

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



NEWSLETTER

MALDIVES LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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EDITORIAL

Mrs Habeeba Hussain Habeeb / Director General of National Library

Due to the inconvenience caused by the sudden transfer of the library building we could not continue producing the Newsletter for 1997. Nevertheless knowing that now the Newsletter has reached you we are bringing the third newsletter into the light and circulating as usual.

We respect your continued criticism and comments and with the help of your highly esteemed ideas and recommendations, we hope to improve our services to you. Criticism is no doubt the foundation of progress.

We hope that the newsletter of 1997 will bring some of our professional achievements to the notice of our readers.

KNOWLEDGE

Shehenaz, National Library

In the midst of time
when everything is grey
A cloud of brightness
can be a thing of joy

In the midst of ignorance
when nothing is important
A book of knowledge
can be a thing of riches

Only the foolish ignore it
It is only those
who are wise enough to care
who get the glorious benefit of it

A book, a script
or even a piece of paper
can do so much for you
and it takes so little to get it

"IT IS THERE FOR THE ASKING"

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE MALDIVIAN MIND ON LIBRARIES.

Shehenaz , National Library

In an era where Maldives is all for education, at any cost, all thanks to the present government, it would not be incorrect of me to say that a Library comes first on the agenda of education.

The scope of educational planning has been broadened day by day in Maldives. Whoever said that libraries are not important must be living in a self made, ignorant world.

They say that reality comes on different forms. I being one of the staff in the National Library of Maldives, speaking honestly, I have to admit that even I had a different opinion on libraries when I first joined here. It is only after working here for a short period of four years that I've come to grasp the important of the services it provides, though I am still learning to hold the ropes, but with each try, I'm getting more and more satisfaction as with each try, I end up helping someone, somewhere, in need of this very rare unique thing called KNOWLEDGE.

As each day passes, more awareness, more hunger for knowledge can be seen on the faces of the people. Libraries have become the firstplace to look for materials which the people need in order to broaden their minds, their values.etc.

Earlier rarely did any one visit a library. One would not be surprised if some people had not even heard of a place called library. But now as we see, everything has changed. A change for the better.

Libraries as we all know, have major responsibilities to individuals and towards the society we live in. Maldives have come a long way to understand this and they are aware that:

- CHILDREN: the future of any society depends on the work of librarians in libraries to occupy much of their lives through their childhood and adulthood and that it does play a significant role in determining their individual futures.
- PARENTS not only want the "best" for their children they are also concerned upon the environment in which their children stay. Although

learning can take place in any setting, home being the first learning space, unfriendly rundown libraries can become breeding grounds for illiteracy and violence.

So in order to avoid this LIBRARIES IN MALDIVES try to create a place which acts as a vehicle towards a better quality of environment, teaching children into becoming better individuals on their own. And believe me when I say, all this hard work pays.

As every other profession has its ups and downs, the major problem facing developing countries like the Maldives is the lack of finance. Yet speaking honestly providing education facilities does not have to mean large new buildings or complex organisations, although to have it will be a lot better.

In order to solve this problem, the best thing in my opinion is considering the limited resources that are usually allocated to education. By using this method, more people get to get more services and the majority of the library users have the satisfaction of being able to obtain what ever it is that they need.

Maldivians seem to drop their inhabitation and they are willing to agree that Librarianship is just as important profession as the rest of others. They understand that a Librarian's towards his or her user is like a doctor to his patient, a teacher to student. Only difference is the procedure. Just the slightest mistake and a patient suffers under the hands of a doctor. Just the slightest error in while explaining can lead to a student being side-tracked on the subject concerned. Likewise a Librarian's uselessness in finding out an information needed, ends up in the user feeling helpless and confused.

More training and more educated people are needed in this profession. Interest in Librarianship is seen as day to day more educated people join this profession.

Gone are the days in which libraries were called off. The demand on libraries has increased and the rate it is going, it will go on increasing, as Maldives speed up ahead in getting more and more of it's beloved citizens are educated, so will the value of Libraries increase and may that remain that way. So GOD help us.

Review of the Basic Librarianship Course

24th March- 7th June 1998

Maldives Library Association.

