

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)

Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

---

August 2013

## Public Libraries in Jaffna District, Sri Lanka - Challenges

Kalpana Chandrasekar  
kchandrasekar68@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

Chandrasekar, Kalpana, "Public Libraries in Jaffna District, Sri Lanka - Challenges" (2013). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 957.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/957>

## **Public Libraries in Jaffna District, Sri Lanka - Challenges**

**Author** : Kalpana Chandrasekar

**Qualifications** : B Sc(Hons.) (Jaffna), MSc(LIS) (Madras), M.Phil.(Biochemistry) (Jaffna)

**Designation** : Senior Assistant Librarian

**Affiliation** : University of Jaffna, Jaffna, Sri Lanka

**Postal address** : 180/4 Sir.Pon.Ramanathan road, Thirunelvely, Jaffna

**E-mail address for correspondence:** [kchandrasekar68@gmail.com](mailto:kchandrasekar68@gmail.com)

**Contact telephone number(s)** : 0212224626 (Residence); 0212227425 (Office)

**Fax number** : 0212226067

## Public Libraries in Jaffna District, Sri Lanka - Challenges

### Abstract

Establishment of public libraries is regarded as one of the essential amenities of the local or central government of a nation since they enhance the idea of free and equal access to information and offers their collections and services to all members of the community. This study revealed the present status of the public libraries in the Jaffna District. Apart from the Jaffna Public Library, which is managed by the Jaffna Municipal Council and provide services to the whole Jaffna District, presently there are 03 Urban Council libraries, 13 Pradeshiya Sabha libraries and 907 Community Center libraries, which cater the needs of the general public of the respective areas in the Jaffna District. Conflict situation which prevailed in the region for the past 30 years severely affected the library services, too. After signing the MOU between the Government of Sri Lanka and LTTE in 2002, many foreign and local Non-governmental organisations and United Nations agencies started to reconstruct and develop some of the public libraries of Jaffna District with the foreign funded projects. This study identified the major challenges for these public libraries, at present. Those are insufficient funding and inadequate infrastructure facilities, poor collection of e-resources and use of IT, dearth of professional and personal competencies among library staff, poor participation in CPD programs, lack of interest and motivation from authorities, and absence of library cooperation. It is recommended to have advocacy programs for all the stakeholders of these public libraries, adopt modern e-technology services in the library functionalities, organise regular user education programs for readers with regard to library services, conduct CPD programs and training sessions especially for the enhancement of professional and personal competencies among librarians of this region, and establish a *library consortia* to coordinate the activities of the libraries in the Jaffna District. With this type of support, public libraries of this region are expected to survive, and also thrive in continuing to provide valuable service in the information age.

**Keywords:** Public libraries; Challenges to libraries; Public libraries – Sri Lanka

# Public Libraries in Jaffna District, Sri Lanka - Challenges

## 1. Introduction

Libraries play a vital role in transmitting knowledge to individuals, which pave the path towards the development of the nation with the help of knowledge-based society. In the modern civilized societies the establishment of public libraries is regarded as one of the essential amenities that the local or central government should provide to its people. The UNESCO manifesto on Public libraries proclaims UNESCO's belief in the public library as "*a living force for education, culture and information and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women*". In order to achieve this goal, UNESCO encourages national and local governments to support and actively engage in the development of public libraries (UNESCO, 2000). This study confined to the public libraries in the Jaffna District of Sri Lanka and assesses the present status and discusses the constraints in their progress. As a prelude to the study, an overview of the development of libraries in Jaffna is also presented.

## 2. Development of Libraries in Jaffna

The *Public library movement* of Sri Lanka began in the early nineteenth century with the establishment of subscription libraries. The *Colombo library* (in 1813) and *Pettah library* (in 1829) were the first of this kind in the country (Corea, 1980; Lankage, 1980). However, there is no historic evidence to support the history of development of libraries in Jaffna. Hence it is not possible to present any historical facts on this issue.

