

NEWSLETTER

Message from SLA-ASIA COMMUNITY PRESIDENT

As the President of Special Library Association Asian Community (SLA Asia), I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for your unwavering support and dedication to our activities. From our successful webinars in collaboration with UNU Yogyakarta and APPTIS Indonesia to our impactful offline events such as ICoASL 2025 held in Dr Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University Library (RMLNLUL), Lucknow, India, and UIN Padang, Indonesia, your participation and enthusiasm have been instrumental in driving our mission forward. This Newsletter will give you insight about the SLA Asia activities and events in Asian Libraries.

As we continue to strive for excellence, I am thrilled to announce that SLA Asia is currently preparing for a series of joint webinars with various library associations across Asia. Your continued support and engagement will undoubtedly play a vital role in the success of these endeavors.

Once again, thank you for your loyalty and commitment to SLA Asia. Together, let us continue to foster a vibrant community of library professionals and drive innovation in the field.

As we navigate the current landscape of our organization, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the significant developments that are underway. In light of the planned dissolution of SLA and its potential merger with ASIS&T, we are embarking on an important initiative to gather and preserve our knowledge assets. We kindly request that you share with us any photographs, brochures, videos, proceedings, and newsletters that capture the essence of SLA Asia's journey and its impact on the library community in Asia.

While we await further developments on the dissolution process, I want to assure you that SLA Asia will continue to move forward with the programs and initiatives that we have carefully planned. We will remain a community that supports and uplifts one another, and I am confident that together, we will navigate this transition with strength and resilience. Please remember that you can always find family at SLA Asian Community

Last but not the least, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Ms. Ana Mae Cantel, Ms. Marwiyah, and the entire team who have worked tirelessly to prepare this newsletter. Your dedication and expertise are truly appreciated. Thank you, and let us continue to work together in the spirit of collaboration and mutual support.



**Dr. Labibah Zain, MLIS
President
SLA Asian Community 2025**

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SLA ASIA 2024



SLA Asia Community: Overview

by Dr. Debal C. Kar

The Asian Chapter/Community of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) was established in 1999 with the objective of promoting professional growth, collaboration, and leadership among information professionals and librarians across Asia.

In its early years, the chapter began with only a few members and faced challenges due to a lack of established leadership in the field of librarianship within the region. However, through the dedication and commitment of its founding members, the chapter steadily grew in strength and scope. Over time, it nurtured a strong leadership base and produced several successful and dynamic leaders who have contributed significantly to the profession.





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In 2005, the Australia and New Zealand Chapter was formed as a separate entity, branching out from the Asian Chapter to better serve members in that region. Despite this separation, the Asian Chapter continued to expand its reach and influence.

The SLA Asian Chapter were one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing chapters of the association. It proudly represents around 150 members spread across a vast geographical region that includes 22 countries. Its diverse membership base extends not only throughout Asia but also to other parts of the world. It has built a diverse and inclusive professional community representing members not only from across Asia but also from other parts of the world.

The membership includes professionals from India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Hongkong, Kazakhstan, Macau, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The SLA Asian Community has been recognized for its innovative approach to professional development. It has offered unique leadership assessment tools designed to enhance simulation-based learning, stimulate exploration, and foster personal and professional growth among its members.

With its strong commitment to excellence, collaboration, and continuous learning, the SLA Asian Chapter continues to play a pivotal role in advancing the profession of librarianship and information management across Asia and beyond.

We found a diversified in leadership in Asian Community and leadership were as follows:

S. No.	Country	No. of Presidents
1	India	12
2	Japan	02
3	Indonesia	02
4	South Korea	01
5	Hong Kong	01
6	Nepal	01
7	Pakistan	01
8	Philippines	02
9	Singapore	01



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SLA ASIA 2024



SLA Awards to Information Professionals in Asia

The SLA Asian Community has always been proactive in promoting leadership, innovation, and professional development. It has offered unique leadership assessment tools that enable members to engage in self-evaluation, experiential learning, and personal growth. These initiatives have strengthened members' ability to take on leadership roles within SLA and in their respective institutions.

Over the years, members of the SLA Asian Chapter have received several prestigious awards from SLA Headquarters in recognition of their outstanding leadership qualities, dedicated service, and contributions to the global SLA community. These accolades reflect the chapter's strong culture of excellence, its commitment to professional development, and its ability to nurture leaders who inspire others in the field of librarianship and information management.

With its continued focus on innovation, collaboration, and service, the SLA Asian Chapter remains a key driver of professional growth and leadership in the global information community. Its members continue to uphold the values of SLA, contributing to the advancement of libraries, knowledge services, and information access across the Asian region and beyond.

S. No.	Award	No. of Recipients
1	John Cotton Dana	01
2	Hall of Fame	02
3	SLA Fellow	04
4	Diversity Leadership Development Programme (DDLDP)	04
5	Professional Award	03
6	Presidential Citation	04
7	Member Achievement Award	02
8	Professional Award	03
9	Star Rising Award	04





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Asian Community members also have received several SLA Division's Awards and as recognized there engagement with other SLA divisions.

S. No.	SLA/Division Awards	Award	Country	No. of Recipients
1	Science and Technology Division, SLA	Bonnie Hidlitch International Librarian Award	India	7
2	Science and Technology Division, SLA	Ann Koopman Achievement Award	India	4
3	Business and Finance Division, SLA	Award for Outstanding Achievement in Business Librarianship	India	3
4	Business and Finance Division, SLA	Distinguished Member Award	India	1
5	Business and Finance Division, SLA	Distinguished Leadership & Service Award	India	1
6	Business and Finance Division, SLA	International Travel Award	India Pakistan Philippines Sri Lanka	04 01 02 01
7	Business and Finance Division, SLA	Professional Grants	India	1
8	Business and Finance Division, SLA	Impact Award	India	1
9	Business and Finance Division, SLA	Centers of Excellence	India	1
10	PAM Division, SLA	PAM International Membership Award	India Pakistan	04 01





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SLA ASIA 2024



The SLA Asian Community has organized several international conferences across different Asian countries over the years. The principal objective of these global events has been to provide a vibrant and inclusive forum for the exchange of knowledge, skills, and best practices among information professionals in Asia, with a global perspective.

These conferences have served as an important platform for participants to present innovative ideas, debate emerging as well as classical concepts, and promote collaboration and networking among professionals from diverse backgrounds. They have successfully solicited high-quality research papers and provided an international stage for researchers, developers, educators, and practitioners to share both applied and theoretical research findings relevant to library and information sciences.

S.No.	Name of Award	Country	No. of Awardees
1	Student Travel Stipend with Science and Technology	China	1
2	Diane K. Foster International Student Travel Award with Science and Technology Division	Philippines Sri Lanka Pakistan India	01 01 01 01
3	Early Career Award with Business and Finance Division	India China Philippines	02 01 01
4	SLA Asian Librarian Award	India Philippines	07 02
5	SLA Young Professional Award	India Philippines	02 02



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SLA ASIA 2024



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The major objectives of these conferences have been to:

- Ensure that information professionals remain acquainted with the latest developments and trends in the global library and information landscape.
- Explore evolving library services in the post-COVID era and their implications for users and institutions.
- Bring together the dispersed community of library and information professionals across Asia to share experiences and build stronger professional networks.
- Assist libraries and professionals in implementing effective development and modernization plans.
- Facilitate learning of innovative tools, technologies, and practices that enhance library services and user support.
- Strengthen academic collaboration and strategic alliances aimed at the growth and sustainability of special libraries across the region.

One of the most prominent initiatives of the SLA Asian Community is the International Conference of Asian Special Libraries (ICoASL), first organized in 2008. Since then, ICoASL has been successfully hosted in various Asian countries, providing a distinguished international platform for professional dialogue, research exchange, and the advancement of library and information services.



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Through these conferences, the SLA Asian Community continues to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of librarianship and information management in Asia by encouraging knowledge sharing, professional innovation, and global collaboration.

- 1st ICoASL in 2008 – Delhi, India
- 2nd ICoASL in 2011 – Tokyo, Japan
- 3rd ICoASL in 2013 – Manila, Philippines
- 4th ICoASL in 2015 – Seoull, South Korea
- 5th ICoASL in 2017 – Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- 6th ICoASL in 2019 – Delhi, India
- 7th ICoASL in 2021 – Seoul, South Korea
- 8th ICoASL in 2023 – Cebu, Philippines
- 9th ICoASL in 2025 – Lucknow, India

Asian Chapter event at SLA Annual Conference:

The SLA Asian Chapter has been an active participant in the SLA Annual Conference, held every year in the United States, where it regularly organizes a series of important events such as Business Meetings, Award Ceremonies, and Panel Discussions. These gatherings have become integral parts of the annual conference, offering members and participants valuable opportunities to engage, collaborate, and celebrate professional achievements.

Each year, many renowned speakers from Asia are invited to deliver presentations during these sessions, sharing insights on emerging trends, innovative practices, and leadership experiences in the field of library and information science. These contributions have significantly enriched the global dialogue within the SLA community by bringing diverse regional perspectives to the forefront.

During the annual conference sessions, the Asian Chapter Awards are also presented to distinguished library leaders from Asia in recognition of their outstanding leadership, professional excellence, and dedicated service to the SLA and the wider library community.

In addition to its independent activities, the SLA Asian Community has also collaborated with several other SLA Divisions and Communities to organize joint programs, panel discussions, and networking events at the annual conferences. These collaborations have fostered cross-cultural exchange and strengthened global professional networks within SLA.

A memorable milestone in the chapter's history was the organization of the first Open House titled "Taste of Asia" during the SLA Annual Conference held in Baltimore in 2015. This unique event celebrated the cultural diversity and hospitality of Asia, offering participants an engaging experience that combined professional networking with cultural exchange.

Through these sustained efforts, the SLA Asian Chapter continues to play a vital role in promoting leadership, collaboration, and community engagement within the global SLA network.



