

The Impact of Natural Disasters on Library Resources and Services: with Special Reference to Galle Richard Pathirana, Matara Kumarathunga Munidasa and Tangalle Public Libraries

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Abstract

Basically, public libraries that are situated in Sri Lanka mostly have been faced with lots of disasters that occurred in natural ways as well as manmade actions. This research was conducted, based on the research questions on how public libraries face any disasters and how they conserve and preserve their collections and do they have proper disaster management plan for their libraries, Throughout the research findings, it is crystal clear that any library does not have such kind of disaster plan, and lack of knowledge and weakness in management mainly caused the extinguishment of the libraries. This research has presented a proper disaster management plan based on the research results.

Keywords: *Natural disaster, Library management, Disaster management plan, Public libraries, Library building*

Introduction

Various type of disasters take place in the world due to natural and manmade causes. The librarian and library staff should pay their attention to these. In Sri Lanka, natural disasters such as floods, landslides, hurricanes, tsunami, and earthquakes take place and public libraries in the coastal areas have experienced a devastating Tsunami in recent past. In addition to that, various other disasters for the libraries that result from human carelessness and negligence occur in Sri Lanka frequently. Disasters can be taken place in any places or for any library. Consequently disasters are considered as the leading enemy of libraries. There are several types of libraries such as academic, school, national and public libraries. Among them the public libraries are the most familiar institute with the public. Public libraries are government or semi-government with facilities which make available to the people, material that is printed or non-printed. Such a library is authorized by the government and functions under the rules and regulations like the urban and municipal councils pertaining to a particular district or zone. Public libraries contain a variety of collections and forms of reading material such as books, maps, collections, non-printed material. Public libraries always try to cater to the needs of the readers who belong to various age groups, various ethnic groups.

The second of the two main functions of libraries is directed at actively exploiting the collection to satisfy the information needs of library users (Encyclopedia of Britannica, 2017).