

Open and Distance Learning Course on Corporate Literacy for Small Scale Entrepreneurs

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The need for effective education and knowledge dissemination in the agriculture sector has highly emerged as it is a key factor for agricultural sector development in Sri Lanka. It is difficult to provide a formal education program to small scale entrepreneurs due to their different demographic characteristics. Hence open and distance learning is emerging as an effective mode of learning to empower them by facilitating knowledge regularly. Randomly selected 50 small scale entrepreneurs in Southern province were interviewed using a pre-tested questionnaire. Existing knowledge was assessed using seven sub-components of corporate literacy. Results discover that the overall knowledge level of the small scale entrepreneurs is moderate which indicates a mean value of 3.37. Likert scale analysis proves that 50% of the respondents have medium level knowledge on corporate literacy. The experience in the business and level of education have positively contributed to their total knowledge level. The type of course module, learning mode, medium, and course duration were selected as the main attributes of the respondents' preference. Results disclose that no respondents have currently joined in an open and distance learning program. According to the responses, 56% of the small scale entrepreneurs prefer to gain information as a voice message via mobile phone. Out of twelve course modules, 24% of the respondents are interested in learning about company registration. They wish to enroll for three months period in the Sinhala language. The study concludes that there is a higher demand for the concept of open and distance learning within small scale entrepreneurs in terms of its convenience, flexibility, and cost-effectiveness. This education system can be further improved by linking to various electronic sources of information on corporate literacy and facilitating live interactive communication sessions with agricultural experts.

Keywords: Corporate literacy, Entrepreneurs, Open and distance learning