

A descriptive analysis of current LIS education providers and programmes in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Formal Library and Information Science (LIS) education in Sri Lanka began in 1961 with the commencement of a short programme by the Sri Lanka Library Association (the then Ceylon Library Association). From 1961 to 1997, many programmes were introduced but some were terminated due to various reasons. The introduction of new LIS programmes was accelerated from 1997 onwards as a result of the reforms in the education system which brought significant changes in LIS education. There were many issues affecting the LIS education system of Sri Lanka but without due attention of the authorities. In order to understand the issues concerning the LIS education system in a holistic manner; a research project was carried out from the year 2004 to 2007. Several aspects regarding LIS education were studied in depth, for example, the current available LIS programmes and providers, course contents, LIS faculty and facilities. This paper presents the current status of LIS providers and programmes in the country. Eight university and non university LIS education providers were identified from a survey. At the university level there are six organizations; the National Institute of Library and Information Sciences, the Department of LIS affiliated to a university faculty, two faculties offering several postgraduate level LIS programmes, and two units affiliated to universities. At the non-university level there are two types of organizations (an association and three colleges) conducting the programme – the Sri Lanka Library Association and three National Colleges of Education. The survey also identified a total of 24 programmes at six different academic levels comprising six Certificate programmes, six Diploma programmes, three Bachelors programmes, three Post Graduate Diploma programmes, four Masters programmes and two Research Degree programmes. The paper highlights the absence of a co-ordinating body for LIS education in Sri Lanka and it concludes by identifying a suitable body for this purpose.

Keywords: Library science education; Library and information science programmes; Library schools; Sri Lanka

LIS EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA: AN OVERVIEW OF ITS ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION

The first effort to provide training in Library and Information Science (LIS) was initiated by the Ceylon Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research (CISIR, presently known as the Industrial Training Institute) in 1957. D. A. Redmond from Canada was invited for this purpose and he conducted a one year course for six members of the staff. In the

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same year, in co-operation with the Ceylon Technical College, two two-week full time courses were offered for 46 untrained library personnel working in school, government and special libraries (Redmond 1958). The same year also saw the Jaffna Librarians' Guild conducting a few classes under the direction of its President using the British Council Study Boxes. The Education Department, realising the dire need of training library personnel, sponsored a ten day seminar on librarianship in 1960 (Mahalingam 1962)

There was no training in librarianship available before the programmes mentioned earlier, but the need for professionally trained librarians and scientific library methods such as cataloguing, classification and indexing was increasing, especially with the gradual development of higher learning institutions such the Ceylon Medical College (established in 1870) and the Ceylon University College (1921, and was granted university status in 1942). However, due to the lack of professionally trained librarians even the University College Library had to be satisfied with a classification system based on the curriculum. During the academic year 1930-31, R.L. Enright, the Librarian of the University College joined the School of Librarianship and Archives at the University of London. In the following year, the Librarian of the Colombo Municipal Library, S.C. Blok entered the School (Piyadasa 1985, 87). While staff with a higher position obtained their training from the School of Librarianship and Archives of London there was a lack of local training for the middle level library staff. Mahalingam (1962) wrote that "a systematic training, at least in the fundamentals of library work was absent" (p. 42).

The need for formal education in librarianship intensified with further expansions of the library system in Sri Lanka. From the mid 1940s¹ several measures were introduced over the years to develop the country's education system. Free education from the kindergarten level was provided for all students in all state schools from 1945. The number of rural schools had to be increased to expand the educational opportunities. Sinhala and Tamil were used as the medium of instruction in 95% of the schools while English was used in another 5% of the schools (Evans 1969). Responding to the expansion of the school education opportunities in native languages, a change in the medium of instruction in the universities was implemented and the first batch of students in the Sinhala/Tamil medium was admitted to the University of Ceylon at Peradeniya in 1960. This was a landmark in the university education system in Sri Lanka, as it had provided an opportunity for children from the lower and middle-income classes with vernacular background, whom benefited from free education, to receive higher education (Central Bank of Sri Lanka 1998).

Shifting the medium of instruction in the educational institutions from English to Sinhala/Tamil had increased both the educational opportunities for the public, and the

¹ The colonial education system before 1945 was elitist. Schools were divided into English, Sinhala and Tamil according to their medium of instruction. English schools were fee-levying and provided higher educational and lucrative employment opportunities. The Sinhala and Tamil medium schools were free but with poor resources and they did not provide higher educational opportunities or rewarding employment opportunities. University education was also provided in the English medium. In 1940 a Special Committee on Education was appointed to investigate the defects of the education system and to make recommendations for improvement. The report of this committee is popularly known as the Kannangara Report (*Report of the Special Committee on Education* 1943).

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need for literature in the vernacular languages. This development gradually led to an increased need for more libraries, which in turn led to the increased need for trained librarians in the country. The need for professionally trained staff in librarianship was pointed out strongly by Frank Gardner and Harold V. Bonny (the visiting UNESCO experts) as well as by the daily press (Redmond 1958). The Ceylon Library Association (now the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA)) was established in August 1960 under the presidency of Mr. S.C. Blok with the training of librarians as the main objective (Nanayakkara 1962).

