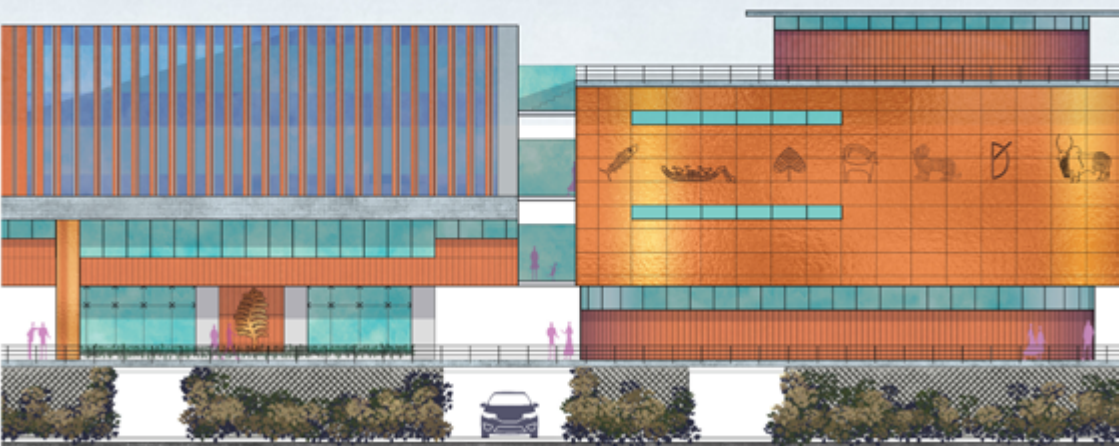




Roja Muthiah Research Library Trust

Annual Report 2024-25



Annual Report

2024-25



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
- Access Healthcare Services Private Limited
- AMM Foundation
- Arumugam, M
- Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company
- Dharmalingam Charitable and Educational Trust
- Entrepreneurs Organisation, Chennai Chapter
- Jothi Sivakannu Themozhi
- Kalpana Mohanraj
- Krishnakumar, N
- Kumar Kumarappan, N
- Lakshmi Narayanan
- Lakshmi Sevugan
- Maran N and Ratnakumar N
- Mutharasan, R
- Parthasarathy Radha, N. S
- Pavai Varam Education Trust
- Rostow Ramanan
- Selvakumar
- Sivasankari
- Solomon Pappiah, S
- Subroto Bagchi
- Sundaram Finance
- Tamil Nadu Power Finance & Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd.
- Tata Trusts
- TVS Capital Funds Private Limited
- Vernalis Capital Pvt. Ltd (Propel)

Annual Report Narrative

A major decision was taken to demolish the old Library building last year which belongs to the Local Library Authority due to the condition of the building and also due to the continuous flooding of the building during storms. Following the demolition, we shifted the entire collection to a temporarily leased space in the Integrated Workshop Building located on the same road. The shifting process took approximately three months, involving careful packing, numbering, and transportation of the materials. Volunteers from various colleges contributed significantly to this massive task, and the Friends of Roja Muthiah Research Library (RMRL) generously supported it by covering the associated costs. Books and periodicals were packed in custom-made corrugated boxes, numbered, and moved to the fourth floor of the Integrated Workshop Building, which now houses the Library.

The vendor dismantled all compact shelves from the old facility. However, only a portion could be reinstalled in the new space due to logistic and cost constraints.

As we reassessed our expansion plans for the Tamil Knowledge Campus (TKC) initiative, a new integrated architectural plan was designed by our architect and approved by the trustees after several rounds of discussion. The total estimated cost for the two-phase construction is Rs.40 crores.

The Trustees of RMRL Trust have been actively involved in raising funds for this initiative. Mr. Balakrishnan and I met with Mr. Subroto Bagchi, co-founder of Mindtree Technologies, to seek his advice and support. Mr. Bagchi emphasized that fundraising should be turned into a movement. Following this, he visited Chennai, delivered leadership lectures for corporate audiences, and generously contributed the proceeds to TKC's construction. He also introduced us to several well-wishers and institutions, including Mr. Lakshmi Narayanan, Sundaram Finance, TVS Capital Funds, Mr. Rostow Ramanan, Mr. N. S. Parthasarathy, Ms. Radha, Mr. N. Krishnakumar, Access Healthcare Services, the Entrepreneurs' Organization (Chennai Chapter), and the AMM Foundation, all of whom have extended their support.

