

**AN ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING
OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS
OF SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES**

A thesis submitted

by

Premarathne, B.N.G.S.
(2003/MLS/03)



UCLIB



**In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of
Masters in Library and Information Science**

Supervisor: Mr. Harrison Perera

**Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Colombo
Sri Lanka**

2009



ABSTRACT

To survive and be successful in the current rapidly changing library environment, staff learning must be an ongoing process. University Library staff can be divided as Professional, Para-Professionals and Non-Professionals. Library Assistants are the largest category of library staff. Not giving more attention on education and training for them creates various problems for the efficient functioning of the library. Therefore it is vital to conduct surveys to find out the existing situation of the library education and training opportunities for the Library Assistants.

The main objective of this Study is set out to gain a clear understanding of educational and training opportunities available for the Library Assistants in Sri Lankan University Libraries. It further aims to investigate the educational and training opportunities currently available for University Library Assistants, actual training needs of the Library Assistants, to identify the critical issues, drawbacks, experienced by the Library Assistants and suggestions to overcome those issues and explore the Librarians' views of the training needs of the Library Assistants.

In order to carry out these objectives of the Study an empirical survey was conducted on education and training within the University Libraries. Twelve University Libraries were selected for this survey. A questionnaire was administered on the Library Assistants who had completed 5 to 15 years service experience. A response rate of 79.50% was achieved. A separate questionnaire was distributed among 12 University Librarians and the response rate was 100%.

On the basis of the responses, an attempt was made subsequently to find out the main characteristics of educational and training opportunities within the present scenario of the

University Libraries. Among the major findings of this survey are lack of training opportunities for the Library Assistants and the impact on their services. Secondly, the study also found no clearly defined educational and training policy, non existence of budget allocation for education and training requirements for the Library Assistants. Suggestions of the Librarians and Library Assistants for further improvement of education and training also were gathered separately.

The Study suggests that the Library Assistants should have proper orientation regarding the overall operations of the library. Increasing of opportunities on educational and training is critical for their career development. It is also essential to give more attention to continuing education programmes. Existing recruitment qualifications of the Library Assistants also should be upgraded and encourage them to develop the language skills. Necessity of stronger promotional scheme will be more helpful to follow LIS courses. Conducting need assessment, proper policy, and budget allocation for educational and training opportunities are essential. Upgrading staff development programmes and giving more attention on ICT knowledge will assist to deliver quality service to the library users.

Human Resource Development is the most critical for any institution. Library Assistants are the largest segment of staff in the University Library. They should be given more opportunities on education and raining through out their career.