

THE IMPACT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCES (SCOLIS) OF UGC FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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Abstract

University libraries in Sri Lanka functioned without any formal coordination during the initial period of 1942 to 1986. However, due to the intervention of His Excellency the President, Mr. J.R. Jayewardene in his capacity as the Minister of Higher Education, a coordination mechanism evolved in the form of a Standing Sub-Committee of the University Grants Commission. This was named the 'Inter University Committee of Librarians' (IUCL) and renamed as the 'Standing Committee of Libraries and Information Sciences' (SCOLIS) in March, 2003. The IUCL / SCOLIS was instrumental in airing the need to improve library infrastructure, manpower resources, funding, dialogue with the teaching staff, ICT facilities and a host of other issues. Above anything else, it acted as the main communication channel between the University Librarians and the UGC. The foregoing discussion provides a brief overview of this aspect.

Keywords: Standing Committee of Libraries and Information Sciences (SCOLIS), IUCL, UGC

Historical Background

The modern era of higher education in Sri Lanka with an outlook of a western university model dawns with the establishment of the Ceylon University College in January 1921. At the beginning, it was affiliated to the University of London with the task of preparing students for the examinations conducted by the latter.¹ The subsequent period of little over 9 decades could be divided into 6 stages according to the evolution of the system to its present status in the following manner:

- (i) 1921-1942 : the period where the Ceylon University College functioned in that capacity ;
- (ii) 1942-1959 : University of Ceylon was established and operated as an unitary university;
- (iii) 1959-1966 : the functioning of three autonomous universities, namely the University of Ceylon, the Vidyodaya University of Ceylon and the Vidyalandara University of Ceylon without any formal coordination structure by the government ;
- (iv) 1966-1972 : functioning of independent universities under the National Council of Higher Education (NCHE)

- (v) 1972-1978: operation of a single university comprising of campuses which were previously independent universities. A highly centralized system of university governance observed during this period.
- (vi) 1978 - to date : independent universities which were coordinated through the University Grants Commission (UGC). As of today, there are 15 national universities functioning under the UGC. The Universities of Peradeniya and Colombo which were direct descendants of the University of Ceylon. The other 13 universities were established in the following chronological order: University of Sri Jayewardenepura (1959), University of Kelaniya (1959), University of Moratuwa (1972), University of Jaffna (1974), Ruhuna University (1978), Open University (1980), Eastern University (1980), South Eastern University (1995), Rajarata University (1995), Sabaragamuwa University (1995), Wayamba University (1999), Uva Wellassa University (2005) and the University of Visual and Performing Arts (2005).

From the beginning, the universities in Sri Lanka were aimed at providing undergraduate education to students who pass the General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) Examination. Of late, it was realized that there is a need for postgraduate educational opportunities. Initially, postgraduate degree programmes were offered by some academic departments of universities in a limited scale. Subsequently, the higher educational authorities followed a two-fold approach to address this issue: through the establishment of Postgraduate Institutes and Faculties of Graduate Studies. The first postgraduate institute established was the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine founded in 1974.

Subsequently, the Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture (1975), Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies (1975), Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology (1976), Postgraduate Institute of Science (1996) and the Postgraduate Institute of English (2005) were established. In 1987 the Faculty of Graduate Studies Ordinance No. 3 of 1987 was enacted empowering universities to establish Faculties of Graduate Studies. With this step, the role of university libraries in supporting postgraduate research became more significant than before. However, at a workshop organized by the Standing Committee on Postgraduate Education and Research of the UGC held in March 2000, one of the principal workshop recommendations on 'Autonomy, Accountability, Organizational Structure and Constraints' had been "of the models available, postgraduate institute model is recognized as the best organization structure to offer quality postgraduates".²

The split of postgraduate programmes between the Postgraduate Institutes and Faculties of Graduate Studies has a profound effect in the organization and provision of information sources and services as this sector requires access to scholarly journals and advance monographs etc. Both the university and postgraduate institute libraries are burdened with this aspect, yet the division of funds among them led to the reduction of purchasing power of individual libraries.

