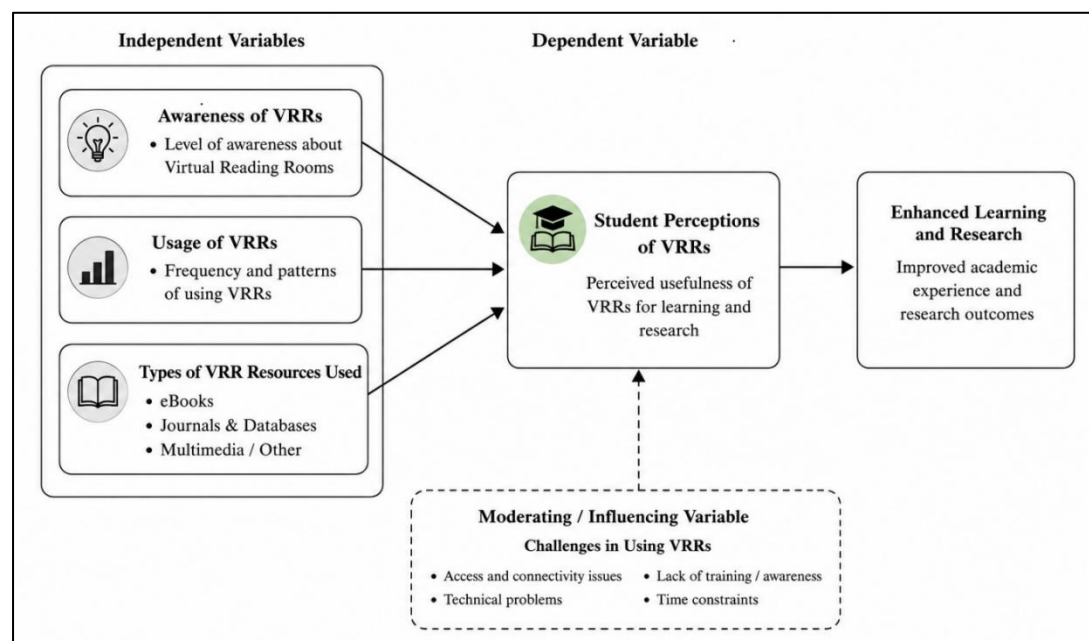


Figure 01: Conceptual Framework for the study

The above conceptual framework was developed based on findings from the literature on Virtual Reading Rooms (VRRs) in academic libraries. It explains how different factors related to VRRs influence students' learning and research experiences. The framework identifies three independent variables: Awareness of VRRs, Usage of VRRs, and Types of VRR Resources Used. These factors influence the dependent variable, Student Perceptions of VRRs, which

refers to students' views on the usefulness of VRRs for academic activities. Positive perceptions of VRRs are expected to lead to enhanced learning and research outcomes, including improved access to information, deeper understanding of coursework, better learning experiences, and stronger research support. The framework also includes challenges in using VRRs as a moderating variable. Factors such as connectivity issues, technical problems, lack of training, preference for printed materials, unawareness of the benefits, and time constraints may affect students' effective use of VRRs and influence their perceptions.

Literature Review

This literature review examines Virtual Reading Rooms (VRRs), focusing on their development, applications in academic libraries, implementation challenges, and relevance in defence university contexts. However, existing studies are largely grounded in conventional higher education settings, offering limited insight into VRR practices within military or defence-affiliated institutions. Consequently, there remains insufficient empirical evidence on how institutional structures and operational constraints influence VRR usage in such environments. In addition, prior research has tended to emphasize technological infrastructure and resource availability, while paying comparatively less attention to user-centred dimensions such as access experiences, engagement patterns, and usage challenges, as well as strategies for promoting faculty-based VRRs.

The concept of digital and virtual reading environments originated as a means of expanding access to restricted academic collections beyond physical library spaces. Avdeeva (2010), for instance, conceptualized VRRs as secure digital dissertation libraries that preserve copyright and intellectual property rights, functioning as controlled extensions of traditional reading rooms rather than open-access repositories. With technological advancements, the role of VRRs has expanded to include current awareness services and targeted dissemination of scholarly information (Badman & Hartman, 2008), reflecting the evolution of academic libraries into hybrid spaces integrating physical and virtual services (Shoham & Klain-Gabbay, 2019). Jacob and Deligiannidis (2005) further describe VRRs as structured digital environments that provide remote access to curated scholarly resources while maintaining security and academic integrity, a view supported by Ajibade and Mutula (2021), who highlight their value in specialized and restricted academic contexts.

The rapid transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the adoption of VRRs, positioning them as essential components of academic continuity rather than optional services. Studies such as those by Ajibade and Mutula (2021) and Sun (2023) emphasize that VRRs now play a critical role in sustaining teaching and research activities through virtual platforms. International case studies also demonstrate their adaptability across diverse academic contexts, with Kamposiori (2023) recognizing their role in integrating institutional workflows with postgraduate research and interdisciplinary collaboration. Similarly, empirical evidence from university settings indicates positive student perceptions of virtual academic spaces, including improved accessibility, motivation, and academic engagement (Tapping, 2021), while effective implementation depends on usability, integration with pedagogy, and institutional support (Teacher Professional Development, 2025).

Despite these benefits, several challenges affect VRR adoption and effectiveness. Technical barriers such as limited connectivity, system reliability issues, and low digital literacy remain significant constraints, particularly in developing contexts (Perera & Suraweera, 2023). Usability factors, including interface design and navigation, further influence user experience (Ajibade & Mutula, 2021). Additionally, financial constraints and sustainability concerns continue to affect the development of VRR platforms, especially in resource-constrained universities and defence institutions (Seneviratne et al., 2023). Institutional and pedagogical factors—such as policy support, staff training, and integration into teaching practices—also play a critical role in determining VRR effectiveness (Marikar & Jayarathne, 2016; Vargas-Murillo & de la Asuncion Pari-Bedoya, 2023).

Within this context, KDU has developed faculty-based VRRs to support teaching, learning, and research through curated open-access resources aligned with academic programmes. This initiative reflects both resource constraints and the need for flexible digital access within a structured defence university environment. However, despite their implementation, there is limited empirical evidence on how students perceive and use these VRRs in practice. Prior studies suggest that gaps may exist between availability, awareness, and actual usage of digital library services (Mangrum & Foster, 2020), while perceptions of virtual academic services are shaped by familiarity, engagement, and service quality (Bennett, 2021). These insights emphasize the need to examine students' awareness of VRRs, their usage patterns, and the types of resources accessed, particularly within a defence-oriented higher education context.

Accordingly, this study addresses these gaps by examining student perceptions and usage of VRRs for learning and research at KDU, Sri Lanka. It specifically focuses on assessing students' awareness and usage of VRRs and identifying the types of VRR resources used, to generate evidence-based insights to enhance access, engagement, and the overall effectiveness of virtual academic support services in a defence university setting.

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was used in this study to investigate student's perceptions and use of Virtual Reading Rooms for learning and research at the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. That is, qualitative and quantitative methods were combined to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of VRRs' use, perceived benefits, and implementation challenges. From November 2025 to January 2026, quantitative data were collected by distributing a structured online questionnaire to students across all KDU faculties. All participants were given access to the Virtual Reading Rooms (VRRs) via a link in the questionnaire prior to data collection, to provide their perceptions of learning impact, resource access, and suggestions. Multiple-choice questions in the questionnaire captured respondents' sources of awareness, the types of resources they accessed, and the reasons they did not access the resources. Closed-ended and Likert-scale questions were used in the questionnaire to assess awareness of VRRs, frequency of use, academic applications, perceived usage in learning and research, and potential barriers. Subject experts in the library profession reviewed the questionnaire to ensure its content validity and alignment with the study's objectives. A pilot test was conducted with 34 students (10% of the sample size) to evaluate the clarity, relevance, and reliability of the questionnaire. Based on the feedback received, minor revisions were made to improve the instrument before the main data collection.

The total student population of KDU was 6,304. According to the Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table cited by Uma Sekaran and Roger Bougie (2014), a minimum sample of 342 respondents was required at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. To ensure adequate representation from all faculties, the student population was stratified by faculty. Proportionate stratified random sampling was then employed, with the sample size for each faculty calculated proportionally using the formula.

$$n_h = \frac{N_h}{N_{total}} \times n$$

(n_h - the sample size for each faculty; N_h - the population of the respective faculty; N_{total} - the total student population, and n - the total sample size) (Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R., 2010).

To account for potential non-responses and incomplete questionnaires, the survey was distributed to several students, with a slightly larger number of students than 515. However, all selected participants responded, resulting in a final response rate of 100%.

Table 01: Sample Size Determination (From Krejcie & Morgan Table)

Faculty	Population	Sample Size	Actual Sample
FAHS	979	53	80
FBESS	256	14	21
FDSS	202	11	17
FMSH	1,148	62	93
FOC	622	34	51
FOCJ	179	10	15
FOE	930	50	75
FOL	549	30	45
FOM	829	45	68
FOT	610	33	50
Total	6,304	342	515

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with library professionals to complement the survey findings. These discussions discovered the resource management, collaboration with academic staff, and service sustainability required for VRR development. Quantitative data were presented in Microsoft Excel, and descriptive statistics were used to analyze. Qualitative data were analyzed to identify recurring patterns and related insights. To address the ethical aspects of the study, the survey ensured voluntary participation, maintained the respondent's confidentiality, and used the collected data only for academic and research purposes. Also, no personally identifiable data was gathered from this survey. To assess students' perceptions and usage of VRRs on learning and research, respondents were allowed to access them before completing the questionnaire. Consequently, the findings reflect user experiences and

perceptions from this period and may not include later updates or improvements to the VRR platforms.

This study mainly focuses on KDU. Therefore, the study's findings may be limited to this study and cannot be generalized to other higher education institutions. Other limitations include the study's reliance on self-reported survey data, which may be subject to respondent bias or personal interpretation, potentially influencing the results. The study also considers only open-source resources accessible through VRR and excludes subscription-based or commercial databases, thereby limiting the scope of the resource evaluation.

Results and Discussion

This study examined awareness, access, and use to assess the impact of faculty-based VRRs on KDU students' learning and research.

Table 02: Faculty-wise Awareness of VRRs

Faculty	Sample	Awareness	
		Yes	No
Allied Health Science (FAHS)	80	35(48%)	45(52%)
Built Environment & Spatial Sciences (FBESS)	21	16(76%)	5(24%)
Defence & Strategic Studies (FDSS)	17	12(71%)	5(29%)
Management, Social Sc, & Humanities (FMSH)	93	58(62%)	35(38%)
Computing (FOC)	51	25(50%)	26(50%)
Criminal Justice (FOCJ)	15	5(33%)	10(67%)
Engineering (FOE)	75	45(60%)	30(40%)
Law (FOL)	45	30(67%)	15(33%)
Medicine (FOM)	68	25(37%)	43(63%)
Technology (FOT)	50	9(18%)	41(82%)
TOTAL	515	260(50%)	255(50%)

Faculty-wise awareness of VRRs was tabulated in Table 02 above. It clearly shows significant variation in students' awareness of VRR across faculties. Overall, 260 (50%) of 515 respondents reported being aware of this service, but 255 (50%) reported being unaware of it before this survey. When considered separately, FBESS (76%) and FDSS (71%) reported the highest awareness, whereas FOT (18%) and FOCJ (33%) reported the lowest. Moreover,

FMSH (62%), FOE (60%), and FOL (67%) were also identified as having moderate awareness. These differences may be attributed to variations in faculty-level promotional strategies and the extent to which digital resources are integrated into academic activities. According to the library professionals interviewed, faculties that actively promote VRRs and incorporate digital resources into teaching and learning activities tend to demonstrate higher levels of student awareness and usage. Therefore, well-developed motivational and awareness programmes are needed to ensure that students in all faculties are equally informed about available digital learning resources.

Table 03: Faculty-wise Access to VRRs

Faculty	Sample	Access to VRR	
		Yes	No
FAHS	35	12(34%)	23(66%)
FBESS	16	5(31%)	11(69%)
FDSS	12	12(100%)	0(0%)
FMSH	58	46(79%)	12(21%)
FOC	25	7(28%)	18(72%)
FOCJ	5	0(0%)	5(100%)
FOE	45	0(0%)	45(100%)
FOL	30	4(13%)	26(87%)
FOM	25	0(0%)	25(100%)
FOT	9	1(11%)	8(89%)
TOTAL	260	87(33%)	173(67%)

Table 03 above presents data on students who used the platform, among the 260 students who were aware of VRRs at the time of the survey. At the beginning of the survey, only 87 (33%) of the 260 students who were aware of the VRRs platform had accessed it. The remaining 173 students (67%) were aware of its existence but had not used it. Therefore, these results indicate a significant gap between awareness and actual usage. The faculty's analysis also reveals significant disparities in access. For example, FDSS reported complete usage among the aware respondents (100%), while relatively high access levels were observed in FMSH; 79% of respondents were aware of it. In contrast, FOCJ, FOE, and FOM did not report any prior access to VRR among respondents who were aware of it. Thus, it is confirmed that awareness alone does not lead to usage. Overall, these findings suggest that knowledge of system usage,

usefulness, and availability of relevant resources may be additional factors influencing users' decisions to increase VRR use.

