



# NEWSLETTER

Quarterly Bulletin of the Sri Lanka Library Association

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<https://www.slla.lk/>

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## 1. SLA Education Programme

### 1.1 A Special Series of Lectures on Research Project

A special series of lectures on "Research Methodology" was held from 01<sup>st</sup> December 2024 to 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024 for the students of Higher Diploma in Library and Information Science II, (HDIPLIS II) in Sri Lanka Library Association via Google Meet. Dr. RD Ananda Tissa, Dr.(Mrs.) Champa Alahakoon, Ms. RM Nadeeka Rathnabahu, Ms. Hiruni Kanchana and Ms. Muditha Ankumbura shared their expertise as resource persons, and they undertook different titles of a research project intending to provide complete and comprehensive knowledge regarding research. This step, initiating a research project for the HDIPLIS II course, added extra value to the courses of the Sri Lanka Library Association of Sri Lanka. Dr. (Mrs.) CK Gamage, Education Officer (2024/25), coordinated and conducted this special series of lectures, which provided a potential platform for the students to commence and carry on their research projects.

## 2. The Information and Public Relations Committee

### 2.1 Sankathana Lecture Series 26 -Sustainable Food Production and Consumption

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8.30 P.M - 9.30 P.M

<https://www.slla.lk>  
<https://sdc.gov.lk>

The Information and Public Relations Committee of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) successfully organized the 26<sup>th</sup> lecture of the *Sankathana* series, focusing on "Sustainable Food Production and Consumption" (නිරසර ආහාර නිෂ්පාදනය සහ පරිභෝජනය). The event was held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 8:30 p.m., in collaboration with the Sustainable Development Board.

The keynote speaker was **Mr. Gemunu Saliya Perera**, a Public Health Inspector from the Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia Municipal Council. His insightful presentation emphasized the importance of adopting a healthy food lifestyle while promoting sustainability in food production and consumption practices.

The primary objective of the lecture was to raise awareness about maintaining a healthy diet and sustainable living practices, essential for personal well-being and environmental conservation.

The primary objective of the lecture was to raise awareness about maintaining a healthy diet and sustainable living practices, essential for personal well-being and environmental conservation.

The programme attracted an engaging audience of over **50 participants**, who joined the session via Google Meet. The lecture concluded with an interactive discussion, where participants had the opportunity to share ideas, clarify doubts, and explore ways to integrate sustainable practices into their daily lives. The success of this programme reflects the dedication of the SLLA and its commitment to addressing contemporary issues through informative and interactive sessions. The session was organized by Mrs. Priyadarshani Hemakumara, Convener of the Information & Public Relations Committee for 2024/25.

## 2.2 Sankathana Lecture Series 27 - U turn from Actress to Yogini



The Information and Public Relations Committee of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) organized the 27th Lecture of the Sankathana Series titled "U Turn from Actress to Yogini" (නිලියකගෙන් යෝගිනියකට ආ ගමන් මග) on 09<sup>th</sup> November, 2024, at 8:30 p.m. The session was conducted by veteran actress Kala Keerthi Ms. Anoja Weerasinghe.

In this programme, Ms. Weerasinghe shared her journey, beginning her career in acting as a teenager, and how she became one of the most accomplished and beloved stars on the island. After completing her education at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, she initiated monthly workshops for those interested in learning the performing arts. She also discussed her transition to becoming a yogini, emphasizing how yoga can change one's happiness, mindfulness, health, and thinking patterns. According to Ms. Weerasinghe, this practice lays the foundation for leading a happy life and overcoming obstacles in daily life.

More than 50 participants joined the programme via Google Meet, which concluded with a fruitful discussion. The session was organized by Mrs. Priyadarshani Hemakumara, Convener of the Information & Public Relations Committee for 2024/25.

### 3. Workshop on “Caring for Book and Paper Collections” conducted by SLLA

A one-day workshop on "Caring for Book and Paper Collections" was held on November 5<sup>th</sup> at the Auditorium of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA). The resource person for the workshop was Ms. Hiranthi Fernando, Curator and Conservator of the National Art Gallery.

The topics discussed during the workshop included agents of deterioration, the preventive conservation framework, examining and handling paper of different formats, collection storeroom planning, and storage of paper-based materials. Fourteen professionals from various fields participated in the workshop.

Participants appreciated the workshop, which was launched under the concept of Dr. Preethi Liyanage, President of the SLLA. They emphasized the importance of continuing such initiatives. The event was graced by Ms. Nadeeka Rathanabahu, Secretary of the SLLA, and Mr. Anton Nallathamby, Treasurer of the SLLA. Certificates were awarded to the participants by Mr. Sugath Gunathilaka, President-Elect of the SLLA.



## 4. Orientation programme for the SLLA Council Members 2024/2025



The orientation programme for the SLLA Council Members 2024/2025 was successfully held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at the SLLA Auditorium. The objectives of the session were to make aware of the members about the history of SLLA, the various services provided by the SLLA and more importantly what the SLLA expects from the conveners. The programme was conducted by the Immediate Past President Dr. R. D. Ananda Tissa. Ms. Shivanthi

Weerasinghe, a Council member of the SLLA and Treasure Mr. Anton Nallathamby share their experience with the participants, and it was a fruitful day for the participants as all the conveners and the office bearers were participated physically.

## 5. Libraries: Workshops, Training programme and Outreach activities

### 5.1 National Library and Documentation Services Board

#### Panel Discussion Announcement: Preservation Strategies for Library Materials in Tropical Climates

A panel discussion on "Preservation Strategies for Library Materials in Tropical Climates" was organized by the National Library and the Provincial Libraries Group on 8th November 2024, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. as an online programme.

**Pannel discussion on**

**PRESERVATION STRATEGIES FOR LIBRARY MATERIALS IN TROPICAL CLIMATES**

**08**  
November, 2024

Aiming to explore innovative strategies and practices for preserving library materials in challenging tropical climate

Via  Meeting ID: 890 6908 2912  
Passcode: 130608

**Keynote Speaker:**  
**Habil. Mag. Dr. Patricia Engel**  
University for Continuing Education Krems,  
Research Lab Sustainable Cultural Heritage.

