

REDEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES AFTER TSUNAMI: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ACEH AND SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Aceh and Sri Lanka were hit by the tsunami in December 2004. This brought about mass destruction to numerous areas in both localities. This paper looks at the rebuilding and redevelopment of the library network in both areas.

Keywords: Disaster planning; Libraries; Information services; Aceh; Sri Lanka; Tsunami

INTRODUCTION

Aceh and Sri Lanka were the worst hit by the tsunami which struck coastal settlements of these island regions following a massive earthquake in the sea bed off the coast of Aceh on 26 December 2004. The unprecedented scale of death and destruction in a natural disaster stunned and traumatized the local population while the rest of the world watched in disbelief and horror before they were galvanized into action for immediate recovery assistance for survivors and burial for the hundreds of thousands who perished. Within days and weeks of the tsunami, aid agencies from all over the world converged on Aceh and Sri Lanka to do their bit to help survivors recover from their trauma by providing medical and health care, drinking water, food, clothing and shelter. While numerous aid agencies, volunteer groups and other government and non-government organizations delivered assistance for immediate recovery for victims, far fewer committed themselves to the long-term rebuilding process. Rebuilding and redevelopment is a complex process involving a myriad of political, economic and social issues and must necessarily be a long-term commitment.

In the longer term redevelopment plan however, there is a need to ensure that the rebuilding and redevelopment of infrastructure and services are approached in a holistic manner to ensure that no sector is left out. This includes libraries and information services which suffered extensive damage and devastation in Aceh and Sri Lanka. There are similarities and differences in the approaches to and strategies employed in the

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rebuilding of libraries in these two regions which may provide lessons to be learnt or ideas which can be borrowed for a more effective implementation of redevelopment, particularly of libraries as heritage institutions and community information centres.

COMPARISON BETWEEN ACEH AND SRI LANKA

The comparison of redevelopment processes and strategies is based on visits and observations, as well as interviews and meetings with CEOs, consultants, librarians, Ministry and local government officials and NGO volunteers. The interviews in Aceh were conducted during the visit to Aceh by a volunteer group from the Librarians Association of Malaysia (PPM) from 2 to 5 August 2005. The objective of the PPM's Iqra' Mission was to establish contact with Aceh librarians, obtain information on damage to libraries, identify assistance required for rebuilding and how best to deliver assistance needed. Interviews with various personalities in Sri Lanka were conducted during the writer's visit to Sri Lanka as a UNESCO consultant to prepare the master plan for redevelopment of public libraries and to propose strategies for e-libraries in Sri Lanka.

Information given and opinions expressed during these interviews reveal similarities and differences in approaches to the process of rebuilding and redevelopment of libraries and the information sector in Aceh and Sri Lanka. There is a greater dependence on interviews as sources of information in Aceh, which were videotaped and transcribed. The situation of libraries after tsunami in Sri Lanka has been much better documented and information is more readily available. The insight and experience gained from the Aceh mission and Sri Lanka consultancy provided input into recommendations for the redevelopment of libraries in Aceh. The persons interviewed in Aceh and with whom the writer had discussions with in Sri Lanka are listed in appendices A and B. Interviews conducted outside of Colombo were done through the National Library's development officer who acted as the interpreter.

BACKGROUND OF ACEH AND SRI LANKA

Both Aceh and Sri Lanka are island regions, strategically located in the Indian Ocean. Their strategic locations however also made them vulnerable to the tsunami which struck following a major earthquake in the seabed off the coast of Aceh. Located closest to the epicenter, Aceh suffered the first and worst onslaught of gigantic tidal waves which wreaked almost total devastation of all that stood in its path. Although Sri Lanka was hit some 3 hours later, the scale of destruction was equally devastating. Without a tsunami warning system in the Indian Ocean region, and failure to read the signs of impending tidal waves due to ignorance and unfamiliarity, the impact of the tsunami caught the coastal population of Aceh and South and North East coast of Sri Lanka completely by

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surprise. Both regions were totally unprepared for the scale of disaster that would unfold. Aceh lies in the northernmost part of the island of Sumatera with a population of about 4.1 million mainly living near the coastal areas. The language spoken is Indonesian and Achinese and the people are largely Muslims. Aceh was once the centre of learning in the Malay world where Islam was highly influential to the extent that Aceh earned the nickname *Serambi Mekah* or the Corridor of Makkah. However, it has somewhat descended from its glorious days in more recent years due to its isolation, separatist movement and military rule in the last decade. At the time of the tsunami, except for a few libraries, Aceh is not well known for its network of public libraries.

