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NEWSLETTER

QUARTERLY BULLETIN OF SRI LANKA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Sri Lanka Library Association Concludes 66th Annual General Meeting

The Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) successfully held its 66th Annual General Meeting on 26th June 2026 at the Auditorium of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine (Academic Centre), Colombo 08. Presided over by SLLA President Mr. K.G.S. Gunathilake and attended by Chief Guest Senior Professor Surangi G. Yasawardhana, the meeting brought together more than 300 librarians, information professionals, and distinguished institutional heads from across Sri Lanka. The event served as a major platform to review annual progress, honor research and academic excellence, and announce the newly elected SLLA Council for 2026/2027.

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1. AGM of the Sri Lanka Library Association

66TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SRI LANKA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The 66th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) was held on 26th June 2026 at the Auditorium of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine (Academic Centre), Colombo 08. The meeting was presided over by SLLA President Mr. K.G.S. Gunathilake, with Senior Professor Surangi G. Yasawardhana, Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, as the Chief Guest.

More than 300 librarians and library and information professionals representing various library sectors across Sri Lanka participated in the AGM. Distinguished guests included Dr. Rathna Sri Wijesinghe, Chairman, and Mr.

W. Sunil, Director General of the National Library and Documentation Services Board; Mr. Tisara De Silva, President-elect of the Organization of Professional Associations of Sri Lanka; Eng. Ravi Rupasinghe, General Secretary of the OPA; and Dr. Sudath Samaraweera,

Chairman of the National Science Foundation, together with heads and representatives of library and information-related institutions. The AGM featured several important professional and academic activities. The Vijita De Silva Research Award 2026 was presented in recognition of outstanding research and innovation in Library and Information Science. Awards were also presented to the winners of the School Library Best Practices Competition 2025, recognizing innovation, excellence, and best practices in school librarianship.

In addition, S.C. Block Memorial Scholarships and academic awards for the 2024/2025 academic year were presented to students who demonstrated outstanding academic performance in the Diploma in Library and Information Science (DLIS)and Higher Diploma in Library and Information Science (HDIPLIS) programmes.

A further highlight of the AGM was the presentation of Associateship Certificates to 56 librarians, recognizing their successful completion of the stipulated professional requirements and professional achievements. The AGM provided an important platform for reviewing the Association's activities and achievements, recognizing professional and academic excellence, and strengthening the library and information profession in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka Library Association - 2026/ 2027 Council Elected

THE SRI LANKA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (SLLA) ELECTED ITS 2026/2027 COUNCIL AT THE 66TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, HELD ON 26TH JUNE 2026. THE NEWLY ELECTED OFFICE BEARERS ARE:

- PRESIDENT – MR. K.G. SUGATH GUNATHILAKE
- IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT – DR. PREETHI LIYANAGE
- PRESIDENT-ELECT – DR. R. MAHESWARAN
- VICE PRESIDENT – MR. ANTON NALLATHAMBY
- GENERAL SECRETARY – MS. T.A.S. ARUNASHANTHI
- TREASURER – MS. CHAMILA GAMAGE
- EDUCATION OFFICER – MR. DHAMINDA MANAMPERI
- ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY – MS. K.V.A.I. DE ALWIS
- ASSISTANT EDUCATION OFFICER – MR. K.A. ARUNA DINESH GUNARATHNA
- PUBLICATION OFFICER – MS. SAKUNTHALA SENEVIRATHNA
- INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER – MS. MANOHA WICKRAMATHILAKA

SIX MEMBERS WERE ALSO ELECTED AS CONVENERS OF THE SLLA PROFESSIONAL GROUPS:

- ACADEMIC LIBRARIES – MS. MANJULA RAJAPAKSHA
- PUBLIC LIBRARIES – MS. NISHANTHI CHANDRASIRI
- SCHOOL LIBRARIES – MS. D.R. GANGA DAMAYANTHI
- GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES – MS. MENAKA SUBASINGHE
- SPECIAL LIBRARIES – MS. SUBHASHINI ABHAYADASA DE SILVA
- NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL LIBRARIES – MR. M.S.M. SHIHAM

THE NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL WILL LEAD THE ASSOCIATION DURING 2026/2027, CONTINUING ITS WORK TOWARDS THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION PROFESSION IN SRI LANKA.

2. Highlights from the Education Committee

SLLA SCHOLARSHIPS AND ACADEMIC AWARDS PRESENTED

Scholarships and academic awards for the 2024/2025 academic year were presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) in recognition of outstanding academic performance in Library and Information Science programmes. The S.C. Block Memorial Scholarship for the Diploma in Library and Information Science (DLIS) was awarded to Ms. N.M.K.D. Maheshi in the Sinhala Medium. For the Higher Diploma in Library and Information Science (HDIPLIS I), S.C. Block Memorial Scholarships were awarded to Ms. N.N. Ranasinghe (Sinhala Medium) and Ms. A.M.T.P. Senevirathne (English Medium). The Gold Medal for Best Academic Achievement in HDIPLIS II was awarded to Ms. T.A.U. Sewwandi (Sinhala Medium). These awards recognize academic excellence and encourage continued achievement among students pursuing professional qualifications in Library and Information Science.

DIPLOMA CONVOCATION OF THE SRI LANKA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The Annual Diploma Convocation of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) was held on 12th June 2026 at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH), Colombo, with the participation of SLLA Executive Committee members, graduating students, their parents, and guests.

Dr. G.R. Padmasiri, Librarian of the University of the Visual and Performing Arts, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, while Attorney-at-Law Ravindra Sumathipala attended as the Special Guest. The President of the SLLA, Mr. Sugath Gunathilaka, and the guests shared insights on contemporary trends and future challenges in Library and Information Science.

A total of 140 students were awarded Diplomas and Higher Diplomas upon successful completion of their respective programmes. The convocation was organized under the leadership of Ms. W.A.J. Kaushalya Rathnasekara, Education Officer of the SLLA, with the support of the members of the Education Committee.