**Panalists**

**Majidha Ali**  
Deputy Librarian  
National Library of Maldives

**Leni Sudiarti**  
Conservator - Librarian  
National Library of Indonesia

**Dr. Udaya Cabral**  
Deputy Director (Conservation)  
National Library of Sri Lanka

The National Library and Provincial Libraries Group of the Sri Lanka Library Association, in collaboration with The National Library of Sri Lanka, is pleased to invite you to join this insightful online panel discussion

Colombo, Sri Lanka	11.00 a.m.
Jakarta, Indonesia	9.30 a.m.
Vienna, Austria	7.30 a.m.
Male, Maldives	10.30 a.m.

 Scan me

In Sri Lanka's tropical climate, museum libraries and archival collections face unique challenges, particularly from pest infestations. Warm temperatures, high humidity, and abundant organic materials create an ideal environment for pests such as silverfish, cockroaches, beetles, and termites, all of which pose significant threats to delicate archival materials.

Resource persons from national libraries in tropical regions contributed their expertise. The National Library of Sri Lanka was represented by Dr. Udaya Cabral, Deputy Director (Conservation). Ms. Majidha Ali, Deputy Librarian, represented the National Library of the Maldives, while Ms. Leni Sudiarti, Conservator, represented the National Library of Indonesia. Dr. Patricia Engel from the Centre for the Protection of Cultural Property at the University of Krems, Austria, served as the keynote speaker.

The panel discussion was attended by around 70 participants, including representatives from other countries such as Vietnam, the United Kingdom, Canada, Pakistan, and India. The discussion concluded with a fruitful exchange of ideas, as participants learned about various strategies practiced by different countries with similar climatic conditions to combat pests in their libraries. The lessons shared provided valuable insights for improving preservation efforts.

## 5.2 School Libraries Group

**5.2.1 මීගමුව අධ්‍යාපන කලාප කාර්යාලය එක්ව සංවිධානය කළ පාසල් පුස්තකාල කාර්යය මණ්ඩලය දැනුමෙන් පෝෂණය කිරීමේ වැඩසටහන**



ශ්‍රී ලංකා පුස්තකාල සංගමයේ පාසල් පුස්තකාල කමිටුව සහ මීගමුව අධ්‍යාපන කලාප කාර්යාලය එක්ව සංවිධානය කළ පාසල් පුස්තකාල කාර්යය මණ්ඩලය දැනුමෙන් පෝෂණය කිරීමේ වැඩසටහනක්, ද මැසිනොද් විදුහලේ ශ්‍රව්‍ය දායක ඒකකයේ දී 2024. 10. 16 වන දින පෙ.ව. 8.00 සිට ප.ව. 4.15 දක්වා පැවැත්විණි.

මෙම වැඩසටහන සඳහා සම්පත් දායකත්වය ලබාදෙන ලද්දේ ජාතික අධ්‍යාපන ආයතනයේ අධ්‍යක්ෂක (පුස්තකාල හා කෞතුකාගාර) සරත් නන්ද කුමාර මහතා සහ කැලණිය විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ ජේෂ්ඨ කලීකාරවරයා (පුස්තකාල හා තොරතුරු විද්‍යාව) ආචාර්ය කේ. ආර්. එන් හර්ෂණී මහත්මිය විසිනි.

සරත් නන්ද කුමාර මහතා විසින් පාසල් පුස්තකාලය කළමනාකරණය හා සම්බන්ධව දේශනය කළ අතර, ආචාර්ය කේ. ආර්. එන් හර්ෂණී මහත්මිය විසින් ක්‍රියාකාරකම් පාදක පාසල් පුස්තකාල සේවා යන මාතෘකාව යටතේ දේශන සිදු කරන ලදී.

ශ්‍රී ලංකා පුස්තකාල සංගමය සහ එහි පාසල් පුස්තකාල කමිටුවෙන් සිදු කරන වැඩසටහන් පිළිබඳව 2024/2025 කමිටුවේ, පාසල් පුස්තකාල කැඳවුම්කරු වන ඩී. ආර්. වන්දිමා දිසානායක මහත්මිය විසින් කෙටි පැහැදිලි කිරීමක් සිදු කරන ලදී.

පුස්තකාල විෂය බාර නිලධාරී මහත්ම මහත්මීන් තිස් හතර දෙනෙකු සහභාගී වූ අතර, දේශන දෙක අවසානයේ සහභාගිවූවන්ගෙන් මෙන්ම පුස්තකාල විෂය බාර එම්. ඩබ්. ගයානී පෙරේරා නියෝජ්‍ය අධ්‍යාපන අධ්‍යක්ෂකුමියගෙන් ලද පැසසුම් අතිමහත් ය.

### 5.2.2 Empowering School Library Staff: A Successful Seminar on Modern Library Management

The School Library Group 2024/2025 of the Sri Lanka Library Association, in collaboration with the Galle Zonal Education Office, successfully conducted a seminar titled “*Empowering School Library Staff: Essential Skills for Modern Library Management*” on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The event was held at St. Aloysius’ College, Galle, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:15p.m., with 82 school library professionals actively participating.



The seminar featured two distinguished resource persons: Mr. H. Sarath Nanda Kumara, Director, Department of Library and Museum, National Institute of Education (NIE) and Dr. (Mrs.) K. R. N. Harshani, Senior Lecturer (Grade 1), Department of Library and Information Science, University of Kelaniya. Their sessions offered invaluable insights into the modernization of school libraries and practical strategies to overcome challenges.



### Key Topics Covered;

- **Efficient Inventory Survey Techniques for School Libraries**  
Practical methods for streamlining inventory processes were shared to ensure accuracy and efficiency.
- **Sustainable Disposal Practices for Outdated Library Materials**  
Eco-friendly and effective strategies for managing obsolete library materials were discussed, aligning with global sustainability goals.
- **Mastering Acquisition Registers and Essential Documentation**  
The importance of maintaining thorough and organized acquisition records to improve library operations was highlighted.
- **Innovative Activity-Based Services to Engage Library Users**  
Creative programmes designed to attract and engage library users, fostering a love for learning and reading, were explored.

