

DEVELOPING A PROGRAMME TO EDUCATE  
ARCHIVISTS IN SRI LANKA

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the possibilities of educating and training archivists in Sri Lanka. It aims to determine the viability of educating archivists and to propose the location, requirements, and curriculum suitable to the Sri Lankan circumstance.

The first part of the study examines aspects of the Sri Lankan context that affect the question of archival education, in particular the constitutional and political evolution of the country, the history of its archives and their preservation and treatment, together with an account of past education and training of archivists and records personnel.

It then synthesizes the international literature on archival education in order to see the various patterns of education which have emerged the world over in order to reflect on the best model for Sri Lanka. Although aspects of several different patterns are applicable to the Sri Lankan situation, it is proposed a programme of studies in purely professional areas should be located in a Sri Lankan university, in a manner more and more becoming the norm the world over. This literature also identifies certain issues of location in the university and related to the curriculum which are addressed in later chapters.

The next two chapters support the idea of

establishing a diploma programme at the post-graduate level lasting one year and located in conjunction with library and information studies. The particular requirements of Sri Lanka are taken into account, but international trends and standards are also observed.

The study concludes that it is both possible and desirable to take a gradualist approach by first building a diploma program of purely professional courses to educate archivists and records personnel for both public and private employment in the Sri Lankan context.

## Table of Contents

Abstract . . . . .	ii
Table of Contents . . . . .	iv
List of Tables . . . . .	v
List of Maps . . . . .	vi
Acknowledgements . . . . .	vii
Introduction . . . . .	1
Chapter One: The Sri Lankan Context . . . . .	4
Sri Lanka Society and its Organization . . . . .	6
Social, Economic, and Government System . . . . .	8
History of Records Preservation . . . . .	15
Dutch Archives . . . . .	16
British Archives . . . . .	19
History of Archive Preservation . . . . .	20
Archival Legislation in Sri Lanka . . . . .	21
Chapter Two: Principal issues in Archival Education . . . . .	27
Chapter Three: University Education: Options . . . . .	48
University of Sri Lanka: Historical Development . . . . .	49
Archival Education: Level of Education . . . . .	59
Duration . . . . .	60
Faculty or Department . . . . .	61
Teachers . . . . .	67
Language of Instruction . . . . .	69
Chapter Four: Designing a Programme . . . . .	72
Admission Requirements . . . . .	73
Curriculum . . . . .	77
Chapter Five: Conclusion . . . . .	96
Selected Bibliography . . . . .	100

## **List of Tables**

### Table 1

Social Indicators: Sri Lanka compared with  
selected countries . . . . .

### Table 2

University Education 1984-1990 . . . . .

## **List of Maps**

### Map 1

Sri Lanka . . . . . 5

### Map 2

Higher Educational Institutions  
of Sri Lanka . . . . .

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## **Introduction**

It is critically important to every civilized society that documentary evidence of its activities be identified, preserved, and accessible. As a Democratic Socialist Republic, Sri Lanka has already acknowledged its responsibility and begun to make provision for preserving its archival heritage. Part of the process of extending the range and cogency of archival administration involves educating archivists to care for the record of the nation. By ensuring that archival documents are properly preserved and made available for all of society's purposes, Sri Lanka can deepen its sense of its cultural heritage and protect the rights and privileges of its citizens.

Archivists and other records personnel play a vital role in protecting the nation's heritage. Their professional competence must be secured by a thorough grounding in their discipline. Even though Sri Lanka has a recordkeeping tradition going back over 2500 years old, it, like many other developing countries, has not yet established a means of educating its own archivists and records managers. In the past, education has been provided either first by training personnel on the job in the institution where they work or by sending people overseas to Britain and other countries for post graduate courses in the field.

As a rapidly developing country in the South Asia,

with one of highest literacy rate in the region, Sri Lanka has the capability to educate its own archivists and records managers. Whether it will do so is a question only time will tell, but an investigation of what is involved in establishing such a program of studies may help the process. Therefore, this thesis aims to characterize the conditions, needs, and options open to Sri Lanka to develop professional education in the field.

It begins by examining the broader context of Sri Lankan society, its history, and the history of its archives to set the stage for a discussion of educational issues. It then surveys the literature on archival education to determine the various patterns of national development from which Sri Lanka may draw counsel. With broader context set in these two ways, it then looks at the perennial question of where archival education should be located, its institutional and intellectual milieu. Finally, as in any educational endeavour, a prime issue is what should be instructed. The thesis therefore examines the nature and extend of the curriculum to meet Sri Lanka's needs and move it along the path to greater effectiveness in its archival endeavours.

The main sources of this thesis are secondary, falling equally into works about Sri Lanka in general, on the one hand, and about archival science and education, on the other. The task was very much one calling upon the

author to put knowledge of Sri Lanka, its society, and its institutions together with knowledge of archives and archival education to devise or propose an appropriate scheme of archival education for her native country. In that sense, the thesis has a very practical aim, but in fact the process caused her to draw together the strands of a lifelong interest in her country's heritage and her newfound professional knowledge of archives. The education of archivists everywhere in the world has been a contentious matter, but everywhere it advances due to the efforts of archivists to conceive of ways to provide a solid formation of new members of the profession. It is perhaps unusual for a new member of the profession to take on that task, but, it is hoped, nonetheless instructive for all that.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE SRI LANKAN CONTEXT

Sri Lanka is an island of 65,610 square Kilometres in extent, roughly of the same size as Tasmania or the Irish Republic, lying off the southern tip of the Indian sub-continent. It is separated from the Indian sub-continent by strip of sea which, at its narrowest is about 45 Kilometres wide. Because of its central location in the Indian Ocean it has been for many centuries a focal point of sea routes. It had links with the ancient civilizations of the Mediterranean, and in medieval times, some of its ports became major commercial centres of the Indian Ocean that were frequented by trading fleets from Arabia and China.<sup>1</sup>

Sri Lanka has Asia's largest natural harbour in Trincomalee (see map of Sri Lanka on page 5). The importance of Trincomalee in the days before the steamer was related to the needs of naval strategy. During the monsoons, a squadron defending India had to lie to the windward of the sub-continent; it required a safe harbour for shelter during the violent weather. Trincomalee fulfilled this requirement nicely and became crucial to the naval defence of India. The strategic importance to the control of the Malabar and

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<sup>1</sup> C.W. Nicholas and S. Paranavitana, *A Concise History of Ceylon* (Colombo: Ceylon University Press, 1961), 9-10.

Map 1  
Sri Lanka



Source: The Times Atlas of the World, 9th ed. (London: Times books, 1992), plate 26.

in peninsular India. Because of the island's geo-strategic value in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka was subjected to Western imperialism longer than any other Asian country.

Sri Lanka experienced Western rule under three successive European colonial powers: the Portuguese (1505-1656), the Dutch (1656-1796), and the British (1796-1948). In 1505, the Portuguese formed settlements in the west and south, which were taken from them about the middle of the next century by the Dutch. In 1796, the British Government annexed the island to the presidency of Madras. In 1802, Ceylon was constituted a separate colony. The British territorial control over Ceylon was confirmed by the Treaty of Amiens between Great Britain and France in the same year.<sup>2</sup>

A Governor was appointed to administer the island, he was also the president of the Supreme Court of judicature consisting of the Governor, the officer commanding troops, and the Chief Secretary. The Chief Secretary was the president of the board of revenue and trade. Agents of Revenue were appointed to collect taxes and duties. The Ceylon Civil Service was also established from the beginning of the British rule. During the early years postal, survey, audit, education and medical departments were set up. The oldest newspaper in Sri Lanka, *The Ceylon Government Gazette*, was started in

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<sup>2</sup> Zeylanicus, *Ceylon Between Orient and the Occident* (London: Elek, 1970), 82.

1802.<sup>3</sup> The British also set up five courts with civil and criminal jurisdiction and by 1809 trial by jury was introduced, the first introduction of this procedure into Asia.<sup>4</sup> Fusing the British legal system to that of Dutch law gave the island a judicature which emphasizes the equality of the individual before the law, irrespective of considerations of caste, creed, and community. This legal system, one of the chief legacies of early British rule, provides the foundation for today's egalitarian society.

Until 1815, Ceylon was still a geographical entity and not a political unit under the British. British power was dominant only over the maritime provinces. In central Ceylon, the indigenous monarchical form of government continued. Political unity would await the subjugation of the Kandyan Kingdom in central Ceylon by the British, who were anxious to control the island militarily.

The British attempted to conquer the Kandyan Kingdom several times, but failed when the troops were massacred in the mountainous defiles and devastated by malaria. Then they established contacts with the Sinhalese chiefs in the hope that diplomacy would enable them to control the Kandyan Kingdom. A notable oriental scholar, John D'Oyly, who acted as the chief translator to the British government, started a

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 85.

steady correspondence in Sinhalese with the Kandyan chiefs. These letters were inscribed on ola or dried palm leaves.<sup>5</sup> Collusion between D'Oyly and the chief minister of the King led to a revolt against the King. When it failed, the chieftain took refuge with the British. The King then butchered the Chieftain's wife and children and several Muslim traders who were accused of being British spies. The British used this act as a *casus belli* and marched into Kandy in 1815, captured the last Sri Lankan king, and made Ceylon a single political unit.<sup>6</sup>

The British established Executive and Legislative Councils to govern the island. Local representatives were admitted to the Legislative Council, composed of the Chief Justice, the Colonial Secretary, the Colonial Treasurer, two provincial agents, and two heads of government departments. From time to time, the number of unofficial representatives was increased. Universal adult suffrage was introduced to the country in 1931.

The end of colonial rule in Sri Lanka was smooth and peaceful in contrast with the violence that raged over British India and Burma. In 1948, the last governor became the governor general of the new dominion. The Westminster style parliament consisted of elected members from ninety five

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

constituencies. The Parliament was composed of two chambers, the Senate and the House of Representatives. The leader of the largest group in the House of Representatives became the prime minister. The Prime Minister selected members of the cabinet from among the elected representatives.<sup>7</sup> In 1956, Sinhalese was declared by legislation to be the official language of the country.

In May 1972, Ceylon became a republic, and its name was changed to Sri Lanka. The new constitution established a uni-cameral legislature, and a centralised democracy in which the dominant element was the political executive. The National State Assembly was described as the supreme instrument of the state power of the republic.<sup>8</sup> The constitution brought the entire administrative structure of the country under the control of the Council of Ministers who were answerable to the National State Assembly. The Council of Ministers was vested with the authority to appoint, transfer, discipline, and dismiss members of the public service.

A new constitution for the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka was promulgated in September 1978. The major feature of the present constitution of Sri Lanka is the division of powers among the three different organs of

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<sup>7</sup> E.F.C. Ludowyk, *The Modern History of Ceylon* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1966), 205-9.

<sup>8</sup> K.M. de Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka* (London: C. Hurst, 1981), 548.

government. The constitution refers to the three branches of government -- the legislative, executive, and judiciary -- as forming the basic political structure of the state. The relationship between the executive and legislative organs in Sri Lanka is based on a peculiar combination of the presidential and parliamentary system of government.

The President of the Republic is elected independently of the legislature, and therefore has a direct mandate from the people to head the political executive.<sup>9</sup> The term of office is six years with no person able to hold the office for more than two consecutive terms. The President is also the head of the state, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and presides at meetings of the Cabinet of Ministers. The President appoints the prime minister, cabinet ministers, and deputy ministers.<sup>10</sup>

Parliament consists of one chamber composed of 225 members. The term of Parliament is six years. The prime minister speaks in Parliament on behalf of the government on most important matters. The importance of the prime minister has been greatly reduced by the 1978 constitution. The office does not in anyway compare with his counterpart under the previous constitutions of Sri Lanka. Rather, it is the

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<sup>9</sup> H.M. Zafrullah, *Sri Lanka's Hybrid Presidential and Parliamentary System and the Separation of Powers Doctrine* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1981), 33.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 33-35.

president, through his authority to appoint ministers, direct all executive affairs, head the military, and act as head of state, who has consolidated power in his hands. The present administration has approximately twenty seven persons holding portfolios at the central level, twenty four district members, and twenty seven deputy ministers. The district ministers are in charge of regional development.<sup>11</sup>

The judicial administration is structured in a hierarchical fashion. The courts of law are the Magistrate's Courts, District Courts, High Courts, and a Supreme Court. The Constitution of 1978 provided for the establishment of two superior courts, the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal. The Supreme Court is the highest and final superior court of record. It exercises jurisdiction for the protection of fundamental rights, final appellate jurisdiction in election petitions, and jurisdiction in respect of any breach of the privileges of Parliament. The Court of Appeal has appellate jurisdiction to correct all errors in fact or law committed by any court, tribunal, or institution.<sup>12</sup>

In Sri Lanka, as elsewhere in South and South East Asia, political independence did not necessarily bring about changes in the existing economic structure. The period of British rule witnessed the emergence and firm establishment of

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<sup>11</sup> Brian Hunter, ed., *The Statesman's Year Book*, 129th edition (London: C. Hurst, 1992), 1225.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 1226-27.

an export economy which revolved principally around the production of three crops -- tea, rubber, and coconut.<sup>13</sup> Statements of government policy and plans and programmes of economic development of the past decade or so have repeatedly emphasized the need for safeguarding the economy of Sri Lanka from the vulnerability which stems from its over dependence on the three staple export products. Today the textile industry is the highest foreign income earner, other industrial exports follow and tea is the third main income source.<sup>14</sup> The rate of growth of the Gross National Product (GNP) in real terms was about 4.4% in 1992. For the same year, per capita Gross National Product was US \$494.<sup>15</sup> At present, the country has a population of 17.4 million and the estimated growth rate of the population is 1.0%.<sup>16</sup>

Table one gives some social facts about Sri Lankan society in comparison with other countries of the region which experienced British Colonial rule in the past.

