



Roja Muthiah Research Library Trust

# Annual Report

23-24







# Annual Report

## 2023-24



ROJA MUTHIAH  
RESEARCH LIBRARY TRUST





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## *Main Objectives*

The Roja Muthiah Research Library Trust endeavours to:

- undertake and enable development of libraries and archives relating to South Indian studies in order to serve the needs of scholars;
- preserve and conserve documents of value for research;
- gather and generate knowledge about libraries and archives;
- disseminate that knowledge;
- train librarians and archivists;
- engage in international collaborative efforts for the betterment of services to readers; and
- engage in research in the areas of humanities and social sciences.

The Roja Muthiah Research Library Trust's principal objectives are maintenance and development of the Roja Muthiah Research Library and affiliated such as the Indus Research Centre.





## *We acknowledge with gratitude the support of*

Government of Tamil Nadu  
Mr. Andi Savithri Giri  
Chatnath Trust  
CTO Talk  
Dr. Pradeep Chakravarthy  
Ellapalayam Arumugam P C Trust  
Mr. K. Chandrasekaran  
Mr. Kasturi Rangan  
Mr. L Venkataraman  
Ms. M. Nachammai  
Ms. Nagarathinam  
Orangescape Technologies  
Pavai Varam Education  
Saama Technologies  
Mr. V. Sankaranarayanan  
Mr. Sivakumar Sadayappan  
Sri Ganeshram AG  
SRV School  
The Gift Foundation

## *Annual Report Narrative*

The year 2023–24 was marked by several significant events and activities. One of the major milestones was the establishment of the Tamil Font Studio at RMRL, supported by Onemai Foundation. As part of this initiative, a two-day seminar was organized, which was well received by students and font makers. The studio aims to develop scientifically researched Tamil fonts, addressing the lack of high-quality body fonts compatible with publishing software.

Another key event of the year was the launch of the book “ஒரு பண்பாட்டின் பயணம்: சிந்து முதல் வைகை வரை” by R. Balakrishnan, head of the Indus Research Centre. This book is the Tamil translation of his 2019 work “Journey of a Civilization: Indus to Vaigai”. Mr. Balakrishnan himself translated the book, incorporating additional information on the Keezhadi excavation. The book was released by the Hon’ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Thiru M. K. Stalin, and the first copy was received by the Hon’ble Minister for Archaeology, Thiru Thangam Thennarasu.

Additionally, we published “T.N. Rajarattinam Pillai: Charisma, Caste Rivalry, and the Contested Past in South Indian Music” by Japanese scholar Terada Yoshitaka in collaboration with Speaking Tiger. Terada, a musico-ethnologist who worked extensively in India, sadly passed away on the day his book was printed and delivered. In his memory, RMRL organized a memorial meeting and a nagaswaram concert as a tribute.

The year also brought challenges. The Michuang cyclone in December 2023 caused severe flooding, resulting in unprecedented damage to the



Library. For the first time, floodwater entered the building, damaging several books and documents, including hundreds of newly printed copies of ஒரு பண்பாட்டின் பயணம் and T.N. Rajarattinam Pillai. With the in-house expertise, we restored most of the affected documents. We also used this opportunity to share book restoration techniques with the general public, assisting those whose personal collections were impacted by the flood.

The disaster made us reassess our expansion plans for the Tamil Knowledge Campus. We had previously received additional land from the Tamil Nadu State Government for the Library's expansion. However, given the risk of future flooding, the Board of Trustees decided to demolish the existing structure with permission from the Government and construct a new integrated, disaster-proof, and environmentally sustainable building. We are grateful to the Government of Tamil Nadu for providing temporary space during this transition. Our architect has developed an integrated floor plan, with an estimated budget of ₹30 crores. We also met with the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, who assured us of necessary support. The Planning Commission has committed ₹9.52 crores towards the project.

To meet the remaining funding requirements, we are launching a crowdsourcing initiative, appealing to Tamils worldwide to support this cause.