Table 04: Distribution of Sources of Awareness Across Faculties

Faculty	Aware of VRRs	Library Web	Library Orientation	From a Friend	Awareness Session	Library Staff
FAHS	35	6(17%)	14(40%)	6(17%)	3(9%)	11(31%)
FBESS	16	6(38%)	2(13%)	3(19%)	2(13%)	14(18%)
FDSS	12	4(33%)	0(0%)	6(50%)	1(8%)	2(17%)
FMSH	58	6(10%)	6(10%)	28(48%)	19(33%)	7(12%)
FOC	25	9(36%)	2(8%)	8(32%)	5(20%)	2(8%)
FOCJ	5	3(60%)	1(20%)	1(20%)	0(0%)	2(40%)
FOE	45	27(60%)	4(9%)	12(27%)	1(2%)	7(16%)
FOL	30	3(10%)	10(33%)	12(40%)	3(10%)	6(20%)
FOM	25	15(60%)	1(4%)	1(4%)	2(8%)	9(36%)
FOT	9	3(33%)	2(22%)	1(11%)	1(11%)	2(22%)
TOTAL	260	82(32%)	42(16%)	78(30%)	37(14%)	67(26%)

Table 04 above shows how respondents learned about VRRs and highlights the significance of various communication channels. Identified the library web (32%) as the most common source, followed by friends or peers (30%). Orientation programmes (16%) and formal awareness sessions (14%) were mentioned less frequently. Meanwhile, the comparatively lower impact of formal awareness sessions suggests an opportunity for the library and faculty to enhance structured promotional efforts.

The frequency of usage was tabulated in Table 05 below. Among the 87 respondents who had accessed VRRs at the beginning of the survey, the majority reported weekly use (52%), followed by monthly use (25%) and rare use (17%). Only 6% of respondents indicated daily use of VRRs. These findings indicate that although VRRs are used by some students, they have not yet become a standard part of students' regular academic routines. The prevalence of weekly use suggests that students' preliminary access to VRRs is for specific academic needs,

such as completing assignments or preparing for exams, rather than as a continuous learning resource.

Table 05: Distribution to VRRs Access Frequency

Faculty	Access of VRRs	Usage Frequency			
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely
FAHS	12	0(0%)	8(67%)	3(25%)	1(8%)
FBESS	5	0(0%)	3(60%)	0(0%)	2(40%)
FDSS	12	0(0%)	7(58%)	4(33%)	1(8%)
FMSH	46	4(9%)	20(43%)	13(28%)	9(20%)
FOC	7	1(14%)	2(29%)	2(29%)	2(29%)
FOCJ	0	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FOE	0	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FOL	4	0(0%)	4(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FOM	0	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FOT	1	0(0%)	1(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
TOTAL	87	5(6%)	45(52%)	22(25%)	15(17%)

Table 06: Resources Accessed by Students with VRRS Awareness and Usage

Faculty	Access to VRRs	Resources Accessed				
		E-Books	E-Journals	Databases	Course Materials	Multimedia
FAHS	12	8(67%)	0(0%)	1(8%)	4(33%)	1(8%)
FBESS	5	3(60%)	0(0%)	1(20%)	2(40%)	1(20%)
FDSS	12	6(50%)	1(8%)	1(8%)	7(58%)	5(42%)
FMSH	46	24(52%)	7(15%)	12(26%)	20(43%)	9(20%)
FOC	7	5(71%)	1(14%)	2(29%)	3(43%)	2(29%)
FOCJ	0	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FOE	0	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FOL	4	2(50%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	2(50%)	0(0%)
FOM	0	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FOT	1	1(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(100%)	0(0%)
TOTAL	87	49(56%)	9(10%)	17(20%)	39(45%)	18(21%)

As shown in Table 06 above, the VRRs are most frequently used to access e-books (56%), followed by course materials (45%). Other resources, such as multimedia materials (21%), databases (20%), and e-journals (10%), were accessed less often. The relatively high use of e-books and course materials indicates that students depend on VRRs for direct academic support with coursework. Conversely, the lower usage of databases and e-journals may suggest limited awareness of advanced research resources or a preference for easily accessible learning materials.

Table 07: Reasons for Not Accessing VRRs Despite Awareness

Faculty	Aware but not accessed	Barriers to Access VRRs				
		No Time	Preferred	Technical	Not aware	Forgotten
			Printed Books	Difficulties	the benefits	
FAHS	23	4(17%)	5(22%)	21(91%)	0(0%)	2(9%)
FBESS	11	3(27%)	3(27%)	2(18%)	0(0%)	4(36%)
FDSS	0	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FMSH	12	4(33%)	6(50%)	4(33%)	2(17%)	0(0%)
FOC	18	6(33%)	3(17%)	3(17%)	9(50%)	1(5%)
FOCJ	5	1(20%)	0(0%)	2(40%)	1(20%)	1(20%)
FOE	45	14(31%)	9(20%)	42(93%)	15(33%)	0(0%)
FOL	26	5(19%)	15(58%)	8(31%)	6(23%)	3(12%)
FOM	25	5(20%)	11(44%)	21(84%)	0(0%)	7(28%)
FOT	8	1(12.5%)	0(0%)	2(25%)	3(37.5%)	0(0%)
TOTAL	173	43(25%)	52(30%)	110(64%)	36(21%)	18(11%)

Among respondents who were aware of VRRs but had not accessed them, several barriers were identified. Table 07 above shows that the most reported challenge was technical difficulties (64%), followed by a preference for printed books (30%) and lack of time (25%). Additionally, 21% of respondents indicated they were not fully aware of the benefits of VRRs, while 11% reported having forgotten about the service. As highlighted in the findings, technological accessibility and system usability are essential factors influencing the effective use of digital resources. Furthermore, technological barriers may discourage students from using this platform. In addition, the preference for printed materials suggests that some users still rely on traditional learning resources.

The data obtained after accessing the platform were tabulated in Tables 08–11 and analyzed.

Note for Table 08 to 11: SA- Strongly Agreed, A-Agreed, N-Neutral, DA-Disagreed, SDA-Strongly Disagreed

Table 08: Impact of VRRs on Coursework Understanding

Faculty	Sample	Better Understanding of Course Work				
		SA	A	N	DA	SDA
FAHS	80	14(18%)	51(64%)	14(18%)	1(1%)	0(0%)
FBESS	21	5(24%)	13(62%)	3(14%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FDSS	17	1(6%)	12(71%)	3(18%)	1(6%)	0(0%)
FMSH	93	16(17%)	45(48%)	32(34%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FOC	51	4(8%)	29(57%)	18(35%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FOCJ	15	1(7%)	7(47%)	6(40%)	1(7%)	0(0%)
FOE	75	7(9%)	42(56%)	23(31%)	2(3%)	1(1%)
FOL	45	1(2%)	29(64%)	14(31%)	1(2%)	0(0%)
FOM	68	3(4%)	27(40%)	37(54%)	0(0%)	1(1%)
FOT	50	5(10%)	28(56%)	16(32%)	1(2%)	0(0%)
TOTAL	515	57(11%)	283(55%)	166(32%)	7(1%)	2(0%)

The data in Table 08 above indicate that VRRs positively contributed to students' understanding of the coursework. Overall, 66% of respondents reported that VRRs helped them better understand their coursework, while 32% were neutral. Only a small proportion of respondents (approximately 1%) indicated that VRRs did not support their understanding of their coursework. The results suggest that VRRs serve as a supportive learning space where students can access additional materials to reinforce classroom learning.

Table 09 below presents responses to the VRRs' contribution to research and learning. According to these data, almost half of the respondents (47%) reported that VRRs positively supported their learning and research activities, while 45% reported it was neutral. However, a minority of respondents (8%) reported that VRRs did not support their research and learning. The relatively high neutral response rate may suggest that some students have limited experience with the platform or have not yet fully explored its resources.

Table 09: Impact of the VRRs on Learning and Research

Faculty	Sample	Positive Contribution to Research & Learning				
		SA	A	N	DA	SDA
FAHS	80	6(8%)	43(54%)	25(31%)	2(3%)	4(5%)
FBESS	21	2(10%)	11(52%)	8(38%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FDSS	17	2(12%)	8(47%)	7(41%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FMSH	93	2(2%)	39(42%)	42(45%)	4(4%)	7(8%)
FOC	51	2(4%)	23(45%)	24(47%)	1(2%)	0(0%)
FOCJ	15	0(0%)	6(40%)	7(47%)	2(13%)	0(0%)
FOE	75	2(3%)	32(43%)	34(45%)	4(5%)	3(4%)
FOL	45	1(2%)	18(40%)	22(49%)	1(2%)	3(7%)
FOM	68	2(3%)	13(19%)	46(68%)	5(7%)	2(3%)
FOT	50	2(4%)	30(60%)	16(32%)	0(0%)	2(4%)
TOTAL	515	21(4%)	223 (43%)	231(45%)	19(4%)	21(4%)

Table 10: Impact of the VRRs on Independent Learning

Faculty	Sample	Encouraged Independent Learning				
		SA	A	N	DA	SDA
FAHS	80	15(19%)	53(66%)	11(14%)	1(1%)	0(0%)
FBESS	21	3(14%)	11(52%)	7(33%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FDSS	17	2(12%)	9(53%)	6(35%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FMSH	93	13(14%)	41(44%)	36(39%)	2(2%)	1(1%)
FOC	51	4(8%)	29(57%)	17(33%)	1(2%)	0(0%)
FOCJ	15	1(7%)	8(53%)	5(33%)	1(7%)	0(0%)
FOE	75	3(4%)	42(56%)	26(35%)	1(1%)	3(4%)
FOL	45	3(7%)	25(56%)	16(36%)	1(2%)	0(0%)
FOM	68	7(10%)	29(43%)	31(46%)	0(0%)	1(1%)
FOT	50	6(12%)	34(68%)	10(20%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
TOTAL	515	57 (11%)	281(55%)	165 (32%)	7 (1%)	5(1%)

The data in Table 10 above indicate that VRRs support independent learning practices: 66% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that VRRs foster independent learning, while 32% expressed neutral opinions. The findings indicate that access to curated digital resources enables students to engage in self-directed exploration of academic materials, an essential component of higher education learning environments.

Data on the accessibility of VRRs were tabulated in Table 11 below, demonstrating that 42% of respondents agreed that it is easy to access academic resources through the VRRs, whilst 51% remained neutral. A small proportion (7%) of respondents reported difficulty accessing resources. The high neutral responses could be due to students' digital literacy or differences in familiarity with the VRR interface. The findings also emphasize the importance of improving system usability and offer guidance on using the platform efficiently.

Table 11: User Perceptions of VRRs for Access to Academic Resources

Faculty	Sample	Easy to access academic resources				
		SA	A	N	DA	SDA
FAHS	80	7(8%)	35(44%)	32(40%)	4(5%)	2(3%)
FBESS	21	0(0%)	12(57%)	8 (38%)	1(5%)	0(0%)
FDSS	17	0(0%)	9(52%)	5(29%)	3(18%)	0(0%)
FMSH	93	1(1%)	38(41%)	47(51%)	3(3%)	4(4%)
FOC	51	1(2%)	21(41%)	25(49%)	4(8%)	0(0%)
FOCJ	15	0(0%)	4(27%)	11(73%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
FOE	75	1(1%)	26(35%)	44(59%)	3(4%)	1(1%)
FOL	45	0(0%)	12(27%)	32(71%)	0(0%)	1(2%)
FOM	68	1(1%)	18(26%)	42(62%)	6(9%)	1(1%)
FOT	50	2(4%)	26(52%)	19(38%)	1(2%)	2(4%)
TOTAL	515	13(3%)	201(39%)	265(51%)	25(5%)	11(2%)

The semi-structured interviews with library professionals provided complementary insights to the survey results. The findings indicated that effective resource management is essential for the development and sustainability of Virtual Reading Rooms (VRRs), particularly in ensuring the continuous updating and relevance of digital content. Participants also highlighted the importance of collaboration between library staff and academic faculty in identifying, selecting, and integrating appropriate learning resources aligned with curriculum requirements.

In addition, service sustainability was identified as a critical concern, with emphasis placed on institutional support, technological infrastructure, and ongoing evaluation to maintain VRR effectiveness. Overall, these qualitative findings reinforce the survey results and highlight that the successful implementation of VRRs depends on coordinated resource management, academic collaboration, and sustained institutional commitment.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that students perceive faculty-based Virtual Reading Rooms (VRRs) at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University as valuable resources that support their learning and research activities by providing convenient access to curated digital academic materials. However, a clear gap persists between students' awareness of VRRs and their actual usage, suggesting that awareness alone does not necessarily translate into effective engagement. The level of institutional promotion and the integration of VRRs into academic programmes were found to shape students' perceptions significantly and influence their likelihood of use. The results further reveal that students are more likely to access e-books and course-related materials through VRRs, indicating their relevance in supporting academic work and independent learning. Nevertheless, usage remains constrained by several factors, including technical difficulties, limited familiarity with the platform, and a continued preference for printed resources. Despite these challenges, students generally perceive VRRs as useful tools for accessing learning materials and supporting their studies. Overall, the study highlights the importance of strengthening awareness initiatives, improving user support, and enhancing the integration of VRRs within academic activities to promote more effective use. These measures are essential for maximizing the VRRs' role in supporting student learning and research within a structured defence university environment.

Recommendations

Improving the effectiveness of VRR could be achieved through a combination of user awareness, teaching practices, and institutional support. The university should integrate VRRs into academic policies and course structures, making them a regular part of teaching and learning. Lecturers have an important role to play in this, as they can collaborate with library professionals to develop VRR by selecting relevant open-source materials for lectures, recommended readings, and assignments, and by motivating students to use those materials through VRR. At the same time, the study recommended conducting regular awareness

programs and training sessions to help users understand how to access VRRs effectively. Outdated materials may reduce user interest. So, regular monitoring is important to keep content up to date, which can be done by uploading the latest and most relevant resources. It is also recommended to have a user-friendly platform and provide easy remote access, which will improve accessibility and could further encourage usage. In addition, regular monitoring of VRR usage across faculties helps identify areas for improvement. Overall, a collaborative effort between the institution, faculty, and library can support the meaningful and sustained use of VRRs in the academic environment.

