

# Strategic planning for the University Libraries in Sri Lanka

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## ABSTRACT

Strategic planning is an essential requirement for any organizational setting since it is closely linked to the organizational philosophy, policies, vision, mission, objectives, plans, programs, design and development. The principal purpose of the study was to investigate the barriers and difficulties faced by the University Libraries in Sri Lanka (ULSL) in strategic planning.

The objectives of the study were to identify what is strategic planning, to study different strategic planning models developed for the libraries, to formulate a strategic planning model for the ULSL, to study the state of art of few selected areas in the strategic planning in ULSL and to identify the barriers and difficulties faced by the ULSL in the strategic planning process.

The method used for this study was the descriptive research. Survey technique was used in order to collect data. The population of the study was the professional staff working in ULSL. Primary data was collected circulating two structured questionnaires among the Librarians and Senior Assistant Librarians (SALs) and Assistant Librarians (ALs) in ULSL.

Librarians pointed out that strategic planning is very much important and 70% of them agreed with this view. It is also observed that majority of university libraries have drafted their vision and mission statements respectively but they have not indicated the library objectives. 70% of university libraries apply both *short and long term planning*, while 20% apply *short-term planning*, and 10% apply *long-term planning*.

Librarians were asked to mention the barriers for *strategic planning* in ULSL. Six barriers were identified. The major barrier is the *lack of funds* which scored 50% i.e. the highest. *Lack of support from UGC* is the second major barrier (40%). Third major barrier is the *lack of trained manpower* (30%) It is evident that funding factor becomes a major barrier for strategic planning in university libraries, particularly in developing countries. Except for *lack of funds* and *lack of infrastructure facilities*, all other four barriers stated above are related to policy implications in university libraries. If sound policies are formulated and worked accordingly, the impact of those barriers could be minimized at a reasonable level. The higher education policy has a direct influence on university library policies. In the higher education policy, high level of place and priority should be given to university libraries. It is also envisaged that the library should be recognized as the key knowledge diffusion center in the university. Suggestion also is made for those university libraries to draft their objectives and missions accordingly. Further for evaluation purposes, objectives and mission of individual university libraries are a prerequisite. It is observed that the Standing Committee on Library and Information Services (SCOLIS) can perform a leading role to make endeavor a success.

**Keywords :** Strategic planning, University libraries, Planning, Human Resource Management, Library policies