Sri Lanka is an island nation strategically located off the south east coast of India. The population of 20 million speak three main languages namely Sinhalese, Tamil and English. Sri Lanka has a highly literate population with an education system already established even before it became independent in 1948. It is not surprising that Sri Lanka has a well developed public library system although the standard of public libraries generally need a lot of improvement. Like Aceh, the central land mass of Sri Lanka is mountainous, thus a large proportion of its population live in coastal settlements.

SEPARATIST MOVEMENT

Both Aceh and Sri Lanka have been troubled by separatist movements over the last two decades. In Aceh, the activities of the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh Movement) or GAM are seen as a threat to visitors and locals alike resulting in the Indonesian Government restricting access into the region and isolating it from the rest of the world. The unprecedented disaster caused by the tsunami opened Aceh to an influx of all manner of aid agencies and visitors from all over the world, and has remained open until today. Another blessing of the tragedy is the cessation of conflict, laying down of weapons and eventual peace accord attained between GAM and the Indonesian Government. The success of the recent general election in Aceh, the first in decades, augurs well for the rebuilding and redevelopment of the region.

Sri Lanka has been under the shadows of ethnic conflict between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE). Since 2002, both parties have signed a Memorandum of Understanding which has brought about a ceasefire agreement. Recent acts of violence following the general elections in 2005 however, appear to indicate not only a return of hostilities but escalating violence especially in the Northeast region, which coincidentally are the areas worst hit by the tsunami. While rebuilding efforts continue, it is inevitable that continued fighting will hinder the implementation of rebuilding projects in these affected areas.

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EARLY REPORTS ON SITUATION REGARDING LIBRARIES

The Librarians Association of Malaysia (PPM) received a report of the situation regarding libraries in Aceh after the tsunami in March/April 2005 from the Director General, National Library of Indonesia who was also the President of the Indonesian Library Association, and an appeal for help in whatever form from professional colleagues in Malaysia to restore library services. In response to the report and appeal for help, the Library Association of Malaysia at its Annual General Meeting in April 2005 approved a proposal to send a mission named the Iqra' Mission To Aceh from 2 to 5 August 2005. The purpose of the mission was to make contact with local librarians and officials and find out details of assistance required and how best to deliver it. The report of the mission was published in several international library bulletins and journals.

The impact of the tsunami to libraries in Sri Lanka and appeal for help was well publicized on the websites of the Sri Lanka National Library, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and UNESCO Regional Office in New Delhi and even in journals of individual librarians in Sri Lanka. The writer's involvement with redevelopment of libraries in Sri Lanka came in the form of a UNESCO consultancy to Sri Lanka. The purpose of the consultancy was to prepare a master plan for the redevelopment of public libraries as well as the establishment of e-libraries in Sri Lanka. The National Library of Sri Lanka and Task Force for the Redevelopment of Library and Information Services provided professional and logistics support for the consultancy.

DESTRUCTION AND DAMAGE TO LIBRARIES BY THE TSUNAMI

Aceh

A report from the National Library of Indonesia together with a video recording of their visit to Banda Aceh in late January 2005 was the first information received about the situation of libraries in Aceh following the tsunami. The report covered a number of libraries in Banda Aceh including the Provincial Central Library (BPD), Aceh Information and Documentation Centre (PDIA), the Grand Mosque Library and a number of school libraries.

In the interview with Ibu Yusnidar, she recalls, "Fortunately when the tsunami struck in the morning of 26 December 2004, about 9.30 am on Sunday when the library was closed." Ibu Yusnidar saw a " huge wave about the height of two coconut trees approaching and the next minute there were shouts of 'the building has collapsed!'" It was actually the noise from the buildings and furniture collapsing or being smashed and swept away by the water and debris. Everyone scrambled and ran to save their lives.

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The Regional Library Authority (BPD) was badly damaged with the entire ground floor contents, the children's area and two brand new mobile libraries damaged beyond repair and washed away. Rubbish and mud and dead bodies filled the ground floor and surroundings of the library. The Head of BPD, Drs. Bakhtiar Aziz and his family, whose residence is in UleiLei along the coast, and 22 other staff members perished in the tsunami. The first floor of the library was spared by the tsunami but was ransacked by looters. Computers in the *Warintek* (Information Technology Section) on the first floor were stolen. However, the regional legal deposit collection although scattered on the floor were dirty from being stepped on but could still be salvaged.

