

## **An Evaluation of Learners' Perceptions of Student Support Services (SSS) in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

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*The quality of Student Support Services (SSS) assumes vital importance in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) because the services facilitate the teaching and learning processes while making learning a more rewarding experience for the learners. This paper presents the findings of a study conducted to identify the importance and efficacy of the SSS package currently available for learners in the OUSL. The analysis is based on the findings of a comprehensive study carried out by a team of academics of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The research methodology adopted for this study included a questionnaire survey, focus group discussions and participant observations.*

*The study revealed that learners considered regular day schools, audio-visual aids and timely availability of course material as the most important components of SSS. The study ranked the satisfaction levels and compared them with the rank order importance of SSS components. It was found that there is a significant discrepancy between the order of importance and the order of satisfaction levels indicating that the SSS providers have not been able to prioritize the order of importance of the components to ensure client satisfaction. It reveals that there are significant shortfalls and lapses in the different components of the SSS package. There was also a significant discrepancy in the satisfaction levels of different regions.*

### **Introduction**

Many learners choose the option of studying in the distance mode because of work and family commitments and geographical isolation. The perceived high quality of the courses offered in the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) format supplements this decision (McMurtrie 1996). Further, learners enjoy the autonomy and flexibility that ODL provides. The principal aim of ODL is to promote independent learning.

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The limited availability of regular face to face teaching makes distance learners independent and responsible.

Two major sub-systems are linked to the success of the Distance Education (DE) mode. They are: Course Material Production (CMP); and Student Support Services (SSS). SSS can be defined “*as the support an institution extends to its learners to facilitate learning at a distance. It comprises a cluster of facilities and activities*”. This is the working definition adopted by the researchers of this study. While CMP is almost exclusively academic in content, the SSS are responsible for establishing a connection between the intended beneficiaries of the learning process and the study material developed by the CMP team. Without SSS, ODL will not be able to achieve its ultimate goal which is learner satisfaction. SSS is therefore bridges the gap between teachers and learners in ODL to make the teaching and learning processes easier and more rewarding to the distance learners. The web based learning options have provided a massive boost to this aspect of contact which is otherwise less feasible for traditional DE learners. Personal contact also involves social capital not only among learners but also between learners and teachers.

According to Kishore (1998), the success or failure of the ODL methodology and the overall corporate image of an ODL institution are contingent on the strengths and weaknesses of the SSS sub-system. This is especially true where the testimony of a successful learner makes a positive image while an unsuccessful learner generates a greater negative image. Simpson (2000) has identified two major areas of SSS, which are the academic and the administrative support services. Simpson defines academic support as the incorporation of a variety of functions such as explaining concepts, giving hands-on practical experiences, developing learning skills etc. This idea is supported by Cuskelly, et al (1995) who also highlight the importance of personal contact for distance learners.

Administrative support services on the other hand include activities or services which support learners in making inquiries, advisory services, record keeping, information management, library services etc. It is these service providers who initially come in contact with learners and who make a lasting impact on them.

Both these components are seen as being integral to the successful implementation of ODL. It means that the efficacy of the first sub-system is contingent on the second sub-system and vice versa. It also

means that the failure of one sub-system makes the other dysfunctional.

One factor that is noticeable in relation to the student population of an ODL institution is the heterogeneity of learners. These learners are diverse in terms of their profiles, personal experiences and learning preferences. This means that a corresponding diversity of support from service providers becomes essential (McMurtrie, 1996). Therefore SSS to be equitable, gender sensitive and flexible to meet the diversity and special needs of different segments of learners. This is because the main purpose of SSS is to support individual learning with a view to enhancing its success. Furthermore, it should be based on the requirements of the client and not necessarily on the interests of trainers and providers (Leach, 2000).

The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) is the only national university in the island which offers all its programmes in the DE mode. The OUSL offers a range of programmes through its island wide network of regional and study centres. The University is responsible not only for the delivery of course material but also for providing support for its learners. In this context, SSS are one of the key functions of the University and form the focus of this research. The study specifically examines the perceptions of the clients (i.e. the learners) regarding the SSS package available to them in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) of the OUSL.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this study.

