

Noolaham Foundation

Project Report

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| Project title | Digitization Project hosted by Colombo Tamil Sangam Library |
| Project number | NF/PG/2009/0001 |
| Project location | Colombo |
| Sector | Print Publications Archive |
| Implementing agency and contribution | Noolaham Foundation |
| Grant Agency and Contribution | Noolaham Foundation |
| Total Budget and Expenditure | N/A |
| Start and End date | 2009 - 2012 |
| Responsible Stakeholder/s | Team Leader: Mr. Shaseevan Ganeshanathan (March 2009 - December 2009) and Mr. Seran Sivananthamoorthy (January 2010 – 2012). Contributors: Mr. S. Ezhilventhan, Mr. A. Kanthasamy, Mr. T. Mathusoothanan, Mr. T. Gnanasegaram, Prof. Saba Jeyarasa, Mr. Rajakulenthira, Mr. Maheswaran, Mr. Sajeev Edward, and Mr. M. Mauran |

Summary:

The Colombo Tamil Sangam contributes towards the betterment of the Tamil language, culture and arts. It was established in 1942. It operates a library with more than 45,000 books and magazines. A special purpose reference section aiming to preserve Sri Lankan Tamil related documents is functioning as part of that library. The goals of the **Digitization Project hosted by the Colombo Tamil Sangam Library Project** were to document and archive the Sri Lankan collection of the Colombo Tamil Sangam Library.

Totally 2,950 valuable books and magazines were digitized through this project and made available online through Noolaham Foundation's Digital Library www.noolaham.org.

Introduction and Background:

Noolaham Foundation is a legally registered (GA 2390), non-profit entity, founded to provide enhanced access to information sources and foster knowledge-based development in Sri Lanka. It maintains an online digital library, facilitates information preservation programs, provides financial assistance and technical guidance for digitization initiatives and actively participates in awareness-raising campaigns.

Noolaham Foundation collaborates with various organizations in project work and in sharing expertise. Noolaham Foundation's mission is to build strong relationships with cultural and educational institutions and to recruit and support new organizations.

Colombo Tamil Sangam is one such organization and it maintains a special purpose reference section aiming to preserve documents related to Sri Lankan Tamils. This section is functioning as part of that library. Over the years, a good collection of documents related to the Tamil speaking communities of Sri Lanka was accumulated by the Tamil Sangam Library and these invaluable resources have become a resource base for knowledge seekers and researchers.

Objective/s and Achievements or Results:

This project was been driven and directed by the volunteers of Noolaham Foundation. Mr. Sarinikar Sivakumar donated a computer to this project and Mr. Shaseevan Ganeshanathan donated two tables. Colombo Tamil Sangam allocated a place and furniture to establish a working unit for this project. Scanning the identified documents was the initial phase of this project.

This project was started and coordinated (see annexure I) by Mr. Shaseevan Ganeshanathan. The first phase of the project process was conducted by Noolaham Foundation with the help of Mr. S. Ezhilventhan. Thereafter, Noolaham Foundation gained plenty of support from experts, such as Dr. T. Gnanasegaram, Prof. Saba Jeyarasa and Mr. Rajakulenthira. They helped Noolaham Foundation to open a unit in the Colombo Tamil Sangam, for the smooth implementation of this project, and lobbying to communities on the importance of this project.

As the collection at Colombo Tamil Sangam was massive, this project took almost three years and an average of 1000 documents was added to the Digital Library each year. The digitization was carried out by accessing the collection based on the subject classification.

Various kinds of 2,950 books (see the annexure II) and magazines were digitized and uploaded on the digital e-library of Noolaham Foundation "www.noolaham.org". These include many personally collected rare documents and this was a massive achievement of this project.

Constrains / Challenges and lesson learned:

- The relevant community asset was digitized with less focus on international digitization standards and thus has to be digitized again. This lesson learning took the precious time of Noolaham Foundation and its investments.
- Noolaham Foundation did not have the expertise to handle fragile documents at the beginning of this project. Thus we could not scan a number of documents.
- A few complaints about intellectual property rights were received as well. Thus related documents had to be removed from the Digital Library.
- As this was our first such massive project, Noolaham Foundation could not plan or budget this project.


Suggestion and Recommendation:

- Adequate project plan, budget and human resources are vital to ensure quality outcome. Noolaham Foundation should implement its projects with a clear plan, time frame, goals and budget.

- Digital photography should be used to digitize fragile documents and staff should be trained to handle such documents properly.
- Tamil OCR has been a frontline research area in the field of human-machine interface for the last few years. When it is improved, it will save more time and solve some technical issues as well. How to find a best solution needs to be discussed.
- Noolaham Foundation should acquire professionally trained experts for documentation and digitization and purchase appropriate equipment for scanning and digitization.

Annexure I: Presentation

- Date: 17.03.2010
- Venue: Colombo Tamil Sangam, Colombo
- Topic: Tamil Heritage Preservation in the Digital era
- Talk by: Mr. Shaseevan Ganeshanathan
- Talk Subject: Making use of the digital media to preserve cultural heritage was discussed.



கொழும்புத் தமிழ்ச் சங்கம்
“தம்மின் பெரியார் தமரா ஒழுக்குதல்
வன்மையுள் எல்லாம் தலை”
(தம்மைவிட பெரியவர் தமக்குச் சுற்றத்தாராகுமாறு நடத்தல், வல்லமை
எல்லாவற்றிலும் சிறந்ததாகும்.)

‘சந்தீவார் ஒன்று கூடல்’
**‘தமிழ்ப்பாரம்பரியச் செல்வங்களைப்
பாதுகாத்தல்’**

இடம் : கொழும்புத் தமிழ்ச் சங்கம்
சங்கரப்பள்ளி மண்டபம்

காலம் : 17.03.2010 புதன்கிழமை

நேரம் : மாலை 6.00 மணி

தலைமை : திருமதி பத்மா சோமசுந்தர்
(துணைத் தலைவர், கொழும்புத் தமிழ்ச் சங்கம்)

நிகழ்ச்சி நிரல்

தமிழ் வாழ்த்து
உரை : திரு.க.சசீவன்
(நிர்வாக இயக்குநர், நூலக இணைய அமைப்பு)

கருத்தாடல்
தமிழ் வாழ்த்து
அனைவரையும் அன்புடன் அழைக்கின்றோம்
ஆழ்வாப்பிள்ளை கந்தசாமி கல்விப் பணிக்குழு,
பொதுச் செயலாளர் கொழும்புத் தமிழ்ச் சங்கம்
7, 57வது ஒழுங்கை, கொழும்பு -06
தொலைபேசி இல 2363759

Some relevant news links:

<http://noolahamfoundation.org/wiki/index.php?title=News/2010/17.03.2010>

<http://noolahamfoundation.org/wiki/index.php?title=News/2012/2012.06.01>

Annexure II:

Digitized documents:

3212 – 3219, 3227 – 3388, 3475 – 4152, 4176 – 4693, 4704 – 4865, 4878 – 4984, 5079 - 5459, 5654-5657, 5852-6198, 6565-6787, and 6999-7358

| Noolaham No From | Noolaham No to | Number of Books & Magazines |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 3212 | 3219 | 8 |
| 3227 | 3388 | 162 |
| 3475 | 4152 | 678 |
| 4176 | 4693 | 518 |
| 4704 | 4865 | 162 |
| 4878 | 4984 | 107 |
| 5079 | 5459 | 381 |
| 5654 | 5657 | 4 |
| 5852 | 6198 | 347 |
| 6565 | 6787 | 223 |
| 6999 | 7358 | 360 |
| Total | | 2,950 |