Literary evidence is available for the existence of a library named '*Saraswathi Mahal*' at Nallur during the reign of the Aryan Kingdom after the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D (Kularatnam, 1997). This is supported by two books, "*Eelanaddu Thamil Pulavar Chatzittizam*" written by Sri Kaneshiah and "*Yaalpaana Chatzittizam*" written by A. Muththuthambi pillai. Even though there is information that there was a collection of manuscripts at the *Saraswathi Mahal Library*, there is no documentary proof to authenticate this information. It is not ascertainable whether *Saraswathi Mahal* possessed the qualities of a modern library. Popular belief is that this library was destroyed by fire.

It is learnt that during the regime of King Pararajasekaram, the destroyed *Saraswathi Mahalayam* was renovated and books brought from India, making provisions for the people to make use of the books. This confirms that the

*Saraswathi Mahal Library* was functioning significantly, serving as a center of collection and preservation of manuscripts (rz;Kfjh];> 1986).

During the regime of foreign rule in Jaffna, though educational growth was ignored, yet propaganda of religious ideologies took firm roots. The churches functioned as schools propagating Christianity among the people. Books required for this purpose may have been preserved in such places. In religious educational centers like churches, convents and seminaries, religious books have been found. It is ascertainable that a library existed at the school established by the *Vaddukoddai Seminary* and that this library was recognised and praised as a valuable one in Jaffna.

In addition, personal collections of books of learned people were also found. But it is uncertain whether these centers use a well-organised body of library system catering the requirements of the ordinary people. The biography of SriLa Sri Arumuganavalar reveals that in addition to printing and publishing books on religious research, he was in possession of a collection of books depicting the traditions of Tamils and Hinduism in Jaffna.

The newspapers "*Uthaya Tharakai*" and "*Inthu Sadanam*" published in 1841 and 1869 respectively spread religious ideas and topics of general interest among the people (rz;Kfjh];> 1986). The first and only library science journal in Jaffna named "*Noolahaviyal*" (quarterly journal in Tamil) published by the Ayothi Library Services during the period of 1985-1991 is a landmark in the library movement in Jaffna. Apart from the publication of journal in the field of library and information science, Ayothi Library Services made valuable contributions to the field by conducting seminars, organising exhibitions and publishing books in library science. After 1991 the activities of Ayothi Library Services disrupted (including the publication of "*Noolahaviyal*") in Jaffna due to various constraints related to the conflict situation, which prevailed in the region.

### **3. Current Status of Public Libraries in the Jaffna District**

Usually, public libraries offer their collections and services to all members of the community/ the general public of a specific area, regardless of age, sex, religion, nationality, language, occupation, economic status, educational level or social status (UNESCO, 2000). These are called Municipal Libraries too. Public libraries enhance the idea

of free and equal access to information. So, Public libraries are considered guardians of the democratic principles of freedom, equality and individual rights (UNESCO, 2000).

In the Jaffna District, there are fifteen (15) administrative divisions (11 Divisional Secretariat divisions and four Assistant Government Agent divisions). Under these administrative divisions, there are 17 local bodies functioning in Jaffna District – one Municipal Council, three Urban Councils and 13 Predeshiya Sabhas (Table 1).

[Table 1]

These local bodies are engaged in the establishment and administration of public libraries in their area, in addition to their activities such as water supply and drainage, conducting health and maternity clinics, management of community centers, and construction of roads within their administrative limits (Jaffna District Secretariat, 2011).

The following three categories of public libraries are identified in the Jaffna District.

- Jaffna Public Library (managed by the Jaffna Municipal Council)
- Urban Council and Predeshiya Sabha Libraries (managed by the Urban Councils and Predeshiya Sabhas)
- Community Center Libraries (managed by the Local bodies and the community)

The status with regard to collection, funding, infrastructure facilities, staffing and readers of these three categories of public libraries existing in the Jaffna District were assessed by conducting semi-structured interviews (with LIS professionals and administrators of the Local authorities), observation method, and data available from secondary sources. The result of the assessment is presented below.