Formal library education was introduced in Sri Lanka in 1961 by the Ceylon Library Association with the objective of training the library assistants. The duration of the programme was six months and the course content was based on the Library Association (London) programme. As it was the only course available for the middle level librarians, the Government recognised this qualification for the recruitment and promotion of the middle level library workers (Piyadasa 1985). In the same year the University of Peradeniya introduced a Postgraduate Diploma programme for the senior library staff. Table 1 presents the chronological development of the formal LIS education programmes in Sri Lanka from 1961 to 1994.

Table 1: Chronological Development of Library Education Programmes in Sri Lanka
(1961-1994)

Course	Organisation	Year started	Status
1. Six months Part time Certificate Course	Ceylon Library Association	1961	Converted to a one year course in 1965
2. One year full time PG Diploma	University of Peradeniya	1961	Discontinued in 1965
3. Three tier part time course	Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA)	1965	Continues
4. Two year full time Junior University Diploma	Junior Univ. of Dehiwela & Palali	1968	Discontinued in 1972
5. Bachelors Degree	DLIS, Univ. of Kelaniya	1973	Continues
6. PG Diploma (Full time)	DLIS, Univ. of Kelaniya	1974	Discontinued in 1989
7. Three tier part time course	DLIS, Univ. of Kelaniya	1977	Continues
8. Diploma in LIS	Univ. of Colombo	1982	Discontinued in 1988
9. Postal certificate course (18 months) for school and public librarians	National Library and Documentation Services Board	1983	Discontinued by mid 1990s
10. Masters by research	DLIS, Univ. of Kelaniya	1989	Discontinued by 1991
11. PG Diploma (Part time)	DLIS, Univ. of Kelaniya	1989	Discontinued 1989
12. MLS (Two years)	FGS, Univ. of Colombo. (Transferred to NILIS in 2007)	1993	Continues
13. MA (LIS) (One year)	DLIS, Univ. of Kelaniya	1994	Continues
14. M. S.Sc. (LIS) (Two years)	DLIS, Univ. of Kelaniya	1994	Continues
15. Library Technicians Course	SLLA	1994	Discontinued in 1999

Sources: Piyadasa (1985, p. 97-98), Kamaldeen (1991, p. 213-214), Wijetunge and Willson 1998a.

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The Education and Training Division of the Sri Lanka National Library Services Board (SLNLSB)² was interested in studying the status of LIS education in the country. With funding from the British Council, in 1983, Anne Irving of Loughborough University UK was invited to study the LIS education system of Sri Lanka for three weeks. The purposes of the visit were to (a) study the issues of LIS education in Sri Lanka; (b) make recommendations to the SLNLSB on improvements to LIS education; and (c) discuss improvements to the courses with the training organisations (Irving 1988, p. 33).

As a result of this visit Irving (1988) identified several factors which affected LIS education in Sri Lanka: organisation and location of courses, syllabi, curriculum development, teaching, resources, students, research and co-ordination of LIS education programmes. According to Irving, courses were organised by “any agency whose members perceived a need” and the syllabus was only “a guide to the content of the course but did not provide information on the quality of teaching” (p. 40). She reported that the aims and target employment sectors were lacking, and there were overlaps and gaps in coverage, as well as topics concerning development of attitude to service and to clients were absent. Curricula were not properly developed, reflected in the absence of goals of teaching and learning, objectives, methods, media, assessment procedures or criteria. Irving commented that “teachers were impressively dedicated but they lacked any guidance or training in theories of teaching/learning” (p.41). The absence of LIS research and publications in native languages in Sri Lanka had reduced the pool of resources. There was no co-ordination among agencies which possessed the LIS research and publications; as such it had become difficult for the teachers to access them. The physical environment of all educational agencies was not conducive and funding was insufficient for further development of the LIS programmes. Course regulations were often inconsistent in defining the minimum entry requirements. Irving (1988, p. 44) pointed out that a lack of co-ordination in LIS education in the past had led to a rather fragmented situation in the current condition of education in this field. She made several recommendations, including a strong leadership role to be played by the SLNLSB as the co-ordinator of LIS education. However literature or communications with the senior librarians do not indicate that these recommendations were given any serious attention by the LIS educators in terms of implementation.

After 15 years of no further analytical empirical studies of LIS education, the second study was conducted in 1997 by the author (Wijetunge and Willson 1998a) with the objective of examining the problems and prospects in LIS education in Sri Lanka. Findings of this study were interestingly similar to that of Irving’s (1988). Most of the recommendations made by Irving have not been given attention and besides the commencement of two Masters programmes in LIS there have been little progress on their development (Wijetunge and Willson 1998a, p. 8)

Nevertheless, the introduction of new LIS programmes continued from 1997 to 2007 as a result of the reforms in the education system which brought significant changes in the LIS education system, further detailed in Wijetunge (2006). Since the LIS education programmes were proliferating, it was felt that there should be an urgent need to understand the issues concerning the LIS education system. To satisfy this need the

² Now known as the National Library and Documentation Services Board (NLDSB).

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author undertook a critical analysis of the Library and Information Science (LIS) education system in Sri Lanka during 2004-2007. This main study concentrated on the following seven aspects of the LIS education system: (a) LIS education programmes; (b) LIS education providers; (c) course contents; (d) teaching and assessment methods; (e) the relevance of programmes to emerging information sector needs; (f) demographic characteristics of the teaching faculty and their research and publications; and (g) infrastructure facilities. This paper presents an account of the origin and evolution of LIS education in Sri Lanka followed by a descriptive analysis of the contemporary LIS education providers and programmes.

