

University of Mysore: Pride of Karnataka

The University of Mysore is one of the famous, prestigious and very few oldest universities in India. The University was founded as a result of the efforts made by the benevolent and visionary Maharaja of erstwhile Princely State of Mysore His Highness 'Rajarshi' Shri Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar -IV (1884-1940) and the then Diwan Sir.M.Vishvesvaraya (1860-1962). Prior to that, all the Institutions of Higher Education and Colleges within the Mysore State was under the administration of Madras Presidency and were functioning under Madras University.

Mysore University is the first University in Karnataka State to be Accredited by NAAC and has undergone NAAC Accreditation Four- First in 2000 with 'Five Star' Status, second time in 2006 with a 'A+' Level and for the Third time in 2012 with a CGPA score of 3.47 on a 4 point scale. NAAC has designated Mysore University as a 'High Performing Institution'. The University Grants Commission has placed Mysore University under Tier -II Category of Graded Autonomy. Govt. of India has recognized Mysore University as "Institution of Excellence (IOE) in 2008 while the UGC has recognized Mysore University as a University with Potential for Excellence (UPE) in 2009. On the other hand Mysore University is also recognized as a centre with potential for Excellence in a Particular Area (CPEPA). On the recommendations of Karnataka Knowledge Commission, the Karnataka government has considered Mysore University as an "Innovative University". Current Science has ranked Mysore University as one of the top 20 universities in Scientific and Research endeavors.

From the four PG Campuses namely Mysore (Manansagangothri), Mandya (Thubinakere), Hassan (Hemagangothri) and Chamarajanagar (Suvarnagangothri) there are 63 PG Departments offering 76 Postgraduate , M.Phil and Ph.D. Programmes. There are 219 affiliated Colleges.

The Post-graduate Centre, it is true, is still young but has a lot of potential for growth and development under the dynamic leadership of the Vice-Chancellor and his team at the administration.


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Vision

To aspire to become a world-class University by tapping human resources from all sections of society by offering them opportunities to learn across disciplines, and to build human capital, men and women of character and competence capable of being leaders of tomorrow and solving problems arising out of fast changing realities- global and local.

1. Oriental Research Institute, University of Mysore, Mysuru

The Oriental Research Institute (ORI), established in 1891 by Chamaraja Wodeyar, the Maharaja of Mysore, with the objectives of collecting, preserving, deciphering and critically editing palm leaf and paper manuscripts, has a massive collection of nearly 70,000 manuscripts. It is housed in the architecturally attractive Jubilee Hall built-in 1887 and is currently part of the University of Mysore since its inception in 1916.

2. About Mythic Society

Mythic Society is a pioneering institution of Indic studies in South India founded in Bangalore in 1909 by a few visionary European and Indian scholars committed to preserve, enrich and promote the cultural heritage of India and especially the then Mysore state. Many eminent personalities including Sri Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wodeyer, Sayyaji Rao Gaekwad III, Baroda, Moolam Thirunal Rama Varma V, Sri Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Sir C. V. Raman, Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, Dr. M. Krishna, Sir M. Vishvesvarayya, Sir Mirza Ismail etc. have been associated with Mythic Society in various capacities. The Society is engaged in activities connected with disciplines of History, Archaeology, Epigraphy, Numismatists, Philosophy, Folklore, Art & Architecture and other allied studies since its inception. It has conducted several national and international seminars on History, Art, Architecture, Culture etc. in addition to the monthly lectures.

Mythic Society also hosts a library which serves as a unique repository with an invaluable collection of 46000 rare books for students and researchers of art, history and culture.


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3. Objectives of MOU

Mythic Society, therefore, proposes to undertake the project of preservation and digitization of the manuscripts involving the following work

1. The very primary attention will be on Pre-Digitization process comprising of **Fumigation, Cleaning and Oiling** of manuscripts on war footing as the palm scripts have already started degenerating due to insects and fungal infestation.
2. **Digitization of catalogues**, making it available for the public as an Open Source.
3. **Image Digitization** of the manuscripts (palm leaves first followed by paper manuscripts and printed books) will be done along with Cataloguing and Barcoding. This will be made available for public hassle-free. The images are put for crowd sourced text digitalization, will be made available for public on a Fee to be paid to Oriental Research Institute fixed by the authorities of University of Mysore. Any data taken from the manuscripts or books, The Oriental Research Institute should be duly acknowledged in their work and any fee should be given to ORI.
4. **Text Digitization** of select (in order of unique and importance) manuscripts by manuscriptologists.
5. Projects to keep the palm leaf manuscripts safe for the next decade and beyond.
6. **Cataloguing and digitization of Rare non-palm leaf manuscripts** using OCR and other methods suitable to its required state of preservation
7. **Collection** of palm leaves from various locations and **Creating Awareness** among the public regarding the importance of manuscripts across India.
8. **Exploring 3D Printing** of the palm leaf manuscripts for posterity.

Mythic Society proposes to make an agreement in respect of **Preservation** (including fumigation, cleaning and oiling of manuscripts, cataloguing etc.), **Digitization** – both image and text (manuscripts, catalogues, etc.) and making them accessible on an **Online Repository** in multiple user-friendly formats.