The report from the National Library noted the possible destruction of libraries in Meulabuh and Sigli, districts which were almost totally wiped out in the tsunami. There were no news from the other affected areas. The worst affected library was the Pusat Dokumentasi and Informasi Aceh (PDIA) which was totally destroyed and with it an important part of the cultural memory of Aceh in the form of manuscripts and rare books and other documentation. The only remains found by the team from the National Library (PNRI) were the genealogy of the Raja-Raja Aceh which was taken back to Jakarta for conservation. The rebuilding of PDIA's collection and its role and functions must be given priority in the rebuilding and redevelopment of Aceh.

The collection and furniture of the library of the grand mosque, Majid Raya Baiturrahman, located at the side of the mosque with a separate entrance was swept away during the tsunami and left the library without a single material but the building remained intact. The library will reactivate a pre-tsunami MOU with Exxon-Mobil to renovate and equip its children's library. The pledge by the Sultan of Brunei to restore the Grand Mosque is likely to include provision for the restoration of the library as well.

Overall, no official statistics are available from the rest of the affected Aceh provinces, as a result of which it is difficult to estimate the loss and damage to libraries as a whole. Worth noting is the emergence of voluntary organizations promoting reading and literacy in Aceh filling in the gaps left by libraries in the rural areas. Even more gratifying is the fact that these initiatives are run by young people, mostly university graduates and undergraduates.

Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, the situation regarding libraries has been much better documented with the National Library of Sri Lanka taking the lead and coordinating efforts in taking stock of damage and destruction to libraries in affected areas throughout Sri Lanka. The National Library sent out appeals to the government of Sri Lanka as well as the international

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organizations such as UNESCO and the international library community. The public library system in Sri Lanka is much better developed than Aceh, hence the scale of losses in terms of libraries is greater. The worst casualties were public libraries in the coastal settlements of Sri Lanka especially Ampara, Batticaloa and Jaffna in the North East Province and Galle in the Southern province.

A total of 70 public libraries were destroyed or damaged in the tsunami, most of which were rural libraries in the *Pradeshiya Sabhas*. Library staff also number among those who lost their lives when the tsunami struck. The worst affected were libraries in the North East Province where 51 libraries were affected and 15 in the Southern Province, which were also areas worst hit by the tsunami. A total of 28 of the affected libraries were completely destroyed while the rest suffered damage to library buildings. Almost all of the affected libraries lost their collections, furniture and equipment.

A visit to the affected areas almost a year after the tsunami, in November to December 2005 showed signs of recovery and initiatives taken to rebuild what was damaged and lost. Issues relating to the "buffer zone" policy introduced by the government has caused delay in the rebuilding effort on the part of Local Government authorities due to uncertainty or unavailability of alternative sites and anticipated relaxation of the policy itself.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

There were no statistics available on the extent and value of damage to libraries in Aceh. Based on interviews with library personnel and literacy group volunteers, the PPM Iqra' Mission report identified the following urgent requirements for restoring libraries and library services in Banda Aceh:

- i. Books for library collection/ literacy projects
- ii. Mobile library vehicles and collection
- iii. Book shelves
- iv. Library furniture
- v. Tracing of books and manuscripts on Aceh
- vi. Education and training of personnel
- vii. Computers and computer software
- viii. Integrated library systems

Books are not only required by libraries but also by literacy programmes run by voluntary organizations to complement libraries in efforts to promote literacy, especially in the rural areas and in the temporary shelters for tsunami victims. Some of the groups actively

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involved in this activity are the Iqra' Reading Society, Phi Beta Learning Centre, Pen Circle Forum, *Yayasan Anak Bangsa* and Children Media Centre. All of these groups are run by volunteers who are mostly university graduates or undergraduates. They share a common desire to rehabilitate Aceh society after tsunami through literacy programmes, especially in the rural areas. *Aceh Bangkit, Aceh Membaca* (Aceh Revives, Aceh Reads) is the slogan for their activities. Some of the groups produce their own reading materials.

In Sri Lanka, although statistics vary depending on when it was obtained. Figures at the end of 2005 indicated that 70 libraries or about 10% of libraries in Sri Lanka were either damaged or completely destroyed by the tsunami. Of these, 51 are in the North East Province, 15 in the Southern Province and four in the Western Province. The total estimated cost of damage to libraries in the Local Government Sector was estimated at 92,662,000 Rupees or USD \$90,000.00. Overall, the amount estimated for restoring library services is Rs11,400,000.00, which does not include the cost of new buildings. Apart from library buildings, books, furniture and equipment were also damaged or destroyed and have to be replaced. The most extensive damage and destruction to libraries are in the rural areas in the North eastern Province, which was also worst hit by tsunami. A USD\$100,000.00 grant from UNESCO provided much needed funds for repairs to library buildings and furniture and rental of space for temporary library buildings. However, much more funds are needed to rebuild and redevelop libraries in Sri Lanka after the tsunami.

