



**A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON MARKETING OF READER  
SERVICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN ASIA WITH  
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SRI LANKA, INDIA,  
MALAYSIA AND THAILAND**

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## Abstract

Universities have been oases of intellectuals for centuries. Since the Library constitutes the heart of a university and supplies its life-blood, it is worth looking at why they need to engage in marketing and how systematic application of the marketing concept can benefit them.

Marketing is a customer-centered approach. Historically, both the study and practice of marketing have focused on manufacturing goods. Later, as service companies recognized the value of this vital management tool, many services industries were quick to incorporate marketing into their overall managerial plans.

Soon marketing started to gain importance in libraries across the world. As the environment became competitive and libraries of all sorts were competing for funds, it is not surprising that libraries in some advanced economies turned towards marketing; soon followed by many in developing countries.

In contrast, Sri Lankan university libraries haven't put any effort to inject marketing concepts. It was felt that they are far behind their Asian counterparts when it comes to showing their entrepreneurship.

*The study aimed to conduct a comparative study of marketing practices in academic libraries in three Asian neighbors and compare them with those practiced in Sri Lanka. This is done with a view to draw attention to local university libraries.*

The study also examined how by injecting marketing techniques, libraries can improve their services, be more user-oriented and achieve customer satisfaction. It is strongly suggested that it is as important for library staff to market themselves as the services they offer or libraries they work for. A greater variety of new services such as IT based services, services to external users and fee-based services for potential users need to be introduced.

Marketing does not necessarily mean a financial profit. For non-profit service organizations, it is imperative to attract resources in order to maintain, expand and improve services. Furthermore, every organization needs to show that they are cost-effective.

Marketing will neither be a single approach to be followed nor an absolute solution to problems facing academic librarians.

The study concludes that despite the belief that marketing requires big budgets, they can translate successfully into library environments even with little expense. What is really needed is creativity coupled with open-minded attitude.