### Fruitful Feedback from Participants

Participants praised the relevance of the topics and the expertise of the resource persons. Many expressed their gratitude for the practical focus of the sessions, which equipped them with strategies to implement in their own libraries.

One participant noted:

*"This seminar gave us the confidence and knowledge to transform our libraries into vibrant learning hubs for our students."*





During the event, Mrs. D. R. Chandima Dissanayake also provided a brief overview of an upcoming competition focused on *best practices in libraries*. This initiative aims to encourage innovation and excellence among school libraries, inspiring further development and creativity in library services.

Under the guidance of Mrs. D. R. Chandima Dissanayake, Convener of the School Library Group 2024/2025, the seminar successfully met its goal of empowering school library staff. With 82 attendees and the hard work of the organizing team, this initiative underscored the importance of continuous professional development and innovation in library services. The success of this seminar was significantly supported by the dedicated efforts of the School Library Group 2024/2025 members. The Sri Lanka Library Association – School Library Group 2024/2025 remains dedicated to organizing similar events in the future, fostering the sustainable growth and modernization of school libraries across the country.



## 5.3 Academic Libraries


### 5.3.1 Training Programmeme for Librarians of Sri Lankan Pirivenas

The training programme for librarians serving Sri Lankan Piriven institutions, focusing on “Library Management and Collection Development,” was successfully conducted on 07<sup>th</sup> November, 2024. Organized by the Academic Library Group of the Sri Lanka Library Association (2024/2025) in collaboration with the Library of Sri Lanka Bhiksu University, Anuradhapura, the event was held at the Auditorium of the Faculty of Languages and Cultural Studies, Sri Lanka Bhiksu University.

Esteemed resource persons for the programme included:


- Dr. RD Ananda Tissa, Acting Librarian, Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine.
- Dr. S.K. Illangarathne, Librarian, Sri Lanka Bhiksu University.
- Mr. Uditha Alahakoon, Senior Assistant Librarian, National Institute of Library and Information Science, University of Colombo.
- Ms. Sakuntala Senevirathne, Senior Assistant Librarian, University of Ruhuna.
- Ven. Demunnewe Upali, Lecturer, Sri Lanka Bhiksu University.
- Mr. Y.K. Tissa Bandara, Senior Assistant Librarian, Sri Lanka Bhiksu University.

The programme was attended 105 librarians from Piriven institutions, representing the districts of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Trincomalee, Vavuniya, and Mullaitivu. This initiative marks a significant step in enhancing the professional competencies of Piriven librarians and supporting the development of robust library systems across Sri Lanka.



## Workshop on Effective Library Management for Pirivena Libraries








(Districts of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Trincomalee, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu)



Date & Time : **07 November, 2024 @ 8.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.**

Venue : Auditorium, Faculty of Languages and Cultural Studies, Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka

### Resource Persons

Organized by

Academic Library Group 2024/2025, Sri Lanka Library Association & The Library, Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka  
in association with  
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology





### 5.3.2 Webinar on “Role of the Libraries for Social Developments”

**Sri Lanka Library Association**  
Academic Library Group  
Webinar Series - 01

**The Role of Libraries for Social Development**  
සමාජ සංවර්ධනය සඳහා පුස්තකාලවල කාර්යභාරය

2024 November 04  
8.00 pm - 9.30 pm

Meeting ID : 956 4517 4153  
Passcode : 45#!VIL%  
zoom

Resource Person  
**Dr. R.D. Ananda Tissa**  
Acting Librarian  
Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of  
Indigenous Medicine

Organised by  
Academic Library Group - 2024/2025  
Sri Lanka Library Association

The Academic Library Group of the Sri Lanka Library Association (2024/2025) launched its webinar series titled “Role of Libraries in Social Development” on 04<sup>th</sup> Monday, November 2024. The webinar, held via Zoom from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m., was designed to highlight libraries' pivotal role in fostering social development and discuss librarians' responsibilities in this context.

The session's resource person was Dr. R.D. Ananda Tissa, Acting Librarian at the Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine. Dr. Tissa provided valuable insights into how libraries contribute to social progress and outlined the multifaceted roles librarians play in facilitating community growth and knowledge dissemination.

Ms. Sakunthala Senevirathna, Convenor of the Academic Library Group, facilitated and moderated the session with commendable expertise.

The webinar attracted nearly 90 active participants, reflecting strong engagement and interest from the library and information science community. This session set the tone for the series, emphasizing the transformative impact of libraries on society.

### 5.3.3 Webinar on “MYTHS and TRUTHS about Library Services”

The Academic Library Group of the Sri Lanka Library Association (2024/2025) continued its webinar series with the second session titled “Myths and Truths About Library Services” on 13<sup>th</sup> Friday, December 2024. The session was conducted via Zoom from 8:00 p.m to 9:30 p.m. and aimed to debunk common misconceptions about library services while shedding light on their actual scope and contributions.



**Sri Lanka Library Association**  
Academic Library Group Webinar Series - 02

**MYTHS and TRUTHS  
about Library Services**

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මිඛාවන් හා සත්‍යයන්

**December 13, 2024**  
8:00 PM - 9:30 PM

Resource Person  
Ms. Dilhani Munasinghe  
Senior Assistant Librarian  
Postgraduate Institute of Medicine  
University of Colombo

Senior Lecturer (Sabbatical Leave)/ University of Kelaniya

Meeting ID : 96886659101  
Passcode : vW0Q.m#7

Organized by : Academic Library Group 2024/2025

The resource person for the webinar was Ms. Dilhani Munasinghe, Senior Assistant Librarian at the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo. Ms. Munasinghe provided an engaging and insightful discussion on the myths surrounding library services and highlighted their truths, focusing on how libraries adapt to meet the evolving needs of society.

