"What is an Archive in India and Europe?" #2:

Archiving The Contemporary

Memory, Technology and People

An international conference to reveal the complex and living nature of the archive

IIT - Madras
6-8 April 2022

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"What is an Archive in India and Europe?" #2:

Archiving the Contemporary: Memory, Technology and People

Indian Institute of Technology Madras

6 – 8 April 2022

Day 1 – Wednesday 6 April 2022

Venue: IC&SR Hall III

Inaugural Ceremony 9:15 to 10:30 am

9:15 **Tamizhthai Vaazhthu** [Tamil Anthem]

9:20 **Welcome Address** – Roland Wittje, IIT Madras

9:30 **Introductory Remarks** - Blandine Ripert (Director, IFP Pondicherry), Benedetta Zaccarello (CNRS/AITIA Project) and Ponnarasu S (IIT Madras)

9:45 **Opening Address by** Jyotirmaya Tripathy, Professor and Head, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras

9:50 **Inaugural Address** by V. Kamakoti, Professor and Director, IIT Madras

10:05 **Chief Guest's Address** by Thiru. Har Sahay Meena, I.A.S., Principal Secretary / Commissioner of Archives and Historical Research, Government of Tamil Nadu, Egmore, Chennai

10:20 **Vote of Thanks** – John Bosco Lourdusamy, IIT Madras

10:25 **National Anthem**

Tea/Coffee Break (10:30 – 11:00)

Day 1 – Wednesday 6 April 2022

Theme – Archives, Science and Technology

Session 1 *Chairperson Kannan M,* Researcher, Department of Social Sciences, French Institute of Pondicherry, Pondicherry

11:00 – 12:30

Senthil Babu, Researcher, French Institute of Pondicherry, Pondicherry
Mathematics as Work: Rebuilding Archives and Rewriting Histories in India

Kumaran Sathasivam, Heritage Centre, IIT Madras
Describe the Picture: Annotating Photographs at the Heritage Centre, IIT Madras

Vanessa Caru, Co-director of the CEIAS (CNRS-EHESS), France
Writing a Social History of Technology: Private Archives of Public Works Department Engineers (1860-1960)

<div align="right">Lunch Break (12:30 – 14:00)</div>

Session 2 *Chairperson Santhosh Abraham,* Assistant Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras

14:00 – 15:30

Blandine Ripert, Director, French Institute of Pondicherry, Pondicherry
Collections of the French Institute of Pondicherry

Bharat Sundararajan, Archivist, French Institute of Pondicherry, Pondicherry
Reimagining the IFP Archives: Methodologies and Processes

Sébastien Soubiran, Director of the Jardin des sciences, University of Strasbourg, France and President of the European University Heritage Network UNIVERSEUM
STS and the Raising Concern with Archiving Science in France, 1980 – 2010

<div align="right">Tea/Coffee Break (15:30 – 16:00)</div>

16:00 – 17:00

Sofia Talas, Curator, Museum of the History of Physics, University of Padua, Italy
"Archiving" Contemporary Scientific Instruments: What? How? What for?

Marta Lourenço, Director of the Museum of Natural History and Science, University of Lisbon, Portugal and President of UMAC (Committee for University Museums of ICOM),
The History of Recent Science in the Portuguese Research Infrastructure of Scientific Collections

17:00 – 17.30

Concluding remarks (Round Table)

17:30– 18:30

Visit to the Heritage Centre Exhibition at IC&SR Exhibition Hall with refreshment

Day 2 – Thursday 7 April 2022

Theme – Archives, People and Memory
Venue: IC&SR Hall II

Session 3 *Chairperson Delphine Thivet ,* Head of the Social Sciences Department, French Institute of Pondicherry, Pondicherry
9:30 – 11:00

Maya Dodd, Associate Professor, FLAME University, Pune
What's Missing: Making History Public in India

Venkat Srinivasan, Archives at NCBS, Bangalore
The Lives of Others and the Right to be (In) Visible

Aparna Vaidik, Associate Professor of History, Ashoka University, Haryana
The Practice of Public History: A Historian's View

