

An exploratory study, how the user orientation conducted by the University Libraries in Sri Lanka, during COVID Pandemic period.

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Library user orientation is a planned programme of giving library instructions either on lecture or a demonstration, program of instructions or a face to face or computer based method or demonstration of library physical arrangement, resources and services conceivably with library functional aspects in a rudimentary manner, specially targeting student categories exposing library services for promoting good library relations and publicity through the process in order to become effective library users. It is a splendid opportunity to "sell" the library to the students, to promote the services making a very friendly atmosphere between library staff and those users nearer to resources and service. COVID 19 pandemic severely affected to the user orientation programmes conducted physically for the new entrants in University libraries in Sri Lanka. The four objectives of this paper were to identify how university libraries conducted their user orientation during this period, to explore the attitudes of Librarians towards conducting user orientation on online mode to examine the problems faced by the libraries in conducting user orientation in this COVID 19 period. This study utilized mixed methods. Sample comprised of four university libraries with their Librarians. Questionnaire was distributed Kelaniya, Wayamba, Ruhuna and Sabaragamuwa university libraries to collect data, which reflect their preference on physical a virtual user orientation programme. Study found that all four universities used online mode for their user

orientation programmes, which means the validity of this process. Attitudes of four Librarians towards this online use for the user orientation were unsatisfactory which underscore that conducting user orientation in physical participation is more fruitful than online mode. The problems faced by the students are the signal and connectivity issues, meager knowledge of the usage of this online mode, the scarcity of computer facilities while the librarian faced problems like how physical demonstration session should be conducted on online mode, mediocre knowledge of the Learning Management System usage, time management issues related to online user education sessions including the shortage of computer facilities.

Keywords: *User orientation, University Libraries, User education, Library orientation, Library instructions, online education*