From 1942 to 1986, the university libraries were treated as an integral element of higher education sector, yet there was virtually no coordinated formal effort from the Ministry of

Education / Ministry of Higher Education or the UGC to examine and assess the nature, scope and requirements of university libraries. This silent attitude of both parties momentarily changed due to some untold reason, and a person no lesser than His Excellency the President, J.R. Jayewardene in his capacity as the Ministry of Higher Education made a directive to the UGC Chairman to obtain from university librarians the relevant information for further action. Accordingly, the Secretary to the UGC informed all university librarians to inform the UGC of “adequacy, availability of funds and any other relevant materials” pertaining to university libraries on or before 30th December, 1986 “to enable the Minister of Higher Education to decide on the further steps that should be taken to raise their standard.”. Further, he also informed the University Librarians and Vice-Chancellors that a meeting to discuss further on this matter is scheduled for 6th January, 1987 and invited all of them for the meeting.³

This historic meeting presided over by Prof. F.S.C.P. Kalpage, Chairman, UGC was attended by the Vice Chancellors of Universities of Colombo, Kelaniya, Moratuwa and Jaffna and the Librarians of Colombo, Peradeniya, Sri Jayewardenepura, Kelaniya, Moratuwa, Jaffna and the Open Universities and the Assistant Librarian of the University of Ruhuna. Based on the information sent by university librarians, the following three areas were identified as main constraints in the development of university library services.

1. Lack of physical accommodation
2. Insufficiency of trained staff
3. Inadequacy of funds

Further, the following aspects/ issues were identified as being important for the planned development for the future.

- (a) Computerization of libraries
- (b) Increase facilities available for training of staff
- (c) Provide more funds for modern equipment, books and periodicals
- (d) Provision of adequate staff
- (e) Provision of suitably designed buildings
- (f) Librarians to have regular dialogue with the academic staff
- (g) Vice-Chancellors to activate library committees
- (h) Negotiate with the Central Bank to obtain open license to import books: Accountant / UGC was requested to negotiate with the Controller of Exchange.⁴

This historic beginning paved way for the initiation of a regular forum of University Librarians with a representative from the UGC chosen among from the UGC Board membership. The UGC representative functioned as the Chairman of the forum and acted as the live wire between the Librarians and the UGC. At the third meeting held on 7th May 1987, it was informed that the UGC has approved the formation of the 'Inter University Committee of Librarians (IUCL) as a Statutory Sub-Committee of the UGC.¹⁵

The formation of the IUCL filled the void between the university librarians and the top level administration of the higher education system in the country. It also ensured the regular and formal dialogue between all university librarians under the aegis of the UGC. Apart from the gains achieved through IUCL, the formation of the same could be considered as the most productive and far-reaching achievement realized through the directive made by His Excellency the President. The composition of the IUCL as decided by the UGC was informed to all members of the IUCL by the Secretary of the UGC. Accordingly the membership comprised of the following officials : Prof. B. L. Panditharatne / Chairman (designated UGC member), Chairman / CVCD, Prof. K. Tillekeratne, University of Kelaniya (possibly representing the Sri Lanka Inter University Committee on Computing), all University Librarians and the Chairman, Sri Lanka National Library Services Board.⁶ During the period 1987 to 1996 Vice-Chancellors of universities have participated intermittently. At some stage, the Chairperson of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Directors (CVCD) has attended meetings. This participation seems to be a highly significant aspect, as the Vice-Chancellor(s) presence makes IUCL deliberations moderated through the university Chief Executive Officers perspective and carries more weight. It would also enhance the communication between the Vice-Chancellors and Librarians at their respective forum levels. However, this practice was not continued beyond the 42nd meeting held on 02.12.1996. From 2000 onwards, the membership was broad-based to accommodate the LIS professionals representing the National Science Foundation, Colombo Public Library etc. Eventually, the UGC renamed the IUCL as the “Standing Committee on Libraries and Information Science (SCOLIS)” effective from the 28th March, 2003.

Analysis of the Actions Taken to Address Identified Issues

At the inaugural meeting of the IUCL, the above mentioned three main areas and eight aspects were identified for further action. In order to examine the contribution made by the UGC in providing solutions or remedial measures, these factors are considered under distinctive headings.