- What are the expectations of learners with respect to the SSS package currently offered by the Faculty of HSS?
- How effective is the SSS package currently being offered by the faculty of HSS?
- What are the lapses, inadequacies and shortfalls in the current SSS package?
- How do learners rate these service options and what proposals have they made to improve them?

Based on the above research questions, the following objectives were formulated.

- To identify the SSS components perceived as important by the learners and rank them in order of importance
- To evaluate learners' perceptions pertaining to the effectiveness of the SSS package available to them.
- To recommend appropriate measures to improve the SSS offered by the Faculty of HSS.

### Research Design

The study covered four undergraduate degree programmes offered by the Faculty of HSS – Bachelor of Law (LLB), Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences (BSS), Bachelor of Management Studies (BMS) and Bachelor of Arts in English and English Language Teaching (ELT). A questionnaire was administered to a stratified sample of 178 learners which was about 5 per cent of the total learner population of the four degree programmes mentioned above. The sample was as follows.

**Table 1:** Sample of respondents by programme of studies.

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
LLB	124	69.70
BA in Social Sciences	10	5.60
BA in English & ELT	8	4.50
BMS	36	20.20
Total	178	100.00

*Source: OUSL data*

The sample was restricted to learners who are currently registered in Levels IV, V and VI of these degree programmes, with the intention of ensuring that respondents had more than an year's exposure to studying in the DE mode and were therefore competent to evaluate the SSS of the OUSL. The geographic distribution of the sample was restricted to the regional centres of Colombo and Kandy.

### Methods

The study utilized a combination of structured questionnaires, observations and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) for the collection of

data. The questionnaire was administered to collect data on the current status of the SSS offered by the University. This was followed by FGD. The questionnaire survey focused on the following issues.

- Data on learner profiles
- Data on the current mix of the SSS available and accessible to learners
- Data on learner expectations with respect to the current SSS package
- Data on learner perceptions and ranking of the mix in relation to the effectiveness of the current SSS package.

FGD were conducted on the following basis.

- The availability and accessibility of the SSS (information, administration and academic requirements)
- Learner satisfaction of the SSS
- Identifying gaps in the SSS
- Suggestions to improve the SSS

Participant observation techniques were used sparingly to gather data for which the following protocol was used

- Registration procedures (vouchers, registration letters, counselling, dispatch of books)
- Day school (attendance, teaching effectiveness of academics, status of classrooms, learner-teacher interactions, learner-learner interactions)
- Tutorial support
- Quality of physical infrastructure
- Suggestions to improve above components.

Several analytical tools were employed to analyze data in this study. The study used the 'Lickert Scale to evaluate learners' perceptions and

satisfaction under each SSS component. Upon scaling, the SSS components were ranked according to the perception of learners regarding 'importance' and 'satisfaction'. The significance of each SSS component on learners' perceptions was tested using mean values. Further, an inferential test (Mann-Whitney) was carried out to gauge whether significant variations could be seen in learners' perceptions of the services and the order of importance of the SSS as provided by the University and also by the two regional centres.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The first research question was on learners' views on the quality of the current SSS package in terms of their assessment of importance. The second research question focuses on learners' assessment of the SSS components (perceived quality of services). It therefore provides an idea about the level of satisfaction learners received from these services. This is important because dissatisfaction on the part of the learners regarding the SSS adversely affects their learning and eventually impacts on the image of the OUSL. The research study also considered the ratings assigned by the respondents to each of these support services.

Table 1 presents mean values of the importance of the various components of the SSS package and the corresponding level of satisfaction assigned to these components. This data highlights learner perceptions and ranking of the mix in relation to the efficacy of the current SSS package.

It is significant that learners assign the highest importance to regular day schools followed by assignment submission, audio-visual aids and timely availability of course material. It is clear therefore that the academic component of the SSS package as defined by Simpson (2000) belongs to a sub-category that scores higher in the order of importance. Furthermore, it is these components that help to bridge the gap between the isolation of distance learners and the inadequacies /limitations of the printed study material that is perceived as being important by the learners. This is important as many other studies in Sri Lanka and elsewhere have indicated that the print material is the most important source of strength to distance learners. This ranking order emerged because the study has not included questions on the quality of printed texts as one of the items.