Future Research

Future research could be valuable if the influence of VRR is explored across different higher education institutions, including military and defence-oriented colleges, whose learning environments differ from those of other institutions, thereby helping to fill the current gap in the literature on defence-related research. It is necessary to conduct research to identify effective strategies to increase VRR use among university students and academic staff. Furthermore, future research should focus on identifying strategies to incorporate VRR into teaching and learning practices.

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Preserving Heritage and Promoting Academic Progress: The Role of the Library, University of Jaffna.

Poologanathan, P.¹

Abstract

Libraries typically act as guardians of cultural heritage as well as modern academic development enablers. This study evaluates how the University of Jaffna library helps to preserving indigenous knowledge, historical records, and cultural resources whereas also helping to research, innovation, and modern academic development for the future advancement. By preserving of rare manuscripts, archival collections, indigenous knowledge, historical documents, and non-book collections related to heritage, University of Jaffna library contributes to heritage preservation whereas encouraging innovation, research support services, and academic growth for future advancements. This study examines the library's attempts to preserve heritage and enable the future developments through the document analysis. The findings show the library's remarkable initiatives to preserve heritage knowledge through varies activities such as Digitization project, Tamilology Library Project, Preservation of Indigenes knowledge, project of Capturing unit for historical records and Preserving of Non-book collections project related to Musicology, in the same time, for the academic progress, library initiates research support services, international knowledge networks, outreach programs, library symposium and collaboration works, which are ensuring that knowledge sharing and innovation within academic communities. When library implements these kind of dual activities, face challenges include shortage of staff, inadequate funding, and limited infrastructure facilities for digitization. This study presents that the University of Jaffna library not only preserve the intellectual heritage of the region but also serves as a dynamic platform for future academic development, it connects tradition and modernity. Finally, this study concludes with suggestions for enhancing dual functions of library in heritage preservation and academic advancement that is establishing the library as a strengthen focal point for cultural continuity as well as academic progress. For this study, primary and secondary data are used.

Keywords: Academic Progress, Archival Collections, Heritage Preservation, Indigenous Knowledge, Library University of Jaffna, Outreach Activities, Rare Manuscripts

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Introduction

Globally, University libraries perform a transformative role by functioning as custodian of cultural heritage while simultaneously serving as centers for an academic and social development. They ensure continuity of cultural identity, safeguard intellectual memory and preserve historical resources. In the meantime, they promote research productivity, making novel information to more accessible, and promote innovation in higher education. (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2016).

Within this dual context, the University of Jaffna library known as the *Vithiananthan Library*, it represents an excellent instance, how a University library can actively engage contemporary academic requirements with maintaining of cultural traditions. Library University of Jaffna was established in October 1974, simultaneous with opening of the Jaffna Campus of the University of Jaffna. Since then, the library has been developing into an important academic institution and providing service to wide range of stakeholders. Now, the main library of University of Jaffna at *Thirunelvely* has eight branch libraries systematically positioned across the University's faculties. (Srisatkunarajah & Paul Rohan, 2025, p.589).

As of December 2024, nearly 13,500 registered users were used the University of Jaffna library. It reflects an important of academic and intellectual life of the institution. Library holdings are over 275,000 books, almost 2,000 scholarly journals and magazines, 70 newspaper titles, more than 14,000 pamphlets, and an increasing collection of digital materials, including CDs, DVDs, e-books, and e-journals. It makes up outstanding collection. In addition to these resources, the library has a large number of heritage materials such as 284 bundles of palm-leaf collections, and specialized audio and visual Musicological collections. It ensures that the library maintains priceless cultural heritage collections and simultaneously serves to the immediate needs of academic research. (Srisatkunarajah & Paul Rohan, 2025, pp.588-590).

Furthermore, the contribution of the University of Jaffna library goes over traditional collection management. It actively contributes to growth of university community's intellectual capacities. Through Information literacy programs, undergraduate students learn how to effectively acquire, evaluate, and use of information in a world dominated by digital complexity. (Library Committee, 2021). The library also assists university community to increase the visibility by developing institutional repositories, preserving faculty research outputs, and fostering open access to scholarly publications. In this manner, library preserves

local academic contributions as well as incorporate it into international knowledge networks. Additionally, by engaging the outreach activities, the library strengthens its role with local communities over the university boundaries, it is seen library as a knowledge center for marginalized society. (Annual Report, 2024).

University of Jaffna library's commitment to preservation of cultural heritage is one of its distinctive features. The collection of palm-leaf manuscripts represents decades of indigenous knowledge tradition, religious beliefs, and literary heritage. In addition to archival materials and historical collections were preserved by digitization project and capturing unit, these collections provided invaluable original data for scholars in variety of disciplines. By preserving these kind of collections, the library protects cultural heritage, however, today, many historical sources of knowledge are under threat due to digitization gaps, globalization, and generational changes. Non-book materials of library such as musicological materials, also contribute to a deeper knowledge of invisible cultural heritage.

Meanwhile, the library strategically promote the academic development including expanding e-resources, digital repositories, research support services, research symposium and national and international collaborations which give students and faculty members access to worldwide research environments. Further, research support services including reference service, citation management, plagiarism and AI deduction facilities, and academic publishing guidance, these initiative increase academic output of University of Jaffna. (Annual Report, 2024). The University of Jaffna library actuality acts as a bridge between the past and the future, striking a balance cultural preservation and contemporary technology.

University of Jaffna library's these kind of dual functions are extremely significant in Northern Sri Lanka, due to region has experienced more than two decades of conflict, limited resources, and difficulties to cultural survival. In this situation, the library's mission preserving cultural heritage and connecting the academic community to international development has taken more important. University of Jaffna library's these kind of dual activities are equally significant one another. While cultural heritage serves as foundation for identity, access to modern knowledge provides development.

Finally, this study provides important insights into how University of Jaffna library can balance its dual functions such as heritage preservation and modern academic development through the various activities, despite limited resources after a long period of civil conflict. Furthermore,

this study highlights the *library's* dual functions as a custodian of the past and a dynamic facilitator for future development, it is reflecting as a key center for continuity of culture, research support, and academic development.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are,

1. To examine the activities done by the University of Jaffna library to preserve cultural heritage resources.
2. To investigate how library can contribute to modern academic development by providing research support services, online resources, and information accessibility.
3. To evaluate library's ability to maintain a balance between heritage preservation and modern academic advancements.
4. To identify the challenges faced by the University of Jaffna library in fulfilling its dual functions.
5. To provide the possible recommendations for improving the library's ability to support both heritage preservation and academic development.

Methodology

A qualitative research method is used to examine the dual functions of the University of Jaffna library for safeguarding heritage and promoting academic development. The document analysis method is used as primary methodology of this study that includes a systematic analysis of primary and secondary data related to this study such as library and university reports, archival collections, rare manuscripts, indigenous knowledge repositories, historical records, and book materials. The methodology of this study is including following steps:

Data Collection

- Evaluate the library's archival documents, catalogues, and special collections.
- Review of library and university's reports, policy documents, and strategic plan documents related to digitization, research support, and outreach programs.

- Analysis of e-resources, digital repositories, and library collaboration records.

Data Analysis

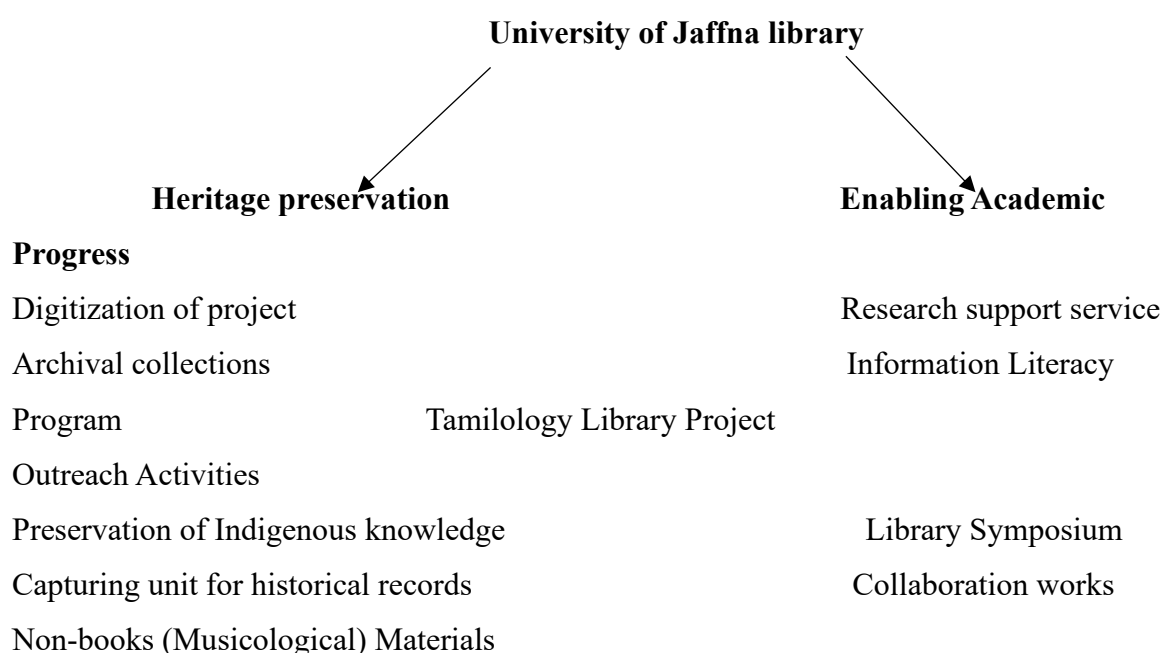
- Identification of programs aimed at heritage preservation, digitization, and resource accessibility.
- Analysis the library services for research supporting, global knowledge networks, and outreach activities.
- Assessment of collaboration initiatives with other organizations

Synthesis

- Findings are compiled to emphasize the library's role to preserving cultural heritage and facilitating current academic progress.
- Observations are used to propose recommendations for reinforcing digital archives, expanding collaborative networks, and enhancing the library's role as a central hub for cultural and academic development.

Above mentioned methodology allows for an in-depth understanding of the University of Jaffna library's initiatives, difficulties, and effect on preservation of heritage as well as academic development.

Conceptual frame work for dual functions of the University of Jaffna library



Review of Literature

University Libraries as organizations for Cultural heritage

University libraries are becoming as cultural heritage organizations, with maintaining the historical, indigenous, intellectual, and cultural heritage of communities while enhancing modern knowledge creation. According to Assmann (2011), he claimed that cultural heritage institutions serve as guardians of collective identity by preserving documentary heritage that represents a society's historical events. Libraries play an essential role to maintaining continuity between previous knowledge systems and contemporary academic practices like archives and museums.

According to UNESCO (2019), libraries are essential for the preservation of documentary heritage, especially in preserving indigenous knowledge, rare manuscripts, and vulnerable archival collections. University libraries in particular have a special place, because they integrate research, teaching, and innovation functions with preservation rules. Literature demonstrates that when heritage documents are integrated within academic settings, they are not just preserved but actively reconstructed and renewed through academic usage (IFLA, 2020).

Heritage Preservation in Academic Libraries

Primary responsibility of academic libraries are preservation and conservation of historical collections, especially in regions strong in manuscript traditions. A Study was done by Harvey (2014), who highlighted that preservation include preventive conservation like environmental management as well as appropriated storage like reconditioning, restoration, and digitization.

In South Asian region, palm-leaf manuscripts, Ola leaf records, and hand- written materials are especially vulnerable due to climate, insect infestation, and material vulnerability. Sri Jayewardenepura university library was conducted a study, which highlighted that systematic preservation techniques are necessary to extant the lifelong of these collections. (Nishanthi & Wijayasundara, 2022). Further, this research emphasized that libraries should incorporate traditional conservation practices and modern scientific methodologies to effectively handle preservation challenges.

Additionally, preservation of heritage in academic libraries expands beyond physical defense. Scholars argue that contextual documentation, metadata creation, and scholarly interpretation are crucial. It ensures that preserved collections remain relevant and useful for future research (Smith, 2016).

Indigenous Knowledge and the Role of Libraries

Indigenous knowledge accumulated from regional environments, local cultures, and historical experiences. According to UNESCO (2019), heritage knowledge as dynamic, consistently growing knowledge system passed down through generations' oral as well as written traditions. Generally, libraries are recognized as essential facilitators for organizing, preserving, and legitimizing indigenous knowledge within formal knowledge systems.

Number of studies mention that when indigenous knowledge is included into academic library documents, which receives scholarly recognition, visibility, and protection from marginalization (Battiste, 2013). Indigenous medical systems in Sri Lanka, including Ayurveda, Siddha, Yunani and Deshiya Chikitsa mostly depend on manuscript-based knowledge. Generally, academic libraries connected with faculties play a crucial role in preserving these collections and integrating them into academic programs and research. (WHO, 2013).

Crucially, literature emphasize that on interpreting indigenous knowledge just as archival artifacts. Rather, libraries are urged to embrace ethical and participation methods, this method protects cultural sensitivity, community ownership, and intellectual property rights (UNESCO, 2015). This view point closely linked with the University of Jaffna library's role in preserving regional and heritage knowledge while enabling responsible accessibility.

Digitization as a Bridge between Preservation and Progress

Digitization is one of the most cutting-edge developments in academic libraries, which helps institutions maintain a balance between heritage preservation and modern academic needs. Digital preservation initiatives enable libraries to preserve originality while expanding access to rare and specialized collections. (Conway, 2010).