Lack of Physical Accommodation

Lack of physical accommodation has been identified as the first main area for attention of the authorities. It is also identified under the eight specific issues to be addressed as “provision of suitably designed buildings”. By 1987, out of the nine universities then functioning, only the Universities of Peradeniya and Kelaniya had buildings constructed for the purpose and other universities were taking steps to build new buildings. Even though the library building at University of Kelaniya was designed and constructed for the purpose, one of the most severe problems encountered from the beginning and even experiencing today is its leaking roof structure and over-flowing rain water gutter system. The improvement of infrastructure was a matter for discussion for ten consecutive meetings and it was deleted from the agenda at the 10th meeting held on 27th September 1988. Interestingly the matter under discussion was focused on the repairs to the Kelaniya Library building and reason for deleting the whole issue from the agenda had been “the apparent lack of interest shown by the authorities of the University of Kelaniya to attend to it”.⁷ Similar to the lackluster attitude displayed in

several other issues, in this instance too the top hierarchy of the UGC escaped from giving a detailed assessment of the situation and getting requisite assistance from the Minister of Higher Education who was instrumental in calling the first meeting.

Insufficiency of Trained Staff

Insufficiency of trained staff has been identified as the second crucial constraint in the development and provision of an effective and efficient university library service. Under the 8 issues identified for attention this factor is considered from a different point of view: "increasing of the facilities available for training of library staff". In order to provide postgraduate training for relevant staff and to provide sufficient human resources it had been unanimously agreed by the university librarians and the UGC authorities that a postgraduate institute to be established. However, the UGC authorities were not prepared to bear the cost of setting-up of the Institute. Initially it was decided to look for the assistance of a foreign funding agency. As such, the UNESCO and the British Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) Programme were requested for their assistance. However, these efforts were not successful, and at one stage it was suggested by the UGC authorities to consider the conducting of the programme in selected university libraries according to the availability of resource persons. As all university librarians disagreed to the 'rotation method', this proposal did not last long. During the period 1987-1995 a detailed project proposal was under preparation and was at the 'incubation stage', without becoming a reality. However, the efforts and insight put into the preparation of the project proposal got dividends from a different corner, which was never considered up to then. In 1995 the Sri Lanka Government had discussions with the World Bank for funding for the Second General Education Project, (GEP 2) meant for the development of primary and secondary education system in the country. The GEP 2 started in 1997 and ended in December 2005. The total project value was US\$ 70 million which included a library component with an estimated cost of US\$ 5.9 million.^{8,9} Under this component, the development of 4,000 School Libraries throughout the country and the establishment of NILIS were two important components.

In this context, the Director of the Sri Lanka National Library Services Board (SLNLSB) submitted a proposal for the establishment of an Institute of Library and Information Science at the 42nd IUCL Meeting held on 2nd December 1996. It was reported that the World Bank will reconsider the funding for an Institute at the next visit scheduled for March 1997.¹⁰ In keeping with the requirements intimated by the World Bank, the Director of SLNLSB suggested to form a sub-committee to prepare a detailed report. A committee comprising of the Director, SLNLSB (convener) and Librarians of Universities of Sri Jayewardenepura, Kelaniya and Colombo appointed for this purpose. As reported by Jayasuriya, the total training needs of Library personnel during the period 1998-2000 was estimated as 8,078 out of which 25 were university professional librarians.¹¹

In 1999, the NILIS was established by 'The National Institute of Library and Information Sciences Ordinance, No. 1 of 1999' under section 18 and 24 of the Universities Act, No. 16 of 1978 with affiliation to the University of Colombo. NILIS started its formal education programmes in 2003. The first Acting Director of the Institute, Mr. P.E. Harrison Perera

participated in the 57th meeting of the IUCL held on 9th August 1999 and since then the Director/NILIS also became a regular member of the IUCL. The establishment of a postgraduate institute for training of university library professionals was discussed at the very first meeting and the deliberations were continued for nearly a decade. In this whole issue, the UGC was not prepared to bear the cost of establishing the Institute. In order to provide foreign training opportunities for relevant university library academic staff, the UGC has requested the Vice-Chancellors to allocate some overseas scholarship opportunities for them and as a result two Assistant Librarians got the opportunity to study for their higher degrees at UK universities. Unfortunately, this procedure was not continued thereafter.