RECOVERY AND REBUILDING

a. Leadership

In a crisis situation like the aftermath of the tsunami, a strong and bold leadership is critical in order to mobilize resources and to provide clear direction and instructions in an abnormal situation. There are marked differences in the response to the tsunami in this respect in Aceh and Sri Lanka.

Aceh

Aceh libraries faced a leadership crisis when the Head of the Provincial Library, Drs. Bakhtiar Aziz, Head of Badan Perpustakaan Daerah perished along with 22 of his staff, leaving a gap in the leadership for library redevelopment. BPD library itself was badly damaged and needed immediate assistance and attention. This naturally impeded efforts in coordinating the recovery of other affected libraries. Ibu Yusnidar, senior librarian and head of services division, was interviewed by CNN on the fourth day after the tsunami on her reaction to the tragedy, and had to make her way to the Library for the interview. This led her to explore damage to the library and discovered that although water did not reach the first floor, the whole area had been ransacked and books and

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papers scattered on the floor and had been trampled on by muddy boots and shoes. She rescued the remaining regional legal deposit collection by putting them in a gunny sack and hiring a car to take the books home for safekeeping.

Support from Jakarta arrived about a month after the tsunami led by the Director-General of the National Library of Indonesia (PNRI) who was accompanied by three members of his staff on the visit to Aceh. The team came in their official capacity to provide financial assistance to the staff of BPD and to assess and report on the damage to libraries caused by the tsunami and to recommend financial support for rebuilding from the Government as well as appeal for help to the regional library community in the rebuilding of Aceh libraries.

During the visit of the Director-General, a meeting was held with the Governor and Ibu Yusnidar, the Head of Services Division who was appointed acting Director of the Library with a mission to clear the debris and restore the library's office and service. This was accomplished over the next three months by which time a new Director was appointed by the Governor. A pledge to repair and rebuild the library had been secured from Sampoerna in Jakarta, the Indonesia cigarette company in Jakarta in January 2005 from funds collected from a charity concert by popular artists in Jakarta. Rebuilding work began in July, 2005 and targeted for completion in October 2005. A recent visit to the BPD library saw the completion of repairs to the main library and new development such as the installation of 20 to 30 computers in the *Warintek*. There are also additional mobile libraries stored in the garage of the building which caters for the services in Banda Aceh and its surroundings.

In the interview with the new Head of BPD, Drs. Kamaruddin Hussein, who was formerly from the Cooperatives Department, in August 2005, he acknowledged that BPD was responsible for the development of public library services in Aceh Besar. This included a library in every sub-district as well as mobile library services. However, rebuilding effort in the initial stages concentrated on BPD's main library. He also envisaged the possibility of obtaining funding support from the newly established Executing Agency for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias (BRR) for the rebuilding and development of public libraries in Aceh. There is a need however, to gather data about the damage and destruction to libraries in Aceh as a whole in order to prepare a development plan.

At the special session on the tsunami of the World Library Conference in Oslo in 2005, Sri Lanka was given a special one-hour slot to inform participants of the situation of libraries in Sri Lanka after the tsunami. However there was no slot for representatives

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from Indonesia to talk about Aceh. The President of PPM suggested the writer gave an impromptu report from the floor about the Librarians Association Of Malaysia's (PPM) mission to Aceh and the urgent needs of libraries in Aceh after the tsunami. The brief report generated a lot of interest among the audience. Representatives from various groups who were interested about the situation of libraries in Aceh but were not able to get much information came forward and requested for PPM's mission report. Subsequently the report of PPM's Iqra' Mission to Aceh were published in several of IFLA's group and section newsletters as well as in *Alexandria*, the journal for national libraries.