SLLA LAUNCHES NEW CERTIFICATE COURSE IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

The Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) inaugurated its new Certificate Course in Library and Information Science on 4th April 2026 at the SLLA Auditorium, marking an important step towards strengthening professional development in the library sector. The launch was attended by SLLA President Mr. Sugath Gunathilaka, Education Officer Ms. W.A.J. Kaushalya Ratnasekera, Assistant Education Officer Mr. Daminda Manamperi, and Council members.

The course is designed primarily for library staff who have not received formal professional training, providing them with essential knowledge and skills in Library and Information Science. It also provides a pathway for eligible participants to progress to the Diploma in Library and Information Science, supporting their continuing professional education and career development.

The course is delivered by an experienced panel of lecturers, including Dr. Ananda Tissa, Mr. Sugath Gunathilaka, Ms. W.A.J. Kaushalya Ratnasekera, Ms. Sakunthala Senevirathna, Ms. T.M.C. Hansamali, Ms. Vishaka Narmada, Mr. P.D. Manamperi, and Mr. M.A.M. Fahri.

The initiative reflects the SLLA's continued commitment to expanding professional education and strengthening the quality of library and information services in Sri Lanka.

3. Libraries, Departments, Institutions: Workshops and Training programmes

3.1. ACADEMIC LIBRARY GROUP

SLLA CONDUCTS SUCCESSFUL WEBINAR SERIES ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Academic Library Group (2025/2026) of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) successfully conducted a comprehensive webinar series titled "Building Research Skills for Academic Excellence" from 18th to 27th May 2026. The programme was delivered online in both Sinhala and Tamil, ensuring inclusivity and wider accessibility among participants.

The webinar series addressed key areas essential for academic and professional research, including research fundamentals, literature review techniques, research methodology, academic writing, and effective presentation skills. A panel of distinguished resource persons from leading universities across Sri Lanka contributed to the sessions, sharing their expertise and practical insights.

Resource Persons

Sinhala Medium

- 18th May 2026 - Research Fundamentals by **Ms. Nadeeka Rathnabahu,** Senior Lecturer, Department of Library & Information Science, University of Kelaniya
- 20th May 2026 - Smart Literature Review Techniques by **Dr. (Ms.) Champa Alahakoon**, Deputy Librarian, University of Peradeniya
- 25th May 2026 - Research Design & Methodology by **Ms. Hiruni Kanchana**, Acting Librarian, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University
- 26th May 2026 - Writing & Publishing High-Quality Research Papers by **Ms. Muditha Ankumbura**
- 27th May 2026 - Presenting Research with Impact by **Ms. M.A.L. Silva**, Senior Assistant Librarian, University of Colombo

Tamil Medium

- 18th May 2026 – Inauguration Session
- 19th May 2026 – Introduction to Research Methodology by **Dr. S. Ketheswaren**, Deputy Librarian, University of Jaffna
- 20th May 2026 - Literature Review by **Dr. (Ms.) T. Sritharan,** Senior Assistant Librarian, University of Colombo
- 22nd May 2026 - Research Methodology by **Mr. S. Santharuban**, Deputy Librarian, Eastern University of Sri Lanka
- 25th May 2026 - Technical Writing by **Dr.(Mrs.) M. M. Mashroofa**, Senior Assistant Librarian, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka
- 26th May 2026- Efficient Presentation by **Mr. T. Ramanan**, Senior Assistant Librarian, University of Colombo

A total of 23 participants attended the programme, comprising SLLA students, undergraduates, and library professionals from schools, universities, and private institutions. The series featured five structured sessions in each language stream, enabling participants to gain a well-rounded understanding of the research process in their preferred medium.

Feedback gathered through participant evaluations indicated a high level of satisfaction with the relevance of topics, quality of presentations, and overall organization of the programme. Participants who successfully completed the series were awarded e-certificates in recognition of their engagement and learning achievements. The initiative marks a significant step toward strengthening research competencies within the academic and library community.

3.2. GOVERNMENT LIBRARY GROUP

WEBINAR ON THE COMPOSITION AND ROLE OF LIBRARY COMMITTEES

Ms. Sakunthala Senevirathna, Senior Assistant Librarian of the University of Ruhuna, participated as a resource person at a webinar on "Composition and Role of the Library Committee" held on 6th June 2026. The webinar was organized by the Government Library Group of the Sri Lanka Library Association as part of its 2025/2026 professional development programme. The session focused on the composition, functions, and responsibilities of library committees in different types of libraries, highlighting their role in supporting effective governance, policy implementation, and service development. The webinar attracted approximately 75 library professionals from across Sri Lanka, who actively participated in the discussions and knowledge-sharing sessions. The programme concluded successfully, providing participants with valuable insights and practical guidance on strengthening library governance through effective library committee structures.

FELLOWSHIP GATHERING OF GOVERNMENT LIBRARIANS

The Government Librarians' Group of the Sri Lanka Library Association held its first fellowship gathering on 12th June 2026 at OPA Family Lodge. The event was organized to appreciate the resource persons and committee members who contributed to the group's lecture series for aspiring librarians and library professionals. The gathering was attended by distinguished resource persons, including Prof. Ruwan Gamage, Dr. G. R. Padmasiri, Dr. Ananda Tissa, Ms. Sakunthala Senevirathna, Ms. Samanthi Nilanka, and Ms. Tivya Jenan, together with SLLA President Mr. Sugath Gunathilaka, Secretary Ms. Vishaka Narmada, and Treasurer Mr. Anton Nallathambi.

The event was coordinated by Ms. Menaka Subasinghe, with the support of committee members Ms. Yanika Nandasena, Ms. Buddhi Maheka, Mr. Vajira Prasad, Mr. Rajith Kumarasinghe, Mr. Vajira Ranaweera, Ms. Lakmini Priyadarshani, and Ms. Ganga Damayanthi. Special appreciation was extended to Ms. Menaka Subasinghe, Ms. Samanthi Nilanka, Mr. Rajith Kumarasinghe, Ms. Tivya Jenan, and Ms. Vishaka Narmada for their valuable contributions to organizing and conducting lectures for candidates preparing for librarian recruitment examinations.

