

The Establishment of ‘Musicology Corner’ at the Sir Ponnampalam Ramanathan Faculty of Performing and Visual Arts Library

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Introduction

The Sir Ponnampalam Ramanathan Faculty of Performing and Visual Arts (SPRFPVA) Library is one of the seven branch libraries under the Library system of the University of Jaffna, serving over 700 students and 70 staff members. Despite having a collection of 1,500 non-book materials (such as CDs and DVDs) related to musicology, the library's existing infrastructure and technological facilities were insufficient, rendering these valuable resources largely inaccessible. Furthermore, the library lacked an appropriate space where students and faculty could effectively engage with resources, particularly for learning from live performance recordings and accessing online storage. These gaps in accessibility necessitated the establishment of ‘Musicology Corner’ at the SPRFPVA Library project, which aimed to enhance the infrastructure, thereby enabling the effective use of these resources. The project was funded with LKR 16.53 million from the Kandiah Karthigasen Tamil Music Trust Fund, with the primary objective of transforming the library into a more conducive environment for accessing and utilizing non-book materials.

Project plan and Methods

The project was meticulously planned and executed during the period from September 2021 to March 2023 under three major activities, each targeting different aspects of the library's infrastructure and resource accessibility.

Developing a Conducive Reading Environment : This activity focused on refurbishing the library to create a more welcoming and conducive space for students and staff. The refurbishment involved aluminium partitioning, electrical installations, painting of bookshelves, installing curtains on windows, fitting iron grills, setting up a CCTV system, and air conditioning. These improvements were essential for enhancing the overall ambiance and security of the library, making it a more attractive space for users.

Procurement of Equipment and Furniture: To enhance the functionality of the library, a range of equipment and furniture were procured. This included desktop computers, UPS systems, headphones, printers, laptops, computer tables, chairs, reading tables, glass-fronted almirahs, armchairs, CD racks, counter table, and executive tables and chairs. These additions were crucial in modernizing the library, enabling users to access digital resources and comfortably engage in their studies.

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Procurement of Reading Materials related to Performing Arts: As part of the effort to expand the library's collection, 300 printed materials related to music, dance, and art & design were acquired. Additionally, the existing collection of 1,500 non-book materials were organized and accessioned for usage. This activity significantly enriched the library's resources, ensuring that users had access to a comprehensive range of materials related to performing and visual arts. Each activity was carefully aligned with the overall goal of improving the library's accessibility and resourcefulness.

Findings and Discussion

The project successfully achieved its objectives, transforming the SPRFPVA Library into a modernized library, which facility equipped with the necessary infrastructure and resources to support musicology studies. Approximately LKR 5.8 million was invested in the refurbishment, creating a conducive reading environment that attracted more users. The improved atmosphere and security have made the library a more desirable place for students and staff. The procurement of equipment and furniture, costing nearly LKR 5 million, was a major step in enhancing the library's functionality. The new technological resources, especially the desktop computers and UPS systems, have been pivotal in providing users with access to digital materials, broadening the scope of study and research opportunities. The acquisition of 300 printed materials and the organization of non-book materials, supported by a budget of LKR 3.3 million, significantly expanded the library's collection and usage. Since the project completion in March 2023, the Library has witnessed a significant increase in user visits, from 6000 in 2022 to nearly 9000 in 2023, approximately. Additionally, there has been a notable increase in borrowing activities.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The establishment of the 'Musicology Corner' at the SPRFPVA Library marks a significant milestone in enhancing and accessing the academic resources available to students and staff. The project has successfully addressed the infrastructural deficiencies that previously hindered access to valuable non-book materials, making the library a hub for musicology studies. Since its completion in March 2023, the 'Musicology Corner' has become an integral part of the library, with extensive usage by the academic community, thereby reinforcing its importance in the educational landscape of the University of Jaffna.

To further enhance the utility of the 'Musicology Corner', several improvements could be considered: Regarding the increased usage of the facility, expanding the space and acquiring additional equipment would better accommodate more users. Additionally, upgrading the current internet facilities is essential, including connecting the 'Musicology Corner' with the Lanka Education and Research Network (LEARN). A separate network installation dedicated to the library is recommended to ensure a successful and stable connection with LEARN. These enhancements would ensure that the library continues to meet the evolving needs of its users.

Keywords: Musicology, Visual arts, SPRFPVA Library, Infrastructure