### **3.1 Jaffna Public Library**

This Library, one of the world-renowned libraries in South-East Asia was burnt down in 1981 on the eve of the District Development Council elections. The burnt library was considered as one of the finest libraries in South-East Asia with its priceless collection of 97,000 books and about 10,000 rare manuscripts (Selvarajah, 2003).

In 1999, the *Peoples' Alliance (PA) Government* allocated 120 Million rupees for the renovation of this library and used the reconstruction of the Jaffna Public Library as a symbol of the restoration of peace to the war torn North and a gesture to win the hearts and minds of the Jaffna people (Sivathamby, 2003). The renovation of the Library was completed in May 2003 and reopened with all its facilities to cater to the needs of the information and knowledge society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century on February 23, 2004. Eventually, after 23 years, phoenix-like the Jaffna

Public Library arose from its own ashes of the burnt library, as a symbol of immortality, the Jaffna man's cultural heritage. Presently, this library functions with five branches (located at Nallur, Vannarpannai, Kurunagar, Navanthurai, and Navalar cultural centre) in the Jaffna District.

### ***Collection***

Regarding the collection, there were about 97,000 valuable books, old newspapers, magazines and 10,000 rare manuscripts up to the torching of the library on June 1, 1981. Later, collection was gradually built up mainly through donations. Even though the collection was distributed among the branch libraries, some of these branches lost their collection during the 1987 and 1995 disturbances. Presently the library has a collection of more than 200,000 books (including branch libraries) and 82 titles of periodicals and newspapers, which is not comparable with the earlier collection in quality.

### ***Funding***

Annually, the Jaffna Municipal Council allocates Rs. 800,000 – Rs. 1000,000 to this library for the purchase of books and periodicals. Apart from this the library receives large amount of donations from all over the world. However, all the donations of books received are not in good condition and quality.

### ***Infrastructure***

The present building of the main library covers almost twice its former area. This expansion has facilitated the building up of several new sections (internet cell, library auditorium, etc.) under a single roof. Presently, this library has sufficient space for collection, furniture and other facilities to fulfill the needs of the majority of the readers.

### ***Staffing***

Generally in the public library system, there are two categories with regard to staff cadre position, namely ***scheduled cadre*** (Librarian Gr.III, Librarian Gr.II, Librarian Gr.I, and Librarian Supra Grade) and ***non-scheduled cadre*** (Library Assistant/ Library Seveka, and Library Labourer). Depending on the requirements, the number of cadres in each staff position is subjected to revision time to time.

The Public Services Commission fills the scheduled cadres while the Jaffna Municipal Council fills non-scheduled cadres. Entry qualification in the scheme of recruitment for non-scheduled cadre varies from Grade 8 to G.C.E

(O/L) depending on the decision of the Municipal Council. The scheduled cadres are filled based on the results of the open and limited competitive examination (written) held by the Commissioner of Examinations/ Provincial Public Service Commission Northern Province. These examinations are conducted based on the *Service minute of the Provincial Local Government Librarian Service of the Northern Province* and its subsequent amendments which came into effect time to time. According to the recently revised service minute, entry qualification for each staff position in the scheduled cadre is upgraded compared to the previous one.

Approved and filled cadre details of the Jaffna Public library from 1990 to 2012 is illustrated in Table 2.

[Table 2]

Even though the number of approved cadres increased time to time, the Table 2 revealed that none of the scheduled cadre position was filled until 2000. Thus, the library was forced to function with existing staff. Because of that, library services were severely affected during this period, due to acute shortage of qualified staff and library provided mainly the basic services with the support of Library Sevekas. Currently, the existing staff position is satisfactory with regard to Librarian Gr.III and Librarian Gr.II. However, applications are not invited from suitable candidates for the newly introduced scheduled cadre positions, such as Librarian Gr.I (created in 2000) and Librarian Supra Grade (created in 1990) until now.