G. Sundar  
Director & Executive Trustee

## *Reference Services*

This year scholars availed the services of JSTOR digital library which was opened to all at RMRL in addition to material in RMRL. JSTOR is a subscription based online portal for articles and papers published from different journals. This was possible with the support of Tamil Nadu Government's grant. A dedicated terminal has been allocated for this purpose. We have also allowed users to use their mobile phone to take photos of pages they want as they access the books/periodicals at the reference service. In December 2023 and January 2024 the reference service was interrupted due to the flood caused by the Michuang cyclone and the subsequent book restoration activities that happened in the reference hall.

## *Preservation & Documentation*

The digitization project "Preservation of Communication Material of an Early Cinema Distribution Company in South India" funded by the Endangered Archives Project was completed this year. Through this two-year project, 75000 correspondence and single sheet material were digitized and their corresponding metadata were created. Through funds received from the Centre for Research Libraries, issues of three early periodical titles namely "Makaḷir Cintaṇai, Pēcum Paṭam, Kumari Malar" were digitized. The digital files were ingested along with their metadata in the JSTOR Forum for public access. Around 72,000 pages of periodicals were digitized and preserved through this project.

### Restoration of archival material damaged by flood water



In continuation of the digitization of the personal collection of Khwaja Ghulam Saiyidain last year, another set of his collection was digitized this year. This project was funded by the University of Texas. In this year, 4536 catalogue records were created for the books received as donations and the books purchased. In addition to this Dr Vasanthi Devi's paper clippings and correspondences were indexed and digitized. Dr. Vasanthi Devi was a renowned educationist and an acclaimed academician.

In December 2023 there were unprecedented floods and two to three inches of water above the floor seeped in. Nearly 2000 books were damaged and the entire RMRL team with the help of a few volunteers were able to salvage nearly 80 percent of the material. The rest were permanently damaged. However, these damaged books are relatively new and copies of them are available. In addition to salvaging our collection, we were also able to provide some advice to book collectors. This disaster led to abandoning our earlier plan.

## *Indus Research Centre*

The book “ஒரு பண்பாட்டின் பயணம்: சிந்து முதல் வைகை வரை” (Oru Paṇṇāṭṭiṇ Payaṇam: Cintu Mutal Vaikai Varai) written by

Mr. R. Balakrishnan was released in April 2023. Honourable Chief Minister Thiru. M. K. Stalin launched the book, and Honourable Minister for Industries, Tamil Culture and Tamil official language and Archaeology Thiru Thangam Thennarasu received the first copy.

Sundar has been working in a graffitti project along with Dr. Sivanandham and Dr. K. Rajan of the Tamil Nadu Archaeological Department in which similarities between the graffitis found in Tamil Nadu and the signs of Indus script are studied.

The IRC is planning for a major seminar on the aspects of IVC as this year turns out to be the centenary year of the discovery of the civilization by Sir John Marshall. We have been creating posters on social media to bring awareness to the subject. A series of lectures and a seminar will be organized along with the Department of Archaeology. A bust of Sir John Marshall is being planned to be kept at RMRL for his contributions to IVC and archaeology.

Mr. R. Balakrishnan delivered a speech about the Indus Valley Civilization in the “சிந்து முதல் பொருநை வரை” conferences held in various locations across Tamil Nadu such as the Presidency College in Chennai, Thavathiru Sandhalinga Adigalar Tamil College in Perur, Bishop Heber College in Trichy.