Inadequacy of Funding

Inadequacy of funding for university libraries has been identified as the third most important issue to be addressed by authorities concerned - this situation has arisen due to several reasons as follows :

- Inadequacy of funding for higher education sector in general
- Inadequate treatment meted out in allocating the university capital grant for the library vis-a-vis that for the faculties and the administration in some universities
- The failure to Notify the allocated amounts to librarians early in the calendar year to plan for procurement of books and journals
- Provision to utilize unspent money in the previous year

The representations made at the IUCL has not resulted a general increase of funds for the university libraries. However, in response to the request of librarians to indicate to universities of the amount set aside for the procurement of books and periodicals, the UGC followed the practice for a number of years during the mid 1990's.

Funding from the World Bank Projects

At the request of the Government, the World Bank assistance was provided for the improvement of the higher education sector. The first project envisaged, "the improvement of Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education - IRQUE" commenced in 2003. Two types of grants were awarded under this project as "Institutional Block Grants (IBG)" and "Quality Enhancement Fund (QEF)". Under the IBG segment a total of Rs. 652,170,000.00 was allocated for 15 universities out of which Rs. 98,720,000.00 earmarked for development of student learning environments.¹² Although the improvement of residential, sports and canteen facilities were identified under this segment, the library development was overlooked. Funding came only through some components of projects, where enhancement of library facilities was identified in such projects by the proposal writers. At the termination of IRQUE Project, another project titled "Higher Education for the Twenty First Century - HETC" commenced under the World Bank funding. At the preliminary stage of awareness building among university academic staff and administrators, it was informed that there will be a Library Component, where project proposals submitted by university libraries will be

evaluated and selected projects would be funded. However, towards latter stages this aspect has been dropped.

In 2012, the HETC project Secretariat decided to allocate a sum of Rs. 135 million for the purchase of books and reading materials including subscriptions to e-journals. In this regard, untiring effort made by Prof. Ranjith Senaratne, the current Chairman/SCOLIS and Vice-Chairman, UGC and the generous consideration by the Project Director/HETC Project, Prof. L.L. Ratnayake who was coincidentally happen to be the Chairman/SCOLIS during the period June 2002 to January 2006 may have largely contributed for this rare occurrence of direct allocations of HETC funds to libraries. It is also to be noted here that at present, Prof. Senaratne, in his capacity as the Chairman / SCOLIS and Vice-Chairman / UGC is performing a pivotal role in forming a Consortium of University Libraries in Sri Lanka and to enter consortial subscriptions for selected full text journal and other databases to enable access by the entire university academic community in the country. It is also envisaged to extend this facility to research community in the country, at the second stage. At present, the major challenge is to obtain funding from the Government and if successful, it will be an historically significant milestone and far-reaching achievement for the SCOLIS.

Computerization of University Libraries

Computerization of university libraries was identified as the first important issue to be addressed, for the planned developments for the future. At the 4th meeting of IUCL held on 1st September 1987, it was decided to seek assistance of the British Council to obtain the services of an expert. On 16th September, 1988, Mr. Stephen Massil from University of London attended a special meeting chaired by the Chairman, UGC.

At the meeting, Mr. Massil has recommended the use of CDS/ISIS software with a common bibliographic format and to use a common type of machine. It was also decided to train both library staff and a member of the computer unit of each university for this purpose, it was recommended to extend the MSc training programme in Computer Science to train personnel necessary for this scheme, in consultation with the British Council.¹³ In January 1991, the UGC supplied each university library with a personal computer, printer and a UPS. These PCs were used with the CDS/ISIS bibliographic software developed and made available free of charge by the Unesco. Although there was an effort by the UGC and other stake holders, this approach did not yield any significant beginning to full automation of university libraries primarily due to inherent limitations in CDS/ISIS software and other logistical considerations.

Towards the development of ICT facilities and services in the university library sector, the UGC has taken steps to release funds on yearly basis for a number of years. However, since the university libraries in the country have individual approaches to the issue, different universities are in different stages of operation with diverse software/hardware platforms.

