



# NATNET LANKA

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### நற்றெநற் லங்கா

Newsletter on Library and Information Networks in Sri Lanka

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இலங்கை நூலக தகவல் விஞ்ஞான வலையமைப்பு தொடர்பான செய்திப்பிரசுரம்

National Library of Sri Lanka, No. 14, Independence Avenue, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka

Vol. 1 No. 1

ISSN 1391-2658

July, 1997

### Chairman's Message

It is with great pleasure that I issue this message to the inaugural issue of the Natnet Lanka Newsletter. Natnet Lanka - the National Library Network of Sri Lanka - was formed in 1996 to co-ordinate the activities of library networks in Sri Lanka. Library networks in Sri Lanka has had fluctuating fortunes during the last few decades. We have witnessed the rise and fall of a number of networks while some networks never moved beyond the starting point. The paucity of both qualified and quality librarians, financial difficulties, insufficient co-operation from participating libraries, lack of vision and enthusiasm at the focal points can be cited as some reasons for the failures of many library networks. As the premier government organisation in the library field the National Library considers it a duty to assist library networks and are indeed encouraged by the response to this endeavour from almost all library networks. This newsletter will serve as the official newsletter of Natnet Lanka, through which we hope to give publicity to activities of all library networks. We strongly believe that library services must be given maximum publicity in order to give optimum benefit to the users. Unfortunately activities of library networks in Sri Lanka are generally not known outside of the respective networks. We hope that this newsletter will strive to correct this situation.

I must thank the Director, National Library of Sri Lanka for initiating the Natnet Lanka Project and Ms Janaki Fernando for the compilation of the newsletter. I also thank all others who assisted in this project.

Henry Samaranayake  
Chairman.  
Sri Lanka National Library  
Services Board

### Introduction to Library and Information Networks in Sri Lanka

#### LOCAL NETWORKS

#### SLSTINET

Sri Lanka Scientific and Technical Information Network (SLSTINET) being the first library network in Sri Lanka, was formally established in 1979. Subject coverage is mainly Science and Technology. This network was started with 30 libraries and the number of participating libraries has now increased up to 120. SLSTIC (Sri Lanka Scientific and Technical Information Centre) of NARESA (Natural Resources Energy and Science Authority of Sri Lanka) serves as the focal point. Development of UNICAST (Union Catalogue of Scientific and Technical Books) and UNILIST (Union List of Scientific and Technical Periodicals) computerised databases, Co-operative Acquisition for Abstracting and

Indexing Journals in the field, Inter-Library Loans, Dissemination of Scientific and Technical Information, conducting training programmes, meetings, seminars and workshops, on-line search facilities and Internet search facilities are some of the activities of the SLSTINET. Since 1981 SLSTINET newsletter was published bi-monthly. SLSTINET Newsletter has ceased its publishing in 1991. Arrangements have been made to publicise SLSTINET news in the NARESA newsletter.

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### HELLIS

The Health Science Library Literature and Information System was organised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as an information project for the developing countries. Priority was given to develop HELLIS at the national level. National focal points were established in Bangladesh, Burma, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand and Sri Lanka. Each country is required to organise a national network under the project. Health Literature Libraries and Information Services (HELLIS) Sri Lanka is the local network which is another sub-network of SLSTINET, established in 1979. The University of Colombo, Medical Library (UCML) is the focal point of the network. Subject coverage is Medicine and Health. Network consists of 20 libraries. Some activities of the network are : collection and dissemination of health information; provide access to information on Health

Research, Health Policy and Plans, Medical Information Reports and bibliographical data; provide access to literature on Allopathy and Ayurveda, Community Health and Health Education; referral services, photocopies of articles on request, Inter-library loans, Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI); access to MEDLINE (Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System), compilation of bibliographies and Indexes; training courses, workshops and seminars for librarians and users in the HELLIS Sri Lanka Network.

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### AGRINET

Agricultural Information Network (AGRINET) was formed in 1982 as a sub-network of SLSTINET. Subject coverage is Agriculture. The network activities were coordinated by NARESA and Coconut Research Institute respectively from 1982 to 1994. Since 1995 Council for Agricultural Research Policy Library (CARP) is serving as the focal point of the network. The network started with 24 libraries and at present the membership increased up to 35 libraries. Selective Dissemination of contents page (SDCP) service, provide photocopies of journal articles, Inter library loans, literature

search services, compilation of specialized subject bibliographies, user seminars, rationalisation of periodicals, conduct meetings, seminars and workshops are the main network activities. Publications-Bibliography on Pineapple has been published. Compilation of bibliographies on Banana, Mango, Papaya, Goat and

National Agricultural Bibliography of Sri Lanka are in progress.