### ***Readers***

At the time of destruction in 1981, this library had 17,600 readers. Later, this number was reduced to 10,000 including readers at all branch libraries, in 1995. Presently, the renovated Jaffna Public Library comprises nearly 16,988 registered members and among them only 1,408 members uses the library for borrowing reading materials. This revealed the drastic fall of reading habit in the community. In addition, branch libraries comprise a readership of 8,109.

### **3.2 Urban Council and Pradeshiya Sabha Libraries**

These libraries function as public libraries and provide services to the public in the respective areas and are managed by the respective Urban Council or Pradeshiya Sabha. Presently, three Urban Council libraries and 13 Pradeshiya Sabha libraries are functioning in the Jaffna District (Table 3).

[Table 3]

Most of these libraries were established during the period of 1969 to 1981 (up to 1997). Normally, the respective Urban Council or Panchayati Sabha obtains the recommendation of the Library Advisory Committee and Readers Circle in the administration of these libraries.

### ***Collection***

Major part of the collection comprises storybooks, books for additional reading, newspapers and magazines. Apart from these, to attract the student population collection of reference sources, textbooks and past paper books of G.C.E (O/L) and G.C.E (A/L) examinations are also available at some libraries (up to 1987). To develop reading habits among children some of these libraries organise Children's section at their libraries.

### ***Funding***

The main source of funding for these libraries is the respective Urban Council or Panchayati Sabha. Annual allocation provided by them is not sufficient to build up a good collection in these libraries. Apart from the respective Urban Council or Panchayati Sabha, the Commissioner of Local Government also provides funds for the development of these libraries. But this funding is not sufficient and not received on a regular basis.

### ***Infrastructure***

Infrastructure facilities such as building, furniture, etc. provided by the respective Urban Council or Panchayati Sabha are not sufficient for a growing organisation like library. Even now some of these libraries function in temporary buildings. In addition, some of these libraries have lost their collection along with the infrastructure facilities during displacements which occurred in 1987 and 1995. Every time reconstruction of the infrastructure facilities and rebuilding the collection consumes large portion of the annual allocation. Hence, new technological developments do not reach these libraries.

### ***Staffing***

Regarding staffing, non-scheduled cadres are filled by the respective Urban Council or Panchayati Sabha, while scheduled cadres are filled by the Public Services Commission. Qualification for Library Labourer is Grade 8 and Library Assistant is G.C.E (O/L) under the recruitment scheme for non-scheduled cadre. Scheduled cadres are filled according to the service minutes of the Public Services Commission circulars. In these libraries too vacancies in the scheduled cadres were not filled during the period 1984-2000, which affected the library services to a greater

extend. However, majority of the scheduled cadre vacancies existed in these libraries were filled in 2010. Presently in Jaffna, there are only few vacancies exist in the scheduled cadres and which have been advertised recently (in July 2012).

### ***Readers***

These libraries have a wide reader population ranging from the general public to students and children. In some of these libraries, the membership rules and regulations are relaxed to accommodate the displaced population, too. They can become a member of these libraries by,

- getting guarantee signed by the area people and
- obtaining recommendation from the respective Grama Seveka

These libraries provide basic services like reference and lending with their collection, in spite of insufficient funding and lack of infrastructure facilities. Some of these libraries have Television facilities, Children's section and Library auditorium in addition to the basic services. The credit for these developments should be given to the staff of those libraries and the concerned Urban Council or Predeshiya Sabha.

### **3.3 Community Center Libraries**

Community based organisations are playing an important role in most of the development activities in the rural areas. They contribute to the improvement of the quality of the life of the rural population. *Community centers* are such organisations involved in rural development activities. The important goal of these Community centers is to provide facilities to cater to the rural population in order to spend their leisure time usefully (Jaffna District Secretariat, 2012). The number of Community centers, and the number of Community centers provide library services to the community in the Jaffna District are given in Table 3. These libraries too come under the category of Public libraries.

