

# **CDNLAO Sri Lanka - Country Report 2007 – 2008**

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## 1. General Overview in FY2007

The 2007 is a very effective and excellence year for the Library sector in Sri Lanka. The National Library and Documentation Centre (NLDC) was performed its duties as the focal point of the library system of the country. NLDC was able to provide a quality service to the public and the libraries of Sri Lanka amidst severe financial constraints to the Centre as well as for the Island.

- **Location and history of Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka is an Island situated in the Indian Ocean and is situated about 645 km north of the equator and is separated from India by the Gulf of Mannar as well as the Palk Strait. The total land area of the country is about 65610 square kilometers.

The population of the country is about 20 million. The majority of Sri Lankans are the Sinhalese and other communities are Tamils, Muslims and Burghers. Literacy rate of the country is 93%. It is a multilingual and a multi cultural country. The main religion of the country is Buddhism.

In the year 1505 for the first time the Portuguese invaded the island. The Dutch succeeded the Portuguese in 1658. The British invaded the country in 1796 and for the first time of its history, the whole country came under their rule in 1815. The British government ruled the country till it gets independency in 1948. During the colonial period, some important milestones have taken place in the library sector of the country (then Ceylon). The Portuguese introduced the use of paper to Ceylon. Before that, the islanders

used Palm leaves as traditional writing material. In the period of Dutch, they introduced the printing press to Ceylon in 1737.

In the British period they started subscription libraries in the some parts of the country.

In 1870, the Royal Oriental Library was set up. One of the main objectives of this library was collecting the documents written in Sinhala, Pali and Sanskrit languages, to one specific place for the use of future generations. This is a basic function of modern National Libraries as well. Therefore, the establishment of the Royal Oriental Library in Sri Lanka could be considered as the first step of the modern National Library of the Island.

Another important stride of history of the National Library of Sri Lanka was the establishment of the Museum Library in 1877. With the establishment of this library, the Royal Oriental Library also was amalgamated to the Museum Library and, was promoted as a Legal deposit library in Sri Lanka. Still the Museum Library acts as one of the Legal deposit libraries. Before the National Library came to existence the Museum Library of the Sri Lanka performed some duties of the present National Library and therefore it has acted as an unofficial National Library.

