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Feature Article

Sri Lankan Libraries and Industrial 5.0

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The industrial revolution or so-called IR is a changing process of technological, socioeconomic, and cultural aspects. The evolution of industries derived from 1.0 now stepping to 5.0. In this gradual revolution, industry 4.0 is the strategic parameter to achieve the action plan of many industries including libraries. The root cause of IR 4.0 is the development of modern technologies (Min et al., 2019). However, the majority of industries are still in the middle phase of IR 4.0. To address the changing needs of users and to survive in the changing world, Sri Lankan libraries tend to transform their entire system, processes, operations, and functions with digital technologies. For example, library automation had become a buzzword in Sri Lankan perspective. Further, smart systems, mobile technology applications, robotization, virtual and augmented reality (VR and AR), big data analytics, cyber computing, virtualization, Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning, and Internet of Things (IoT) (Ellen Frederick, 2016) are enablers of industry 4.0 which are not best leveraged in Sri Lankan libraries. However, IR 5.0 is also on its way.

Industry 5.0 is a result of a gradual industrial revolution where both humans and technology involve in human wellbeing and economic enhancement (GEORGE & GEORGE, 2020). Industry 5.0 is more rational, sustainable, and human-centric whereas industry 4.0 is to maximize performance optimization through machines, processes, and system interconnection (Hussain, 2020). Thus, "technology" is man-made and indeed for supporting humans but not for superseding. Therefore, Sri Lankan libraries should strategically continue their move in this industrial revolution. Efficiency and productivity generated by industry 4.0 should be optimistically balanced when moving towards industry 5.0. No doubt, human intuition is paramount. The reason is that even any technology is a masterpiece of the human mind. Human creativity, capacity of problem-solving, and decision-making cannot be programmed. That is why libraries still survive and the role of librarianship remains as a well-accepted profession with slight changes. If the machines, systems, and processes could fulfill the expected requirements in the library with no human intuition, this industry 5.0 will not emerge. Therefore, industry 5.0 provides the answer to the common question raised by many parties "why do we need librarians if we have Google". The optimal outcome can be leveraged where only human-machine interactive collaboration exists.

Furthermore, industry 5.0 in libraries ensures sustainability. It does not merely encourage the libraries to grab whatever the latest technology available in the industry. But it motivates the librarians to be aware of the present requirements of the users, availability, and compatibility of the technologies as well as how effective they are in optimizing the existing phenomenon. In terms of reducing wastage and enhancing efficiency and effectiveness, industry 5.0 expects library productivity. In a nutshell, this strives toward economic growth. But the human-centric approach in industry 5.0 widens the library objectives. Thus, the concerns about the well-being of the library staff uplift the library vision to the next level. However, the basement created by industry 4.0 is essential to reach the prosperity of libraries while research and development (R&D), innovations, creativity, decision making, and problem-solving capability are embedded in the strategies of the libraries. Thereby, industry 5.0 will act as a multi-faceted approach to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which address 3 main dimensions of economic, social, and natural resources conservation perspectives. Hence, this is the best time for Sri Lankan libraries to set their vision, mission, long-term objectives, values and develop policies, and procedures before embracing industry 5.0.

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