METHOD

The study used both quantitative as well as qualitative data gathering techniques using four methods to collect data: semi structured questionnaires, semi structured interviews, participatory observations and literature reviews. Because of the original nature of the data required, primary sources such as official documents related to the LIS education programmes that existed during 2004 -2007 in Sri Lanka were reviewed. These include reports on the establishment of institutes and their aims and objectives; minutes of meetings; reports on the aspects of institutions' operations; legal documents such as Ordinances and By-Laws; handbooks; guides and other references prepared for students; day-to- day records of students; personal correspondence of students with the staff; letters of appointments; and legal documents of students. In addition, published books, journal articles and other similar external publications were also examined.

Course co-ordinators responsible for each LIS education programme were identified by means of personal communication. As the numbers of organisations which offer LIS programmes were fewer than ten, and the survey was intended to be comprehensive, the entire population was studied using a semi structured interview schedule. In some cases, the same person was interviewed more than once when they co-ordinate more than one programmes. Response rate was 100 per cent. Data gathered were more verbal and textual hence two methods – coding and content analysis – were used to condense such data considering the semantic relationship of words.

FINDINGS

Current LIS Education Providers

There are eight LIS education providers in Sri Lanka. At the university level there are six types of organizations; the National Institute of Library and Information Sciences (NILIS), an Institute specialising in LIS affiliated to a university; Department of LIS affiliated to a university faculty; two faculties offering several postgraduate level LIS programmes; and two units affiliated to universities. At the non-university level there are two types of organizations; a professional association and three National Colleges of Education

providing pre-service teacher education. Figure 1 presents a bird's eye view of the different academic units within the university system.³

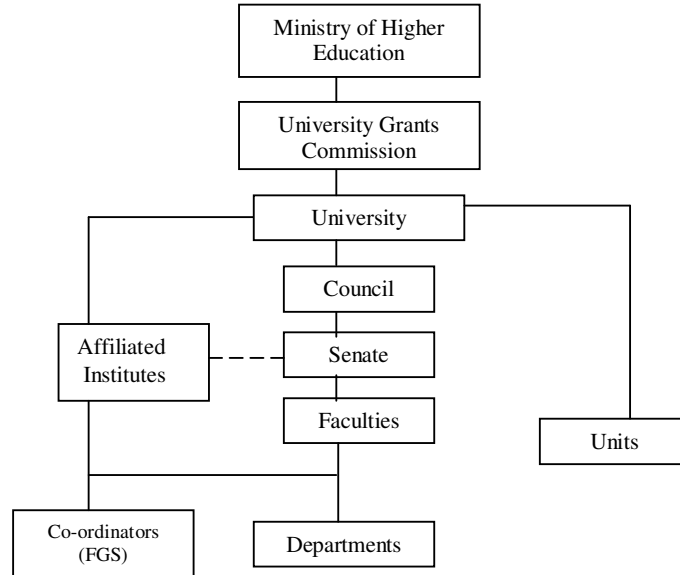


Figure 1: Hierarchy of Different Organisations within the University System

³ University Grants Commission (UGC), existing under the Ministry of Higher Education, is the highest authority responsible for the public university system of Sri Lanka. Under the UGC there are fifteen universities at present and the administrative hierarchy of these and the other organisations under the universities are discussed here in accordance with the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 and subsequent amendments to it.

A **University** is established by the Minister of Higher Education in consultation with the UGC, by an Order spelling out the structure, powers and authority of the university. The Council is the executive body and the governing authority of the university, the Senate is the academic authority.

A University can establish a **Faculty** with the concurrence of the UGC which will be governed by a Faculty Board subject to the control of the Senate. The Dean is the academic and administrative Head of the Faculty. The Faculty Board can make recommendations to the Senate of the university to establish an academic **Department** under the purview of the faculty and the executive officer will be the Head. All such departments will be controlled by the respective Deans and the Faculty Boards. Funding for each faculty will be allocated by the university out of a lump sum allocated to the university by the Government Treasury. Each department will be funded through the allocation made to the faculty.

A **Faculty of Graduate Studies** (FGS) can be established with the concurrence of the UGC under the FGS Ordinance No. 3 of 1987 for the purpose of promoting research and providing courses of study leading to *higher degrees* and other academic qualifications in several different branches of learning within the university. The structure, powers, duties and functions of the faculty and the procedure of appointing the Dean are determined by an Ordinance. It is headed by a Dean and controlled by a Faculty Board subject to the control of the Senate of the university concerned.

An **Institution** of higher learning is established by the Minister of Higher Education in consultation with the UGC and the structure, powers duties and functions are prescribed by an Ordinance. Such an Institution is recognised for the purpose of providing, promoting and developing higher education in a particular discipline by an Order published in the Government Gazette. The Director is the academic and administrative Head of the Institution while it is governed by a Board of Management appointed as specified in the Ordinance. Institutions affiliated to universities are funded directly through the UGC by the Government Treasury.

Units are established by the respective universities with the concurrence of the UGC to serve specific purposes and are headed by Directors. (Universities Act 1995).