Mr. Balakrishnan and I visited the United States in June 2024, where we gave presentations about RMRL and the Indus Civilization at six locations across the country. We also participated in the FeTNA Convention in San Antonio, engaging with potential donors and well-wishers.

We are continuing our outreach efforts in Tamil Nadu, connecting with Corporate houses and philanthropists to support this initiative. Simultaneously, we are working on finalizing all land-related documentation with the Government of Tamil Nadu. We have received a fresh lease for the land owned by the School Education Department and are in the final stages of submitting documents to CMDA.

One of the key milestones from last year was the launch of our digital library. Although RMRL's digital resources have been accessible through various platforms over the years, this unified digital library now brings them all together in one place. I am happy to share that the portal was developed entirely in-house. We also resumed our monthly newsletter last year, which is now available for download on our website.

From an operational standpoint, we received two significant grants this year: one from the Modern Endangered Archives Programme (USA) to digitize the Tikkatir newspaper, and another from Tata Trusts, aimed at training and equipping our paper conservation lab and team. Thanks to the Tata Trusts for also extending their support toward the construction of the Tamil Knowledge Campus. I would like to thank the Tamil Nadu Government for providing the recurring grants, providing us the required land for the construction of the TKC. Our gratitude for all the donors who have supported both for the projects and also for the building of TKC.

With the major responsibility of constructing TKC ahead, the coming year is expected to be both challenging and exciting.

G. Sundar
Director & Executive Trustee

Reference Service

This year, considerable effort went into shifting the entire collection to the temporarily leased premises. So the reference service was briefly interrupted due to the relocation of the Library. Following the resumption of the reference services, the Library witnessed a steady flow of users. Nearly 260 new scholars visited the Library who were first-time visitors.

RMRL also launched its long-awaited digital library portal this year. To begin with, 10,000 books and 5,000 issues of periodicals were uploaded to this portal and the digitized materials have been uploaded periodically. Several users all over the world started using this portal to access the digital library.

The following individuals and institutions have donated material to the library

Individual Donors

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Adhi Valliappan | 14. Naganathan, M |
| 2. Ambalavanan, T | 15. Neyveli Balu |
| 3. Ambuja Chakravarthi | 16. Parisal Krishna |
| 4. Balaji, V | 17. Prema, R |
| 5. Balakrishnan, R (IAS) | 18. Premeela Gurumurthy, M |
| 6. Balasubramanian, T. R | 19. Radhakrishnan, K. S |
| 7. Balasundaram, V (IAS) | 20. Radhakrishnan, P |
| 8. Chidambaram, N. S | 21. Raj Gauthaman |
| 9. Gayatri Srikanth | 22. Rajagopalan, M |
| 10. Kalam, M. A | 23. Ramakrishnan, Crea- A
(collection received through
Mr. Sathyamurthy) |
| 11. Kasinathan, Natana | 24. Ramalakshmi, C. S |
| 12. Lakshmi Narasimman | |
| 13. Mohanasundaram, R | |

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 25. Ramesh Subramanian | 33. Thenmozhi, G |
| 26. Sarangan, A | 34. Theodar Baskaran, S |
| 27. Sathyabama Subramaniam | 35. Thiruvalluvan, Dr. |
| 28. Seenu Ramasamy | 36. Valli, Na |
| 29. Senthilkumar | 37. Venkatachalapathy, A. R. |
| 30. Subramanian, N | 38. Vincent Kumaradoss, Y |
| 31. Suganya, T | 39. Vinodha Ram Mohan |
| 32. Sundar, G | |

Institutions

1. Angusam Charitable Trust
2. Asian College of Journalism
3. Centre for Indian Knowledge System
4. Mullai Pathippakam

Cataloguing

The routine cataloguing work has resumed after the completion of the shifting process. 9,100 books were checked and 4,563 were identified as unique titles, which have been added to the database. Our online catalogue is being regularly updated.