**Table 2** :-Mean Values of Importance and Satisfaction

SSS Component	Mean Values		Relative Rank (importance)
	Importance	Satisfaction	
Regular day schools	4.50	3.39	1
Assignment Submission	4.42	3.36	2
Audio-visual aids	4.30	2.51	3
Timely availability of course material	4.29	3.21	4
Washrooms	4.25	2.57	5
Computer Facilities	4.16	2.67	6
Good Cafeteria	4.14	2.44	7
Student registration (finance, student affairs, RES)	4.08	3.07	8
Classroom Facilities	4.02	3.14	9
Vouchers	3.82	3.01	10
Internet Access	3.81	2.43	11
Academic counselling	3.80	3.22	12
Exam Timetable	3.68	-	13

Source: Computed by the authors using survey data

Despite the fact that the sample population consists of learners who have already been registered at the OUSL for more than one year, they still have not made a successful transition from the “dependent learning” to the “self-learning” mode.

In Sri Lanka’s current system of learning whether in the formal school system or in the after school “tuition classes” – the teachers or tutors supply notes on each and every subject which the student copies down unquestioningly and rote learns. This type of dependent learning is practiced in schools where the primary objective is not in learning but in passing examinations. Self learning on the other hand is based on experience and critical thinking. The transition from dependent learning in the school system to independent learning in the university system would be difficult for learners. These learners demand more support in the form of day classes, model questions, answers to past question papers etc., than the other forms of assistance that help in honing their critical faculties.

What is also important to note is that the satisfaction level assigned to components like audio-visual aids and academic counselling is relatively low while aspects like day classes command a very high level of importance. It clearly indicates that the styles of learning adopted by the learners need a different alignment. It may be possible that there

are certain inadequacies in the provision of some of these support services that makes learners consider them to be of lesser importance.

The findings also indicate that the provision of physical facilities (washrooms, cafeterias etc.) are considered to be more important even though learners may use these facilities located in the university premises only once a month. This is not unreasonable; the need for basic facilities like washrooms arise irrespective of the regularity of the use of these facilities.

It is also significant that although learners assign great importance to computer facilities they appear to be dissatisfied with the level of IT and audio-visual facilities offered by the University. This has implications for the University's future plans to offer web based modes of learning (WBL). Two points are important here. First, there is an urgent need to establish high quality IT infrastructure. Second there has to be teacher commitment to introduce WBL facilities. At present, initiatives have been taken by the academic staff to introduce online courses and measures have been taken to strengthen the IT infrastructure at the OUSL to support this endeavour.

### **A comparative analysis of SSS in the Regional Centres of Kandy and Colombo**

Having analyzed the importance-satisfaction relationship for the entire University, the study shifted its focus to the regional services to gauge whether there are significant variations in the SSS offered by the regions. To ascertain this the study evaluated the differences between the importance assigned to various aspects of SSS components by learners in the Colombo Regional Centre (CRC) and the Kandy Regional Centre (KRC). Ideally, all regions should have produced similar outcomes for similar programmes. This statement is based on the following assumptions that:

- a) learner profiles do not vary drastically in different regions; and
- b) SSS offered in different regions do not differ significantly.

**Table 3:** Analysis of SSS in the KRC and CRC

SSS Component	Mean Values		P Values
	KRC	CRC	
Registration	4.14	4.06	.792
Day Schools	4.54	4.49	.486
Classroom Facilities	4.09	3.99	.586
Audio-visual aids	3.59	4.54	.000**
Assignment Submission	4.30	4.67	.003**
Course Material	4.25	4.31	.841
Cafeteria	3.52	4.35	.035*
Washrooms	3.30	4.59	.151
Academic counselling	3.92	3.74	.022*
Internet Access	3.10	4.08	.306
Computer facilities	3.47	4.40	.000**
Exam Timetable	4.42	4.79	.012*
Vouchers	3.85	3.16	.009**

\*\* , \* indicates a significant inference at 1% and 5% level respectively.

The statistical significance of the differences of the group-specific means was tested by the Mann-Whitney test.

The results indicate that there are differences in importance of all the thirteen components tested for this study. Of this number, about seven (7) components were significantly different between the two regional centres. It is interesting to note that there were significant differences in the views expressed by the learners of the two regional centres in relation to the importance attached to both academic and administrative support services.

The Colombo learners attached a higher degree of importance to exam timetables and assignment submission whereas the Kandy learners to day schools and assignment submission.