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#### **ENLINET**

Environmental Library Network (ENLINET) was formed in 1994 as a sub-network of SLSTINET by the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) Library. Subject coverage is environment and the network consists of libraries attached to organizations interested in environmental matters. The CEA library functions as the focal point. At present the network consists of 19 libraries. Development of Union Catalogue of Environmental Books (UNICEB) database and Union List of Environmental Periodicals (UNILEP) database, compilation of Contents Page Bulletin, Selective Dissemination of Contents Page (SDCP) service, conduct meetings, seminars and workshops are some of the network activities. Publications of the network are Union Catalogue of Environmental Books, Environmental Contents and Newspaper Article Index on Environment.

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#### **INNESS**

The Information Network in Social Sciences (INNESS) was formed in 1991, mainly for the non-governmental sector, enabling the collaborating libraries to share their resources related to social sciences. Special emphasis was given to subject areas such as Women's Education and Employment, Policy Studies, Labour, Finance, Law, Environment and Agriculture. This network serves the community of social scientists and facilitates the flow of information. It also co-operates in making available bibliographical information related to gray literature. Marga Institute Library is the focal point of the network which consists of 18 libraries. Five (05) of them are member libraries and other 13 were given the status of associate member. Provides contents pages of the journals to the member libraries of the network. Publications - INNESS Newsletter - a quarterly publication.

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#### **NATIONAL INFORMATION NETWORK ON EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA**

In order to fill a gap for the long felt need of an information network in the field of education in Sri Lanka, the National Institute of Education (NIE) initiated the establishment of the National Information Network on Education in Sri Lanka in 1995. The main objective of the network is to

strengthen information exchange in the field of Education. The network consists of 17 libraries involved in the field of education. National Institute of Education serves as the focal point. Contents page service, current awareness service, CD-ROM and Internet search facilities are some of the network activities. Network news are included in the NIE journals.

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### **NATNET LANKA**

The National Library Network of Sri Lanka, NATNET LANKA was formed in 1996 as the umbrella network of library networks in Sri Lanka. The National Library of Sri Lanka is the focal point of the network and all library networks in the country are members of NATNET LANKA.

The objectives of the network include Improving co-operation among library networks, assisting new and comparatively weak networks, co-ordinating training programmes and assisting library networks to improve their activities and performances etc. Publication NATNET LANKA Newsletter.

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## **REGIONAL NETWORKS**

### **DEVINSA**

Development Information Network on South Asia. The Committee on Studies for Co-operation in Development in South Asia (CSDS) with the collaboration of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) took an important initiative of establishing the Development Information Network on South Asia (DEVINSA) project. The DEVINSA project became operational in 1986. The Marga Institute, Colombo was designated as the co-ordinating centre, and the national focal points of the CSDS Member institutions of the South Asian countries namely, Bangladeshi Institute of Development Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University and National Institute of Rural Development India, Ministry of Planning and Environment Maldives, Central Library Tribhuvan University Nepal, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics provide bibliographic data to the Marga Institute.

Although the main purpose of DEVINSA is to establish a regional network for sharing Socio-economic bibliographic information among the participating members, it is expected to provide services and products to various categories of users such as researchers, policy makers, development planners and providers of information. A computerised regional database of bibliographical information on socio-economic development in South Asia, has been created by the Marga Institute under the DEVINSA Network. This database contains data primarily on " shadow literature " eg. reports, theses, working papers, conference papers, research studies and so forth; which are mostly unpublished. The national focal points of South Asian countries provided bibliographic data to the Marga Institute which is the co-ordinating centre of DEVINSA. DEVINSA with 14,000 records in its database has

introduced another service named marketing of information. Marketing strategies include : the compilation of information packages on selected topics of current interest, training and consultancy services, and export of parts of the database to interested information centres. Emphasis is put on marketing of information with the aim of making DEVINSA self sustainable.

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### CINSA

Cultural Information Network for South Asia. The Central Cultural Fund (CCF) with the collaboration of the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology (PGIAR) of the University of Kelaniya and the Architectural Conservation on Monuments and Sites (ACOMAS) unit of the University of Moratuwa commenced building up a Cultural Information Network for South Asia (CINSA) in 1993. One of the objectives of the network is to create a database for cultural information in the SAARC region. This database will cover archaeology, museology, applied arts, performing arts and other miscellaneous cultural activities.

Central Cultural Fund is the Focal point of this network and it consists of 28 libraries in Sri Lanka as participants.. Publication - CINSA Cultural Abstracts.