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<sup>13</sup> L.A. Wickremeratne, "The Economy in 1948," in *Sri Lanka: A Survey* ed., K.M. de Silva (London: C. Hurst, 1977), 131.

<sup>14</sup> "Basic Economic Indicators," in *Central Bank of Sri Lanka Annual Report* (Colombo, 1992), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

**Table 1**Social Indicators: Sri Lanka compared with selected countries

Item	Ref	Sri Lanka	India	Pakistan	Malaysia	Hong Kong
	Year					
Literacy Rate%	1985	87	43	30	73	88
Population of Working age (15-64 years)%	1989	62.3	58.6	52.2	59	69.6
Total Dependency Ratio%	1980	82.8	86.7	97.2	81.5	47.0
No. of Persons per Physician	1985	7364	2647	2229	3175	1117
No. of Persons per hospital bed	1985	358	1143	1694	408	222
No. of Daily Newspapers per 1000 persons	1985	106	20	18	173	560
Economically Active population of the Total population %	1985	38	38	29	39	48

Source: *Economic and Social Statistics of Sri Lanka*  
 (Statistics Department, Central Bank of Sri Lanka,  
 1992), 94.

Sri Lanka has a high literacy rate compared with the many South Asian countries. In 1990, there were about 10,382 primary and secondary schools and 4.11 million students attending school in years one to thirteen.<sup>17</sup> Education is administered by eight provisional education directors. Overall

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<sup>17</sup> *Statesman's Year Book*, 1227.

control of education regions is vested in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Education is free from the first school year through university. There are nine universities in the country: Peradeniya, Colombo, Jaffna, Sri Jayawardenepura, Moratuwa, Kelaniya, Eastern, Ruhuna, and the Open University. In 1990 there were 28,923 students and 1,811 teachers in the eight universities excluding the Open University.<sup>18</sup> In the universities, undergraduate and graduate degrees are offered in the disciplines of arts and oriental studies, education, commerce and management studies, law, science, engineering, medicine, dental surgery, agriculture, veterinary science, and architecture.<sup>19</sup> There is a diploma course in library and information science offered at University of Kelaniya, and a master of library science degree offered at the University of Colombo.

Education in the sense of formal instruction and learning has had a long history in Sri Lanka. Religious instruction for novices in Buddhist temples started well before the Christian era, and basic instruction in reading, writing, and religion appears to have been given to interested laymen by Buddhist monks from about the same period. Thus, from early times there was in the island a considerable

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> "Higher Education 1983-1991," in *Economics and Social Statistics of Sri Lanka* (Statistics Department, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 1992), 96.

literate lay public.<sup>20</sup> The academic nature of temple education was strengthened because it met the need for literate officials who could maintain revenue and other records for purposes of administration.

The tradition of record keeping practices in Sri Lanka runs back to the introduction of Buddhism in the third century B.C. During the period of native monarchs from the third century B.C. to nineteenth century A.D., royal archives were in existence, as evidenced by information available in inscriptions, chronicles, ola manuscripts (palm leaves), and other literary sources.<sup>21</sup>

From the third century B.C. until 1815, the country's activities were recorded in the historical chronicles of the island. The Mahavamsa<sup>22</sup> and its continuation the Culavamsa were the work of Buddhist monks. These works have been extensively corroborated by lithic documents, archaeological evidence, and foreign writings. It is known that these chronicles were written using monastic archives of

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<sup>20</sup> C.R. de Silva, "Education," in *Sri Lanka: A Survey*, 403.

<sup>21</sup> S.S.K. Wickramanayake, "Evolution of the Record Keeping Practices in Sri Lanka," in *Historical Research and National Archives* (Colombo: Government Press, 1992), 24.

<sup>22</sup> Mahavamsa, the oldest chronicle has been considered a work of the sixth century A.D. Centuries later George Turnour published a translation of the Mahavamsa under the title *The Mahavamsa in Roman character with the translation subjoined and an introductory essay on Pali Buddhistical literature* (Ceylon, 1837). See A.W.P. Guruge, *Mahavamsa* (Colombo, 1989).

various traditions, but those archives since appear to have been lost or destroyed. Perhaps they disappeared in the many foreign invasions to which the country was subjected. One of the reasons for the abandonment of first capital at Anuradhapura (377 B.C. to A.D. 1052) as well as that of its successor capital at Polonnaruwa (1065-1236) was foreign invasions. Later, the search for security led the kings of Sri Lanka to Damdeniya (1236-1277), to Yapahuwa (1277-1288), Kurunegala (1293-1347), Gampola (1347-1351), Kotte (1410-1581) and finally to Kandy (1604-1815). In these many movements of the seat of government there was ample opportunity for neglect of archives. Most notably, the last of these capitals, Kandy, was ransacked time and again by the Portuguese, Dutch, and British over a period of two hundred years from the seventeenth century onwards. Numerous references to the destruction of the island's early archives are available in both local and foreign literature.<sup>23</sup>

The beginnings of modern record keeping practice are generally associated with the coming of the Dutch to Sri Lanka. The bulk of the records of the Portuguese were burnt before they surrendered to the Dutch in 1656.<sup>24</sup> Therefore,

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<sup>23</sup> G.P.S.H. de Silva, "Archives in developing countries: Sri Lanka, a case study within Asia," *Unesco journal of information science, librarianship and archives administration* 4, no. 2 (April-June 1982): 81-82.

<sup>24</sup> J.H.O. Paulusz, "History of the Ceylon Government Archives," *The Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 97 (1944): 210.

records bearing on Portuguese administration of Sri Lanka are only available at the Central State Archives of Portugal (Arquivo Nacional do Tombo), and the Arquivo Historico Ultramarino, which houses the metropolitan records of Portuguese colonial administration, and in the Goa Archives in India. During the Portuguese period the change from an indigenous to a colonial system of administration was characterized by the establishment of a top layer of officials -- the Captain General, Controller of Revenue, and Chief Judicial Officer, who in fact together exercised the various functions that had been the prerogative of the king and the council of old. Another significant change was that revenue collection was separated from civil administration. This led to the creation of document series named forals or land registers.<sup>25</sup>

The Dutch who expelled the Portuguese in 1658 followed the pattern of Portuguese forals and started the compilation of land registers named Tombus. Tombu or description of lands were placed in the custody of the Tombu Keeper (the modern day archivist).<sup>26</sup> He was answerable directly to the Governor. No alterations therefore could be made in the body of these volumes without the special sanction of the

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<sup>25</sup> Wickramanayake, "Evolution of Record Keeping," 25.

<sup>26</sup> Paulusz, "History of Ceylon Government Archives," 212.

Governor or an order from the Land Court based on a judgement. Secondly, there are the class of secretarial papers formed at each administrative centre, whether the capital itself or any of the provincial seats of government. These collections were in the custody of the Political Secretary assisted by the First Sworn Clerk. There was a rule that each outgoing executive chief should hand to his successor an inventory of all the records left behind.<sup>27</sup> Thirdly, there are the parish registers or school tombus, which record births, deaths, and marriages, and attendance at the various village schools.<sup>28</sup>

The systematic records practices of the Dutch are evident from the instructions given from time to time for the proper management and safe custody of official records by the Dutch Governors. Three great historical and descriptive works on Sri Lanka, derived from these official records, were produced during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Philip Baldaeus published his book in 1672.<sup>29</sup> Pieter van Dam's monumental work on the Dutch East India Company was completed in 1701.<sup>30</sup> Francois Valentyn published eight volumes

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Philip Baldaeus, *Naaukeurige Beschrijvinge van Malabar en Choromandel en het machtige Eyland Ceylon* (Amsterdam, 1672).

<sup>30</sup> Handed to the Directors of the East India Company in 1701, published later in 1927.

during the period 1724 to 1726.<sup>31</sup> The Dutch kept their records in an excellent state of preservation. Today the Sri Lanka National Archives hold the tombus and minutes of the Dutch political council from 1640 to 1796.

The third European power to rule Sri Lanka, the British, captured the maritime provinces from the Dutch in 1796, and the Crown Colony administration commenced in 1802. The methodically accumulated archives of the Dutch administration of coastal Sri Lanka were taken over by the British to form part of the records of Chief Secretary's Office to serve continuing administrative needs.<sup>32</sup>

This state of affairs was brought to an end as a result of pressure from two directions during the year 1901. The British colonial secretary in London, sent out a circular to rouse various parts of the Empire to a better maintenance of their dormant files.<sup>33</sup> About the same time, C.J.R. Le Mesurier, a retired civil servant, launched a series of land actions against the Crown. He claimed huge tracts of property on the basis of a number of Dutch documents, alleged to be

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<sup>31</sup> Francois Valentyn, *Oud en nieuw Oost Indien*, 8 vols (Amsterdam & Dordrecht, 1724-1726).

<sup>32</sup> de Silva, "Archives in Developing Countries," 82.

<sup>33</sup> Ceylon, Department of National Archives, *Administrative Report of the Government Archivist for 1947-1950* (Colombo, 1951), 3.

land grants. The government was unwilling to admit these exorbitant demands, but proved unable to refuse them without recourse to the relevant Dutch originals, enfolded among its impenetrable archives. In this situation, a government archivist was appointed in 1902.<sup>34</sup>

The government also took steps to introduce administrative procedures to maintain records. A report on the improvement of the office system in the Kachcheris<sup>35</sup> of Ceylon made suggestions for introduction of an uniform system of record keeping.<sup>36</sup> It was not until 1947 that the *Ceylon Government Manual of Procedure* provided rules and regulations for the preservation and destruction of government records.<sup>37</sup> The archives of the British period held in Sri Lanka contain documents from the beginning of the British rule, including ordinances and regulations since 1796, Government Gazettes from 1802 onwards, administrative reports of various kinds from 1860 onwards, and despatches to the Governor General from the Colonial Office in London, to name but a few series.

In 1948 Sri Lanka regained its independence. Under

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Kachcheris are the equivalent of County Council in Great Britain.

<sup>36</sup> L.J.B. Turner, *Report on the Improvement of the Office System in the Kachcheris of Ceylon* (Colombo: Government Press, 1925), 1.

<sup>37</sup> Ceylon, *The Ceylon Government Manual of Procedure* (Colombo: Government Press, 1947).

the new constitution a separate Archives Department was created in the Ministry of Education. The function of the department was to ensure "official custody" of the records, with all its implications, so that the safety of their essential qualities may be guaranteed.<sup>38</sup>

In 1973, a law was enacted to provide for the establishment of a Department of National Archives. The National Archives was given powers to provide for the transfer of public records to its care and to make better provision for the custody and preservation of public archives and public records.<sup>39</sup> A director is in charge of the National Archives. The powers and the duties of the director allow him to take all measures as are necessary for the preservation of public archives.<sup>40</sup> More specifically, the director has the power under the act

(a) to make available and publish lists, indices, guides, inventories, calendars, texts, translations and such other things as may be necessary as aids to the public archives in his custody;

(b) subject to such terms and conditions, if any, on which any records or manuscripts are transferred to or acquired by the National Archives, produce, edit, print or make any other public use of any public archives in his custody;

(c) provide for the restoration and conservation of

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<sup>38</sup> *Report of the Government Archivist 1947-1951*, 4.

<sup>39</sup> *Statutes of Sri Lanka, National Archives Law No. 48 of 1973*.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, section 8 (1).

public archives in a suitable manner and make photographic reproductions or duplicate copies of any public archives where necessary;

(d) produce or cause to be produced for inspection by any individual, any public archives open to public inspection;

(e) acquire by purchase, donation, bequest, contract, or otherwise or take on loan, any record, manuscript or document or any other material which, in his opinion, should be deposited in the National Archives for permanent preservation;

(f) examine any record or any other manuscript or document containing references to Sri Lanka or which had its origin in Sri Lanka but lying outside Sri Lanka, with a view to securing either on loan or by purchase, the original or any copy thereof;

(g) examine any collection of records or printed material in private possession for purposes of listing and recording and render such technical aid or assistance as may be necessary for the conservation and preservation of such records or printed material; and

(h) hold public exhibitions or expositions of any class or description of public archives, private documents, manuscripts or printed material deposited in the National Archives, either in the premises of the National Archives or elsewhere.<sup>41</sup>

An advisory council was formed to advise the Minister on all matters relating to the National Archives. The areas of responsibility include location, preservation and the use of public archives, the custody and transfer of public records, inspection and preservation of documents and manuscripts of historical or cultural or literary value in private possession, inspection by members of the public of public archives, and editing and publishing of public archives and

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., section 2 (a) to (h).

private manuscripts.<sup>42</sup>

The implementation of National Archives Law in 1973 solved the problems caused by the lack of authority existing for the first two decades since independence in regards the disposition of records. The main objectives of the department were stated in the Administrative Report of the Director of National Archives in 1989. They are, 1) accessioning of state records for permanent preservation and their conservation, 2) research and publication to facilitate public use of the records, 3) serving as the principal depository for all material published in Sri Lanka and receiving such for deposit. In the latter case, the National archives has assumed responsibility for an activity usually conducted by national libraries.