Tea/Coffee Break (11:00 – 11:30)

11:30 – 12:30

Thamarai Selvan, Research Scholar, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras
Memory and Practice of Musical Instrument Making

Madhu Narayanan, Research Scholar, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras
Archiving Bamboo Basket Making Practices in South India

Lunch Break (12:30 – 14:00)

Session 4 *Chairperson Maya Dodd*, Associate Professor, FLAME University, Pune

14:00 – 15:30

Sukanta Chaudhuri, Fellow of the British Academy, founder of the School of Cultural Texts and Records, Jadavpur University, Kolkata
Shabdakalpa: A History of Language, A Vision of Words

Zoe E. Headley, Co-director of the CEIAS (CNRS-EHESS) France, and **Ponnarasu S,** Archive Project Leader, IIT Madras
Documentary Evidence and Digital Dilemmas. A View from the Village

Shalom Gauri and Siddarth Ganesh, QAMRA Archival Project at NLSIU, Bengaluru
Digital Fever: Reflections of a Queer Archive

Tea/coffee Break (15:30 – 16:00)

16:00 – 17:00

Sundar G, Director, Roja Muthiah Research Library, Chennai
Archives and Collective Memory

Amil Varghese, Research Scholar, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras
Archiving the Labour: Documenting the Life Experiences of Tea Plantation Workers

17:00 – 18:00
Concluding remarks (Round Table)

Day 3 – Friday 8 April 2022

Theme – Archives, Communities and Society

Venue: IC&SR Hall II

Session 5 *Chairperson Aparna Vaidik*, Associate Professor of History, Ashoka University, Haryana

9:30 – 11:00

Srijan Sandip Mandal, Head of Studies, Center for Public History, Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Bengaluru
Curating a Contemporary Archive: The Construction of the Published Record on Constitution-Making in India

Albert Varghese, Research Scholar, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras
Documenting Histories of Science for Social Change: The Archives of Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad

Roland Wittje, Associate Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras
Indian and German Archives in Contemporary Science and Technology

Tea/Coffee Break (11:00 – 11:30)

11:30 – 12:30
Benedetta Zaccarello, Senior Researcher at the Institut des Textes et Manuscrits Modernes, (ITEM, CNRS/Ecole Normale Supérieure), France; Head of the "Archives of International Theory" project (AITIA)
An Intercultural, Transnational, Contemporary Archive: The Sri Aurobindo Ashram Collections

Jayaprabha Ravindran, Assistant Director (Retd.), National Archive of India, New Delhi
In Search of Unsung Heroes/ Freedom Fighters in India's Struggle for Freedom: Exploring Records in the National Archives of India, with Special Reference to the Indian National Army

Lunch Break (12:30 – 14:00)

Session 6

Chairperson John Bosco Lourdusamy, Associate Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras

14:00 – 15:30

Albert Dichy, Literary Collections Supervisor, Institut Mémoires de l'Edition Contemporaine, Caen, France
Networks, Movements, Interactions: The Collective Making of the Archives

Madhucchanda Sen, Professor of Philosophy, School of Cultural Texts and Records Jadavpur University, Kolkata
Re-Interpretation of Classical Indian Texts by 19th-20th Century Anglophone Indian Scholars in Colonial India

Ravi Ahuja, Professor, Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Göttingen, Germany
Modern India in German Archives

Tea/Coffee Break (15:30 – 16:00)

16:00 – 17:00

Round Table - Way forward - Concluding remarks

Day 1 – Wednesday 6 April 2022

Theme – Archives, Science and Technology

Session 1 *Chairperson Kannan. M,* Researcher, Department of Social Sciences, French Institute of Pondicherry, Pondicherry

11:00 – 12:30

Senthil Babu, Researcher, French Institute of Pondicherry *and ETH, Zurich*
Mathematics as Work: Rebuilding Archives and Rewriting Histories in India

I will present aspects of our ongoing work to build a public digital archive, as part of our programme on the Social History of Mathematical Practices in India. The hegemonic function that texts, languages, and priority disputes have played in writing histories of mathematics, so far, needs critical analysis. Through this archive, we want to articulate a different historiography of mathematics, wherein texts could be studied as records of occupational practices, and as results of their routine work. The village school teacher and students, the accountant in the revenue administration, and at the merchant's household then occupy a central place in this archive, along with artisans and craft workers. In the process of collecting and curating such records of practices, available to us as texts in the existing archival collections with public institutions and private holders, we want to explore how an archive could invite students of history and the public to engage with the diverse pasts of mathematics. The reconstruction of the relationship between the text, practice, and the practitioner as a social history of mathematics, we believe is possible through the building of the archive itself.