Dialogue between the Librarians and the Academic Staff

The issue of having a regular dialogue with the academic staff is of paramount importance in making the library a 'used facility.' One of the best formal forums where library matters could be discussed with the academic staff is the Faculty Board. Although the Librarian is an ex-officio member of the Senate, the opportunity of having a dialogue with all academic staff is not possible, due to limited participation at the Senate. In the university of Ceylon Act, No 1 of 1972, provision for the library representation was included as follows : Clause "26 (ii) the person in charge of the library of the faculty if any or the person in charge of the campus library". When this Act was repealed by the Universities Act. No. 16 of 1978, the wording changed, yet the provision remain untouched. The relevant clause No. 48 section (b) read as "the Librarian or his nominee". However, when the 1978 Act was amended by the Universities (Amendment) Act No. 7 of 1985, this provision was deleted from the appropriate section.

Librarians reported this matter at the IUCL and finally the request was placed before the UGC for a policy decision. However, the UGC declined to make room for the participation of the Librarian (or his nominee) at Faculty Boards observing that "the Commission decided to inform that it was not in favor of the Librarian serving as a member in all the Faculty Boards" .¹⁴ As per the 'Library review reports' published in the website of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of the UGC, only in six universities the Librarian or a Senior Asst. Librarian/Assistant Librarian invited for all faculty board meetings - interestingly, in all Medical Faculties the Assistant Librarian or Senior Asst. Librarian in charge of the Faculty libraries invited for the Board meetings. ¹⁵ The non-participation of a member from the library has deprived the academic staff of such universities the opportunity to have a creative dialogue with the Librarian or his representative.

The resistance from the academic administrators against the nomination of the university librarians at Faculty Boards, may be due to the fact that the Librarian will have voting right in selecting the Deans for each Faculty, thus assimilating some powerbase at the hands of the university Librarian. However, this notion could have been eliminated by making the Librarians' presence at Faculty Boards as an invited member.

Recognition of Library Professionals as an Academics on par with the Teaching Staff.

University legislation in Sri Lanka has its hereditary roots in Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and therefore library service was considered as an integral academic function within the higher education system. With the development of the university system to its present stature, it evolved through a series of legal enactments. The provisions made in respect of the recognition accorded to university library professionals varied with each of these enactments due to some unclear reasons. The recognition of parity status could be considered at different levels such as :

- Recognition of university library professional in a given university by the administration an academics of the same university

- Recognition accorded by the UGC and the Ministry of Higher Education
- Recognition accorded by external agencies such as the Government Treasury

Time to time, the notion of parity academic status accorded to university library professionals was contested by university administrators as well as government officials which included the senior administration of the UGC, Ministry of Higher Education and the Treasury. In one such occasion, when the academics were paid an academic allowance, the then Registrar of the University of Rajarata withheld the payment to library academic staff for a number of days, whereas at Kelaniya, and Colombo etc. it was paid along with the teaching staff. At this time, the non-recognition came from within the university administration itself.

The next most calamitous occasion created at the time of issuing permits to academic staff of universities and government officials to import vehicles under concessionary duty rates. At the first round, when the eligible library professionals applied for this facility, permits were denied with the clarification that “in terms of the Cabinet decision of 13.01.1993 and the Public Administration circular No. 24/93 only the Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, Associate Professors and Professors of the teaching staff (not the academic staff) of the universities are entitled to import vehicles on concessionary terms.” The University of Colombo Librarian, who submitted the first application from among her colleagues, was refused the granting of permission. However, with the necessary recommendations from appropriate authorities she was able to obtain the facility, while rest of the university library colleagues were deprived of the same, as the higher officials of the UGC were not of any help for subsequent applicants. This chaotic situation arose due to non-inclusion of the eligible official designations of the appropriate library professionals in submitting relevant information to higher authorities, which also may had been a deliberate omission. In response to the representations made by the University Librarians' Association on the 16th April, 1994 the Cabinet of Ministers, approved the inclusion of Librarian/Deputy Librarian/Senior Assistant Librarian as university teaches and for allow them to enjoy the concision to import motor vehicles under the Public Administration Circular No. 24/93.¹⁶ However, by the time this privilege was granted, the Government has suspended the facility for all, and therefore, the library community was deprived of getting the benefits. When this facility was given to state sector officials for the second time in 1998, again the same situation arose, due to non inclusion of the corresponding library staff designation in the Treasury Circular No. 866. This was reported at the 55th meeting of the IUCL held on 22nd March 1999, whereas the Chairperson of the IUCL undertook to inform the Chairman/UGC of this anomaly and to offer redress. Finally the issue was settled in favour of the library professionals.

