

## **Enhancing human capital through university library outreach: Impact on teacher**

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This study investigated the impact of university library outreach (OR) programs on human capital development in Sri Lanka, specifically focusing on the "Online Education and School Libraries in the 21st Century" initiative at the Kuliyaipitiya Zonal Education Office, a programme aimed at enhancing teacher librarians' (TL) skills and knowledge on digital literacy. The study employed purposive sampling and qualitative research methods, using semi-structured interviews for data collection. The sample comprised 10 teacher librarians (TLs) selected out of 72 participants in the program. The thematic analysis examined how these initiatives contribute to TLs' professional growth and broader community development. The demographic profile revealed that 93% of the participants were qualified in Library and Information Science, 86.8% were appointed as TLs, and 77% were aged between 41-50. The impact of outreach (OR) programs on TLs' human capital development was assessed through six key themes from focus group findings, which showed significant improvements in TLs' self-confidence, skills in using digital tools and integrating ICT into daily activities. University libraries play a multifaceted role in community development. In conclusion, university libraries OR programs in Sri Lanka were found to be vital in fostering 'human capital' by improving TLs' professional skills, providing training on learning tools, and raising ICT awareness. The study recommends expanding OR programs and training mechanisms, integrating innovative ICT training, and ensuring continuous assessments to address the evolving needs of TLs and communities.

**Keywords:** Community development, Digital literacy, Human capital, Teacher librarians, University library outreach

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