Even though reforms have been carried out from time to time, proper attention has not been paid to the cardinal issues pertaining to the management of public records. This can be attributed perhaps to the lack of awareness among the administrators and the public of the value and the necessity of keeping archives. With only nineteen professional and three para-professional staff members serving in the department,<sup>43</sup> it is extremely difficult to conduct any programmes to educate

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., section 7.

<sup>43</sup> Sri Lanka, National Archives, *Administrative Report of the Director, National Archives for the year 1989* (Colombo, 1990), 9.

administrators and the public while coping with the daily demands of running the department. At present, there is only one person in the National Archives qualified to implement records management programmes.<sup>44</sup>

During the year 1989 only one seminar was held for the middle level Public Officers in the Public Sector in Records Management in order to orient them to the legal requirements of the National Archives Law.<sup>45</sup> The current method of training also limits the availability of their professional staff. Persons holding at least a bachelor's degree in humanities and preferably an honours degree are recruited to the department, and then sent overseas for post appointment training in archives management. So at any given point of time, the absence of one or two professional and two to three para-professional is to be expected.

Of the records of the private sector little is known. There are many large private companies in Sri Lanka. British companies such as Lipton, Lever, Singer, Thomas Cook, and banks such as the Standard Chartered Bank have been in operation since the late nineteenth century. There is no evidence of any provisions being made to safeguard their archives. In the private sector, both international and

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<sup>44</sup> The position is currently held by S.K.K. Wickramanayake, the Deputy Director of the National Archives, who completed a Ph.D in Archives and Records Management at the University College London in 1992.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 4.

domestic companies use modern technology extensively in managing records and information to a far greater degree than in the public sector, where there is no doubt a need for personnel knowledgeable of office automation and electronic records keeping.

Since independence, all the professional staff at the National Archives have had their professional training overseas in countries such as India, United Kingdom, Italy, Netherlands, Australia and Malaysia.<sup>46</sup> Continuing to send students to these countries, where under ideal circumstances they get good training, see excellent standards in operation, and find about the latest technology, also has disadvantages. Most of the training courses in these countries are geared to meet the needs of the nationals of the country in which the programme is held. Raymond Irwin in his article titled "The education of an archivist" observed that

students from overseas countries are welcomed at the University of London school, but the fact that the Diploma course is expressly designed for those hoping to work in English Record Offices makes it inappropriate for them ....<sup>47</sup>

Sri Lankan archivists must know the history of Sri Lanka and of the institutions that created records in order to take care of them. They also must be competent in all three languages of

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<sup>46</sup> Compiled from the Administrative Reports of Director of National Archives from 1957 to 1990.

<sup>47</sup> Raymond Irwin, "Education of an Archivist," *Essays in Memory of Sir Hilary Jenkinson*, ed., E.J. Hollander (Sussex, 1962), 187.

the country, Sinhalese, Tamil, and English. It is also desirable that some of them learn Dutch in order to work with the vast number of Dutch records in the Archives. For these reasons, it is necessary to examine the various issues which will come up in devising a program to educate archivists and other records personnel in the country to meet its needs. Even from a purely practical point of view, some change in the existing situation would appear to be in order.

By sending people abroad to train, the government is spending valuable foreign exchange it can hardly spare. The government also keeps paying its employees their full salary during the duration of their studies. This money can be put to better use, and more could be saved by implementing an educational programme for Sri Lankan archivists in the country. Sri Lanka today educate its own engineers, doctors lawyers, librarians and other professionals in the nine universities in the country. It is time that it began educating its own archivists in a similar manner in the university to meet the needs of public and private bodies for effective management of both current and historical archives.

## CHAPTER 2

### PRINCIPAL ISSUES IN ARCHIVAL EDUCATION

This chapter will examine and analyze the English literature on the education and training of archivists, with the aim of identifying the principal issues that must be resolved in developing an archival education scheme. With the larger context of existing archival education and training in mind, it will be easier to establish the best way to educate Sri Lankan archivists.

The persons who look after a nation's documentation require specialized knowledge and skills. This fact was recognized by early civilizations. In ancient Mesopotamia, before a man "could become useful as an archivist" he had to "master fully the difficult art of writing." Therefore writing was taught in regular schools, most of them attached to temples, and the rigorous training they provided placed great emphasis on the preparation of legal and other administrative documents.<sup>1</sup> Although archivists no longer fulfil a scribal role, they must thoroughly understand the generation of all forms of administrative documentation and their proper management and use for manifold societal purposes. Nowadays, many different schemes exist to educate archivists and other records personnel. From the analysis of international

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest Posner, *Archives in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 67.

literature on the subject, one can see several patterns of archival education and training.

Italy is virtually the only example of the first pattern. The first school for archivists in Europe was created in Italy in 1765.<sup>2</sup> In Italian practice, persons holding a first degree in arts, philosophy, political science, or law, each of which requires some study in history, may participate in an open competition for archival positions in state archives.<sup>3</sup> Hence, archival education begins in Italy when the graduates prepare for the competitive entrance exam. In preparing for the exam, candidates often take university courses in the various disciplines which will be included in the competition.<sup>4</sup> It is reasonable to assume that candidates who have a degree in law will do some further studies in political science, those who have a degree in history will take a course in law in order to prepare for this examination. The entrance examination is in two parts, one a written examination and the other an oral examination. This process is similar to the Sri Lanka Administrative Service entrance examination. The graduates of any discipline who are under twenty five years of age are eligible to sit for the

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<sup>2</sup> Luciana Duranti, "Education and the Role of the Archivists in Italy," *American Archivist* 51, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 347.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 349.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

competitive examination to enter the civil service in Sri Lanka. In Italy, the written examination is held several months after the announcement of a competition. There is another gap of seven to eight months before the oral examination takes place. As is the case in the Sri Lankan administrative service, only candidates who pass the written examination may take the oral examination. The written examination consists of examinations on history and on the history of Italian institutions and law, with questions covering the period from the fall of the western Roman Empire to the present. The oral examination covers many more subjects, namely, history, the history of Italian institutions and law, constitutional law, administrative law, accounting methods of state government, archival science, history of archives, archival law and organization, the organization of the Ministry of Cultural and Environmental Properties, legislation on cultural properties, Latin, and one or more foreign languages.<sup>5</sup>

After securing a post by the competitive entrance examination to the Italian state archives, archivists undergo a probationary period during which they are trained by senior archivists in archival practices and techniques. After this probationary period they are assigned to a particular section. In order to advance in the archival profession beyond the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 349-50.

entry level they have to have a master's degree from one of the schools of state archives or from a university archival school.<sup>6</sup>

Since the eighteenth century there has been a number of archival schools in Italy, placed under the direction of the state archives. There are currently seventeen such schools, generally known as "Schools of Archival Science, Palaeography and Diplomatics."<sup>7</sup> Both the University of Rome and the University of Florence have long had a combined school for archivists and librarians. These two schools initiated the first university degrees in archival science in Italy.<sup>8</sup> The general pattern of all Italian schools consists of courses of study in general archival science (archival theory), special archival science (history of institutions, intended as the history of the ways in which institutions express their activities and functions in document series), the history of archives, archival legislation, conservation, Latin palaeography, and diplomatics. Series of lectures are given in chronology, sigillography, heraldry, numismatics, and other allied disciplines.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 350.

<sup>7</sup> Donato Tamberi, "The Teaching of Archival Science in Italy and the Role of the Schools of the State Archives," *Archivaria* 19 (Winter 1984-85): 247.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 351.

<sup>9</sup> Duranti, "Education and the Role of the Archivist in Italy," 348.

This pattern, referred to by Michael Cook as the Italo-Hispanic tradition, illustrates how archival education can be incorporated into centralized and highly developed archives system.<sup>10</sup> The method of open competition insures that persons entering the profession will have sufficient knowledge of their country's history, institutions, and juridical system to work with records from any period. It also requires students to have studied the languages and specialized historical sub-disciplines needed in the Italian context. The state archives schools concentrate on teaching students application of archival principles and methods. The university schools exist to disseminate archival knowledge to persons outside those with archival posts, and to advance it through research. Even though Sri Lanka is familiar with competitive public service examinations, it has neither the network of archives to support an Italian-style scheme nor the need for extensive study of history and its sub-disciplines to cope with vast quantities of very old records. Rather, Sri Lanka needs to initiate virtually all facets of professional studies to prepare archivists for both public and private sector employment and work with modern and contemporary records of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The second pattern can be seen in countries such as France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Like the first pattern,

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<sup>10</sup> *ALA World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services*, s.v. "Archives-Professional Training," 52.

it grows out of tradition of education in the historical sciences onto which professional training and education has been grafted, but as Cook puts it, "the training schools of [this] tradition are usually either autonomous institutes..., attached to principal archives services..., or associated with the historical faculty of a university".<sup>11</sup> Frequently, there is more than one grade of archivist, the grade depending on the academic attainments of appointees to archival position, with professional archival knowledge most often dispensed after appointment.

In France, L'Ecole Nationale des Chartes, established in 1821, educates archivists for public and private employment. Its program to educate "archivist-paleographers" aims primarily to dispense fundamental knowledge, multidisciplinary methods, and research experience which are indispensable to archivists to understand, criticize, interpret, exploit, preserve, and communicate the materials in their care, and secondarily to provide pre-professional formation for persons who will work as archivists. Persons entering L'Ecole must have a first university degree and two additional years special historical study. Admission is by competitive examination, and students are regarded as bureaucrats in training who receive a living allowance. Studies include general subjects such as law and economics,

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

archaeology, history of art, literature; archival subjects such as archival theory and the history of archives together with diplomatics and palaeography; and practical work.<sup>12</sup> Other studies include Latin, historical linguistics with reference to the French language, and French legal and institutional history.<sup>13</sup> There is evidence that L'Ecole des Chartes concentrates on turning out experienced historical researchers, as its very aims would indicate. Yves Perotin noted this tendency after making a visit to L'Ecole in the late 1960's. He wrote:

After speaking with two professors, "I asked for... a meeting with the student council... I had discovered with stupefaction: first, that the whole ambition of these young aspiring archivists was to become professional researchers, a term designating for me "des erudits - negres," people who do work which is difficult, thankless, and poorly paid in order to allow grand masters to build their brilliant syntheses; second that even in this perspective -- which I firmly disparege whereas they themselves think it is most noble -- they hardly see the value of archival education. If I have understood them, they would accept, if absolutely necessary for the survival of the School, teaching of that sort as an appendix to their studies (in the form of supplementary year or professional school) for those who, being of feeble mind, decide, for want of something better, to become bureaucrats, that is to say, archivists."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> International Council on Archives, Section for Archival Education and Training, *Directory of Schools and Courses of Professional Training for Archivists* (Koblenz, 1992), 98-100.

<sup>13</sup> Dorothy Mackay Quynn, "The Ecole des Chartes," *The Indian Archives* 4 (July-December 1951): 147-59.

<sup>14</sup> Yves Perotin, "Les archives et le mepris," *La gazette des archives* 68 (1970): 13, quoted from Elio Lodolini, "The War of Independence of Archivists," *Archivaria* 28 (Summer 1989): 44.

In fact, as Michael Cook observes, the deficiencies on the score of professional knowledge caused the Archives Nationales de France, which employs the bulk of the graduates of the archivist-palaeographer programme of the school, to set up a separate course of three months duration, "Le Stage Technique Internationale des Archives" to instruct its employees and foreigners in modern archival science.<sup>15</sup>

In Germany, the first school, the Bayerische Archivschule in Munich, was founded in 1821 and currently provides post-appointment training of archivists for the public and private sectors in Bavaria. The course lasts for two years, eighteen months of which is practical training in a repository. A second school, the Archivschule Marburg, founded in 1949, educates archivists for the rest of Germany. It has one programme for archivists holding a doctorate in historical sciences or the law which lasts two years, with 80% of the studies in academic courses and 20% in practical work. It has another programme for high school graduates which lasts one and half years, with 90% in classroom studies and 10% practical work. This division reflects the two grades of posts in German archival institutions. In the former programme, students study: history, law and economics, archaeology and historical monuments; archival doctrine and history, palaeography and diplomatics, archival methods

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<sup>15</sup> *ALA Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Archives-Professional Training." 78.

(archivistique), reprography, conservation, and preservation, public service, and archival legislation; with practical work reading old medieval documents, arranging and describing archives, and the six months practical training in an institution. The studies for second grade archivists are very much the same, except that more time is spent on history and on archival theory and history, and much less on auxiliary sciences of history.<sup>16</sup> The teaching staff at Marburg consists of three permanent appointments, including the head of the school, and heads of departments of the State Archives at Marburg, several professors from Marburg University, as well as visiting lecturers from Germany and other countries.<sup>17</sup> The visiting staff in the past included directors of archives of many European countries.<sup>18</sup>

Dutch professional education for archivists has existed since the early part of this century. The programme of the Dutch archives school (Rijks Archiefschool), founded in 1919, is based on the principle that archivists must first know the history of the Netherlands and the institutions that

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<sup>16</sup> ICA, *Directory of Schools*, 106-120.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Dietmar Rolhermund, "The Training of Archivists in Germany," *The Indian Archives* 14 (January 1961 - December 1962): 66-68.

created its archival documents.<sup>19</sup> The studies, which are taken by either persons holding a university doctoral degree or high school education who hold a position in Dutch archives (as in Germany there are two grades), last for a year, and consist in courses in archival science, auxiliary sciences of history, historical-institutional studies, and study of the juridical systems in the Netherlands.<sup>20</sup> The examination for senior archivists of the first grade is structured differently and is longer than that for second grade archivists. There is also an internship as part of the programme, served at the place of employment of the student. Persons without a position are placed at various government archives under the direction of a qualified archivist.<sup>21</sup>

In this second pattern, a single, or at most two, state supported schools dispense both general and professional knowledge in the post-appointment mode, or in a system closely linked to employment to regulate supply and demand. There remains a heavy emphasis on auxiliary sciences of history of study of law and administrative history, the former to provide students with interpretive skills for identification of documents and the latter to place documents in their

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<sup>19</sup> Majorie Rabe Barritt, "Archival Training in the Land of Muller, Feith, and Fruin: The Dutch National Archives School," *American Archivist* 51, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 338.