Studies indicate that digitized traditional collections greatly enhance research productivity by allowing remote access, multidisciplinary use, and international scholarly engagement (IFLA,

2020). In developing post-war regions, digitization activities act as a resilience mechanism, preserving cultural memory against physical damage, loss, and unrest political conditions (UNESCO, 2015).

However, scholars advise that digitization activities should not be seen as a substitute for physical preservation. Rather, it should be seen as a complementary approach to increase accessibility while minimizing handling of originals. (Harvey, 2014). Strong metadata standards, long-term preservation planning, and durable digital infrastructure facilities are necessary for Effective digitization; in this university libraries have an essential strategic.

Libraries as Enablers of Academic and Research Development

In addition to preservation, university libraries are deeply recognized as facilitators of academic progress and research excellence. According to Corral, mentioned a strong collaborations between research productivity and library services, learning outcomes of students, and institutional visibility. (Corral, 2014).

Main contributions of academic libraries for future progress, which include,

- Access to electronic resources and databases
- Research support services (reference management, citation management and publishing guidance)
- Information literacy and academic research training
- Institutional repositories and open-access projects

These services mentioned that libraries as active partners in the research process rather than passive storage facilities. Additionally, the Study mention that importance of libraries in promoting open science, measurement of research impact, and international knowledge exchange (IFLA, 2020).

Role of Libraries in Post-Conflict Contexts and challenges

The function of libraries in post-war societies has received increasing Scholarly interest. According to research, libraries in these environment support to social integration, academic

rehabilitation, cultural healing, and identity reconstruction. (Johnson, 2018). Safeguarding of heritage collections becomes crucial in regions where cultural survival has been threatened by war.

Northern Sri Lanka is a special in post-conflict scenario, where libraries have to work with limited recourse to meet greater demands for access and preservation. According to UNESCO's suggestions, libraries in this situation take hybrid roles including serving as heritage custodians, as well as academic facilitators, and community information centers (UNESCO, 2015).

Although libraries have ability to function as custodian of heritage as well as enabling innovation, there are several challenges in that direction. They include limited funding, shortage of trained staff in dual functions, difficulties in building collaborations with stakeholders and insufficient infrastructure facilities for digitization activities (Wilson et al., 2023; Senaratne & Perera, 2018). However, there are number of opportunities such as increasing digitization projects, improving collaborations with communities, and in the overtime, library employees get the specialized training skills (Smith & Kennedy, 2020).

Despite current literature expendably studies on heritage preservation, indigenous knowledge management, digitization, and academic library services, very few studies use comprehensive analytical structure on how university libraries preserve cultural heritage as well as enable academic advancement. This study fulfills this gap by offering a comprehensive analysis of the University of Jaffna library as a dual-function organization such as a custodian of cultural heritage as well as a facilitator for academic and research development. This study provides a deeper LIS discussion on balancing tradition and innovation within historical and post war context.

Discussions

a. Initiatives Undertaken by the University of Jaffna library for Heritage Preservation.

Digitization and Preservation Project for the Sri Lankan Tamilology Collections

A major digitization and preservation project, funded by the *Kandiah Karthigaesan Trust Fund* at a cost of LKR 92,813,563.30, has been launched in 2021 to safeguard and enhance access to Sri Lankan traditional Tamilology resources. The project focuses on preserving rare materials, documenting Tamil lifestyles and traditions, and providing digital access through a dedicated

repository containing rare works with detailed metadata. (Srisatkunarajah & Paul Rohan, 2025, p.612).

Part of this Digitization and Preservation project, a Conservation Laboratory is established at the university library, equipped to treat deteriorating materials and digitize the Tamilology collection. Established Capturing Unit will record Tamil cultural practices in compliance with legal standards. The project also includes forming local and international partnerships through MoU was signed with *Roja Mudiah Libray*, Chennai for resource sharing, capacity building, and collaborative research. Conservation of Ola-leaf manuscripts is ongoing, with plans to publish and reproduce selected rare materials based on user demand (Annual report, 2024).

Establishment of the Library of Tamilology projects

The Library of Tamilology (தமிழியல் நூலகம்) was established with funding from the *Kandiah Karthigaesan Trust Fund*, which contributed LKR 111,561,454.69 for its development. It is a specialized library dedicated to collecting, preserving, and providing access to knowledge on Tamilology, with a strong focus on Sri Lankan Tamil heritage. The library houses a rich collection of published and unpublished materials in multiple languages and formats, covering literature, culture, linguistics, science, indigenous medicine, folklore, law, and traditional practices of the Tamil people. A noteworthy aspect is the “*YālpāṇaKaruvoolum*”, a special section that preserve rare collections and unique works pertaining to Sri Lankan Tamil culture and history. The Trust is providing fully funding for library’s collection expansion, it supports study and the preservation of Tamil heritage. This provides the services to not only University community but also outside society. (Annual report, 2024).

Preservation of indigenous knowledge

The Siddha Medicine Library of University of Jaffna holds a distinctive rare collection related to indigenous medical texts in Tamil, particularly related to Siddha medicine. Since its inception, the library has supported the needs of students, faculty, and research scholars affiliated with the then Department of Siddha Medicine. With a collection of over 5,000 books and subscriptions to 10 periodical titles, the library offers essential resources for the study and research of Siddha medicine. Its specialized materials make it an invaluable asset for both academic and research purposes in the field of traditional medicine. Now, University of Jaffna library is providing digitization works with collaborated with faculty of Siddha medicine to

preserving traditions Ola leaves manuscripts. (Srisatkunarajah & Paul Rohan, 2025, pp.597-598).

Traditional Ola leaf Collections of Library

In 1979, the University Library enriched its collection by acquiring a significant number of Ola-leaf manuscripts, covering a range of subjects including Literature, Astrology, Folklore, History, Veterinary Medicine, and Siddha Medicine. The goal was to build a comprehensive and invaluable collection of these traditional manuscripts. Today, the Preservation and Conservation section of the university library preserves 207 bundles of Ola leaves, totaling 25,607 individual leaves that have all been carefully catalogued. These manuscripts are a testament to the university library's commitment to preserving ancient knowledge and cultural heritage. (Srisatkunarajah & Paul Rohan, 2025, p.588).

Establishing the Musicology Corner project

A project costing LKR 16.53 Million was implemented a *Musicology Corner* to safeguarding the non-book materials related to traditional Music at the *SPRFPVA Branch Library of University of Jaffna*. As part of this effort, the collection was significantly strengthened with the organization of 1,500 non-book materials (CDs, DVDs, Video castes, and Audio Castes) providing a richer and more comprehensive resource base for students, researchers, and performers. (Annual Report, 2024).

Preservation and Conservation Units in University Libraries - UGC (2012-2013)

The University Grants Commission, through the *Information Technology of the Knowledge Enhancement & Institutional Development vote*, provided financial support for the establishment of Preservation and Conservation Units in university libraries in 2012. With this grant of LKR 1,000,000.00, the Library of the University of Jaffna procured a digital camera and accessories valued at LKR 815,305.00 to support its preservation and digitization efforts. (Srisatkunarajah & Paul Rohan, 2025, p.610).

b. Academic Development Initiatives of the University of Jaffna library.

Institutional Repository (IR) at the University of Jaffna

The University of Jaffna established its Research Repository (RR) in 2009 and upgraded it in 2013. An RR policy was developed in 2015 and approved by the University Council in 2021. The repository (<http://repo.lib.jfn.ac.lk/ujrr>) archives and provides access to scholarly output produced by academics, researchers, postgraduate students, and visiting scholars. It enhances global visibility and contributes to the University's webometrics ranking. The RR currently holds nearly 9,000 documents and is maintained by the university library. The Faculty of Medicine launched its own Institutional Repository (IR) in 2012 (<http://repo.jfn.ac.lk/med/>), featuring theses, research articles, presentations, teaching materials, and multimedia resources related to medical sciences (Srisatkunarajah & Paul Rohan, 2025, p.607).

Information Literacy Programme

The Library of the University of Jaffna proposed an *Information Literacy (IL) programme for all Undergraduates* (First year to fourth year) to promote independent learning alongside classroom-based lectures. The curriculum for the IL Programme for the undergraduates of University of Jaffan, developed by the Library and submitted for Senate approval, was officially approved by the University Senate in 2021. The programme aims to enhance information handling skills and improve the overall competency in information literacy among undergraduates. The IL programme was introduced as an optional course module for undergraduates in the same year, which was offered by the University Library. The IL programme is offered as a certificate course with a total duration of 60 hours for all undergraduates. (Srisatkunarajah & Paul Rohan, 2025, p.608).

Outreach Activities and Community Engagement

After the civil conflict of Sri Lanka, since 2009, the university library has undertaken several outreach initiatives aimed at promoting reading and expanding access to information within the region, including educational institutions and libraries in remote areas. Recognizing its responsibility to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in society, these initiatives leverage the library's expertise and human resources. The activities include providing consultancy for organizing school and public libraries, fostering library awareness among school students, organizing information literacy programs to enhance students' information-

handling skills, conducting training programs for library personnel in public and school libraries, and addressing important community issues by providing relevant information. The outreach activities of library collaborated with outside communities to enhance the social development beyond the university boundary collaborated with public librarians in the Northern Province, Department of Local Government, Northern Province, *The Provincial Department of Education, Northern Province, The Medical Officer of Health (MOH) Office, Nallur*. Key outreach activities included the capacity-building workshops for teacher-librarians, establishment of a prison library, Organization of library resources in rural schools, information literacy programs for school communities, and health information sessions for pregnant women focusing on accessing reliable pregnancy-related information. (Library Newsletter, 2019, 2020 & 2023).

Library Symposium

The library symposium “*ETAKAM*” organized by the University of Jaffna library serves as an important academic and professional platform for knowledge exchange, scholarly communication, and capacity building among librarians, academics, researchers, and information professionals in national and international level. Through these symposium, the library facilitates critical dialogue on emerging trends in library and information science, heritage preservation, digital transformation, and research support services. This conference offers changes for participants to present their research findings, exchange best practices, and discuss issues related to conservation, digitization, indigenous knowledge management, and the use of digital technologies in libraries. Further, *ETAKAM* symposium promotes collaborative activities by bringing together experts from various research organizations, and libraries. Overall, the library symposium provides a strategic academic forum that strengthens library’s role as a dynamic knowledge center. (Annual Report, 2024).

Contribution of E-Resource Services to Academic Development

The electronic resource services of University of Jaffna library is one of the contributions of modern academic development. The Subscription of library databases is the backbone of the University of Jaffna library’s e-resource services. By providing access to digital scholarly content, the library supports teaching, learning, research, and knowledge dissemination beyond the university boundaries. Currently library was subscribed 58 databases including Taylor and Francis, Oxford and Emerald. By accessing of interdisciplinary academic databases, the library,

University of Jaffna provides students, academics, and researchers to peer-reviewed journal articles, research reports, books, conference proceedings, and reference materials. These databases support curriculum development, evidence-based research, and postgraduate studies across faculties. The online databases greatly improve research efficiency by providing rapid access to modern international literature. Further, Remote access facilities extend the benefits to out of faculty users, including researchers, alumni, and external scholars, through this remote access facilities library's social reach expanding. (Srisatkunarah & Paul Rohan, 2025, pp.596-598).

Plagiarism and AI Detection Tools

The library offers plagiarism and artificial intelligence (AI) detection technologies to enhance ethical research practices, which help students and researchers in maintaining academic integrity. This services encourage the appropriate research practice within the University community and help to improve the standard of academic writing. The e-resource services of Library also contributes to academic development by enabling access to academic knowledge for students, academic, and researchers in the University. Through the integration of library databases, plagiarism and AI detection tools, institutional repositories, and remote access facilities, the University of Jaffna library serves as a comprehensive digital knowledge gateway. By extending the library's role from a university-based service to a socially responsive knowledge hub, these e-resource services strengthen academic excellence and promote research visibility. (Srisatkunarah & Paul Rohan, 2025, p.605).

c. Library's ability to maintain a balance between heritage preservation and modern academic Progress.

The University of Jaffna Library sustains its dual role of heritage preservation and modern academic development through the following integrated activities.

Heritage preservation Activities

Digitization and Preservation Project for the Sri Lankan Tamilology Collections: Through this project, library safes rare and historical collections, where valuable manuscripts, rare books, and archival documents are converted into digital formats to ensure long-term preservation.

Establishment of the Library of Tamilology projects: It dedicated to collecting, preserving, and providing access to knowledge on Tamilology.

Preservation of indigenous knowledge: The Siddha Medicine Library of University of Jaffna holds a distinctive rare collection related to indigenous medical texts in Tamil, particularly related to Siddha medicine.

Traditional Ola leaf Collections of Library: The Preservation and Conservation Division of the University Library safeguards 207 bundles of Ola leaves, comprising 25,607 individual leaves, all meticulously catalogued.

Establishing the Musicology Corner project: Through this project safeguarding the non-book materials related to traditional Music at the *Sir Ponnappalam Ramanathan Faculty of Performing and Visual Arts (SPRFPVA)* Branch Library of University of Jaffna. These kind of activities ensure that cultural heritage is safeguarded while also making it accessible to contemporary users.

Modern academic development Activities

Institutional Repository (IR): Currently more than 9,000 documents are maintained by the university library, it enhances global visibility and contributes to the university's webometrics ranking. Information Literacy Programme: Information Literacy (IL) programme for all undergraduates to promote independent learning alongside classroom-based lectures. Library Symposium: Library serves as an important academic and professional platform for knowledge exchange, scholarly communication, and capacity building among librarians, academics, researchers, and information professionals through these symposium. Research support services: Library provides the research support services by the E-Resource Services, Plagiarism and AI Detection Tools. Through these combined efforts, libraries successfully preserve cultural heritage while simultaneously supporting the evolving needs of modern education and research.

d. Challenges are faced by the University of Jaffna library in fulfilling its dual Mission

The University of Jaffna library has a number of challenges in fulfilling its dual mission, despite the fact that it plays a crucial role in balance the heritage preservation and academic development.

