

SINGAPORE TOUR REPORT

In pursuance of Ministry of Culture Order OM No. 12-34/2014-Lib dated 20th August 2014 Ms Monali P Dhakate, Director (Libraries), Ministry of Culture and Sh. Soumen Sarkar, Deputy Director, RRRLF, Ministry of Culture visited Singapore during 25-27th August 2014 to discuss the area of collaboration and to facilitate the services of the libraries of both the countries. Discussions were held with the National Library Board Authorities of Singapore on the areas like Library Services & Library Automation Technologies, Web Archiving System, Digital Library Initiative & National Libraries Asia Pacific (NL-AP) Project. Discussion was also held with the National Heritage Board & Asian Civilisations Museum Authorities regarding Cultural Exchange Programme between India and Singapore.

I. Meeting with Deputy High Commissioner at High Commission of India, Singapore.

Deputy High Commissioner was briefed about the various issues and possible areas of collaboration that would be taken up for discussion with the authorities of National Library Board of Singapore, National Heritage Board (TBC) and the draft discussion on the Cultural exchange programme. Deputy High Commissioner advised that one Officer from the High Commission would accompany the Indian delegation to attend the meeting at National Heritage Board (TBC) to keep a note on the proceedings of the discussions. She suggested that Singapore has developed a very good system for preservation of Textiles for Museums and collaboration in this area should be explored in the CEP.

II. **National Library Board (NLB), Singapore** was the main venue where the discussions and presentations took place with the delegates from both the Countries for Library matters. The Indian delegates were taken on tour to the Central Public library, Library @ Esplande, National Archive Old Ford Factory and the Peranakan Museum during the visit.

A) Public Library System of Singapore and Role of NLB

The National Library or Lee Kong Chian Reference Library (LKCRIL) is the premier resource centre, at the National Library Building with a collection size of over 600,000 items in various formats to serve the information needs of researchers, professionals and the general public. The Collection primarily consists of English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil literature. The Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, named after Dr Lee Kong Chian, in honour of the Lee Foundation's S\$60 million donation for building of this state of the art library.

There are three main components of the statutory functions of the National Library of Singapore:

- Legal Deposit
- National Bibliographic Services
- National Union Catalogue
- National Virtual Union Catalogue Project

NLB promotes reading, learning and information literacy by providing a trusted, accessible and globally-connected library and information service through the National Library and a comprehensive network of Public Libraries. The libraries encourage appreciation and awareness of Singapore's history through their wide range of programmes and collection on Singapore and regional content.

NLB manages the National Library (known as Central Public Library), 25 Public Libraries (Regional, Students, Community Centre Libraries and Mall / Shopping Centre (New concept)) and the National Archives of Singapore. *Each Library is a thematic library and specializes on a single topic with its unique collection on that particular topic.*

Various facilities of the libraries are chargeable on usage by the public or any other departments/ Ministries, thus generating Revenue for the Public Libraries. The Library provides Internet facilities to all, except Children.

Public Libraries conducts programs like School Reading Programmes, Programmes for Senior Citizen, School Children Community Information Programme, Community based Programmes and activities for active involvement of public and encouraging them to join libraries. Tax relief is provided to Sponsors of Public Library Programmes. Some libraries have earmarked space for display of Art work by Local artists and the Central Public Library has developed a 'Green Library' specifically for Children where Mother and Children can Read, Play, do their Homework with the CSR policy of big companies like Philips.

All the libraries have RFID based Book/DVD issue and return System with 24 hour book drop (return) System. The four Regional libraries have created a facility through which anyone can donate their own books to any library for others to read. Rejected buses are renovated and used for providing mobile library and book delivery services.

National Library has a centralized book purchase policy for all libraries. The Policy takes into consideration the viewers request for books, reviews of books and the list of publishers. The amount is not fixed per title but the experts from various fields in the Selection Committee selects two types of books. Books selected for reference may be on a higher side (S\$ 1500 – 4000) whereas one for circulation is normally priced from S \$ 150-300. The Government publications are purchased without observing the price policy. 50 copies are purchased for each title and circulated keeping 5 copies as reserve in the archives'.

The National Library has a weeding out policy through which old books are sold to members and public at a nominal price. The policy takes into consideration the same parameters of duplication of books, second titles editions, torn and mutilated books after binding.