A lively group singing session, enriched by Dr. Ananda Tissa's insightful interpretations, added a memorable and enjoyable element to the gathering. The event, which continued for over three hours, concluded on a joyful note, strengthening professional relationships and fostering friendship and camaraderie among government librarians and SLLA members.

3.3. SCHOOL LIBRARY GROUP

SCHOOL LIBRARY BEST PRACTICES COMPETITION 2025 AWARDS PRESENTED

The Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) presented awards to the winners of the School Library Best Practices Competition 2025 at its 66th Annual General Meeting held on 26th June 2026.

The competition evaluated reports submitted by school libraries across Sri Lanka, highlighting innovative projects, reading promotion programmes, effective library management practices, and other initiatives that contributed to the development of school library services.

Following an evaluation by a panel of experts in Library and Information Science, schools demonstrating outstanding achievements and innovative practices were selected for recognition.

Awards of Excellence were presented to Galagedara New Model Primary School – Kandy, St. Sebastian's College – Moratuwa, Kokuvil Sri Ramakrishna College – Kokuvil, Akkaraipattu Muslim Central College – Akkaraipattu, and Pallewela Maha Vidyalaya – Pallewela.

Awards of Merit were presented to Polpithigama National School – Polpithigama, Kegalle College – Kegalle, Dudley Senanayake Central College – Tholangamuwa, Kondavil Hindu College – Kondavil, and Kannangara Model Maha Vidyalaya – Anamaduwa.

The competition recognizes the commitment of school librarians, principals, teachers, and students and promotes innovation, effective library practices, and a strong reading culture in Sri Lankan schools.

4. Feature Article

FEATURE ARTICLE 1

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES OF A DEVELOPED COUNTRY: A CASE STUDY BASED ON VISITS TO PUBLIC AND ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Senior Assistant Librarian, Engineering Library,
University of Peradeniya

Introduction

S. R. Ranganathan, a philosopher, educator, mathematician, and professional librarian, is considered the father of Library Science in India. He formulated the five laws of library science: books are for use; every person has his or her book; every book its reader; save the time of the reader; and the library is a growing organization. According to the fifth law, libraries have grown fast since the ancient era. Records have revealed that libraries existed in ancient Mesopotamia (Sumerian libraries in 2700 BC), Nineveh (7th century - 668-626 BC), Alexandria in Egypt (3rd century -201-300 BC), and monastic or academic libraries in Europe, Asia, India, and Sri Lanka. The library material developed from ancient civilizations to present times as clay tablets, papyrus, parchment and velum Conexus, palm leaf manuscripts, print and non-print material, audiovisuals, electronic information materials etc. The invention of printing technology by Gutenberg around 1450 paved the way for modern librarianship.

The role of librarians also shifted from custodians of the libraries to information providers.

The growth of libraries resulted in to the development of librarianship as a profession. The changing forms of information material and the library usage patterns of the patrons led to the need for continuous professional development of the librarians to stay in par with the modern library practices in the world. Library visits are also a part of this process and contribute to developing librarians to impart knowledge on innovation, adopt new technologies, develop networking and collaborative partnerships, design library spaces, and many other avenues for development.

This article describes library visits to public and academic libraries in the state of New York in the USA.

The Public Libraries

The public library system in the USA dates back to several centuries, starting as private collections owned by wealthy individuals and families. Later, when literacy rates increased and the establishment of schools and other educational Institutions commenced, the desire for reading materials grew. This prompted the establishment of reading rooms, which later turned into libraries opened to the public free of charge. The oldest public library was reported in the 17th century in Mexico. The US President Benjamin Franklin played an important role in establishing public libraries in the USA.

The Schenectady County Public Library (SCPL)

The SCPL system provides services to the city of Schenectady and surrounding areas. The library has existed since 1903, with small collections in different locations in the city, and was established in the current location in 1967. The new modern library system provides extensive local history resources, digital access (using Hoopla, Mango), and community programs.

The library has a central library and eight other branches in different locations. The Main Library is named the Hon. Karen B. Johnson Library.

The SCPL is supported by the "Friends of SCPL," which comprises past Librarians, retired professionals, booksellers, businessmen, and other interested parties. This is a non-profit organization founded in 1966. They collect books in good condition donated by the community and maintain two bookstores. They hold two book sales every year at the central library. Proceeds support various needs of the library system. Volunteer opportunities are offered to community members of all ages to serve in the bookstores and sales.

The main library has print resources, audio-visuals, electronic databases, etc. The electronic resources, such as e-books, are provided through the Hoopla app. All these resources are available for library members.

The services include providing free library cards to the residents of Schenectady, Albany, and Rensselaer counties and others in suburbs for a nominal rate, organizing events for different age groups, reservation of meeting rooms, study rooms, Interlibrary Loan facilities, and conducting language classes for needy members.

The SCPL is a member library of Capital District Library Council (CDLC), a non -profit organization. The CDLC members include all types of libraries (Public, School, Academic Special) in ten counties of upstate New York. CDLC has a program called the Direct Access Program (DAP). The library patrons of member libraries can obtain a DAP card from their library to use the library facilities of other member libraries of CDLC. This is a service that goes beyond Interlibrary Loan (ILL), as the member can access reference-only materials and special collections of other libraries.

The museum pass program is conducted with the support of the Friends of the Library. The library members can obtain a free pass from the library for his/her family to visit selected museums. After the visit, they have to return the card to the library.

The central library has a microfiche and microfilm collection of old newspapers

from the early 1800s to 2004. The library provides modern microfilm reader-scanners. They are connected to computers, and users can access the films.

The library allows mothers to visit with their children. A separate area in the library is allocated for them. The library is not a silent space. There are separate areas for serious studying and group discussions.

A Discussion in the Library

Play area

Special equipment used to read microfisch/microfilm

The Academic Libraries

The books were imported from England before the American Revolution, from 1765 -1789. John Harvard created the first academic library by donating 300 of his books to Harvard University during the colonial period. (before 1783)

Libraries of the University of Rochester

The University of Rochester is a private research university founded in 1850. The university offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate degree programmes across seven schools focusing on interdisciplinary studies and individualized learning. The university has more than 1000 academics, 11,000 students, and 30,000 staff.

