

## LEGITIMATE OWNERSHIP AND 'HANDLING' OF DNA BASED DATA IN SRI LANKA

Piyumal Herath

Faculty of Graduate Studies, Sir John Kotelawala Defence University,  
Ratmalana, Sri Lanka  
*piyumalherath@gmail.com*

Deoxyribonucleic acid or DNA contains the genetic information of every human being. Analysis of DNA using modern molecular biology techniques makes it possible for law enforcement agencies to fight crime efficiently by accurately identifying criminals. At present DNA analysis is done in Sri Lanka at the request of law enforcement agencies in several government and private institutions. In addition to these there are two known privately funded organizations that analyse DNA for various purposes. There is no legal frame work in Sri Lanka to empower any of these agencies to analyse and store DNA based data. More importantly there is no law to govern the accessing and use of this data by anybody. This makes it possible for the misuse of DNA

data bases held by these institutions. In view of this, there is an urgent need for the establishment of a legal framework in Sri Lanka to govern the extraction of DNA, retention, and accessing of DNA based data by both governmental and non-governmental organizations. The legal systems in place in UK, USA and India are presented for comparison and a centralized authority to oversee the operational procedures for quality assurance, preservation and ownership of DNA data and maintaining confidentiality is recommended.

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