

Adapting Global Cultural Competency Practices to Sri Lankan State University Libraries: Bridging Multilingual and Multicultural Challenges

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State-owned public universities in Sri Lanka embody the nation's rich multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual diversity. Hence, Sri Lankan state university libraries operate in contrasting linguistic and cultural environments. Sri Lanka university statistics (University Grants Commission [UGC], 2023) suggest University Libraries in the North and East predominantly serve Tamil-speaking communities within a Tamil cultural setting but also accommodate Sinhalese students. Conversely, libraries in the South are situated in a predominantly Sinhalese cultural and linguistic environment yet serve Tamil-speaking students and library users. Despite these challenges, there is a lack of documented evidence on how these libraries address cultural competency or adapt to the best global practices and standards to meet the needs of their multicultural and multilingual user populations. The objective of this rapid review is to explore global practices in cultural competency within academic libraries and to evaluate their applicability to Sri Lankan state university libraries. The review attempts to address the following review questions: What are the essential components of multicultural competence in academic libraries? How do university libraries contribute to promoting diversity and inclusivity? How can library staff enhance their readiness to serve diverse populations effectively? Literature search was done based on title and research questions using databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, Taylor & Francis, and Emerald. Fifteen Articles from 2000–2024 were screened, filtered by inclusion criteria, and analyzed thematically for cultural competency practices. Findings emphasized the need for professional development and institutional support through ongoing training in cultural competence, inclusive information literacy programs for Library users, and the formulation of policies promoting diversity and inclusion, such as the IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto. Recommendations include adopting inclusive recruiting practices to ensure a diverse workforce, conduct surveys to identify cultural gaps, host cultural events, workshops, and exhibits, enhance access to multilingual resources, improve communication strategies to address multilingual and multicultural challenges in Sri Lankan university libraries. Reviewers identified a research gap specific to Sri Lanka and encourage future empirical studies on cultural competency, particularly in academic and public library settings.

Keywords: *Cultural competency; Multicultural; Multilingual diversity; State Universities; University libraries*