Generally, one of the main challenges is **insufficient financial resources**. Despite a larger digitization and preservation projects have been funded by trust funds and national and international grants, consistent funding is needed for digital preservation, long-term conservation, system improvements, and maintaining of specialized facilities. Relying on project-based funding gives difficulties on consistency and flexibility.

Limitation of Human resource is another major challenge. Shortage of staff, especially in fields requires specific skills include digitization methods, manuscript conservation, metadata generation, and digital archiving, impact on the effectiveness and progress of preservation activities. Furthermore, continues career development possibilities for library employees are limited, it is restricting for modern preservation technologies and international best practices.

Furthermore, the library faces another challenge is **Modern technological and infrastructure facilities**. An infrastructure facilities for digitalization, storage facility, and long-term digital preservation mechanism restrict to large digitization activities in all heritage collections. Software sustainability, system interoperability, and cyber security, which are further difficulties for digital preservation initiatives.

Open access to some digital resources such as research publications, theses, and rare manuscripts is challenging due to **Copyright laws and access limitations**. Finding a balance between the need for wider accessibility and intellectual property rights is still a major challenge. Finally, if University of Jaffna library is serving in a **post-war and rehabilitation area**, library must address significant socio-economic issues, including limited internet facilities among communities, differences in digital literacy, limited funding facilities and the need for more awareness on heritage collections beyond the University boundary.

e. Recommendations for enhancing the library's capacity in heritage preservation and academic development.

Sustainable financial mechanisms should be created through long-term institutional budgeting, collaborations, and endowment models, it ensure for continuation of preservation and digitization activities.

The library should enhance **capacity building programs for professional development**, it is including training in metadata production, digital preservation, conservation technology, and

contemporary library technologies. Further, collaboration activity with national and international organizations help the exchange of knowledge and development of skills.

Digital infrastructure facilities such as extending digitization facilities, establishing digital preservation methods, enhancing storage techniques, and implementing international metadata standards.

Collaborations networks with other institutions, and stakeholders. These collaborations with universities, research institutions, and stakeholders can enhance research collaborations, resources sharing, and outreach activities of library.

Library must focus on community engagement activities, it improves the use of historical collections and digital resources among public libraries, schools, and marginalized societies.

Additionally, this study recommends that **establishment of ethical guidance on access, copyright, and ethical use of heritage sources,** it will be balance between preservation, accessibility, and intellectual property issues.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examined the dual functions of the University of Jaffna library in preserving heritage and enabling academic progress in future. The findings highlight that the library of University of Jaffna plays an important role as a custodian of cultural heritage by preservation of archival collections, indigenous knowledge, rare manuscripts, and non-book materials. Meanwhile, it functions as a facilitator of future academic development by providing research, digital access, information literacy, and global scholarly engagement. Although facing difficulties pertaining to funding, staffing, infrastructure, and access constraints, University of Jaffna library has proven resilience and innovation in balancing tradition and modernity. Its activities highlight the evolving role of University libraries as dynamic knowledge centers that integrate physical heritage preservation, and digital transformation. Finally, this research concludes that digital capacity, strengthening institutional support, and collaborative networks will further enhance the library's ability to sustain cultural continuity while contributing meaningfully to academic excellence and development. In this sense, the University of Jaffna library serves as a model for university libraries functioning in culturally rich yet resource-constrained contexts.

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Mapping Library and Information Science Research in Sri Lanka: A Bibliometric Study of the Sri Lanka Library Review (2020–2025)

Wadasinghe, Chandima¹

Abstract

Bibliometric studies play an important role in evaluating the growth, structure and scholarly output of academic journals. The present study is a bibliometric survey of the Sri Lanka Library Review (SLLR), a journal published by the Sri Lanka Library Association, between 2020 and 2025. The study analysed 55 full research articles and two abstracts published in twelve issues. The main indicators examined were annual publication output, authorship and collaboration patterns, article length, reference use, language of publication, institutional affiliation and readership on the Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL) platform. The findings show that SLLR maintained a regular publication record during the study period, with an average of approximately nine research articles per year. Single-authored publications accounted for 52.63% of the total output, while multi-authored publications accounted for 47.37%, resulting in a Degree of Collaboration of 0.47. Most articles were between 16 and 20 pages in length, and the majority cited between 11 and 30 references. English was the dominant language of publication (68.42%), followed by Sinhala (19.30%) and Tamil (12.28%). Article view data indicated measurable readership through SLJOL, with most articles receiving between 200 and 399 views during the data collection period. The University of Colombo was the highest contributing institution. The findings demonstrate that SLLR is an important national journal for Library and Information Science research in Sri Lanka and has the potential to further strengthen its scholarly visibility, research collaboration and multilingual contribution.

Keywords: Academic publishing, Bibliometric analysis, Library and information science, Research collaboration, Scholarly communication, Sri Lanka Library Review

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Introduction

The academic fields of scholarly journals are usually the primary medium through which the research is conveyed and legitimised. One of the quantitative models of examining the production, dissemination and consumption of knowledge using these journals is bibliometric analysis (Pritchard, 1969; Moed, 2005). Research productivity and collaboration patterns and journal performance are comprehended through bibliometric studies, which allow analysing such variables as the number of publications, authorship, citation behaviour, and the measure of use (Hood and Wilson, 2001; Donthu et al., 2021; Järvelin and Vakkari, 2021). Bibliometric methods have become popular in Library and Information Science (LIS) as a field of analysis in terms of journal quality assessment, research topic mapping, and professional discourse development (Chaurasia, 2020; Thanuskodi, 2010). These works are particularly helpful when it comes to learning about the local and national research setting, where local journals could quite often play the central role in forming the professional practice and scholarly communication (Aksnes et al., 2019).

Sri Lanka Library Review (SLLR) is among the oldest LIS journals published in Sri Lanka by the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA). First published in 1962, the journal has a publication history of more than six decades. However, during this long publication history, it was not published continuously in every period and experienced certain interruptions before being revived as an active scholarly journal. Therefore, although SLLR has a long historical background, the present study focuses on the recent period from 2020 to 2025, during which journal issues and article-level metadata were available in a consistent and comparable form through the Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL) platform. The journal is now a peer-reviewed, biannual, open-access journal published by the Sri Lanka Library Association and hosted on SLJOL. Since its revival, SLLR has continued to play a significant role in Library and Information Science research in Sri Lanka by publishing articles on library services, information literacy, research methods, technology and other social aspects of information use.

Literature Review

Bibliometric analysis is considered one of the most stable and well-established techniques to examine the structure and development of scholarly communication within the field of academia. Pritchard (1969) was the first to introduce the term "bibliometrics" as the application of mathematical and statistical methods to books and other types of recorded information. Over

time, bibliometric procedures have evolved into widely used tools for evaluating research output, authorship, citation behaviour, collaboration patterns and journal performance (Moed, 2005; Hood & Wilson, 2001). It has also, in recent years, been featured in bibliometric literature that has added recent indicators like article views and article downloads in order to include dimensions of visibility and readership engagement that can never be entirely captured by citation counts alone (Sugimoto et al., 2017). Bibliometric research has been of specific relevance to the development of the discipline and the processes of scholarly publishing in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS). The publication output, thematic focus and research collaboration are some of the topics where LIS journals have been studied by many researchers. In a bibliometric study of Library Philosophy and Practice, Thanuskodi (2010) noted consistent increases in the length of articles and the number of references and an apparent growth in the importance of methodological rigour and interest in the work of earlier studies. Yeoh and Kaur (2008) reported similar trends when they asserted that journal literature is increasingly being relied on as electronic databases continue to increase. Previous Sri Lankan studies have also used bibliometric and scientometric methods to analyse subject-specific scholarly literature and database-based research output. Wadasinghe (2020, 2021) demonstrated the usefulness of these methods for examining publication growth, subject coverage and research trends in information-resource contexts.

Kumar (2014) found that more than fifty per cent of articles published in Library Herald were authored by single individuals, and Singh, Mittal and Ahmad (2006) reported a similar pattern in their study of digital library research. Such trends have been commonly explained by the professional and practice-driven character of LIS research, in which case studies and concept papers are often pursued individually. Meanwhile, more recent research evidence indicates a slow transition to collaborative research in LIS. Verma et al. (2007) found that the most frequent type of collaboration in the Indian Journal of Library and Information Science was two-author publications. Such trends have been commonly measured using the degree of collaboration that was suggested by Subramanyam (1983), so that a journal and a region can be compared to another one. Higher levels of collaboration were reported by Garg et al. (2019), who analysed the Malaysian Journal of Library and Information Science and attributed such patterns to institutional research policies and collaborative project funding. At the international level, Zhang and Yuan (2023) registered a significant decrease in single-authored publications in the LIS subject and emphasised the increasing significance of interdisciplinary and collaborative studies.

More recent studies also show that authorship and disciplinary contribution patterns are important indicators in understanding the development of LIS scholarship. Stephens et al. (2018) examined authorship trends in Collaborative Librarianship, while Vakkari et al. (2022) showed that LIS research is increasingly shaped by contributions from related external disciplines. Research has indicated growth in terms of average reference per article over time as an indicator of better access to scholarly information and increased demand for scholarly rigour (Moed, 2005; Thanuskodi, 2010). Donthu et al. (2021) highlighted the idea that reference analysis provides more than citation volume but also helps to inform about the body of knowledge and theoretical ground of a field. Although English is the primary language of global academic publishing, there are several national journals with multilingual publication practices to increase their levels of accessibility and relevance to local communities (Aksnes et al., 2019). Research has indicated that multiple-language journals are critical in professional growth and national knowledge sharing, although their international influence on citation may be comparatively small (Moed, 2005).

Chaurasia (2020) observed that the frequency and co-occurrence of keywords are useful methods of extracting the most common research themes and changes in scholarly interest (Wattanasiri & Chansanam, 2024). Information literacy, user studies, library services, and digital libraries are some of the commonly recurring themes that appear in LIS literature (Thanuskodi, 2010). Newer bibliometric searches have indicated the expanding importance of technology-related themes like artificial intelligence, digital transformation, and data analytics to the reflection of the discipline to more extensive technological and societal shifts (Zhang and Yuan, 2023; Wu et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2024). Usage statistics are particularly useful in open-access and practice-oriented journals because citation counts alone may not fully show how articles are read, accessed or used by professional communities. In LIS journals, article views and downloads can therefore provide additional evidence of readership and professional engagement beyond formal citation impact (Sugimoto et al., 2017; Cho, 2021; Vermillion, 2025). Although the SLLR has become more regular and visible online, no complete bibliometric study has been conducted for the 2020-2025 period. Examining publication patterns, collaboration behaviour, and engagement helps the editorial committee strengthen journal standards and improve research communication in the national LIS community. Therefore, this study conducts a systematic bibliometric analysis of SLLR publications between 2020 and 2025.

Significance of the Study

This study provides a systematic bibliometric review of the Sri Lanka Library Review during the period from 2020 to 2025. It presents an overview of the publication output, authorship patterns, institutional contribution, language distribution, reference use, keyword coverage, ORCID adoption and readership engagement of the journal. These findings are useful for editors, reviewers, authors and decision-makers because they provide evidence for improving journal policy, strengthening metadata standards, encouraging research collaboration, increasing visibility and promoting multilingual scholarly communication in Library and Information Science in Sri Lanka.

Research Problem

The Sri Lanka Library Review has made a long-standing contribution to Library and Information Science scholarship in Sri Lanka. However, its recent publication patterns, authorship characteristics, institutional contribution, language distribution, referencing behaviour and readership engagement have not been systematically evaluated for the 2020–2025 period. This lack of bibliometric analysis limits the understanding of the journal's recent scholarly contribution, visibility and development needs. Therefore, this study addresses the problem by conducting a bibliometric review of SLLR publications from 2020 to 2025.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the bibliometric characteristics of the Sri Lanka Library Review during the period 2020–2025. The specific objectives are:

- To examine the annual publication output of SLLR from 2020 to 2025.
- To analyse the pattern and degree of research collaboration.
- To examine institutional affiliations and author designations.
- To assess article length and reference use.
- To examine the distribution of language and keywords used.
- To measure the level of readership through article views and ORCID adoption

Research Methodology

This study used a descriptive bibliometric research design. The study consisted of all items published in the Sri Lanka Library Review during the period 2020–2025. A total of 57 items,

including 55 full research articles and two abstracts, were included in the analysis. Data were collected from the Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL) platform. The main data collection was conducted in October 2025, while article view counts were recorded during December 2025 to January 2026 because online usage statistics are cumulative and may change over time. A Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was used to record publication year, number of authors, institutional affiliation, author designation, article length, number of references, language of publication, keywords, ORCID availability and article views. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages.

Results

The results were analysed using quantitative measures in bibliometric research, publication volume, authorship behaviour, collaboration patterns, article length, reference use, language of publication, keywords, institutional affiliation, ORCID, and readership activity. Descriptive statistics were used for the analysis, and the data were collected from the SLJOL platform.

Year-wise Publication Output

The annual distribution of research articles was examined to identify patterns in publication output. Table 1 presents the year-wise distribution of articles published between 2020 and 2025.

Table 1. Year-wise Distribution of Research Articles Published in SLLR

Volume Number	Year	Issue Number	No. of Abstracts	No. Research articles
39	2025	2	0	6
39	2025	1	0	3
38	2024	2	0	3
38	2024	1	0	3
37	2023	2	0	6
37	2023	1	2	2
36	2022	2	0	7
36	2022	1	0	3
35	2021	2	0	5
35	2021	1	0	4
34	2020	2	0	7
34	2020	1	0	6
Total			2	55

Authorship Pattern

The authorship of articles was analysed to determine their distribution by the number of authors (Table 2). Out of 57 items published from 2020 to 2025, 55 were full articles, and 2 were abstracts. More than half of the articles (30) were written by a single author, while the remaining 27 involved multiple authors.

