NEWSLETTER

Content

01   SLLA Education Programme

The Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) successfully comenced two key academic programmes for the year 2025, marking significant progress in its ongoing commitment to professional development in the field of Library and Information Science. The inaugural session of the Diploma in Library and Information Science (DLIS) – Distance Mode Programme was held on 23rd August 2025, while the Higher Diploma in Library and Information Science (HDIPLIS) Course commenced on 20th September 2025 at the SLLA.

Both inaugural sessions were graced by President Mr. Sugath Gunathilaka, together with Secretary Ms. Vishaka Narmada, Education Officer Mrs. W.A.J.K. Ratnasekera, Treasurer Mr. Anton Nallthambi, and other distinguished Council members.

The HDIPLIS programme will be delivered in hybrid mode, with online classes as the primary mode of instruction. In addition, participants will attend a face-to-face session during the

third week of every month, fostering enhanced interaction and engagement. These two inaugurations reflect the SLLA's continuous efforts to expand educational opportunities, uphold academic excellence, and support the professional growth of library and information science practitioners across the country.

New Office Bearers of the SLLA 2025/2026   02

The following members were elected in the last AGM held on 27th June 2025 and appointed as the Council Members and Executive Committee members for the year 2025/2026 of the SLLA.

Council Office Bearers

President : Mr. K.G.S. Gunathilake
Immediate Past President : Dr. Preethi Liyanage
President-Elect : Dr. R. Maheswaran
General Secretary : Ms. K.A. Vishaka Narmada
Vice President : Ms. Givon Yanika Nandasena
Treasurer : Mr. Anton Nallathamby
Education Officer : Ms. W.A.J. Kaushalya Rathnasekara
Assistant General Secretary : Ms. Ashani De Alwis
Assistant Education Officer: Mr. Dhaminda Manamperi
Publication Officer : Ms. Sakunthala Senevirathna
Information & Public Relations Officer : Ms. Buddhika Liyanaarachchi

Nominated Council Members

Ms. Shivanthi Weerasinghe
Dr. R.D. Ananda Tissa

Professional Group Conveners

Academic Libraries: Ms. Manjula Rajapaksha
Public Libraries: Ms. Kalpani Maharage
School Libraries: Ms. D.R. Ganga Damayanthi
Government Libraries: Ms. S.M.M.M. Subasinghe
Special Libraries: Ms. Manoha Wickramathilaka
National and Provincial Libraries: Ms. P. Niroshani Herath
IT Convener: Mr. M.A.M. Fahri

Committee Conveners

National Conference on Library and Information Science (NCLIS):
Ms. Thushara Wanasinghe
Committee on Monitoring and Assigning in Implementation of Strategy Plan (COMAISP):
Mr. Sunil Premarathne

Nominated Executive Committee Members

Ms. Varuni Ganagabadaarachchi
Mr. M.N. Ravikumar

03 Libraries, Departments, Institutions: Workshops, Training programmes, and Outreach activities

3.1 Government Library Group

One-day workshop on Application of Artificial Intelligence in Library Service Execution

To empower library professionals to meet the ever-growing demands of information technology in their daily service delivery, a one-day workshop on "Application of Artificial Intelligence in Library Service Execution" was successfully conducted at the auditorium of Lady Ridgeway Children's Hospital, Colombo, on 23rd September 2025. This was organized by the government librarians' group of the SLLA, led by Ms. Menaka Subasinghe, the convener of the group.

The resource person was Professor Ruwan Gamage, from the National Institute of Library and Information Sciences, University of Colombo. His insights provided valuable perspectives, and the positive outcome was clearly reflected by the active participation of library professionals from all corners of the country.

The success of this initiative was further strengthened by the unwavering support of the Hon. President of the Sri Lanka Library Association, Mr. Sugath Gunathilake, General Secretary Ms. Vishaka Narmada, Vice President Ms. Givon Yanika, group members including Ms. Menaka Subasinghe, Mr. Prasad Welikannage, Ms. Lakmini Priyadarshani, Ms. Buddhi Maheka, Mr. Rajitha Kumarasinghe, and the committed staff of the Association.

Through this event, the SLLA ignited the transformation of user-centered library services, setting new benchmarks with artificial intelligence.

3.2 Special Library Group

A Workshop on OpenBiblio :
A Library Automation Software

The Special Library Group of the Sri Lanka Library Association successfully conducted a workshop on OpenBiblio (OB) Library Automation Software on 22nd & 23rd August 2025 at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS). the resource person was Mr. M.A.M. Fahri, the Librarian at Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies. A total of 21 participants attended and gained hands-on experience with the Open Biblio software. All participants received valuable certificates and enriched their practical knowledge in library automation.