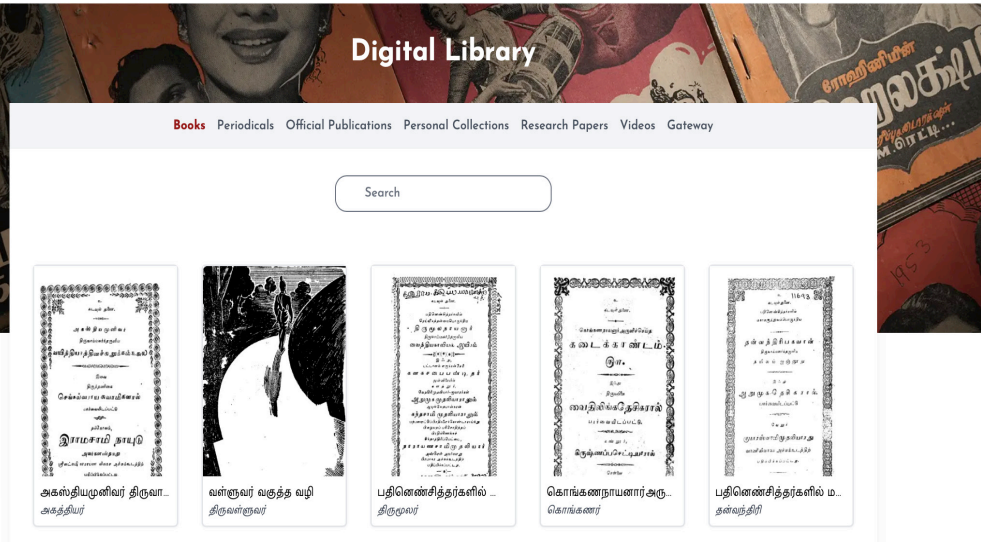


'Oru Panpattin Payanam' Book launch

Balakrishnan also participated and delivered a speech in the discussion about the book “ஒரு பண்பாட்டின் பயணம்” organized by Tamil Nadu Progressive Writer’s Association. He turned his cash award to RMRL.

Balakrishnan and Sundar participated in and delivered talks about the Indus Valley Civilization in a one-day conference on Balakrishnan’s book “ஒரு பண்பாட்டின் பயணம்” organized in Dharmapuri by Thagadur Puthakap Peravai.





RMRL Digital Library

## New RMRL Website

A new website is being developed. This will host the digital library of RMRL. The digital library will comprise of books, periodicals, single sheet material, government reports, gazettes and gazetteers. Only those items that are out of copyright are being planned to be ingested. We might need a little support to be more efficient in ingesting the material.

## *Centre for Study in Public Sphere (CSPS)*

The following Reading Hub events have been organized through by the CSPS in association with the Dravidian Professional Forum.

- A Conversation with Kalpana Kannabiran, author of the book “The Speaking Constitution” and Senior advocate, mediator and arbitrator Sriram Panchu on 08 April 2023.
- A discussion with Meena Kandasamy, author of the book “The book of desire” and Kanimozhi Karunanidhi on 18 April 2023.
- A conversation with Prof. G N Devy and Prof. Ravi Korisettar authors of the book “The Indians” and N Ram on 12 August 2023.
- A Conversation with M.S. ‘Viru’ Viraraghavan and Girija Viraraghavan, about their book “Roses in the Fire of Spring” with Geeta Doctor on 19 August 2023.
- A discussion on Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi’s ‘I am an Ordinary Man: India’s struggle for freedom (1914-1948)’ with Gopalkrishna Gandhi and Sashi Kumar on 05 January 2024 at RMRL.
- An enlightening discussion with Mr. Naveen Kishore, an accomplished author, publisher, about his book “Mother Muse Quintet” on 22 February 2024 at RMRL.
- A discussion with Political philosopher Nalini Rajan, author of the book “Secularism: How India Reshaped the Idea” and A. S. Panneerselvan on 01 March 2024 at RMRL.



G. Sundar, Muthu Nedumaran and Vignesh Sundaresan

during the launch of Tamil Font Studio 18

## *Tamil Font Studio*

The Roja Muthiah Research Library, in collaboration with the Onemai Foundation, inaugurated the Tamil Font Studio on February 28th, 2024. Sundar Ganesan highlighted the importance of the need for a Tamil Font Studio. Vignesh Sundaresan from Onemai Foundation discussed “Imagining Tamil Typography in the age of Blockchain Technology,” and Muthu Nedumaran of Murasu Anjal from Malaysia gave the Inaugural Speech for the evening. The event included a one-day workshop on February 28th and a seminar followed on the second day. The workshop focused on Tamil calligraphy by Tharique Azeem from Sri Lanka and on Glyphs software for creating Tamil Fonts by Muthu Nedumaran, with 28 college students from esteemed Design Institutions and the participation was by invitation. The seminar, open to all, had over 100 participants and featured main speakers such as D Udaya Kumar from IIT Guwahati, GV Sreekumar from IIT Mumbai, Tharique Azeem from Tatype Foundry, and Muthu Nedumaran from Murasu Systems. Other speakers included S Narayanan (NS Nana), M Udhaya Sankar, Ranjith Roozo, and Pooja Pradeep.