We also assisted the American Institute for Lankan Studies in ingesting the *Aththa* newspaper into the JSTOR Forum as part of the SAOA initiative. Additionally, we provided cataloguing training to cataloguers at the Tulana Research Centre for Encounter and Dialogue, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.

Digitization

With the grant received from the Tamil Nadu government's Directorate of Public Libraries, an overhead scanner was purchased this year. It produces high quality colour archival images and it would enhance our capacity to efficiently digitize material.

தீக்கதிர்

சுதிர்த் : 19 நாளிதழ் 4 பக்கம் 35 காசு பொறி : 16
(மதுரை) 16 4 81 வியாழன் (வெளியூத்) 17 4 81

This year we received a digitization project from the Modern Endangered Archives Program to digitize the issues of the periodical *Tikkatir*, a Tamil daily. RMRL has already digitized a part of the issues, and under this project, issues from 1978 to 2010 will be digitized. The bound periodical volumes, which were in Theekathir's Madurai Office, were carefully packed and transported to RMRL. They were checked, dust cleaned, and taken up for digitization. We have planned to digitize around 1 lakh pages of this magazine through this two-year project.

RMRL received three boxes of Syed Sajjad Zaheer's collection, a poet and writer, containing his books and manuscript collection. The material was digitized and digital copies are now available through Sajjad Zaheer Digital Archive portal (<https://sites.utexas.edu/zaheerarchive/>). This project is funded by the University of Texas, Austin.

The books and diaries of the writer Rajam Krishnan were also digitized this year. The digitized books are available in RMRL's digital library. This was supported by Mrs. Uma Narayanan and Ms. Bharathi.

Tamil Font Studio

The Tamil Font Studio has made significant progress on two key projects: the revival of an archival body font and the development of the late renowned artist Adimoolam's lettering font. The beta version of the Body font was tested and fine tuning is being done. The font is



Typewalk in Chennai with Mr. Muthu Nedumaran

expected to be released during the font seminar planned for May 2025. Collection, analysis, and finalisation have been completed for the Adimoolam Lettering font. Glyphs will be created soon. In November 2024, the team also organised a Typewalk in Chennai, partnering with Mr. Muthu Nedumaran. This event is the first of its kind, bringing together artists working on signboards and type enthusiasts. The Tamil Font Studio project has gained significant knowledge and visibility. People from across India and other countries have visited the library for reference purposes: Sarang Kulkarni, co-founder of Ek Type; Anagha Narayanan, a Paris-based SOTA Catalyst Award winner; Andreu Balias, founder of Type Republic, Spain; and Ishan Khosla from Typecraft Initiative, Dehradun, are some of the well-known figures in the typography circle who visited the library during the past year. This project is funded by the Onemai Foundation.

Centre for Study in Public Sphere

The Centre for Study in Public Sphere organized the following Reading Hub sessions.

- A conversation with Author Mukund Padmanaban about his book 'The Great Flap of 1942: How the Raj Panicked over a Japanese Non-invasion'

- A discussion with Savithri Preeta about her “Chromosome woman, Nomad Scientist” on 02 December 2024. As A. S. Panneerselvan, the head of CSPS has taken up another project outside RMRL, he has stepped down, and Sundar Ganesan assumes the temporary responsibility for the Centre.

Indus Research Centre

The year 2024 marked the centenary of the announcement of the Indus Valley Civilization by Sir John Marshall. To commemorate this occasion, Mr. Balakrishnan, Honorary Consultant of the Indus Research Centre (IRC), delivered a special lecture titled “RIG Complex.” The event was held at the Conference Hall of the Anna Centenary Library, Kotturpuram, on 20 September 2024.

As part of the centenary celebrations and to bring together scholars and students, the Roja Muthiah Research Library (RMRL) and the Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamil Nadu, jointly organized a three-day International Conference on the Indus Valley Civilization from 5 to 7 January 2025 at the Museum Theatre, Egmore. The conference was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Scholars from across India and abroad presented papers at the event, contributing to a rich exchange of ideas and research.

During the inauguration, the Chief Minister also announced an allocation of ₹2 crores to the Indus Research Centre for the establishment of the Iravatham Mahadevan Chair. A detailed proposal for this has been submitted, and the release of funds is pending.