The libraries are designed with the vision of "Empowering bold thinkers to change the world".

The University of Rochester's libraries offer resources for empowering inspiration, research, and collaboration.

I visited two libraries, namely Rush Rhees and the Carlson Science and Engineering Library, situated on the River Campus, a section of the University.

Rush Rhees Library

The library serves as the Main Library. The library houses the Art and Music Library, Barbara J. Burger iZone, the Janis and James S. Gleason Library, Department of Rare Books, special collections and preservation, Rossell Hope Robins Library, Koller Collins Centre for English Studies, and the University Archives. AQ & I desk is maintained at the entrance to serve students and fulfill their different information needs, including course-related materials on short term lending for students on the request of instructors.

The library staff includes 14 subject specialists. They help the students in their academic and research work related to their subjects. The students can get an appointment to meet the subject specialist by clicking the link given on the library website. The libraries maintain a chat channel where the students can communicate with the librarians at any time during the opening hours. The on-call librarians work on a roster basis to receive the queries forwarded by the students.
The students are given the facility to reserve the spaces in their choice of library attached to Rush Rhees Library.

Art and Music Library

The subject collections are on visual arts, art theory, architecture, photography, and music. The physical facilities include two viewing rooms with large flat-screen monitors, comfortable seats, fold-away tables, whiteboards, gaming systems, 3-D Blu-ray, etc.

Barbara J. Burger iZone

The iZone provides services to students who are creative problem solvers, innovators and change makers by guiding them to use the relevant resources in the library. A team of full-time staff, student employees, and student fellows who work on consulting, marketing, and curriculum design teams is involved in these programmes.

Janis and James S. Gleason Library

The library is open 24 hrs. a day and provides individual and collaborative study spaces (such as group studies with fellow students or with faculty staff, etc.) to do coursework, hold meetings, rest, and socialize in between classes.

Different types of seating facilities, whiteboards, and group studios are available for students.

Department of rare books, special collections and preservation (RBSCP) and university archives

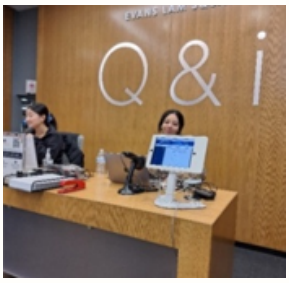
The library has a rich collection of rare and historical materials. The library, together with the faculty, helps students to use the resources in the special collections and supports them in using their personal cameras to digitize the resources within the laws of copyright of the country.

The library collaboratively works with students, faculty, and community by providing instruction, research, fellowships, internships for part-time employment, events, and holding physical and digital exhibitions.

The collections are open to the university community as well as visitors all around the world. Selected material is kept only for reference.

Rossell Hope Robins Library and Koller Collins Centre for English Studies

This is a non-circulating medieval studies library. The library has materials on vernacular literature, medieval history, medieval manuscripts, rare and unique material, and artist books. The Koller Collins Centre is a reference collection for literary and cultural studies. The centre is housed in the Robins Library. The collections are open to all users.



Q & I at the entrance of the library

Carlson Science and Engineering Library

Chester F. Carlson Library was built in 1987. The library offers expertise and support for students and faculty in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects. There are eight staff members in this library. The Mary Ann Mavrinac Studio X and VISTA Collaboratory are also set up in this library.

Mary Ann Mavrinac Studio X

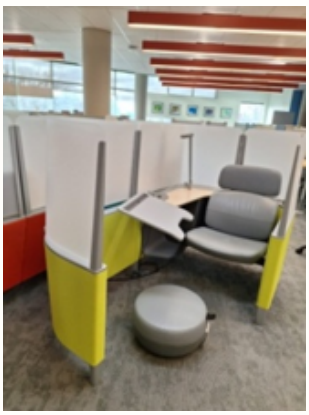
This is the hub for Extended Reality (XR), offering interactive, computer-mediated experiences like gaming, training, and design. The studio provides a variety of XR equipment for the students and faculty of the university.

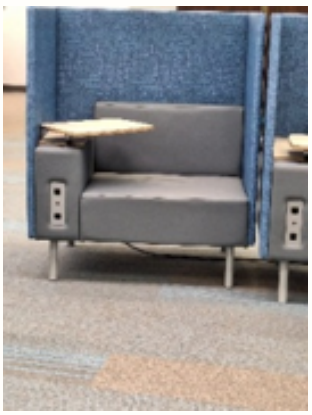
Vista Collaboratory

Visualization, Innovation Science Technology Application (VISTA) Collaboratory is a visualization lab capable of displaying massive datasets in real time (information which is available instantly or with minimal delay after it's generated). Equipped with an interactive tiled display wall, giving faculty researchers the ability to visualize and analyze instant data instantaneously and collaboratively with colleagues and students.

The libraries conduct an annual competition of artwork, photographs, etc., called the Art of Science. The artwork and photos of winners are displayed in the library.
There is a special space to display the landmark inventions of the scientists of the University of Rochester.

Modern furniture and reading areas in the two libraries.





Carlton Library

Rush Rhees Library

Thoughts for Sri Lankan Libraries for better services

The libraries in the USA are not isolated institutions. They collaborate with many other organizations to serve their communities to the maximum capacity. Central organizations, like the Capital District Library Council, connect all types of libraries by allowing library members of one library to use the collections of other member libraries. The public libraries connect with other government organizations such as museums and allow users to get their services through libraries. This could be applied to local situations too in an appropriate manner.

The Sri Lankan public libraries can consider providing more remote services in an innovative manner to their members using new technologies. The public libraries should target all the communities in their area and try to fulfill their diverse information needs.The academic libraries can maintain chat channels to answer student queries and work closely with students in providing library services.