<sup>20</sup> ICA, *Directory of Schools*, 206-211.

<sup>21</sup> Barritt, "Archival Training," 339.

historical, institutional, and juridical context. This system is easier to envisage being adapted to the Sri Lankan situation than the Italian one, but it is perhaps doubtful that a separate institute of historical and archival studies could be set up. Moreover, to replicate this European pattern would require a well-developed professional community to support the instruction and examination of new entrants. The relative smallness and underdevelopment of the profession in Sri Lanka presents it, and others like it, with a conundrum. Sending archivists overseas is not a satisfactory solution, and neither is developing a European-style combination of education and training in a post-appointment mode. Is there not another alternative ?

A third pattern can be observed in countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. These countries have all developed in-service training programmes for the staffs of national archives and some of the larger institutions, but this method has gradually given way to pre-appointment education taken in programmes run at universities.

In the United Kingdom, the larger institutions, like the Public Record Office and Scottish Record Office, still have their own in-service training programmes. Staff members both with and without a professional qualification undertake a two-year programme which takes them to each section of the office, where they are introduced to its work, and perform,

under supervision, appropriate tasks as part of their training.<sup>22</sup> However, the main path of entry into the profession in Britain today is through one of the graduate university courses leading to a diploma or master's degree. The University College London, the University of Liverpool, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, the University College of North Wales, Bangor, and the University College Dublin offer courses leading either to a diploma or a master's degree or both in archival studies. Even though they carry different titles, the main courses of study in archives in these universities are comprised of study of archive administration, records management, arrangement and description, administrative and legal history, palaeography, and diplomatics.<sup>23</sup>

In Canada, in service training was supplemented by a course developed by the Public Archives of Canada in 1956, and offered yearly in recent years to members of its own staff and staff members of other archives. It still fills the needs of persons who do not hold a professional qualification, but since the early 1980's university graduate education for archivists has been available.

The first programme, established at the University of British Columbia in 1981, in effect responded to a call from

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<sup>22</sup> Michael Roper, "Archival Education in Britain," *American Archivist* 50, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 588-89.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 586-87.

the Association of Canadian Archivists for a graduate programme in archival studies. The programme is a two-year, full-time programme of studies located in the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies. The first chairman of the programme has recounted its early days and development of the curriculum in several articles.<sup>24</sup> Currently, the studies cover all aspects of archival theory and method, including courses on the main functions of the archivist, on records management, on the Canadian juridical system, on the history of archives and archival concepts, on preservation, research methods, and specialized areas like electronic records management. The former course on historiography has been dropped, and the former requirement for a thesis and a practicum have become optional in changes made in 1994. Concentrations of archival studies also exists in the History Department at the University of Manitoba, the faculty of Library and Information Science at the University of Toronto, and in several universities in Quebec.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Terry Eastwood, "The Origins and Aims of the Master of Archival Studies Programme at the University of British Columbia," *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983): 35-52; Terry Eastwood, "Nurturing Archival Education in the University," *American Archivist* 51, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 228-51; and also by Terry Eastwood, "Revisions to the MAS Program," *ACA Bulletin* (May 1994), forthcoming. I am indebted to Professor Eastwood for showing me a pre-publication copy of his article.

<sup>25</sup> For details of the courses of study at Manitoba and Toronto see Society of American Archivists, *Directory of Archival Education, 1993-94* (Chicago, 1992), 8. For the Quebec courses, see ICA, *Directory of Schools*, 51-63.

In Australia, the Australian [National] Archives has a training scheme.<sup>26</sup> In 1973, the first postgraduate course leading to a Diploma in Archives Administration at the School of Librarianship at the University of New South Wales, Australia was established.<sup>27</sup> The students having a degree in any approved university were admitted to the programme. Those who have not studied Australian history and politics face the possibility of having to do qualifying studies or concurrent studies to make up the deficiency.<sup>28</sup> In all, a total of six subjects are required to be taken within a period of one year's full-time study. Three subjects are taken from among courses in the Diploma of Librarianship, without significant modification for archival students.<sup>29</sup> In the mid 1980's, the School began to offer a master's degree, which requires an additional year's study and a thesis.

In the United States, the Society of American Archivists, formed in 1936, immediately took steps to form a

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<sup>26</sup> Australian Archives, *The Australian Archives Technical Training Scheme: Handbook* (Canberra, 1992) gives details of this scheme.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Orlovich, "Some Basic Assumptions Underlying the Education and Training of Archivists," *Archives and Manuscripts* (The journal of the Australian Society of Archivists) 6, no. 6 (February 1976): 206.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 215.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 214.

Committee on the Training of Archivists.<sup>30</sup> In 1937, at the annual conference of the American Library Association Margaret Cross Norton, state archivist of Illinois, led a discussion on archival training.<sup>31</sup> Since that time the Society of American Archivists has taken various steps, to address the educational issue, such as setting up education committees and issuing guidelines for a degree programme. Though there are several educational opportunities for archivists in the universities there is no established diploma or master's degree programme in archival studies, such as the ones at the University of New South Wales in Australia or at the University of British Columbia in Canada. Most programmes are in fact concentrations of archival study in the course of taking a history or library science degree.<sup>32</sup> Recently, Richard Cox, a leading American archival educator, has called for establishment of master's degree programmes in the United States.<sup>33</sup>

To sum up, the education of continental European archivists grew from study of the historical sciences. These

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<sup>30</sup> Richard C. Berner, "Archival Education and Training in the United States, 1937 to present," *Journal of Education and Librarianship* 22, no. 1&2 (Summer/Fall 1981): 9.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>32</sup> SAA, *Directory of Archival Education*, gives details of these concentrations.

<sup>33</sup> Richard J. Cox, "The Master of Archival Studies and American Education Standards: An Argument for the Continued Development of Graduate Archival Education in the United States," *Archivaria* 36 (Autumn 1993): 228.

archivists needed knowledge and skills to analyse documents whose context and meaning were not obvious or easily uncovered. By contrast, countries in this third pattern tended to adopt some form of on-the-job training complemented as time passed by formalized post-appointment education run by archival institutions and eventually by pre-appointment education conducted in universities in purely professional subjects.

In Europe, the state, prodded by archivists, took it upon itself to provide a scheme of education for archivists, and set the standards for employment in conjunction with that initiative. In the rest of the world, the state has declined to provide for education for archivists directly or indirectly by setting universal standards for professional employment, so that archivists and their professional associations have been forced to appeal to universities to establish programmes of graduate education for archivists. The idea is that the general knowledge archivists need will be obtained in the first degree, and professional knowledge will be imparted in the archival programme of studies. This pattern of development has gradually progressed from small concentrations of studies, often taught by part-time instructors to a larger clusters of archivally related courses, and in a few cases, to degree programmes. The early emphasis on training has given way to the academic mould of many other professions, where the student is expected to take a theoretical approach to the

study of a professional discipline and contribute to its scholarship.<sup>74</sup>

The effort to establish archival education in the university has often run into the question of what existing subjects or disciplines it should be associated with. In many cases, courses on archives exist as concentration of studies in association with study in some other discipline. This situation can be seen in Spain, for example.<sup>35</sup> In the nineteenth century, Spain had an education system for the archivists at the Escuela de Diplomática (School of Diplomats) which trained archivists and librarians for the government. Then in 1900 the Department of History of the University of Madrid assumed responsibility for archival education.<sup>36</sup> The students were taught palaeography, diplomatics, epigraphy, archival theory, history of archives, legislation, philology, and institutions. The Spanish Civil War disrupted archival and library education. In the 1950's, the Spanish national library began offering courses to meet the needs of persons taking separate competitive examinations for government positions as librarians and archivists. The National Library's School of Documentalists was discontinued

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<sup>74</sup> Frank B. Evans, "The Organization and Status of Archival Training: An Historical Perspective," *Archivum* 34 (1988): 77. See also Eastwood, "Nurturing Archival Education."

<sup>35</sup> Vicenta Cortes Alonso, "Archival Education in Spain," *American Archivist* 51, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 331.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

in 1986, and education of archivists, librarians, and documentalists was given over to the professional association of those groups. A course lasting four months was put on for archivists. Since the mid 1980's some educational opportunities for these professions have been available in Spanish universities. This "less than ideal situation," in the words of Vicenta Cortes Alonso, is made worse by the fact that Spanish employers no longer require specialized professional knowledge when hiring archivists.

One other initiative needs to be examined. There are archival educational programmes which have been tried on the international stage. The International Council on Archives (ICA) formed a committee on archival development in 1970 with financial assistance from UNESCO. It established the Records and Archives Management Programme [RAMP], whose primary object is to provide opportunities for training and education of archivists. With the assistance of UNESCO's General Information Programme (PGI), ICA's RAMP organizes expert meetings and seminars on archival training. A meeting of experts on the harmonization of archival training programmes was held in Paris in 1979. That same year a regional seminar on archival training needs in South and West Asia was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Frank B. Evans, "Unesco and Archives Development," *Unesco Journal of Information Science, Librarianship and Archives Administration*, 4, no. 2 (July-September 1982): 171.

The concept of regional training centres was put into practice in 1971 by the Unesco with the assistance of the ICA and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It was staffed by foreign experts and used cooperatively by the various countries of a specific region. One such programme was established by the School of Librarians, Archivists and Documentalists (EBAD) of the University of Dakar, Senegal to meet the training needs of the French speaking African countries.<sup>38</sup> A second regional was set up for the English speaking African countries. It was established in 1975 within the Department of Library and Archival Studies of the University of Ghana.<sup>39</sup> Another, the East African School of Librarianship (EASL) at Makerere University, was supported by Unesco for the training and education of information workers in the English speaking countries of Africa.<sup>40</sup> Unesco also obtained financial assistance for the National Archives of India for a faculty study grant and for instructional materials.<sup>41</sup> These funds were used to purchase necessary

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<sup>38</sup> Ousmane Sane, "Archives administration in the French speaking countries of black Africa: EBAD's curriculum," *Unesco Journal of Information Science, Librarianship and Archives Administration*, 1, no. 4 (October-December 1979): 260-63.

<sup>39</sup> Evans, "The Organization and Status of Archival Training," 88.

<sup>40</sup> I.M.N. Kigongo-Bukenya, "Education and Training of Archivists at the East African School of Librarianship in the 1990's and Beyond," *American Archivist*, 56, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 359.

<sup>41</sup> Evans, "Unesco and Archives Development," 89.

equipment to help to transform its training programme into an academically accredited school of archival studies.<sup>42</sup>

These training and educational programmes failed after the withdrawal of funding in the 1980's. They proved difficult to finance and manage without the grants. The regional centres effectively became national schools.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps the idea of regional centres was doomed. Besides the funding question, there are inevitably different needs and different traditions in the countries in any given region. Particularly if archival programmes take responsibility for educating all records personnel, each country will need to go its own way to cultivate acceptance of the needed standards of education.

In summary, then, Sri Lanka clearly follows into the third category of country which must develop some indigenous means of educating archivists and records personnel. From the continental European experience, it can bring a sense of the importance of learning about the historical, administrative, and legal context of its archives. From, the experience of those countries which have turned to the university, it can

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<sup>42</sup> The alumni of this school include the Director of Archives Malaysia, and the Deputy Director of Archives, Bangladesh, besides many professionals in Sri Lanka, Nepal, Singapore, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Burma, Thailand, Australia, Kenya, Botswana, Nigeria and Uganda, see R.K. Perti, "A Personnel Resource Development in Archives: Present Status and Future Development," *Archivum* 35 (1989): 175.

<sup>43</sup> Anne Thurston, "The Training of Archivists from Developing Countries: A Commonwealth Perspective," *Archivaria* 20 (Summer 1985): 118.

draw that lesson that a dedicated programme of studies in the university must be developed, even if it is placed in conjunction with some other discipline. Archivists and records personnel need to have their own identity, to develop their own studies and scholarship, and define the terms for the formation of new members of the profession to serve the needs of society. We need, then, to look at the university situation in Sri Lanka, and examine the options available there, for no country can simply adopt the pattern or tradition of another in any sphere. As Anne Thurston, the head of archival studies programme at University College London, has observed:

Those concerned with establishing new programmes have the scope to address these problems in a creative new way. They are in a position to build upon the guiding principles of the profession but to bypass the habit of tradition, which can sometimes act as a constraint to the development of new solutions. Their freedom to draw on the knowledge of a wide range of professionals and to link their programmes to training at different management levels in government or in business could well inspire dramatic new approaches to managing modern records.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Anne Thurston, "New Directions in Archival Training," *Janus*, (1990): 49.

## CHAPTER 3

### UNIVERSITY EDUCATION: OPTIONS

This chapter looks at the question of the best setting in the Sri Lankan system of higher education for an archival education program. It discusses the options available for an education and training program for the archivists in the universities.