The session was expertly moderated by Ms. Sakunthala Senevirathna, Convenor of the Academic Library Group, ensuring an interactive and fruitful discussion.

The webinar attracted nearly 60 active participants, demonstrating significant interest in addressing misconceptions and fostering a deeper understanding of library services. This session further enriched the webinar series by promoting awareness and advocating for the critical role of libraries in the modern era.

### 5.3.4 Library, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

#### 5.3.4.1 Human Library Project



**Human Library Project**  
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Registration

Resource Person  
**Prof. Sarath Wijesooriya**

**23rd Oct. 2024 | 10.00 am - 12.30 pm**  
At the Auditorium, Faculty of Geomatics - SUSL

Connect with Facebook live via

Human Library Project  
Main Library  
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

The 7<sup>th</sup> Human Library Event organized by the main library, SUSL was successfully held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 at 10. 00 a.m. at the Faculty of Geomatics, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Belihuloya with the talk of eminent retired professor, Sarath Wijesooriya from University of Colombo. The project concept, planning and development was by the Assistant Librarian, Ms. Thrishala Warnasooriya and the supervision and consultation by the librarian, Mrs. T. N. Neighsoorei and Senior Assistant Librarian, Mr. I. D. Kusala Fernando.

The readers representing the Vice-Chancellor, deans of faculties, librarian and library staff, directors of centres, administrative officers, non-academic staff and other delegates of the university could physically read this interesting autobiography. The online audience could read the human book via the official Facebook page of the library. The event recording is available on the official YouTube channel of the library, SUSL.



#### 5.3.4.2 Hands on training programme on "D-Space" for library staff, SUSL



Two-day hands on training programme was organized by the main library, SUSL for the entire library staff to enhance their existing knowledge and skills on D-Space on 09<sup>th</sup> November 2024 from 8.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. at the ICT laboratory of Center for Distance Learning, SUSL. Mr. I D Kusala Fernando, Senior Assistant Librarian was invited as the resource person for the entire programme.

#### 5.3.4.3 India Gallery

The "India Gallery," a special corner generously donated by the Indian High Commission, has been established in the Main Library of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (SUSL). This unique corner features a rich collection of Indian classics, paintings, and cultural ornaments and has been accessible to all library users at SUSL since October 2024. To mark its inauguration, Assistant High Commissioner, Her Excellency Dr. Athira S., and Vice-Chancellor Prof. M. Sunil Shantha visited the India Gallery on 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2024. During this occasion, they officially handed over this valuable addition to the librarian, Mrs. T. N. Neighsoorei.



### 5.3.5 Library, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

#### 5.3.5.1 Reading camp at the Widhyapradeepa School, Dunupethagama, Anuradhapura

The Rajarata University library system organized a reading camp for students of Grade 8 at Widhyapradeepa School, Dunupethagama, Anuradhapura, on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024, in commemoration of National Reading Month 2024. Conducted as part of a community outreach programme, the camp aimed to promote reading habits among students. Ms. W.P.T. Dilrukshi, Senior Assistant Librarian of the Faculty of Agriculture, and Ms. Hansamali Wickramasooriya, Assistant Librarian of the Main Library, served as resource persons for the event.



#### 5.3.5.2 Reading camp at the Anuradhapura Public Library

The Rajarata University library system conducted a reading camp for child patrons registered at the Anuradhapura Public Library on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024. This initiative aimed to foster a desire for reading among young readers. Ms. W.P.T. Dilrukshi, Senior Assistant Librarian of the Faculty of Agriculture, and Ms. Hansamali Wickramasooriya, Assistant Librarian of the Main Library, served as resource persons for the programme.



### 5.3.5.3 Practical lecture on effective and efficient internet browsing and educational information retrieval at the College of Technology, Anuradhapura



**ජාතික සාහිත්‍ය හා කියවීම් මාසය - 2024**

**“ලෝකය ජයගෙන ඇත්තේ කියවන මිනිසුන්ය.”**

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**2024-10-24 වන දින පෙ.ව. 09.00 සිට - 11.00 දක්වා විද්‍යාලීය පරිගණක විද්‍යාභාරයේ දී පැවැත්වේ.**

සම්පත්දායකත්වය - **W.P.T. දිලරුක්ෂි**  
ජ්‍යෙෂ්ඨ සහකාර පුස්තකාලසාධක  
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In celebration of National Reading Month 2024, a practical lecture on effective and efficient internet browsing and educational information retrieval was conducted on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at the College of Technology, Anuradhapura. The session was organized for the students of the college, with resource contributions provided by Ms. W.P.T. Dilrukshi, Senior Assistant Librarian of the Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

### 5.3.6 Library, Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo

#### Workshop on How to Use ClinicalKey Database and Mendeley Reference Management Software

The Library of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine (PGIM), University of Colombo, organized a workshop titled **"How to Use ClinicalKey Database and Mendeley Reference Management Software"** for members of the Board of Studies, trainers, and trainees of the PGIM. The workshop aimed to enhance the research and academic skills of PGIM trainers and trainees by introducing them to advanced tools for accessing reliable clinical information and managing research references efficiently. ClinicalKey, a clinical search engine, offers comprehensive access to evidence-based resources, while Mendeley, a reference management software, helps organize citations and supports collaborative research. The workshop was held on **20<sup>th</sup> November 2024** at the PGIM Academic Center. The resource person for the session was **Mr. Durga Marakala**, Customer Success Manager, Elsevier | Health Sciences, India, who shared valuable insights and conducted hands-on training sessions. The session chair was Dr. Sudath Dharmarathne, Senior Lecturer at PGIM.

A total of **134 participants** attended the workshop, actively engaging in discussions and practical exercises. The event was successfully coordinated by **Mrs. Chandima Wadasinghe**, Senior Assistant Librarian, and **Mrs. Dilhani Munasinghe**, Senior Assistant Librarian at PGIM.