The academic libraries in Sri Lanka need more collaboration with the faculties of the university to jointly serve their members in an effective manner. Together we can work towards the common goal of producing complete graduates equipped with knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The appropriate furniture and pleasant environment inside the library encourage the readers to visit the library. The libraries get the services to young students, and this helps them to learn about the value of libraries and use them for their lifelong learning activities.

In the USA, the funding for libraries is considered an investment. The public support for the development of libraries is also high. The citizens respect the libraries as knowledge hubs that produce a knowledgeable workforce for the country. The local organizations that work towards the development of libraries and the library profession should take the lead role to convince the government and other donor organizations to allocate sufficient funds and support for the development of libraries in Sri Lanka, as the libraries serve the nation, intending to produce adventurous, imaginative, creative, and innovative individuals for the country.

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FEATURE ARTICLE 2

BEYOND CUSTODIANSHIP: BUILDING FUTURE-READY LIBRARIES IN SRI LANKA

Anton Nallathamby
Consultant - Centre for Advanced Resources Mobilization (CARM)

Libraries are changing – and so is the profession

Libraries have long been recognized as custodians of knowledge, culture, and learning. In Sri Lanka, librarians across government, academic, school, and private-sector institutions continue to uphold this tradition with dedication and professionalism. However, the environment in which libraries operate today is markedly different from that of previous decades. Rapid technological change, fiscal constraints, evolving user expectations, and increasing accountability requirements demand a new set of competencies from library professionals.

The future sustainability of libraries will depend not only on technical expertise in librarianship but also on strategic thinking, institutional management, ethical governance, communication, and the ability to mobilize resources responsibly. This article invites library professionals to reflect on these emerging demands and to consider how broadening their professional skill sets can strengthen both their institutions and the profession as a whole.

From repositories to active knowledge partners

Modern libraries are no longer passive repositories of books and information. They are:

- Learning and digital literacy hubs
- Research support centers
- Community engagement and outreach platforms
- Digital knowledge facilitators

With this expanded role comes greater responsibility. Librarians are increasingly expected to participate in planning, budgeting, project development, reporting, and stakeholder engagement. These functions require familiarity with concepts traditionally associated with organizational leadership rather than librarianship alone.

As institutions face constrained budgets and heightened scrutiny, librarians who understand resource mobilization, accountability, and governance are better positioned to advocate for their libraries, design impactful programs, and contribute meaningfully to institutional decision-making. (Mullins & Boyd-Byrnes, 2024)

Resource Mobilization as a Professional Skill

Resource mobilization is often misunderstood as fundraising alone. In reality, it encompasses a broader framework that includes:

- Strategic planning and project design
- Ethical engagement with donors and partners
- Proposal and concept note development
- Financial accountability and transparent reporting
- Sustainability planning

For library professionals, these skills can be applied to initiatives such as digitization projects, reading promotion programs, research support services, infrastructure development, and community outreach. When librarians are equipped with these competencies, they become enablers of growth rather than managers of decline.

Importantly, resource mobilization must be practiced within a strong ethical framework—one that aligns with the values of librarianship, public trust, and institutional integrity (Mhaprolkar, 2026).

Sri Lankan libraries are already showing the way Safeguarding documentary heritage through digitization

The University of Jaffna and University of Kelaniya Library's work to preserve and digitize rare materials, including items from its collections, illustrates how a library can combine preservation expertise with project planning, specialist equipment, institutional approval, and external collaboration.

Sri Lankan libraries are already showing the way Safeguarding documentary heritage through digitization

The University of Jaffna and University of Kelaniya Library's work to preserve and digitize rare materials, including items from its collections, illustrates how a library can combine preservation expertise with project planning, specialist equipment, institutional approval, and external collaboration. Such initiatives do more than create digital copies: they protect fragile documentary heritage and extend access to researchers and future generations.

Strengthening research through shared services

Across Sri Lankan university libraries, institutional repositories, literature-search guidance, information-literacy programmes, plagiarism-awareness support, journal-selection advice, and open-access services have become part of the research environment. Collaboration among librarians, academics, research offices, quality-assurance units, and information-technology teams helps these services reach more users and contribute to research visibility and institutional performance.

What these examples show: Successful library initiatives connect professional knowledge with partnerships, credible planning, clear communication, ethical practice, and evidence of impact.

Governance, Accountability, and Professional Credibility

Good governance is central to the credibility and sustainability of any institution. Libraries, whether publicly funded or independently managed, are increasingly required to demonstrate:

- Transparent financial management
- Clear policies and procedures
- Ethical decision-making
- Measurable outcomes and impact

Library professionals who understand governance structures and accountability mechanisms can strengthen institutional systems. This knowledge is particularly valuable for those in senior and middle management roles, where decisions influence not only services but also staff morale, public confidence, and long-term viability.

Developing these competencies should be seen as an extension of professional ethics rather than a departure from traditional librarianship (Jordan, 2012).

Communication and Leadership in the Library Context

Effective communication is a critical yet often underemphasized skill in library management. Librarians today must communicate with:

- Administrators and policymakers
- Donors and development partners
- Academic staff, students, and communities
- Internal teams and volunteers

The ability to articulate a library's value, present ideas clearly, and report outcomes convincingly strengthens institutional positioning. Equally important is leadership development, particularly for early- and mid-career professionals who will shape the future of the profession.

Structured exposure to leadership concepts, mentoring, and reflective learning can help librarians transition from operational roles to strategic leadership positions (Dawes, 2015).

Learning Pathways for the Future-Ready Librarian

To respond effectively to these evolving demands, professional learning must extend beyond conventional formats. Forward-looking approaches may include:

- Online learning programs that introduce librarians to resource mobilization, governance, accountability, and communication within a library context

- Knowledge contributions through professional journals and newsletters that blend librarianship with institutional management perspectives

- Capacity-building initiatives designed specifically for emerging library leaders

- Recognized professional learning pathways that complement existing qualifications and contribute to continuing professional development

Such learning opportunities encourage librarians to remain relevant, adaptable, and confident in navigating complex institutional environments (Goulding & Campbell-Meier, 2024).