NLB provides training to the staff deployed in various Public Libraries, who in turn provides training to Volunteers (designated as 'Friends of Library'). Services of these Volunteers are utilized for various Library Outreach programmes including the Community participation programmes in the library.

The library@esplanade is Singapore's first dedicated public library for the performing arts specialising in the areas of Music, Dance, Theatre, and Film. The library is located in the Esplanade Mall. The library's collection caters to varying levels of interest in the performing arts, from the casual browser, the man-on-the-street, to arts students, teachers, practitioners, and performers. The library houses a Piano Practice Room, a Silent Studio for jamming sessions, and Screening Rooms, all available for rent. Besides these facilities, the library also has the Open Stage, a programming and various exhibition spaces such as the Innovation Gallery, Glass Showcase, and the Gallery Wall. The library works with various partners for programmes, exhibitions, education, and outreach. These partners include the Esplanade Company, National Arts Council, National Heritage Board, Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Dance Theatre, and various performing arts institutions like theatre and dance companies. The library is host to a variety of programmes and exhibitions related to the performing arts to create awareness and to educate the community. Programmes include performances, regular talks, master classes, workshop series and monthly film screenings.

NLB have recently developed a Training Academy to train the staff of libraries and volunteers. In the initial stages, the MOU was signed with the university providing the degree in Library Science to train the staff. On a review of the training it was found that University teaches only theoretical part of Library science with no hands on training. NLB authorities then requested the retired / senior's officers, professors to undertake training the trainees with experience. The trained trainers then teach the trainees. NLB board is in the course of finalizing the contents for training.

NLB has agreed to consider collaboration in the area of Capacity Building Programmes specifically for Training of Trainers.

B) Digitization Program and National Libraries Asia Pacific (NL-AP) initiative.

- The National Libraries Asia Pacific (NL-AP) initiative began by the *ASEAN countries* coming together to share the metadata of their digitised content on the prototype NL-AP platform offering users a one search facility to gain access to the ASEAN rich cultural resources.
- *Primary objective* of the project is to showcase participating library's material to promote knowledge exchange and cultural understanding. *The spectrum of formats* are books, papers and manuscripts, maps, photographs, paintings and drawings, audio and video recordings, ephemera, and newspapers.
- This regional sharing project is jointly led by the National Library Board, Singapore (NLB) and the National Library of New Zealand (NLNZ). NL-AP is supported by "SUPPLEGATE" developed by DigitalNZ, of National Library of New Zealand (NLNZ) for metadata harvesting and sharing. The technology facilitates Unified Search of ASIAPACIFIC collections.

Service Framework of NL-AP:

The service framework of NL-AP is based on the successful aggregation models. It works as follows:

1. NL-AP uses aggregation technology to collect the metadata about digital objects from participating library's website or repository. Participating library would need to agree to the sharing of the descriptive metadata of the resources.
2. Once the agreement is confirmed, the metadata from source website or repository is copied into the NL-AP search index. This search index will contain copies of all metadata contributed by the partners. The service does not take a copy of the digital objects, and therefore does not violate copyright. With permission it simply takes a copy of the metadata and keeps track of URLs to point people back to the source web page.
3. API (Applications Programming Interface) provides a data gateway for software developers, so that they can build new discovery services. This API allows the collected metadata to be queried in a consistent way.
4. Partner library then uses the shared metadata to build services unique to the respective country, or build experience that span countries.

NLB suggested that India should participate in the NL-AP project and India will be welcomed to be a part of the NL-AP. On acceptance to participate, necessary training and technologies would be provided by the NL-AP authorities. Indian Authorities may contact Mr. Andy Neale, Head of DigitalNZ, for further details on the digitization. It was conveyed that a proposal for creation of a National Virtual Library of India under the National Mission of Libraries has already being accepted. It was expressed that there should be provision for resource sharing and collaboration between India and NL-AP.

C) Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) presentation

The Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) is a consortium of natural history and botanical libraries that cooperate to digitize the legacy literature of biodiversity held in their collections and to make that literature available for open access and responsible use as a part of a global "biodiversity commons." The BHL consortium works with the international taxonomic community, rights holders, and other interested parties to ensure that this biodiversity heritage is made available to a global audience through open access principles in partnership with the Internet Archive and through local

digitization efforts. Singapore actively participates in BHL and contributes significantly to BHL resources through local digitisation efforts.