Until the middle of the twentieth century Sri Lankan students had to depend on institutions overseas for their university education. Despite the existence of a well developed system of primary and secondary schools by the end of the nineteenth century, Sri Lanka had no universities. Hence the children of the wealthier classes were sent to British universities for their education, and the less affluent went to universities in India. Owing to the demand for university education, the colonial authorities permitted the University of London to conduct external degree examination in Arts, Law, and Science in 1905 and in Medicine and Surgery in 1910-11.<sup>1</sup>

The University of Ceylon was established under the Ceylon University Ordinance No. 20 of 1942. It was established as an autonomous, residential institution. The idea that a university should be autonomous found wide acceptance among all sections of political opinion in the country, including

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<sup>1</sup> Bikas C. Sanyal et al., *University Education and Graduate Employment in Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Tisara, 1983), 112.

the leading intellectuals and economic figures of Ceylonese society.<sup>2</sup> The University commenced with 942 students, and with faculties of Arts, Oriental Studies, Science, and Medicine. A Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Science was set up in 1947.<sup>3</sup> Until 1948 the University was located in Colombo. The transfer of the University to Peradeniya, near Kandy, took place slowly over the next two decades. Until 1958, when the two main centres of Buddhist learning in Ceylon were converted overnight into universities, it was the only university in the country. In 1967, the University of Colombo was established at the old University of Ceylon premises. The language of instruction remained English until 1960, and well into 1970's the vast majority of students continued to follow their courses in English.<sup>4</sup>

During the period 1972 to 1978 further expansion in university education was made by opening two new university campuses, at Katubedda and Jaffna. During the same period the opening of three new undergraduate institutes, Ayurvedic medicine, aesthetic studies, and worker's education, and also of four post graduate institutes of agriculture, Buddhist

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<sup>2</sup> Kingsley de Silva, "The Universities and the Government in Sri Lanka," *Minerva: A Review of Science, Learning and Policy* 16, no.1 (Spring, 1978): 251.

<sup>3</sup> D.L. Jayasuriya, "Developments in University Education: The Growth of the University of Ceylon (1942-1965)," *University of Ceylon Review* 23, no. 1&2 (April-October 1965): 84-100.

<sup>4</sup> C.R. de Silva, "Education," in *Sri Lanka: A Survey*, 424.

studies, demographic studies, and medicine, further expanded higher education opportunities. A number of new non-degree and post graduate certificate and diploma programs emerged from these new institutes.<sup>5</sup> One such program is a library science degree course at University of Kelaniya, which was prompted by a request from the Education Ministry. This course deals with all aspects of librarianship and library management.<sup>6</sup> Another programme leading to Master of Library Science Degree was started at the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of Colombo in 1994. The purpose of these library science programmes is to provide trained library staff for school libraries, public libraries, local government bodies, and research libraries.

During the period 1979 to 1981 there were further developments in the university education scene in Sri Lanka. The new Rhuna University College at Matara and the Dumbra Campus at Polgolla were started in 1979. An Open University was established in 1980, and a University College was set up in Batticaloa in 1981.<sup>7</sup> The map of Sri Lanka (p. 51) shows where the universities are located. The following schedule (in summary) has been prepared by the University Grants Commission (UGC) for the guidance of the Universities and colleges in Sri

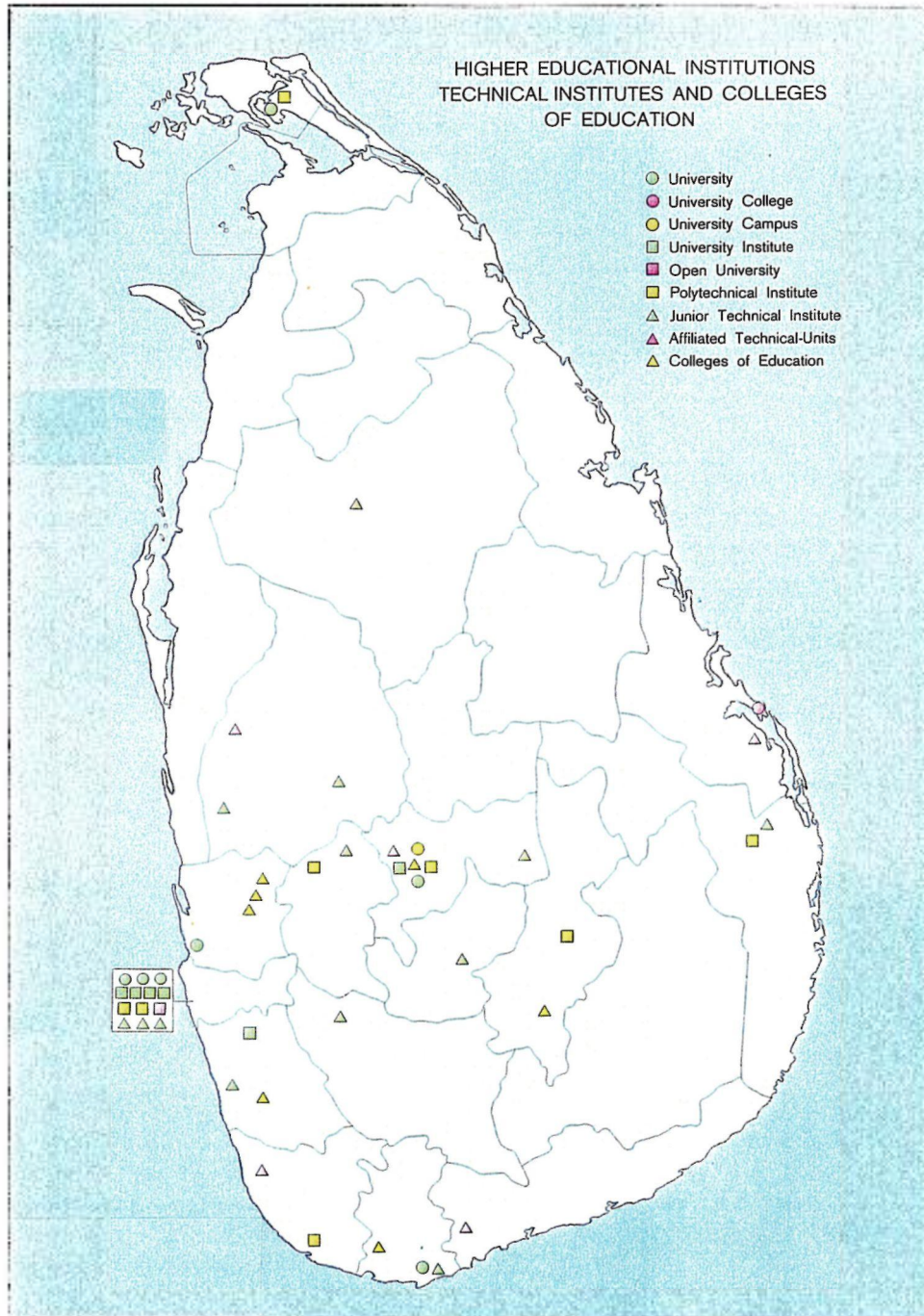
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<sup>5</sup> Sanyal, *University Education*, 121.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 122.

Map 2  
Higher Educational Institutions of Sri Lanka.



Source: Survey Department, Sri Lanka, The National Atlas of Sri Lanka (Colombo: Survey Department, 1988), map 5.5.

Lanka:

University of Colombo

Faculty of Arts - Commerce and Management Studies, Economics, English, Geography, History and Political Science, Sinhala, Sociology.

Faculty of Education - Educational Psychology, Humanities, Education, Science and Technical Education, Social Science Education.

Faculty of Law - Law

Faculty of Medicine - Anatomy, Bacteriology, Bio-chemistry, Community Medicine, Dental Surgery, Forensic Medicine, Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Parasitology, Pathology, Pharmacology, Physiology, Psychiatry, Surgery.

Faculty of Science - Botany, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics, Zoology.

University of Peradeniya

Faculty of Agriculture - Agricultural Biology, Agricultural Chemistry, Agricultural Economics and Farm Management, Agricultural Engineering, Animal Science, Crop Science.

Faculty of Arts - Arabic and Islamic Civilization, Archaeology, Classical Languages, Economics, Education, English, Geography, History, Pali and Buddhist Studies, Philosophy, Political Science, Sinhala, Sociology, Tamil.

Faculty of Engineering - Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Engineering Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, Production Engineering.

Faculty of Medicine - As in Colombo.

Faculty of Science - As in Colombo plus Geology.  
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine & Animal Science - Animal Science, Veterinary Pre-clinical Studies, Para clinical Studies, Clinical Studies.

Dumbara Campus (University of Peradeniya)

Faculty of Arts - As in Peradeniya, less Archaeology.

University of Sri Jayawardenepura  
(formerly Vidyodaya)

Faculty of Applied Science - Biological Science, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics.

Faculty of Arts - Economics, Geography, History, Languages and Cultural Studies, Pali and Buddhist Studies, Sinhala and Sociology.

Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce - Business Administration, Commerce, Public Administration.

University of Kelaniya - (formerly Vidyalankara)

Faculty of Humanities - Classical Studies, English, Fine Arts, Linguistics, Modern Languages, Pali and Buddhist Studies, Sanskrit, Sinhala.

Faculty of Social Science - Archaeology, Buddhist and Comparative Philosophy, Commerce, Economics, Geography, History, Library Science, Mass Communication.

Faculty of Science - As in Peradeniya plus Industrial Management.

University of Moratuwa (formerly Katubedde)

Faculty of Architecture - Architecture, Town and Country Planning, Building Economics.

Faculty of Engineering - Applied Science, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering.

University of Jaffna

Faculty of Arts - Economics, Education, Fine Arts, Geography, Hindu Civilization, History, language and Cultural Studies, Philosophy, Sanskrit, Sinhala and Tamil.

Faculty of Science - As in Colombo, with a combined Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

Faculty of Medicine - Anatomy, Biochemistry, Community Medicine, Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Pathology, Physiology, Surgery.

Rhuna University College

Faculty of Agriculture - Agricultural Economics, Agronomy, Animal Science.

Faculty of Arts - Economics, Geography, History, Sociology, Sinhala.

Faculty of Medicine - As in Jaffna.

Faculty of Science - As in Colombo.

Table 2 gives an indication of university education during the years 1984 to 1990.

**Table 2**University Education 1984-1990.

	1984	1986	1988	1990
No. of Universities	9	9	9	9
No. of Students	18,496	18,913	29,781	28,365
No. of Teachers	1941	1683	1683	1700
New Admissions	5463	6054	6143	8970
No. Graduated	4468	3997	614	4625
Arts & Oriental Studies B.A/B.A. (Hons).	2008	1764	221	1807
Education	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Commerce and Management Studies	753	718	159	822
Law L.L.B	46	61	N/A	88
Science B.Sc.	703	759	164	827
Engineering B.Sc.(Eng)	340	286	N/A	454
Medicine M.B.B.S.	387	156	70	360
Dental Surgery B.D.S.	42	63	N/A	27
Agriculture B.Sc.	144	142	N/A	167
Vet. Science B.V.Sc.	23	20	N/A	34
Architecture B.Sc.(BE)	22	28	N/A	39

Source: Compiled from "Higher Education 1983-1991", *Economic and Social Statistics of Sri Lanka*, Statistics Department, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, (Colombo, 1992), 96.

The graduates of these universities usually find employment in the public sector. There is a shortage of

graduates in such categories as engineers, doctors, and scientists in Sri Lanka due to immigration of graduates to both developing and developed countries. For the others the public sector has been long considered as the chief employer of graduates. The teaching service, which is solely government controlled, provides the single largest area for the employment of university graduates in Sri Lanka. The present requirements with regard to graduate teachers point to an over supply of graduates in social science disciplines, while graduates specializing in commerce and aesthetic studies are in short supply. There is an acute shortage of graduates in mathematics, life sciences, and physical sciences.

The Sri Lanka Administrative Service (SLAS) is another potential employer. The university graduates have to compete with those already employed in the public service for positions. The government sector, which covers all corporations, boards, and other statutory bodies established by the legislature, and also extends to the National Banks, provides employment opportunities for university graduates. Positions are generally at three levels:

Professional level - positions at this level would require specialisation and skill, and would therefore be confined to professional graduates;

Executive/Administrative levels - open to all categories of graduates in the Arts and Sciences;

Clerical grades - entry into this grade would generally require secondary level qualifications, but under the present employment situation university graduates, especially in arts oriented

subjects, are increasingly being absorbed into clerical positions.<sup>8</sup>

The demand for Sri Lankan graduates in the private sector is very small, if not negligible. It is reasonable to assume that very few graduates embark on self employment ventures. The majority of the self employed are graduates in law. There is also a small number of self employed medical doctors. With the increase in the number of universities in the country from four in 1960's to six universities and two university colleges in 1980's, a greater number of students has entered the arts faculty. This creates a strong demand for the limited number of jobs for which arts graduates are qualified.<sup>9</sup> As a result, there are thousands of unemployed arts graduates. To solve the problem of unemployed arts graduates, it is generally recognized that the post secondary education system should be more responsive to the challenges of development. Study of academic disciplines needs to be complemented by programmes capable of transforming the graduates into agents of development. Developing countries need persons schooled in all disciplines and professions, not only utilitarian areas like estate management or public finance, to infuse the development process with a steady

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>9</sup> Sepalika Fernando, "Social Environment and the Unemployment of Arts Graduates," *Economic Review* 8 (July 1982): 27.

stream of intellectual capital.

Professional development is badly needed in Sri Lanka in the broad area of information management. The only sphere of information studies currently providing professional education and training in Sri Lanka is in library science. Little has been done to educate a cadre of archives personnel. Every complex organization generates records, and they are a basic tool of administration. They are the means by which many operational processes and functions are performed. They include all recorded information created or received by an organization in the course of performing its business.<sup>10</sup> Certain non-current records have continuing or permanent values of one kind or another. Permanent records are preserved in archival repositories. These normally amount to only a small percentage of the great mass of records from which they are selected, but they are useful and valuable in an almost infinite variety of ways.<sup>11</sup> Archives serve as the nation's memory, and enable a society to plan intelligently for the future based on an awareness of past experience. They are an essential and significant part of a nation's information resources, and that programmes for their management and use are, or should be, integral parts of the national information

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<sup>10</sup> Michael Cook, *The Management of Information from Archives* (London: Gower, 1986), 8.

<sup>11</sup> James B. Rhoads, *The Role of Archives and Records Management in National Information Systems* (Paris: Unesco, 1983), 1.

system. In other words, as Michael Cooks says, the libraries, documentation centres, and archival repositories together look after, maintain, and exploit the information stock of organisations or of a community.<sup>12</sup>

In Sri Lanka where social and economic life has been subject to much political violence in the past decade or so, it is extremely necessary to safeguard all kinds of public and private records and archives by trained people. Public records such as the police department records, election records, and school records, to name a few, are of vital importance for the present and future governments to justify their actions. Archives preserve a record of the obligations and commitments of the government and evidence of the rights and entitlements of the citizens. Collectively, the archives contain a vast amount of information about people, organizations, social and economic development, natural phenomena, and events -- invaluable primary source material for writing about all facets of the nation's history. As a source of national history the archives can become a powerful influence in fostering a people's understating of itself in creating a sense of national identity.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Michael Cook, *The Management of Information from Archives*, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Rhoads, *The Role of Archives and Records Management in National Information Systems*, 1.

### **Level of Education**

It is also possible to argue that introducing a university archival studies programme in Sri Lanka will contribute to the solution of the problem of unemployment among graduates in the arts. Graduates who obtain a qualification in archival studies could be put to work developing and managing programs to keep and exploit the records of both public and private bodies. For these practical reasons, a programme of archival education must be established at postgraduate level. The undergraduate studies in archives, like the bachelor of archives degrees offered in Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia are not advisable. Archivists and records personnel, as we have seen, are generally regarded to need a comprehensive understanding of the of the constitutional, administrative, and legal system of a country, and of its historical development, particularly its institutional development. This knowledge can only be got in a carefully devised plan of undergraduate studies. The European, North American, Australian, and other experience strongly endorses this view. In addition, only at the post-graduate level could one expect to encourage and eventually develop needed research into Sri Lankan records, their management, and their utilization.

### **Duration**

Keeping the gradualism of development of other countries in mind, it is reasonable to think of beginning with

one-year diploma programme to serve the needs of public and private bodies. The one-year diploma course will be easier to develop within a short period of time than a Master's degree course. It follows the library science example in Sri Lanka. The University of London still offers a diploma course of one-year, as does University of New South Wales in Australia. The diploma course should be a first step in developing professional education in the field. The eventual aim should be to train professional archivists with master's qualifications.

#### **Faculty or Department**

The next question to arise is, which faculty or department in the university is best equipped to sponsor such an archival studies programme. Traditionally, archival studies have been associated either with library studies or with historical studies. Either option is available in Sri Lanka, so it will be useful to review the arguments supported in favour of each of them.

In his major work *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* published in 1956, T.R. Schellenberg discussed the need for uniformity in methodology for administering public archives. He declared that library schools are concerned with methodology and that they are the only place in which

attention is likely to be given to methodological training.<sup>14</sup> In his second major work, *The Management of Archives* he argued that "library Schools are the proper places in which to provide archival training."<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, Schellenberg recognized what he called the "dangers inherent in having methodological training given by librarians." He feels that librarians might "mistakenly apply [library] techniques ... to archival material," become "preoccupied with single record item," or treat archives as discrete items rather than intellectual aggregations.<sup>16</sup> He is also concerned that different approach, functional approach to archival studies.<sup>17</sup>

The University of Kelaniya and the University of Colombo have already established library schools. At Kelaniya University from October 1994, there has been a course in records management taught at the library school too. The University of Colombo has two year master's programme in Library Science. It would be fairly easy to incorporate an archival studies programme into one of these schools. The alternative is to establish an archival studies programme in

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<sup>14</sup> T.R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

<sup>15</sup> T.R. Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 70.

<sup>16</sup> T.R. Schellenberg, "Archival Training in Library Schools," *American Archivist* 31, no.2 (April 1968): 162.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

conjunction with historical studies. In fact, Schellenberg's idea to abandon the traditional reliance upon graduate history departments for archival training was challenged by the some of the other archivists in the United States. One of the persons who challenged educating archivists in library schools was Dr. H.G. Jones, then State Archivist of North Carolina. Jones proposed to train archivists in graduate schools in history in cooperation with the heads of leading archival agencies.<sup>18</sup> He argues that a strong background in history and historical method is essential. Historical background can be acquired if necessary through experience, it is true, but its most obvious place is in the graduate schools of history.<sup>19</sup>

Jones wrote in a footnote in his paper on "Archival Training in American Universities, 1938-68" that this paper should not be construed as an objection to library training for archivists.<sup>20</sup> He admitted that archivist would greatly benefit from such training. His point was that:

"while library education may be desirable, a solid foundation in history and the historical method is essential. Unfortunately, few persons with advanced work in history enroll in library schools, and few librarians enroll in graduate schools of history. A combination of library and historical education, coupled with formal training in archives administration, would be the ideal

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<sup>18</sup> H.G. Jones, "Archival Training in American Universities, 1938-1968," *American Archivist* 31, no. 2 (April 1968): 152.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., footnote 50.

preparation for an archival position."<sup>21</sup>

In Sri Lanka, several of the universities have well established schools in history with well qualified and experienced faculty. Sri Lanka has a longer recorded history than in the United States making a knowledge of palaeography, diplomatics, and other auxiliary sciences of history valuable to the archivist. It is possible with this background to start an archival studies programme in a school of history. Even Schellenberg asserted his belief that:

"the best preliminary training that an archivist can have, in my opinion, is advanced training in history. This provides him with a knowledge of the development of his country and its government, which is basic to any evaluation of the research values that are to be found in its public records. It provides him with training in research methodology, which is needed in all the work he does in rationalizing public records, in arranging them in proper relation with each other, and in describing them in terms of organization and function. Since the formulation of the basic archival principle of provenance in the middle of the last century, archival institutions in all countries have stressed the importance of historical training for archivists."<sup>22</sup>

By the above statement Schellenberg meant that basic or preliminary training in history is a good foundation for a would be archivist. While he acknowledged that historians, as primary users, had a "real interest in archives," but warned

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Practices*, 131.

of "dangers inherent in having methodological" training given by historians. One of the dangers that in discussing methodology they would "excessively emphasize historical developments" without adequate concern for methodology. He added that "they are prone to consider techniques either as unimportant or as a kind of restraint that would stifle scholarly initiative."<sup>23</sup> The other danger, in his opinion, was that historically trained archivists would excessively emphasize the historical work required in appraising, arranging, and describing archival material.<sup>24</sup> It is an accepted fact that historians are concerned with interpreting documents and historiography rather than with questions of professional theory, method, and practice.

In Sri Lanka another problem of a completely different nature attached to having an archival education programme in a school of history arises. During the last three decades, the largest number of unemployed graduates have come from the schools of history, political science, pali and buddhist studies, and fine arts. To introduce an archival studies programme in school whose graduates have a high unemployment record might have unattractive consequences. It will be difficult to persuade people to read for higher degree in such a department and convince them of possible employment

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<sup>23</sup> Schellenberg, "Archival Training in Library Schools," 160.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 158.

upon graduation.

A library school is the best setting for an archival education programme in a Sri Lankan university. Unlike a school of history which is academic in its outlook, a library school is professional in orientation. A library school would be devoted to development of the professional knowledge. There is also a body of knowledge the library profession can share with the archival profession. For example, studies of use and the users of libraries have been valuable in understanding how information is matched with the needs of individuals. Archivists may need to adapt some of the techniques used in these studies by librarians in order to understand their own clients and better satisfy their needs. Another is, library management, which is concerned with purposefully managing all areas of information service. Management as a course does not feature prominently in many archival educational programmes.<sup>25</sup> This may be one area in which the archival profession might consult the librarians for insights. Then there are other areas such as automated access systems, descriptive standards and many more, which the archivists can benefit. At this preliminary stage, there are many advantages in joining forces with library school. The outlook is the same in both, in the professional sense, even if the knowledge needed is different.

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<sup>25</sup> Gabriel O. Alegbeleye, "Designing the Archival Education Curriculum; What Experiences from What Disciplines, Why and How ?", *Archivum* 39 (September 1992): 291.

In both the short and long run, however, the archival studies programme needs to be distinct, and even autonomous in the sense that it has its own discipline to develop.

Even though there are similarities in the library and the archival profession, it is important to know the difference in the work of the archivist and the work of the librarian. That is, whereas, the archivist is concerned with documents that exist in only one copy and their relationships, the librarian deals with publications that exist in many but as single items. While the archivist, dependent on the government offices that transfer their documents to the archives, has no choice in regard to the contents of holding and files, the librarian is the custodian of finished products. The primary function served by the archivist is a legal one.<sup>26</sup> It is true that the librarian exercises judgement, and exercises it in a most important way, when he selects the books that are to be added to his library. But this is rarely final or irrevocable judgement. The books he decides not to buy will not be destroyed, nor are likely to be unique. He can change his mind and buy them later if he wishes to do so. The archivist, by contrast, is called upon continually to decide what papers or records are to be kept and which should be destroyed, determining whether papers shall survive or whether

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<sup>26</sup> B. Delmas, *The Training of Archivists* (Paris: Unesco, 1979), 18.

they shall disappear.<sup>27</sup> The students in both library and archival programmes should be made aware of these basic differences.

### **Teachers**

As to the question of the curriculum, which subjects should be taught in the diploma in archival studies course, is an issue for a lengthy discussion it will be taken up in the next chapter. It is time, however, to look at the issue of the teaching staff. Who is going to teach these courses? Any subject taught in the universities should be by teachers of academic competence and respectability. It is reasonable to assume that in Sri Lanka, at least at the early stages, such persons could only be found in practitioners. It is also desirable to teach practical subjects by asking appropriate practitioners to give part-time lecturers.<sup>28</sup> In this way, one can capitalize on the great experience of such people. In the health sciences, all of the faculty outside of the laboratory have clinical appointments. The understanding is that their teaching is more useful and more vital because they are at the same time practitioners of their art. In the same way, it should be made required that the directors of archival training programs should be practicing archivists of

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<sup>27</sup> W. Kaye Lamb, "The Modern Archivist: Formally Trained or Self Educated ? " *American Archivist* 31, no. 2 (April 1968): 176.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Cook, "Professional Training: International Perspectives," *Archivaria* 7 (Winter 1978): 39.

responsible experience.<sup>29</sup> The students of this programme needs archivists as role models, (very few people know about archivists in Sri Lanka) as competent, interesting, involved professionals. They can learn more than theory; they acquire attitudes of dedication, concern, and obligation if they are taught by professional archivists who work with "dedication, concern, and obligation."<sup>30</sup> The obvious answer to the question of who is best qualified to teach in the profession is, therefore, are practioners who know the profession. In other words, "archivists should teach archivists."<sup>31</sup> At the Sri Lanka National Archives, there are already three senior archivists with Ph.D degrees in Records Management, Archives Administration, and Paper Conservation. There is also a fourth person, from the National Archives, currently reading for a Ph.D in archives administration in the University of New South Wales. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that at least one full-time staff member could be found among these highly qualified people. It is necessary to have at least one full-time appointment from the beginning of the programme. A full-time staff member is needed to act as coordinator between the students and the other part-time staff members. In the long

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<sup>29</sup> Ruth W. Helmuth, "Education for American Archivists: A View from the Trenches," *American Archivist* 44, no. 3 (Fall 1981): 301-2.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 302.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

run, it is necessary to find few more full-time academic faculty. Perhaps they could be found among the practitioners who are looking for a career change.

### **Language of Instruction**

The next question which arises is the language of instruction for the programme. Even though officially the language of instruction in the universities is Sinhalese, all the sciences, engineering, and medicine courses are conducted in English. It has been realised by students and graduates that high proficiency in English is vital to improve their academic performance and to secure lucrative graduate-level employment. This is true for both public and private sectors. Another reason to consider English as the language of instruction is that, at least during the initial stages of the programme, it will have to depend rather heavily upon the literature published in that language. Until the archival profession develops in Sri Lanka, one cannot hope to find research articles published in Sinhalese in Sri Lankan journals. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that all the text books and other readings will be in English for quite a long time. It is possible that this can be changed if needed in the future once the profession is fully developed in the country.

After looking at all the options available, it can be established now that the archival education programme should be a postgraduate, one-year diploma course in a school of

library and information studies. As the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) guidelines put it, "archival studies are part of the broad field of information studies," and so would most properly be associated with other aspects of that field. It is also established that teachers schooled in archival studies and with professional experience are the best for a professional study course. The language of instruction of the course will have to be in English. It is time now to look at, what subjects should be taught in the diploma course, and to look generally at curriculum questions.

