

New Online User Service Initiatives of Public Libraries During the Long Term Shutdown Periods Due to The Unexpected Circumstances: A Case Study in Sri Lanka During the Covid – 19 Pandemic

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Abstract

A public library is a center of learning that is open to all, rich and poor, young and old, with no restrictions, or to any particular class. This study evaluates new online services implemented by public libraries during the COVID 19 pandemic period in Sri Lanka. The objective of this study was to explore the capabilities of public libraries in Sri Lanka to meet the needs of users through online services during the lockdown period in the country and explore the social media applications that public libraries can use to communicate among users. An online questionnaire was used as the tool in this study to collect preliminary data. The study found that the majority of public libraries use Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber, and IMO to disseminate knowledge for users during the COVID 19 pandemic period. And also study revealed that public librarians face a number of challenges in providing services to their clients because Public Library sector has no policy or funds regarding online service providers for users on such situations. Public Library has a serious impact on every community in Sri Lankan society even user community also discourages to use online services. This paper proposes to local government authorities and management level decision makers to encourage and support for public libraries be encouraged and supported by funding and the relevant legal authority to increase the effectiveness of use, increase productivity and satisfy users, and move their services to a digital platform.

Key Words - Public Library, Online User Service, Covid-19