Kumaran Sathasivam, Heritage Centre, IIT Madras
Describe the Picture: Annotating Photographs at the Heritage Centre, IIT Madras

The Heritage Centre collects and displays items of heritage value to IIT Madras, one of the premier technological institutions of India. Artifacts, photographs, and videos are exhibited by the Heritage Centre at a display space on campus and on its website. These items are obtained from within IIT Madras as well as from senior faculty and staff members and alumni. The Heritage Centre has an ongoing oral history program under which talks, interviews, conversations, and discussions are recorded. Apart from the oral history recordings, the collections at the Heritage Centre comprise books authored by members of the IIT Madras community, items of nostalgic value to students, photographs, and student publications. The photographic collection is the largest of the collections at the Heritage Centre.

The photographic collection began with a set of albums obtained from the Central Photographic Section of IIT Madras. The major contributions added to this nucleus include images shot by the late Mr. C. Gourishankar, the late Prof. Wolfgang Scheer and Mr. N.S. Vinodh. Various photographers have contributed images that document the natural heritage of the IIT Madras campus.

The Heritage Centre was opened in 2006. Most of the photographs it started with and many of those added to the collection subsequently had minimal or no metadata. Thus there were challenges in cataloguing the collection, curating exhibitions, and searching for specific photographs. The Heritage Centre has been making efforts to annotate its photographs to overcome these challenges and to present the images to viewers for their edification.

This presentation outlines the experience of the Heritage Centre in gaining an understanding of its photographs. A case study is presented that serves to illustrate the multiplicity of stories that may emerge from a single album and the numerousness of the sources from which the strands of these stories may need to be drawn, particularly when an institutional archive is to become operational in the future.

Vanessa Caru, Co-director of the CEIAS (CNRS-EHESS), France
Writing a Social History of Technology: Private Archives of Public Works Department Engineers (1860-1960)

This paper aims to analyse the specific problems posed by the collection and exploitation by historians of family archives, based on a study of the Indian personnel of the Public Works Department (PWD) of the Bombay Presidency (1860-1960).

The archives usually used to write the history of administration or technology are proving to be very limited materials for a social history investigation, especially if the latter aims to cover the first decades after Independence. In order to answer certain questions, in this case, the question of measuring the social mobility permitted by entry into the engineering profession, it is necessary to seek out other types of sources, in particular private archives, or even to create new ones by compiling oral archives. This is not an easy task, however, due to the dispersed and inaccessible nature of these sources.

By tracing the different stages of the investigation carried out among the descendants of the PWD engineers, the aim will be to reflect not only on the different practical means implemented to constitute this collection (creation of a database from the PWD archives, recourse to social networks to disseminate the call for testimonies, etc.), but also on the specific problems posed to the historian by the use of these materials (preservation, anonymization, etc.).

Lunch Break (12:30 – 14:00)

Session 2 *Chairperson Santhosh Abraham,* Assistant Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras

14:00 – 15:30

Blandine Ripert, Director, French Institute of Pondicherry, Pondicherry
Collections of the French Institute of Pondicherry

The French Institute of Pondicherry is a research centre that was established in 1955 under the aegis of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and more recently with the support of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). The staff of this institute, 80% of whom are Indian, have since the beginning built up collections of manuscripts, plant specimens, pollen, photographs, and data that they have collected, which I shall retrace the recent history of their acquisition. These collections are very varied databases from which researchers work in different disciplines. I will show how the uses of these collections have been transformed by technical changes, research needs, and societal demands. This will be an opportunity to raise the question of ownership of archives or collections, their conservation, and of the possibilities of sharing such responsibilities.

