



Bibliographic and Reprographic Services

Scholars can use the OPAC system in the A K Ramanujan Reading Room for searching information and printing. Printing incurs a nominal charge.

Our catalogue can also be accessed through the internet at: <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/su/southasia/rmrl.html>

Extensive reference material including encyclopedias and other general reference publications are also available in the library.

Microfilming and digitization services are available to provide copies of pages from items in the collection (subject to copyright). An estimate of cost is provided at the time of placing the order. A microfilm reader is available on request.

The Library is open from 9.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday through Saturday (second Saturday is a holiday).

Directions & map



RMRL is located along the IT Corridor in Central Polytechnic (CPT) Campus, Taramani - to the west of Adyar just opposite to Indira Nagar train station. It is approximately 13 km. from Koyambedu bus station, 13 km. from Chennai Central Railway Station, 12 km. from Chennai Egmore Railway Station and 10 km. from the Chennai Airport.



ROJA MUTHIAH RESEARCH LIBRARY TRUST

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Website: www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/su/southasia/rmrl.html

ROJA MUTHIAH RESEARCH LIBRARY

"A CULTURAL TROVE"

Roja Muthiah Research Library

(RMRL) is a resource and research hub for south Indian studies covering diverse fields from humanities, social sciences to popular culture. The RMRL holds a unique collection and is widely recognized as a model library in India. With beginnings as a small private collection by Roja Muthiah, the library now holds an impressive 1,50,000 items and aims at continually preserving and expanding the historic archive.

History

The RMRL is what it is today thanks to the pioneering efforts of Roja Muthiah Chettiar from Kottaiyur. Muthiah began his career as a sign-board artist and soon became enthralled by antiquarian books, and started collecting classical Tamil literature in 1950. At the time of his death in 1992, the collection comprised nearly 1,00,000 items in Tamil which included books, periodicals and several other literary gems. Understanding the significance of the library and the need to preserve its valuable contents the University of Chicago bought the entire collection in 1994. However, with the library being deeply rooted in south Indian culture and tradition, it was decided that the collection would remain in Tamilnadu to form the nucleus of a research library. RMRL Trust now maintains this rare private collection of Tamil imprints in collaboration with the University of Chicago.

Collections

The vast collection in RMRL is a direct reflection of Tamil print heritage and culture, spanning a period of over 200 years, the earliest title being a book, 'Kantarantati' published in 1804. The spectrum of subjects covers language and literature, indigenous medicine, religion, folklore, popular culture, metaphysics, Gandhian studies, women's studies and modern history. It also holds material such as oleographs, theatre handbills, wedding invitations and private letters. It is this unique eclectic range that sets RMRL apart from other libraries and archives. Considering that Tamil is accorded the status of a classical language and that over sixty million people worldwide speak Tamil, the RMRL presents itself as a significant institution in the world of research and scholarship.

In a bid to augment its already unique collection, the RMRL recently acquired gramophone records from the 1920 and 1930s from private collectors which supplement the existing gramophone song books available at the library. The collection has received and continues to receive generous donations from private collections, growing by almost 50 percent in the last decade.

Human Resources

The RMRL's collection, sought after by scholars in India and elsewhere around the world, is not its sole strength. The library's staff is world class, having been trained in premier institutions around the world and having adopted the latest in library techniques that its resources allow. The Library is a nodal agency in imparting training in cataloguing and preservation to other institutions. Currently,

the RMRL serves as the resource centre for the training of staff involved in the South Asia Union Catalogue.

(<http://dsal.uchicago.edu/saucl>)

Current Activities

The preservation of material for posterity is a crucial element of RMRL's vision. A core of RMRL's activity therefore lies in preserving existing material in alternate formats. To this end, the Library has acquired equipment to facilitate this programme. The collection is being systematically preserved through archival microfilming and digitization. The RMRL also lends its expertise in these areas to other institutions. Significant headway has already been made on this front with regard to the South Asia Union Catalogue programme.

Support

Grants from the U S Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine, the Ford Foundation, University of Chicago, India Foundation for the Arts and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust are facilitating efforts at cataloguing and preservation.

Admission

Admission is free for the purpose of reference for bonafide scholars. Readers must provide proof of identity bearing their signature and a written request in a specified form before admission is granted.