Sri Lanka

The National Library of Sri Lanka had demonstrated excellent leadership in the crisis following the tsunami which could be emulated in Aceh for the redevelopment of its libraries. Sri Lanka was fortunate that the seat of Government in Colombo was not affected by the tsunami and was in a position to immediately take control and mobilize local and international aid agencies for immediate recovery assistance. The National Library of Sri Lanka provided the leadership initiative and was instrumental in gathering data on libraries damaged, assessing the value of the damages and destruction and estimating the cost of rebuilding libraries in the affected areas throughout Sri Lanka and to send out appeals to the international library community and on its website for assistance in rebuilding libraries and restoring library services. The National Library's strong leadership went a long way to bring the plight of Sri Lanka libraries to world attention and to secure funding for rebuilding and redevelopment. Sri Lanka was allocated an hour during the plenary session of the World Library Conference in Oslo 2005 to talk about the plight of libraries after the tsunami and to appeal for assistance. UNESCO's Regional Office in New Delhi provided support for libraries affected by the tsunami in Sri Lanka and contributed USD100000.00 for repairs and restoration of library buildings, collections, furniture and equipment. In addition, UNESCO also appointed a consultant to prepare a master plan for the redevelopment of public libraries after the tsunami as well as to plan strategies for e-libraries in Sri Lanka in line with e-Sri Lanka, the blueprint for ICT development in Sri Lanka.

b. Coordination and monitoring of recovery effort

At the time of the visit by PPM's Iqra' Mission to Aceh in August 2005, there was no formally established committees comprising of representatives from relevant agencies in Aceh to coordinate, plan and submit proposals for repair or rebuilding of libraries damaged by the tsunami. BPD is in direct contact with the National Library in Jakarta and received assistance from the National Library in the provision of two mobile libraries complete with a collection of books with funding from donor agencies. The mobile

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libraries were built in Jakarta and delivered to BPD complete with book collections. The rebuilding of the BPD library with funding from Sampoerna is monitored by the library's staff. Aceh at this point in time has yet to embark on a holistic plan for rebuilding and redevelopment of libraries after the tsunami. Basic data on damage and losses suffered by libraries has yet to be collected and accounted for. This is essential in order to provide a sound basis for the rebuilding and redevelopment planning for libraries and information services.

In order to plan and coordinate rebuilding of libraries following the tsunami, a special committee called the Sri Lanka Disaster Management Committee for Library and Information Services (SLDMC LIS) was set up by The National Library and Documentation Services Board, chaired by the Director-General. Eight Task Forces also were set up to assist the SLDMC LIS in tackling problems and requirements in specific areas such as ICT, conservation and planning of library buildings. Members of the Task Force comprise of representatives from the different library sectors and the Library Association. Although its members serve in a voluntary capacity over and above their normal work, the Task Forces perform their task diligently. The National Library of Sri Lanka acts as secretariat for the SLDMC LIS Task Force and incorporates this additional work load in their normal operations although constrained by lack of staff and funds.

c. Master plan for library redevelopment.

The master plan for redevelopment of libraries in Sri Lanka takes into account the damage and destruction to public libraries in Sri Lanka and provides a three-year plan for the rebuilding and development of public libraries in Sri Lanka as well as the estimated costs involved. As foreign funding support is needed for redevelopment and rebuilding the existence of a holistic plan with details of types of structures, contents and services of libraries as well as estimated costs would greatly facilitate consideration for funding by foreign aid agencies.

Aid agencies such as the Red Cross, for example, are interested to support funding for medium and long-term redevelopment but need to base their consideration on a concrete redevelopment plan with estimates of the cost of rebuilding. Aceh has not yet embarked on a master plan for the redevelopment of its libraries. Principal libraries such as BPD has itself to recover from the tsunami and while the PDIA building and collection was almost totally destroyed. BPD needs to collaborate with other relevant agencies such the National Library of Indonesia, Librarians Association (IPI), University and other libraries to plan the development of a network of libraries for Aceh.

In Sri Lanka, the SLDMC recognized the need for a holistic approach to the redevelopment of the library and the information sector would be required for input into such a plan. The Task Force also agreed that the rebuilding effort should also take the opportunity to redevelop and upgrade library facilities in Sri Lanka. In this respect, the master plan should leverage on existing national policies and programmes in particular, e-Sri Lanka, the national plan for the development of ICT in Sri Lanka. The UNESCO Regional Office in New Delhi, as part of their continuing support and assistance with recovery of the Library and information sector in Sri Lanka appointed a consultant to prepare a master plan for the redevelopment of public libraries in Sri Lanka and strategy for e-libraries.

d. Lack of availability of information and data

There is a dearth of published materials about library services in Aceh. Equally lacking is accessible data about libraries which already exist, particularly in the sub-districts of the province. Similarly data regarding library redevelopment projects are either scarce or difficult to find in the RAND (Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias database) database. A search in this database has revealed the rebuilding of BPD as the only library project. The collection of data about libraries in Aceh needs to be undertaken by a relevant agency such as the BPD in cooperation with the *Kabupatens* and other relevant planning and development agencies as it has responsibility for development of libraries in Banda Aceh.

