Noolaham Foundation
Final Report

Project Title	Muslim Archive Pilot Project
Project Number	NF/PG/2012/0006
Project Location	Akkaraipattu, Ampara District
Sector	Collection Development
Implementing agencyand contribution	Noolaham Foundation
Grant Agency and Contribution	Noolaham Foundation
Total Budget and Expenditure	
Project Period	September 2012 - September 2013
Responsible Stakeholders	Coordinator - Mr. Larisdeen Rajeeb, Initiated by Shaseevan Ganeshannanthan and facilitated by Mr. Mahroof Fauzer and Mr. M.I.M.Jabeer

Summary

The **Muslim Archive Pilot Project** was the pilot project conducted by Noolaham Foundation to create a special collection called Muslim Archive within the Foundation's digital library www.noolaham.org. The Muslim Archive collection aims to collect and update a comprehensive information resource pool about the Tamil speaking Muslim communities of Sri Lanka. This project was implemented with the support of various individuals who had documents about Muslim issues in Sri Lanka.

During this project 201 rare and endangered documents were digitized and made available online through Noolaham Foundation's Digital Library to the Tamil speaking community. A web portal was created for the Muslim Archive special collection where all documents related to the Muslim identity can be located and accessed. This project was a successful initiative and received special appreciation from Sri Lankan Muslim writers and publishers.

Introduction and Background

Muslims are an important ethnic group that is sometimes identified as a part of the Tamil speaking community in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan Muslims are the third largest ethnic group in Sri Lanka, comprising 9.23% of the country's total population. Many of them are native speakers of the Tamil language and possess a unique culture and history. So many written documents are published about Sri Lankan Muslims.
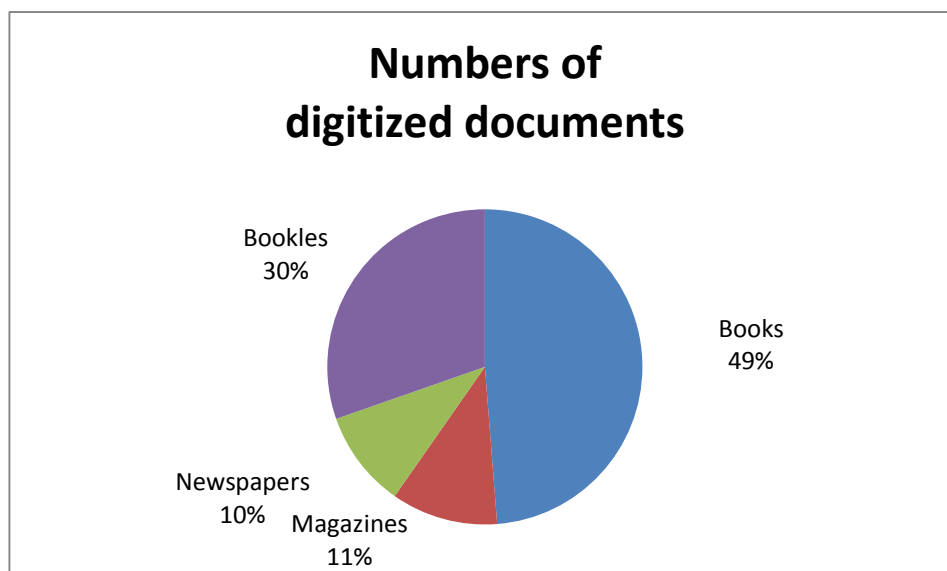
Noolaham Foundation is a non-profit, charitable organization (GA 2390) founded to provide enhanced access to information sources and foster knowledge-based development in Sri Lanka. It maintains an online digital library, facilitates information preservation programs, provides financial assistance and technical guidance for digitization initiatives, and actively participates in awareness-raising campaigns.

During 2008, Mr. Shaseevan Ganeshananthan of Noolaham Foundation gave an interview at Nethra Television regarding starting a special collection on Muslim issues at the Noolaham Digital Library. Various users and scholars contacted Noolaham Foundation regarding this new Archival project and a small number of documents were digitized. But a full scale Muslim Archive could not be launched till 2012 due to lack of resources to run the project.

In 2012, resources were allocated and a scanning center was established at Akkaraippattu in the Eastern Province. And the project was coordinated from Akkaraipattu by Larideen Rajeeb and was facilitated by Mahroof Fauzer and M.I.M.Jabeer.

Objective/s and Achievements or Results:

The objective of the Muslim archive pilot project was to digitally archive books, magazines, newspapers and other documents related to the Sri Lankan Tamil Muslim identity and to make them available online through Noolaham Digital Library (www.noolaham.org).A web portal named Muslim Archive was also created as part of this project.

Two hundred and one documents of various kinds were digitized through this project. The documents are mainly classified into four types. They are books, magazines, newspapers and brochures. During this project 98 books, 22 issues on four types of magazines, 20 issues on two types of newspapers and 61 booklets were archived by Noolaham Foundation.

Noolaham Foundation has used appropriate digital archiving technologies so that the digital master files can be preserved in the long run. Derivative files are created to enable online access. This Muslim Archive special collection will be updated continuously through the Foundation's annual collection development projects. There are plans to archive photographs, audio recordings and videos related to the Tamil speaking Muslim communities in Sri Lanka through our Multimedia Archive Program in the future.

Constrains / Challenges

- The preliminary work of this project was started in 2008, but actual work was started in September 2012 due to the lack of human resources, lack of funds and lack of contacts.
- The cost of the labor required for digital preservation will be the most significant by far and includes not only dedicated experts but varying proportions of staff members to do work in the domains of administration, management, IT support, legal advising etc.
- Copyright and other intellectual property rights (IPR) such as moral rights have a substantial impact on digital preservation. These matters are another important topic on which it is difficult to find practical information. Items in an archive may become inaccessible for legal reasons as well as for technical reasons. This is a much greater threat than most people realize, particularly after the person who created a document, photograph or recording has died.

Suggestions and Recommendations

- Noolaham Foundation should raise funds to enable further digitization initiatives. If Noolaham Foundation obtains financial assistance from the Muslim community, then Noolaham Foundation could archive the entire available documents in the near future.
- Motivating the people to take basic steps to assure that historical information will be reliably accessible beyond their lifetimes is important
- Written authorizations that release most or all copyright restrictions can greatly increase the accessibility, use, preservation, and long-term historical value of photographs, documents, and recordings. Voluntary arrangements need to be negotiated on a case by case basis.
- At least three copies of the archive should be maintained, including at least one copy at a different location. Distributing copies of the archive to others can achieve this result.

Relevant Attachments

During the scanning work