

Social Acceptance and Tenure of Library Profession in Sri Lanka: A Comparative Study with Special Reference to Public Libraries and University Libraries

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Library Profession has a history around 5000 years. Origin of library profession commenced in 19 century however, it was developed as a highly accepted profession in 20th century. There are several factors and characteristics to be defined as a profession. The Principal objective of this research is to study the social acceptance and status of library profession in public all university libraries in Sri Lanka. The other objectives are to examine the social acceptance of library profession in Sri Lanka, to explore the status of library profession in the institutional hierarchy, to identify the corelationship between the social acceptance and professional status, to identify the attitudes of the society toward the library profession and to investigate how social acceptance and status influencing the progress of library profession. Population was comprised of category 01 Lawyers, Politicians, Students and Readers and the category 02 Doctors, University Lectures, Teachers, 200 trade professionals and the category 03 Librarians. Sample selected 300 representing category 01, 200 from category 02, and 100 Librarians from category 03, altogether c. 600 among total population. Cluster sampling technique used since the sample comprised of homogenous and heterogeneous categories and the collected data was analyzed using SPSS applying descriptive method of research.

The findings were that meager social acceptance and status of library profession and libraries prevailed eventhough they provide quite satisfactory library service, under estimation and the value of communities towards the library services, inadequate knowledge and the access to information as well as the library services, unclear visibility of educational, research and world of work behavior of library professionals, pale and weaker attitudes and mentalities of library professionals and that there is an acute and concomitant influence from prevailing meager social recognition toward this social acceptance and status of a profession in Sri Lanka. Few policy suggestions are to improve the attitudes and response of authoritative, managerial, administrative political stakeholders including policy makers and the general public towards libraries, their services and library professionals by way of extending more public relations and cooperation extending the gravity and the visibility of library service among those categories. Within this context, establishment of a National Library and Information Science Commission (NAISC) and the drafting and the institutionalization of Sri Lanka National Library Services Manifesto (SNLSM) and making an effective and efficient library operation system and to formulate a unique recruitment, selection and job promotion policy based on skills, educational qualifications experience and professional competencies from lower to professionals staff level are few suggestions.

Keywords: *Library history, Library profession, Public Librarianship, University Librarianship, Professional status, Social acceptance, Library education, Library management*