

A case study on eliminating poverty through Public Library Services in Sri Lanka: A Special Reference to the Colombo Public Library

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Abstract

The absence of a typical or socially acceptable level of wealth or material possessions is referred to as poverty. According to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), number one calls for eradicating all poverty by 2030. Thus, as in other sectors, Information and knowledge are essential for development, as mentioned by Singh in 2012. Therefore, libraries and information centers are crucial in this greater context. This study aimed to conduct an in-depth, detailed examination of an analysis of the contribution of public libraries to poverty alleviation, a sustainable development objective. The main objectives were to find the types of public library services provided by the Colombo Public Library to upgrade their lives, to find out how it effectively affects the users, and to find out the problems they are facing providing the services by the library. For this, the Colombo Public Library was purposively selected. The case study method was selected as a research method, and data was collected through face-to-face interviews with library staff and users. Qualitative data was analyzed accordingly. According to the findings, several services were provided by the Colombo Public Library to improve their physical and mental sustainability. These services' final aim was to support eliminating their poverty. Accordingly, the Colombo Public Library provides mobile library services, public lectures, book supply services for prisoners, self-employment training programs, gardening encouragement

programs, health camps, counselling, and vocational training guides. Further, providing land in public libraries for the market, plumbing training, and informing about job opportunities directly contribute to poverty eradication. Moreover, readers to access the computer labs they need to become part of the information society, encouraging the enrollment of out-of-school children in classes, providing prison guards with career training, and giving the self-employed the option to pay in low-interest instalments through commercial banks and the setting up of loan arrangements and other ideas can be mentioned.

Colombo Public Library faced some issues when implementing the services to end poverty and promote personal development. The primary issues were a lack of funding, skilled staff shortage, space, computer resources, etc. Further, library users were greatly satisfied with the Colombo Public Library's services, which helped them upgrade their lives to eliminate poverty. Colombo Public Library is also happy to maintain the existing support services for its users.

Keywords: *Sustainable Development Goals, Poverty, Public Library Services, Colombo Public Library Service, Sri Lanka*