Towards a Resilient and Future-Ready Profession

The strength of the library profession lies in its ability to evolve while remaining grounded in its core values. As libraries confront financial, technological, and organizational challenges, librarians must be equipped not only with technical expertise but also with strategic, ethical, and managerial competencies.

By embracing forward-thinking approaches to professional development, particularly in areas such as resource mobilization, governance, accountability, communication, and leadership, librarians can enhance the resilience of their institutions and reaffirm their relevance in a rapidly changing world.

This reflective shift is not about transforming librarians into fundraisers or administrators, but about empowering them as well-rounded professionals capable of safeguarding the future of libraries in Sri Lanka.

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5. Library in Focus: Introduction of a Library

THE DISC AND TAPE LIBRARY OF THE SRI LANKA BROADCASTING CORPORATION: PRESERVING SRI LANKA'S SOUND, MEMORY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

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When we think of a library, we often think of books and printed documents. However, libraries also preserve information in many other forms. The Disc and Tape Library of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) is a remarkable example of a Special Library that preserves Sri Lanka's audio, musical and broadcasting heritage.

Although this valuable collection has existed for decades, it remains relatively unknown to many members of the public and even to some library professionals. The collection is not simply a supporting resource for radio broadcasting; it is an important repository of the voices, music, programmes and memories of generations.

A LIBRARY WITH A LONG BROADCASTING HISTORY

The history of the SLBC library is closely connected with the development of radio broadcasting in Sri Lanka. Radio broadcasting began in the 1923s, and the broadcasting service was officially inaugurated on 16 December 1925. It subsequently developed through Colombo Radio, Radio Ceylon, and the Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation, becoming the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation in 1967.

The exact date on which the library itself was established has not been documented. However, historical evidence confirms that a disc and tape library existed within the radio service by 1942. Disc recording began after 1936, while tape recording commenced after 1948. These historic recordings became the foundation of the present collection.

Today, the SLBC library system contains five major libraries: Sinhala, Tamil, English, Hindi, and Preservation. Together, they hold more than 250,000 discs and tapes, representing over 55,000 hours of broadcasting.

Five Libraries, One National Heritage

- **Sinhala Disc and Tape Library**

The Sinhala Library contains some of the oldest recordings associated with Sri Lankan broadcasting. Its holdings include large gramophone discs, light-song and folk-song records, commercial discs, donated recordings, tapes, cartridges, CDs and DVDs.
The tape collection contains 15, 30, and 60-minute recordings covering religious, educational, musical, cultural and other programmes. A special DVD collection preserves daily broadcasts from SLBC channels from April 2008 onwards.

- **Tamil Disc and Tape Library**

The Tamil Library contains recordings received from India as well as commercially produced records in formats such as 78 rpm, 45 rpm and LP. It also includes recordings in South Indian languages such as Malayalam and Kannada.

Its programmes include religious, political and musical content, as well as recordings of prominent personalities. These resources have supported national, Tamil and Asian-language broadcasting services.

- **English Disc and Tape Library**

The English Library has a particularly interesting historical background. Some of the earliest recorded discs received by the Corporation were English records supplied by the BBC.

In addition to English, the collection includes recordings in Dutch, French, Latin, Russian and Spanish. It contains classical music, symphonies, operas, dramas and Western popular music, including recordings associated with internationally renowned composers, artists and musical groups.

- **Hindi Disc and Tape Library**

The Hindi Library contains a rich collection of Indian film music, devotional music, ghazals, thumris and classical music. It includes recordings associated with artists such as Lata Mangeshkar, Mohammed Rafi, Mukesh, Kishore Kumar and Asha Bhosle, as well as North Indian classical musicians such as Bhimsen Joshi, Dasraj, D.V. Paluskar, Ravi Shankar, Hariprasad Chaurasia, V.G. Jog, etc.

The collection also extends to Arabic, Urdu, Marathi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Sindhi, Assamese, Oriya and Manipuri recordings.

- **Preservation Library**

The Preservation Library is perhaps the most significant component of the system. It safeguards old Sinhala and English programmes, including religious, political, educational, children's and musical programmes.

It preserves the voices of prominent national figures and scholars, including D. S. Senanayake, S. W.R.D.Bandaranaike, C.W.W.Kannangara, Dr.E.W. Adikaram, Professor Gunapala Malalasekera and Professor Senarath Paranavithana.

The collection also contains a gramophone-era recording of a sermon by Anagarika Dharmapala, as well as historic religious broadcasts and recordings associated with prominent Sri Lankan artists and traditional cultural forms.

What Can Be Found in the Collection?

The SLBC library is far more than a collection of songs. Its resources include:

- Radio programmes and historical broadcasts
- Classical, popular and folk music
- Film songs and devotional music
- Radio dramas
- Religious and educational programmes
- Political programmes and speeches
- Interviews and voices of prominent personalities
- Traditional songs
- Advertisements and jingles
- National anthems
- Programme announcements

The collection therefore represents a broad range of Sri Lanka's cultural, social, musical and broadcasting history.

Who Uses the SLBC Library?

This library is mainly used by the Producers and Announcers of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation. In addition, the library is used by schoolchildren, university students, lecturers, scholars and independent researchers for academic and research purposes.

Its resources are particularly valuable for researchers in:

History • Music • Linguistics • Folklore • Cultural Studies • Media and Communication • Performing Arts • Religious Studies • Library and Information Science

For researchers, an audio recording can provide something that a printed document cannot: the actual voice, pronunciation, performance, and atmosphere of a particular historical period.

Why Is This Library Important?

The SLBC library's greatest value lies in its ability to preserve original voices and sounds from the past.

A historical book may tell us what a person said, but an audio recording allows us to hear the person's actual voice. A book may describe a traditional song, but a recording preserves how it was performed. A historical document may describe an event, while a broadcast can preserve the voices and language of the people who experienced it.

For this reason, the SLBC library should be considered an important primary-source research collection and national heritage resource.

Its recordings provide evidence of the development of Sri Lankan music, language, broadcasting, religion, politics, education and popular culture.

The collection therefore represents not only the history of radio but also the changing identity of Sri Lankan society.