## CHAPTER 4

### DESIGNING A PROGRAMME

The primary purpose of this chapter is to identify and establish the requirements of a course of study leading to a diploma in archives and records administration. Secondly, it will establish a suitable curriculum for the programme. To do this, it will closely examine the curriculum guidelines of the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) for the development of a two-year curriculum for a master of archival studies programme (1988),<sup>1</sup> the Society of American Archivists (SAA) guidelines for the development of a curriculum for a master of archival studies (1993),<sup>2</sup> and guidelines for curriculum development in records management and the administration of modern archives by Michael Cook (1982).<sup>3</sup> These are the three most

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<sup>1</sup> Association of Canadian Archivists, Education Committee, "Guidelines for the Development of a Two-Year Curriculum for a Master of Archival Studies Programme (1988). This document replaces the 1976 "ACA Guidelines Towards a Curriculum for Graduate Archival Training Leading to a Master's Degree in Archival Science," prepared by Hugh Taylor and Edwin Welch published in *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983): 44-51.

<sup>2</sup> The Society of American Archivists, "Draft Guidelines for the Development of a Curriculum for a Master of Archival Studies," (1993): 1-12.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Cook, *Guidelines for Curriculum Development in Records Management and the Administration of Modern Archives*, (Paris: Unesco, 1982). There is also curriculum guidelines on an earlier RAMP study by B. Delmas on *Analysis of the Study Programmes of Different Countries and Thoughts on the*

recent guidelines available, and no other guidelines have been put forward by any other countries. This chapter further examines two education programmes, One is at the University of London, where there are both a master's degree and a diploma in Archive Studies. These are studied because the commonwealth archivists are mainly trained here. The second education programme is at the University of British Columbia. It is a Master' Degree in Archival Studies, it is examined because it is the only master's degree in North America. All this is considered in order to identify the necessary entry requirements and to establish a suitable curriculum for the diploma course in Sri Lanka in the light of providing basic archival education for Sri Lankan graduates with little or no archival experience.

#### **Admission requirements**

The first step before designing a curriculum is to determine entrance qualifications. The Canadian guidelines recommend graduates with a strong background in history who have some experience working at an archives as the ideal candidates. It states that:

Because archives are created in a specific historical context, some background in the study of Canadian history is extremely helpful as preparation for a number of subjects which will be taught in the programme. Applicants should therefore be strongly advised to complete one or two university courses in

Canadian history before registering in the programme.<sup>4</sup>

The University of London's Diploma in Archives Studies requires candidates to have a first or second class Honours degree. It can be from any discipline. It does not specifically recommend, as the Canadian guidelines, that the students have a background in history. What it does do, however, is to make it compulsory for all students to pass at least one examination in administrative history.<sup>5</sup> The Cook guidelines and the SAA guidelines do not specifically mention any admission requirements, but they both put emphasis on the need of historical knowledge for the archivists. The SAA curriculum, which calls it "contextual knowledge," includes a course in United States organizational history.<sup>6</sup> Michael Cook, simply states that

Archivists must emerge from their training able and confident in undertaking research which uses documentary evidence. If this training has not been acquired during the first degree experience, then it must be provided during the specialist training course.<sup>7</sup>

In the University of British Columbia Master's degree course, the majority of candidates have come with a history or historically oriented major in their first and/or

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<sup>4</sup> ACA curriculum guidelines, 132.

<sup>5</sup> University College London, "Diploma in Archives Studies, Library, Archive and Information Studies", (1985), 19-20.

<sup>6</sup> SAA guidelines, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Cook, *Guidelines for Curriculum Development*, 31.

subsequent degrees. In the early years, Canadian historiography and general methods of historical study comprised the substance of a required course in the first year. The importance and the rationale behind this course is explained by Terry Eastwood, the Chairman of the Master of Archival Studies Programme at University of British Columbia:

Archivists can never know all the history they might be called upon to know by all the professional exigencies which they may face over a career, but they should understand the historiographical traditions and the scholarly methods historians use to build their knowledge. Everyone who has praised the value of the study of history in the intellectual making of archivists is right, but like other sensibilities of archivists, the historical one permeates their habit and therefore is cultivated throughout a properly designed and instructed archival curriculum.<sup>8</sup>

They all recognize that this knowledge, which ACA calls "foundation courses" and the SAA calls "contextual knowledge," can not be the responsibility of the archival studies programme alone. It can teach administrative and institutional history and the juridical context of archives which students need to understand to do their work, but applicants to archival studies must come equipped with general knowledge of society and its history.

The knowledge of history of the country is crucial for the Sri Lankan archivist who has to cope with archives dating back to the seventeenth century. The context of the

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<sup>8</sup> Eastwood, "Nurturing Archival Education in the University," 243-244.

archives and the instruments and procedure generating them require a good knowledge of the country's history and particularly its administrative history. Since the proposed education program for the archivists in Sri Lanka is a one-year diploma course, the resources and the limited time would be spent mostly on core archival and records management, and automation courses. Therefore, candidates should acquire the knowledge of history of the country and its institutions before embarking on the archival education programme.

Hence, the enrollment requirements for the candidates must be, to have obtained an honours degree with a good historical knowledge of the country. It should be from a university in Sri Lanka. This should be the general rule. In the extreme circumstances, where the candidate shows a dedication to the profession but is without the necessary background in history, the candidate should be admitted to the programme on condition that a dedicated study of Sri Lankan history be undertaken at the same time.

A good standing in the last degree is also essential. The University of British Columbia programme requires at least a good second class standing (high B average) in the last two years of undergraduate studies.<sup>9</sup> The University College London requires a first or second

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 241.

class in an Honours degree. In Sri Lanka, entrance qualification must be set at the minimum level of second class lower division pass. Like any other postgraduate degree course the candidates should have academic references to attest to their capacity for superior professional performance.

Apart from knowledge of the official languages of the country, Sinhalese and Tamil, a knowledge of English is required as the language of instruction. Another desired enrollment requirement should be a knowledge of foreign language. As the National Archives and several church missionary archives contains considerable number of Dutch archives, candidates with the ability to read and write Dutch, Pali, or Sanskrit, should be given preference in the selection process, the other things being equal. Admission to the University of British Columbia master of archival studies program encourages the candidates to have a reading knowledge of a foreign language.<sup>10</sup> The University College London's diploma also requires, an advanced knowledge of Latin, for those who wish to specialize in medieval records.<sup>11</sup>

### **Curriculum**

The next question and the most vital one is what

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 241.

<sup>11</sup> University College London, Diploma in Archives Studies, 20.

the student should learn. It is generally agreed that the quality of the staff looking after the nations archives depends on the quality of the training they receive. The objective should be to give them professional competence. Around the world, a dominant factor in the field of archival education and training is still the overriding importance of national and linguistic traditions.<sup>12</sup> There are no universal standards for diplomas or master's degrees despite the effort of the Unesco and the ICA on harmonization of archival education and training programmes.

Terry Eastwood, in outlining the purposes of the University of British Columbia's archival programme, wrote that there are three desired elements in the learning and methodology of a professional education. The first is for students to learn the general principles and the theoretical framework which supports and guides the actual practice of the profession.<sup>13</sup> Students must know the principles of the profession in order to prepare for sound practice. This way the students knows the nature, purposes, and uses of archives before they embark on practical work. This is also the main difference between a university education programme

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<sup>12</sup> Michael Cook, *The Education and Training of Archivists - Status Report of Archival Training Programmes and Assessment of Manpower Needs* (Unesco, 1979), 2.

<sup>13</sup> Eastwood, "The Origins and the Aims of the Master of Archival Studies Programme at the University of British Columbia," 40.

and on the job training. At the university students learn why things are done; they critically examine the way things are done. In an apprenticeship situation, the apprentice is only taught how the things are done. The first element therefore, is the learning of theory, the nature of archives, generation of records in office systems, and the juridical system in which they are generated. The theory, therefore, is the intellectual framework of understanding archives.

The second element is to give student the opportunity to gain knowledge of a variety of subjects relating to the methods. They will need this knowledge of different subjects when they deal with all kinds of matters on the job.<sup>14</sup> The students should be given the opportunity to learn all they can about the use of archives, the development of the archival profession, and working of archivists and archival institutions in the world. Most importantly they must know about the basic archival functions, the management, and research methods. The method of application is easy to comprehend when you know the theory. Methods are the means by which theory is translated into practice.

The third and the final element according to Eastwood is to build skills. Even in a totally academic

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 41.

atmosphere, students must be given some opportunity to apply their knowledge. An archivist cannot practice without knowing how to identify records, arrange a body of manuscripts, construct an inventory, and treat all the various forms of material he or she will encounter.<sup>15</sup> This is the practical element. It can be taught by way of an internship at an archives during the programme. Even if it is not possible provide an internship, practical experience can be achieved by class assignments such as description and arrangement of materials and records surveys.

James O'Toole offers another way of looking at curriculum question. Working from the 1988 SAA guidelines and some of the work of defining the areas of archival knowledge, he identifies several broad curriculum areas that archival education should cover. He calls them clusters.<sup>16</sup> A detailed description of the clusters is given below.

#### Archival Curriculum Clusters<sup>17</sup>

##### 1 Introduction to Archives Cluster

Introduction to Archival Theory and Practice

##### 2 Theory and Practice Cluster

Research Seminar in Archival Administration

History of Archives and the Archives Profession

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> James M. O'Toole, "Curriculum Development in Archival Education: A Proposal," *American Archivist* 53, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 464.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 465.

Development of Archival Theory  
Current Archival Issues  
Independent Readings and Research

### 3 Archival Functions Cluster

Appraisal  
Arrangement, Description, and Reference  
Reference Service in Archives  
Preservation Administration  
Current Records Management and Archives  
Archival Public Programs

### 4 Institutions and Repositories Cluster

Management of Public Records  
Private Manuscripts and Rare Books  
Institutional and Organizational Archives

### 5 Management Cluster

Introduction to Management Principles and Techniques  
Budgeting and Personnel Management  
Space and Facilities Planning  
Program Planning and Development  
Legal Issues for Archivists  
Archival Ethics

### 6 Record Formats Cluster

Machine-Readable Records  
Micrographics  
Photographic and Visual Records  
Aural Records and Oral History

### 7 Practicum Cluster

Directed Archival Internship  
Extended Student Project  
Archives Thesis

There are twenty five elements altogether excluding the internship, extended student project and the thesis. Some of these elements are construed as courses, for example the seminar on archival administration, and others could be elements of a single course, such as the management topics

in cluster five. O'Toole's list also reflects certain circumstances in the United States, which do not apply in Sri Lanka, where, for instance there would be no need to incorporate study or rare books or oral history into an archival curriculum. Still he has similar elements in general terms to that of Eastwood: Courses dwelling on theory, methods (archival management courses) and practice (practicum cluster).

The University of British Columbia's master's degree curriculum is broken down into three broad categories, core archival subjects, archival methodology, and practice. The original curriculum has been changed over time, and, with three fulltime faculty members, the latest revised curriculum<sup>18</sup> of the programme has three main theory courses. They are the nature of archival materials, records in office systems, and the juridical context of Canadian archives. The courses on method consists of arrangement and description of archival materials, indexing, selection and acquisition of archival documents, access and retrieval systems, management of electronic records, and archival systems and the profession. The practice section of the curriculum falls into the now optional internship. Practical knowledge is also gained by the various class assignments.

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<sup>18</sup> The University of British Columbia, School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, Master of Archival Studies, course descriptions (Winter 1994-95).

Some of these courses such as research methods and management of libraries and archives are offered to both archival studies students and library science students.

The University College London's Masters degree in Overseas Records Management and Archives Administration consists of core subjects and a MA report. The core subjects (foundation or theoretical knowledge) taught over one academic year, are Records Management, Records Office Management, the Use of Computers in Record Offices, Overseas Historical Sources, Overseas Administrative History, Description of Documents, and Preparation of Finding Aids. The last two courses are taught entirely at the Public Record Office (PRO) in day-long supervised practical sessions held once a week. The MA report (method) is a piece of research done relevant to the country where the student is going to be employed.<sup>19</sup> It can also be study of records relating to their countries held at the PRO. Research can be undertaken outside Britain.<sup>20</sup>

The Diploma in Archives Studies at the same institution has four core courses compulsory for all students. They are Record Office Management, Records

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<sup>19</sup> Thurston, "The Training of Archivists from Developing Countries," 125.

<sup>20</sup> University College London, School of Library, Archive and Information Studies, MA in Overseas Records Management and Archives Administration, (1987). Some revisions have taken place since then.

Management, Preparation of Finding Aids, and Description of Documents. Then there are four other courses the students have to do. They can choose one from among courses on English Administrative History from c. 1100 to c. 1800, English Administrative History from c. 1800, or Overseas Administrative History; one from among Medieval Palaeography and Diplomatic; Medieval Latin or Post-medieval Palaeography, and Diplomatic or Historical Bibliographical Sources, Overseas; and two other courses. The other optional courses are Reading and Interpretation of Documents (non-European languages), Local Government Organization, Historical Bibliographical Sources in England and Wales, Historical Bibliographical Sources (overseas), Business Archives, or the Use of Computers in Record Offices.<sup>21</sup>

The Canadian and American guidelines provide the most comprehensive attempt to conceive an archival curriculum. The ACA guidelines group subjects which should be taught in a Master's degree archival curriculum into four categories. The first is the foundation courses, followed by substantive or core courses designed to provide the archivist with depth of professional knowledge. The third group are methods courses, and finally there are subjects in common with other professions to prepare archivists as

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<sup>21</sup> University College London, Diploma in Archive Studies, 22.

administrators and managers.<sup>22</sup> According to these four categories the following list of subject areas have been recommended by the ACA.