NLB has suggested that India can contribute significantly in the BHL project. It was informed that in the Indian context the matter is dealt by other Ministries and it would be brought to the notice of the authorities.

D) Web archiving System of NLB

NLB's Web Archive Singapore is a rich collection of Singapore-related online contents that showcase various facets of Singapore life. Ranging from subjects such as Government administration to popular topics like arts and recreation, these websites are carefully selected to be part of the nation's documentary heritage.

NLB has developed a Task Management System (TMS) which facilitates periodical crawling of relevant Sites, identification & storage of relevant contents from the sites in the web archive repository and archiving of the contents in an organised manner with search facility. Each identified site specifically in the .sg domain is accessed in every three months for changed contents. The System has been developed using Heritrix, which is Archive's open-source web crawler. The project was started in 2006 and 300,000 sites have been crawled since then. For example, National Day Parade of Singapore is tracked each year and the contents are archived.

NLB is a member of the International Internet Preservation Consortium (IIPC).NLB Act is under revision for inclusion of this digital legal deposit.

E) Singapore Memory Project

The Singapore Memory Project (SMP) is a whole-of-nation movement that aims to capture and document precious moments and memories related to Singapore; recollections not merely from individual Singaporeans, but also organisations, associations, companies and groups. The SMP involves partners (academic, research and library institutions, heritage agencies, public agencies, private entities and community and Memory Corps) who volunteers and help individuals for documenting their memories; connecting the SMP to people with memories of key Singapore events, personalities and places; and enrolling more volunteers to join the SMP cause. The web portal – SingaporeMemory.sg - allows every Singaporean to own a memory account to deposit their memories and stories. Memories can be deposited in the form of texts, audio files, video files or images.

F) Tamil Digital Heritage Project

NLB of Singapore has initiated the Tamil Digital Heritage Project to digitize all works of local Tamil authors. The project will cover all the literary works from 1965 till 2015 and is being targeted for completion before the nation gets to celebrate its 50th Independence Day on August 4th. OCR of the digitised contents will also be done to facilitate full text searching.

NLB authorities sought the help of Indian delegates to locate good OCR software for Tamil. Director (Libraries) assured the NLB that all possible co-operations in this regard would be extended.

III. Discussion with National Archives of Singapore (NAS):

National Archives of Singapore (NAS) functions as institution under National Library Board of Singapore. NAS is the official custodian of Singapore's collective memory. NAS oversees the collection, preservation and management of public and private archival records, including government files, private memoirs, maps, photographs, oral history interviews and audio-visual materials. To allow easy access to archival holdings, Archives Online is designed to search

information across NAS' various independent databases and view selected photographs, maps and plans listen to oral history interview samplers and watch snippets of audio-visual recordings.

Old Ford Factory (Memoirs of Old Ford Factory), a repository of NAS was officially opened on 16 February 2006. This historical building was the site where the British surrendered to the Japanese on 15 February 1942. A permanent exhibition gallery showcasing the memories of life during the Japanese Occupation has been developed by NAS. MOFF has audio video room which runs various documentaries on selected days available with them. Public are encouraged to visit the gallery (free) and shows (at minimal cost), whereas it is open for school children.

Singapore authorities requested that the digitised contents of Archival documents pertaining to both countries should be shared.

IV. Meeting with National Heritage Board (NHB) at Asian Civilization Museum (ACM)

Dr Alan Chong, Director, ACM, Mr Gerald Wee, Deputy Director, International Relations, NHB, Ms Gouri Krishnan, Centre Director, NHB, Ms Theresa Mccullough, Senior Curator, ACM and an Officer deputed by the High Commission of India were present for the meeting.

- It was confirmed that an Exhibition of rare artefacts from India would be organised at ACM, Singapore in 2015.
- The List of artefacts exhibited at Japan was requested by the National Heritage Board Authority to facilitate selection of items.
- The Space earmarked for the exhibition was visited and found to be satisfactory.
- The NHB had requested for holding an joint exhibition with Indian Heritage Centre, Singapore on "Women" through images, sculptures, drawings/paintings by both the countries. They have forwarded the proposal to JS (Museums).

Sd/-

(Monali P Dhakate)
Director(Libraries)
Ministry of Culture

Sd/-

(Soumen Sarkar)
Deputy Director
Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation