

**EXTENDING LIBRARY SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY
BY LIBRARY OUTREACH SERVICES:
AN INSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCE OF
KOTELAWALA DEFENCE UNIVERSITY**

U.D.H. Kanchana

Allied Health Sciences Library, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University,
Sri Lanka

E Mail: udhkanchana@kdu.ac.lk

‘Library outreach services’ indicates reaching the society beyond borders of physical libraries, and organized and offered by many libraries. Various initiatives in outreach services are conducted by academic librarians to interact with their surrounding communities. Kotelawala Defence University (KDU) library initiated its outreach services programme with the objectives of promoting and marketing library services particularly among underprivileged user communities, thereby helping them. Current Covid-19 pandemic situation made it necessary for the library to re-assess these outreach services due to some practical issues. This study aims to describe institutional experience in delivering outreach services in the past few years and to make new suggestions. The KDU Library conducted three main outreach projects in three schools located at Ratmalana, Ahangama and Bulathsinhala. These projects were the library development program, book donation program, and the art competition and library renovation program respectively. These were executed in 2015, 2016 and 2017 at different stages. Donors of the projects were KDU staff, students, and suppliers. Additionally, KDU provided labour force by assigning military and civil staff as required. According to the feedback of the end users, renovation project of children’s library added immense value to the selected school since it mainly focused on grade five scholarships. It provided an opportunity for related school communities to interact with the university community and the KDU library staff to gain an awareness on issues faced by school librarians. Lack of sufficient assistance from end users and the failure to maintain continuity were the negative issues identified during these projects.

Keywords: *Outreach services; Library development; Library marketing; School libraries.*