

Leadership Role of the National Library and Documentation Centre of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The National Library (NL) is a living organization as well as a social institution in the contemporary society. It is the heart of library system of most of the countries. Therefore, it is a major responsibility of a library to provide its service to all the members of their communities, regardless of age, race, nationality, religion, culture, political affiliation, physical or other disabilities, gender or sexual orientation, and any other status. To fulfill this role the NL/NLs of a particular country perhaps has to play both the collaborative and the leadership role. In analyzing these roles NLs all over the world could be categorized into two as libraries in the developed and the developing countries, while some NLs in the developed countries playing a more collaborative role (CR), some NLs in the developing countries are playing a more leadership role (LR). The history of the origin of the NL of Sri Lanka goes back to 19th century. Government Oriental Library (GOL) in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) was established in 1870 and it can be considered as the first setup in establishing a library at national level. The long felt need of a NL for the country was at last fulfilled when the NL of Sri Lanka was declared open in April 1990. Most of the NLs in the developing world play a leadership role in their library communities. The National Library and Documentation Centre (NLDC) of Sri Lanka is playing leadership role in the field of Library and Information Services especially in emergency situations. The NLDC has been playing rebuilding of libraries in Sri Lanka which were devastated due to two disasters namely Tsunami disaster in 2004 and terrorist attacks of Northern and Eastern provinces which were destructed by a terrorist group (LTTE) in last 30 years. The interview method is selected to gather data required for this research. It involves conducting lengthy discussions with selected people. The purpose of the interview is to provide the researcher with a relatively flexible format for gathering data. The form of an interview-questioning by one person, answering by another can be used for variety of purposes (Dillon, 1990). The significant advantage of this method is the possibility and capability of obtaining the most realistic data. Therefore, the author selected an unstructured interview method for data collecting. Interviews are usually thought as structured and unstructured. The outcomes of the research are useful to different groups of people in Sri Lanka, mainly those who are working in managerial positions and members of the Directors of NLs. Secondly, the outcomes of the research useful to academic groups in the Library and Information Science (LIS) segment as well as in the field of Organizational Management. Scholars, researchers and students in these disciplines and related disciplines may also be advantaged. Librarians/ library managers of other types of libraries also will benefit from these research findings.

Keywords: National Libraries, National Library of Sri Lanka, Leadership role, Tsunami devastation, Collaborative role

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