Bharat Sundararajan, Archivist, French Institute of Pondicherry, Pondicherry
Reimagining the IFP Archives: Methodologies and Processes

This presentation will focus on a series of ongoing attempts to re-imagine the archival collections of the French Institute of Pondicherry, a research institution under the joint supervision of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) established in 1955. With the changing nature of public institutions all over the world, there is a growing need to rethink older paradigms of what an archive is, what an archive does, and who it is for. Here, I make the case that archives, as repositories of collective memory and knowledge, should be understood as knowledge infrastructures with an important political and intellectual role to play in contemporary society. Drawing on multiple recent projects built around the IFP's collections, particularly an archival training course, and an archiving project on ecological research in the Western Ghats, the presentation will think through the promises and challenges of realizing this archival imagination and the forms of archival praxis it calls for.

Sébastien Soubiran, Director of the Jardin des sciences, University of Strasbourg, France
and President of the European University Heritage Network UNIVERSEUM
STS and the Raising Concern with Archiving Science in France, 1980 – 2010

In this presentation, I would like to discuss the kind of relationships archivists and curators of science and technology museums have developed with academic social studies of scientific research since the 1980s and try to draw perspectives for new directions to renew the link between academic research and curating projects. Indeed, Historical research on science developed since the turn of the 21st century highlighted a concomitant interest between archiving and curating practices of scientific knowledge on the one hand, and the material dimension of the production of scientific knowledge on the other. Thus, the social dimension of knowledge, the material culture of science, and the importance ascribed to the associated objects brought archives, scientific museums, and collections to be a major focus of interest for the development and the test of different research approaches in social studies on science and technology. This strong attention has also opened up new perspectives on the public display of science in museums and the conservation of scientific artifacts. I will focus my presentation on France from a European perspective and I will articulate my presentation around three different questions:

1/ How did the social history of Science contribute to the raising attention put on the preservation of scientific archives and historical artifacts? How did it renew the way museums display scientific knowledge to the public? And how did museums mobilize the social history of science to deal with social and political issues?

2/ How did curators and archivists contribute to new research in the social history of science? What kind of new historical research can be fostered by looking at the museum, collections, and exhibitions as a "historical object in itself", with a multi-layered, stratified and inner evolution?

3/To what extent do we try to put into practice this multi-layer approach in the way we are curating scientific heritage in Strasbourg?

Tea/Coffee Break (15:30 – 16:00)

16:00 – 17:00

Sofia Talas, Curator, Museum of the History of Physics, University of Padua, Italy
"Archiving" Contemporary Scientific Instruments: What? How? What for?

Why and how should we collect, preserve, interpret and study the scientific devices dismissed by recent research and teaching activities? Such issues have been examined and discussed in various papers and workshops in the last years.
In this talk, we will examine what was experienced at the Museum of the History of Physics, now Giovanni Poleni Museum, in Padua. Since the 1980s, the Museum has actually been collecting and studying several recent instruments used at the Department of Physics and Astronomy of the University of Padua.
After briefly describing some of the general issues we have been dealing with, the talk will present three case studies, focusing on a few devices we studied in Padua, i.e. two particle detectors and a gravitational-wave detector. Through these examples, we will discuss in more detail some of the challenges and opportunities related to recent scientific heritage.

Marta Lourenço, Director of the Museum of Natural History and Science, University of Lisbon, Portugal and President of UMAC (Committee for University Museums of ICOM)
The History of Recent Science in the Portuguese Research Infrastructure of Scientific Collections

Among the many challenges of preserving the contemporary heritage of science, the collaboration between institutions generating scientific artefacts (universities, institutes, laboratories) and the cultural heritage sector (museums, heritage sites) is paramount. In this talk, I will explain how Portugal addressed this challenge through the infrastructure PRISC (Portuguese Research Infrastructure of Scientific Collections). I will explore some of the main problems, with a focus on surveying and training. I will also discuss the preservation of contemporary archives of science.

