

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE LIBRARY USAGE OF  
STUDENTS ENGAGED IN DISTANCE EDUCATION WITH  
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE OPEN UNIVERSITY  
OF SRI LANKA AND NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
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## ABSTRACT

For the last twenty five years Sri Lanka has been using distance education method as a teaching method of various subjects. The OUSL and its library system started in 1980.

For the last twenty years OUSL library system has been serving distance education learners in various ways. But no evaluation has been done for the past 20 years to test its effectiveness. The main objective of the present study was to find out the nature and extent of use of libraries and to compare it with that of NIE.

To achieve this objective, two sample groups were used. Group 1, Degree and diploma students OUSL in level three and above. Group 2, NIE students in Primary, Diploma and special training courses. The sample included 350 from OUSL and 200 from NIE selected according to the percentage of the number of students registered at the selected centers. Questionnaire and interview were the instruments used to collect data for the study.

Literature on the use of libraries and problems of usage was reviewed and found that library services are essential for Distance Learning.

According to the findings majority of both groups see great value in using libraries for studying. Analysis showed significant difference in usage of center libraries by the two groups. The main reason for this was found to be lack of materials available at the centers.

The study indicated that development of libraries with additional text materials and its services will effect the studies of the students. It thus leads to the conclusion that library services for distance learners are essential at any level and for any subject.