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SLA ASIA 2024



Memories Captured in Pictures



Asian Chapter Events at SLA 2018



SLA Asian event in SLA Annual Conference 2017





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SLA ASIA 2024



Memories Captured in Pictures



Asian Chapter Events at SLA 2015





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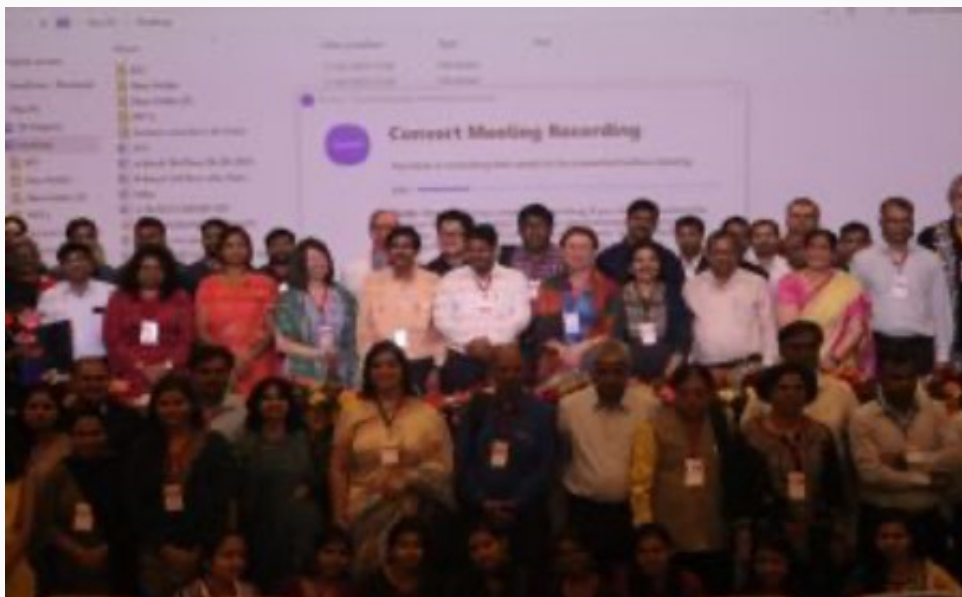
SLA ASIA 2024

Asian Chapter Event in India:

SLA Asian Community was also organizing International Library and Information Summit (I-LIPS) every year since 2012 in India. The events are as follows:

- I-LIPS 2024 held during 29 Nov -1 December 2024 at Galgotias University, Greater Noida
- I-LIPS 2023 held during 13 to 14 April 2023 at Galgotias University, Greater Noida
- I-LIPS -2022 on 20-22 May 2022 in IEG, DU, Delhi
- I-LIPS 2020 held during 14-16 February 2020 in Gwalior
- I-LIPS 2019 held during 22-24 November 2019 in Lucknow
- I-LIPS 2018 during February 2018 in Jaipur
- I-LIPS 2017 during April 2017 in IISER, Mohali
- I-LIPS 2016 during May 2016 at Ambedkar University, Delhi
- LIPS 2015 during January 2015 at National Law University, Delhi
- LIPS 2014 in February 2014 at South Campus, University of Delhi
- LIPS 2013 on Conference on on 9th March 2013 at IEG, Delhi
- LIPS -2012 on 16-17 March 2012 in IEG, DU, Delhi

I-LIPS 2023





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Apart from these initiatives, the SLA Asian Community has also engaged in academic collaborations with various local organizations and institutions across Asia to organize a wide range of professional events. These include conferences, seminars, expert lectures, webinars, workshops, training sessions, and professional development programs aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of library and information professionals.

Through these collaborative efforts, the Asian Community continues to promote learning, innovation, and capacity building among professionals, fostering a strong culture of continuous growth and global engagement within the field of librarianship and information management.

Some of the other initiatives of the Asian Communities are as follows:

1. Exchange Programmes – Asian Chapter is also having exchange programmes to develop leaders.
2. Lectures – Many Asian leaders have given presentation at SLA Annual Conference and are regularly participating in the leadership programmes.
3. Newsletters/Publications/Presentation in SLA – The Asian Chapter is regularly raising its voice through its newsletters which is published online since 2008.

Concluding:

Since its inception, the SLA Asian Chapter has played a pivotal role in promoting leadership, collaboration, and knowledge sharing among library professionals in Asia and beyond. Through its sustained efforts in organizing conferences, developing leadership programs, and fostering professional partnerships, the chapter continues to embody the SLA's mission of empowering information professionals worldwide.

With its expanding network, dedicated members, and commitment to excellence, the SLA Asian Chapter was a cornerstone of SLA's global community—bridging cultures, inspiring innovation, and advancing the future of librarianship across Asia.



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SLA Asia Presidents

1999-03 SLA Asia President



Mr. Dave McCaughan
Japan

2003-04 | 2015
SLA Asia President



Dr Praveen Kumar Jain
India

2004-05 SLA Asia President



Mr. Damodar Adhikari
Nepal

2005-06 SLA Asia President



Ms. Jane Macoustra
Hongkong

2006-07 SLA Asia President



Mr. Scott Davidson
Singapore

2007-08 | 2017 | 2021
SLA Asia President



Dr Debal C Kar
India

2008-09 SLA Asia President



Mr. Maqsood Shaheen
Pakistan

2009-10 SLA Asia President



Ms. Kyoko Sato
Japan

2010-11 SLA Asia President



Dr BP Prakash
India

2011-12 SLA Asia President



Dr Harish Chandra
India

2012-13 SLA Asia President



Dr Medha Joshi
India

2014 SLA Asia President



Ms. Shirley Ingles-Cruz
Philippines



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SLA Asia Presidents

2016 SLA Asia President



Dr SS Dhaka
India

2018 | 2025
SLA Asia President



Dr Labibah Zain
Indonesia

2019 SLA Asia President



Mr. Mu-Suk Oh
Korea

2020 SLA Asia President



Dr Nabi Hasan
India

2022 SLA Asia President



Dr Parveen Babbar
India

2023 SLA Asia President



Mr. Joseph M. Yap
Philippines

2024 SLA Asia President



Dr Mahender Pratap Singh
India

2026 SLA Asia President-Elect



Dr Shiva Kanaujia Sukula
India



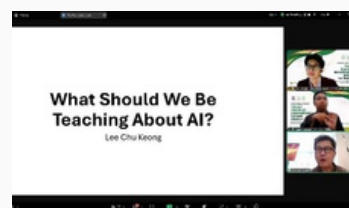
HIGHLIGHTS OF SLA ASIA COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR 2025



INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIVERSITY OF NAHDLATUL ULAMA LIBRARY, YOGYAKARTA by Marwiyah

Special Library Association had planned a series of international webinars during 2025 that involve library associations across Asia, such as Asosiasi Perpustakaan Perguruan Tinggi Islam (APPTIS) Indonesia, Society for Library Professionals (SLP) India, and Association of Special Library Philippines (ASLP). And the first international webinar was held on February 14th, 2025, in Indonesia, hosted by Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama (UNU) Library Yogyakarta in collaboration with Asosiasi Perpustakaan Perguruan Tinggi Islam (APPTIS), Asosiasi Perpustakaan Perguruan Tinggi Nahdlatul Ulama (APPTNU), Ikatan Pustakawan Indonesia (Indonesia Library Association), Society for Library Professionals (SLP) India, Association of Special Library Philippines (ASLP), and Pakistan Library Club (PLC). The topic of the webinar was What Should Librarians Learn About AI, and an

the President of the Special Library Association Asian Chapter, Dr. Labibah Zain, as an opening speaker, Vice Rector for Research, Innovation, and Global Recognition of the University of Nahdlatul Ulama, Dr. Suhadi who gave an opening remark on behalf of the UNU Rector and Secretary of SLA Asia Community, Maria Teresa Cabance who closed the webinar session by delivering vote of thank. Chaired by I Nyoman Apras R., Ph.D. (Lecturer of UNU Yogyakarta), the webinar that was delivered in online mode using Zoom and live YouTube had attracted 500 participants across countries such as India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Nigeria, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, and Indonesia.



Presentation by Professor Chu Keong Lee



Question and Answer Session

SLA Asia & UNU Yogyakarta Library Present

INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR

WHAT SHOULD LIBRARIANS LEARN ABOUT AI

Sign Language Interpreter

 Brian Kustantoro Edityanto Academic Rector of UNU Yogyakarta Keynote Speech	 Maria Teresa M. Cabance Secretary of SLA Asia Vote of Thanks	 Dr. Labibah, M.LIS President of SLA Asia Opening Speech	 Dr. Lee Chu Keong Lecturer of Nanyang Technological University, Singapore Speaker	 I. N. Apras R., Ph.D. Doctoral Engineering Lecturer of UNU Yogyakarta Moderation
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Master of Ceremony: Fina Nur Jayanti, Friends of Library, English Education Student of UNU Yogyakarta

via ZOOM
ID MEET 875 2801 8171
PASSCODE 353 620
<https://s.id/librarianslearn>
08.00 AM JAKARTA TIME

Friday, 14th FEBRUARY 2025

Free E-Certificate
*Participants on Zoom and Youtube

Supported by:

expert on AI was invited as the keynote speaker, Professor Lee Chu Keong from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. The webinar also invited other key persons:

In the discussion, Professor Lee Chu Keong stated that the advancement in technology is unstoppable. Hence, librarians must adapt to the rapid development of technology, especially AI technology. At the beginning of its emergence, ChatGPT received negative responses from most people, but nowadays, there has been a growing acceptance in society, allowing AI to continue evolving and assisting users around the world. And as Professor Lee said, everyone must adapt to changes driven by AI to remain relevant in the workforce, including in the field of library professionals (e.g., librarians). Vice rector, in his opening remark, also emphasized the importance of AI for librarians, since the libraries have a responsibility to ensure AI is transparent, inclusive, and accessible to everyone. This presentation session received positive responses from participants. In the discussion, Professor Lee Chu Keong stated that the advancement in technology is unstoppable. Hence, librarians must adapt to the rapid development of technology, especially AI technology.

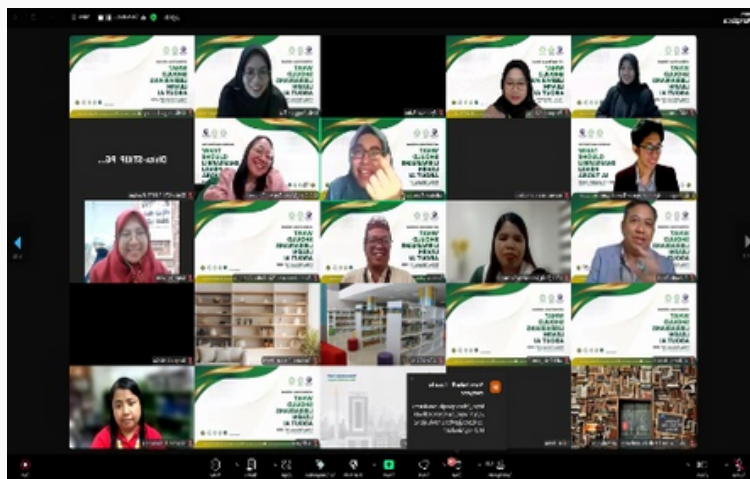
HIGHLIGHTS OF SLA ASIA COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR 2025



INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR...

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At the end of the session, the head of UNU Library, Abdulloh Badruzzaman, thanked to SLA Asia Community for this interesting discussion and appreciated the participants for joining the international webinar and hoped that this session would contribute to the library's advancement, primarily for the digital library.



The participants

THE 3RD AICIBLIB 2025 HIGHLIGHTS LIBRARIES AS GATEWAYS TO GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY By Resty Jayanti Fakhlina (UIN Imam Bonjol Padang Indonesia)

The second program organized by SLA in 2025, in collaboration with the library association in Indonesia, was held in UIN Imam Bonjol Padang. This program was successfully hosted by The Library of UIN Imam Bonjol Padang through the 3rd Annual International Conference on Islamic and Indonesian Library and Information Science (AICIBLib) held on April 21st, 2025. This international conference, themed “Libraries: Gateways to SDGs”, brought together library professionals, academics, and researchers in a hybrid format, with both on-site participation at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang and virtual attendance from across Indonesia and beyond.



Presentation of Prof. Lee Chu Keong

This conference emphasized the transformative role of libraries in supporting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through inclusive knowledge, digital innovation, and community empowerment.

The conference was organized through a strategic collaboration between the UIN Imam Bonjol Padang Library, the Association of Islamic Higher Education Libraries (APPTIS), the Special Library Association – Asia Community Chapter (SLA-Asia), and the Forum of Library Studies Program Lecturers (ASDIP PTKI). The event was officially opened with a welcoming speech from Prof. Dr. Martin Kustati, M.Pd, Rector of UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, who reaffirmed the university's commitment to library excellence and academic advancement.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SLA ASIA COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR 2025



THE 3RD AICIBLIB 2025 ...

A vote of thanks was delivered by Mufid, S.Ag, SS., M.Hum, the President of APPTIS, who appreciated the enthusiasm and collaboration that shaped the success of this international gathering. The conference featured renowned speakers, including Prof. Lee Chu Keong from Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, Dr. Labibah Zain, M.LIS, President of SLA-Asia, Dr. Resty Jayanti Fakhlina, S.Sos., M.A, the Head of UIN Imam Bonjol Library, Yori Yuliandra, Ph.D, Head of Andalas University Library, Fadhila Nurul Husna Zalmi, M.Hum, Lecturer at UIN Imam Bonjol , and Nasrul Makdis, S.IP., MA, Librarian at UIN Imam Bonjol. The discussion was chaired by Fitri Diane P.S., SS., S.Pd, Librarian at the Library and Archives Office of Padang Panjang City. Each speaker offered insights on the evolving role of libraries in the digital age and their impact on education, knowledge equity, and sustainable development.

showcasing the vitality of library scholarship and its relevance to real-world issues.

The 3rd AICIBLib was more than a conference—it served as a platform for intellectual exchange, strategic dialogue, and professional networking. It reaffirmed the role of libraries not only as information centers but also as proactive agents of change in achieving the SDGs. With strong participation, high-quality papers, and a spirit of collaboration, AICIBLib 2025 set a new benchmark for academic events in the field of library and information science in Indonesia.

AI FOR ALL: DRIVING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN COMMUNITIES SLA ASIA AND UNIVERSITY OF ANTIQUE, PHILIPPINES-COLLEGE OF COMPUTING AND INFORMATION SCIENCES, AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS UNIT HOSTED INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN LIBRARIES

by: Maria Teresa M. Cabance and Dr Renecynth B. Jaurigue

Through a Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Antique, Philippines represented by Dr. Pablo S. Crespo Jr., University President and Special Library Association - Asia represented by Dr Labibah Zain, SLA Asia President successfully organized an international webinar titled, “AI for All: Driving Digital Transformation in Communities” on August 12, 2025, held via Zoom. The event brought together Library and Information Science (LIS) practitioners, faculty members, and students across Asian countries. The said webinar was attended by almost 500 participants coming from the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Myanmar and other Asian countries who are very eager to explore how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping the way communities access, manage, and share knowledge.

Dr. May T. Delgado, University of Antique, Philippines, Vice President for Administration and Finance warmly expressed their gratitude to the SLA Asia Community for the meaningful collaboration, noting that the collaboration initiatives created a valuable opportunity for global learning and professional exchange.



Closing session of the conference

The conference invited librarians and other related professionals to participate in the “Call for Papers” session to present their papers, and 16 papers were selected and published in an online proceedings with ISSN 3090-3599, accessible at <https://proceeding-perpus.uinib.ac.id/index.php/AICIBLib>. The papers covered a wide range of topics reflecting the intersection of librarianship, community service, and sustainability frameworks. The participants, composed of librarians, faculty members, and students, engaged in dynamic discussions throughout the sessions,

HIGHLIGHTS OF SLA ASIA COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR 2025



AI FOR ALL...



She further informed that the partnership shared, reflects the University's commitment in embracing innovation and connecting with the wider LIS community and other related field beyond borders.

Meanwhile, Dr Irhamni Ali S. Hum, MP, Lead Data Scientist at the National Library of Indonesia graced the occasion as the webinars' Resource Person. Dr Irhamni Ali shared inspiring insights on how AI technologies can enhance library services, streamline operations, and empower communities through data-driven innovation. He emphasized that AI is not only a technological breakthrough but also a social equalizer, a tool for extending the reach and relevance of libraries in today's digital society. The organized event, not just only became a dynamic venue for knowledge exchange and collaboration, with participants learning about practical AI applications in cataloging automation, knowledge discovery, and smart digital repositories. Likewise, it highlights the importance of ethical practices and human-centered design in implementing AI solutions. On the other hand, Dr. Labibah Zain, President-SLA Asia and Ms. Christine Pelosi, SLA Headquarters-USA Board of Director, also delivered their inspiring and heartfelt messages of commendation to the host university for its active role in promoting dialogue, innovation, and inclusivity through the international webinar.

Their remarks also reflected a shared belief that partnerships can build connections that strengthen the LIS community and Computing and Information Sciences community across Asia and beyond. Indeed, their messages resonates and inspire libraries to lead with purpose in the digital age where knowledge, technology, and human connection come together to create a meaningful and lasting impact. Dr. John C. Amar, Dean of the College of Computing and Information Sciences gives the closing remarks as he also highlights the role of everyone in the integration of AI in today's world.

The successful webinar reaffirmed the commitment of the University of Antique to continuously uphold excellence, promote innovation and sustainability towards a resilient and literate communities. Thus, SLA Asia's mission to provide a networking facility to connect LIS professionals across borders and encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing was also realized when both organizations commit to understand the vital role of libraries, industries and information professionals as catalysts for digital transformation in their respective communities.



HIGHLIGHTS OF SLA ASIA COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR 2025



9TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ASIAN SPECIAL LIBRARIES ICOASL 2025

Dr Maneesh Kumar Bajpai
Convenor (ICoASL-2025)
University Deputy Librarian & Head
Madhu Limaye Library, RMLNLU, Lucknow

The Madhu Limaye Library of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University (RMLNLU), Lucknow, proudly hosted the 9th International Conference of Asian Special Libraries (ICoASL 2025) from May 9-11, 2025, in collaboration with the SLA-Asia Community, Society for Library Professionals-Delhi, and the Uttar Pradesh Library Association-Lucknow, brought together distinguished library and information professionals from across the globe with the theme, “Sustainable Development of Libraries through Innovative Technologies.”.

The conference was generously supported by Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), and INFLIBNET Centre, Gandhinagar, as well as several corporate partners, including Cambridge University Press, Taxmann, Oxford University Press, Turnitin, and Total Library Solutions.

With participation from over 300 delegates representing India, the USA, the Philippines, Indonesia, Hungary, and Singapore, ICoASL 2025 served as a vibrant international platform for dialogue on how libraries can thrive in the rapidly evolving technological landscape. The participants included LIS professionals, researchers, faculty members, IT professionals, and students from leading national and international institutions.



A total of 139 papers were received, and 72 papers were selected to be published in two edited volumes, i.e. ‘Studies on Bibliometric, Scientometrics and Webometrics’ and ‘Sustainable Development of Libraries in the AI Era’. The chief guest also released the e-souvenir of the conference along with other guests on the dais.

Warm Beginning: Lightning of the Lamp

The conference commenced with warmth and symbolism through the lighting of the lamp, followed by the presentation of a “book and bouquet” to the guests, a unique RMLNLU tradition that celebrates both learning and appreciation.

The inauguration was graced by Prof. Amar Pal Singh, Vice-Chancellor of RMLNLU, as Chief Guest, alongside Ms. Christine Pelosi (Director, SLA-USA), Dr. Labibah Zain (President, SLA-Asia Community, Indonesia), Prof. Ajay Pratap Singh (Director General, RRRLF, Kolkata), Prof. R. C. Gaur (Director, Kalanidhi Division, IGNC), and Prof. M. P. Singh (DLIS, BBAU, Lucknow).

In his welcome address, Dr. Maneesh Kumar Bajpai, Convenor of ICoASL 2025, highlighted the conference’s vision of fostering sustainability through innovation and collaboration. The keynote sessions set a thoughtful tone. Speakers reflected on issues such as open access, digital ethics, and the integration of AI in research and library services. Prof. Ajay Pratap Singh spoke on the growing relevance of public libraries in an AI-driven world, while Prof. Amar Pal Singh reminded participants to remain vigilant about data privacy and ethical challenge



HIGHLIGHTS OF SLA ASIA COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR 2025



9TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF...

The speakers collectively underscored the evolving role of libraries as dynamic, ethical, and community-oriented knowledge spaces. Ms. Pelosi shared insights on how AI is reshaping user engagement in American libraries, while Dr. Zain reflected on SLA-Asia's role in connecting professionals across borders. Prof. R. C. Gaur traced the ancient Indian tradition of scholarly gatherings – Gyan Ygya, as the precursor to today's academic conferences, reminding everyone of the timelessness of knowledge exchange.

The first day continued with parallel technical sessions and panel discussions exploring themes such as the role of AI in libraries, inclusive access, and emerging trends in libraries. The sessions featured lively exchanges of ideas among researchers and practitioners.