The National Library of Sri Lanka maintains a database of libraries affected by the tsunami. These data are submitted by the Local Government authority and their completeness and up-to-dateness depends on the individual Local Government Councils and library projects. Although the figures vary from time to time, basic data and information are available to assist library rebuilding and redevelopment and to identify priority areas based on needs.

e. Collaboration

There appears to be no coordination or collaboration among libraries in Aceh in the rebuilding effort. BPD look towards the National Library in Jakarta for support as well as potential donors who approach them. The lack of communication facilities such as telephones and internet particularly in the first year after the tsunami did not facilitate efforts towards cooperation among libraries or agencies involved with development. There need to be better collaboration and networking among libraries and between libraries in Aceh and other agencies which can provide support and facilities for library services. In the rebuilding of its library collections, particularly materials about Aceh, BPD and PDIA need to collaborate with other libraries in the region particularly the National Library of Malaysia and other major libraries in Malaysia to facilitate tracing

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and obtaining copies of important materials. Major libraries in the West such as the Netherlands, Australia, Britain and the United States too, because of the international coverage of their collecting policies and interest in the region, will have substantial materials on Aceh.

Libraries in Sri Lanka are well represented in the Sri Lanka Disaster Management Committee and eight Task Forces established to plan and implement the different aspects of rebuilding and redevelopment of libraries after the tsunami. Apart from the National Library, the Library Association of Sri Lanka is also active in providing training and advisory services to library staff and newly established libraries as well as school libraries. However there is a need for libraries to collaborate with other agencies on which the libraries can leverage for the development of libraries such as the Information and Communication Agency (ICTA) as the implementing agency for e-Sri Lanka.

f. Funding from donor agencies

The BPD in Aceh appears to be fairly successful in securing financial assistance from donor agencies through Jakarta, as demonstrated by the repairs carried out with funding from Sampoerna, the largest tobacco company in Indonesia. More recently, the BPD has also been pledged a new wing for its legal deposit collection by UNESCO Regional Office in Jakarta and a new mobile library from the Goethe Institute as well as funds for book collection from an international bank. The same is true of the Library at the Grand Mosque Baiturrahman. The PDIA which was almost totally destroyed needs to be completely rebuilt and restored, both the building and its collections. It was believed to contain the largest number of Malay manuscripts and rare books before the tsunami. There is general awareness of its fate although not the full implications of the destruction of its collection, but thus far, there has been no concrete proposal for nor a pledge to fund its rebuilding from the government or aid agency.

Apart from the piecemeal aid to BPD and Baiturrahman, there is a need however to attend to the needs of other affected libraries in Aceh. This has to be preceded by a damage assessment exercise and a concrete plan for rebuilding. BPD and the Aceh Government should take this opportunity to approach the rebuilding of library and information services in a holistic manner with a view to preparing a master plan for the redevelopment of an all Aceh library network. The role of public libraries under this redevelopment plan should be expanded to become a community information centre with participation from community members. There should also be close cooperation and collaboration with literacy and other voluntary groups or organizations to promote the library as a information, learning and cultural centre for the community.

ISSUES IN LIBRARY REDEVELOPMENT AFTER TSUNAMI

While there are differences in the political, economic and social circumstance in Aceh and Sri Lanka in many respects, there are issues in the development of libraries which are common to both. These inevitably present obstacles and constraints in the rebuilding of library and information services and is discernable even in the aftermath of a tragedy the scale of the tsunami. These issues can be identified as:

- i. Low priority for libraries in the reconstruction process;
- ii. Problem of land acquisition and relocation also affect library projects;
- iii. Lack of data on damage and losses suffered by libraries;
- iv. Library development and administration decentralized under local government or provincial authorities, the majority of which are not well funded;
- v. Need to implement standards and models for library specifications;
- vi. Lack of capacity to meet stringent pre-requisites of donor agencies;
- vii. Bureaucratic administrative and financial procedures for procurement
- viii. Lack of or non-existent ICT facilities in libraries and low level of ICT skills among library personnel
- ix. Lack of collaboration between library authorities and other agencies including strategic government agencies and literacy groups
- x. Need to enhance community participation and ownership of rural libraries

Much has been made of the buffer zone policy in Sri Lanka, often quoted by local government officials interviewed as the reason for delay in rebuilding or its slow take off. The uncertainty with regard to the distance allowed by the buffer zone, rumours of relaxation of the policy and alternative sites for those who may have to relocate are the main causes of inaction or delay on the part of the local and rural councils.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