In relation to academic support services the Colombo learners attached a higher degree of importance to assignment submission. This indicates that these learners are well aware of the importance of their eligibility as they have a close relationship with the academics in the central campus. In the CRC, the day classes are generally conducted by the OUSL's own academic staff members of different academic departments. This situation places the CRC learners at an advantage. At the other regional centres the day schools are conducted by outside visiting staff who are less acquainted with ODL related procedures.

It is also important to note that the Colombo learners perceive audio-visual material as being more important than the Kandy learners.

Another issue that needs to be considered is whether equal physical and institutional access is granted to learners at both the Colombo and Kandy regional centres. In the CRC learners are likely to have greater physical access to audio-visual material because the library maintains a fully equipped Audio-visual Resource Centre (AVRC). Institutionally, the procedures for seeking access to these material are relatively streamlined. Also, academics from academic departments are aware of these audio-visual material and make reference to them in their face to face sessions. All three elements discussed above may not be present in the KRC. The findings presented in Table 3 supports this assumption.

In relation to the importance attached to the administrative support services there was a significant difference in the views expressed by the learners from CRC and KRC in the three categories listed below.

- sending vouchers,
- computer facilities and
- exam timetables.

It appears that learners who are registered at the CRC do assign a great deal of importance to the smooth and efficient functioning of “administrative support services”.

### **Student Support Services- Level of Satisfaction by Learners in the Two Regions**

Having studied the importance learners attach to support services, it is important to assess how SSS differs in these two regions. It is postulated that the nature and effectiveness of SSS differs substantially between the two regions. This distinction indicates that learners of some regional centres receive relatively better services than those in other centres. The results indicate that learner opinions of the two regional centres differ in relation to seven factors.

**Table 4:** Satisfaction of SSS: Kandy and Colombo learners' perceptions

SSS Component	Mean Values		P Values
	Kandy	Colombo	
Vouchers	3.38	2.86	.006**
Computer facilities	2.14	2.96	.001**
Audio Visual Aid	2.46	2.54	.667
Internet Access	1.87	2.72	.004**
Classroom Facilities	3.41	3.02	.074
Good Cafeteria	2.15	2.54	.015*
Washrooms	2.27	2.67	.024*
Academic Counselling	3.52	2.91	.005**
Availability of Course Material	2.95	3.29	.169
Assignment Submission and collection	3.60	3.27	.070
Regular Day Schools	3.76	3.24	.004**
Registration	3.03	3.21	.794

\*\* ,\* indicates a significant inference at 1% and 5% level respectively.

The statistical significance of the differences of the group-specific means was tested by the Mann-Whitney test.

On the whole the learners of the CRC appear to be more satisfied than their counterparts from Kandy. There are marked differences in the provision of computer facilities and internet access. It appears that the CRC is better equipped to fulfill learners' IT requirements than the KRC. Two points are worth noting here. First, regional centres other than Colombo are less served in terms of IT infrastructure. This is true of other regional centres like Matara, Jaffna and Batticaloa as well. Second, the varied quality of the facilities offered at the different centres, run counter to the principle of equity and diversity.

However, it is interesting to note that learners of the KRC have assigned a higher level of satisfaction to academic support services such as counselling and day schools. These learners seem to perceive that the face to face component of the ODL package is relatively more satisfactory. This finding is tautological because in the absence of a strong package of services these learners concentrate on what is available to them rather than what is best for them. The findings of the questionnaire survey were substantiated by the data gathered through observations and focus group discussions.

### *Observations*

The observations made during the student registration process indicate that the process lacks the basic attributes of effective learner registration. Currently there are long delays and wastage of academic, administrative and student time that may have been productively utilised. Under the semester system, academic time available to learners is restricted to less than 90 days because more time is allocated to administrative functions including registration and examination matters. Ideally, the University has to increase its efficiency and provide more time for learners to complete their learning. The lack of focus on this adversely affects pass rates of OUSL learners.

The registration work is carried out in different locations which means that learners must walk long distances to rectify mistakes made in vouchers and entries in record books. Very often, registration work starts late. Learners are kept waiting due to staff taking lunch break and other intermittent breaks. The computers fail to provide correct information and this also affects the registration process. These are serious shortfalls given the fact that there are many employed learners who find managing workplace-home-study time quite a difficult proposition.