The session on Libraries in the AI Environment: Challenges and Opportunities, chaired by Prof. Sonal Singh (Vikram University, Ujjain), featured an invited talk by Dr. Suresh Jange (Gulbarga University, Karnataka) on building Atmanirbhar or self-reliant university libraries. Another parallel session on New Innovative and Emerging Resources and Services, chaired by Dr. P. K. Jain (Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi), examined how digital tools are transforming library operations and access.

In the panel discussion on ONOS and the Open Access Movement in the AI Landscape, moderators and panellists debated the intersection of AI, ethics, and open science, urging libraries to act as champions of equitable knowledge dissemination.

A session chaired by Dr. Bibhas Kr. Mishra (Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gorakhpur University) examined inclusivity and the changing role of libraries, while Dr. Vinit Kumar (BBAU, Lucknow) raised thought-provoking questions on whether the rise of private reading spaces threatens the traditional public library. Meanwhile, Dr. Labibah Zain's presentation on Green and Smart Libraries in Indonesia inspired participants to integrate sustainability with technology in library design and management.

The first day concluded on a lighter note with cultural performances – a reflection of how ICoASL harmonizes intellect, creativity, and culture. Delegates were treated to a cultural evening of poetry, drama, and dance – an elegant reminder that creativity and culture remain at the heart of learning.



Exploring Ideas: Workshops, Research, and Conversations

Day two opened with a plenary workshop on 'Awareness Programme on IRINS and INFLIBNET Services for Scholarly Communities' in collaboration with the INFLIBNET Centre, Gandhinagar. Mr. Hitesh Solanki, Scientist C, INFLIBNET, Gandhi Nagar, delivered lectures and demonstrated the services of INFLIBNET. Prof. Sharad Kumar Sonkar, DLIS, BBAU, Lucknow, chaired the session. During the workshop, two posters, i.e. 'Research Corner' and 'INFLIBNET Services', were released by Prof. Amar Pal Singh, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Manish Singh, RMLNLU PhD Cell Coordinator, Dr. Maneesh Bajpai, University Coordinator and other dignitaries.



HIGHLIGHTS OF SLA ASIA COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR 2025



9TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF...

Subsequent sessions delved into topics like Research Ethics, Plagiarism, and Academic Integrity, chaired by Prof. A. Suryanarayan (Osmania University), with Ms. Christine Pelosi, Information Specialist, 4As Research Services, American Association of Advertising Agencies (4As), New York, USA delivering an engaging talk on Transforming Relationships: Strategies for Client Engagement in the Age of AI.

Ms. Maria Teresa Cabance, Head Librarian, Department of Labour and Employment, Philippines, offered an inspiring presentation titled Beyond Shelves: Libraries as Safe Havens in Fostering Mental Health and Well-Being in a Technology-Fueled World, which resonated deeply with participants for highlighting the human side of librarianship in today's digital era.

Parallel sessions explored IPR and Libraries, chaired by Prof. Manish Singh (RMLNLU), Ethical Challenges in Innovative Technologies, and Information Society: Emerging Paradigms. Together, these discussions emphasized that the future of libraries depends not only on technology but on human-centered values, professional ethics, and creative adaptability.



An online technical session, chaired by Dr. Shiva Kanaujia Shukla (JNU, Delhi), expanded ICoASL's reach beyond borders. Speakers like Dr. Lee Chu Keong (NTU Singapore) and Mr. Joseph M. Yap (Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary) shared compelling insights on media literacy, civic responsibility, and combating misinformation — issues that transcend national boundaries.

Valedictory Session

The valedictory session marked a heartfelt conclusion to the three-day knowledge journey. Chief Guest Prof. Amar Pal Singh, Vice Chancellor of RMLNLU, reflected on India's Knowledge System through the lens of the Shrimad Bhagwat Geeta. Guest of Honour Ms. Maria Teresa Cabance, SLA-Asia Secretary, highlighted the joy of professional camaraderie and the vibrant spirit of the SLA Asia Community. Special Guests Dr. Ashish Kumar Srivastava (CSJM University, Kanpur) and Dr. Debal C. Kar (Galgotia's University, Noida) shared insights on AI's growing influence on library services.

The "Best Librarian Award 2025", jointly presented by SLA-Asia Community and the Society for Library Professionals–Delhi, was awarded to Dr. Maneesh Kumar Bajpai, Deputy Librarian of RMLNLU, for his exemplary leadership and contributions.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Bajpai emphasized global collaboration in shaping new library service environments within the AI paradigm and underscored the need to address copyright and licensing issues in digital content use. He expressed heartfelt gratitude to all participants, guests, partner institutions, and sponsors for their support, noting that their collective spirit made ICoASL 2025 a resounding success.

The final day featured academic tours of major institutions in Lucknow, including IIM, CSIR Laboratories, Central and State Universities, Private Universities, the Language University, Music University, and the University for Persons with Disabilities, along with visits to museums, public libraries, and historical landmarks, showcasing the city's rich academic and cultural heritage.



HIGHLIGHTS OF SLA ASIA COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR 2025



WLIC IFLA IN KAZAKHSTAN: A VOLUNTEER'S PERSPECTIVE by: Labibah Zain – Indonesia



I had the opportunity to attend The World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) IFLA 2025, held in Astana, Kazakhstan, from August 18-22, 2025, it was a great congress featuring almost 200 sessions, covering a wide range of topics, including Media and Digitalization: Exploring the impact of artificial intelligence on news consumption and media behavior, Sustainable Future: Building a sustainable future for resource sharing in a changing world, Climate Change: Empowering communities through climate change awareness and action, Future-Ready Libraries: Integrating AI in information literacy and library services, Information Integrity: Promoting healthy information environments and combating misinformation. I was glad to be selected as one of the congress volunteers who support the congress activities and ensuring its success and smooth execution.

On August 16, 2026, all volunteers attended scheduled training sessions followed by Venue tours. As Volunteers, we had to be familiarized with all congress buildings and rooms. I was appointed as a Living sign who must answers the delegates questions regarding congress rooms and events. I was in the entrance side together with the volunteer from Malaysia. It was fun to be there helping the delegates to find the conference rooms, exhibition venue, canteen and event toilets. It was great opportunity to meet new people from all over the world. As Volunteers, we got free registration fee. I encourage SLA Asia members to apply WLIC Volunteers next year.

The next day, as one of the elected members of IFLA Asia Oceania, I attended the regional meeting led by Lin Li Soh from Singapore. As chair, Lin highlighted key activities, updates, and action plans across areas such as library development and regional events. She then formally handed over the leadership to the newly elected 2025–2027 chair, Kim Taunga from New Zealand. It was a meaningful opportunity to meet both the outgoing and incoming members of IFLA Asia Oceania. The official opening ceremony set the tone for the congress, with IFLA President and Kazakhstan's Minister of Culture and Sports delivering inspiring addresses.

The keynote speakers that followed were equally impressive, highlighting the critical role libraries play in driving transformation and innovation. I was impressed by the diversity of presentations and the enthusiasm of the delegates, all united by a shared passion for libraries and information.

One of the highlights of the congress was a session on "Libraries and Artificial Intelligence." The speakers shared examples of how libraries are leveraging AI to improve services and enhance user experience, and I was struck by the potential of AI to transform library services. Another highlight was a workshop on "Designing Library Spaces for the Future," which provided valuable insights into creating flexible, inclusive, and sustainable library spaces that meet the evolving needs of users.

Throughout the congress, I had the opportunity to network with fellow librarians, exchange ideas, and explore potential collaborations. The networking opportunities were invaluable, and I was grateful for the chance to connect with colleagues from around the world. I was also impressed by the hospitality of Kazakhstan fellows and was glad to have opportunity to enjoy traditional songs, music, dances and food provided by the organizers.

I want to extend my gratitude to ibooks Indonesia and Kubuku (kubuku.co.id) for giving me supports to attend WLIC 2025 in Astana. without their generosity, I could not be part of this event. The WLIC IFLA 2026 was a truly unforgettable experience, and I feel grateful to have had the opportunity to attend. I left Astana feeling inspired, motivated, and already looking forward to the next congress. Until then, I'll be reflecting on the lessons learned and implementing new ideas in Asia and Indonesia



HIGHLIGHTS OF SLA ASIA COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR 2025



REFLECTIONS FROM SLA 2025: CREATIVE TRANSFORMATION: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE INFORMATION PROFESSION

Shalani Jayamanne

PhD Candidate in Library and Information Science,
University of Pittsburgh, USA.

Lecturer in Library Information Science, University of
Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.

As part of this inspiring event, SLA Asia hosted the session "Creative Transformation through Leadership and Management in Special Libraries of Asia." This collaborative forum explored how Asian libraries are navigating the digital era through innovative leadership and strategic management. Participants engaged in rich dialogue about blending tradition with innovation, driving knowledge-sharing, advancing sustainability, and preserving cultural heritage. Through case studies and shared experiences from Sri Lanka, India, and beyond, attendees exchanged insights on fostering creativity, empowering communities, and implementing forward-thinking solutions.



The SLA 2025 Annual Conference, held from July 7 to 10 at the University of Pittsburgh under the theme "Creative Transformation: Shaping the Future of the Information Profession," provided a transformative and collaborative knowledge-sharing experience. Far more than a professional gathering, it created a vibrant convergence of minds where ideas, strategies, and innovations came together to shape the future of library and information science.

The conference also reaffirmed SLA's enduring legacy of advancing the information profession. In this era of generative AI, the gathering proved especially timely, providing a crucial platform to address both the challenges and opportunities emerging in our field. Discussions centered on how information professionals can harness AI and other transformative technologies while maintaining core values of collaboration, sustainability, and community empowerment. The conference underscored SLA's ongoing commitment to equipping professionals for a rapidly evolving landscape, ensuring that libraries and information centers remain vital, forward-thinking institutions in our increasingly digital world.

The Information Generation & Management invites contributors for the next issue of the journal. See submission guidelines below.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF SLA ASIA COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR 2025



YAMAN AT KABAN: A TRANSFORMATIVE CONGRESS FOR FILIPINO LIBRARIANS

by: Justin Harold A. Hingco, RL
ASLP President

On September 24–26, 2025, the Association of Special Libraries of the Philippines (ASLP) held its 12th National Congress of Special Libraries of the Philippines (NATCON), in partnership with the Philippine National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) through its 2025 Competitive Grants Program in which ASLP is a grantee. This event was conducted in the City of Friendship in Tagbilaran City, Bohol with the theme 'Yaman at Kaban: mga Laybraryan at Pantas ng Impormasyon sa mga diskurso at kasanayan sa pang-ekonomikong pag-unlad,' (Wealth and Storage: Librarians and Information Professionals in the economic development discourse and skills) the congress brought together librarians and information professionals to explore the intersections of culture, economy, social justice, governance, and technology.