Table 2. Distribution of Articles by Number of Authors

Year	Single Author	Two Authors	Three Authors	Four Authors	Total Articles/Abstracts
2025	5	2	1	1	9
2024	3	3	0	0	6
2023	3	6	1	0	10
2022	4	4	1	1	10
2021	5	3	1	0	9
2020	10	3	0	0	13
Total	30	21	4	2	57

Degree of Collaboration

The Degree of Collaboration (DC) was calculated using Subramanyam's (1983) formula:

$$DC = \frac{N_m}{N_m + N_s}$$

Where:

N_m = number of multi-authored articles

N_s = number of single-authored articles

Based on the data:

$$DC = \frac{27}{27 + 30}$$

$$DC = \frac{27}{57} = 0.474$$

The Degree of Collaboration (DC) for articles published in the Sri Lanka Library Review from 2020 to 2025 was 0.47. This value was calculated using Subramanyam's formula, where DC represents the proportion of multi-authored publications among the total number of publications (Subramanyam, 1983). Therefore, the result indicates that multiple authors wrote 47% of the publications, while 53% were single-authored. Since DC is interpreted as a collaboration measure ranging from 0 to 1, a value of 0.47 suggests a moderate level of collaboration, with single authorship still slightly dominant in the journal (Subramanyam, 1983; Savanur & Srikanth, 2010).

Institutional Contributions

Institutional affiliations of authors were analysed to identify major contributing organisations. Table 3 presents the leading institutions based on the number of published articles.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Institutes

Institute	Frequency	% of Total
University of Colombo	15	16.30%
University of Jaffna	12	13.04%
University of Kelaniya	11	11.96%
University of Peradeniya	8	8.70%
Open University of Sri Lanka	3	3.26%
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka	3	3.26%
Vavuniya University of Sri Lanka	3	3.26%
University of Sri Jayewardenepura	4	4.35%
National Library and Documentation Services Board	4	4.35%
Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka	2	2.17%
Eastern University	2	2.17%
University of Ruhuna	2	2.17%
Vavuniya Campus, University of Jaffna	2	2.17%
Law & Society Trust	1	1.09%
Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous	1	1.09%
Sandilipay Hindu College, Jaffna	1	1.09%
General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University	1	1.09%
Nelukkulam Kalaimagal Maha Vidyalayam, Vavuniya	1	1.09%

St. Joseph's Primary School, Onehunga, Auckland, NZ	1	1.09%
South Eastern University of Sri Lanka	1	1.09%
Bharathidasan University, India	1	1.09%
Total	92	100%

The analysis shows that universities dominate the publication contributions, with the University of Colombo and other universities accounting for the majority of the output.

Author Designation

Author designations were examined to understand professional background. Table 4 presents the distribution of authors by designation.

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Designations

Designation	Frequency	% of Total
Senior Assistant Librarian	50	54.35%
Not mentioned designation	17	18.48%
Assistant Librarian	7	7.61%
Librarian (University)	4	4.35%
Lecturer	4	4.35%
Senior Lecturer	2	2.17%
Librarian (Special library)	3	3.26%
Deputy Librarian	2	2.17%
Director	1	1.09%
Probationary Lecturer	1	1.09%
Library and Information Assistant	1	1.09%
Information Assistant	1	1.09%
Senior Staff Assistant (Library Services)	1	1.09%
Research Assistant	1	1.09%
Teacher	1	1.09%
Former Senior Assistant Librarian	1	1.09%
Academic Coordinator	1	1.09%
Library Assistant (Voluntary)	1	1.09%
Total	92	100%

The majority of authors were Senior Assistant Librarians, representing 54.35% of the total. This highlights their central role in the library workforce. A notable proportion of authors (18.48%) did not mention their designation in the article metadata.

Article Length Analysis

Article length was analysed to assess the extent of content coverage and reporting depth. Table 5 shows the distribution of articles according to page length.

Table 5. Distribution of Articles by Page Length

Page Range	Frequency	Percentage
1–5	2	3.51%
6–10	1	1.75%
11–15	15	26.32%
16–20	22	38.60%
21–25	12	21.05%
26–30	4	7.02%
Over 30	1	1.75%
Total	57	100%

Most articles in the Sri Lanka Library Review were 16-20 pages long, while the 1-5 page range includes 2 abstracts rather than full articles. Table 5 indicates that the journal generally published articles with sufficient length to present the topic, methodology and discussion in reasonable detail.

References Analysis

Citation data were analysed to examine the referencing behaviour of research articles published in the Sri Lanka Library Review. Table 6 presents the distribution of articles according to the number of references cited. The analysis excludes two abstracts that did not include reference lists; therefore, the total number of research articles considered for this analysis was 55.

Table 6. Distribution of Articles by Number of References

(Excludes 2 abstracts with no references; n = 55 research articles)

Reference Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0–5	2	3.64
6–10	9	16.36
11–15	17	30.91
16–20	11	20.00
21–25	5	9.09
26–30	2	3.64
31–35	6	10.91
36–40	1	1.82
More than 40	3	5.45
Total	55	100

Table 6 shows that the largest proportion of articles cited between 11 and 15 references, accounting for 17 articles (30.91%). When the reference ranges from 11 to 30 are considered together, 35 articles (63.64%) fall within this range. This indicates that the majority of research articles published in SLLR used a moderate number of references to support their research content. Only a small number of articles cited more than 40 references, suggesting that highly extensive reference use was less common during the study period.

Language of Publication

The language in which articles were published was analysed to assess linguistic distribution. Table 7 presents the language-wise distribution of articles.

Table 7. Language-wise Distribution of Articles

Language	Frequency	Percentage (%)
English	39	68.42%
Sinhala	11	19.30%
Tamil	7	12.28%
Total	57	100%

Table 7 shows that English was the predominant language of publication, followed by Sinhala and Tamil.

Keyword Frequency Distribution

Keyword data were analysed to identify thematic coverage. Table 8 presents the frequency of commonly occurring keywords across articles.

Table 8. Keyword Mapping and Frequency by Thematic Category

Category	Keyword Count	Representative Keywords
Library Types	7	Academic libraries, Public libraries, School libraries, University libraries, Mobile services
Library Services & Operations	14	Library services, Circulation, Resource sharing, Marketing, Metadata service
Classification & Cataloguing	8	Dewey Decimal Classification, Uniform titles, Bibliographic control
Information Resources	7	Electronic resources, Online content, Information resources, Video repositories
Information Literacy & Skills	5	Information literacy, User proficiency, Information-seeking behaviour
Research & Academic Topics	15	Research productivity, Scientometric analysis, Systematic reviews, Plagiarism
Technology & Digital Tools	7	Artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, ICT infrastructure, E-services
User Groups	8	Undergraduate students, Postgraduate medical trainees, School librarians, Teachers
Social & Cultural Issues	13	Rural schools, Urban schools, Community outreach, Literacy
Marketing & Communication	7	Social media, Web 2.0/3.0, Marketing concepts
Geographical Contexts	10	Sri Lanka, Northern Province, Maldives, Bharathidasan University, India
Specialized Topics	8	Medical information retrieval, Patient safety, Disinformation

Library Science & Profession	9	Librarianship, Job satisfaction, Professional training
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A total of 212 keywords were identified across the 55 research articles. The number of keywords per article ranged from three to five. Frequently occurring keywords included *research methodology*, *information literacy*, *library services*, *digital libraries*, *user studies*, and *information management*. Keywords related to emerging areas such as *artificial intelligence*, *digital transformation*, and *data analytics* appeared primarily in articles published after 2022.

Usage Metrics: Article Views

Readership engagement was analysed using article-level usage statistics available on the Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL) platform. The article view counts were recorded during the period from December 2025 to January 2026. Since online view counts are cumulative and may change over time, this period indicates the specific time at which the usage data were accessed. Table 9 presents the distribution of articles based on the number of views received.

Table 9. Article View Counts on SLJOL (2020–2025)

View Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
200–399	31	54.39%
400–599	17	29.82%
600–799	5	8.77%
800–999	1	1.75%
1000 and above	3	5.26%
Total	57	100%

Table 9 shows that most items, 31 out of 57 items (54.39%), received between 200 and 399 views. A further 17 items (29.82%) received between 400 and 599 views. Only three items exceeded 1,000 views, suggesting that a small number of publications attracted comparatively higher readership during the recorded period. Overall, the article view data indicate that SLLR publications received measurable readership through the SLJOL platform during the data collection period.

ORCID Adoption

ORCID availability was analysed to assess adoption of global author identification standards (Porter et al., 2025). Table 10 presents ORCID usage among authors.

Table 10. ORCID Adoption Among Authors

ORCID Status	Count	Percentage (%)
Yes	76	82.61%
No	16	17.39%
Total	92	100%

Analysis of author metadata revealed that 82.6% of contributing authors had provided ORCID identifiers. This information was obtained directly from the article metadata available on the SLJOL platform.

Discussion

The annual publication output of the Sri Lanka Library Review shows that the journal maintained a regular publication pattern during the 2020–2025 period, although the number of published articles varied from year to year. This shows that SLLR continues to serve as a national platform for Library and Information Science research in Sri Lanka. Similar bibliometric studies of LIS journals have also shown that publication output may vary depending on submission patterns, editorial processes and the research activity of the professional community (Kumar, 2014; Garg et al., 2019).

The authorship pattern shows that single-authored articles were slightly dominant in SLLR. This pattern is common in LIS research, especially in national and practice-oriented journals, where case studies, professional reflections and institutional studies are often carried out by individual authors. However, the Degree of Collaboration value of 0.47 and the presence of multi-authored articles indicate a moderate level of collaboration. This suggests that collaborative research is gradually becoming more visible in SLLR, which is in line with wider developments in LIS scholarship where collaborative and interdisciplinary studies are increasingly encouraged (Zhang & Yuan, 2023).

The article length and reference analysis suggest that most SLLR articles provide reasonably detailed research reporting. A considerable number of articles were more than 15 pages in

length, while the majority cited between 11 and 30 references. This indicates that most authors used a moderate level of scholarly support to develop their studies. These patterns are consistent with bibliometric studies that consider article length and reference use as useful indicators of research reporting practices and engagement with previous literature (Thanuskodi, 2010; Yeoh & Kaur, 2008).

The language distribution of SLLR is another important feature. English was the dominant language of publication, which can support wider scholarly visibility. At the same time, the presence of Sinhala and Tamil articles strengthens national accessibility and professional inclusiveness. This multilingual publication pattern is important for a national LIS journal because it allows the journal to serve both academic and professional communities in Sri Lanka (Aksnes et al., 2019).

Keyword analysis shows that SLLR covers a wide range of LIS themes. Traditional areas such as library services, information literacy, user studies and information management were strongly represented. At the same time, emerging themes such as artificial intelligence, digital transformation and data-related topics also appeared in recent articles. This indicates that the journal is gradually responding to current changes in the LIS field and is not limited only to conventional library topics.

View statistics indicate measurable readership for SLLR articles. Since usage metrics can reflect professional engagement beyond formal citations, these data provide useful evidence of the journal's reach and visibility through the SLJOL platform (Cho, 2021; Sugimoto et al., 2017; Vermillion, 2025). Although most articles received moderate view counts, a small number of articles attracted comparatively higher readership, suggesting that some topics may have stronger professional or academic interest.

Institutional analysis shows that Sri Lankan universities made the largest contribution to SLLR publications, with the University of Colombo appearing as the highest contributing institution. This highlights the important role of universities in supporting LIS research in Sri Lanka. The high level of ORCID adoption among authors also reflects increasing awareness of international scholarly identification practices and supports the credibility, visibility and traceability of author contributions.

The findings show that the Sri Lanka Library Review is an important national journal for Library and Information Science research in Sri Lanka. Its strengths include regular publication

activity, multilingual contribution, participation from major academic institutions, moderate research collaboration and measurable online readership. At the same time, the findings suggest that the journal can further improve its scholarly contribution. This can be achieved by encouraging wider institutional participation, stronger collaborative research, improved metadata quality, greater article promotion and continued support for Sinhala and Tamil publications.

Conclusion

This study examined the bibliometric characteristics of the Sri Lanka Library Review during the period 2020–2025, with attention to publication output, authorship and collaboration patterns, institutional contribution, article length, reference use, language distribution, keyword coverage, readership engagement and ORCID adoption. By analysing 55 research articles and two abstracts published across twelve issues, the study provides a clear picture of the recent scholarly contribution of SLLR to Library and Information Science research in Sri Lanka.

In relation to annual publication output, the findings show that SLLR maintained regular publication activity during the six-year period, although the number of articles varied from year to year. This indicates the continued role of the journal as a national platform for LIS research, particularly after its revival and increased visibility through the SLJOL platform.

The analysis of authorship patterns shows that single-authored articles remained slightly dominant, while multi-authored publications also represented a substantial proportion of the total output. The Degree of Collaboration value of 0.47 suggests a moderate level of research collaboration. This finding indicates that although individual research contributions are still common in SLLR, collaborative research is gradually becoming more visible.

The institutional and author-profile analysis shows that universities were the major contributors to the journal, with the University of Colombo making the highest contribution. Senior Assistant Librarians represented the largest author group, highlighting their active role in LIS research and scholarly communication in Sri Lanka. At the same time, the presence of contributors from different institutions shows that SLLR has attracted participation from a wider professional and academic community.