## *Tamil Knowledge Campus*

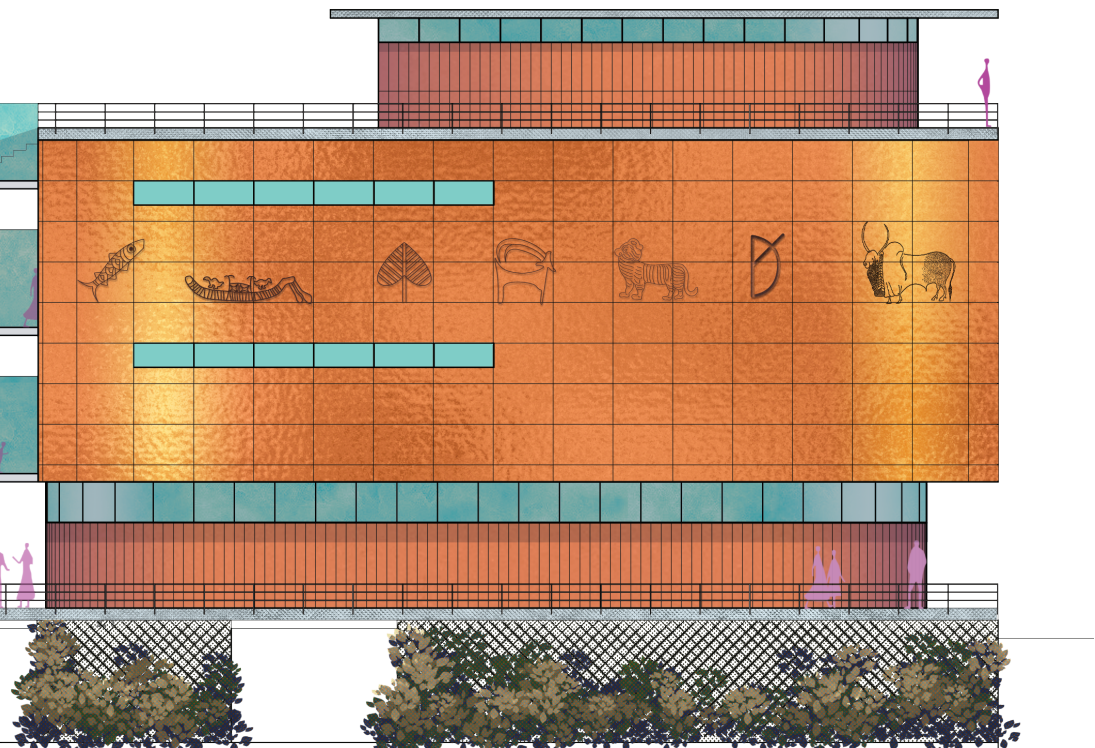
As RMRL is planning to have a building complex for the Library and its extended activities, it will be named as the Tamil Knowledge Campus (TKC). It will encompass the library, archive, museum and research facilities. It is also planned to have an interactive public space with world-class auditorium, amphitheatre and exhibition halls. This is to attract Tamils from around the world to join the efforts of building this TKC. The present campus of RMRL belongs to the School Education Department, Government of Tamil Nadu. The Government has provided





14,989 sq. ft. of additional land adjacent to the current building for expansion. During the 2023 Michuang cyclone, flood water entered into the entire ground floor and several books and periodicals were damaged. Earlier, we had thought of constructing the TKC without disturbing the current building. Now, we have realized that the building is in a disaster-prone area. Hence permission has been sought to pull down the old building and build the TKC in the consolidated space that will be disaster-proof, environment-friendly, and a green building.

