SIGNIFICANCE OF INFOPRENEURSHIP IN COVID-19 PANDEMIC: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN SRI LANKAN PERSPECTIVE

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The term 'infopreneurship' derived as a combination of information + entrepreneurship is a profit-oriented; internet and client-based; yet unexplored concept in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, the key objectives were to gain and spread an understanding on infopreneurship and to emphasize its significance in this pandemic situation. Basically, an analysis of literature and documents carried out to comprehend its origination, nature, key areas, functions and the strategic value. The significance of infopreneurship was validated based on a self-defined framework which consisted of its strategic value in economic, social, educational and business perspectives to address the limitations and barriers faced in this pandemic. The findings shows that the origination of the concept of infopreneurship dates back to 1984; is not a mere process limited to information retrieval and dissemination; being a profit-oriented approach, it contains a long, complex process with number of activities and functions to fulfill the client's needs with a quality outcome; some major similarities in librarianship and infopreneurship were identified; several skills, qualities and practices are essential to become a vendor in this digital world; challenges and changes should have to be experienced. This approach can be initiated to address the rising issue of unemployment in this pandemic situation; simultaneously, as a profit generating strategy via online platforms which assures social distance and 'work from home' concept; skill development opportunity in web-based technology, managerial and business activities, research and publication sector; finally, the entire process leads to an informed society, knowledge society and digital society.

Keywords: *Infopreneurship; Librarianship; COVID-19 pandemic; Information society.*