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NILIS was established in 1999 under the NILIS Ordinance No. 1 of April 1999 as an affiliated institute⁴ of the University of Colombo. Its mission, goals and objectives⁵ specifically target the education and training of LIS professionals in Sri Lanka, conduct of LIS research and establishment of its links at the national and international level. NILIS is governed by a separate ordinance and a Board of Management and is directly related to the University Grants Commission (UGC) as far as funding is concerned. It is connected to the parent university for academic affairs (which is indicated with a dotted line in Figure 1). It is mandated to conduct postgraduate programmes, but since its name does not bear the word “postgraduate”, it is classified as a non-postgraduate institute existing under the UGC. NILIS is unique in the sense that it has powers to offer programmes at any level from certificate to postgraduate degrees. It offers the highest number of LIS programmes offered by one single institute, which makes a significant contribution to the LIS discipline in Sri Lanka.

The Department of LIS (the Dept. of LIS) at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Kelaniya, was established in 1972. So far this is the only organisation which offers LIS at the bachelor’s degree level. When all universities in Sri Lanka became campuses under one university in 1972, there was a restructuring of the study programmes. Different campuses were expected to serve as centres of excellence in different disciplines. The University of Kelaniya was entrusted with the responsibility for LIS. The Vice Chancellor appointed a high level committee of librarians to draw up the syllabus for a bachelor’s course in LIS. The Dept. of LIS was the outcome and a bachelors programme was

⁴ Affiliated institutes are related to the Senate and the Council of the respective universities with regard to the control and monitoring of their academic programmes while they are directly related to the UGC for fund allocations.

⁵ **Mission**

- In accordance with the NILIS Ordinance No. 1 of 19 April 1999, NILIS has to provide higher education and conduct research within the discipline of LIS up to the highest educational level and contribute to the expansion of the knowledge domain of LIS.
- NILIS will provide education and training for librarians and information professionals, for undergraduates of the University of Colombo, Masters and higher degree candidates and for secondary school leavers.

Goals

- Goal 1: Provide for the development of LIS education for future generations
- Goal 2: Strengthen the LIS knowledge domain by promoting high quality research & Contribute to the Professional Development of LIS professionals.
- Goal 3: Develop the personnel strength of NILIS
- Goal 4: Continue to improve teaching / learning facilities in NILIS
- Goal 5: Continue to develop a collaborative culture for NILIS nationally and internationally

Objectives

NILIS is a higher education and research institution in the field of LIS and in fulfilling its objectives NILIS will;

- Educate LIS professionals in such manner that they take full responsibilities for the development of Sri Lankan libraries and information services of all types to the highest international standards.
- Be the Centre of Excellence for educating Teacher Librarians for the Sri Lankan general education system.
- Create new knowledge in the domain of LIS through research and communicate the results, nationally and internationally.
- Strengthen the position of NILIS in the international LIS environment.

Source: Corporate Plan of NILIS 2005-2008

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introduced in 1973 (Piyadasa 1985). The mission of the Dept. of LIS is “to develop studies and research in the fields of LIS and to produce well trained, skilled human resources at all levels needed by this sector in Sri Lanka, being the only department in the university system in Sri Lanka offering LIS as a subject for bachelor’s degree” (University of Kelaniya, Faculty of Social Sciences 2009). According to this mission statement, the Dept. of LIS concentrates mainly on bachelor’s degrees in LIS.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Kelaniya (FGS/UK) was established in 1998. All postgraduate programmes conducted by the University of Kelaniya are offered through this faculty. Accordingly it offers 23 postgraduate degrees and six postgraduate diplomas in various disciplines including two Master’s Degrees and a PhD programme in LIS (University of Kelaniya Sri Lanka 2009b) but all the academic activities of the three programmes, such as curriculum development, teaching and assessment, are handled by the Head of the Department (HOD) of the Department of LIS. FGS is only responsible for administration. The Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Jaffna (FGS/Jfn) established in 1999, conducts several postgraduate programmes in other disciplines and this includes a Postgraduate (PG) Diploma in LIS (University of Jaffna 2009)

There are two Units offering LIS programmes within the universities. The Centre for Open and Distance Learning (CODL) of the University of Kelaniya established in 1993 offers external degree programmes⁶ in a variety of subjects and LIS is offered as a subject for the three year Bachelor of Arts degree. The mission of the CODL is “to achieve excellence in providing learners with opportunities to develop knowledge, attitudes and skills to serve the world with respect for dignity of life” (University of Kelaniya Sri Lanka 2009a). All the administrative functions are handled by the CODL while academic activities such as the provision of the syllabi and assessments are handled by the Department of LIS. The External Degree Programmes and Extension Services Unit (EDPESU) of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka offers a Certificate programme in LIS. The mission of EDPESU is “to disseminate knowledge to the external students and assist them to achieve an academic or professional qualification through distance education and to co-ordinate, supervise and bring the administration of all external degree programmes, diplomas, certificate courses and extension courses under one unit to ensure quality and standards of these programmes” (Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka 2006).

The Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) is the major professional organisation offering LIS education in the non university sector. Its mission is “to act as the pivotal professional body for library, documentation and information services in the country, by providing library education programmes, setting professional standards, fostering co-operation between all individuals and organizations interested in the welfare of libraries, acting as the forum for the exchange of ideas among members of the association,

⁶ Domestic public universities can accommodate only about 14% of those who are eligible for university education in a given year (UGC 2005). There is a large number of students therefore seek learning opportunities as external students. Usually they are not formally taught or provided with library and other facilities within a university. For a nominal fee they are provided with course syllabi and recommended texts. Annual end of academic year examinations are held and according to the established rules and regulations students can obtain a degree after three or four years. These external degree programmes are offered through the External Degree Programme Units but there are wide disparities between the curricula of the external programmes and internal programmes.