ACA graduate curriculum<sup>23</sup>

A. Subjects for Foundation Courses

- A.1. Intellectual history
- A.2. Administrative history of Canada
- A.3. Elements of law for archivists

B. Subjects for Substantive, or Core Courses

- B.1. Archival science and history of archives
- B.2. Records Management
- B.3. Organization and administration of North American archives

C. Subjects for Method Courses

- C.1. Diplomatics
- C.2. Automation and archives
- C.3. Special methods for description of archival holdings

D. Subjects for Courses in Common with Other Professions

- D.1. Preventive conservation
- D.2. Management sciences
- D.3. Financial accounting

The SAA guidelines has three knowledge areas that are defined as contextual knowledge, archival knowledge, and complementary knowledge. In addition practice given by a practicum or internship experience. A thesis is also

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<sup>22</sup> ACA guidelines, 135.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

included in order for students to undertake original research.<sup>24</sup> The following is an overview of the SAA curriculum.

Curriculum of an Archival Studies Program<sup>25</sup>

1. Contextual knowledge

- 1A. U.S. Organizational history
- 1B. U.S. Legal system
- 1C. U.S. Financial systems

2. Archival knowledge

- 2A. The history of archives, archival organizations and legislation, and the character of the archival profession
- 2B. Records management
- 2C. Archival science

3. Complementary knowledge

- 3A. Preservation
- 3B. Library and Information Science
- 3C. Management science
- 3D. Research methodology

4. Practicum

5. Thesis

Michael Cook guidelines recommends four main categories and two supplementary categories. The four main ones are the professional core subjects (theory), courses in common with other information training (method), course in common with other sectors (method), and practical study (practice). The supplementary courses are the general

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<sup>24</sup> SAA Guidelines, 4.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 5.

foundation courses and the electives. The following broad distinctions have been recognized by Michael Cook.

Michael Cook's analysis of the components of an archival training programme.<sup>25</sup>

A. General foundation courses

B. Professional core subjects

Records management; archives management  
Interpretative sciences and skills; administrative history

C. Courses in common with other information training

Reprographic; information storage, retrieval and dissemination; bibliography and sources of information; user studies; exhibition; legislation; security; building design and environmental control; systems design and automation

D. Courses in common with other sectors;  
Management sciences, statistical methods  
Languages  
Research methodology and environment

E. Practicals and special study

F. The question of electives - education  
conservation  
publication  
special formats  
oral evidence

For a diploma course in Sri Lanka, it is possible to follow this pattern of courses on theory, method, and practice.

Some of the courses on method such as indexing and research methods courses can be selected from the Master of Library Science Program in the case of University of Colombo and

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<sup>25</sup> Cook guidelines, 38.

from the Diploma course in the case of University of Kelaniya. As the duration of the diploma is one academic year, the classes and field trips will take place from October to June. There are three terms (semester) in an academic year. Final exams would be held in July, following the usual pattern in Sri Lankan universities.

Drawing on the ACA, SAA, and Cook guidelines as well as the University of British Columbia and University of London examples, it is possible to extract the necessary elements for a one-year diploma course. Similar to the Master of Library Science programme at the University of Colombo, which comprises four compulsory courses, two optional courses, and an extended essay, the diploma in archives studies should also have a seven course curriculum, with all courses being compulsory.

The theory could be taught in two foundation courses during the first term. The first course being the basic foundation of archival theory. The concepts, an exploration of the nature of archives, the study of historical development of archival institutions and practices in Europe and North America, most particularly in the British tradition. Sri Lanka has strong educational, cultural, and economic links with Britain and the Commonwealth countries. Through the British Council Libraries operated by the British High Commission in Sri Lanka, students will have easy access various British,

professional, and educational journals, magazines, and other published sources. The other chief sources of literature in English on archives, *The American Archivist* (published by the SAA) and *Archivaria* (published by the ACA) are currently only available at Library of the Department of National Archives which only serves as a library to the staff. No access is usually given to the public. Ultimately, the university where the programme is placed will have to develop library holdings relevant to archival studies.

The other theory course offered in the first term should cover generation of archives in the context of the Sri Lankan legal and political situation, administrative history, archival laws and regulations, and the current, semi-current management of records. It is necessary for the archivist to understand the various contextual and documentary relationships found in Sri Lankan archives, and to be prepared to elucidate them as needed in the course of archival functions. This course would also teach the basic elements of records management according to the most recent thinking about the records continuum.<sup>27</sup>

A course in automation should also be taught during the first term, under foundation courses. Automation is a subject which cannot be left out of the curriculum any

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<sup>27</sup> For more details between the relationship between archives and records management see Jay Atherton, "From Life Cycle to Continuum: Some Thoughts on the Records Management Archives Relationship," *Archivaria* 21 (Winter 1985-86): 43-51.

longer. Automation is a current educational issue in every field of academic and professional studies throughout the world; students should be willing to turn to the computers as an educational aid and tool for practice.<sup>28</sup> Terry Eastwood wrote in an article titled "Educating Archivists about Information Technology" that teaching of information technology for archivists should be integrated across a curriculum.<sup>29</sup> He also recommends how the teaching and learning of automation should be done. He writes:

The first step is to develop a component of instruction for those who need the basics of literacy, divorced entirely from questions of archival application. The next step is to work out a fundamental level of instruction on the nature of electronic records, dovetailed with study of archival fundamentals in general. Then, there should be a component of specialized study of the management of electronic records all along the continuum of their existence. Advanced study of highly specialized questions, such as treatment of shared databases, might eventually be worked into the scheme. On the automated techniques side, one builds on basic literacy (the common foundation of the two aspects) by melding the basics of arrangement, description, and archival adaptation of methods of bibliographical control with instruction in the concepts ruling automation of the archival office.<sup>30</sup>

This is quite true for the Sri Lankan situation. Even basic knowledge of word processing is not common among the Sri

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<sup>28</sup> For more details see, William H. Graves, ed. *Computing Across the Curriculum: Academic Perspectives* (United States: EDUCOM, The Inter-University Communications Council, Inc. and Academic Computing Publications, Inc., 1989).

<sup>29</sup> Terry Eastwood, "Educating Archivists About Information Technology," *American Archivist* 56, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 462.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 463.

Lanka university students, as class assignments and term papers are still handwritten. It is possible at both University of Colombo and at University of Kelaniya where are there are computer laboratories to provide students with access to computing labs. Then more advanced information technology should be introduced to the students. The archival repositories today have to handle not only traditional audio technology, but a variety of media. The computer's ability to integrate all kinds of media, such as the compact disk, the videodisc, and various devices for voice recognition, and synthesis will generate all kinds of electronic media archives the archivist will have to look after and provide access to. This course will develop, in all students, a level of computer fluency necessary to assume a leadership role in the utilization of computers and communications technology. Therefore, the fundamental goal of this course is to prepare students for successful career in a rapidly advancing technological world.

Archival functions (methods) could be taught during the next two terms. First, during the second term a course on arrangement and description of archives which must also deal with international rules and standards must be taught. Even though the course is taught in English, and the description and arrangement work is done in English, the students and the faculty should jointly undertake in developing a archival glossary in Sinhalese in order to

describe and prepare inventories in Sinhalese. The majority of the public using the archives in Sri Lanka only use Sinhalese. Students should be encouraged to do the same in Tamil too. The theory and methods of arrangement and description are well suited to various kinds of practical work, such as preparing inventories. It is here that the special language abilities of the students come useful. As part of their course work, the students who are proficient in Dutch can prepare inventories using the considerable Dutch archives at the National Archives.

The next course to be taken during the second term should be a course on appraisal for acquisition and selection. As there is no course on archives management on this curriculum, the management issues could be covered in the above course.

For the third term too two courses on archival functions should be taught. One could be a course on preservation. Sri Lanka being a tropical country it is a necessity for archivists to know the preservation of archival material. There is at present, a qualified conservator specialized in paper conservation currently working at the National Archives who may be able to teach this course.<sup>31</sup> The other course for the third and final term

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<sup>31</sup> Ms. Saroja Wettasinghe obtained her Ph.D (Paper Conservation) from the University College London, University of London in 1990.

should be a course dealing with access to archives and all facets of public services of archival repositories.

There are limitations to a seven course diploma lasting only one year. The major deficiency is that little attention is paid to studies of management of archives and records services. This subject could be added to the curriculum as the diploma is developed in to a master's degree. A course in research methods could be added too. Many elective courses can also be added from the courses offered in the library science programme. In the case of University of Colombo, there are optional courses in the Master of Library Science programme such as Data Communication Networks, and Information Systems and Networks currently being offered.<sup>32</sup> The other courses could be added to a master's degree curriculum are a major essay and a directed study course. Having a major essay in the curriculum will enable the students who may want to pursue further studies in the field to develop their own area of special interest, such as Temple archives, Business Archives, Financial Archives, or Dutch Archives. Students will also obtain work related experience by using primary and secondary sources for their essays. Some elements of scholarly endeavour needs to be included to encourage

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<sup>32</sup> University of Colombo, Faculty of Graduate Studies, "The Curriculum of the Master's Degree in Library and Information Science," (1994-1995).

students to see the needs and experience, the means of developing new knowledge of archives.

The other limitation in this proposed diploma course is that the students are not given a chance to acquire practical knowledge by way of academic internship at an archives. It is quite difficult at this stage to have this highly desired element of skill building by way of an internship incorporated into the curriculum. For one reason, there are neither enough qualified archivists to supervise the students on an academic internship programme nor are there adequate numbers of open archival repositories. It is also far beyond the scope of a diploma programme to have an academic internship incorporated into one-year educational programme. For the moment at least, the Sri Lankan archivists will have to do without the practical training until they find employment. This is an area which could be developed in the future, especially if the education programme is gradually developed to a master's degree level.

The development of an archival education programme is not an easy task. The case of education programmes in the United States proves the fact. After decades of discussions and several guidelines on archival education programmes none of the Universities in the United States yet offer a master degree level education programme. Yet, in Canada, the University of British Columbia has been successfully educating archivists for over a decade. The success of this

perhaps is due to gradual improvement of the programme. The educators in the School of Library, Archival and Information Science at the University of British Columbia keep up with the changes and adjust the curriculum of the archival education programme. Likewise in Sri Lanka, it is not possible to begin an educational programme with all the questions answered. Questions will come up frequently, they have to be answered as the profession attains maturity in the country.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The archival profession unlike the library profession is little known in Sri Lanka at present. Yet the training of this branch of information specialists is a matter which cannot be ignored any longer. Not only must there be properly trained professionals to look after the archives already well preserved, but there must also be archivists and records managers to evaluate, select, and preserve records of modern times for the future generations. It cannot be left to chance for records to survive for posterity.

Therefore, the necessity of education and training of archivists is an extremely important issue in the training of information specialists in Sri Lanka. The current economic and political situation alone warrants a real need for records managers and archivists. The economy in Sri Lanka today has steady and fast growth. The stock market in Colombo is rapidly growing, and a number of industries such as tourism and cloth manufacturing to name but two have developed during the last decade or so. All these industries generate various kinds of records which need proper care. The political situation in the country also suggests a need for a better care of records. Despite the existence of terrorist attacks, bomb explosions,

politically motivated violence and destruction, it may be hoped that Sri Lanka will emerge from current difficulties. When that happens, all sides will want to have records vital to society's continuing operation and for an understanding of what has happened. For this, the country will need well educated persons to care for archives in the proper manner.

The character of archives and the systems which generate them are so deeply rooted in the cultural and administrative traditions of individual countries, it is essential for every country to have its own education and training programmes for archivists. The archives always remain unique, and this makes very difficult to educate archivists remote from the particular political, administrative, and legal context in which they will work. Therefore, the education and training of archivists overseas should be replaced by adoption of national education and training programmes in every country. In Sri Lanka, the few qualified archivists have been all trained overseas. They are only few for a country with such a large population. There should be more qualified archivists trained in the country to serve the needs of the country.

The only common aspect of international training is that all archives and records services do share the characteristic that they should be user oriented. Hence, the international guidelines can be used both to raise professional standards and to systematise those standards as

between nations. It will be necessary that some training to be done overseas in certain cases. At the leadership level, persons should be sent to developed countries for continuing studies. That way, they will gain the ability to compare and to have direct knowledge of alternative systems, and gain deeper understanding of importance of international standards.

The normal entry to the profession should be by a postgraduate qualification in archival studies. The establishment of the diploma will also be the beginning of the development of a professional body in the country. The graduation of the first batch of students from this course may result in the establishment of the first archivists professional association in the country. Once a professional body is established, it can work to improve standards, of education at more advanced levels. However, a great deal depends on the establishment of the first education and training programme for Sri Lankan archivists, for much will follow from this initiative.

The two main recommendations flowing from this study are that Sri Lanka begin with a diploma and concentrate on developing a core of professional studies giving students the requisite knowledge of the Sri Lankan context and of archival functions, together with the most essential technical knowledge, such as of preservation and conservation of archival materials.

Sri Lanka need not look at its contribution as being purely self-interested or isolated in its objectives. As Ann Thurston has noted:

Those countries which are and will be in the process of developing new training programmes have a vital role to play in the evolution of archival training. Trainers in these countries, faced with the challenge of drawing up programmes to utilise local expertise, and will be in a position to take a more wholistic approach than has been possible in more traditional institutions. They will, therefore, have an important role to play in helping the profession evolve to meet the needs of a new information age.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, it is hoped that this thesis will contribute to that process.

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<sup>1</sup> Anne Thurston, "New Directions in Archival Training," *Janus* (1990): 52.

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