This congress was a resounding success under the leadership of Justin Harold A. Hingco, RL the 2025 ASLP President, together with the rest of 2025 Executive Board. The Congress is a translation of the ASLP Executive Board's vision in finding and redefining the path of all librarians and information professionals in economic development. A path that is not usually explored and availed of by the community of librarians. From the moment this program was drafted in August 2024, the Executive Board worked tirelessly in matching experts in the field and the topics to be offered in the NATCON to provide and cultivate a holistic learning environment in economic development for our librarians and information professionals. ASLP's commitment to empower Filipino librarians were evident throughout the event's planning and execution.



Mr. Justin Harold A. Hingco, ASLP President

Why This Congress Matters: The Filipino Librarian in 2025

The 12th ASLP National Congress was not just a professional gathering—it was a strategic response to the evolving challenges faced by Filipino librarians today. Librarians in the Philippines continue to face technological limitations, underfunded libraries, low professional recognition, salary disparities, and limited career development opportunities. Despite being listed among the most in-demand professions by DOLE, many librarians still struggle with job security, fair compensation, and institutional support.

This congress directly addressed these issues by offering sessions on financial literacy, public finance, labor standards, gender equality, cultural mapping, and AI integration—equipping librarians with tools to advocate for their welfare, enhance their services, and lead innovation in their institutions.

Day 1: Financial Literacy and Cultural Heritage

- Yaman sa Pag-gawa – Agile workforce strategies and ASEAN labor standards.
- Yaman ng Bayan – Preservation of numismatic and art collections.
- Yaman sa Kahandaan – Financial resilience and inclusion.
- Kaban ng Pinaghirapan – Personal Equity and Retirement Account (PERA).

Day 2: Governance, Labor, and Gender Empowerment

- Kaban ng Bayan – Public finance and open governance.
- Yaman ng Sekswalidad – Safe spaces and gender sensitivity.
- Yaman ng Siyensiya – Gender equality in STEM.
- Yaman ng Ekonomiya – Islamic Banking as a culturally inclusive financial system.

Day 3: Indigenous Knowledge, AI, and Cultural Mapping

- Yaman ng Wika – Localizing library services for indigenous communities.
- Yaman ng Lahi – Human Libraries and community storytelling.
- Yaman ng Teknolohiya – Cultural mapping using generative AI.
- Yaman sa Pagkakaiba-iba – AI and cultural diversity.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SLA ASIA COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR 2025



YAMAN AT KABAN...

Evaluation Insights

Based on the ASLP Evaluation Summary, the congress received an average rating of 4.67 (Excellent) across all categories. Participants praised the relevance of the sessions, the effectiveness of the platform, and the opportunities for collaboration.

Memorable sessions included PERA and retirement planning, Islamic banking, gender equality, cultural mapping, and AI. Participants also suggested future topics such as digital transformation, leadership, mental health, and sustainability.



Conclusion

The 12th ASLP National Congress empowered librarians to be cultural advocates, financial stewards, technological pioneers, and inclusive leaders. In a time when Filipino librarians face both systemic challenges and unprecedented opportunities, 'Yaman at Kaban' served as a beacon of empowerment, reminding the profession of its vital role in shaping a more informed, inclusive, and resilient society.

ASLP is grateful for the opportunity to offer these new perspectives and unfamiliar areas in economic development through the help of the NCCA to our beloved Filipino Librarians. This is a testament that librarians and information professionals can and always be an expert in a skill specific and development area such as this.



MOU SIGNING: SLA ASIAN CHAPTER AND LIBRARY OF STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITIES by Marwiyah

The libraries of Indonesia's State Islamic Higher Education institutions have become an integral part of the SLA Asia Community, as their parent organization, APPTIS (the Association of Islamic Higher Education Libraries), has been a partner of SLA in several activities since 2019, including conferences and webinars. APPTIS members, which are libraries of State Islamic Universities (UIN) across Indonesia, are also involved in SLA membership and participate in several activities organized by SLA, such as attending International Conference of Asian Special Libraries (ICoASL) 2019 in India and in Cebu, Philippines, in 2023. To further strengthen cooperation with the SLA Asian Chapter, four APPTIS members signed a Cooperation Agreement through an MOU, namely the libraries of UIN Walisongo Semarang, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, UIN Prof K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, and UIN Imam Bonjol Padang. The MOU signing took place on 20th August 2025, at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. The signing of the MoU was carried out by each head of the UIN library, while from SLA, it was done by Director 2 of the SLA Community Board 2025, Marwiyah, representing the President of the SLA Asia Community, who was unable to attend due to attending the IFLA meeting in Kazakhstan.



Signing SLA Asia Community-UIN Imam Bonjol Padang



Signing SLA Asia Community-UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan



Signing SLA Asia Community-UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto



Signing SLA Asia Community-UIN Walisongo Semarang



SLA-ASIA LIBRARIAN EXCELLENCE 2025 MUFID

With over two decades of dedicated service at the Library of Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Mufid has established himself as a seasoned academic librarian.

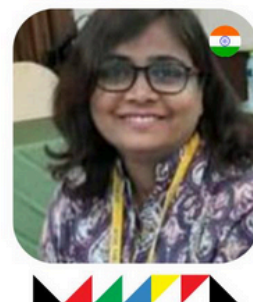
His extensive 23-year tenure underscores a deep commitment to fostering information literacy among both students and faculty. Driven by a genuine desire to elevate the quality of education, Mufid actively promotes and conducts comprehensive information literacy programs. Recognizing the dynamic landscape of information access, he continuously endeavors to evolve these programs, aligning them with the latest advancements in information technology and the evolving informational needs of the student body.



SLA-ASIA SCI-TECH LIBRARIAN 2025 DEEPA SINGHAL

Dr. Deepa Singhal played a key role in developing institutional repositories using open-source software such as DSpace and Koha, making research output more accessible and organized. As the librarian of Shri Venkateswara College, University of Delhi, she has organized and conducted numerous workshops, webinars, and practical training sessions for library professionals, researchers, and students.

Through her career, she has explored areas such as information literacy, the use of technology in library services, open educational resources (OER), and digital inclusion. Her publications in national and international journals aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice, providing innovative solutions to contemporary challenges in library management and user engagement.



SLA-ASIA YOUNG PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIAN 2025 JUSTIN HAROLD A. HINGCO

Justin's career trajectory as a special librarian encompasses significant roles across a diverse range of institutions, including the Makati Medical Center - College Library, the Office of the President of the Philippines - Presidential Communications Development and Strategic Planning Office (OP-PCDSPO) within Malacañan Palace, the Ortigas Foundation Inc. (OFI), and the Commission on Human Rights. He currently holds a position at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (Central Bank of the Philippines), further demonstrating his expertise within specialized information environments.

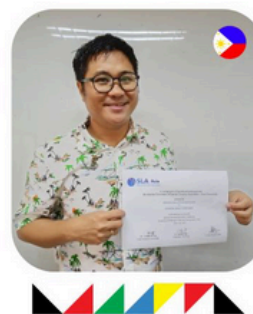
His professional engagement extends to leadership within the field as the current President of the Association of Special Libraries of the Philippines. In this capacity, during his one-year term, he is spearheading a national initiative aimed at convening various special library associations and organizations. This collaborative endeavor seeks to facilitate critical discourse on pertinent issues and to assess the overarching state of special librarianship within the Philippine context.



SLA-ASIA INFORMATION PROFESSIONAL 2025 EUGENE JOSE T. ESPINOZA

Eugene is a champion of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) in libraries and archives, fostering digital transformation, and mentoring the next generation of library and information professionals. He led KohaCon2017, the international conference of the Koha community, held for the first time in the Philippines which is a free registration event.

He is now the Legislative Staff Officer V at the Senate of the Philippines, where he developed and implemented the Legislative Digital Resources (LDR) portal. This system integrates full-text laws, legislative histories, bills, transcripts, news articles, and research papers—significantly improving access to legislative information for senators, staff, and the public.



FEATURED ARTICLES 2025



THE END OF AN ERA: FAREWELL TO SLA ASIA

Joseph Yap
SLA Asia President 2023
[joseph@slis.upd.edu.ph]

After 26 remarkable years, the SLA Asia community is bidding a heartfelt farewell to its parent organization, the Special Libraries Association (SLA). With the official merger of SLA into the Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T) set for August 2025, we look forward with hopeful anticipation as the Asian chapters prepare to join ASIS&T's Asia and Oceania network.

Having been a proud member of SLA Asia for over a decade, I feel a bittersweet mixture of sadness and excitement. Sadness for the closing chapter of an organization we helped nurture and grow, yet excitement for the new journey ahead, a fresh chapter of collaboration, camaraderie, and shared vision under ASIS&T's welcoming umbrella. I see in this merger not an end, but a brighter confluence of ideas, opportunities, and community.

As we await further updates before the formal dissolution, it is fitting to reflect on some of SLA Asia's proudest moments and milestones that underscore our commitment to knowledge sharing and professional growth in the region.

The Philippines had the honor of hosting the International Conference of Asian Special Libraries (ICoASL) twice, each time a testament to the vibrancy and dedication of our community. The first conference took place at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), Manila, from April 10-12, 2013, under the theme "Special Libraries towards Achieving Dynamic, Strategic, and Responsible Working Environment." Over 150 participants from more than 15 countries, including Germany, India, Iran, Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, South Korea, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, and China, gathered for three days of inspiration and exchange.

A decade later, on February 22-24, 2023, Cebu City warmly welcomed delegates once again with the conference theme "Advancing Asian Special Libraries towards the Fifth Industrial Revolution." This gathering attracted over a hundred passionate professionals committed to pushing the boundaries of our field.

Both landmark events were expertly organized by the Association of Special Libraries of the Philippines (ASLP), SLA Asia's steadfast local counterpart. Through these collaborations, I witnessed firsthand the strength and spirit of partnership that fueled our community's growth.

On a personal note, I will deeply miss my colleagues at SLA Asia, the friendships, the shared visions, and the intellectual journeys we embarked upon together. As we align our goals with ASIS&T, I am hopeful that our paths will cross again and that we will continue to cultivate spaces for learning, innovation, and scholarly engagement.