## 6. Feature Article

### Developing ChatBot for Library Website using Dialogflow Console



**M N Ravikumar**

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#### Introduction

As libraries evolve with the digital age, integrating technology to enhance user experience has become imperative. One such innovation is the integrating a chatbot in the library website, which can assist users with queries, provide information, and guide them through library resources. The website of a library serves as an online platform for communication with its users. Also there has been a decrease in physical interaction between librarians and users, with patrons predominantly preferring to access the libraries online. It is crucial to ensure that the content on a library's website is easily discoverable in order to provide efficient access to library resources and showcase library services. Furthermore, the lack of sufficient staff in the libraries makes it increasingly challenging to dedicate time to addressing users' queries. Thus, integrating a chatbot into the library website offers 24/7 assistance to users, support users to navigate resources efficiently, enhance the user experience, and reduce staff workload by managing routine queries. This article explores the possibility of implementing a chatbot in the library's website using the Dialogflow console, an open powerful tool by Google for building conversational interfaces.

#### ChatBot

A chatbot, which is a type of artificial intelligence tool based on natural language processing (NLP) which generates responses to inquiries and interact with humans through text format. (Barus & Surijati, 2022). The advantages of chatbots are already evident in the business world, where they enhance customer service, improve the customer experience, and reduce operational costs. Similarly, libraries can use chatbots to provide fast and easy access to resources, respond to research inquiries, and offer reference assistance to users (Lappalainen & Narayanan, 2023; Allison, 2012).

#### Dialogflow Console

There are numerous tools available for chatbot development today, with one of the most popular being Dialogflow, created by Google (Barus & Surijati, 2022). Dialogflow is a powerful cloud-based tool for building conversational interfaces, capable of understanding and responding to user inputs in a natural language (<https://dialogflow.cloud.google.com>). It can be integrated with various platforms, including websites, mobile apps, and messaging services. Dialogflow provides robust features for intent recognition, context management, and integration with other Google services (Google, 2022).



## Developing Library User Guide Bot

Before utilizing Dialogflow, it is crucial to plan the chatbot conversation by setting up key elements such as agents, intents, entities, contexts, events, fulfillment, and integration.

### Creating an Agent:

To get started with Dialogflow, a Google account is required. Then, agent could be created by providing a name (e.g., LibraryGuideBot), selecting the default language, and setting the time zone. Agent is a natural language understanding module that could be trained to understand human language to make conversations more natural (Fig. 1).

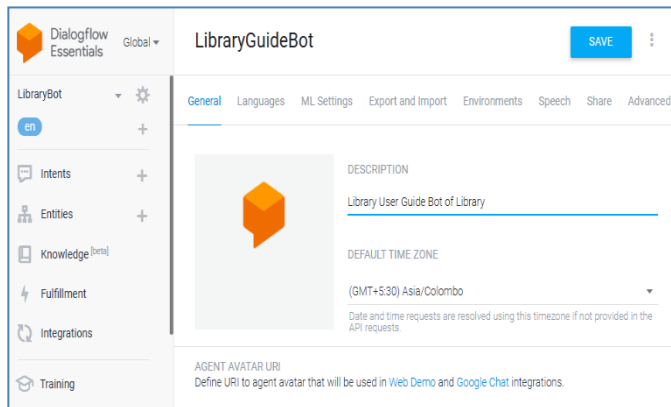


Fig.1: Agent in Dialogflow console

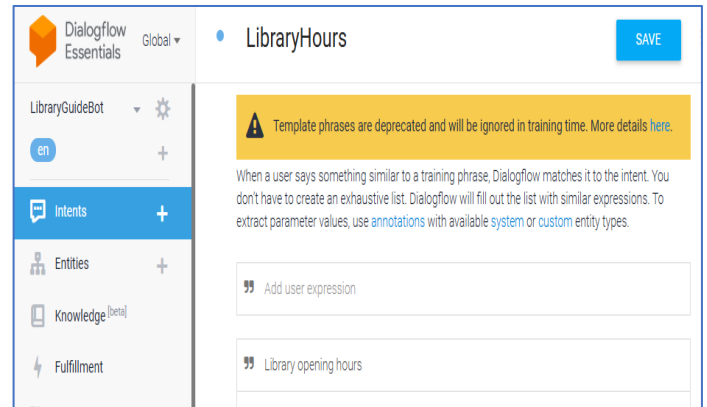


Fig.2: Intent in Dialogflow console

### Designing Intents:

Intents are the core components in Dialogflow that define how the bot should respond to user inputs. The agent will match user questions with intentions if they enter data and it will reply correctly. If a query does not match the purpose, the agent will use the fallback intent to answer (Fig.2). List down the common questions users might have, such as "What are the library hours?" and define responses (e.g., "The library is open from 9 a.m to 8 p.m. on weekdays.....").

### Adding Entities:

Entities help in extracting specific information from user inputs. For example, if users ask for book recommendations by genre, "genre" would be an entity.

### Creating Knowledge Bases for Enhanced Library Services:

In addition to entities Dialogflow console have the option to create knowledge base using existing data such as Library catalog (books, e-books, journals), FAQ from the library's website and user guides. Structured knowledge base in a CSV, Google Sheet, or document format (PDF) with question-answer pairs or well-defined entries could be uploaded to process as knowledge source.

### Context Management:

Contexts help to maintain the flow of conversation by remembering the context of a user query. In the intents, define input contexts to trigger the intent only when specific conditions are met and set output contexts to keep track of conversation progress. Eg: If user type "Library opening hours", then, agent will match the response with the intent "Library Hours" and give the answer.