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safeguarding and promoting the rights, privileges and status of librarians and information scientists and playing a leadership role in chartering the course of future library needs in the country” (SLLA 2007).

The second group of organisations which offers LIS education in the non-university sector is the National Colleges of Education (NCOEs). The empirical survey revealed that out of 17 NCOEs scattered across the country, Jaffna (Northern Province)⁷, Pasdunrata (Western Province) and Mahaweli (Central Province) NCOEs offer LIS as a major subject for two academic years while twelve other colleges⁸ offer it as a 40 hour general compulsory module (TETD 1997) for all student teachers. Batticaloa and Vavuniya NCOEs do not offer LIS education programme at all. Their mission is to produce vocationally competent teachers who can contribute to universal social development through pre-service and continuing education.

In the university sector, only NILIS and the Dept. of LIS have a specially oriented mission towards LIS education and therefore will be defined as Library Schools (LSs) in the context of this paper. In FGS/UK, FGS/Jfn, CODL and EDPEU LIS education is not given any particular emphasis over the other disciplines therefore they will be defined simply as LIS Education Providers (LISEPs). In the non-university sector, the mission and objectives of SLLA and NCOEs are not solely oriented towards LIS education hence they are also classified here as LISEPs.

Current LIS Education Programmes

The empirical survey determined that 24 LIS education programmes are being conducted in Sri Lanka at present and these programmes, together with the institutes which offer them, are listed in Table 2. Analysis of the academic standards of these programmes indicated that there are six levels of programmes ranging from certificate to postgraduate degrees.

Six certificate courses were identified (Table 3): Course on Library Automation (COLA), Certificate in School Librarianship (CSL), Certificate in Teacher Librarianship (CTL), Certificate in Public Librarianship (CPL), Mandatory Training Programme (MTP) and Certificate in LIS (CLIS). While four of them are conducted by NILIS, one each is conducted by the SLLA and EDPEU (Table 1). The main objective of introducing these certificate programmes is to provide basic qualifications in the specific topic as the course title denotes. The CSL, CTL, CPL and CLIS also intend to draw those who have secured employment in libraries without any prior qualifications in librarianship⁹ to the

⁷ Sri Lanka is divided into nine administrative provinces as North, West, South, East, Central, North Central, North West, Sabaragamuwa and Uva and each province consists of 2 or 3 districts.

⁸ Addalachenai, Dharga Town, Hapitigama, Nilwala, Pulathispura, Ruhuna, Ruwanpura, Sariputta, Siyane, Sri Pada, Uva and Wayamba NCOEs.

⁹ Public and school library systems are comparatively larger than other types of libraries and scattered throughout the country. There is an established recruitment scheme for professional staff but not for the lower grades like library attendants and labourers. Hence recruitments are made to these grades in an ad hoc manner mainly as a political strategy of providing youth employment. In 2006 and 2007 applicants for CSL and DLIM of NILIS revealed this status and in 2007, 500 youths were recruited as “Library Workers” to the Schools of the Western Province on daily-paid basis. These individuals sometimes do not have the

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training programmes. Admission requirements of the certificate programmes vary from “no emphasis on academic qualifications” to bachelor’s degrees as depicted in Table 3. To suit the nature of the target group, course duration is only six months in all programmes; classes are conducted over the weekend so that the participants do not have to depend on duty leave. Participations are offered at a low cost and without the burden of examinations (except in CLIS which conducts an end-of programme written examination). MTP programme provides a basic training in teaching, learning and assessment to the Assistant Librarians of the universities and therefore it has higher admission requirements as well as academic standards, but the course duration is similar to other certificate courses.

Table 2: Current LIS Programmes and Providers

Courses offered	Institute	Affiliation
1. Certificate in School Librarianship	National Institute of Library & Information Sciences (NILIS)	University of Colombo
2. Certificate in Teacher Librarianship		
3. Certificate in Public Librarianship		
4. Mandatory Training Programme for University Asst. Librarians		
5. Diploma in Teacher Librarianship		
6. Diploma in English for LIS Professionals		
7. Diploma in Library and Information Management		
8. PG Diploma in LIS		
9. PG Diploma in Teacher Librarianship		
10. Master of LIS		
11. Master of Teacher Librarianship		
12. Master of Philosophy leading to PhD		
13. Higher Diploma in LIS	Department of Library & Information Science (DLIS)	Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Kelaniya
14. BA (General) – LIS as a subject for three years	Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS)	University of Kelaniya
15. BA (Special) – LIS as the specialization for		
16. MA (Library Science)	Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS)	University of Kelaniya
17. Master of Social Science (Library Science)		
18. Doctor of Philosophy	Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS)	University of Jaffna
19. PG Diploma in LIS		
20. BA (General External) (LIS as a subject)	Centre for Open & Distance Learning (CODL)	University of Kelaniya
21. Certificate in LIS	External Degree Programmes and Extension Services Unit (EDPESU)	University of Sabaragamuwa
22. Diploma in Library & Information Science	Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA)	Independent organisation
23. Course in Library Automation		
24. National Diploma in Teaching (LIS as a major subject)	National Colleges of Education (NCOE)	Ministry of Education

required minimum academic qualifications to enrol in a long term LIS programme. Because they are not permanent workers, their employers do not provide leave or financial support for their studies.