Library opening hours

This library is open only from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. every weekday. The library is closed on weekends, Poya days, and commercial holidays.

Planning a Visit

Researchers, students, and other interested users who wish to access the collection should make arrangements and obtain permission from the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation before visiting.

A prospective visitor should:

- Identify the research topic or information required.
- Contact SLBC in advance and inquire about access arrangements.
- Explain the purpose of the visit or research.
- Consult library staff regarding relevant catalogues and recordings.
- Follow the instructions provided for handling historical materials.

As many recordings are historical and some are subject to copyright restrictions, access to a recording does not necessarily mean that it can be reproduced or published freely.

The SLBC headquarters is located at No. 574, Torrington Square, Colombo 07. Visitors are advised to confirm current access arrangements directly with SLBC before making a visit.

Preserving the Sound of a Nation

The SLBC Disc and Tape Library is a unique Special Library that demonstrates that a library does not have to be made up of books to preserve knowledge.

Its collection preserves voices, songs, stories, traditions, performances, and memories.

With five specialized libraries, more than 250,000 discs and tapes, and over 55,000 hours of recorded broadcasting, the collection represents an extraordinary body of audiovisual heritage.

For library professionals, it is an important example of audiovisual librarianship and preservation. For researchers, it is a source of primary information. For students, it provides opportunities for academic exploration. For musicians and cultural scholars, it is a valuable reservoir of artistic heritage.

Most importantly, it reminds us that national heritage is preserved not only in books, documents and monuments, but also in sound.

The SLBC Disc and Tape Library is therefore more than a library serving a broadcasting organization. It is a living archive of Sri Lanka's history, culture and collective memory, deserving greater recognition, research, preservation and appreciation within the Sri Lankan library community and beyond.

6. Publications, Awards and Achievements

VIJITA DE SILVA RESEARCH AWARD 2026

Professor Ruwan Gamage, Director of the National Institute of Library and Information Sciences (NILIS), University of Colombo, has received the Vijita De Silva Research Award 2026, presented annually by the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) to recognize outstanding research and innovation in Library and Information Science.

The award was presented in recognition of his development of CATMELK Version 2.0, an artificial intelligence-based library cataloguing application. The award was presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Sri Lanka Library Association on 26th June 2026.

NATIONAL LIBRARY RESEARCH AWARD 2025

Mr. M.N. Ravikumar, Senior Assistant Librarian at Eastern University, Sri Lanka, and a Fellow Member of the SLLA, received the National Library Research Award 2025 in recognition of his outstanding and innovative contributions to research in the field of Library and Information Science.

The prestigious award was presented at the 36th Anniversary Celebration of the National Library and Documentation Services Board (NLDSB), held on 28th April 2026. The award was conferred by the Chief Guest, Hon. Prof. Hiniduma Sunil Senevi, Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs, in the presence of the Chairman and the Director General of the NLDSB, along with distinguished professionals.

Mr. M.N. Ravikumar was awarded for his intellectual work on the integration of Sri Lankan libraries' OPACs to create a unified, real-time resource discovery platform, enabling the public and researchers to locate required books across libraries in Sri Lanka through a single interface.

The framework was envisioned as a foundation for connecting bibliographic databases nationwide into one integrated national system, and it has been adopted in the development of the National Virtual Union Catalogue of Sri Lanka, marking a significant milestone in enhancing nationwide access to library resources and strengthening resource sharing among Sri Lankan libraries.

ASIS&T JAMES M. MATARAZZO RISING STAR AWARD 2026

Dilhani Munasinghe has been selected as a recipient of the 2026 ASIS&T James M. Matarazzo Rising Star Award, presented by the Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T). The prestigious international award recognizes ASIS&T members who demonstrate exceptional promise in leadership and significant contributions to the information science profession. Munasinghe received the award alongside Erin Gray and Lingzi Hong.

Munasinghe's recognition reflects her contributions to research, professional service, and scholarly communication within the global Library and Information Science (LIS) community..