3.3 Sri Lanka Library Association

One-Day Training Program for Newly Elected Council Members

The Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) successfully conducted a One-Day TrainingProgram for its newly elected Council Members on 2nd August 2025 at the Auditorium of the Colombo Public Library. The main objective of the training was to provide guidance, share experiences, and offer practical insights to help the new Council Members effectively perform their roles and responsibilities within the Association. The program commenced with a Welcome and Introduction by Mr. Sugath Gunatilaka, President of SLLA, followed by a series of insightful sessions conducted by eminent past and present leaders of the Association.

• Principles and Procedures – Ms. Deepali Thalagala, Past President, SLLA
• Workload Balance – Ms. Nadeeka Ratnabahu, Past General Secretary, SLLA
• Financial and Budget Management – Mr. Anton Nallathambi, Treasurer, SLLA
• Information and Communication – Ms. Shivanthi Weerasinghe, Past President, SLLA
• SLLA History and Education Programs – Dr. Ananda Tissa, Past President, SLLA

The sessions were interactive and informative, offering participants valuable knowledge and practical understanding of the Association's operations, financial management, and communication strategies.

The program concluded successfully with positive feedback from participants, marking another step forward in strengthening the leadership and governance capacity of the Sri Lanka Library Association.

04 Feature Article

Standardizing Sinhala Author Names in the Digital Age: Challenges and Future Directions

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As Sri Lankan libraries advance toward fully automated and digital environments, new challenges have emerged in managing bibliographic data with accuracy and consistency. One of the most prominent among these is the representation of Sinhala author names within online catalogues. With library systems like Koha now widely adopted, the complexities of Sinhala linguistic structure often clash with the rigid technical demands of automated cataloguing. The result is an environment where author names appear in multiple forms, search results become unreliable, and users feel increasingly frustrated. This featured article offers a reader-friendly exploration of these challenges and presents new insights into enhancing author name authority control in Sri Lankan libraries.

Authority control is at the very heart of bibliographic and information management as far as consistency, accuracy, and reliability of names, titles, and subjects go in library catalogues and digital information systems. It establishes standardized, authorized forms for access points and collocates all variant forms to these preferred entries, enabling precise and efficient information retrieval. According to Jeng (2002), authority control is pivotal in increasing search precision by maintaining uniform headings; yet this is quite contrary to the approach that online databases have taken, which emphasizes speed, keyword searching, and flexible interfaces at the expense of strict standardization, sacrificing sometimes some retrieval accuracy for user convenience. With the expansion of digital libraries, authority control also took a broader role within the evolving world of metadata. According to Borbinha (2009), metadata, whether of a bibliographic, administrative, or preservation nature, depends upon authority structures that can assure their interoperability in heterogeneous digital environments, especially with the adoption of Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard (METS) and Moving Picture Experts Group – 21 (MPEG-21) frameworks by libraries to deal with different types of digital resources. This digital shift did not solve the intellectual problems posed by authority work. Wisniewski states of the challenges cataloguers are facing when they have to establish name or subject authority records in unfamiliar foreign languages or unfamiliar subject domains; however, Wisniewski proves that effective authority control is feasible using established cataloguing tools, national authority files, and trusted online resources, combined with logical reasoning. Authority control has enjoyed quite an evolution path across years. Buizza (2004) relates its beginnings in the

1961 Paris Principles-initially oriented to uniform headings-through successive phases to technological innovation, the passing from card catalogues to digital ones, and to the recent, rather diverse passage to global, web-based cataloguing systems. This path should mean a progressive shifting from stiff, localized rules toward an integrated and flexible international approach. A main player in such an international setting is IFLA, whose work since the 1970s, illustrated by Plassard, has ranged from creating international authority lists to devising standardized cataloging rules, up to proposing the UNIMARC authority format to enable the circulation of authority data between nations. Nevertheless, the question of efficiency arising from the particularly time-consuming nature of authority control Kulczak's investigation of OCLC copy cataloguing showed that most headings were already matching existing authority records, and the University of Arkansas Libraries decided to cut down its front-end authority checks while still retaining necessary controls through post-processing review. That proves the point that while certain authority tasks are wasteful, keeping authoritative filing is absolutely essential in long-term catalog maintenance. Regarding the future, authority control debates center on what model best suits standardization. Snyman and Jansen van Rensburg (2000) discuss the traditional NACO program and the ISAN model, which hopes to attain universality through the use of unique alphanumeric identifiers assigned to authors. Their comparison seems to show that ISAN might offer a more universally applicable or effective system since it bypasses linguistic and cultural differences of word-based headings. Authority control thus emerges as a dynamic and evolving system for information organization in both traditional and digital contexts, balancing intellectual rigor, technological adaptation, and global collaboration.