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Table 3: Certificate Programmes

Course	Year started	Target Group	Admission Requirements
COLA	1992	Any one interested in the application of IT in libraries	No specific requirements. Anyone who is interested can join.
CSL	2003	School Library workers who are recruited without any LIS qualifications. Mainly for those who do not have the necessary entry requirements to enter the three tier programmes but have secured permanent employment in a school library and for those who do not engage in long term study for personal reasons.	Current employment in a school library.
CTL	2004	Teachers who are looking after school libraries without any LIS qualifications'	Permanent Appointment as a school teacher and work experience in a school library
MTP	2004	Senior Asst. Librarians and Asst. Librarians of university libraries who are graduates	Permanent Appointment as an Asst. Librarian of a university library. The minimum qualification required to join as Asst. Librarians is a Bachelors degree with a First or Second class pass.
CPL	2006	Public Library workers who have no LIS qualifications. Mainly for those who do not have the necessary entry requirements to enter the three tier programmes but have secured permanent employment in a public library for those who do not engage in long term study for personal reasons.	Applicants must be over 18 years by the time they apply AND with Three passes at GCE/AL examination. Those who are working in a Library/Information Centre and have a minimum of six months work experience can apply if they have gained 6 passes at GCE/OL examination. Number of sittings is not considered
CLIS	2007	Young secondary school leavers in the region or anyone who needs a short term training in general librarianship.	Two years work experience in a library OR five six passes at GCE/OL in one sitting including five credits.

The survey identified six diploma programmes being conducted at present: Diploma in LIS (DIPLIS), Higher Diploma in LIS (HDLIS), National Diploma in Teaching (NDT) with LIS as a major, Diploma in Teacher Librarianship (DTL), Diploma in Library and Information Management (DLIM) and Diploma in English for LIS professionals (DELIS). Of these six diploma programmes three are conducted by NILIS while the SLLA, Dept. of LIS and the NCOEs conduct one programme each. The duration of the programmes varies from one year (DTL and DELIS), two years (NDT) and three years (DIPLIS, HDLIS and DLIM) on part time mode. The admission requirements of the diploma programmes indicate that some (DIPLIS, HDLIS, DLIM and NDT) are designed for school leavers while certain others (DELIS and DTL) are designed for practicing librarians. Admissions to the NDT with a specialisation in LIS are made according to the Z-score¹⁰ of the year applicable for enrolments

¹⁰ The 'z-score' technique is used to rank students in each stream/ discipline. This is a statistical method which brings marks of different subjects to a common and comparable standard. Once the raw marks are converted to the Z-score using this technique it is possible to use either the aggregates or the averages to rank the students in each stream irrespective of the nature of subjects/ syllabi/ number of subjects. (UGC 2005). Admissions to the NCOEs are made according to the Z score rank by the Ministry of Education. In addition to the Z score it is necessary for the students to stay unmarried during the period

Table 4: Diploma Programmes

Course	Year started	Objective	Admission Requirements
DIPLIS	1961	To provide a formal education in LIS as the oldest LIS programme in Sri Lanka and to provide this education in all languages and in many centres as much as possible.	Three passes at GCE/AL AND a passes for GCE/OL English. OR 6 passes at GCE/OL including mathematics and English and 3 years work experience in a recognised library
HDLIS	1977	To provide a formal education in LIS and to provide this education in a university environment	Three passes at GCE/AL and a pass for GCE/OL English AND work experience.
NDT (LIS as a major subject)	1997	To offer LIS as a specialized subject for student teachers so that they can serve as Teacher Librarians.	Z score applicable to current year
DTL	2003	To provide a broad understanding of the principles of Teacher Librarianship, the organisation and management of school library and information centres and of handling, storage and retrieval of information in all media.	Training College Certificate and work experience in a school library
DLIM	2003	To expand the higher educational opportunities using the available facilities at NILIS, at tertiary level. To provide an employment oriented training for the young school leavers. To provide students with a sound understanding of the nature and role of information, information resources and services in the private and the public sectors and how they relate to managerial theories.	Three passes at GCE/AL and a pass for GCE/OL English. (For those who are already holding permanent employment in libraries, GCE (OL) English is not essential).
DELIS	2006	To improve the English Language competency of the Library and Information Professionals of Sri Lanka.	Three years full time work experience, in a recognized Library or Information Centre AND a simple pass in English at GCE (OL) examination OR Students following a recognized LIS programme at NILIS or any other recognized body.

Table 5 indicates that three bachelor's programmes are offered at the undergraduate level. BA (General) and BA (Special) programmes are accessible to those who gain necessary qualifications to enter the university as regular students¹¹. BA (General

of study; marriage will result in cancellation of registration. Once selected, they also have to confirm in writing that they will not compete for a place in a Sri Lankan public university (Jayasena 2002).

¹¹ Admissions to universities are achieved on a highly competitive basis on the rank order of Z score obtained by the candidates at the GCE/AL examination. In 2002, the Z score method was introduced for student selection. The 'z-score' technique is used to rank students in each stream/ discipline. This is a statistical method which brings marks of different subjects to a common and comparable standard. Once the raw marks are converted to the Z-score using this technique it is possible to use either the aggregates or the averages to rank the students in each stream irrespective of the nature of subjects/ syllabi/ number of subjects. (UGC 2005).