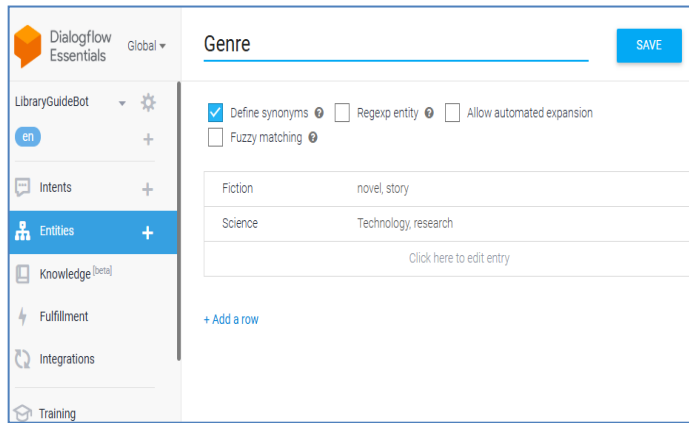


Fig.3: Entities in Dialogflow console

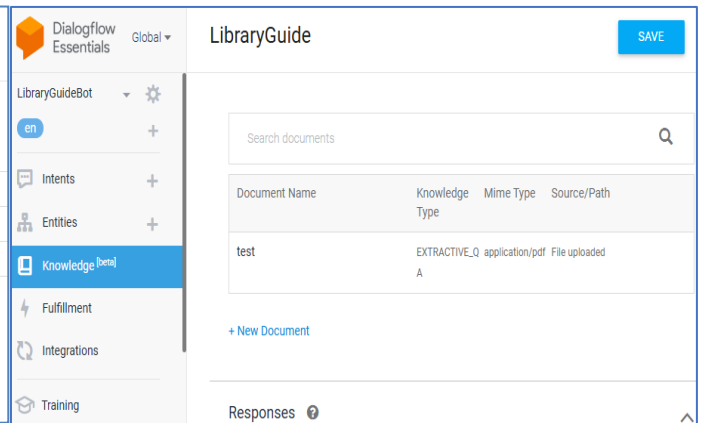


Fig.4: Knowledge in Dialogflow console

### Testing and Training:

After conversation flow is compiled, the bot could be tested to ensure its structured conversations using “Web Demo” available on the integration section in the Dialogflow console. The web demo will serve as a simulator or platform for user testing, allowing interaction with developed user guide bot. At the same time review the conversation logs in Dialogflow could be used to add new training phrases and adjusting responses as needed will improve accuracy of bot.

### Integrating the User Guide Bot with Library Website

Enabling the 'Web Demo' in the Integration section of the Dialogflow console generates a code snippet to embed the widget for the built User Guide Bot. This code may be inserted into the library website where the chat widget is to be displayed. The performance of the User Guide Bot can be assessed by the routine examination of analytics in Dialogflow. The bot can be updated with current information by adding new intents as necessary.

### Conclusion

Implementing a Library User Guide Bot on the library's website significantly enhance the user experience. The bot facilitates fast access to information through immediate support and efficient resource navigation. Employing Dialogflow console features, libraries may provide a contemporary, user-centric interface that satisfies the demands of today's digitally literate consumers. The use of phrases that can encompass diverse versions provided by users in the Intents will enhance the precision of chatbot responses. Consistent maintenance and evaluation of User Guide Bot intents is crucial for its success.

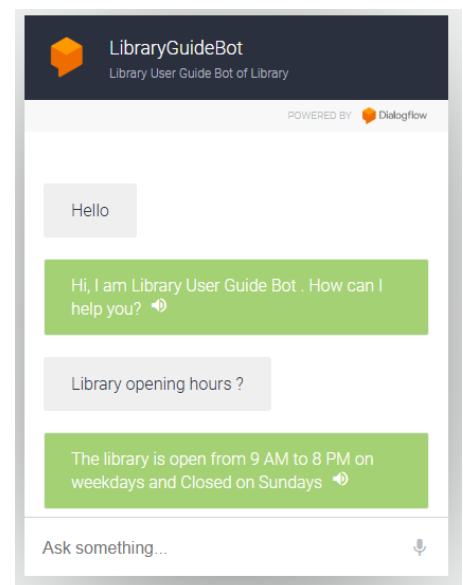


Fig. 5: Library Guide Bot built using Dialogflow console

**References:**

Allison, D. (2012). Chatbots in the library: Is it time? *Library Hi Tech*, 30(1), 95–107. <https://doi.org/10.1108/07378831211213238>

Barus, S. P., & Surijati, E. (2022). Chatbot with Dialogflow for FAQ Services in Matana University Library. *International Journal of Informatics and Computation*, 3(2), 62. <https://doi.org/10.35842/ijicom.v3i2.43>

Google. (2022). *Dialogflow Documentation | Google Cloud*. <https://cloud.google.com/dialogflow/docs>

Lappalainen, Y., & Narayanan, N. (2023). Aisha: A Custom AI Library Chatbot Using the ChatGPT API. *Journal of Web Librarianship*, 17(3), 37–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19322909.2023.2221477>

## 7. Library in Focus: Introduction of a Library

### University of Vocational Technology and UoVT Library

With the vision to be the leading university providing technical and vocational education for all with aspirations to achieve professional excellence, the University of Vocational Technology (UoVT) was established under Act Number 31 of 2008.

UOVT has the same legal and academic status as any other national university in Sri Lanka. The degrees awarded by the UOVT are treated as equivalent to degrees awarded by any other university under the purview of the University Grants Commission and the universities listed in the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

The mission of the UOVT is to provide services in human resources, curriculum, learning resource development, research, and consultancy, to achieve professional excellence with ethical rectitude, and to liaise with the global Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, the academic community, and industry.

The general objective of the UoVT is to provide progressive upward movement to the students in the technical education and vocational training system, based on their aptitudes and abilities, to acquire a university education.

The specific objectives of the UoVT are:

- To provide pedagogical training up to degree level for trainers serving in the technical and vocational education sector and industry.
- To provide courses of study for middle-level technical personnel with qualifications acceptable for admission to UOVT up to degree level.
- To provide courses of study for those with National Vocational Qualifications to upgrade their competencies and acquire degree-level qualifications.
- To provide extension courses on continuous professional development.

### UoVT Library

The UoVT Library is an academic library that serves tertiary education. It is one of the most comprehensive technical libraries in Sri Lanka. Providing access to over 25000 volumes and some journals, it functions as the primary information source for students, staff, professionals, and faculties of the institute. With the view to providing an ever-improving service, the knowledge base as well as the access and facilities of the library are continually enriched.