By Melanie Weeks / VSO Teacher Librarian

The Basic Librarianship Course, run under the auspices of the Maldives Library Association, held its closing ceremony on Tuesday 9th March 1998. During the ceremony certificates were handed out to the 35 students who completed the course by the Chief Guest, Mr. Ibrahim Waheed, Director of Ministry of Information, Arts and Culture.

The Basic Librarianship Course ran for ten weeks with one, two hour lesson each week. More than 50 students enrolled initially, so two classes were run each week. 'Batch A' was made up of people already working in libraries who had not had any formal library training. 'Batch B' was made up of people interested in librarianship as a career but who were not employed in libraries at the time of the course. I am delighted to report that three students from this group obtained jobs in libraries while on the course.

The course outline was as follows:

Week 1 looked at the question of 'What is a library?' and the different types of libraries and their users in Maldives.

Week 2 was very much a practical session with the students planning the layout of a library.

Week 3 covered the choosing and ordering of new books. The lesson stressed the importance of taking into account the needs of the users when choosing new books.

Weeks 4 & 5 covered the Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme which is used to classify books in most libraries in Maldives.

Weeks 6 & 7 covered cataloguing, following AACR2, the standard used throughout the world.

Week 8 covered the basic but essential library routines of membership and book issuing procedures, reservations and overdues.

Week 9 looked at daily library management and the keeping of statistics.

Week 10 briefly covered library rules and then looked at customer care in more

detail.

Throughout the course students were given short pieces of homework including a test at halfway stage. In Week 10 the students sat an end of course test to assess their understanding of the course and highlight any areas that should be covered again in future courses.

Throughout the course the philosophy of 'Libraries are for people, not for Librarians' was emphasised - the needs of the people who use libraries being the most important factor in the running of a library.

Throughout the course I was assisted by the staff from the National Library. Their help was invaluable and contributed to the success of the group and practical work that made up a large part of the course. So, many thanks to Zulfa Mohamed, Hawwa Nasiha, Thifla Umar, Aminath Jameel and Fathmath Nashath.

Thanks should also go to Aminiya School for generously donating the use of a classroom for the lessons.

DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARY, SALAAHUDDEEN BUILDING*By Hussain Haleem**Co-ordinator of the library, Salaahuddeen Building*

During a time that is considered as an information age, when people are talking about the information super highway and the information revolution, it is very important to take major developmental steps towards achieving some of the benefits of these developments. Many countries and especially many small libraries, such as the library services in the areas of teacher education, curriculum development and non-formal education, face a lot of challenges today.

These challenges result from the changing conditions of our society such as the changes in technology, the changes in the type of knowledge required, the changes in the way the knowledge is procured and the changes in learner characteristics. As explained by Tessmer (1992).

“ Properly met, these challenges can result in the growth and revitalisation of faculty and their institutions. Unmet, they can result in atrophy or stagnation or both”(p.1)

Library, Salahuddeen Building is the result of uniting the three separate libraries namely the Educational Development Centre Library, Non-Formal Education Centre Library and Institute for Teacher Education Library. Some of the reasons that necessitated this unification could be summarised as below:

- ⇒ Increased number of users.
- ⇒ Expansion of the programmes in three institutions.
- ⇒ High expectations placed on the institutions
- ⇒ Duplication of manpower and resources
- ⇒ Can acquire variety of knowledge and the way the knowledge is provided
- ⇒ Demand for specialist knowledge
- ⇒ Method of work requires increasing amount of information
- ⇒ Avoids financing and managing three separate libraries.

After many discussions the three institutions committed themselves to take on these challenges and work towards overcoming them. A “Library Committee”

formulated among the senior staff of EDC, ITE and NFEC was given the major task of formulating a library development plan. Major tasks identified in the plan are:

- Physical expansion of the library to cater for the number of users.
- Improving 'customer' care through staff training and improving the quality of services offered.
- Improving the physical layout to provide a better reading and referencing environment.
- Increasing the volume of books in the library
- Improving the quality and variety of materials available and increasing the access to these materials
- Incorporating the audio-visual resources (audio, video & CD-ROM) within the library.
- Computerising the cataloguing and referencing of the library.
- Increasing the staffing of the library to improve management and administration.
- Improving library security

Most of these tasks have already being undertaken. The library has expanded almost to the maximum size possible for the moment, while the physical layout of the library has been completely reorganised. A facility for students to do individual reading and referencing has been included. Facilities for group work are included and two rooms have being allocated as discussion rooms. Shelves have been increased to spread the congested materials for easy access. Reference, short loan, local text book, Dhivehi books, fiction and non-fiction sections have been placed in the library. Even though there is no separate room for library staff for managing and organising the new books and management of book processing, facilities have been identified within the library for such work.

