

A Study of Extension Services Which Are Used to Improve Community Participation in Public Libraries in Sri Lanka: based on the Kurunegala District

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Abstract

Extension services in libraries can be identified as one of the services rendered by a public library. This is a unique service rendered by public libraries and does not work in other libraries. The research problem of this is whether the library extension services conducted by the public libraries in Sri Lanka are correctly functioning in such a way as to increase its community participation. The main objective of this study is to explore the extension services that can be used to enhance community participation in public libraries in Sri Lanka. All the public libraries in Sri Lanka are used as a population and the Kurunegala district has been selected as the sample. Ten public libraries were randomly selected from 19 local authorities in the district. Questionnaires, interviews, and observations were used and tables and charts were used in the analysis of the data. Extension services have been identified through exhibitions, seminars, lectures, discussion forums, workshops, film shows, and reader clubs which help enhance community participation. The extension services are operated at a high level of 60% by public libraries and a minimum of 40%. In identifying community involvement in these services, 70% of the sample public libraries are high. These extension services cover local and cultural values and significantly increase community involvement. It is important to note that they can enhance community participation and enhance the quality of these services by utilizing appropriate policies and regional and cultural values in launching and maintaining these extension services.

Keywords: *Public Library, Library Services, Extension Services, Community Participation, Sri Lanka*