

# Future Directions of the Sri Lanka Library Association

Looking back at the 62-year history of the Sri Lanka Library Association, the inconsistencies found in the Constitution and rules of our association have helped to strengthen the well-being of the association. Through that, the members of the Governing Council, who are appointed by their members for a two-year service period, not only explain the importance of adhering to the responsibilities assigned for the perpetuity of the association, but also the need to work hard to achieve the objectives of the association that have not been accomplished so far.

Officers elected for the Governing Council to achieve the objectives of the association at a sustainable level, one must make the utmost commitment. The continued existence and development of the association is expected by every member. The right implementation of the powers assigned to the Governing Council by its members in accordance with the Constitution and the set of rules and

regulations for the well-being of the association should be understood as a great responsibility that is burdened on all of us at this time.

It is a high challenge assigned to us to further maintain the level of professional development that the association has achieved so far. It is a special responsibility to maintain the recognition that the association has received internationally. In particular, we must maintain the existing relationships with organizations such as the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), the Council for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (CSDG) and the Commonwealth Library Association (COMLA). In addition to this, the cooperation with the local bodies such as National Library & Documentation Services Board (NLDSB), National Institute of Library and Information Science (NILIS), and the Organization of Professionals Associations (OPA) should not be forgotten.

In line with those associations' collaborations, it would be another special responsibility that we have to address in the future is to strengthen the training opportunity of our members in a professional manner. As a program to continue this cooperation, we have to guide our members to get membership in those associations.

Access to accurate data and information is a priority in determining the development goals of every country. Public libraries scattered all over Sri Lanka can be used as institutions for obtaining relevant information.

At present, the number of public libraries operating under Municipal Councils and Provincial Councils is nearly 1150. The information available in all these libraries can be collected locally and the information of the public library staff can be used simultaneously to achieve the development goals implemented by the respective local government area. Is it possible to get the

necessary information from libraries? Now is the time for monitoring by the relevant authorities. Trained librarians work in these libraries and it is with immense pleasure to recall that the Library Association has done an invincible service since 1960 in developing their further education activities.

We are living in an age where the traditional education system is breaking down and education is being transformed to modern technological needs. Integrating the relevant infrastructure in libraries and providing them to relevant parties is another challenge facing libraries today.

Providing related training is another challenging goal assigned to the Library Association. It is our belief that library and cognitive science studies will move forward along new paths by developing appropriate curricula. The Library Association also introduced a Diploma course and an Advanced Diploma course in the education process as an answer to those challenges.

Addressing the inaugural meeting of the Ceylon Library Association (now the Sri Lanka Library Association) in 1960, Harold V. Boney, a UNESCO consultant stated that in his statement as follows;

"...The establishment of Ceylon Library Association is a commendable benchmark in the history of Sri Lanka, and many challenges facing the library profession can be overcome after joining this association. Mr. Boni's statement is still valid today.

Achieving the future goals and aspirations of the Sri Lanka Library Association is entirely dependent on the dedication of its members. For that, I would like to specifically mention that young library professionals are expected to join hands to overcome these challenges, following in the footsteps of its senior members who are looking forward to the development of the Library Association.

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