Authority control is vital for organizing information and ensuring the reliability of a catalogue. Its core function is to ensure that every author, subject, or title is represented under a single, consistent, and standardized name. When the principle of consistent authority control is not followed, the same person can appear under multiple variations in the catalogue. This often happens due to different transliteration patterns or simple spelling errors, particularly with names from languages like Sinhala, as shown in these examples:

- Paññānanda (Standardized Form) may appear as: Pannananda, pagngnananda
- Vijēsuriya (Standardized Form) may appear as: Vijesuriya, Vijesooriya, Wijesuriya, Wijesooriya
- Vijēsiṁha (Standardized Form) may appear as: Vijesinghe, Vijesingha, Wijesinghe, Wijesingha
- Abhayasūriya (Standardized Form) may appear as: Abayasuriya, Abhayasuriya Abhayasooriya
- Paṭabändigē (Standardized Form) may appear as: Paṭabandige, Paṭabendige, Paṭabadige
- vikramasiṁha (Standardized Form) may appear as: Vikramasinha, Vikramasinha, Wikramasinha, Wikramasinha, Vickramasinha, Vickramasinha, Wickramasinha, Wickramasinha
- Sēnaviratna (Standardized Form) may appear as: Senaviratna, Seneviratna, Senaviratne, Seneviratne, Senavirathna, Senevirathna, Senawirathna.

This inconsistency leads to scattered search results and unnecessary confusion. Users searching for a familiar author often fail to retrieve all relevant materials because cataloguers have used different, non-standardized entries. In an age where people expect fast

and accurate information retrieval, inconsistent name entries directly weaken both catalogue reliability and user trust. Effective authority control is therefore fundamental to a high-quality, dependable information system. Part of the difficulty arises from the linguistic richness of Sinhala personal names. Sinhala names frequently include multiple components—patronymics, initials, and long surnames—which do not always correspond neatly to Roman script conventions used in automated systems. Features such as long vowels, optional diacritical marks, and combined consonants further complicate transliteration and indexing. Additionally, the coexistence of several Romanization traditions—colonial spellings, modern phonetic spelling, and Unicode-based transliteration—results in unpredictable name forms being entered into cataloguing databases. Such complexities make it clear that Sinhala personal names require careful attention when integrated into ILMS platforms.

Across Sri Lankan libraries, several recurring issues are evident in the management of Sinhala author names. The most significant challenge is inconsistent transliteration. Different cataloguers follow different spelling preferences, producing multiple Romanized versions of the same name across institutions. Software limitations also contribute to the problem. Although Koha supports Unicode, Sinhala search functions sometimes fail when encountering diacritics, ligatures, or variant character renderings. A further issue is the absence of an updated national authority file. The existing printed list, contains only older authors and is not compatible with today's digital catalogues. Additionally, many cataloguers have limited training in authority control, especially in areas related to RDA, MARC 21, and non-Roman script management. This leads to inconsistent cataloguing practices from library to library.

To address these challenges, several practical improvements can be adopted. A major need is the establishment of a national standard for Sinhala transliteration. A guideline based on a simplified adaptation of ISO 15919 would reduce spelling variations and help maintain uniformity across catalogues. Equally important is the development of a digital Sinhala name authority database that is regularly updated and accessible to all libraries. Such a resource would allow cataloguers to verify the correct form of an author's name and reduce duplication. Enhancing Sinhala support within ILMS platforms is also crucial. By collaborating with open-source developers, libraries can improve indexing rules, refine search behavior, and introduce plugins that highlight authorized name forms during cataloguing. Training is another essential component. Regular workshops and online modules focusing on authority control, transliteration, and RDA-based record creation would ensure greater consistency across the sector.

International initiatives such as VIAF (Virtual International Authority File) and ISNI (International Standard Name Identifier) offer models that Sri Lanka can learn from. While these systems cannot be applied directly without adaptation, they demonstrate the importance of shared, interoperable authority structures. A localized system inspired by these frameworks would greatly strengthen name consistency while preserving the cultural uniqueness of Sinhala names.