The last two issues identified at the first meeting were the “activation of library committees” and “to negotiate with the Central Bank to obtain open licenses to import books”. However, the first issue is now settled to some degree and library committees are operational in all university libraries.¹⁷ In spite of the efforts made by the UGC to obtain the concurrence to import books under open license scheme, the Exchange Controller refused to grant permission for a a scheme.

Schemes of Recruitment for the Library Professionals

The nature of duties performed by the university library professionals and the teaching staff differs significantly and therefore qualifications stipulated in schemes of recruitment have to reflect this reality. However, the recruitments for the library professional staff were carried out following the same criteria stipulated for the selection of parallel positions in the teaching staff. The need to establish a suitable scheme of recruitment to suit the purpose, without lowering the levels maintained in teaching staff recruitment procedure was discussed at the IUCL from the 16th meeting held on 21st June 1990. After a number of attempts spanned over a period of almost two decades, the issue was settled with issuing of the UGC Circular no. 921 dated 23rd April 2010. However, there are still unresolved issues such as the lack of provisions for the promotion of Librarian to a position parallel to the rank of Senior Professor.

Annual Conference on University Librarianship

In order to be truly recognized as 'academics', library professionals are required to engage in quality research and to publish findings. However since the participation in international conferences become prohibitively expensive, the LIS professionals are automatically directed toward presenting the findings in local forums and to publish mostly in local journals. Until 1995, the only peer reviewed journals published in the LIS field was the "Sri Lanka Library Review" published by the Sri Lanka Library Association. In 1995, the "Journal of the University Librarians' Association of Sri Lanka" commenced publication while , the NILIS commenced its publication, "NILIS Journal" in 2005. All these publications have helped to publicize the findings of research and other scholarly communications to some extent. However, more than a journal, an annual conference will facilitate the sharing of experiences and building informal networks. In view of this situation, the organization of an annual LIS conference was proposed at the IUCL and the UGC has released some funding on a number of occasions when such conferences were held.

Provision of Adequate Staff

The university libraries are manned by staff who could be categorized into four groups: professionals, Para-professional, Library Support Staff and labourers. All Assistant Librarians', Senior Asst. Librarians, Deputy Librarian and Librarians belong to the group who are considered as academic staff. Para-professional staff includes all Library Assistants-Grade III up to from Senior Staff Assistants. Support staff includes Library Attendant, Book Binder and Library Vehicle Driver. Although the provision of adequate staff was discussed from the first meeting onwards, there is no evidence to suggest that the UGC has taken initiative to approve requisite cadre positions in all universities and to fill vacancies. However, as a direct result of the deliberations at IUCL, norms for university library staff was approved by the UGC.¹⁸

Implementation of the Quality Assurance Programme in University Libraries

The CVCD in association with the UGC formulated the procedure for quality assurance programme in higher educational institutions. As per the Handbook compiled, the program consisted of two segments: Institutional review and Subject review. Although there was a section titled “Learning infrastructure and student support” which dealt with the library provision, a comprehensive evaluation was not warranted.¹⁹ Sensing the need to have a separate reviewing programme for university libraries, the university librarians formally discussed the matter at SCOLIS level and informally with relevant authorities. As a result, several workshops were jointly organized by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of the UGC and SCOLIS and a comprehensive programme was developed. The first round of the reviewing process finalized with the review of the University of Visual and Performing Arts Library in June 2011.

Conclusion

As an integral element in a learner centered higher education system, university libraries are essential to achieve the aims and objectives of the whole system. However, the university library sector has not been able to obtain the due attention and assistance continuously. In view of this situation, the formation of the IUCL as a Standing Sub Committee of the UGC and its continuation as SCOLIS is a commendable effort to identify important issues and to recommend remedial measures. During the past, there are instances where the voice of this body was powerful enough to clear road blocks, while in some other instances it failed. Although the IUCL / SCOLIS has not been able to derive full results, one cannot deny that it was instrumental in making an impact on the UGC in relation to the development of the university library sector. A timely need to ensure a better future for university librarianship is a thorough review and reassessment by all stakeholders of our present environment and preparedness and to prepare an integrated road map for the future.

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