

## **Understanding the Service Quality expectation of library users of Special Libraries of professional institutions.**

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21<sup>st</sup> Century libraries are not traditional places with only a collection of documents. The entire role of the national, public, academic and special libraries and librarians is changing and there is an urgent need to adapt to the environment because not merely sustain or survive but to thrive in to the future. Users or customers are important stakeholders in libraries and information centres. It is necessary to establish a dialogue with customers and find out their expectations. When identification the users expectations it will give a guideline to library to develop a quality library service and empower the library users to solve problems. Today, service quality is one of the most important factors in all service sectors. Now it is the time for evaluate the quality and significance of the library service through a service quality model based on ‘SERVQUAL’ concept.

The main objective of this study is to identify the expectations of the users service quality of special libraries of professional institutions. The other objectives are to identify the most important factors to implement them giving a priority and to preparation of a library development plan for the library.

Five special libraries in Colombo District have been selected as a sample for the study. All selected libraries are attached to a parent institution which offer ‘Professional Qualifications’ in different study areas such as Banking, Accounting, Engineering, Marketing and International Relations.

The survey was based on primary and secondary data gathered through structured questionnaire and literature review. The data gathered on user expectations thought five service quality dimensions resources, staff, services, guidance and physical environment. The expectations of users can be identified as most important, important, less important and no important and the first priority can be given to most important aspects and implemented. Then the other expectations can be fulfilled step by step plan. Collected data were analyzed using Weighted Average method.

It is observed that the first priority given by the users of the selected special libraries is to ‘Physical Environment’. The library quality dimension ‘Services’ is ranked second by the users. Third ranked is ‘the Staff’ and the fourth to ‘Resources’ and fifth service quality dimension is ‘Guidance’. The expectations of the users will be implemented and library infrastructure services, resources, staff and other activities will be putting in to practices.

**Keywords:** *service quality, special libraries, user expectations, user perspectives, quality dimensions*