Ultimately, authority control is not merely a technical function, it is a reflection of how libraries respect and preserve the identity of the authors who shape our national literature. As Sri Lankan libraries shift toward more advanced digital environments, ensuring the accurate and consistent representation of Sinhala names is essential for improving information access. By embracing standardized transliteration, digital authority tools, enhanced ILMS features, and continuous professional training, libraries can effectively bridge the gap

between linguistic complexity and automation. This will lead to more reliable catalogues, more satisfied users, and a more inclusive future for Sri Lanka's knowledge landscape.

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Library in Focus: An Introduction to a library   05

The Library of Medical Research Institute operates under the Ministry of Health. This library was established by Dr. Aldo Castellani, a medical scholar who worked in Sri Lanka in the 1903s. It has been a great help to doctors and public health workers to obtain health-related specialized information. This library obtained a special grade on 22nd November 1994. Currently, the size of the library collection is around 13,000 books and magazines.

Vision

Library of the Medical Research Institute will be creating and delivering high quality, user focused information resources and services to support and facilitate all the researchers in the field of human and animal health and creating the most dynamic learning environment.

Mission

To deliver a high standard of library resources and information service to meet the academic and professional needs of the researchers to support the mission of the medical research institute to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest level of excellence.

Services and Resources

The Library of the Medical Research Institute (MRI) is a specialized center designed to support the advancement of medical science through access to information, research facilitation, and professional training. It combines traditional library functions with modern information services to meet the needs of researchers, medical professionals, and students. It maintains national publications such as the MRI Bulletin and Newsletter, as well as international research papers that connect local scientists with global knowledge. The subject focus of the library includes scientific research and policy documents relevant to human and animal health. Users benefit from interlibrary loan services, enabling access to materials from other institutions, and the British Council lending service, which expands access to international resources. In addition, the library provides access to the Internet, book binding, preservation of library materials, literature searching, and reference services, particularly aimed at external users such as biochemistry and MD trainees.

Library Contact Information
Opening Hours: Monday to Friday 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
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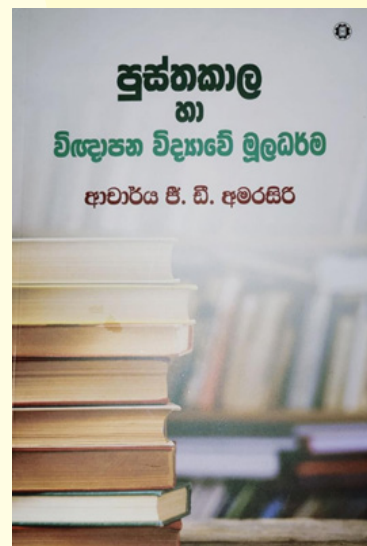**Mudithangani Subasinghe**
Librarian
Medical Research Institute

06 — Publications, Awards and Achievements

6.1 Book Launch

පුස්තකාල හා විඥාපන විද්‍යාවේ මූලධර්ම (Principles of Library and Information Science) compiled by Dr. G. D. Amarasiri, Former Director, National Library and Documentation Services Board has been published as a Sarasavi publication. This book written in Sinhala contains information on areas like types of libraries, library services, library management activities, library policies, library co-operation, Indigenous knowledge, information literacy, human resources development in libraries, international policies, standards and guidelines in library and information field, international projects related to library and information field, contribution of libraries in education process,, library legislation, library building planning and international organizations related to library and information field. This book is especially useful to library and information science students, library professionals and general readers who are interested in library activities.

6.2 Awards

Vishaka Narmada Receives Honored to Receive the Angela Bersekowski Grant to Attend– IFLA WLIC 2025

Ms. Vishaka Narmada, General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA), was awarded the Angela Bersekowski Grant and participated in the IFLA World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) 2025 held in August in Astana, Kazakhstan. The grant recognized her professional contribution to the library and information sector. During the congress, she took part in key sessions, engaged in discussions on emerging trends, and interacted with professionals from around the world. She also shared insights on Sri Lanka's library initiatives and explored opportunities for international collaboration. Her participation strengthened Sri Lanka's visibility within the global library community.

"නූතන වෛද්‍ය විද්‍යාව තුළ සායනික වෛද්‍ය පුස්තකාලයාධිපතිගේ කාර්යභාරය"
(43rd "Meet an Expert" programme of the National Library of Sri Lanka)