Some useful lessons can be drawn from the experience of Sri Lanka based on the comparative study in tsunami recovery and redevelopment of library and information services. These are incorporated in the following proposed strategies for rebuilding and redevelopment of Aceh libraries:-

- i. There need to be a holistic approach for library redevelopment planning in Aceh to ensure an equitable distribution of libraries and library services. Planning should leverage on and incorporated with existing regional policies and plans for development including ICT and community development in rural areas.
- ii. The rebuilding and restoration of *Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Aceh* (PDIA), the central documentation and information centre for Aceh which was totally

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destroyed in the tsunami, should be given top priority. In particular, the rebuilding of its collection, which formed an important part of Aceh's cultural memory should begin immediately. There should be consolidation of efforts to trace old materials and manuscripts on Aceh from libraries in Indonesia, neighbouring countries and overseas.

- iii. Establish a consortium for digitization of old materials and manuscripts on Aceh for preservation and access to existing and surviving heritage collections in Aceh institutions including libraries, museums and archives.
- iv. Expand the role of public libraries as community information, learning and cultural centres with active participation of community members and collaboration with literacy, cultural and other groups and agencies.
- v. Develop the necessary human resource in line with proposed infrastructure development, focusing of education and training in ICT application in libraries for library personnel.

PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF ACEH RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The establishment of the Aceh Research Institute proposed at the International Seminar on Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies in Banda Aceh is very timely and will provide the necessary vehicle for generating new and useful knowledge about all aspects of Aceh and its people through research. This will serve to reinforce the identity of Acehnese people and to provide concrete premises and data for development and rebuilding of Aceh. The Institute should be international in nature and have an inclusive approach towards gaining support and participation from higher education and research institutions in the region and internationally. In respect of the library and information field, the following research topics are proposed:

- i. Assessment of information needs of Aceh communities and information and knowledge infrastructure requirements;
- ii. Case Study on development of community participation and ownership of public libraries as community information centres in rural Aceh;
- iii. The preservation of and access to Aceh rare books and manuscripts through digitization

NEXT STEPS

The following steps are recommended for immediate and urgent action in the rebuilding and redevelopment of library and information services in Aceh:

a. Task Force to prepare master plan for redevelopment of libraries

There is an urgent need to set up a Task Force to prepare a master plan for redevelopment of libraries in Aceh. The Task Force should comprise of representatives from the Library Association and major libraries in Aceh as well as the relevant development agencies in Aceh. The terms of reference of the Task-Force include:

- i. Taking stock of losses and damage to library buildings, personnel, collections and services throughout Aceh after the tsunami;
- ii. Identifying present and future information and literacy needs of Aceh communities;
- iii. Preparing a three-year master plan, budget and manpower requirements for the redevelopment of the necessary infrastructure and services to meet needs at provincial, district and rural community levels;
- iv. The plan should emphasise the role of public libraries as community information centres in close collaboration with cultural and literacy groups;
- v. Submitting the plan to BRR and other relevant agencies for funding.

b. Task force for rebuilding and preservation of heritage collections

There is an equally urgent need for a separate task force to be established to look into strategies for the rebuilding of Aceh collections that were destroyed in the tsunami and to plan for the preservation of existing or surviving collections in Aceh institutions. This Task Force should comprise of representatives from libraries and information centres, museums, archives and universities. The terms of reference of this task force should include:

- i. Inventorising of losses and damages to collections suffered by Aceh libraries, museums and archives after the tsunami and estimate value of losses.
- ii. Strategising for rebuilding and tracing of old materials and manuscripts collections in other institutions in Aceh, Indonesia, neighbouring countries and Asia, Europe, North America, Australia and other parts of the world.
- iii. Establishing a consortium for the preservation of old materials and manuscripts about Aceh, written by Acehnese or which originate in Aceh. Digitisation of these materials is recommended not only for preservation but also to provide for easier, faster and wider access to these collections via the internet.
- iv. Submitting a three-year strategic plan, budget and manpower requirements for the tracing and listing of Aceh materials abroad and acquisition of copies in microform, facsimile or photocopies to relevant authorities for funding and implementation.
- v. Submitting a three-year strategic plan for the digitization of old and out of print Aceh materials and manuscripts as well as budget and manpower requirements to the relevant authorities for funding and implementation.

