

Noolaham Foundation

Project Report



Project title	Digitization Project in Trincomalee
Project number	NF/PG/2008/0005
Project location (District)	Trincomalee Colombo
Sector	Collection Development - Ongoing Collection Development
Implementing agency and contribution	Noolaham Foundation
Grant Agency and Contribution	Noolaham Foundation
Total Budget and Expenditure	LKR 29,388.00
Start and End date	2008
Responsible Stakeholder/s	Project Coordinator - Mr. Muralitharan Mauran, Contributors – Mr. V. Prashanthan, Mr.S.Sathiyathevan, SDRO and Volunteers of Noolaham Foundation.

Summary:

The **Digitization Project in Trincomalee** was conducted by Noolaham Foundation during 2008 in Colombo and Trincomalee. It was implemented as a volunteer driven project to digitize a collection of print publications which were donated to Noolaham Foundation at Trincomalee by various well-wishers.

Through this project 102 books and magazines were digitized and made available online through Noolaham Foundation's Digital Library at www.noolaham.org. This collection of documents was gathered through NF's volunteers. After digitization, those publications were either returned to the contributors or donated to libraries. This project was a successful initiative and received special appreciation from Tamil writers and publishers of Trincomalee.

Introduction and Background:

Documentation and archiving are keys to the knowledge profile of a community. These activities are important information providers to processes that influence the social and economic development of local communities. Documentation and archiving are also influence the manner in which the histories of local communities are written. The functions of documentation and archiving turn out to be particularly difficult tasks in minority communities which are neglected. Hence a more robust community-driven approach to documentation and archiving is important.

The recorded history of Trincomalee spans more than two and a half thousand years beginning with civilian settlement associated with the Koneswaram temple in the pre-modern era. One of the oldest cities in Asia, Trincomalee has been one of the main centers of Tamil language speaking culture on the island for over two millennia. Trincomalee has been the inspiration of both domestic and international poetry, films, music and literature

for many centuries. Many individuals and libraries in Trincomalee have collections of important documents which have to be digitized so that they can be accessible to all.

Objective/s and Achievements or Results:

This project was conducted under Noolaham Foundation's objective of creating a digital archive of publications related to Tamil speaking communities and making them accessible to all. During 2006 and 2007, a number of documents were donated by well-wishers of Noolaham who were based at Trincomalee so that they could be digitized and made accessible online. This project was initiated to digitize that collection.

This project was implemented in Trincomalee and Colombo. Mr. M. Mauran coordinated this project by organizing the infrastructure and collecting the sources along with Mr. S. Sathiyathevan. Through this project 102 books and magazines were digitized and made available online through Noolaham Foundation's Digital Library at www.noolaham.org. Books designated by the following Noolaham numbers were uploaded to Noolaham Foundation's Digital Library (1832-1852, 1915 - 1925, 1936-1942, 2826-2888). The magazines and books digitized date back to the year 1960s. It is a great cost effective opportunity to bring and link quality information and reading resources to Tamil speaking community. Moreover they can access these e-documents from anywhere and anytime. These collections will function as a repository where researchers of all kinds, all over the world, turn to magazines and books for information relating to their needs.

Constraints / Challenges and Lessons Learned:

- Offering scanned images without any fully searchable text would only partially fulfill users' needs, as many (if not all) desire to search all of the texts available to them. It is necessary to consider providing navigation within the digital data through the use of indexing software. However NF provides enough metadata and brief contents for each digitized documents.
- Noolaham foundation needs to open special web portals to those digitized collections as well as subject specific collections. If there is a portal to showcase these collections it will make them easily accessible to users.

Suggestions and Recommendations:

- Once the digital image is created they need to be made searchable and accessible. The scanned images are processed with optical character recognition software to make them fully searchable. But there is no such software available in the market which satisfactorily provided the required results in Tamil language. Still the best solution of the system needs to be discussed and metadata must be created for each title, issue, image, and possibly article to help the users find what they are looking for.
- The past few years have seen a significant expansion of activity in making copies of older runs of magazines available via the internet. It is anticipated that as commercial and public body investment grows, far more will be available soon. It is also likely that there will be far greater ease of access to texts available as a result of the application of

sophisticated software. This will significantly increase the ability of researchers to search quickly through huge quantities of printed magazines, which will be a vast improvement over the former manual process.

- Noolaham foundation could conduct a few seminars or discussions among them year by year in their venue. And NF should collaborate more and more with other publishers and groups in creating digital content to share information and resources.
- Noolaham foundation should start a section for authors and publishers based in Trincomalee. Noolaham foundation needs to be in contact with those volunteers who provided their collections and publications to this project. It will increase the foundation's collections in the future.

Acknowledgments

Noolaham Foundation would like to thank all collaborators and volunteers for joining us in this project despite their busy schedule and Noolaham foundation is very proud of their keen interest and dedication towards our society. NF hopes to collaborate with them in more and more events in the future.