The main objectives of these Community center libraries are:

- to aid generally in the advancement of knowledge and
- to use the leisure time to promote personal contentment and social well-being

among the rural population. It is the duty of these libraries to attract them by providing suitable materials for reading and help them in gaining knowledge for life-long education (nry;tuh[h> 1989).

Some of these Community center libraries function efficiently next to the Predeshiya Sabha libraries in satisfying the information needs of the community, in the Jaffna District. At the same time, some of the libraries in the same category function only as '*reading centers*' for the community.

### ***Collection***

Collection of these libraries mostly comprises storybooks, newspapers and magazines for leisure time reading. The libraries, which function as 'reading centers' consists of only newspapers and magazines.

### ***Funding***

These libraries are maintained by the funds collected from the people of that area and *Fund raising programs* conducted by the Community center or people of that area who are interested in the development of the library.

### ***Infrastructure***

Most of these libraries are lodged in a small room of the community centre without a building facility and other infrastructure facilities for a library due to inadequate funds.

### ***Staffing***

Even a small library like a Community center library requires a person with fundamental knowledge of library science to organise the collection. In this regard, these libraries lack a professionally trained staff or staff with the knowledge of library science (nry;tuh[h> 1989). Even though the Community centre libraries are considered as the heart of the rural areas, these libraries have not attained their goals in the Jaffna District.

The following section discusses the limitations, barriers and challenges for the effective functioning of public libraries in the Jaffna District, in detail.

#### **4. Challenges for Public Libraries of Jaffna District**

Worldwide, public libraries are expected to provide open and free access to information. Modern libraries are increasingly being redefined as places to get unrestricted access to information in many formats and from many sources. They are extending services beyond the physical walls of a building, by providing materials accessible by electronic means, and by providing the assistance of librarians in navigating and analysing tremendous amounts of information with a variety of digital tools (Steve, 2011). However public libraries in developing countries, usually occupy a position of low priority. The above assessment of public libraries also emphasized this fact.

Regarding the libraries in the Jaffna District, it has been identified that the conflict which prevailed in the region is the root cause for the present status. Development of libraries (including public libraries) in this region were hindered by the ethnic war and disturbances, confrontations between the military and militants, restriction imposed on transport, intervention of the IPKF in 1987 and the exodus of the people in October 1995, etc. Maximum damage was caused to the libraries by the IPKF invasion in October 1987 and the exodus of 1995. A number of materials were rendered unusable by termites and exposed to the ravages of nature.

After signing of the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) between the Government of Sri Lanka and LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) in 2002, many foreign and local Non-government organisations and United Nations agencies were involved in reconstruction and development of Jaffna District with the foreign funded projects. Under these projects some of the public libraries were also developed (including the Jaffna Public Library by UNESCO), whereas most of the other public libraries in this region went unnoticed. Some of the major challenges for public libraries in Jaffna District are discussed below in detail.

- **Insufficient funding and inadequate infrastructure facilities**

Public libraries are maintained by public funds. The three main areas of public library expenditure are on collection development, staff salaries and infrastructure facilities (Harrison, 1963). The main requirement for a proper public library service is that it should be sufficiently financed by public funds. Inadequate finances seem to be the biggest problem and with this are combined inadequate infrastructure facilities and poor quality book stocks and other resources.

Except the Jaffna Public library, other public libraries (managed by the local bodies) existing in this region are functioning with inadequate infrastructure facilities due to financial constraints. Real improvement in the financial status of public libraries will not come until local authority members re-orientate their attitudes to the service. It is recommended to approach donor agencies, politicians, and well-wishers to get financial support for the development of infrastructure facilities and building the collection, in these libraries.

- **Poor collection of electronic resources and use of IT**

Today, libraries need to bring in information available in all media and document formats (both physically available and remotely accessed via the www) accessible to their users, in order to fulfill their needs and expectations. In this context, without modern e-technology services adopted in the library functionalities, libraries are increasingly viewed as outdated (Akbar, 2009). Due to 30 years of war, libraries (excluding Jaffna Public library) in Jaffna are far behind in technological development. Thereby, efforts should be made in the aspects of utilising new technology to automate library functions, employing IT for the enhancement of information access, and acquiring licenses for remote access to e-resources.