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c. Seminar/Workshop on redevelopment of Aceh Library and Information Services

A seminar for heads of libraries and development officials at provincial and district levels need to be organized to raise awareness of the need for a holistic redevelopment plan for Aceh library and information services. A workshop can be held at the seminar to provide guidelines on data collection techniques, planning for library buildings and services and development of public libraries as community information centres. It is proposed that this workshop be held in October 2007 to coincide with the annual meeting of library personnel in the province. The National Library of Indonesia and Library Association of Indonesia can provide the necessary leadership and professional input into the seminar and workshop.

CONCLUSION

The rebuilding and reconstruction of Aceh and Aceh society after the tsunami involves not only physical infrastructure but also the mental and emotional development of its people. Libraries as heritage and cultural institutions play an important role in the preservation of the nation's cultural memory. A holistic approach to the redevelopment of libraries is essential so as to ensure that all members of society have equal access to information and reading materials for self-development, education, recreation and enlightenment and life-long learning. A comprehensive and coordinated plan will be more amenable for consideration for funding from donor agencies. The establishment of the Aceh Research Institute is timely and will facilitate discovery of new and important data and information useful for the rebuilding of Aceh and Aceh society after the tsunami.

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Appendix A : List of Interviewees in Banda Aceh

1. H.E Yusof bin Abu Bakar
Consul-General, Malaysia Consulate Medan
2. Drs. Kamaruddin Hussein
Kepala, Badan Perpustakaan Daerah NAD
3. Ibu Yusnidar
Kepala Bahagian Layanan, BPD
4. Pak Fauzi Yunus
Presiden, Ikatan Pustakawan Indonesia, Cabang Aceh
5. Saiful Mahdi
Ketua Eksekutif, Yayasan Masyarakat Iqra'
6. Pak Mahyuddin
Volunteer/ Coordinator, Phi Beta Learning Centre
7. Fauziah Usman
Pustakawan, Perpustakaan Masjid Raya Baiturrahman
8. Pak Abu Bakar Ishak
Ketua Lingkungan (Community Head)
Lingkungan Al-Mukaramah, Punge Jurung , Banda Aceh
9. Hermantono
Childrens Media Centre, Banda Aceh
10. Edy Sopian
Coordinator
Yayasan Anak Bangsa Aceh, Daerah PEndampingan Lambrado, Aceh Besar, NAD
11. Cut Intan Mutia
Coordinator, Forum Lingkaran Pena (The Pen Circle Forum)
12. Faizal Riza
Information on rare books and manuscripts at Pesantren Tanoh Abee, Sulimuem,
Aceh Besar, NAD

Zawiyah Baba

Appendix B: List of interviewees in Sri Lanka

1. Mr. Upali Amarasiri
Director-General, National Library Documentation Services Board (NLDSB)
2. Mr. W.S. Punyawardena
Deputy Director (Development and Publication), NLDSB
3. H.E. Ambassador Nazariah Hussein
High Commissioner of Malaysia, Colombo
4. Ms. Dil Piyaratna
Senior Project Manager
Information Infrastructure, Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA)
5. Mr. Premasiri Hettiarachchi
Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government
6. Mr. W.A. Abeysinghe
Chairman, NLDSB
7. Ms. L.P. Karunawathie
Chief Librarian, Colombo Public Library
8. Ms. Janaki
Development Division, NLDSB
9. Mr. Ranjit Wickramaratna
Chief Secretary, Southern Province
10. Dr. Richard Pathivan
Chief Librarian, Municipal Council Library, Galle
11. Mr. P.H. Nimalsena
Secretary, Habaraduwa Pradeshiya Sabha
12. Miss Maleka Wijewena
(Acting) Librarian
Dickwella Public Library, Matara District
13. Mr.K.S.Kithsiri
Chairman, Tangella Pradeshiya Sabha

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14. Mr. W.A. Amurakumara
Chief Librarian, Hambantota Urban Council Publiv Library
15. Mr. D.A. Gammi
Chairman, Hambantota Urban Council
16. Mr. N. Stanley Daluwatta
Manager, Mimijawila Electrosheed Technologies Institute
17. Mr. Ulrik Raysse
Architect and Unesco Consultant
18. Ms. Deepali Tagalla
President, Sri Lanka Library Association
19. Miss Dilwani ST Warnasuriya
Manager, Information Services Centre, Industrial Technologies Institute
20. Mrs. Kartini Drahaman Mohamad, Media Consultant
21. Mr. Manju Hathotuwa
Managing Director and CEO, ICTA
22. Dr. Susanne Ornager
Adviser, Information and Communication, UNESCO Regional Office, New Delhi, India.