

**Noolaham Foundation**  
**Final Report**



<b>Project title</b>	Vethiyar Thamilavanam: Colombo Royal College Digitization
<b>Project number</b>	NF/PG/2013/0002
<b>Project location (District/s, Division/s, Village/s)</b>	Colombo
<b>Sector</b>	Collection Development
<b>Implementing agency and contribution</b>	Noolaham Foundation
<b>Grant Agency and Contribution</b>	Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust (digitization)
<b>Total Budget and Expenditure</b>	LKR 32,350.00 (except digitization)
<b>Start and End date</b>	January 2013 – March 2013
<b>Responsible Stakeholder/s</b>	Students of Royal College Tamil Debate Council, Volunteers of Noolaham Foundation and Royal College, Colombo

**Summary:**

The 'Vethiyar Thamilavanam: Colombo Royal College Digitization' project aimed at collecting, preserving, and disseminating digital copies of the published documents of Royal College, Colombo and its Tamil community. The main objectives this project was to provide open access of institution's printed collection, preserve and create wide global visibility of historical documents of Royal College in order to make it much easier for students and others who are interested in learning the college history.

Noolaham foundation has digitized 92 documents and made required facilities for readers to view these digitized publications online at [www.noolaham.org](http://www.noolaham.org) and shared offline digital resources in a DVD named 'Veththiyar Thamizhavanam 2013' which was released at Royal College Union Skill Centre on 31 March, 2013. Royal College Tamil Debaters' Council was involved in collecting these publications released by the Tamil societies and Associations of their college.

This collection includes magazines, newsletters, booklets, reports, souvenirs and felicitation publications, annual publications, leaflets and memorial publications published from 1964 to 2012.

**Introduction & Background**

Noolaham Foundation is a non-profit, charitable organization (GA 2390) 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.

Sri Lankan Tamil speaking communities hold knowledge as their primary and proudest resource but there is a lack of intellectual resources. It is obvious that the rare and valuable documents are getting lost over a prolonged period. That is why preserving, sharing knowledge and resources is one of the most unrivaled needs as far as the Tamil community is concerned. Thus Noolaham Foundation strives to fill the gap and has toiled for the last eight years in digital preservation. Noolaham Foundation's activity of 'Collection Development', identified Tamil student's publications of Colombo Royal College.

Royal College is one of the leading public schools in Sri Lanka. There are more than 35 functioning Clubs & Societies for students. The Tamil students of the school have five such clubs. They are Hindu Students' Union, Tamil Debaters' Council, Tamil Dramatic Society, Tamil Carnatic Society and Tamil Literary Association. These societies have organized various activities to improve and bring out the talents of the students. Such programs include publishing books, conducting language training campaigns and cultural events which would help students understand and appreciate each other and the cultures of students belonging to the various ethnicities at Royal College.

#### **Objective/s and Achievements or Results:**

This project was conducted under NF's objective of collection development; provide knowledge and information services to ensure free and open access, thereby supporting educational, research and development endeavors related to Sri Lankan Tamil speaking communities.

13,087 pages of 92 (The Noolaham Numbers of documents 12214, 12334 – 12417) different kinds of documents were added to Noolaham Foundation's digital library ([www.noolaham.org](http://www.noolaham.org)). The project helps to opening up outputs of the institution to a worldwide audience, maximizing the visibility and impact of these documents.

#### **Constrains / Challenges:**

- During implementation of the project, NF faced some challenges in processes of digitization. The flow of the project was affected due to the poor condition of source materials.
- Due to lack of awareness, only a limited number of rare and endangered published documents are available in the school and the community, and an enormous amount of valuable material in all formats remains uncollected and risks being permanently lost. Re-collecting rare endangered published documents was a hard job during this project period.
- Lack of awareness of open access institutional archives among students, teachers and researchers, and inadequate information and communication technology infrastructure are major problems in this area.

### **Suggestion and Recommendation:**

Based on the aforementioned problems identified, the following suggestions were offered for possible improvement among others:

- Correct handling of paper documents will aid us to preserve them in the long term. Some recommended procedures should be followed. They should always be handled with care, stored in a stable condition and under acceptable temperature, on a proper shelf.
- The published documents that are missing should be scanned when resources are available and Noolaham Foundation and its volunteers should find those documents from old boys, school well-wishers, past principals and teachers, community libraries and community based organizations.
- Noolaham Foundation should collaborate more and more with other institutions and groups in creating digital content to share knowledge and resources. There is also a pressing need for training programs that will help administrators as well as special collections professionals to understand their responsibilities in this environment.

### **Case Stories / Quotes etc...**

“It gives me great pleasure to contribute to “Veththiyar Thamizhavanam 2013” published by the Students of Royal College Tamil Debate Council and Noolaham Foundation on this occasion. Through this project the students participate in a pursuit of knowledge. The digitization work would undoubtedly preserve rare and endangered intellectual documents. I take this opportunity to thank the Noolaham Foundation and students who have acted together in a noble endeavour. I extend my best wishes for their success.”

***Mr. H. A. Upali Gunasekara***  
**Principal, Royal College, Colombo.**

### **Relevant Attachments**

***News/2013/2013.03.31***

‘Veththiyar Thamizhavanam 2013’ - DVD Release

<http://noolahamfoundation.org/wiki/index.php?title=News/2013/2013.03.31>

The Cover page of DVD - 'Veththiyar Thamizhavanam 2013'





***Some photos taken during the event on 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2013 when the digitized publications were released at Royal College Union Skill Centre, Colombo 07.***