Observations regarding the conduct of day schools reveal that it is unsatisfactory. Irregular times of commencement of classes and intermittent cancellation of classes are common occurrences at day schools. Another problem is that some day school academics are incompetent or not fully prepared to conduct the classes; these shortcomings create a poor impression regarding the pedagogy of ODL. Consequently, student attendance is comparatively low and is often less than 30 per cent of the total number of students registered for a class.

The layout of day classes are arranged in such a way that students find it difficult to interact with the tutor. It is very much like a lecture room in a conventional class. The quality of the physical infrastructure does not provide support to a distance learner. The classrooms are badly ventilated and are in a noisy location and the absence of audio-visual facilities all indicate limited academic support to these learners.

### *Focus group discussions (FGD)*

The focus group discussions (FGD) also shed further light on the current status of SSS in the University. Learners commented on the inadequacy of the SSS which directly impacted on their studies. FGD were mainly based on the SSS with regard to information, administration and academic support. The observations were on the presentation of course material, the course content, communication on academic activities, the pricing of the programme etc.

Learners also stated that they are not satisfied with the information they receive especially with regard to academic schedules.

*“It is a disaster. Within an year our academic schedules are changed so many times disrupting our own work/family. We are employed, married adults. These changes make our life extremely unmanageable”.*

The learners are not happy about programme information as a whole.

*“Strikes in the University, elections or some other reasons stop us from getting correct information on time. For instance, payment vouchers reached us without giving any lead time to find money. Admission cards and timetables of examinations sometimes come on the day of the examination”.*

*“The University is very strict on assignment deadlines. But it fails miserably when it comes to keeping its own deadlines”.*

These comments are genuine and show that there is much room for improvement.

*“One of the serious lapses in the brochures is the difficulty in separating relevant information from the irrelevant. It is true that the brochures produce lot of information that is important to the University. For us most of it is unnecessary”.*

Therefore a majority of learners complain that the information provided is irrelevant. They suggested that the brochures be substituted by “information on the web”. For example in the form of a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) format dealing with registration, access, costs and technical matters etc.

Learners’ responses to the administrative services provided can be categorized into several items as follows:

### *Registration*

According to some learners, the registration process should be more organized and more lines of communication with learners should be established. The research team observed that most learners were not aware of the place specifically designated for registration, or of its exact location or even the rudiments of the registration process. This is especially hard on new entrants who are sent from pillar to post in order to complete the registration procedure.

### *Student Counselling*

Student counselling is another area that needs attention. It appears that sometimes junior staff members are assigned counselling responsibilities at the registration desks. Their lack of knowledge is an impediment to the smooth functioning of counselling activities, so much so that it would be far better not to have any counselling at all rather than have these half-hearted efforts.

A student reading for the BA in English & ELT mentioned that the brochure should be more informative and that they need more academic counselling. He further said that the time allocated to counselling at the time of the registration is insufficient. Many learners were also not happy with the grading tests. They were also dissatisfied with the arrangement to conduct English classes in secondary school locations, as the schools extra-curricular activities disrupt the holdings of regular English classes.

### *Library*

Learners were unhappy about the facilities provided by the library. They stated that

*“We are not allowed to take books inside the library which we need badly. There is no space to keep books.”*

These regulations have been introduced because learners abuse some of the facilities. There have been instances where pages of books and journals have been torn by the learners.

One study room in the library is not adequate. Library staff need to assist students with their specific requests.

It was stated that the library staff is “*very slow*”. The majority of learners felt that the photocopying facility provided by the library is not satisfactory. They also suggested that past question papers should be made accessible online.

*Examination Division/ Student Affairs Division*

Learners showed discontentment regarding the auxiliary services provided by the University as a whole. The services provided by the Examination and Student Affairs Divisions are totally inadequate according to the learners. Some of the frequently quoted comments are:

*“They are not polite at all. We are not school children. We expect some respect”.*

*“They sometimes mislead us to go here and there without giving proper directions. This is common to both Examination and Student Affairs Divisions”.*

Although many learners are dissatisfied with the services provided by the staff of the Examination and Student Affairs Divisions, not all of the comments made by the learners are valid. However, it is advisable for the University authorities to inquire into the complaints and take remedial action if and when necessary.

