

The role of the non-governmental women's welfare libraries (A study made through selected libraries under Colombo municipal council)

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Women's welfare organization library is a special library which renders services to an organizational body that work in the field of women's welfare.

There is a great interest for implementation and development of women's welfare in the present society and as less number of studies have been made in this field, a research was conducted with the objectives of identifying the role the libraries play in the society and its influence on their users.

Data for this study was gathered by interviews, observation and questionnaires. From 30 women's welfare organizations only those which maintained libraries were selected for the study. A special effort was made to find out the services the libraries render, resources used, the problems they face and the impact of libraries on their users and the organizational body.

Findings revealed that 92% of the library users are women and though these libraries are attached to the organizational bodies which work in the same field, they provide services to their targeted groups separately. Findings also revealed that the women's welfare libraries housed a rich collection of resources related to women in different fields such as domestic violence, socio-economical problems, trafficking etc.

Transportation problems, lack of qualified staff and space and resource sharing methods create barriers between the libraries and the users. Through user educational programmes, current awareness services, networking and electronic resources, the services provided by these libraries can be made more efficient.

Final conclusion is that even with the problems mentioned above the Non-Governmental women's welfare libraries play significant roles in the Sri Lankan society.

Key words: Non-government organizations, Special libraries, Welfare, Women

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