A Demographic Profile of Public Library Leaders in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study reuses data extracted from a previous report to create a profile of public library leaders in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, it was recognized that the country has a group of library leaders mostly in their early 40s, moderately educated, and ready for further advancement with proper guidance and policy implementation.

Keywords: Public libraries, Librarians, Sri Lanka, Human resources, Profile of library leaders

Introduction and Objectives

Public libraries in Sri Lanka are operational under the auspices of the local governments of the country. There are 21 Municipal Councils, 41 Urban Councils and 276 Pradeshiya Sabhas functioning under the 09 Provinces. According to the National Library and Documentation Services Board (NLDSB), there are 1176 libraries being operated throughout the country.

Any public library has an administrator who reports to the mother organization. Hence, the term 'public library leader' is used to denote heads of public libraries in this paper. These heads could have been formerly appointed (Chief Librarians and Acting Librarians) or informally selected (including solo librarians/staff). It is essential to know demographics of these leaders for higher order decision making and policy formulation.

Ugwu and Ugwu (2017) conducted a study with a group of University librarians. He states that only age, education, job position and work experience are significant predictors of librarians' task-based and contextual performance. Roberts and Rowley (2008) suggests that gender may have some impact on the leadership tasks.

A few studies had expressed the danger of low profile of public library leaders in the country in terms of education and recruitment (Wanasinghe, 2018; Wijetunge, 2000).

Therefore, it is beneficial to recognize the current profile of library leaders based on the above factors to support policy making and planning for the public library sector.