An Overview of the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Batticaloa District Public Libraries

R. Achala Sugandini
Library Attendant, Eravur Urban Council, Sri Lanka
asugandini@gmail.com

Librarians play an important role in providing reliable knowledge; integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) can improve library services, similar to how technology is transforming other fields. The study examines how AI can support library operations and enhance efficiency in managing information and assisting readers, also the usage of AI in public libraries in the Batticaloa district, focusing on the awareness and ability of library officials to integrate AI into their library operations. The objectives are to educate public librarians on using AI in library activities and promote the use of open-source AI resources. By adopting AI, libraries can improve their services, build their good will, and strengthen their role as reliable knowledge providers. This study used a quantitative research method, surveying librarians and library attendants from all 83 public libraries in the Batticaloa district via online means. A structured questionnaire (Google Form) was used to collect data. Data analysis was done using Excel Spreadsheet and SPSS. The analysis, based on 56 responses, revealed that 6.67% of the class II libraries and 93.33% of the class III libraries were managed by the local government. Out of these libraries, 30% were managed by Librarians, 57% by Library Attendants and 13% by other employees. Internet access was limited, with only 23.5% of libraries having internet facilities. While 94.1% of the respondents believed AI can improve library operations, only 17.6% of them had introduced AI tools for translating documents, preparing invitations for events and certificates for competitions, and 41.2% of them were aware of AI, mostly gained through training seminars. In addition, all respondents were interested in implementing AI in their libraries. The results clearly showed that most libraries were managed by Library Attendants. They often did not have the necessary educational background to carry out library operations using AI. Therefore, the study highlights the need for AI education among library staff, as many lack the necessary background. It is recommended that parent institutions provide AI training, encourage further studies, and promote online AI-related courses to help integrate AI into library operations effectively.

Keywords: *Artificial intelligence; Batticaloa district; Library office management; Open source AI tools; Public libraries*