The time has come to weave ourselves into a new fabric, one rich with fresh opportunities for leadership, expanded networks, and renewed purpose. While this marks the end of an era, it also heralds the beginning of a new chapter, filled with promise and potential.



Joseph Yap
SLA Asia President 2023

BREWS AND BOOK CHATS: FOSTERING CONNECTION AND PROMOTING WELLNESS THROUGH BOOKWENTUHAN AT KAPEHAN

Maria Teresa M. Cabance

Head Librarian, Department of Labor and Employment, Philippines

In a world where mental health often takes a backseat, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Library, Philippines, is stepping up to create spaces that nurture the well-being of its employees.

Through an innovative program, Bookwentuhan and Kapehan, the library is fostering a culture of learning, connection, and wellness in the workplace. This initiative aims to promote work-life balance and mental well-being by bringing DOLE employees together through books, stories, and conversations over coffee.



Conceived as part of the library's ongoing commitment to employee growth and holistic well-being, the activity offered participants a chance to pause, unwind, and engage in thoughtful exchanges inspired by books and personal reflections. It offered a relaxing and engaging space where employees could exchange ideas, share insights, and strengthen their connections with colleagues. More than just a library event, Bookwentuhan at Kapehan exemplified the library's evolving role within the organization. Traditionally regarded as a repository of books and information, the library now serves as a dynamic partner in promoting employee engagement, knowledge sharing, and workplace wellness. By integrating reading and reflection with wellness practices, the DOLE Library highlights how information institutions can contribute to both individual growth and organizational productivity. Ultimately, this initiative highlights the vital role of wellness in sustaining motivation and productivity in the workplace. Through programs like Bookwentuhan at Kapehan, the DOLE Library reaffirms its dedication to building a positive, supportive, and connected work environment - one that values mental health, continuous learning, and genuine human connection.



Key Highlights of the Program

- Provided DOLE employees with a space to relax, recharge and reflect.
- Fostered workplace camaraderie through book inspired conversations.
- Promoted mental well-being alongside professional productivity.
- Showcased the library's evolving role from information hub to wellness and community space.



INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AMONG PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN YOGYAKARTA, INDONESIA

by : Marwiyah (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta)

Inclusion has been an important topic of discussion for decades. As stated in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, inclusion means covering or including everything, open to everyone, not limited to certain people. Meanwhile, the related term, inclusivity, is the quality of trying to include many different types of people and treat them all fairly and equally. These two terms indicate that everyone has the same opportunity to be treated equally and to participate in the communities. Originally, inclusion is related to inclusive education, which has been internationally recognized as a fundamental human right for all (Ignacio Calderón-Almendros; Gerardo Echeita-Sarrionandia, 2022). Inclusive education initially emerged from The Human Rights movement in the 1960s in America in the period of intense struggle and progress for civil rights, particularly for African Americans in the United States. The roots of inclusion come from liberal and progressive thought that promote human rights for all people. Recently, inclusion has become a global issue and has become a core principle of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to create a world where everyone can thrive, regardless of their background or circumstance. Furthermore, in the document "Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development", the term "inclusion" can be found in not less than 40 references (Arts, 2017). This shows that inclusion is a very important aspect promoted by the United Nations, in which inclusion becomes the umbrella of the 17 goals developed by the UN. Additionally, SDG covers some aspects of inclusion, including: 1) the motto "Leaving no one behind," which indicates that everyone benefits from sustainable development, including marginalized and vulnerable groups; 2) fostering diversity and inclusivity; 3) promoting equal access to resources and opportunities. Those three aspects are closely related to public libraries, as public libraries are institution with a mandate to provide access to various information resources. As an organization that is supported and funded by the community, either the local, regional, and national government or community organizations, the public library has to serve the community by fulfilling their information need. Public libraries also have important roles in creating a democratic society by providing access to a wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas, and opinions.

As stated by IFLA, the public library provides access to knowledge, information, lifelong learning, and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic and employment status, and educational attainment (Christie Koontz, 2010). A public library should also provide access to its collections to all users, ICT facilities, and offer an inclusive environment for all community members (Schulze & Berget, 2024). This implies that public libraries should create an inclusive society that welcomes all users regardless of their condition. This is in line with the Manifesto for Public Libraries that states:

The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, language, social status, and any other characteristic. Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and 1 materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, poor digital or computer skills, poor literacy abilities or people in hospital or prison. (UNESCO, 2022)

That Manifesto underlines the important role of the public library as an organization that is in charge of creating an inclusive environment. Inclusion and accessibility are at the heart of libraries; it is one of the fundamental values that public libraries should uphold. Therefore, libraries should constantly look at their spaces, collections, technology, and programming to design them in a way that everyone, regardless of ability, can access and participate in everything their libraries have to offer (Carlson et al., 2019).

Yogyakarta is a multicultural city that has various communities coming from different cultures across provinces of Indonesia. Also, Yogyakarta is one of the disability-friendly cities in Indonesia that welcomes people with disabilities as part of the community. Local government of Yogyakarta has taken innovative and progressive steps to ensure that Yogyakarta city creates a comfortable environment for all communities, including people with disabilities (Samira, 2022).

INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR....

Furthermore, the Local Government of Yogyakarta Regency has issued Regional Regulation Number 4 of 2019, which states that persons with disabilities have the same legal status and human rights as an integral part of the unity of society. And to support the implementation of the regulation, libraries are required to support a disability-friendly environment. The city of Yogyakarta has 2 public libraries, namely the Yogyakarta Regency Public Library and Ghratama Pustaka (a provincial public library) that is provided for the people of Yogyakarta and its surroundings as a place that serves as an information source. As a public library, these public libraries should provide various services for various users, including the disabled community. Therefore, it is important to uncover how public libraries in Yogyakarta create an inclusive environment for users with disabilities. Moreover, based on IFLA standards, libraries should also follow to service standards for disabilities.

Finding and discussion

Based on the observation performed in the two Yogyakarta public libraries, it is found that those public libraries have made significant efforts to create an inclusive environment for users with disabilities, as discussed below. This research focuses on the 2 aspects: the physical accessibility and library services.

1. Physical accessibility

According to the IFLA Checklist, there are 3 areas that the library should consider relating to users with disabilities, they are: outside the library, getting into the library and access to library services and collection.

a. Outside the Library

Relating to the outside area of the library, IFLA states that people with disabilities should be able to arrive at the site, approach the library building, and enter the building easily and safely. And as can be seen from Figure 1 below, the Ghratama Pustaka Library has a very wide parking area that is supported by the international symbol for disabilities. This means that the library provides a special parking area for people with disabilities. The library also provides a safe path for people who use wheelchairs by offering a not-too-steep and non-slip ramp to reach the library building.



The Yogyakarta Regency Library also offers an accessible environment for people with disabilities. The parking area is wide enough, but there is no international symbol for disabilities, which means that the library does not provide a specific parking area for disabled people. However, the wide parking area allows disabled users to park their cars in an area close to the ramp that leads to the library entrance, as shown in Figure 2 below.



Parking area



Ramp for users with wheelchairs

2. Getting into the library

Based on the IFLA Checklist, a person in a wheelchair or using crutches or a walker should be able to enter through the door and pass through security checkpoints. A blind person with a cane or a guide dog should also be able to enter without encountering obstacles. The Yogyakarta Regency Library has two library entrances. The main entrance has a narrower area that may make wheelchairs difficult to enter the library. Therefore, the library built an alternative entrance, which provides sufficient space in front of the door that enables wheelchairs to turn around and enter the library more easily since the door is wide.



Wide space in front of the library entrance

INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR....

Ghratama Pustaka library also has an accessible space in the entrance area. The library has sufficient space in front of the door that allows a wheelchair to turn around. The entrance door is wide enough to allow a wheelchair to enter the library easily. The accessible environment can also be seen in other areas, such as the elevator that is equipped with buttons and signage in braille that enables blind people to access the elevator.

3. Access to collections and services

To access collections and services, the library facilitates easy access for the disabled since both Ghratama Pustaka library and the Yogyakarta Regency library are designed to be accessible for all. To access libraries collections, the bookshelves are placed systematically with no barriers between the bookshelves. This enables users with wheelchairs can access the collections easily.



Unobstructed aisles between bookcases



Elevators with buttons and signs in Braille

The two libraries also provide a toilet that is designed for disabled users, such as a wide door that enables wheelchairs to enter it, and a clear signpost that shows the availability of the toilet for disabled users. The library also has a desk with a height that fits wheelchairs, as shown in Figure 6. Other signposts are also provided by the library to make it easy for users to find the library collections and services

2. Department for users with disabilities

1. Ghratama Pustaka Library

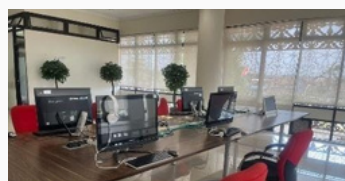
According to the IFLA Checklist, libraries should provide a department for Persons with Reading, Hearing, and Other Disabilities. Based on observation, it is found that both the Ghratama Pustaka Library and the Yogyakarta Regency Library have this type of department. Ghratama Pustaka Library provides a special space for disabled users, a room for Braille collections. This room was designed using a glass door with a symbol of disabilities that makes it easier for users with visual impairment to find, primarily for low-vision users. The other room also provided access to digital collections (in CD format) and the

internet. Audio devices are also available for disabled users to access audible collections. To encourage disabled users to visit the library and to access library collections and services, Ghratama Pustaka Library developed specific activities for users with disabilities.

The first is the literacy program for disabled users that was conducted in 2019, aiming to ensure disabled users are able to access library collections and services. In this program, the library invites blind students of SLB Yaketunis (Special school for disabled students) to write and read Braille collections. The disabled users were also introduced to technology-based facilities, for example, a computer supported by assistive technology. In this session, librarians taught them how to use these computers. The second is storytelling for users with disabilities. Primary school students of SLB were invited to participate in this program. The last program is a collection development accessible for disabilities. Most library collections for disabled users are in Braille, and only a few of them are in digital talking books; therefore, it is important to develop more collections primarily in electronic format. Relating to special collections, the library tried to digitize selected collections to be converted into audible collections.



Digital library room



Room for Braille collections

2. Yogyakarta Regency Library

Yogyakarta Regency Library has a special service unit for people with disabilities, BELINDA (Braille Corner untuk Anda, Braille corner for you), launched in 2017 and supported by other institutions that have a great concern for inclusion, such as Balai Penerbitan Braille Indonesia (Indonesian Braille Publishing Centre), Yayasan Kesejahteraan Tunanetra Islam (Islamic Blind Welfare Foundation), Persatuan Tunanetra Indonesia (Indonesian Blind Community Association), and Ikatan Tunanetra Muslim Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Blind Association).

INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR....

This unit is located on the first floor and close to the information desk and the library entrance for disabled users, which makes it easy for disabled users to access. Belinda provides facilities to support accessible services for disabled users, and among of them are:

1. Collections for disabled users.

The library has special collections such as digital talking books in DVD format and braille collections. These collections are acquired by the library in cooperation with Balai Penerbitan Braille Indonesia (Indonesian Braille Publishing Centre) and consist of various collections such as instruction books for children, fiction and religious books.

1. A computer supported by JAWS (Job Access with Speech) that enables text collections to be changed into an audible format. This computer is provided for users with visual impairment.

2. A scanner equipped with OCR that enables to convert written text into an audible format. This device allows librarians to scan the books they need and convert them into the audible format that helps blind users to access those scanned books.

3. Room for disabled users equipped with comfortable armchairs. This facility is not only for the disabled but also for older people. Usually, the users will stay in the room, and the librarian will search the collection that the users need.

Librarian has important roles in providing library services for the disabled. Before the library started operating Belinda, the librarians were trained on how to serve people with disabilities, such as how to communicate properly with the disabled, how to guide them to access the library, and how to read Braille books. Moreover, the library also has an outreach program for disabled users through the mobile library service. The library regularly visits the special school for disabled students to share their collections, Hellen Keller school, and MTs Yaketunis (an Islamic Junior High School for disabled people). Hellen Keller School is a special school for students with multiple disabilities. The school needs Braille books for the students, so the Yogyakarta Regency library helps them with Braille collections.

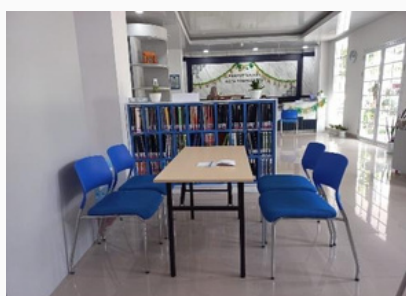


Figure 8:
Facilities for people
with disabilities in Belinda

Conclusion

The Public Library in Yogyakarta regency has made some effort to create an inclusive environment for people with disabilities by providing physical access and a specific department for disabled users. This means that the public libraries have carried out the mandate of the Public Library Manifesto, which has been set by IFLA and UNESCO. And at the same time, the public libraries have also implemented Regional Regulation Number 4 of 2019 released by Local Government of Yogyakarta Regency, since the libraries have offered persons with disabilities the same legal status and human rights as an integral part of the unity of society by give them the equal access to library collections and services for them.



Braille collections and Computers supported with JAWS

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THE ROLE OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE LIBRARY IN DEVELOPING THE LITERACY PROGRAM IN GUNUNGPOTRI VILLAGE, BOGOR, INDONESIA

By Juznia Andriani

Introduction

Literacy is a fundamental skill that people should have in daily life. Literacy is the ability to understand and interpret information, whether in written form or other forms of information, and strengthens comprehension, interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and the ability to apply knowledge, which helps individuals think critically and make appropriate decisions to improve their lives. Having good literacy skills will increase the quality of life, and the quality of life plays a vital role in community development. It also fosters a culture of lifelong learning. This literacy skill can be applied to all aspects of life in various community conditions, including rural communities in agricultural areas, where most people work as farmers. It is hoped that farmer communities with good literacy skills can improve their farming abilities, thereby increasing their agricultural production. The library is one of the institutions that plays an important role in the development of literacy by providing access to various reading materials, creating an environment that supports learning, and helping the community develop information literacy skills. Libraries can also expand their role by organizing educational programs, collaborating with educational institutions, and local communities to enhance accessibility. In short, libraries have an important role in community development through literacy programs. Unfortunately, some rural communities have to deal with challenges relating to those facilities, and among those challenges are the lack of access to and optimal use of useful information, whether in the form of printed materials, digital resources, or online content as happened in Gunungputri village, a village located in Bogor, West Java, Indonesia that have agriculture area. Therefore, the Ministry of Agriculture and related institutions initiated a literacy program that was implemented in Gunungputri Village. This literacy program focused on the agriculture issue, which aims at increasing the awareness of people on the importance of literacy skills to increase their capacity as farmers, which in turn will increase agricultural production. And this is a good example of where the literacy program is successfully implemented since this program can change people's mindset of agriculture and literacy, which leads to positive actions related to agriculture.

Collaboration in the Literacy program development

To build and foster literacy skills of the Gunungputri community, the Ministry of Agriculture Library assigned a librarian, Juznia Andriana (the author of this article), who is in charge of supporting Gunungputri Village through a social inclusion-based service program with a specific program on literacy development. The librarian, who also had a role as a mentor, started the literacy building by building awareness on the importance of literacy for personal growth. Literacy enables people to gain knowledge and skills, which in turn leads to improved welfare of the Gunungputri community.

This literacy initiative was closely related to agriculture. To implement the literacy program, the librarian works together with other institutions. The first institution that became a partner of the literacy program was the Bogor Regency Food Security Agency (DKP). With the DKP, the Ministry of Agriculture Library had launched a program to promote home gardening as a means of strengthening household food security, specifically in Gunungputri. The librarian collaborated with the DKP team to develop agricultural practices in the village, in which the librarian focused on literacy development, while DKP handled the implementation of gardening in the agricultural field.

The second partner is the village leaders and local government of Gunungputri, which clearly shows strong support for the program. Some efforts are implemented to support this literacy program. The first program developed by the library and local government of Gunungputri is the development of reading corners, which are managed independently by community members. The village leader has been particularly proactive in promoting the creation of reading corners in every neighborhood unit (RW). He stated that the community wants to make Gunung Putri a literacy tourism village and to achieve this, it requires more collaboration with various stakeholders. The second program is a digital literacy program aiming to help villagers use technology wisely and effectively to develop their local potential. This program was also involved with the Reading Garden Society as a partner in developing the literacy program. Working together with this community leader, the librarian conducted a digital literacy program aimed at introducing the community to how to access and use online information.

The librarian also built cooperation with the Bogor District Library and Archives Office to explore the appropriate library management practices that are in line with standards set by the National Library of Indonesia. By operating the library based on the national standard, it is hoped that reading centers can be sustainable in providing services to the Gunungputri societies.

THE ROLE OF THE MINISTRY

Innovative programs for Literacy development

Other than digital literacy and reading corner program, the Ministry of the Agriculture Library also develops another innovative program, namely Library Comes to You, in which the librarian actively visits the reading garden community to assess literacy conditions, facilities, and ongoing activities done by the society. The next innovative literacy program is agricultural literacy sessions using the "text-to-context" method that involves professionals who guide the participants during the program. This method was used to teach a literacy program, where reading materials are directly linked to real-life applications. Several communities have set up demonstration plots (demplots) for planting food crops, helping to strengthen food security. This integrated approach—pairing demplots with reading corners—is highly effective. People in Gunungputri learn agricultural techniques from books and leaflets and apply that knowledge directly in the field. The librarian also facilitates community discussions with agricultural experts or researchers to address local challenges. These sessions promote knowledge transfer and encourage villagers to implement what they read into practical action, with professional guidance.



Figure 1. The librarian with the manager of Cakrawala Reading Garden

Another program is also developed by the library, namely, collection development. To make learning more engaging, the reading gardens are equipped with educational tools and materials. This makes children enthusiastic because the learning becomes interactive and fun. Furthermore, to increase book access, the librarian, in collaboration with literacy activists, has introduced a rotating book collection system. The goal of this program is to ensure that a wide variety of books provided by the library and literacy activists can reach more readers. Interestingly, the village police that serve village communities (we call them Babinsa) have partnered in this initiative, helping to rotate books between neighborhoods using motorcycles.

This is a type of mobile library service with the goal is to rotating books to reading corners and reading gardens that enable to circulation of more varied library collections for Gunungputri communities.



Figure 2. Activities with Babinsa and literacy activists

Reading spaces are equipped with shelves containing a diverse range of books, including children's stories, practical guides, textbooks, and religious materials. Comfortable seating is provided, with floor cushions, cement benches, and circular wooden reading tables with matching chairs. These spaces double as study areas for children.

To create a more attractive place, the outdoor areas of the reading center have also been changed into garden spaces for growing vegetables and ornamental plants. A wide range of agricultural books is also available to help readers enhance their gardening skills. Mothers and children are the most frequent visitors to the reading gardens, which are also used as community learning centers. To support health issues in Gunungputri, some health services are provided for communities, for example, the Posyandu program, an integrated health center operated in small towns or villages to serve local communities. Additionally, the space is used for cultural activities such as traditional dance and music, such as the tambourine.

Conclusion

The Ministry of Agriculture library has implemented the literacy development programs focusing on integrating information sources in the library and practice in agriculture to increase food resilience in Gunungputri village, Bogor. The librarian has an important role in developing literacy programs. The literacy program had a great impact on the Gunungputri community, where they are gaining valuable knowledge about agriculture through literacy, and it helps support household food resiliency. This means that the literacy program developed by the Ministry of Agriculture Library has achieved the main goal of the program. However, it requires the library to develop the program consistently to ensure the sustainability of the program.

LIBRARIANS' ENDEAVORS IN MANUSCRIPT PRESERVATION AND FUTURE AHEAD: THE CONTEXT OF INDIAN EXPERIENCES AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Introduction

In India, manuscript preservation has increasingly become a multi-pronged endeavour in the past few years, with government agencies, libraries, and academic institutions stepping up digitization, conservation, and preventive preservation efforts. The National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) remains central, actively documenting, conserving, and disseminating manuscript heritage through a network of Manuscript Resource Centres (MRCs), Manuscript Conservation Centres (MCCs), and partner institutions [1, 2]. In various libraries, there has been attention to strategies for digitizing rare materials, improving hardware/software infrastructure, and formulating digital preservation policies.

Method:

To examine emerging scholarship, a Google Scholar search strategy was employed using the phrases “manuscript preservation in India since 2024,” “role of librarian in manuscript preservation in India since 2021,” “role of librarian in manuscript preservation in India since 2024,” and “role of librarian in manuscript preservation since 2021.” Searches were refined by applying filters for relevance and time frames (2021–2025), while allowing any document type, including articles, books, conference papers, and citations. This method ensured comprehensive coverage of recent and relevant works, capturing both technological and professional perspectives on manuscript preservation and librarians' evolving responsibilities. Later part of article is reflecting scoping review of “role of librarians in manuscript preservation since 2021 specially with the context of India. The search keywords/phrases from Google scholar platform with search results to be sorted with the condition based on relevance.