## **2. National Library**

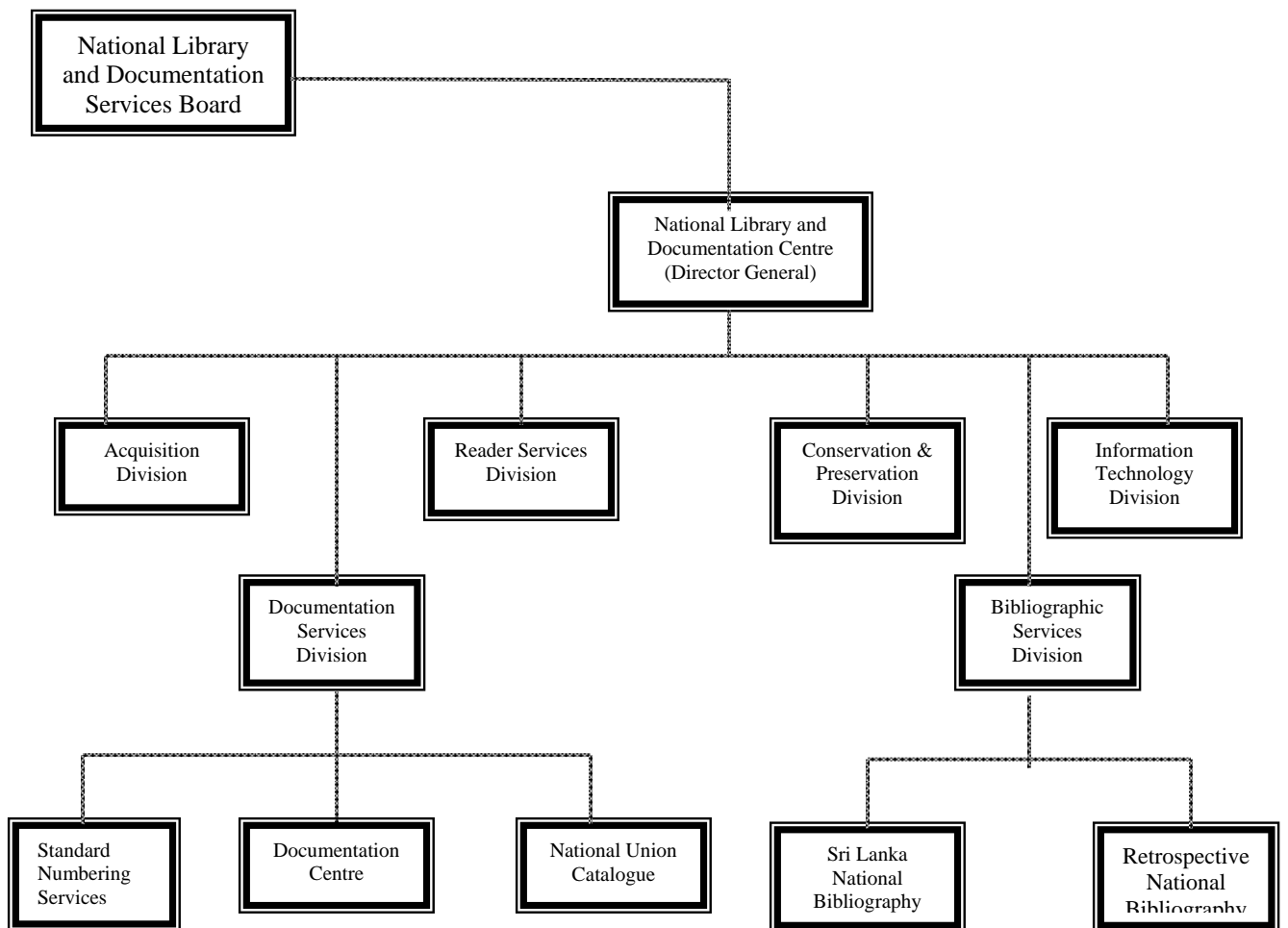
- **History of the National Library of Sri Lanka**

The idea of a National Library for Sri Lanka emerged in the 1950s. A number of prominent scholars and a number of Commission reports urged the contemporary governments to consider the establishment of a National

Library and from 1950-1970 very important dialogues took place in this regard and as a result of these attempts the National Library was inaugurated in 1990.

- **Organizational Structure**

### Organizational Chart of Sri Lanka National Library and Documentation Centre



## **Mission of the National Library and Documentation Centre(NLDC)**

- Plan and co-ordinate library services at national level
- Develop a Sri Lanka Information Resource Excellence Centre at the National Library and to co-ordinate and assist other major Sri Lankan collections in the country
- Assist and encourage the establishment of Information Resource Excellence Centres in specific fields and inter-link them through a national information network
- Facilitate access to national and international databases
- Provide learning opportunities to every Sri Lankan and thereby assist the advancement of Sri Lanka
- Assist Sri Lanka to become a culturally enriched and intellectually advanced nation

## **Employment**

Total number of employees of the NLDC is 150.

## **Library Users**

Membership is open to all readers in the society. There are two types of membership: short term (one day, week) and long terms (one year, 6 months, 3 months). Membership of the organization increased as follows in 2007.

Permanent Members	30
Membership for 3 months	544
Annual Membership	56
Daily Membership	5810

## **Collection**

The NLDC of Sri Lanka has the third largest library collection of the country. The largest collection of the country located in the National Museum Library because it was set up in 1877. The NLDC of the Sri Lanka is a newly established library in the country in 1990. Therefore, it has not any historical roots such as the NLs in Europe. Historical manuscripts and books of the country are stored in the Museum Library and the National Archives Department (NAD) and the National Library does not possess a leading collection from the historical point of view. The section of the acquisition is one of founding sections of the library.