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External) programme is offered for those who do not gain entry to university as full time students. A noticeable fact is that all bachelor's degree programmes are offered by the institutions affiliated to University of Kelaniya.

Table 5: Bachelor's Degree Programmes

Course	Year started	Objective	Admission Requirements
BA (General)	1973	To offer LIS as a subject at undergraduate level	Z score applicable to current year
BA (Special)	1973	To offer LIS in depth as a subject at undergraduate special degree level	
BA (General External)	1998	To offer LIS as a subject at undergraduate level	Three passes at GCE/AL in one sitting OR DIPLIS or HDLIS certificate

Three PG diploma programmes are offered currently: PG Diploma in Teacher Librarianship (PGTL), PG Diploma in LIS conducted by NILIS (PGLIS) and the FGS of the University of Jaffna (PGLIS/Jfn). As indicated in Table 6, the minimum entry requirement is the same for all three programmes. All these programmes are conducted in part time mode so that the target group (working librarians) or employed others can attend the classes on weekends. Although PGLIS is opened for anyone who wants to study LIS, PGTL is only designed for school teachers or teacher librarians who are in charge of school libraries.

Table 6: Postgraduate Diploma Programmes

Course	Year started	Objectives	Admission requirements
PGLIS	2003	To provide a broad understanding of the principles of Library and Information Science, the organisation and management of libraries and information centres and of handling, storage and retrieval of information in all media.	A bachelor's degree in any discipline awarded by any recognized university
PGTL	2003	To prepare graduate teachers to perform at the initial professional level in Teacher Librarianship and to provide the basis for further professional career needs.	
PGLIS/Jfn (Jaffna)	2006	To provide the intellectual and professional foundation for careers in LIS and the skills and competencies in the management of information resources and services	

Table 7 indicates that at present, four Masters programmes are offered in Sri Lanka: Master of LIS (MLS)¹², Master of Art (Library Science) (MA), Master of Social Science (Library Science) (MSSc) and Master of Teacher Librarianship (MTL). Two of these

¹² MLS which is the oldest masters programme in LIS has been offered by the FGS, University of Colombo since 1993 and was transferred to NILIS in 2007

programmes are conducted by NILIS while the other two are conducted by the Dept. of LIS (Table 2). The admission requirements depict that MLS lays emphasis on academic achievements and one year work experience, while MSSc emphasises prior LIS qualifications. The main objective of the introduction of the MSSc and MA by the Dept. of LIS is to provide higher learning opportunities for LIS professionals in the Sinhala medium since the MLS of Colombo is conducted only in the English medium. While anyone who is interested in LIS can enrol for the MA programme, MLS and MSSc are limited to those with working experience in a library or prior qualifications in LIS. MTL is specifically offered for Teacher Librarians. While MLS is conducted in full time mode, others are conducted in both fulltime and part time modes for the students' convenience.

Table 7: Masters Degree Programmes

Course	Year started	Objectives	Admission requirements
MLS	1993	To provide an educational opportunity for those who need a two years Masters Degree with a research component for their promotions and would like to study in English medium.	1st or 2nd class honours in Special/General Degree in any field of study OR Bachelor's Degree with Postgraduate Degree or Diploma in any field of study OR Bachelor's Degree with ASLLA or equivalent in Library and Information Science AND One year work experience in a recognised library AND a good working knowledge of English
MA (LS)	1994	To provide an educational opportunity for those who need to gain higher qualifications but do need to obtain a two years Masters Degree with a research component.	A Bachelor's degree in any discipline awarded by any recognized higher educational institution.
MSSc	1994	To provide an educational opportunity for those who need a two years Masters Degree with a research component for their promotions and need to study in Sinhala medium.	General / Special Degree in LIS OR a General / special Degree [in any discipline] AND 1 year experience in a recognised library OR General / Special Degree and Advanced Certificate of University of Kelaniya or Final Certificate of the SLLA.
MTL	2003	To provide a broad understanding of the principles of Teacher Librarianship, the organisation and management of school library and information centres and of handling, storage and retrieval of information in all media	A Bachelor's Degree in Education or LIS with a first or upper division pass, awarded by a recognized higher educational institution OR A Bachelor's Degree in any discipline awarded from a recognized higher educational institution AND PGLIS/PGTL awarded by University of Colombo OR any other Postgraduate Diploma or Degree awarded by a recognized higher educational institution. OR A Bachelor's Degree in any discipline awarded from a recognized higher educational institution AND HDLIS of University of Kelaniya or equivalent or higher qualification awarded by the SLLA or equivalent professional body. AND A permanent appointment as a Teacher or a Teacher Librarian and work experience in a school library.

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As indicated in Table 8 two research degree programmes are available. Dept. of LIS offers a PhD in which candidates can enrol directly if they have a Masters degree and the required experience in the area. NILIS offers an MPhil programme which can be upgraded to PhD after 18 months of satisfactory work. Only those who already possess an MPhil can enrol for the PhD at NILIS.