Through Government assistance, World Bank Loan for the Second Education and Training Project, and Australian High Commissioner's Small Grant Scheme, major developments have been made possible. The Library has acquired 3 computers for Library management and referencing of CD ROMS and Library catalogue referencing. 'In-magic' software has been purchased and is being trialed for the

development of the referencing catalogue and computerising the issuing and borrowing of the library materials. The 'Serum Security System' comprising of an electronically activated alarm system with electronic security tags has been installed. An additional facility has been allocated to include the audio-visual facilities. In close cooperation with Educational Media Unit of the EDC, more than 150 video films have been located in the audiovisual section. Many audiotapes and many CD ROMS are available in the library for member's use. Library rules have been formulated and are in effect.

Due to the high priority placed on staff training, all present staff have undergone basic library training provided by the National Library. Some of the library staff have also undergone intermediate and advanced library training. Some of the librarians are also utilising their experiences gained in their international exposures gained through short-term courses and attachments.

High priority is also given to the acquisition of the books available locally as well as overseas. Since we require books from pre-school level to university level it still remains as the most challenging and difficult task of the library.

Even though many changes and developments have been brought about in the library, the following challenges lie ahead. They include:

- Providing further training for the library staff.
- Providing photocopy services within the library.
- Developing linkages with the other libraries to provide services such as inter library loans.
- Updating and acquiring of library books and other audio-visual learning materials.
- Gaining access to the Internet and the information superhighway.
- Increasing the physical space in order to cater to the increase of library users.
- Improve the security system through monitoring equipment and facilities.

Library, Salaahuddeen Building with the commitment of the EDC, ITE, NFEC and Ministry of Education will always try to cater to emerging needs. Emerging

needs are becoming increasingly complex and technologically advanced. As all educationists would agree with Salamon(1991) who pronounced that "Educators have funded in intelligent technologies the vision of a new kind of education that empowers and liberates the mind as no pattern of educational practice had done to date" (p. 2)

Preliminary report on the User Survey carried out at the National Library Jan.-Feb. 1998

At the beginning of the year the National Library of Maldives carried out a User Survey. The aims of the survey were:

- to build up a picture of the average library user - nationality, sex, age, education, employment
- to measure the use of the library - when, why and what
- to measure the user's perceptions of the library staff
- to obtain a list of subjects and book titles that the users would like to see in the new National Library.

Questionnaires were sent to every library member over the age of 14 (approximately 500) and copies were also handed out to users in the library, to make sure that we also got the view of those users who are not members. 145 were returned - a response rate of 29%.

The result of the survey were as follows:

(Questions 1 and 2 were about name and address respectively)

Q3 Nationality

92% of respondents are Maldivian
The remaining 8% are made up largely of Indians and Sri Lankans

Q4 Gender

55.5% of respondents are female
45.5% of respondents are male

Q5 Age

4.5% of respondents are aged 13 or under
82.6% of respondents are aged 14 or 24
7.6% of respondents are aged 25 or 34
3.8% of respondents are aged 35 or 44
1.5% of respondents are aged over 45

Q6.1 Studying at school

53% of respondents are studying at school
47% of respondents are not studying at school

Of the respondents:

- 25.9% are studying at Aminiya School
- 24.7% are studying at SEC
- 15.6% are studying at Majeedhiyya School
- 11.7% are studying at Ahameddiyya
- 11.7% are studying at MES
- 10.4% are studying at EPS

6.2 Grade left school

- 17.2% of respondents had left school after completing Grade 7 or below
- 12% of respondents had left school after completing Grade 8 or 9
- 48.4% of respondents had left school after completing Grade 10
- 22.4% of respondents had left school after completing Grade 12

6.3 Educational Qualifications

Of the respondents:

- 54.1% had 'O'levels
- 18.4% had 'A'levels
- 6.1% had degrees
- 21.4% had other qualifications ranging from diplomas to PhDs.

Q7 Employment

Of the respondents:

- 66.2% are employed
- 33.8% are not employed

Th next set of questions were about the use of the library.