During the year of 2007 the NLDC has acquired following categories to the collection

<b>Types</b>	<b>Number</b>
Books	1077
Microfilms	112
Dissertations	30
Rare books	129
Legal Deposit Publications	8190

## **Institutional Membership**

The NLDC renewed its institutional membership in following institutions.

1. Australian Library and Information Association
2. American Library Association
3. IFLA
4. National Geographic Society
5. DELNET

## **Digitization**

Still there are no proper infrastructure facilities for digitization. However in 2006 the NLDC was started digitization project on manual basis. During the year of 2007 it has digitized 45 books.

## **Services**

### **Reader Services**

The collection of the NLDC is especially intended for research and education and therefore this section can be considered as the heart of the NLDC. The large number of reader services provided by the NLDC as follows.

1. Reference Service
2. Internet & CD-ROM Services
3. Inquiry Service
4. Referral Service
5. Documentation Service
6. Inter-Library Loan Service
7. Database Searching
8. Photocopying Service
9. Current Awareness Service
10. Selective Dissemination of Information
11. Information Repackaging

All the materials are kept on closed access system and the main reference sources are kept on open access system. Readers can approach the collection through title, translator, editor, subject, and classification number. There are two types of catalogues, OPAC and card catalogue. OPAC facilities are open to users since 1993. At the beginning, the NLDC used CDS/ISIS software packages for automation purposes. Since 2000 the NLDC has been using the

Alice for Windows for all library activities. Since 1998 the National Library collection is available through the web site as well.

The NLDC has a good collection of CDs in various subject fields and it is connected to the Internet since 1998. There are three reading rooms with reading facilities for 320 readers in the NLDC. There is a reference desk in the ground floor to help reader's enquiry. During the year of 2007 the NLDC formed a Friends of National Libraries.

Internet services provided by the centre were used by 80 readers. Reference services provided to 275 readers. Due to the demand of readers the reader services section extended its opening hours in Tuesday and Thursday by 2 hours.

### **Seminars Workshops**

- Awareness programme on Unicode: Collaboration with the University of Moratuwa ,Sri Lanka
- WINISIS Workshop, Collaboration with Sri Lanka Library Association
- Programme on Information Literacy: Collaboration with Sri Lanka Library Association

## **3. Library at the National Level**

### **Role of the National Library and Documentation Centre at National Level**

The NLDC is the only governmental body in the field of Library & Information Science which has legal power of advising the government regarding issues in the sector. According to National Library and Documentation Services Board Act (NLDSBA 1998) one of functions of the NL is "to promote, advise and assist in ,the establishment, development and maintenance of ,library and documentation networks, including networks of



public, school, academic, government and other libraries and documentation centers serving all sections of the communities in Sri Lanka" (NLDSBA 1998). Therefore, the National Library has a major responsibility of development of all types of libraries in the country.

Library system of the Sri Lanka could be divided to 05 categories.

- (A) Academic Library
- (B) Public Library
- (C) Special Library
- (D) School Library
- (E) National Library

### **(A) Academic Libraries**

There are 15 university libraries in Sri Lanka which are autonomous bodies. All universities are governed by the University Grant Commission (UGC) of Sri Lanka which is a statue body of the government. The main funding source for university libraries is the government through the UGC. There is a special committee of University librarians set up in the UGC which is chaired by a Board member of the UGC. The Director General (DG) of the NLDC is a representative of the committee. According to the NLDSB Act, 1998 of the Sri Lanka the NLDC has a responsibility of providing advice and assistance to the development of the university library system of the country.

### **(B) Public Libraries**

There are about 1203 public libraries in the country. All libraries are governed by government and local government authorities. The NLDSB has direct power to control public libraries activities in the country. The National Library has the following advisory competences regarding public libraries.