View of the proposed Tamil Knowledge Campus building



## *Visitors and visits*

- Mary Radar, South Asian Librarian from University of Texas Libraries visited RMRL and discussed regarding possible projects and collaborations with RMRL.
- Mr. Narendrakumar, CSR head from the Cholamandal Investment and Finance Company visited the Library after the December floods. They have assured to support RMRL in future endeavours.
- Chairman of Pavai Institutions visited RMRL with his wife and daughter. He has promised to support RMRL.
- Chancellor of VIT, Vellore, Dr. Viswanathan visited RMRL and saw its activities. He has agreed to support RMRL and the new TKC venture.
- Dr. Susan Seizer, a professor of Anthropology, visited the Library and handed over her video collection on Tamil stage drama to RMRL. These videos will be soon made available to the public.
- Mr. Srinivasan, CEO of Ananda Vikatan visited RMRL and has agreed to support RMRL.
- Dr. Janakiraman who was part of the fund raising committee for Harvard Chair visited RMRL. He said he will work with Dr. Arumugam towards raising money for TKC.
- Prakash and Sundar visited Judiciary archives at Cuttack. They were invited by Justice Muralidhar. They provided orientation for their staff. Subsequently Justice Muralidhar and his colleague visited RMRL. They were impressed. Later Prakash made a presentation at the Conference organized by Justice Muralidhar in Cuttack.

- Sundar and Prakash from RMRL attended a three-day Sonic and Visual Cultures workshop organized by the University of Chicago Centre in New Delhi and the Committee on Southern Asian Studies. The workshop was held in Kandy, Sri Lanka.
- RMRL staff attended a three-day workshop on curation and museums by Dr Stephen Inglis organised by Dhakshnachitra
- RMRL staff attended a three-day training programme about collection maintenance, jointly organised by the Endangered Archives Program and the Jadavpur University in Kolkata.
- RMRL staff attended the three-day KaniTamil24 conference organised by the Tamil Virtual Academy, Government of Tamil Nadu.

## *Endowment Lectures*

### **Prof. M. Anandakrishnan Endowment lectures**

- A talk by Aarti Tank, curator on “Private Collections : Public Engagement” was organized on 24 June 2023. This was about private collections of art work, curation and museums.
- Mu. Ramanathan delivered a lecture on the topic “பெரியாறு அணை பொறியியலும் அரசியலும்” on 01 August 2023. The lecture was very informative as he used so much of data to provide clarity to the subject.
- Writer and researcher Mr. Pazha. Athiyaman delivered his talk “எழுத்தாளர் கு. அழகிரிசாமி அதிரடி விமர்சகரா?” on 16 February 2024.
- Dr. Sankara Saravanan, Joint Director of the Tamil Nadu Textbook and Educational Services Corporation (TNTBESC) delivered his talk “அரியவற்றுள்ளெல்லாம் அரிதே” on 08 March 2024.

Mu. Ramanathan





Dr. Shanti Pappu and Dr. Kumar Akhilesh

### **Mrs. Santhanalakshmi Sugavanam Memorial Endowment Lecture**

- Dr. Jinu Koshy delivered his lecture “Evidence of Existing and Semantic Memory from Kurnool District Rock Art” on 09 June 2023.
- Dr. Shanti Pappu and Dr. Kumar Akhilesh jointly delivered the lecture “New Interpretations on old sites & Lets knap : Reconstructing Prehistoric Stone Tools” on 10 June 2023.



### Prof. V. Arasu Endowment Lecture

- Mr. Gandhirajan, an expert in rock art, delivered a talk on “அண்மையில் கண்டறியப்பட்ட பாறை ஓவியங்கள்” on 04 January 2024



Gandhirajan

### Nallasiriyar C. Nallathambi Endowment Lecture

- Mr. Krishnamoorthy delivered a talk on “சென்னை நகரில் பெளத்தம் (1850-1950) on 04 January 2024.