The library is easily accessible, and study areas, facilities, and information services are designed to create a reader-friendly atmosphere. Knowledgeable library staff members are available to assist readers, whether they are looking for in-depth database research or simply a book or any other reference needs.

Among the various types of libraries, such as public libraries and school libraries, the UoVT library falls into the category of technical academic library. As a specialized library, it serves a well-defined part of education, namely technical education under the Ministry of Education, Higher Education, and Vocational Education.

The mission of the library is to support the provision of the services of a knowledge organization needed for effective teaching, study, and research in vocational and technical education and allied subjects at the graduate level while extending reader services to the professional and industry community.

### Members of the Library

- Full-Time Students
- Part-Time Students
- Academic Staff Members
- Non-Academic Staff
- Members



### Collections of the Library

- Reference collection
- Lending collection
- Curriculum collection
- ILO Journal collection
- Encyclopedia Collection
- Dictionaries Collection
- Paper cutting collection
- Past Examination papers collection
- Students Project Reports Collection

### Services of the Library

#### Lending service

The UoVT offers a library lending service for registered members. (Staff/Students/Visiting Staff). Those members of the UoVT library can borrow books or items based on their user category. A large number of books and reference materials are available for lending purposes.

#### Reference Service

The library is offering a special reference service for the members as well as any other people who are coming from outside. The reference section is available for this purpose in the library. Reference materials, thesis collection, curriculum collection, and special encyclopedia collection are also

available in the library. The library staff helps readers with assistance or instruction with using the library, including locating materials, using the library catalog, using the KOHA system to access information, and using basic reference sources.

- Assistance identifying library materials needed to answer a question.
- Providing brief, factual answers to questions, such as addresses, statistics, phone numbers, etc. that can be quickly located.

### Photocopying Service

The library has a separate photocopying section for photocopying the necessary parts of some rare books that cannot be taken out of the library and also for obtaining photocopies for other needs of the students.

### Electronic Library

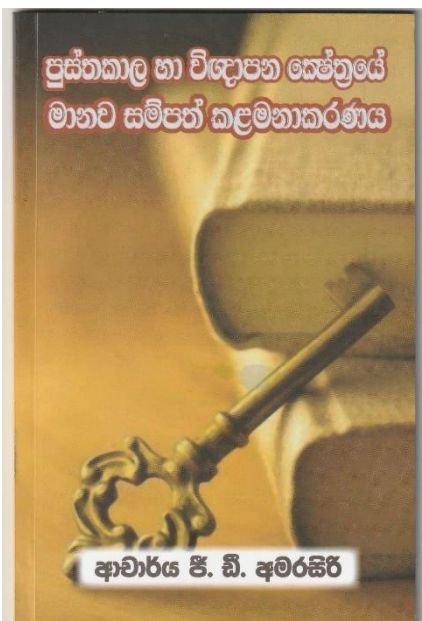
The KOHA System is established in the library for all kinds of library management services, and a computer laboratory has been established in the library premises for the use of students, it has been made possible to get internet facilities as well as computer facilities for other study opportunities, and it is possible to get this service during office hours on weekdays.

### Library service on weekends and after office hours

The library will be open from 8 am to 4 pm on weekends for students participating in weekend courses. Also, arrangements have been made to keep the library open till 7 pm on weekdays.

## 8. Publications, Awards and Achievements

### 8.1 Publications



A new book on human resource management in library and information field compiled by Dr GD Amarsari former director NLDSB has been published as a Godage publication. This book contains information mainly on areas like introduction to human resource management, selection and recruitment of staff for libraries, library staff development, importance of communication in human resource management, contribution of library field in distance education, continued professional development for Library professionals ethics for the lies professionals, LIS education, knowledge management and organizational culture and public relation. This book is specially useful for LIS professionals and LIS students.

## 8.2 Paper Presentations

### 8.2.1 Paper presentations at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Multidisciplinary Desk Research Conference (DRC 2024)

Mr. I. D. Kusala Fernando, Senior Assistant Librarian with the co-authors Ms. Thrishala Warnasooriya, Assistant Librarian, SUSL and Mr. M.A. Kasun Munasinghe, Assistant Librarian, UOK presented a research paper on “Social media in collaborative learning: a systematic literature review” at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Multidisciplinary Desk Research Conference (DRC 2024) organized by the library, UOK, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024. This research paper was selected for the Journal of Desk Research Review and Analysis.

### 8.2.2 Paper presentations at the International Postgraduate Research Conference (IPRC 2024)

Ms. Thrishala Warnasooriya, Assistant Librarian, SUSL, with the co-authors Mr. I. D. Kusala Fernando, Senior Assistant Librarian, SUSL, and Mr. Kasun Munasinghe, Assistant Librarian, UOK presented a research paper on “Bedtime reading for sleep quality among university academics: A case study in Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka using global PSQI” at International Postgraduate Research Conference (IPRC) - 2024 organized by the Faculty of Graduate Studies, UOK, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

## 9. Outreach Activities

### 9.1 Three-Day Training Workshop for Public Librarians

The Management Development and Training Institute (MDTI) of the Southern Province successfully organized a three-day training workshop for public librarians representing the Galle, Matara, and Hambantota districts. The workshop was held from 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024, at the MDTI premises in Galle.



The resource persons for this event included Dr. R.D. Ananda Tissa, Acting Librarian at Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine; Ms. Sakunthala Senevirathna, Senior Assistant Librarian at the University of Ruhuna; and Dr. Udaya Cabral, Assistant Director at the National Library of Sri Lanka. Their sessions covered a range of essential topics, including the responsibilities of public librarians in enhancing library service quality, collection development and management in public libraries, as well as the conservation and preservation of library materials.

Approximately 80 public librarians participated in this workshop, which was described as a highly productive and impactful programme. The feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, reflecting the practical relevance and effectiveness of the training sessions. This initiative was instrumental in promoting professional growth and improving the overall standards of public library services in the Southern Province.