- **Dearth of professional & personal competencies among library staff**

The human element is perhaps the most important factor of all, in determining the success or otherwise of a public library service. Most of the cadre vacancies existed in the Urban Council and Pradeshiya Sabha public libraries for more than 20 years filled in the recent past with suitable candidates, who possess required qualification in library science. However, Community center libraries are forced to manage by a person without professional competencies in the field of library science. This results in the unsatisfactory service to the public.

In addition to professional competencies (such as knowledge in the areas of information resources, information access, technology management, and the ability to apply them in providing library and information services), librarians should acquire personal competencies as well. Personal competencies are a set of skills, attitudes, and values that enable librarians to survive in the information world. This includes commitment to service, ability to face challenges, foresight, ability to create an environment of mutual respect and trust, effective communication skills, good team work, dynamic leadership, systematic planning and prioritising skills,

interest in lifelong learning, and positive attitude towards continuing change (Ramos, 2007). It is observed that training is essential to develop such competencies among librarians.

- **Poor participation in Continuing professional development (CPD) programs**

Professional and continuing education of the librarian is essential to ensure adequate services (UNESCO, 2000). Therefore, in-service training programs play an important role in the field of library science. There is no doubt that in-service training conducted internally put quite a strain upon the senior staff, but they are invaluable because they help to develop devotion and team spirit among staff (Harrison, 1963). Furthermore, participation in seminars, workshops, conferences, etc. is also found to be essential for library professionals in order to update their knowledge in the field of library science.

Before 2002, even though several in-service training programs (mostly conducted outside Northern Province) for Public library librarians were conducted by the National Library and Documentation Services Board (NLDSB), National library, and Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA), participation from Jaffna District was very poor due to transport difficulties, security reasons, lack of opportunity, etc. After the MOU was signed in 2002, this situation has slightly improved. However, still there are problems, such as lack of incentives for the participation in CPD programs, language barrier, etc. As an alternative, majority of the public library librarians suggested to conduct such CPD programs within the Northern Province in order to improve the participation of librarians. However, in order to organise such CPD programs support from local bodies and authorities is indispensable. Currently, efforts have been made and few seminars were organised by the LIS professionals in this region with the collaboration of SLLA. Librarians preferred such initiatives should be continued.

- **Lack of interest and motivation from authorities**

Generally, the Local Government bodies such as Municipal Council or Urban Council or Pradeshiya Sabha administrate these public libraries. The authorities of these local bodies do normally not recognize the importance of the library services and hence the libraries get poor attention. The idea is too firmly fixed in their minds that the public library is an amenity service, purely recreation in nature. This is the influencing factor in the low annual allocation for libraries by the local bodies. Hence, advocacy programs need to be conducted

regularly not only for authorities of these local bodies, but also for other stakeholders of the public libraries, in order to make them aware of the role played by the libraries in developing a knowledge-based society.

- **Poor library co-operation**

To make the Public library service more effective it is necessary to have inter-library co-operation (Corea, 1980). Experience during this study showed that coordination and cooperation between the libraries at local level is lacking in the Jaffna District, at present. To ensure library coordination and cooperation, strategic plan must be devised in collaboration with wider range of related institutions and library professionals, to develop a library network based on agreed standards. Such a library network not only helps for sharing resources and providing better services, but also facilitates the library professionals (in the region) to express their problems and constraints in one voice.

## **5. Conclusion**

Presently public libraries are considered not only as *recreational centers* but also as *social, cultural and information centers* in developed countries. This study revealed the problems and constraints of Public libraries in the Jaffna District towards development. One of the major problems identified is the insufficient financial assistance and inadequate infrastructure facilities for the public libraries. As mentioned earlier, this is largely influenced by the attitudes of the administrators of the Local authorities. In order to make attitudinal changes advocacy programs need to be conducted not only for administrators of the Local bodies but also for all the other stakeholders of the public libraries.