- Recruitment of personnel
- Grading of libraries
- Library development plan,
- Training and education
- Reorganization of academic qualification
- Library standards and norms.

According to the NLDSB Act 1998 it has to provide guidance and assistance for development of every type of library in the country. In most occasions public libraries are asking advice from the NLDSB and the NLDC regarding some professional issues.

### **(C) School Libraries**

There are about 6000 School Libraries in the country. One of responsibilities of the NLDC is to develop and provides advice and guidance to School Libraries. There is a School Libraries development project in Sri Lanka with the help of the World Bank . The main aim of the project is the establishment of 2000 new School Libraries and the redevelopment of the existing 2000 School Libraries in the country. The NLDC has been acting as the coordinating and leading body of the project in Sri Lanka.

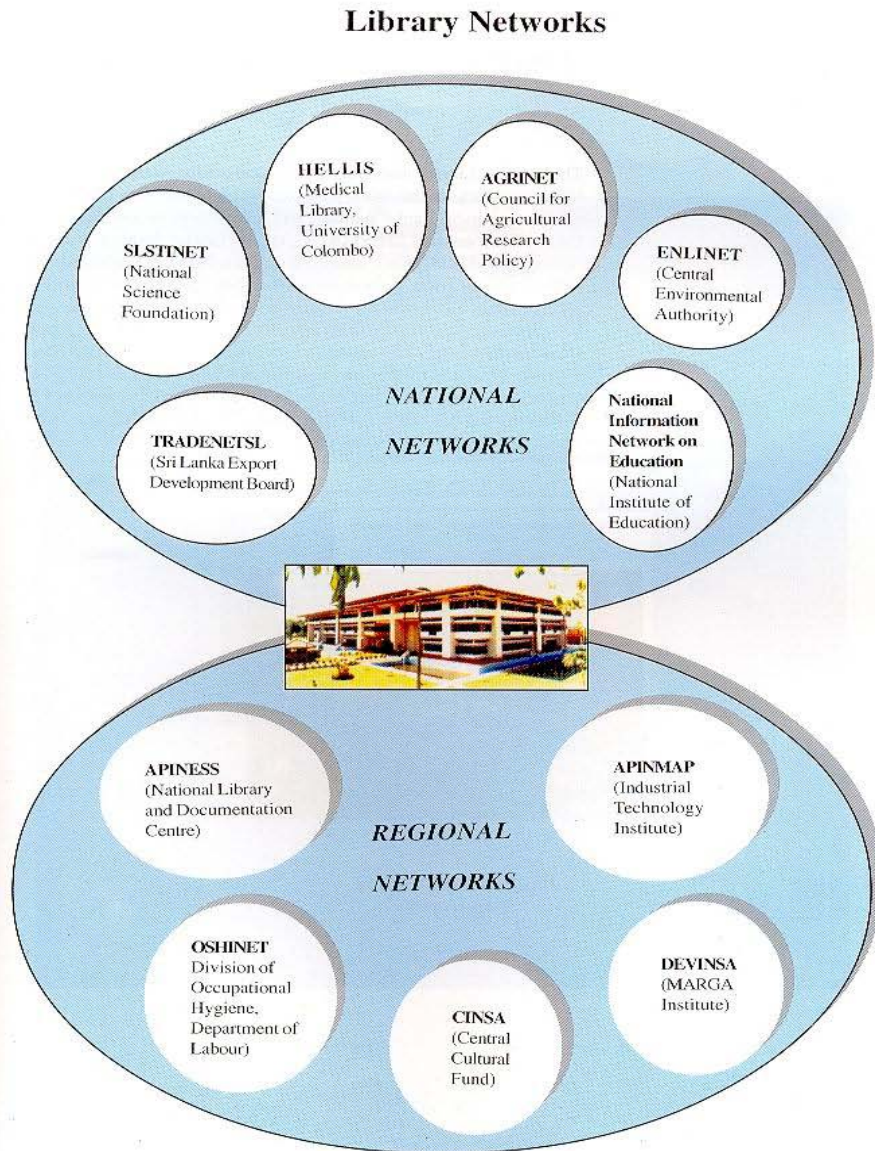
### **(D) Special Libraries**

There are few special libraries in the country related to the government as well as private institutions and organizations. These libraries represent information networks and the Union Catalogue project is carried out by the NLDC. Apart from this no any attempt has been made to develop relationship between the NLDC and special libraries.

