

A Study on Available Library Services for Differently- Able Users in North Western Province (NWP) Public Libraries, Sri Lanka

Abeyasinghe H. M. P. P. K.¹ ✉, Angamma B. H.²

Abstract

Reading is considered a major tool in searching and acquiring knowledge. This paper discusses the available library services for differently-able users in North Western Province (NWP) Public Libraries. The general objective of the study was to study the current status of the library services, facilities and resources for differently-able users in North Western Province (NWP) public libraries in Sri Lanka. The other objectives were to identify the available library services and facilities for differently-able users in NWP, Public libraries and to identify the barriers faced by public librarians when providing the services for differently able users in NWP, public libraries. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data. The convenient sampling method was used and the response rate was 80% out of 100 questionnaires. Excel (2013) version was used to analyze the data. Most physically disabled (48%) differently-abled users are coming to their public libraries to get the library services. Most respondents stated that they provided as the service for differently- able users support to get photocopy service and it was 35% and the next highest percentage indicated that they provided as a service, special books distribution services for differently-able users and it was 27%. They faced several barriers related to library services such as limited space, lack of technology, lack of funds, lack of professional guidance and training. It is recommended to arrange some activities such as workshops, seminars to develop the professional knowledge and the training to provide library services for differently-abled users. Necessary steps should be taken by the authority to introduce new technology to facilitate differently-able users.

Keywords: *Differently-able users, public library Services, North Western province, public libraries*

¹ Library, Kurunegala Regional Centre, The Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka

² Department of Social Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, The Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka

✉ Corresponding author: hmkar@ou.ac.lk