Another important problem is the decline in usage of libraries. It is observed worldwide that visiting to libraries and borrowing books from libraries has been consistently falling over the past few years. In Britain, annual statistics revealed that book borrowing has dropped by 20% in 2008 compared to 2003 (Akbar, 2009). This study also revealed that out of 16,988 registered members, only 1,408 members are engaged in using the lending service of the Jaffna Public library. However, people are taking advantages of the free internet access services provided by the libraries. Moreover, most people are willing to access the library services via internet, for reservation, renewals and catalogue inquiries (Steve, 2011). Thereby, the information world is undergoing transition from a library-centred to information-centred entity and libraries are expected to change from paper-based environment to digital interface

(e.g. using search engines, online databases, data mining, etc.). It is also observed that there is lack of awareness among the general public regarding the services offered by the libraries. Hence, it is advisable for the public libraries to conduct *user education programs* to popularize their services, on regular basis and more frequently.

Moreover, steps should be taken (by the local authorities) to conduct CPD programs and training sessions for the enhancement of professional and personal competencies among librarians of this region with the collaboration of NLDSB, National library, SLLA and other LIS organisations.

In order to develop cooperation among different types of libraries (school libraries, libraries at Higher Educational Institutions, public libraries, etc.) in this district a *library consortia or library network* consisting of library professionals, administrators of the education sector and local authorities is proposed at the District level. This body could function at district level with the objective of developing the libraries in this region. In addition to that, working groups could be formed at DS/AGA divisional levels to implement and monitor the recommendations of this body.

With this type of support, public libraries in this region not only survive, but thrive in continuing to provide valuable service in the information age. At this juncture, Ministry of Local Government & Provincial Councils and local authorities of the Jaffna District should be acknowledged for their initiatives taken in the recent past with regard to empowering the public libraries.

## References

- Akbar, Arifa. 2009. The big question: how are public libraries changing, and what does their future hold. *The Independent*. September 29.
- Corea, Ishvari. 1980. New dimensions in Public library services in Sri Lanka. **In:** Ishvari Corea, ed. *Roads to wisdom*. Colombo: Colombo Municipal Council: 263-276.
- Harrison, K.C. 1963. *Public libraries today*. London: Crosby Lockwood & Son.
- Jaffna District Secretariat. 2012. *Statistical handbook of Jaffna District-2011*. Jaffna: District Secretariat.
- Kularatnam, K.S. 1997. *Jaffna Public Library: a file*. Sydney: Mithra Publications.

- Lankage, Jayasiri. 1980. Library movement in Sri Lanka. **In:** Ishvari Corea, ed. *Roads to wisdom*. Colombo: Colombo Municipal Council: 33-42.
- Ramos, Mila M. 2007. The role of librarians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Paper presented at the 35<sup>th</sup> ALAP Anniversary Forum, June 2007, at UPLB CEAT Auditorium. [www.slideshare.net/plaistr/c/the-role-of-librarians-in-the-21st-century](http://www.slideshare.net/plaistr/c/the-role-of-librarians-in-the-21st-century).
- Selvarajah, N. (Comp.). 2003. *Rising from the ashes: tragic episode of the Jaffna Library*. London: Thesam Publications.
- Sivathamby, K. 2003. Do we begin the Esela Perehera with the randoli: opening of the Jaffna Library. **In:** N.Selvarajah, comp. *Rising from the ashes: tragic episode of the Jaffna Library*. London: Thesam Publications: 92-95.
- Steve, Haber. 2011. The changing role of libraries in the digital age. *Huffington Post (Internet newspaper)*. March, 1. [www.huffingtonpost.com/steve-haber/the-changing-role-of-libr b 803722.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/steve-haber/the-changing-role-of-libr b 803722.html).
- UNESCO. 2000. UNESCO public library manifesto. Geneva: UNESCO. [www.unesco.org/webworld/libraries/manifestos/libraman.html](http://www.unesco.org/webworld/libraries/manifestos/libraman.html).
- rz;Kfjh];> kNdhd;kzp. 1986. aho;g;ghzj;jpy; E}yf tsh;r;rp. *E}yftpay*; kyh; 2> ,jo; 2: 1-5.
- nry;tuh[h> vd;. 1987. cs;Suhl;rp E}yfq;fs;. *E}yftpay*; kyh; 3> ,jo; 1: 14-16.
- nry;tuh[h> vd;. 1989. *fpuhkpa E}yfq;fSk; mgptpUj;jpAk*;. Midf;Nfhl;il: mNahj;jp E}yf Nritfs;.
- tp[afhe;jd;> ghyn[ae;jp. 1997. *Aho;g;ghz khtl;l;jpd; fy;tp mgptpUj;jpapy; E}yfq;fspd; gq;F*. KJjj;Jtkhzp
- Ma;Tf;fl;Liu. aho;g;ghzk;: aho; gy;fiyf;fofk;.