Q8 Frequency of visits:

- 20.9% of respondents visited everyday
- 49.2% of respondents visited once a week
- 8% of respondents visited twice a week
- 8.9% of respondents visited once a month

Other respondents visited between for a few times a week to once a fortnight

For questions 9-13 respondents were able to fill in more than one answer, so the total percentages are over 100

Q9 Time of day of visits:

41% visited in the morning
64% visited in the afternoon
56.5% visited in the evening

Q10 Purpose of visits:

84.8% of respondents came to find information
49.6% of respondents came to study
47.5% of respondents came to read the magazines
41.3% of respondents came to read the newspapers
31% of respondents came for leisure purposes
15.8% of respondents came to borrow books

Q11 Use of the different sections of the library:

Reference section	56.5%
English magazines	55.1%
English newspapers	51.7%
English section	51.7%
Dhivehi	44.1%
Lending section	42.7%
Dhivehi newspapers	40%
Dhivehi section	28.2%
Academic collection	20%
Children's section 1	9.3%
Environment Collection	18.6%
Maldivian Collection	13.7%
Arabic section	1.3%
Urdu section	0.6%

Q12 Types of books read - fiction:

Horror	51%
Romance	50.3%
Adventure	46.8%
Novels	43.4%
Teenage	41.3%
Crime	37.9%
Thrillers	34.4%

Short stories 33.1%

Children's 14.4%

Types of books read - non-fiction:

Science	40.6%
Technology	30.0%
Religion	30.3%
True crime	29.6%
Language	29.6%
Historical	28.2%
Biography	21.3%
Literature	20.6%
Politics	18.6%
Arts	14.4%
Geography	6.2%

Q13 Languages read:

English	93.7%
Dhivehi	88.9%
Arabic	2.7%
Urdu	2.7%
Sinhalese	0.6%
Tamil	0.6%

Users perceptions of library staff.

Q14 Service provided by the library staff:

20% of respondents thought the service provided was excellent
 56.6% of respondents thought the service provided was good
 20.7% of respondents thought the service provided was average
 2.7% of respondents thought the service provided was poor

Q15 Helpfulness of the library staff:

29.9% of respondents found the library staff very helpful
 60.4% of respondents found the library staff helpful
 9% of respondents found the library staff not very helpful
 0.7% of respondents found the library staff unhelpful

Q16 Visibility of staff:

29.9% of respondents found that the staff were always visible

47.2% of respondents found that the staff were sometimes visible

2.1% of respondents found that the staff were never visible

The remaining questions asked the users what subjects (Q17), books (Q18) and future services (Q19) they would like to see in the library.

Q17 Subjects with 10 or more requests included:

Physics	33
Chemistry	28
Biology	27
Business studies	21
Literature	21
Biography	19
English	19
Mathematics	19
Accounting	15
Dhivehi	14
History	14
Science	12
Information Technology	11

Q18 Authors with 10 or more requests included:

Sweet Valley titles	32
Sidney Sheldon	21
Danielle Steel	18
Mills & Boon titles	16
Stephen King	12
Virginia Andrews	10
William Shakespeare	10

Q19 Services wanted in the new library (10 or more requests):

Quiet study area	73
Meeting room	20
Computer/AV room	18
Toilets	18
Canteen	17
Children's library	13
Access to Internet	12
Separate study areas for boys and girls	10

Q20 Below is a selection of responses to question 20 - 'Any other comments.'

"More books, more news, more magazines"

"Not enough staff"

"The staff are always pleased to help and have a friendly smile"

"The staff are sometimes very slow and sometimes not very helpful"

"Everything is excellent"

"A very comfortable atmosphere"

"Since I haven't visited many libraries, I found the national library the best library I have ever visited"

"We are very thankful for the help we receive from the library. We can find information and can enjoy our free time peacefully"

"The staff members are very helpful, but in most of the books pages have been torn off by borrowers"

"Library services are good but hope to see even better services"

"Not enough books for all members"

"Bring more story books and bring more information books which are interesting"

"Library has been a useful place for me ever since I started visiting there"

A full report will be published at a later date. For more information contact
Melanie Weeks at the National Library.

Melanie Weeks
28th June 1998

مَدْرَسَةُ الْإِسْلَامِ

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



سازمان اسناد و کتابخانه ملی
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