Table 8: Research Degree Programmes

Course	Target Group	Objectives	Admission requirements
MPhil	Any LIS professional with Masters in LIS or a relevant field who wishes to obtain a research degree.	University Librarians staff have limited opportunities for higher research degrees. So far only a few has completed PhD in Library & Information Science (LIS) in Sri Lanka. There have been a number of requests made to NILIS to commence an MPhil / PhD programme. MPhil / PhD programme is offered to fill this void.	A two year masters degree in a relevant field with a substantial research component from a recognised University, OR A four year Bachelor's Degree in a relevant field with a first or second class (Honours) from a recognised University OR A Bachelor's Degree and a Postgraduate Diploma / Degree in a relevant field from a recognised University and a minimum of three years full time work experience in a recognized Library or Information Centre.
PhD (NILIS)	Those who already have an MPhil in LIS or a relevant field and wishes to obtain a PhD		Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) in a relevant field from a recognised university where the study programme is not less than two years in duration.
PhD (DLIS/UK)	Any LIS professional with Masters in LIS or a relevant field who wishes to obtain a research degree		Not publicly advertised yet. Three senior academics of the university are enrolled in the current batch.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study found that there are eight LIS education providers in Sri Lanka and they can be categorized into three criteria based on: a) their affiliations as government (all LIS educational organizations except the SLLA) and non government (the SLLA)); b) the type of organizations they are affiliated to as university sector (CODL, Dept. of LIS, EDPESU, FGS/UK, FGS/Jfn and NILIS) and non university sector (NCOEs and the SLLA); and c) their mission; the Library Schools (LSs) which have a specially oriented mission towards LIS education (Dept. of LIS and NILIS) and the LIS Education Providers (LISEPs) whose sole mission is not LIS education (FGS/UK, FGS/Jfn, CODL and EDPESU, SLLA and the NCOEs).

A total of 24 programmes at six different academic levels, varying from certificate to postgraduate level, were identified: six Certificate programmes, six Diploma programmes, three Bachelors programmes, three PG Diploma programmes, four Masters programmes and two research degree programmes. The varying levels of programmes offered indicate that the Sri Lankan LIS education system has reached a mature level. Diversification of programme levels has been identified as having advantages because it increases the range of choices available for students, matches education to the needs and abilities of the individual students, enables and protects specialisation within the system, and meets the demand of an increasingly complex social order (Meek 2001). However, the diversification of LIS education in Sri Lanka is at the certificate and diploma level. At bachelor's degree level no such opportunities

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prevail. At the postgraduate level only two options are offered; Teachers Librarianship or general LIS programmes, however the enrolment at Teacher Librarianship programmes are limited only to teachers and teacher librarians. There needs to be more diversification at the bachelor's and postgraduate level so that higher levels of LIS professionals are produced in a variety of specialties to cater to different groups of information users from various domains.

The most significant observation with regard to the LIS education providers is the absence of any co-ordinating body for the LIS education system. Library schools and LIS education provider seem to act according to their own rules and regulation, without any national approach to LIS education. It is strongly recommended that a co-ordinating national body is identified so that LIS education in Sri Lanka is offered in a more relevant and organised manner.

Out of eight organisations offering LIS education programmes six exist under the university system therefore it is recommended that any co-ordinating body emerge from the university sector. Any other organisation would give the impression of a lower rank to the universities and would not be able to advise or guide the library schools and the LIS education providers affiliated to the highest seats of learning in Sri Lanka. It is suggested that the current Standing Committee of Library and Information Studies (SCOLIS) which is set up under the auspices of the UGC, to serve as the co-ordinating body for LIS education for the following reasons:

- a) Standing Committees for various disciplines are established within the UGC with the objectives of supporting UGC members in the advancement of university education in these particular disciplines. SCOLIS was similarly established with the objective of supporting the library and information services within the university sector.
- b) A member of the University Grants Commission, who is always a senior professor with higher levels of academic and administrative experience in the university sector, serves as the chairman of SCOLIS. As a result top level support from the UGC and the Ministry of Higher Education is always available for the activities of SCOLIS.
- c) Heads of the two library schools (Director/NILIS and the Head of the Dept. of LIS) and the two librarians (Universities of Jaffna and Sabaragamuwa) who are co-ordinators of two LIS programmes, are members of SCOLIS. It is through their affiliation to SCOLIS that these LIS educational institutes had already followed the decisions of this committee.
- d) In addition to the LIS professionals mentioned above, all the other University Librarians, and some of the LIS professionals holding prominent positions in the library sector (Director General of the NLDSB, Director/Information of the NSF, Director/Information of the Unites Stated Information Centre, Chief Librarian of the Colombo Public Library, and one or two other senior LIS professionals also serve as UGC nominees) are already members of the SCOLIS. Therefore the need to establish a new body does not arise.
- e) Membership of SCOLIS can be further strengthened by inviting the President to represent the SLLA. Rather than undertaking programmes and working in isolation, a relationship with SCOLIS will provide additional support to the SLLA in its development endeavours.

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- f) Exceptions will be given to the NCOEs. However, SCOLIS and the UGC as well as the NCOEs are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education (although sometimes two Ministries are formed for education and higher education). Therefore, through the Ministry of Education the Commissioner of the NCOES could be invited to join SCOLIS so that the NCOEs are represented.
- g) Both Indian and Pakistani UGCs have made significant contributions to the development of LIS education in these two countries and their support could be obtained for Sri Lanka if such a co-ordinating body is established under SCOLIS.

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