Mrs. Dilhani Munasinghe was invited as a distinguished speaker at the 43rd "Meet anExpert" programme, held on 30th July 2025 at the National Library and Documentation Services Board (NLDSB) Auditorium. Her lecture, entitled "නූතන වෛද්‍ය විද්‍යාව තුළ සායනික වෛද්‍ය පුස්තකාලයාධිපතිගේ කාර්යභාරය" (The Role of the Clinical Medical Librarian in Modern Medical Science), offered a timely and insightful exploration of the evolving responsibilities of information specialists in healthcare environments in Sri Lanka.The presentation highlighted key strategies for strengthening clinical librarianship, with particular emphasis on evidence-based practice, interdisciplinary collaboration, and professional skill development. Mrs. Munasinghe also addressed pressing issues such as the promotion of health literacy, upholding ethical standards in medical information services, and innovative approaches to integrating librarians within clinical teams. The event was streamed live via the NLDSB's official Facebook platform, reaching a wide national audience of information and healthcare professionals. The participants found this lecture as a significant contribution to the ongoing professional dialogue on the strategic development and formal recognition of clinical librarianship within the Sri Lankan context. Mrs. Padma Bandaranayake, Director of the National Library, and Mrs Anoma Wijesinghe, Deputy Director/Reader Services Division, organized this as part of the "Meet an Expert" lecture series.

Library Management for School Librarians

A workshop titled "Library Management for School Librarians" organized by the Akuressa Pradeshiya Sabha was successfully held on 29th September 2025 at the Auditorium of the Akuressa Pradeshiya Sabha. The program was conducted for school librarians of the Akuressa Educational Zone, with the participation of nearly 80 library staff members. Ms. Sakunthala Senevirathna, Senior Assistant Librarian of the University of Ruhuna, served as the resource person for the event. The workshop covered a wide range of essential areas, including book acquisition, basic classification and cataloguing, circulation procedures, library services, basic conservation and preservation techniques, withdrawal of library materials, and library activities. The session provided valuable insights into enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of school library management.

Reading Promotion Activities

A series of reading promotion programs for school children took place in the Hakmana area during September 2025, with Ms. Sakunthala Senevirathna, Senior Assistant Librarian at the University of Ruhuna, serving as the resource person. These programs were organized by public and school libraries to encourage reading habits, creativity, and effective use of library resources among young learners.

A Reading Camp organized by the Hakmana Pradeshiya Sabha in collaboration with the Hakmana Public Library was held on 26th September 2025 at the Public Library Auditorium, attracting nearly 120 school children. Another Reading Camp, organized by the Ellewala Public Library of the Hakmana Pradeshiya Sabha on 16th September 2025, engaged around 50 primary students through activities such as learning proper book-handling skills, poems, storytelling, and creative drawing. In addition, Hakmana Buddha Jayanthi Vidyalaya conducted a Storytelling Hour on 24th September 2025, with the enthusiastic participation of about 250 primary students, featuring interactive storytelling followed by a drawing session.

Across all three events, Ms. Senevirathna contributed to enhancing children's reading interest and creative expression, supporting community efforts to build a strong reading culture within the region.

4.   6.   **Any other News**   **08**

8.1 SLLA Organizes Farewell for Mr. Wijaya Premadarshana

On behalf of the Sri Lanka Library Association, a farewell was held for Mr. Wijaya Premadarshana in appreciation of his dedicated service as Administrative Secretary of the Sri Lanka Library Association. His contributions over the past two years in this position were deeply valued, and his commitment, professionalism, and tireless efforts have left a lasting impact on the Association.

8.2 SLLA Team Participates in OPA Inter-Association Six-A-Side Cricket Tournament 2025

The Organization of Professional Associations of Sri Lanka (OPA) held its annual Inter-Association Six-A-Side Softball Cricket Tournament on 21st September 2025 at the Thurstan College Ground. The event was organized as part of the Social Event Outreach Programs of the OPA Young Professionals Committee. The Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) fielded a team for the tournament, showcasing active participation in professional social sports events. The SLLA team comprised Mr. V.P.P. Welikanna (Team Leader), Mr. M.G.A. Thilanka, Mr. P.D. Manamperi, Mr. M.A.M. Fahri, Mr. Aruna Liyanage, Mr. Mahinda Amarasiri, Mr. W.P. Dileepa Dharmasiri, and Mr. G.G.R. Prabath. The tournament created an opportunity for networking and fellowship among members of various professional associations.

8.3 101st Anniversary of Sri Vajirarama Library Celebrated

The 101st Anniversary Celebration of the Sri Vajirarama Library was held on 15th July 2025 at the library's premises. The event was attended by several distinguished guests, including Dr. Ratna Sri Wijesinghe, Chairman of the National Library and Documentation Service Board; Mr. W. Sunil, Director of the National Library and Documentation Service Board; and Mr. Sugath Gunathilaka, President of the Sri Lanka Library Association. The ceremony marked an important milestone in the library's long-standing contribution to community learning and information services.

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