The findings on article length and reference use suggest that most articles followed a reasonable level of research reporting. A large proportion of articles were between 16 and 20 pages, and

the majority used a moderate number of references. This indicates that most authors provided sufficient discussion and source support for their studies, while still maintaining a manageable article length.

The language and keyword analysis show that English was the dominant language of publication, followed by Sinhala and Tamil. This reflects the journal's dual role in supporting wider academic visibility and serving local professional communities. The keyword patterns further show that SLLR covers both traditional LIS areas, such as library services, information literacy and user studies, and emerging areas, such as artificial intelligence, digital tools and data-related research.

Readership data from SLJOL show that SLLR articles received measurable online attention during the recorded period. Although most articles received moderate view counts, a few attracted comparatively higher readership, suggesting that certain topics have stronger visibility and user interest. The high level of ORCID adoption among authors also reflects growing awareness of international scholarly identification practices.

The findings indicate that the Sri Lanka Library Review remains an important national journal for Library and Information Science research in Sri Lanka. Its strength lies in its long history, regular publication pattern, multilingual contribution, institutional participation and growing online visibility. At the same time, the study identifies areas for further improvement, including stronger research collaboration, wider institutional representation, improved metadata quality, greater promotion of published articles and continued support for Sinhala and Tamil publications. Strengthening these areas will help SLLR further improve its scholarly quality, national relevance and international visibility.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following practical measures are recommended to strengthen the quality, visibility and scholarly contribution of the *Sri Lanka Library Review*:

- SLLA and related Library and Information Science institutions should consider providing small research grants, publication awards or institutional recognition for LIS professionals who conduct publishable research and submit high-quality papers to SLLR.

- Research projects funded, supported or coordinated by SLLA and other LIS-related bodies should be encouraged to publish their findings in SLLR, while maintaining independent peer-review and editorial standards.
- The visibility of published articles should be improved through systematic promotion using SLLA communication channels, university library networks, professional mailing lists, webinars, social media platforms and direct links to SLJOL article pages.
- The journal should further strengthen metadata quality by standardising author names, institutional affiliations, designations, ORCID identifiers, abstracts and keywords.
- Authors should be encouraged to provide clear, specific and searchable keywords so that articles can be easily identified by readers, researchers and indexing systems.
- Collaborative research should be actively encouraged by inviting joint papers from academic librarians, public librarians, school librarians, postgraduate researchers, LIS educators and professionals from related disciplines.
- Publication in Sinhala and Tamil should continue to be encouraged because these languages support national accessibility and professional inclusiveness.
- Local-language articles should include English titles, abstracts and keywords to improve wider visibility and access for national and international readers.
- SLLR may organise author-development workshops on research writing, bibliometric methods, referencing, APA style, research ethics and journal submission procedures.
- The editorial board may consider developing special issues on emerging and nationally relevant LIS themes such as artificial intelligence in libraries, information literacy, digital preservation, research data services, open access, user behaviour, school libraries, public library development and community information services.
- SLLR should continue monitoring article-level usage data, such as views and downloads, to identify topics that attract higher readership and professional interest.
- Regular bibliometric and usage-based reviews should be conducted to support evidence-based editorial planning and long-term journal development.

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A Study of Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students Zonal Education Office, Vavuniya North, Sri Lanka.

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Abstract

This study examines the information needs, information-seeking behaviour, and library usage of senior secondary school students in the Zonal Education Office, Vavuniya North. A quantitative research approach with a descriptive survey design was employed to investigate how students' access and use information for academic and personal purposes. The study population consisted of 487 students from four schools, representing different grades and academic streams. Using Krejcie and Morgan's sampling method, a stratified random sample of 214 students was selected. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, and the responses were analyzed using SPSS. Ethical standards, including voluntary participation and confidentiality, were maintained throughout the study. The findings reveal that students primarily seek information related to academic activities, entertainment, general knowledge, current affairs, and daily life. Websites, social media, and noticeboards were identified as the most frequently used information sources due to their accessibility and convenience. Although school libraries are mainly used for reading and studying, their usage remains limited. Several barriers affecting effective information seeking were identified, including outdated library systems, limited borrowing facilities, slow internet connectivity, and inadequate ICT skills among students. The study highlights the important role of school libraries in supporting students' learning and information needs. It recommends improvements such as implementing digital cataloguing systems, enhancing internet access, providing information literacy and ICT training, and increasing awareness of available library resources. These measures would improve students' access to information and promote more effective information-seeking behaviour.

Keywords: Information needs, Information Seeking Behaviours, Information Sources and Services, Senior Secondary School Students, Zonal Education Office Vavuniya North.

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Introduction

School libraries play a vital role in supporting teaching and learning processes by fulfilling the information needs of students and other users within educational institutions. As an essential component of instructional activities, school libraries contribute significantly to academic achievement, intellectual development, and social transformation. Education and libraries are closely interconnected, and the quality of education largely depends on the effective functioning of school libraries. With rapid technological advancements, schools and libraries continue to adapt to modern developments to meet the evolving needs of learners. The concept of “information-seeking behaviour” has been widely discussed in professional literature since the mid-twentieth century (Manjunath & Babu, 2018), emphasizing the importance of understanding how individuals search for, access, and use information. Recent studies have shown significant changes in young people’s information-seeking habits, particularly the growing use of social media, mobile devices, websites, and digital platforms for educational purposes (Eden Dahlstrom & Kashif Warraich, 2012).

In the digital era, school libraries are expected not only to provide printed materials but also to promote information literacy skills, support independent learning, and facilitate access to electronic resources and digital learning tools. Academic school libraries remain one of the most reliable and widely used sources of information in literate societies. However, information-seeking behaviour varies among individuals depending on their needs, interests, educational background, and search contexts. Therefore, librarians must understand students’ information requirements and provide appropriate resources and services accordingly.

Although several studies have examined information-seeking behaviour in universities and higher educational institutions, limited research has focused on senior secondary school students, particularly in the context of Vavuniya North. There is insufficient evidence regarding students’ information needs, preferred information sources, library usage patterns, and the challenges they face in accessing information within school environments. This research gap highlights the need for a focused study on secondary school students in the region. Therefore, the present study investigates the information needs, information-seeking behaviour, and library usage of senior secondary school students in Vavuniya North, while also identifying the barriers they encounter in accessing essential information in the contemporary information environment.

Objective

1. To determine the information requirements of the senior secondary school students of the Zonal Education Office, Vavuniya North.
2. To examine how senior secondary school students of the Zonal Education Office, Vavuniya North, satisfy their information needs
3. To determine which sources students in Senior secondary school of the Zonal Education Office, Vavuniya North, like for their educational pursuits
4. To explore the issues the senior secondary school students, have when obtaining their needed information in the Zonal Education Office, Vavuniya North.

Literature Review

There is a variety of material for this review, as it is a current area of interest for educational policy-makers to enhance students' reading results. A thorough analysis of linked literature summarizes, contrasts, and links different academic works that are relevant to the field of research. The school library may be able to plan for the future by analysing the present based on solving a certain issue. In the present era, individuals seek knowledge for personal consumption, professional growth, and social survival. The experts feel that information needs are not homogeneous for everyone they differ from person to person. Information is a fundamental component of contemporary culture that almost everyone depends on, according to (Kalbande, 2019). Every individual uses the information according to his or her requirement (Silva & Chandrawamsa, 2016). According to (Manjunath & Babu, 2018), until knowledge is made available to those in need, no country can advance. They claim that in their everyday, professional, and personal lives, policymakers, planners, economists, farmers, educators, researchers, physicians, engineers, librarians, and others all require information.

Catalano (2013) has reviewed studies published from 1997 until now to draw out patterns of information seeking behaviour of graduate students. He endeavoured to find if graduate students begin their research through the internet. (Gordon et al., 2020) state that "information-seeking behaviour is a set of actions that an individual takes to express information needs, seek information, evaluate and select information, and finally use this information to satisfy his or her information needs." As a result, academics worldwide take the phrase "information-seeking

behaviour" seriously. They spoke extensively about the viewpoints of academics, researchers, scientists, mathematicians, graduate students, undergraduates, and postgraduates. (Gyesi, 2020) state that a library must offer effective information resources and services in order to satisfy its readers' information needs. (Sugihartati & Harisanty, 2014) investigated information-seeking models among senior high school students in Indonesia and found that the students' information demands were mostly focused with entertainment and further learning. Most of the students also reported that their teacher's recommendations of information sources performed an essential role in their information search activities, and that the majority prioritized accessing the internet. In a survey of senior high school students in Ghana, (Yeboah, 2016) discovered that students searched for academic material primarily for assignments and relied heavily on their course books and notes for end-of-term tests. He emphasized that, while the schools where the study was conducted had libraries, they had unprofessional staff who lacked the expertise and abilities to educate students' information literacy. As a result, students did not grasp how to analyze information from both print and internet sources. Students' usage of the Internet as a source of information was low, owing to the inaccessibility of campus Internet services. (Gyesi, 2016) carried out research on the content and sources of information searches among university students in Ghana. He sampled 121 graduate students from the University of Professional Studies and presented a self-reported questionnaire to them. (Ndiku, 2016) analysed an additional study that looked at the information needed by schoolchildren living in urban slums in Kenya. The study's conclusions showed that while schoolchildren in Nairobi's slums utilize a range of information sources, they mostly rely on their instructors, parents, the media, and their classmates for knowledge. She went on to say that the majority of Nairobi's slum schools lack libraries, and the handful that do exist are kept in staff quarters and classrooms. According to (Nwobasi et al., 2013) information demands of the information searchers are like variables that change over time. In a similar way, an information need is described as a knowledge gap that has to be filled in order to solve a problem or decide. (Catalano, 2013) has reviewed studies published from 1997 until now to draw out patterns of information seeking behaviour of graduate students. He endeavoured to find if graduate students begin their research through the internet.

Sin & Kim (2013) posit that social networking sites (SNS), such as Facebook, may play an important role in students' everyday life information seeking (ELIS). (Lacović, 2015) found that students' knowledge searching is complicated and multidimensional. The study aimed to investigate the information needs, sources, and types of library usage among university

students from diverse disciplinary domains. He discovered that the majority of responders required academic knowledge, such as writing, assignments, and completing semester examinations. The most widely used information sources are books, newspaper articles, websites, and so on. The internet, however, was regarded as the most important source of scholarly content. In addition, most kids were encouraged to seek critical information from their instructors, peers, and libraries.

Methodology

The study focused on senior secondary school students in the Zonal Education Office, Vavuniya North. A descriptive survey design was employed for the study, as it was considered suitable for collecting quantitative data from a large number of respondents and systematically examining their information needs, information sources, information-seeking behaviour, and library usage patterns. The study population consisted of 487 senior secondary school students from selected schools within the Vavuniya North educational zone. Using Krejcie and Morgan's sampling method, a sample size of 214 students was determined. The respondents were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure adequate representation of different grades and academic streams.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed based on the objectives of the study and relevant literature related to information-seeking behaviour and library usage. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and multiple-choice questions covering demographic information, students' information needs, preferred information sources, library usage patterns, information-seeking methods, and barriers faced in accessing information. Before the main data collection, the questionnaire was piloted with a small group of students outside the selected sample to ensure clarity, reliability, and relevance of the questions. Necessary modifications were made based on the pilot study feedback.

The collected data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical techniques such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data. For certain questions, respondents were allowed to select more than one option; therefore, the total frequencies and percentages in those tables were calculated based on the total number of responses rather than the total number of respondents. This approach was adopted to accurately represent multiple-response data.

Before data collection, permission was obtained from the relevant educational authorities and school principals. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. The purpose of the research was clearly explained to the respondents, and their informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were strictly maintained, and the information collected was used solely for academic research purposes.

Population

Table 4.1 Students Population

School Name	G.C.E.A/Level 12							G.C.E.A/Level 13							No of Students
	Science	Maths	Commer	Arts	Bio -	Eng-	Tech	Science	Maths	Commer	Arts	Bio -	Eng-	Tech	
Kanagarayankulam Maha Viddiyalayam	5	2	5	17	7	8	15	6	4	10	21	3	4	7	114
Nedunkeny Maha Viddiyalayam	3	1	11	32	0	-	-	4	2	12	20	0	0	0	85
Omanthai Central College	4	4	13	42	0	-	-	3	5	11	49	0	0	0	131
Puthukkulam Maha Viddiyalayam	5	6	15	47	0	-	-	6	6	22	50	0	0	0	157
Total	17	13	44	138	7	8	15	19	17	55	140	3	4	7	487

Sample

Table 4.2 Sample of students

School Name	G.C.E.A/Level 12							G.C.E.A/Level 13							No of Students
	Science	Maths	Commerce	Arts	Bio - Tech	Eng- Tech	Tech	Science	Maths	Commerce	Arts	Bio - Tech	Eng- Tech	Tech	
Kanagarayankulam Maha Viddiyalayam	2	1	2	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	8	2	2	3	43
Nedunkeny Maha Viddiyalayam	1	1	6	14	0	-	-	2	1	6	10	0	0	0	41

Omanthai Central College	2	2	6	18	0	-	-	1	2	7	21	0	0	0	59
Puthukkulam Maha Viddiyalayam	2	2	6	22	0	-	-	3	3	11	22	0	0	0	71
Total	7	6	20	57	3	4	3	9	9	28	61	2	2	3	214

Results

The findings of the research, which were based on information gathered from 214 senior secondary school students at the Zonal Education Office in Vavuniya North, are presented in this part. Demographic characteristics, information needs, information-seeking behavior, information sources, library usage, and challenges faced in accessing information are the categories under which the data are displayed.