## 9.2 Special lecture on “ The Role of reading in shaping futures in an In an inter-connected world”

There was a special lecture conducted on “ The Role of reading in shaping futures in an In an inter-connected world” on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at the at the Bandaranayake Centre for International Studies Olympus Auditorium to Commemorate the National Reading Month. Dr Madhubhashini Disanayake Ratnayake, senior lecture of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura delivered the keynote address and the guest address was done by Dr Preethi Liyanage, the President of Sri Lanka Library Association.

Around 200 participated in this programme including students from Colombo Districts, teachers and library professionals. This programme was organized by the library staff of the Bandaranayake Bandaranayake Centre for International Studies library under the guidance of Ms Chamila Gamage, Assistant Librarian.





### 9.3 Special lecture on “Different between Western and Eastern Theatrical Singing”



The Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, High Commission of India, Colombo, in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Library Association, presented a lecture-cum-demo on "The Difference between Western and Eastern Theatrical Singing." The event took place at the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre Auditorium on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

The session was conducted by Mr. Kithsirimevan Jayasena, an artist, dramatist, music composer, and painter. The distinguished gathering included Mr. Sujeewa Lal Dahanayaka (President of OPA), Mr. Thisara de Silva (Secretary of OPA), Mrs. Renuka Ekanayaka (Director of SAARC Cultural Centre), Prof. Prashanthi Narangoda (Director, National Center for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences), Mr. W. Sunil (DG, NLSBSL), Ms. Shivanthi Weerasinghe (PP, SLLA), Mr. Uditha Alahakoon, Ms. Nadeeka Rathanabahu (GS, SLLA), Mr. Sugath Gunathilaka (PE, SLLA), Mr. Anton Nallathamby (Treasurer, SLLA), along with veteran actors, journalists, and library professionals.

### 9.4 "සිරි විජය සිරි කළණ මිතුරු පොත් සුමිතුරු" නම් වූ කියවීමේ ප්‍රවර්ධන කඳවුර"

ශ්‍රී ලාංකේය සමාජය තුළ මුද්‍රිත මාධ්‍ය හා කියවීම කෙරෙහි ඇති උනන්දුව අඩුවීම, විශේෂයෙන්ම ළමා සාක්ෂරතාව කෙරෙහි එහි අහිතකර බලපෑම් හඳුනා ගනිමින්, සහන පදනමේ අධ්‍යාපන හා පුස්තකාල අනුකම්ඵවට කියවීමේ කඳවුරක් යෝජනා කරන ලදී. මෙම යෝජනාව පිළිගනු ලැබූ අතර, ඔක්තෝබර් 6 වන දින ලෝක ළමා දින සැමරුම් උත්සවයේ කොටසක් ලෙස කඳවුර සංවිධානය කරන ලදී. “සිරි විජය සිරි කළණ මිතුරු පොත් සුමිතුරු” නම් වූ කියවීමේ ප්‍රවර්ධන කඳවුර සඳහා ළමුන් 86 දෙනෙකු සහභාගී විය. මෙම කඳවුර සැලසුම් කර සම්බන්ධීකරණය කරන ලද්දේ, ලයනල් ආර්. අමරකෝන්, MIM (Merit) UoC, MSLITAD, FLA (SL), Dip in HRD (First Class), මහතා විසින් තෝරාගත් සම්පත් දායකයින් හත් දෙනෙකු විසිනි. මෙම කියවීමේ ප්‍රවර්ධන කඳවුරෙහි මූලික පරමාර්ථය වූයේ දරුවන්ගේ කියවීමට ඇති උනන්දුව නැවත පණ ගැන්වීමෙන් ඔවුන්ගේ සාක්ෂරතාවයේ ඉහළ නගා සිටුවීමට පිළියම් යෙදීමයි. ආකර්ශනීය ක්‍රියාකාරකම් සහ අන්තර්ක්‍රියාකාරී සැසි හරහා, පොත් සඳහා ඇල්මක් ඇති කිරීම සහ සාක්ෂරතා කුසලතා වැඩි දියුණු කිරීම අරමුණු කර ගනිමින් ව්‍යාපෘතිය සාර්ථකව නිම කෙරිණි. මෙම මූලපිරීම සහන පදනමේ අධ්‍යාපන හා පුස්තකාලය සහ ඔවුන්ගේ පාසල් පුස්තකාල භාවිතය වැඩි කිරීමට හේතු වන අතර අවසානයේ ඔවුන්ගේ කියවීමේ පුරුදු සහ සාක්ෂරතා මට්ටම ඉහළ නැංවීමට හේතු වනු ඇත. ළමයින්ගේ සාක්ෂරතාවය සහ කියවීමට ඇති කැමැත්ත අඛණ්ඩව පෝෂණය කිරීම සඳහා නීතිපතා කියවීමේ කඳවුරු, පොත් ප්‍රදර්ශන සහ අන්තර්ක්‍රියාකාරී කථා කීමේ සැසි මේවාට ඇතුළත් වේ. ළමුන් තුළ කියවීමේ පුරුද්දක් ඇති කිරීමට දරන මෙම උත්සාහයන් ඔවුන්ගේ සමස්ත අධ්‍යාපනික සංවර්ධනයට සහ සාර්ථකත්වයට දායක වේ. එමෙන් ම ඔවුන්ගේ අනාගතය සඳහා සැලකිය යුතු ආයෝජනයක් ද සිදු වන බව “සිරි විජය සිරි කළණ මිතුරු පොත් සුමිතුරු” වැනි කියවීමේ ප්‍රවර්ධන කඳවුර වැනි කියවීමේ ව්‍යාපෘති පැවැත්වීම තුළින් තහවුරු වන බව විශ්වාස කරමු.



## 10. In Memory of late



It is with profound sadness we inform you of the Passing away of the former Librarian of the Department of Irrigation Ms. Susila Nanayakkara. She was the 92<sup>nd</sup> Member of the SLLA. **May she attain the supreme bliss of Nibbana**

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