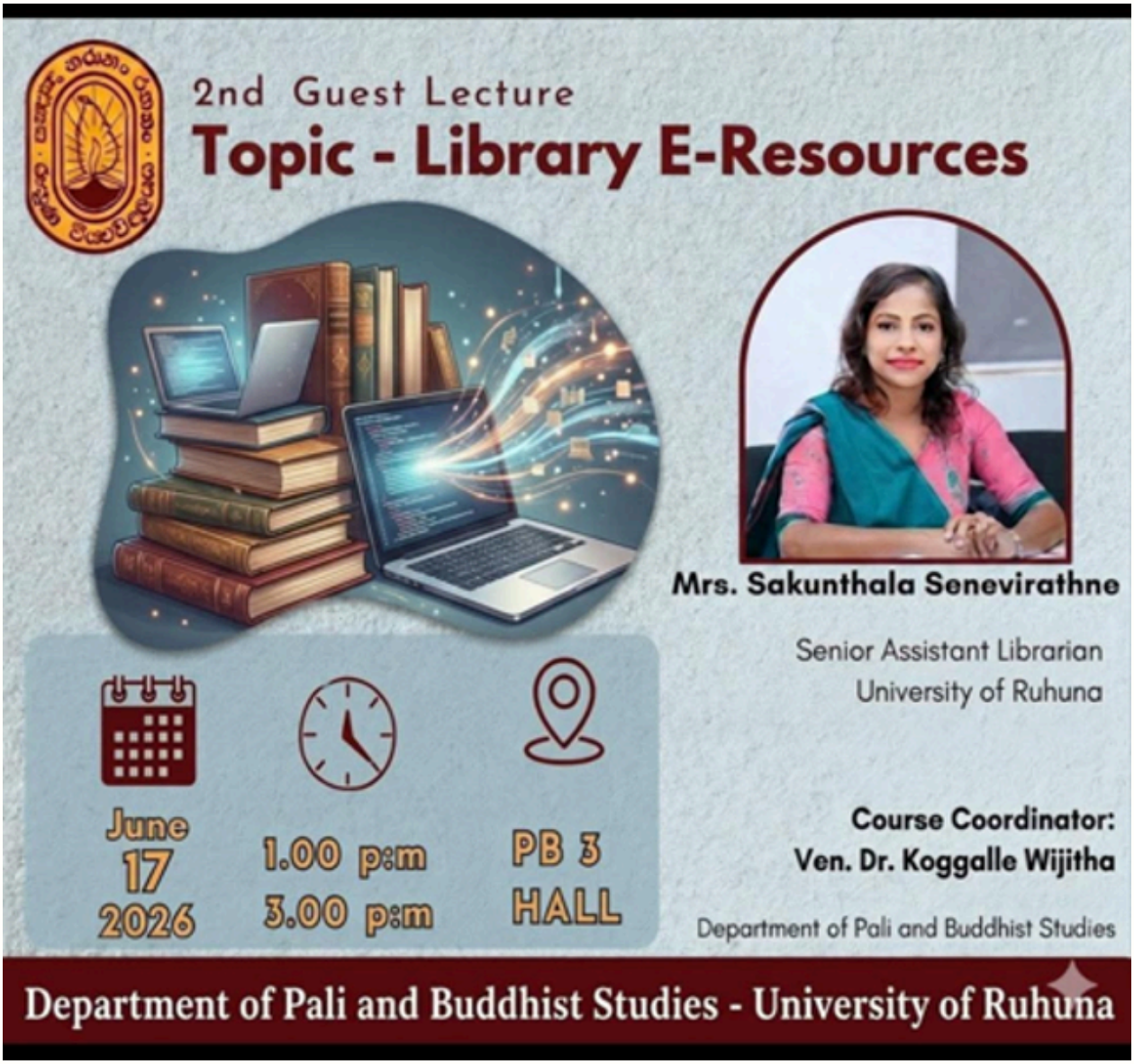
Her involvement with ASIS&T includes receiving Second Place in the SIG-III International Paper Contest in 2024, serving as a Jury Member for the SIG-III International Paper Contest (2025–2026), and contributing to the ASIS&T Publication Committee (2026–2027). She also serves as a reviewer for the ASIS&T Annual Meeting 2026 The award marks a significant achievement for Munasinghe and highlights the growing contribution of South Asian information professionals to the international LIS community. It was formally presented during the ASIS&T 2026 Information Science Summit & Special Libraries Conference (ISS/SLC26), held from 6th - 9th June 2026 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA.

7. Outreach Activities

DELIVERED GUEST LECTURE ON LIBRARY E-RESOURCES

Ms. Sakunthala Senevirathna, Senior Assistant Librarian of the University of Ruhuna, participated as a resource person at a guest lecture organized by the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Ruhuna on 17th June 2026.

The lecture, titled "Library E-Resources," was conducted for undergraduate students pursuing Buddhist Studies. The session introduced participants to a range of electronic information resources, including e-books, e-journals, online databases, digital repositories, and other scholarly resources available through the university library. Students were also guided on effective search techniques and the efficient use of electronic resources to support their academic studies and research. The lecture provided students with practical knowledge and skills to enhance their information literacy and promote the effective use of library e-resources for learning and research.



SLLA REPRESENTATIVES APPEAR ON ITN'S HATHWENI PEYA

Ms. Sakunthala Senevirathna, Publication Officer of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA), and Ms. Givon Yanika Nandasena, Vice President of the SLLA, participated in the Hathweni Peya television programme on Independent Television Network (ITN) on 24 June 2026.

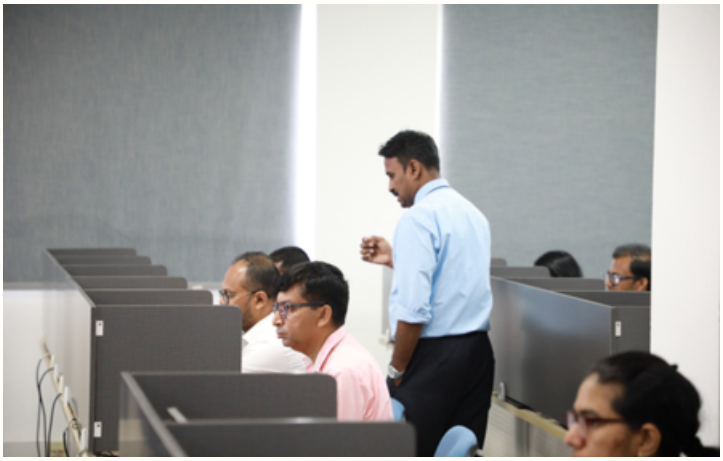
Hosted by Mr. Sadeepa Senevirathna, the programme focused on raising awareness of the SLLA's 66th Annual General Meeting, held on 26 June 2026. The discussion also highlighted the Association's educational programmes, publications, outreach initiatives, and other activities undertaken to promote the library and information profession in Sri Lanka.

PGIM LIBRARY CONDUCTS TWO-DAY WORKSHOP ON DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS

The PGIM Library organised a two-day workshop on data analysis tools. The workshop was held on 8th and 9th June 2026 at the PGIM Academic Centre, Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo. The programme was designed to strengthen the research and data analysis skills of the PGIM community through practical training in both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. On 8th June 2026, the first session, titled "Learn R: A Practical Introduction to Data Analytics," provided participants with hands-on exposure to the R environment, with emphasis on data analysis, data visualisation, and basic statistical techniques. The second session, held on 9th June 2026, focused on "NVivo Software for Qualitative Data Analysis." This practical session introduced participants to the use of NVivo for organising, coding, managing, and analysing qualitative data derived from interviews, documents, and other textual sources.

The workshop was conducted by Mr. S.Santharooban, Deputy Librarian, Faculty of Health-Care Sciences, Eastern University, Sri Lanka. He provided practical demonstrations and guided participants through key features and applications of both R and NVivo in research.

A total of 60 participants, comprising PGIM trainers, postgraduate trainees, academic staff, and administrative staff, took part in the workshop. The workshop was coordinated by Mrs. Dilhani Munasinghe and Mrs. Chandima Wadasinghe, both Senior Assistant Librarians of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo.



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