### P. Sankaralingam Memorial Endowment Lecture

- Mr. Udhayasankar, a technology expert and heritage enthusiast, delivered his talk ‘கல்வெட்டும் கணினியும்’ on 04 November , 2023.

## *Training program*

Roja Muthiah Research Library organized 6 batches of two-week courses on academic research writing this year. This was organized in collaboration with the State Planning Commission, Government of Tamil Nadu. A total of 1444 students from various parts of the state benefited from this course. The idea is to empower our students with research skills so that they get integrated with the mainstream research.

## *Other lectures and events*

- A discussion on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza was organized with Ambassador Talmiz Ahmad and Vaishna Roy, Editor of Frontline.
- Dr P. J. Cherian delivered his talk “The State, Market and Religions as Reflected in Muciri Pattinam Finds and Sangam Sources” for the 99th anniversary of the announcement of the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization by Sir John Marshall.
- Senior journalist Kanak Mani Dixit delivered the talk “Beyond Cartography”. Kanak Mani is the Editor of Himal from Nepal.
- A discussion with Se. Murugavel, author of the book “சுத்த சைவம்” was organized on 11 August 2023.

- A discussion on Terada Yoshitaka's book, "T.N. Rajarattinam Pillai: Charisma, Caste Rivalry and the Contested Past in South Indian Music." was held on 22 April 2023. A Nadaswaram concert was also performed by Sangeetha Nataka Akademy Puraskar awardees. The book was jointly published by RMRL and Speaking Tigers. Unfortunately the author passed away before the book was released. However as a tribute to him this event was organised.
- Two documentary festivals were organized in RMRL curated by Amuthan, a documentary film maker.

Dr. Aditya Ramesh and Dr. Bhavani Raman



## *Madras Week Events*

- A talk by Dr. Aditya Ramesh and Dr. Bhavani Raman on the “Stubborn Waters :The Cooum’s many Urban Histories” was organized on 18 August 2023.
- The documentary “Westminster Abbey of the East” was screened on 23 August 2023. This film delves deep into the history and significance of the iconic St. Mary’s church at Fort St. George, which has withstood the test of time.

## *Exhibitions*

- RMRL in association with Yaakkai Heritage Group and Archaeology Department organized an exhibition on “Herostone traditions of Tamil Nadu” in Vellalar College, Erode and in Thanjavur Palace, Thanjavur.





## *Board of Trustees*

R. Balakrishnan, Civil Services (Retd.)  
M. Arumugam, Entrepreneur  
Manuraj Shunmugasundaram, Lawyer  
Mariam Ram, Publishing  
B. G. Rajendran (Indran), Writer, Art Critic  
R. Ramachandran, Auditor  
Ramani Natarajan, Constitutional Lawyer  
U. Sudhir Lodha, Educationist  
G. Sundar (Founder Trustee), Archivist  
S. Theodore Baskaran, (Founder Trustee), Film Historian, Author  
Urvashi Butalia, Author, Publisher