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### APINESS

Asia-Pacific Information Network in Social Sciences (APINESS) was created at the Regional Expert Meeting on Social Science Information and Documentation held in Bangkok in 1986. APINESS was setup to break up information isolation and to promote the exchange of information and Documentation related to Social Sciences within the Asia-Pacific Region. The Regional Focal Point of this network is the Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia Pacific located in Bangkok and the National Library of Sri Lanka is the national focal point of APINESS. The APINESS Regional Network consists of 16 member countries and the APINESS National Network consists of 26 major social science libraries in Sri Lanka as participating centres. Activities of the National Focal Point of the APINESS Network are as follows: collection building on social sciences; compilation of the Sri Lanka National Bibliography (current and retrospective); compilation and publication of subject and specialised Bibliographies; Indexes and Directories; compilation of the National Union Catalogue; compilation of the Sri Lanka Newspaper Article Index; Referral Services; Documentation on Devolution of Power and Ethnic Conflict; provides training; conduct meetings, seminars and workshops; coordination of Networks in Sri Lanka.

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### **APINMAP**

Asian-Pacific Information Network on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (APINMAP) was established in 1987 as a Regional based network. This network is primarily designed in assisting the member countries for the improvement of their capability in collecting, processing, disseminating and using research information and data on medicinal and aromatic plants. The APINMAP Regional network centre is the Agriculture Information Bank for Asia (AIBA) in Philippines and it consists of 11 countries. The National Focal Point of Sri Lanka is the Ceylon Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research (CISIR). Each National Focal Point is creating bibliographic databases on Medicinal and Aromatic plants and the information is sent to the regional network centre. These databases are consolidated as a regional database by AIBA. It's available in diskette.

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### **OSHINET**

Occupational Safety and Health Information Network (OSHINET) was established in 1995 as a Regional Based Network. The Libraries and Institutions related to the field of Occupational Safety and Health are the members of this network. Asia-Pacific Regional network consists of over 24 participating countries and the territory of Honkong. The Regional Focal Point is the International Labour Organisation (ILO) - Asia-Pacific Regional Programme on Occupational Safety and Health (ASIA-OSH) in Bangkok. The National Network consists of 14 participants. Library of the Division of Occupational Hygiene of the Department of Labour is the Focal Point of the network. Publications: the Sri Lanka Occupational Safety and Health Information Network Newsletter and the Organisational Profile of the National Network participants.

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### **WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS (January/March)**

#### **FIRST WORKSHOP ON ABIA**

The Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology (PGIAR) in collaboration with the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) of the Netherlands is planning to establish a database connected with the ABIA (Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology). The first workshop on ABIA was held at the PGIAR from 14-16 January, 1997. Delegates from Netherlands, India, Thailand, Indonesia and Sri Lanka participated at the workshop.

### **WORKSHOP ON CDS/ISIS FOR NETWORK LIBRARIANS IN SRI LANKA**

NATNET LANKA conducted a three day workshop on CDS/ISIS for Librarians of the Library Networks in Sri Lanka, at the National Library of Sri Lanka from 20 - 22 January, 1997. Sixteen (16) participants from twelve (12) networks attended the workshop.

### **SLSTINET ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1996**

The 1996 Annual General Meeting of the SLSTINET was held on 31 January, 1997 at the NARESA auditorium. Fifty representatives of the network member libraries participated at the meeting.

13 Members have been appointed for the SLSTINET subcommittee. A suggestion was made to conduct series of short seminars on various subjects such as E'mail and Internet, library management ect.

### **SAARC REGION EXPERT GROUP MEETING**

A meeting of the Expert Group on National Data Bases and establishment of Cultural Information Network in the

SAARC Region was held at the Holiday Inn, Colombo from 10-13 February, 1997. Four SAARC countries namely- India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka participated.

The main purpose of the three day seminar was to discuss the progress and modalities of establishing national data bases and operation of a network system on cultural information.

The Expert Group unanimously agreed at the following Recommendations : to have an annual meeting to deliberate on the progress of National Databases and cultural Information network; to promote research and training in the area of cultural information networking; to compile a directory of experts and Institutions on culture in the SAARC Region; to establish focal points in each SAARC member country for the establishment of the cultural Information network.

The meeting was jointly organised by the SAARC Secretariat, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Cultural and Religious Affairs of Sri Lanka and sponsored by the Central Cultural Fund and the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology of Sri Lanka.

Please send information on Seminars,  
Workshops, Training programmes and,  
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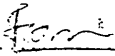
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