THE CHALLENGES OF MARKETING UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
IN SRI LANKA: LIBRARIANS' PERSPECTIVE

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Marketing strategies could be used by librarians to promote library services among the users, to attract new users and to retain the existing ones. It is necessary for university librarians to identify the potential challenges in marketing library services and to develop effective strategies ensuring a streamlined marketing function. The objective of the study was to find out the challenges faced by Sri Lankan university librarians in marketing their services. This study involved all 130 academic staff members in the libraries of the 15 state universities in Sri Lanka coming under the purview of the University Grants Commission. Total population sampling was considered and data collected through self-administrated questionnaires. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the responses and the SPSS software package used in analyzing data. 105 valid questionnaires were received giving a response rate of 80.8%. The mean rating of perceived challenges in marketing library services by university librarians in Sri Lanka was considered in interpreting data. Lack of networking librarians was perceived as a major challenge in marketing library services in Sri Lankan university libraries. Further, inadequate funding for marketing, lack of awareness on user needs, lack of marketing skills, and high cost of marketing operations were perceived as challenges by the librarians. This concludes that university librarians in Sri Lanka do face some challenges in marketing their library services. Establishing a consortium of marketing librarians in Sri Lankan university libraries, separate adequate funding for marketing library services and, development of a unique marketing strategy for each library are recommended as further actions.

Keywords: Marketing library services; University libraries; University librarians; Challenges in marketing library services.