RMRL has also been working with the Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamil Nadu, to create an online concordance for the graffiti marks identified in several excavations throughout Tamil Nadu. Initial work has been carried out, and the online concordance will be developed in the following year.



Conservation

The Conservation Studio was organized in the new building with the limited space available. This year, the studio received a project supported by the Tata Trusts to train its team and develop a training curriculum in paper conservation. As part of this initiative, two new staff members were recruited.

It has also been planned to send the conservation team to leading conservation facilities across the country to gain exposure to the latest practices and advancements in the field.

Visit to Jaffna

Sundar visited Jaffna this year along with Library staff Muthu Malathi and Manikanda Subbu. Sundar gave the Keynote address in the two-day symposium organized by Jaffna University's Library department. They also visited the Noolaham Foundation's office in Jaffna, where they were given a tour of their operations. Following this, staff from Noolaham Foundation visited RMRL and received training in digitization, cataloguing, and paper conservation.





Comparative Iconography photo exhibition

Extension Activities

Book Launch

The book “AHIMSA: 100 Reflections on the Harappan Civilization” written and illustrated by the renowned author and mythologist Devdutt Pattanaik and launched by Balakrishnan on 5th October 2024 at Anna Centenary Library.

Exhibition

A talk and photo exhibition on the “Comparative Iconography Of the Temples of Tamil Nadu and Cambodia” by Ms. Sherin Someetharan.



Mr. Devdutt Pattanaik

Endowment Lectures

Prof. M. Anandakrishnan Endowment lecture

- Mr K. Ashok Vardhan Shetty delivered a lecture titled “Rethinking Indian Cities: Coping with Urban Sprawl, Water Scarcity, Degraded Rivers, Urban Flooding, and other challenges in the Age of Climate Change,” on April 04, 2024 at RMRL.
- Prof. Amutha Pandian delivered a lecture “கருநாடக இசை என்னும் தமிழிசை தொன்மையும் இலக்கணமும்” on 25 October, 2025 at RMRL.
- Dr. J. P. B. More delivered a lecture titled “Recovering Tamil Scholars of the 18th Century Pondicherry School of Orientalism” on 21 November 2024 at RMRL.
- Dr. Balamurugan V T delivered a lecture titled “Unlocking Ancient Tamil Wisdom: AI-Powered Revival of Palm Leaves and Tamil Pannisai Knowledge” on 23 December 2024.



Prof. Raj Mutharasan

- Prof. Raj Mutharasan delivered a lecture titled “Exploring Indian Tamil Ancestry Through Genetics: Methods and Recent Findings” on 14 February 2025 at RMRL.
- Dr. V. Rajesh delivered a lecture titled “Subramania Bharati and the Progressive Literary Magazines in Tamilnadu, 1950-1970” on 22 March 2025 at RMRL.

Prof. V. Arasu Endowment Lecture

- Dr. N. Govindharajan from Madurai American College delivered his lecture titled “காலனியம் - கதைகள்- தேசம் : பத்தொன்பதாம் நூற்றாண்டை வாசித்தல்”.

Nallasiriyar C. Nallathambi Memorial Endowment Lecture

- Dr. Tamil Kamarajan delivered his lecture titled “திராவிடக் கருத்துநிலையும் கால்டுவெல்லும்: சாதி - சமயம் குறித்த உரையாடல்”



Dr. V. Rajesh

Santhanalakshmi Sugavanam Memorial Endowment Lecture

- Prof.V. Selvakumar delivered a lecture titled “ Archaeological Sites as Cultural Resource: Sustainable Heritage Management Strategies on 22 November 2024.

P. Sankaralingam Memorial Endowment Lecture

- Dr. M.Arumugam delivered a talk on “Artificial Intelligence Role in Tamil Language - History and Culture” on 09 January, 2025.

Rakesh Endowment Lecture for Justice and Equity

- Dr. S. Muralidhar, Former Chief Justice of Orissa High Court, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India delivered a special lecture in the title “Guilty Till Proved Innocent - Dark Areas of Criminal jurisprudence” on 28 April, 2024 at Museum Theatre, Chennai.



