

The role of communication in the provision of library and information services in state-sector university libraries in Sri Lanka

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The communication ability of the staff is one of the most important aspects in libraries or information centers and in almost every other sector for that matter. Although communication is vital in providing library and information services, it has not often been regarded as an absolute necessity. Most library staff have not identified it as a powerful element needed for providing effective services. The objectives of this study were to identify the pattern of organizational communication in university libraries, to identify the impacts of communication in providing effective library and information services, and to find out the barriers to communication in university libraries. A survey method has been used for the study while the sample population was the library staff of state university libraries. The sample included librarians, senior assistant librarians, assistant librarians, and library information assistants working at the University of Kelaniya, the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, the University of Colombo, and the University of Moratuwa. All 152 staff members were given questionnaires and 116 responses were received. The data analysis was done using Microsoft Excel software. The study showed that the information in libraries often flows from the senior staff to the junior staff. The junior staff too communicate with their superiors whenever there is a need to do so. Oral communication was the mode of communication used often in communication. Library staff had a positive perception of the importance of communication within the organization and also on providing better service to users. In handling the English language, 68.97% of the library staff faced difficulties in conveying accurate messages to the users. Efforts should be made to remove barriers against effective communication between library staff and users. Librarians and other library staff should acquire knowledge of new technology to meet users' information needs and to improve communication among themselves.

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