*Regional Educational Services Division (RES)*

Learners are not satisfied with the services provided by Regional Educational Services (RES) Division. One of the major grievances was regarding the state of some of the classrooms such as A and B. These classrooms that were situated in close proximity to the Nawala Road and the students found the street sounds disturbing and distracting. Although these rooms are no longer in use, at the time of conducting this survey, these rooms were extensively used for day schools.

A request was also made for a detailed site plan of the University to be installed in a prominent place in the RES Division. The current site plan only indicates hall numbers which makes it difficult for new learners to locate classrooms easily and quickly. A detailed site plan would facilitate the identification of venues such as the registration desk, the classrooms, the library etc. for both the staff and the learners.

### *Finance Division*

Learners face much inconveniences with respect to information provided by the University regarding payment of tuition fees. This is especially so with regard to the preparation of learners' vouchers which very often have inaccurate information and are dispatched late.

The learners were also critical of the Finance Division. Some learners expressed the view that *"once we go there to get the wrongly compiled vouchers, we are sent from pillar to post"* because the Finance Division is located about one km away from Block 4 where the registration of students is conducted. The learners requested that the Finance Division be re-organised in order to function more efficiently and that its staff be trained to be more understanding of learners' needs and wants. Therefore learners are unable to make timely payments which results in them not being able to obtain their course material early. Obtaining one's course material is dependent upon the settlement of one's outstanding bills.

### *Day Schools*

Frequent cancellation of classes coupled with ineffective and unpunctual teaching staff result in badly administered day schools. Day schools are not conducted satisfactorily. Therefore it was suggested that more "virtual classes" and online facilities be introduced to offset the problem on ineffectual day schools.

*"We attend day classes expecting some assistance to understand the lesson material. Yet information provided by the day class teachers are obsolete; they confuse us; hence day classes are not very useful"*

The following comments were made by learners of the Departments of Social Studies and Management Studies respectively.

*"... texts are difficult because they are not readable and even the content is difficult "*

*"Sometimes we find presentation of study material is in poor quality".*

These learners expressed the view that the quality of the printed material is below the expected levels.

According to a law student *"material written and taught are two different and contradictory. Therefore we get stuck with what is right*

*and what is wrong.”*

All the learners made comment that the regular permanent staff is better than the visiting staff. They lauded the commitment, dedication and enthusiasm of the internal academic staff.

#### *Assignment marks*

Learners claimed that the assignment turnaround time is too long and that feedback is not provided regularly. They were of the view that answer scripts should not only have marks and/or grades but also have detailed comments. Thus they felt would help them improve their standards.

The FGDs provided an additional insight with respect to the SSS. The FGDs supplemented the information provided in the questionnaires and observations made by the research team. The information provided by these three sources are compatible and reliable. It appears that the OUSL has a long way to go before it can find a solution to the SSS related problems and shortcomings.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings indicate that there are significant shortfalls and lapses in the services offered by the University in relation to both the academic and the administrative component of the SSS package. Learners have found that the SSS components are critical for their studies and the ranking assigned by the learners show that they attach a high value to these services. However, there is a contradiction between the importance they attach to different components of the SSS and their assessment of service quality of each of these SSS components. This inconsistency means that the University has assigned greater importance to some of the SSS components that are least preferred by the learners.

This contradiction is substantiated by the finding of the FGD and the observations made by the research team. The FGD revealed that the learners were less satisfied with the information received, the library and classroom facilities and services rendered by the Examination and Student Affairs Divisions and RES. However it should be noted that this sample of the FGD comprises young learners who have had no previous exposure to the DE mode and it is possible that they may have had significantly higher expectations of the SSS offered by the OUSL.

The following are the recommendations are made on the basis of the findings:

- Identification of the critical SSS components which demand priority and make the respective Departments providing SSS to learners known about the importance of these dimensions.
- To conduct workshops for those individuals in charge of SSS in social marketing with special emphasis on relationship building.
- To explore the possibilities employing senior students to assist in the registration process. To centralize the registration process in order to eliminate delays.
- To provide the SSS units with essential equipment and facilities.
- To streamline the support services provided by other departments such as finance, library, student affairs etc
- To improve the physical facilities (washrooms, cafeteria)
- To improve programme delivery (e.g continuous assessment, conducting day schools)

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