Mr. R. Balakrishnan

Dr. Gift Siromoney Endowment Lecture

- Mr. Sukumar Rajagopal will deliver a lecture on “IVC Astronomy Harappan Celestial Omens List” on 08 February 2025.

Special lecture

- Mr. R. Balakrishnan delivered a talk titled “அகஸ்தியர்: ஒரு மீள்பார்வை” at Anna Centenary Library on 07 March 2025.

Training programme

RMRL organized a one day research writing workshop titled “Here’s what happened: Historians as Literary Sleuths” in collaboration with the Centre for Writing and Pedagogy, Krea University.



Mr. Lakshmi Narayanan

Inauguration of RMRL's Digital Library

RMRL's digital library was inaugurated by Mr. Lakshmi Narayanan, former chairman of Cognizant Technology, on 12 December 2024. Balakrishnan delivered a special address at the event. Sundar provided the salient features of the digital library. This was entirely designed and built by the RMRL team members, led by Manikanda Subbu.

Board of Trustees

M.Arumugam, Entrepreneur

R. Balakrishnan, Civil Services (Retd.)

Manuraj Shunmugasundaram, Lawyer

Mariam Ram, Publishing

B. G. Rajendran (Indran), Writer, Art Critic

R. Ramachandran, Auditor

Santhi Duraisamy, Entrepreneur

U. Sudhir Lodha, Educationist

G. Sundar (Founder Trustee), Archivist

S.Theodore Baskaran, (Founder Trustee), Film Historian, Author

Heads of Departments

R. Balakrishnan, Honorary Consultant, Indus Research Centre

R. Prakash, Centre for Cataloguing and Preservation

G. Sundar, Centre for Study in Public Sphere

Consultants

B. Gandhi

Muthu Nedumaran

Roja Muthiah Research Library Trust Balance sheet as at 31st March 2025					
Particulars	Sch .	As at 31st March 2025		As at 31st March 2024	
<u>SOURCES OF FUNDS</u>					
Capital Fund	1		148,389,180		60,911,090
Endowment Funds	2		1,598,150		1,598,150
			149,987,330		62,509,240
<u>APPLICATION OF FUNDS</u>					
Fixed Assets					
Tangible Assets	3				
Gross block		62,361,432		50,544,728	
Less: Depreciation		17,187,409		14,462,422	
Net block			45,174,023		36,082,306
Capital Work in progress			58,450		58,450
Building Work in progress			265,324		
Intangible Assets	3				
Gross block		159,294		61,708	
Less: Depreciation		54,574	104,720	7,713	53,995
Net block			45,602,517		
Current Assets, Loans and Advances					
Cash and Bank balances	4		104,657,421		25,427,598
Prepaid Expenses					48,976
Interest Accrued on Deposits			676,799		700,340
Loans and Advances	5		1,414,330		1,493,297
			106,748,550		27,670,211
Less: Current Liabilities and Provisions					
Other Liabilities	6		2,363,737		1,355,703
			2,363,737		1,355,703
Net Current Assets			104,384,813		26,314,489
			149,987,330		62,509,240

Roja Muthiah Research Library Trust			
Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st March 2025			
Particulars	Sch ·	For the year ended 31st March 2025	For the year ended 31st March 2024
		Rs.	Rs.
<u>INCOME</u>			
Contributions received	7	37,527,289	20,576,832
NRTT grant		15,000,000	148,890
Donations received	8	65,126,254	5,007,767
Other receipts	9	3,887,443	7,141,379
Total Income		121,540,986	32,874,869
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>			
NRTT Grant Expense	10	700,170	
Operating expenses	11	2,304,792	2,538,223
Employee benefit expenses	12	16,261,886	13,658,337
Administrative expenses	13	11,942,293	10,846,335
Depreciation	3	2,853,755	1,741,267
Total Expenditure		34,062,896	28,784,162
Excess of Income over expenditure		87,478,090	4,090,707

Accounting Policies

- The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention on accrual basis of accounting.
- 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.
- 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.



Library | Museum | Archive | Research | Interactive Space

3rd Cross Road, CPT Campus, Taramani, Chennai – 600113

+91 8015312686 | +91 44 22542551

www.rmrl.in | rmrl@rmrl.in