## 4. Infrastructure

- Library Network

### National and Regional Networks leading by the NLDC



The NLDC maintains relationship with 08 library network in Sri Lanka.

**SLSTINET** - Sri Lanka Scientific and Technical Information Network

**HELLIS** - Health Science Library Literature and Information System

**AGRINET** - Agricultural Information Network

- ENLINET** - Environmental Library Network
- CINSA** - Cultural Information Network in South Asia
- APINMAP** - Asia Pacific Information Network on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants
- OSHINET** - Occupational Safety and Health Information Network
- APINESS** - Asia -Pacific Information Network in Social Sciences

### **Role of the National Library and Documentation Centre at International Level**

The NLDC is the only institution that represents various international forums in the subject. It has legal power to make international cooperation with external communities. The NLDC maintains a good relationship with international communities in the discipline.

The NLDC has collaborated with following associations and organizations

- CDNL -The Conference of Directors of National Libraries
- CDNLAO-Conference of Directors of National Libraries of Asia and Oceania
- APINESS - Asia-Pacific Information Network in Social Sciences
- IFLA - International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
- ISBN - International Standard Book Number
- ISMN- International Standard Music Number
- ISSN - International Standard Serial Number
- UNESCO

### **5. Preservation**

The conservation and preservation section is playing a leading role in the NLDC. This section was set up in 1982.

Functions of the section:

- 01 Conservation and preservation of the national library collection
- 02 Conservation activities of other libraries on national levels
- 03 Production of library stationeries on library standards
- 04 Organizing workshops and seminars for library personnel in the country.

Three types of centers are in the conservation unit of the NLDC.

- 01 Book binding centre
- 02 Preservation unit
- 03 Fumigation unit

This section of the NLDC provides advisory services to rest of the libraries of the country. It has established local centers in various places with the aim of preservation library materials on regional basis. Currently there are 126 local conservation centers in Sri Lanka. The NLDC gives manpower training and equipments donations to those centers to carry on preservation activities.

This section has a major responsibility regarding the reconstruction of the Tsunami devastated libraries in the country. Due to Tsunami waves more than 200 libraries were damaged in the coastal area of the country. Therefore, the conservation and preservation section has started a programme of conservation and preservation of damaged collections of libraries.

The project on rebuilding of Tsunami devastated libraries is still going on especially in southern and eastern provinces in Sri Lanka. This project is continuing with the help of UNESCO/IFAP/BAI. The public library of Hikkaduwa was built with the assistance of the London Library Association of UK.

## 6. Education and Training

- **Library Schools in Sri Lanka**

1. Department of Library and information Science ,University of Kelaniya
2. Sri Lanka Library Association
3. National Institute of Library and Information Science
4. Buddhist University,Anuradhapura

The NLDC could keep closer contact with these library schools in upgrading the contribution made by those institutions. The above organizations provide a formal education programmes in librarianship while the NLDC generally conducts programmes related to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of librarians. The NLDC conducts CPD programmes like distance level certificate courses, workshops, seminars and conferences, lectures and in house training programmes.

### **Conclusion**

The Nation and the Country need new dimensions in research for the development and well being as education, higher education and technical education in the country are rapidly changing. Knowledge has been considered as the change agent of the advancement of the new dimensions which required by the country. Within this context, contribution of Sri Lanka national library in the next two decades for harnessing the knowledge economy and library services is enormous.