Problems Related to Subject Headings Authority Control Mechanism in the National Library of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

A very enormous role has been vested to libraries, information centers due to information growth and explosion. Given this opportunity, it is much important in controlling, organizing and dissemination of information and this has lead for establishing speedy bibliographic control strategies and methods. With the rapid use and development of computer cataloguing than the traditional cataloguing together with its application of modern ICT has diverted to online catalogue both in-house and web based forms. Even though, the author, title and subject are used as access points, different areas pertaining to the subject available in document cannot be accessed through that mean and therefore different areas in subject domain will have be accessed through different subject headings. This can be done with the provision of subject headings to the relevant catalogue. When providing subject headings proper authority control have to be followed. There is a dire need for the authority control of subject headings. To investigate whether authority control mechanism is used by the national library is the problem of this study.

Keywords: Authority control, Subject headings, Access Points, Cataloguing standards, OPAC

Introduction

Although Sri Lanka National Library has used the list of Library of Congress Subject Headings, it is not practically used to cover the entire subject. It has become an obstacle for the uniformity of subject headings in the Sri Lankan library system. As the National library is the leading institute of a country, with using a standard List of Subject Headings, it is possible to access the authorized subject heading. It can be used by libraries in the country. Accordingly, it is clear that authority control of subject headings is an important concept to provide an efficient library service in Sri Lanka.

Objectives

To identify whether subject heading authority control mechanism is used by the national library. If so what are the salient features of the authority control of subject headings used by the National Library of Sri Lanka. Then to investigate what problems are faced by readers in terms of subject headings related authority control. For this purpose, the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) of Sri Lanka National Library was used.