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4. Scope of the MOU – Proposed Modes of Collaboration

The Mythic Society, after entering into a written MOU with UOM, will begin its activities as follows:

- It will form a project monitoring committee comprising of Mythic Society members, UOM representatives, ORI committee members, leading experts, and like-minded civic society activists, in consultation with UOM. This committee will oversee the progress of the project objectives.
- A detailed manpower and resource planning covering the whole operation at ORI - right from cleaning and treating the palm leaves, image digitisation, digitisation of catalogues
- The Mythic Society will hire experienced professionals for the posts which need a high degree of project management. Other staff would also be recruited and trained for undertaking various tasks at ORI. All the staff will be paid by the Mythic Society.
- A proper space plan will be made by taking expert advice.
- The Mythic Society will plan the purchase of materials required for the preservation of the palm leaves and store it in ORI.
- Daily, weekly and monthly reports will be generated and shared with ORI and UOM authorities.
- The Mythic Society will bear all the cost of this Agreement and will submit a Quarterly statement to UOM for reference.
- It is expected that the MOU will be completed (with one round of complete cleaning of all the palm leaf manuscripts) in 24 months from the date of entry into ORI. Detailed time frame will be provided once the actual data on palm leaves are collected.

5. Coordinators:

Both will designate persons who will have responsibility for co-ordinations and implementation of this agreement and the same shall be communicated to the other party.


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6. Jurisdiction:

Any dispute arising out of this MOU/agreement shall be subjected to the jurisdiction of Mysuru. The Law Courts/District Courts at Mysuru shall have exclusive Jurisdiction over the dispute.

7. Signed in Duplicate:

This MOU executed in duplicate with each copy being an official version and having equal legal validity. By signing below, the institute, acting by their duty authorized officers has caused this Memorandum of understanding to be executed, effective as of the day and year first above written

● Outcome

- 1) ORI's palm-leaf manuscripts would be cleaned and a regular process of cleaning and preserving them will be put in place.
- 2) The catalogue of the titles (palm leaf, handwritten, printed are made available for the public.
- 3) All the important palm leaf works are identified and their Unicode digitisation is undertaken by the help of manuscript readers
- 4) All the palm leaves and books are image scanned and kept in a safe place. The images are put for crowdsourced text digitisation
- 5) A working model of image capturing is formulated.
- 6) ORI will have an independent portal providing all information about its collections, apart from sharing its content also.

Problem Statement / Statement of Need

ORI is one of the premium repositories of India and Asia with such a massive collection. It has published many notable titles including the first-ever complete text of Kautilya's Arthashastra (written in the fourth century B.C) in 1909, which catapulted the Institute to International Academic Renown. There are important texts like Navaratnamani-mahatmya (a work on gemology), Tantrasara - sangraha (a work on sculpture and architecture), Vaidyashastra-Dipika (an ayurvedic text), Rasa-kaumudi (on mercurial medicine) and Paryayapadamanjari (ayurvedic materia medica) which are part of ORI's collection. The Institute has already published 17 volumes of Descriptive Catalogues


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of different subjects including 9 volumes of the Sritattvasudhanidhi, the illustrated manuscripts.

University of Mysore (UoM) has provided commendable patronage and assistance to ORI in pursuing its objectives. Considering the massive work that lays before ORI, any amount of assistance is inadequate. Therefore, Mythic Society feels there is a need to strengthen the hands of UoM and ORI in preserving the rich intellectual heritage – available in the form of manuscripts, of Indian civilization.

Current Status

The Mythic Society has noted the following:

1. ORI has about 70,000 manuscripts in its collection. Apart from palm leaf manuscripts, ORI also has a collection of 41,000 rare printed and other types of manuscripts.
2. There are 17 volumes of catalogues published by ORI. Five more volumes are under different stages of publication.
3. About 40% of the palm leaf manuscripts are microfilmed.
4. ORI continues to receive manuscripts from donors. All the entries of a new manuscript are entered in an inward registry and the acknowledgement letter goes to the donor.
5. The palm leaves are in critical condition and demand immediate efforts in preservation. Many leaves are so fragile that they are turning into powders when opened.
6. Neem leaf packets are now being kept in racks to protect the manuscripts.
7. There is a need for a dedicated professional team to work on the preservation of the manuscripts. Currently, whereas, with regard to maintenance of Neem Leaf packets, there is a scope for the professional expertise. The arena of work with respect to protection and preservation of Manuscripts is vast.
Presently, the work undertaken by the Researchers, Teachers, Volunteers and student fraternity needs additional support and professional orientation for the reservation of scripts. Therefore, the current proposition for the project has stepped in
8. Recently, a minor centre for fumigation has been started which fumigates 3000 leaves in a 15-day process.


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9. 17 volumes of published catalogues need to be digitized for searchable options along with the new to-be-published volumes. They need to be reformatted to suit the database search.
10. There is a need for ORI to have a website of its own with a digital, searchable catalogue of manuscripts.
11. Experts feel that there is a need for a proper Academic evaluation of the research undertaken in the ORI and this can be addressed by restoring its research institution status.
12. There is a High-powered Committee w.r.t. ORI, which can involve more actively in the activities of ORI.
- 13. Copy of right of Manuscripts:** Oriental Research Institute.
14. That both the parties hereby understand and admit the fragility of the scripts. That both the parties shall ensure at most care and diligence in conducting the desired activity. In case of any loss or damage to the script during the tenure of work, the same shall be evaluated mutually and the damages shall be compensated according to such joint evaluation.
- 15. Terms of MOU:** Duration 24 Months.

Signed on behalf of Mythic Society

Name:

Date:

Place:

Seal:

Witnessed by

Signed

Date: 18/02/2022



Signed on behalf of University of Mysore

Name:

Date:

Place:

Seal:

Witnessed by

Signed...

Date:

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Director

Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation Board
Crawford Hall, University of Mysore,
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