**Table 1:** Local authorities for the Administrative Divisions of Jaffna District

No	DS/ AGA's Division	Local Authorities		
		Municipal Council	Urban Council	Predeshiya Sabha
01	Delft*	-	-	Delft
02	Islands South	-	-	Islands South
03	Islands North*	-	-	Islands North
04	Karainagar*	-	-	Karainagar
05	Jaffna	Jaffna	-	-
06	Nallur	-	-	Nallur
07	Valikamam South West	-	-	Valikamam S. W.
08	Valikamam West	-	-	Valikamam West
09	Valikamam South	-	-	Valikamam South
10	Valikamam North	-	-	Valikamam North
11	Valikamam East	-	-	Valikamam East
12	Thenmarachchy	-	Chavakachcheri	Chavakachcheri
13	Vadamarachchy South West	-	-	Vadamarachchy S. W.
14	Vadamarachchy North	-	Point Pedro Valvettithurai	Point Pedro
15	Vadamarachchy East*	-	-	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>13</b>

Source: Jaffna District – Statistical Handbook 2011

**Table 2:** Approved and filled staff cadre details of the Jaffna Public Library from 1990 to 2012

CADRE DETAILS	1990		1995		2000		2005		2012	
	Approved	Filled								
Library Assistant/ Library Seveka (Non-scheduled)	14	14	10	10	18	06	18	11	18	13
Librarian Grade III (Scheduled)	03	01	08	02	08	08	20	18	20	17
Librarian Grade II (Scheduled)	01	01	04	-	04	04	08	04	08	06
Librarian Grade I (Scheduled)	-	-	-	-	01	-	01	-	01	-
Librarian Supra Grade (Scheduled)	01	-	01	-	01	-	01	-	01	-

*Source: Jaffna Public library, Jaffna*

**Table 3:** Number of Public libraries, Community centres, and Community centres with library facilities by Local Authority – 2012

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Public libraries</b>	<b>Community centres</b>	<b>Community centres with library facilities</b>
<b>Municipal Council</b>			
Jaffna	06	72	10
<b>Urban Councils</b>			
Chavakachcheri	03	22	-
Point Pedro	01	16	02
Valvettithurai	01	16	01
<b>Pradeshiya Sabhas</b>			
Delft	02	12	-
Islands South	05	50	05
Islands North	04	28	-
Karainagar	02	13	02
Nallur	03	44	-
Valikamam South West	04	83	08
Valikamam West	04	84	10
Valikamam South	03	57	14
Valikamam North	04	53	08
Valikamam East	05	120	03
Chavakachcheri	06	90	02
Vadamarachchy South West	03	80	10
Point Pedro	03	67	05
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>80</b>

*Source: ACLG, Jaffna & Dept. of Local Government, Jaffna*