

User Education Process in Public Libraries in Sri Lanka: with Special Reference to Libraries attached to Pradeshiya Sabhas

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Abstract

Libraries are a place to use literature, music, art, or reference sources, including books, manuscripts, reports or art, without the purpose of selling. (Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, 2011). The education on propagating and making the awareness on the use of library and information sources, provided by libraries or information centers is known as User Education. Different libraries and information centers use vivid user education systems and services at weaker and higher levels. The study aims to study User education practices in relation to Pradeshiya Sabha libraries, to study the organization as well as to explore the reasons for its lack and to make suggestions to improve the User education. For this study, five public libraries administered by the Pradeshiya Sabha of Kandy district were selected using a random sample. For this Study, 100 men and women, 20 from each library, were included in the research. Primary data was collected by giving questionnaires to the contributors. Approved statistical reports were used to obtain the Secondary information. Although many issues are being discussed in the field of Sri Lankan libraries, the activities of the local libraries are still in progress.

Keywords: *Pradeshiya sabha, Public libraries, User education, User services, Information literacy*

Introduction

Utilitarian education is to educate the utility of all the resources, including the various sources of information available in a library or information center, and the use of the services provided by them. (Ranasingha, 1997, p.7) At present, information is being generated through various media, but it is impossible for a library to absorb all of those information. Problems such as inadequate provisions, inadequate library space, and speed of information generation make a great hinder when delivering information to the users. Therefore, libraries have only limited resources. The purpose of user education is to make the best use of these limited resources and services.

In addition, the library staff has to perform the information needs of all the members of the library accurately, easily, efficiently and efficiently, to direct readers, and to provide advice on library usage. Regardless of the type of library available, User education is an important area. Due to the diversity and availability of readers, public libraries are one of the most important agents of user education and user service.