

## **Contribution of Libraries in Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage: A Study Based on Selected Public Libraries in Ratnapura District.**

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There are two aspects in classifying the concept of cultural heritage. One is Tangible cultural heritage (TCH) the other is Intangible cultural heritage (ICH). Tangible cultural heritage comprised of physical items, artifacts and ancient remains. Traditional knowledge, Practices, folklore literary creations and human mental creations and designs belong to Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Even though the UNESCO introduced a convention on this subjects, in 2003, still a national level well organization has not been instituted in Sri Lanka yet though some initiatives launched by the National Library and Documentation Services Board. Still important role has to be done by those organizations.

The principal objective of this study was to investigate the contribution of libraries particularly the public libraries in preservation of ICH. In this context, study was conducted on the verbal tradition depicted in the folklore. 14 public libraries in Ratnapura district were used a study sample. It was found that all libraries only limited to routine a collection development and no any library involved in the expected task. This has happened owing to that librarians are unaware the importance of ICH and the contribution and the programs related to ICH by the National Library are not known by the librarians. The lack of knowledge and understanding in collection and preservation method related to these traditional swore by the librarians was the other reason. The other problems were that villagers did not recognize the value of ICH, there was no legal framework of preserving ICH and the scarcity of trained human resource and relevant technologies in collecting and preserving the ICH.

Suggestions are to train the librarians in collection at preservation of ICH, to take the National Library full responsibility of leading, guiding, preparing legal framework, giving full publicity of the role and importance of preservation of ICH.

**Keywords:** *Intangible Cultural Heritage, Indigenous knowledge, Public Libraries, Traditional knowledge, Library History*