## *Consultant*

B. Gandhi, Archeology and Culture  
Muthu Nedumaran, Font making

## *Research Fellows*

A. S. Panneerselvan, Centre for Study in Public Sphere  
R. Vijayashankar, Head of Research and Publication

Roja Muthiah Research Library Trust					
Balance sheet as at 31st March 2024					
Particulars	Sch.	As at 31st March 2024		As at 31st March 2023	
<b><u>SOURCES OF FUNDS</u></b>					
Capital Fund	1		6,09,11,090		5,69,69,274
Endowment Funds	2		15,98,150		15,98,150
			<b>6,25,09,240</b>		<b>5,85,67,424</b>
<b><u>APPLICATION OF FUNDS</u></b>					
<b>Fixed Assets</b>					
<b>Tangible Assets</b>	3				
Gross block		5,05,44,728		4,79,87,616	
Less: Depreciation		1,44,62,422		1,27,28,869	
Net block			3,60,82,306		3,52,58,747
Capital Work in progress			58,450		
<b>Intangible Assets</b>	3				
Gross block		61,708		-	
Less: Depreciation		7,713	53,995	-	
Net block	3				
<b>Current Assets, Loans and Advances</b>					
Cash and Bank balances	4		2,54,27,579		2,42,10,673
Prepaid Expenses			48,976		11,917
Interest Accrued on Deposits			7,00,340		4,41,079
Loans and Advances	5		14,93,297		1,17,564
			2,76,70,192		2,47,81,232
Less: Current Liabilities and Provisions					
Other Liabilities	6		13,55,703		7,62,100
Grant Received in advance			-		7,10,456
			13,55,703		14,72,556
<b>Net Current Assets</b>			2,63,14,489		2,33,08,676
			<b>6,25,09,240</b>		<b>5,85,67,424</b>

Roja Muthiah Research Library Trust			
Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st March 2024			
Particulars	Sch.	For the year ended 31st March 2024	For the year ended 31st March 2023
		Rs.	Rs.
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>			
Contributions received	7	2,05,76,832	70,71,113
Donations received		50,07,767	1,29,86,001
Other receipts	8	71,41,379	39,68,261
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>3,27,25,979</b>	<b>2,40,25,375</b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>			
Operating expenses	9	25,38,223	7,16,429
Employee benefit expenses	10	1,36,58,337	84,83,797
Administrative expenses	11	1,08,46,335	1,07,22,041
Depreciation	3	17,41,267	12,82,232
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>2,87,84,162</b>	<b>2,12,04,498</b>
<b>Excess of Income over expenditure</b>		<b>39,41,816</b>	<b>28,20,877</b>

### Accounting Policies

- i) The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention on accrual basis of accounting.
- ii) The preparation of financial statements requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the period reported.
- iii) The income from Digitisation, Documentation, Reprographics, Reference Services and Training is accounted on accrual basis.

Donations are accounted on receipt basis. Interest is accounted on accrual basis.

Project work in progress (WIP) has been recognized on percentage of completion basis.

- iv) The Fixed Assets other than the Books owned by the Library are accounted at cost and

depreciated over the useful life of the asset.

The books & periodicals purchased for the collection are recorded at cost and not depreciated.

The books and periodicals received as donation are valued at fixed prices depending on the age of the book or periodical. These rates have been approved by the managing committee after considering the practices followed by similar organisations. These assets are not depreciated.

- v) Depreciation on fixed assets is provided on written down value method at rates arrived at based on the useful life of the asset.

Depreciation in respect of additions made during the year and put to use for less than six months has been charged at 50% of the original rate for the block.

- vi) Investments in Mutual Funds being short term in nature are recorded at cost.
- vii) Foreign currency transactions are recorded at the rates prevailing on the date of transaction.

#### **Notes**

##### **Books Collection**

- a. Roja Muthiah Research Library Trust (RMRLT) has a large collection of books some of which date back to the 19th century, which are partly owned by the Trust and partly by the University of Chicago (UoC).
- b. The books owned by RMRLT were received as donations from various sources during the past several years. These books were not represented in the books of account earlier and it was decided by the committee of management to bring these books into the accounts. Subsequently, a formula was arrived by the management, based on practices followed by similar organisations and the books received as donations have been capitalized during the year.
- c. As per an MOU entered into between the UoC and RMRLT, the fourth transfer of ownership covers some of the items held by the University of Chicago Library and RMRL and duplicate issues of periodicals. There are 237 books and 14,410 issues of periodicals in this transfer. The approximate average value for books at Rs. 153 or \$2.84 per volume and for periodical issues at Rs. 162 or \$3 per issue yields a total value of Rs. 23,79,300 or \$44,061 for this transfer.
- d. RMRLT also has a collection of books and periodicals on Microfilm which were made using their own resources. These books and periodicals are owned by other organisations and only the microfilms are held by RMRLT. The value of this collection has not been reflected in the accounts.









Roja Muthiah  
Research Library

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