

**THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT AND STUDENTS OF ISLAMIC STUDIES AND ARABIC LANGUAGE, SOUTH EASTERN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA: AN EVALUATIVE STUDY**I.Saujan<sup>1</sup>, AMM.Hijas<sup>2</sup>, ARM.Mahsoom<sup>3</sup>

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**Abstract**

The Right to Information Act No. 12 of 2016 (RTI Act) certified by Parliament on August 4, 2016, and published as a Supplement to Part II of the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka of August 5, 2016, can be considered one of the more meaningful and positive democratic measures passed during the time. The major concern of the RTI is to allow for greater probity in the functioning of the government departments to promote transparency and accountability in the working of the public bodies and contain the scourge of corruption, which are critical for ensuring good governance and development in the country. Social scientist believes that public participation is a must for a participatory development in a democratic country. In spite of this, participation of Sri Lankan people is not enough to the Act due to lack of knowledge about the Act. Thus, the objectives of the study is to evaluate the knowledge level of the students about the RTI Act. Besides, exploring the factors contributing for this knowledge was also an objective. This is a quantitative and qualitative study consisting of questionnaire, interview and group discussion mainly. Therewith, research articles, book, magazines, newspaper and website of the right to information commission as techniques of data collection. By this study, most of the students have introductory knowledge only (73.95 percentage), 26.05 percentage of students have no knowledge at all the Act and lack of application. Furthermore, usage of Media, self-enthusiasm and motivation in selected subjects and family background are the key factors responsible for their poor level of knowledge. Therefore, this study suggests that in terms of giving knowledge about the Act, creating enthusiasm among students, facilitate knowledge sharing among the students efficiently and systematically by including the Act into the syllabus, use of social media efficiently and conducting awareness programs, seminars and debates regarding the Act is important.

**Keywords:** The Right to Information Act, University Students

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