5.1 Demographic Data

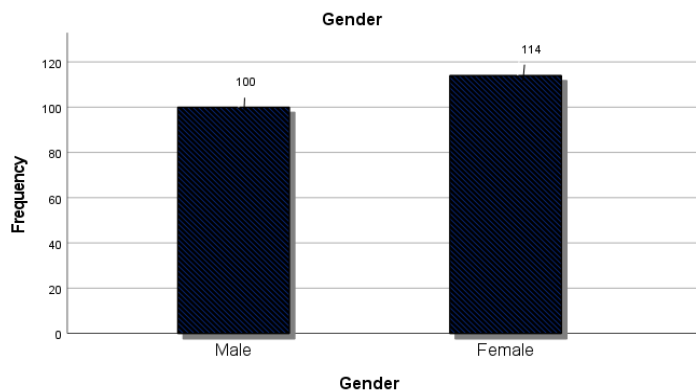


Figure 5.1.1 Gender

Figure 5.1.1 shows that there were 53.3% (n = 114) females and 46.7% (n = 100) males in the entire sample.

Table 5.1.1 School Name

School name	Population	Sample	Percentage
Kanagarayankulam Maha Viddiyalayam	114	41	19%
Nedunkeny Maha Viddiyalayam	85	42	19.5%
Omanthai Central College	131	60	27.5%
Puthukkulam Maha Viddiyalayam	157	71	33%
Total	487	214	100%

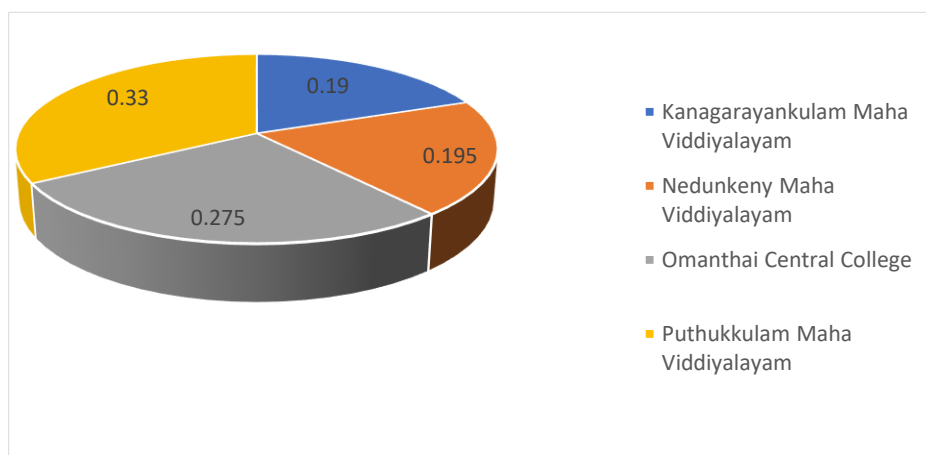


Figure 5.1.2 School Name

Figure 5.1.2 shows 214 students from four schools contributed to the sample, accounting for 48.7% of the 487 total students. With 71 students (33%), Puthukkulam Maha Vidyalayam supplied the most, followed by Omanthai Central College with 60 students (27.5%). Kanagarayankulam Maha Vidyalayam contributed 41 students (19%), while Nedunkeny Maha Vidyalayam contributed 42 (19.5%). Students from each school are proportionately represented in this distribution according to the size of their respective populations.

Stream

Table 5.1.2 Stream

Stream	Frequency	Percent
Bio	16	8%

Maths	15	7%
Arts	118	55%
Commerce	48	22%
Eng. Tech	6	3%
Tech	6	3%
Bio-Technology	5	2%
Total	214	100%

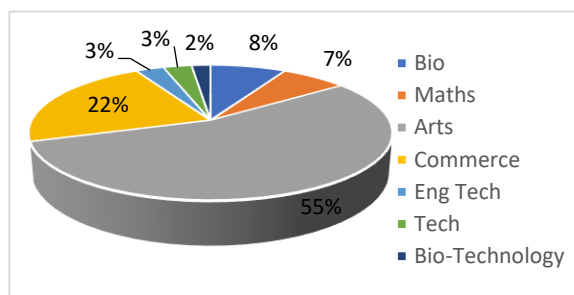


Figure 5.1.3 Stream

The Figure 5.1.3 shows that 55% of the 214 students are enrolled in the arts, with commerce coming in second at 22%. Eng. Tech (3%), Tech (3%), and Bio-Technology (2%) have the fewest students, indicating a definite preference for Arts and Commerce streams, while Bio (8%) and Math (7%) have moderate enrolment.

5.2 Descriptive Analysis

Table 5.2.1 Information Needs

Information Needs	Frequency	Percentage
News	172	11.9%
Sports	92	6.3%
Entertainment	189	13.0%
Health	45	3.1%
Higher education	107	7.4%
Politics	47	3.2%
Literature	108	7.5%
Science and Technology	121	8.4%
Arts and Literature	82	5.7%

Economics	125	8.6%
Daily life	185	12.8%
General knowledge	176	12.1%

The above table 5.2.1 shows the respondents' information needs. Entertainment (13.0%), daily life (12.8%), general knowledge (12.1%), and news (11.9%) have the most demand, demonstrating a concentration on useful and up-to-date information. Economics (8.6%), science and technology (8.4%), literature (7.5%), and higher education (7.4%) all show moderate interest, underscoring the significance of academic subjects. Sports (6.3%), arts and literature (5.7%), politics (3.2%), and health (3.1%) are ranked lower, indicating that these subjects are less important to students. Overall, the results show that general knowledge, entertainment, and everyday living information are strongly preferred over specialised or political content.

Table 5.2.2 Information Sources used by the students

Information Sources use	Frequency	Percentage
Library	114	9.8%
Social media	172	14.7%
Discuss with friends	129	11.0%
Noticeboard	189	16.2%
Website	164	14.0%
Group discussion	94	8.0%
Newspaper	89	7.6%
Discuss with family	44	3.8%
Radio	66	5.6%
TV	108	9.2%

The Table 5.2.2 Shows the results, students primarily use websites (14.0%), social media (14.7%), and noticeboards (16.2%) for information, indicating a preference for easily accessible and up-to-date platforms. Reliance on friends (11.0%), libraries (9.8%), and television (9.2%) is moderate. Conversely, less common sources include family conversations

(3.8%), radio (5.6%), newspapers (7.6%), and group talks (8.0%), indicating that conventional media are less preferred.

Table 5.2.3 Frequency to visit the library

Frequency (Library visit)	Frequency	Percentage
Almost daily	104	11.3%
Once in a week	164	17.8%
Several times in a week	189	20.5%
Once in a month	163	17.7%
Several times in a month	172	18.7%
Never	129	14.0%

The Table 5.2.3 shows that Students use the library at different frequencies, according to the statistics, with the largest percentage indicating visits several times a week (20.5%), several times a month (18.7%), and once a week (17.8%). A comparable percentage of students (17.7%) visit the library once a month, showing moderate involvement among a significant number of students. In contrast, 14.0% of students never visit the library, and nearly daily visits (11.3%) are less frequent, indicating that a significant minority does not use library services at all. Overall, the trend shows that students use the library in an active but variable way.

Table 5.2.4 Reason for Visit Library

Reason for Visit Library	Frequency	Percentage
To study	134	17.8%
To borrow books	112	14.9%
A quiet place to read	189	25.2%
Reprography service	108	14.4%
To read newspapers	140	18.6%
Browsing shelves Reference	68	9.1%

The Table 5.2.4 shows most frequent reason students visit the library is to locate a quiet spot to read (25.2%). Additionally, a significant percentage come to study (17.8%) and read newspapers (18.6%). Other explanations involve using reprography services (14.4%), looking through shelves for reference materials (9.1%), and borrowing books (14.9%). Overall, the

research indicates that reading, studying, and gaining access to educational materials are the primary uses of the library.

Table 5.2.5 Satisfaction with library services

Satisfaction with library services	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly dissatisfied	28	13.08%
Dissatisfied	37	17.29%
Neutral	42	19.63%
Satisfied	49	27.57%
Strongly Satisfied	48	22.43%

The Table 5.2.5 results indicate that overall satisfaction levels are positive, with a majority of students reporting being **satisfied (27.57%)** or **strongly satisfied (22.43%)**, together accounting for nearly half of all responses. A smaller proportion remains **neutral (19.63%)**, suggesting some ambivalence toward the service. However, levels of dissatisfaction are still notable, with **17.29% dissatisfied** and **13.08% strongly dissatisfied**, indicating that over one-third of students experience some degree of dissatisfaction. Overall, the findings show that while most students express satisfaction, a considerable minority report negative experiences, highlighting areas for potential improvement.

Table 5.2.6 Difficulties faced by students while seeking information

Difficulties of information seeking	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of knowledge to use OPAC	134	9.6%
Limited borrowing facilities in library	174	12.4%
Insufficient information resources	139	9.9%
Manual system in libraries	189	13.5%
Lack of time	167	11.9%
Poor organization of materials	108	7.7%
No special study room	89	6.4%
Lack of ICT knowledge	114	8.1%
Slow internet speed	169	12.1%
Inability to seek to obtain and to evaluate information	118	8.4%

The Table 5.2.6 show most commonly mentioned issues that students have when trying to get information are the manual system in libraries (13.5%), limited borrowing options (12.4%), and slow internet speed (12.1%). Lack of time (11.9%), inadequate information resources (9.9%), and lack of knowledge of how to use OPAC (9.6%) are other major challenges. Though to a lesser degree, problems including disorganized materials, a lack of a dedicated study space, a lack of ICT expertise, and trouble assessing information also contribute to students' difficulties. Overall, the results show that problems with technology and resources have an impact on students' capacity to efficiently find information.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide important insights into the information-seeking behaviour and library use patterns of senior secondary school students in Vavuniya North. The results revealed that Arts and Commerce streams had the highest student representation, while Science and Technology streams had lower enrolment. This finding is consistent with previous Sri Lankan educational studies which reported that rural schools often face limitations in science facilities, laboratory resources, and qualified teachers (Perera, 2016). The study found that students mainly sought information related to entertainment, daily life, general knowledge, and news. Similar findings were identified in earlier literature, where students preferred practical and personally relevant information over academic or specialized content (Kurbanoglu, 2016). Moderate interest in higher education and science-related information also reflects students' awareness of future educational opportunities. The findings further revealed that students mainly depended on social media, websites, and noticeboards as information sources. This supports previous studies on youth information behaviour which found that digital platforms and peer communication are increasingly replacing traditional information sources such as newspapers and radio (Head & Eisenberg, 2010). The regular use of libraries by many students also agrees with earlier Sri Lankan LIS studies that identified school libraries as important learning and reading environments (Wijetunge, 2015).

Although most students were satisfied with library services, several difficulties were identified, including manual library systems, slow internet speed, limited borrowing facilities, and lack of OPAC knowledge. These findings are consistent with previous Sri Lankan LIS literature that highlighted inadequate ICT infrastructure, lack of automation, and insufficient user education in rural school libraries (Rasiah & Peiris, 2018). This study contributes to Sri Lankan Library and Information Science (LIS) knowledge by providing recent evidence on the information-

seeking behaviour of rural secondary school students, an area that has received limited research attention. The findings have important implications for school librarians, educational administrators, and policy makers. Improving ICT facilities, introducing automated library systems, conducting information literacy programmes, and expanding access to digital resources may help students access information more effectively and improve library usage in rural schools. However, the study was limited to four schools in the Vavuniya North zone and mainly used quantitative questionnaire data. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all Sri Lankan secondary school students. Future studies could include more schools and qualitative methods such as interviews to gain deeper understanding of students' information-seeking experiences. Overall, the study highlights that students actively use both digital information sources and school libraries, but improvements in library infrastructure, ICT facilities, and information literacy education are necessary to support effective information access in rural Sri Lankan schools.

Conclusion

This study examined the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of senior secondary school students in Vavuniya North. The findings show that students look for information mainly related to entertainment, daily life, general knowledge, and current news. They also need academic information for their studies. Most students prefer using websites, social media, and noticeboards because these sources are easy to access and provide quick information. The study found that many students use the library, mainly to read, study, and find a quiet place. However, some students rarely visit the library. Several problems affect students when they try to find information, such as manual library systems, limited borrowing facilities, slow internet speed, and lack of ICT and OPAC knowledge. In conclusion, school libraries play an important role in supporting students' learning. Improving library facilities, internet access, and providing basic information literacy training will help students find and use information more effectively.

Future research could adopt mixed-methods approaches to gain a deeper understanding of students' information-seeking behaviour and challenges. Similar studies may also be extended to other districts in Sri Lanka to enable comparative analysis. In addition, future research could include teachers and school librarians as informants to provide broader perspectives on students' information needs, library usage, and information literacy development.

Limitations

There are a few problems with this study. First, the study focused exclusively on senior secondary school students within the Vavuniya North Zonal Education Office; consequently, the results are not applicable to all students in different regions. Second, the study exclusively involved students, omitting teachers, librarians, and junior students. Third, the study employed a quantitative survey methodology utilising exclusively structured questionnaires, thereby constraining the ability to gather comprehensive opinions and experiences. The data were derived from self-reported responses, which may contain bias or inaccuracies.

Recommendations

The study's conclusions suggest that Vavuniya North school libraries enhance its services to better serve students' information requirements. In addition to providing more frequent and reliable internet access, libraries should implement digital catalogues and automated systems to facilitate book searches and loans. To teach students how to locate, assess, and use information efficiently, information literacy training ought to be provided. To promote frequent library use, peaceful, orderly study spaces should be made available and borrowing possibilities should be increased. Additionally, students should be encouraged to use both traditional and digital sources and informed about the range of resources accessible, such as journals, e-resources, and reference books. These upgrades will facilitate students' academic learning and improve their access to information.

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