Manuscripts and Preservations in Various Aspects Manuscript Preservation in India (2024–2025)

Manuscript preservation in India has gained momentum with a blend of traditional practices, digital technologies, and artificial intelligence (AI). Indigenous methods, such as those of the Jain community in Maharashtra (Modak & Ray, 2025),

complement AI applications like Brahmi script recognition, damage detection, semantic binarization, and deep learning segmentation (Jain et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024; Rani, 2024; Maheshwari et al., 2024). Material conservation studies, including ink flaking mechanisms and herbal restoration techniques (Lian et al., 2024; Reale et al., 2024), further support preservation efforts. Bibliometric analyses also reveal a shift in librarians' perspectives toward AI-enabled cultural heritage preservation (Kalbande et al., 2024; Harisanti et al., 2024).

Evolving Role of Librarians (Since 2021)

Librarians in India have transitioned from custodians to technical intermediaries, bridging heritage preservation with AI tools and digital systems. Their roles now include digitization, metadata management, degraded manuscript identification, and digital archive preservation (Sabarirajan et al., 2024; Sánchez-Delacruz & Loeiza-Mejía, 2024). They also ensure ethical AI use and contribute to research support services and Cultural Heritage Information Systems (CHIS) (TK & RN, 2022; Singh et al., 2025). Recent scholarship emphasizes librarians as custodians, strategists, and facilitators in AI-driven manuscript preservation, fostering innovation, sustainability, and cultural continuity (Cox & Mazumdar, 2024; Hodonu-Wusu, 2025).

Scoping Review

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into heritage and library preservation has accelerated since 2021, spanning conceptual, technological, and practical domains. The search on Google scholar was made with the following the phrases/keywords:

- Manuscript preservation in India since 2024
- Role of librarian in manuscript preservation in India since 2021
- Role of librarian in manuscript preservation in India since 2024
- Role of librarian in manuscript preservation since 2021

Total 38 articles were collected and 07 were removed from the inclusion in scoping review as being duplicates (05) and not from India (02).

Excluded in scoping review as other country study:

1. Fatmawati (2021)
2. Taufiqurrahman & Hidayat (2021)

Removed duplicate studies:

1. Harisanty, Obille, Anna, Purwanti & Retrialisca (2024)
2. Kalbande, Yuvaraj, Verma, Suradkar & Chavan (2024)
3. Sabarirajan, Reddi, Rangineni, Regin, Rajest & Paramasivan (2024).
4. Sánchez-DelaCruz & Loeza-Mejía (2024).
5. Teel (2024).

LIBRARIANS' ENDEAVORS IN MANUSCRIPT...

1. Heritage Conservation and Preservation Practices

Studies highlight evolving frameworks for urban and cultural heritage conservation (Abdul Huq & Puthuvayi, 2024; Rachman, 2024) and the role of indigenous knowledge (Modak & Ray, 2025). Specific preservation methods include essential oils for restoration (Reale et al., 2024), MIS technologies for sustainability (Sabarirajan et al., 2024), and conservation of manuscripts using CHIS frameworks (TK & RN, 2022). Traditional challenges like ink flaking on palm leaves (Lian et al., 2024) and material degradation (Rani, 2024) are met with computational modeling and chemical/technological interventions.

2. AI in Libraries and Knowledge Systems

It has been observed that AI-driven transformation of libraries is a dominant theme, with experiences and works defining AI for librarians (Cox & Mazumdar, 2024) and exploring ethical implications (Hodonu-Wusu, 2025). Significantly, librarians' perspectives (Kalbande et al., 2024; Mallikarjuna, 2024) and strategies (Silvia & Yadi, 2024) reflect growing expectations for adaptation in the Fifth Industrial Revolution (Adigun et al., 2024). The past and future are travelling together as AI adoption is traced historically (Jayavadivel et al., 2024) and projected into future service models (Lalitha et al., 2024; Singh et al., 2025). Various concerns include the risks and opportunities of ChatGPT (Aithal & Aithal, 2023; Nehra & Bansode, 2024).

3. Digital Preservation and Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Among the published articles, digitization is central to sustaining manuscripts and languages, with emphasis on indigenous languages (Ajani et al., 2024), and the role of women in digital heritage spaces (Rachman, 2024). Large-scale reviews stress bibliometric patterns in AI-based preservation research (Harisanty et al., 2024), as observed.

4. Computational Approaches for Manuscript Preservation

Future oriented cutting-edge computational studies target manuscript preservation through deep learning and computer vision. These shared publications include character segmentation for Tamil palm leaf manuscripts (Maheswari et al., 2024), Brahmi script recognition (Jain et al., 2024), Sanskrit manuscript damage detection using SegFormer (Wang et al., 2024), and deep feature extraction for historical script classification (Boudraa et al., 2024). Broader surveys on handwriting recognition (Sánchez-DelaCruz & Loeza-Mejía, 2024) and degraded document text extraction (Shashidhara & Amith, 2024) reflect the trend toward automation.

1. Interdisciplinary integration—combining heritage science, AI, indigenous knowledge, and library science—is emerging as the most promising direction for research and practice.

5. Insights and Future Directions

The literature converges on three insights:

- AI is increasingly indispensable for sustainable preservation and access of manuscripts and cultural heritage.
- Librarians' roles are evolving—they act as mediators between traditional preservation, digital infrastructure, and ethical AI adoption.
- Interdisciplinary integration—combining heritage science, AI, indigenous knowledge, and library science—is emerging as the most promising direction for research and practice.

Conclusion

Regarding the role of librarians, the present study examines various published experiences from the literature while direct studies explicitly since 2021 or 2024 are fewer, existing literature indicates that librarians are increasingly expected to take on responsibilities beyond cataloguing: these include managing the digitization process; training and awareness of preservation best practices; overseeing preventive conservation (storage, handling, environmental control); collaborating with conservation specialists; organizing metadata & access; and liaising with mission-level bodies. The reviewed works (2021–2025) reveal a rapid expansion of AI applications in manuscript and heritage preservation, while reaffirming the essential role of librarians and indigenous practices. This literature signals a shift from preservation as custodianship toward intelligent, sustainable, and participatory models of cultural knowledge stewardship.

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FEATURED ARTICLES 2025



A JOURNEY OF GROWTH AND CONNECTION: REFLECTION ON ICoASL 2025

Maria Teresa M. Cabance

Attending the 9th International Conference of Asian Special Libraries (ICoASL) 2025 in Lucknow, India, was far more than a professional event. It became a deeply personal journey of discovery, courage, and connection.

Hosted by the Madhu Limaye Library of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University (RMLNLU) from May 9–11, 2025, with the theme “Sustainable Development of Libraries through Innovative Technologies,” ICoASL 2025 was an inspiring gathering of minds and hearts. What I expected to be a typical conference filled with papers and presentations turned into something profoundly meaningful. It reminded me that librarianship is not just about systems and service. It’s about people, purpose, and the stories that connect us.

One of my most unforgettable moments was standing on stage as an Invited Speaker. My first-ever international speaking engagement. For someone more comfortable working quietly behind the scenes, it was both humbling and empowering to share my experiences and passions before an international audience. And, as I spoke during the Valedictory Session as Secretary of the SLA Asia Community, I felt deep sense of gratitude for the opportunity to represent a community that continues to inspire and unite professionals across Asia.

Beyond the sessions, the true heart of ICoASL was found in the conversation. Those shared over a cup of tea, during meals, and between sessions. These moments of laughter, learning, and connection revealed the essence of our profession – the human spirit behind the work we do.

Lucknow itself added its own charm to the experience. From its graceful architecture to the warmth of its people, the city offered both beauty and belonging. Each encounter was a gentle reminder that kindness and curiosity know no borders.

I came home from ICoASL 2025 with more than photos and notes. I brought back new ideas, renewed purpose, and friendships that I will always treasure. More than anything, Lucknow reminded me that growth begins when we step beyond our comfort zones, and that the most meaningful journey, the ones that change not just what we do, but who we become.



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The Asian chapter's mission statement is:

- *To provide a networking facility for all Asian Librarians and organize visits by members to libraries in other Asian countries to encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing.*
- *To provide global access to other Chapters and Divisions, wikis, blogs and Community of Practice areas, so that professionals have contact with a global audience that shares a mutual vision of the industry.*
- *To organize Annual Meetings in which Asian Librarians are invited to participate.*
- *To organize training, workshops, seminars, and conferences in the Asian region to encourage continuing further education.*
- *To provide remote training via Click-University, and encourage the use of new technologies in the professional work environment.*
- *To provide guidance, guidelines and professional support to librarians on topics of interest and importance to the profession.*
- *To raise revenue for the Chapter activities through sponsorship, Chapter activities and the Chapter newsletter via advertising.*
- *To support the SLA Asian Chapter activities by increasing the membership.*
- *To celebrate the diversity of the Asian Chapter through its members, recognizing the cultural identities the members bring to the chapter.*
- *The Asian chapter encourages members' suggestions to further the development of the chapter. We are already one of the current dynamic model chapters of the SLA, and have gained international attention, including that of service providers and publishers.*

Editor's Closing Note

As we close this final issue of the SLA Asia Newsletter 2025, I write with a heart full of gratitude and reflection. For the past three years, it has been an honor and a joy to serve as your editor, working alongside the SLA Asia Board and our dedicated editorial team to bring timely updates, stories, and insights to our vibrant community of information professionals across Asia.

This journey has been deeply memorable, not only for the milestones we've shared but also for the spirit of collaboration, learning, and friendship that has defined our work together. While this marks the last chapter of the SLA Asia Newsletter and the dissolution of the community as we know it, it is not an ending but a transition. We now look forward with hope to new beginnings, new communities to belong to, and continued opportunities to grow and connect.

May the future bring us even more academic and meaningful conferences, fruitful collaborations, and enduring friendships that transcend institutional boundaries and national borders.

To the Editorial Board members I have had the privilege of working with over the past three years, thank you for your passion, creativity, and unwavering commitment. And to all our readers and colleagues across Asia, thank you for your trust and support. It has been an honor to be part of this shared journey.



Prof. Ana Mae B. Cantel
Chair, Editorial Committee



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