17:00 – 17:30

Concluding remarks (Round Table)

17:30– 18:30

Visit to the Heritage Centre Exhibition at IC&SR Building with refreshment

Day 2 – Thursday 7 April 2022

Theme – Archives, People and Memory

Session 3 *Chairperson Delphine Thivet ,*   Head of the Social Sciences Department, French Institute of Pondicherry, Pondicherry

9:30 – 11:00

Maya Dodd, Associate Professor, FLAME University, Pune
What's Missing: Making History Public in India

While it has been noted that infrastructures are central to the practice of public history, it is also true that limits to the digital make infrastructures for such practices in India particularly fragile. As anthropologist Akhil Gupta states, infrastructures "are a process [not a thing] that is characterized by multiple temporalities [and] open futures". Affording public history project work in India is often a function of both imagination and infrastructure. The structural exclusion of non-mainstream history is a defining impediment to including such materials in the official curriculum. To go beyond how this frames institutional possibilities of curation and distribution would entail the activation of new channels of creation and distribution. Though mostly, extant usage of digital tools rests on the overall systemic conception of access, several other players from locations parallel to the academic are scaffolding their own solutions to current impediments. The need to develop infrastructures across several Indian languages and to examine the need for open access resources might offer some possibilities to combat the existent shortfall in institutional spaces.   Since neither connectivity nor access can be assumed, to imagine such sites in India also necessitates the consideration of offline techniques. In India, digital affordances need to be imagined beyond known infrastructures to nudge a future of archiving that enhances inclusivity.

Venkat Srinivasan, Archives at NCBS, Bangalore
The Lives of Others and the Right to be (In) Visible

On July 30, 1990, Narayanbhai Karangia wrote a letter to the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) after reading their pamphlet titled, 'The Vanishing Floricans'. Karangia was then a farmer in western India. He talked about sighting the birds and offered to help in conservation work. Today, his letter sits at the Archives at NCBS, as part of the papers of Ravi Sankaran Papers, an ornithologist who studied floricans.

The letter has an unlikely journey, from the private thoughts of a farmer in the fields of Gujarat to an acid-free folder in a climate-controlled public archive in Bangalore. And once visible, the object forces us to probe the past with new eyes (1). But every accession also brings with it questions of inclusivity, ethics and privacy. These are especially critical questions when an archive is just starting out, as is the case with the Archives at NCBS (https://archives.ncbs.res.in/), which is both a space for institutional records as well as a collecting centre for the history of contemporary biology in India.

Through examples from correspondence, oral histories, native digital files, its nascent accession and retention policies, and the challenge of a new campus COVID-19 archive, this paper is an attempt to show the conflicts and synergies at an institutional between a set of agents – creators and custodians, archivists, users and a set of ideas – diversity, privacy, and the ethics of a contemporary archive.

What enters the archive today is key to tomorrow's meaning-making. Today, researchers rely on WhatsApp messages, marginalia on paper, and electronic logbooks to communicate with their peers. All too often, the only persistent record for many marginalized in the sciences is their oral history interview (2). While a data protection bill is under review, India doesn't yet have a robust law that identifies the boundaries of data privacy. Karangia's letter can be seen as both diversification of ecological histories and an affront to an individual's privacy. This paper is about a fledgling archive's struggles in laying bare the diverse lives of others even as they wonder about their rights to be invisible.

Aparna Vaidik, Associate Professor of History, Ashoka University, Haryana
The Practice of Public History: A Historian's View

This paper discusses the genesis of our Public History project and our journey with it through last year. The project team included two historians, two archivists, and a cultural studies scholar bringing their disciplinary specialisation and methods to the collaboration. Our project revisits questions regarding the inclusion of marginal voices in mainstream historical narratives that the subaltern studies scholars and the extant practices of oral history had raised but did not really deliver on. Questions such as --how can historians enter into debate with individuals and groups in Indian society who have their own view of the past? How do we engage the popular understanding of the past? -- remain unanswered. The answer we argue lies in Public History as its practice redefines four interlinked ideas: audience, archives, authorship, and pedagogy.

Tea/Coffee Break (11:00 – 11:30)

11:30 – 12:30

Thamarai Selvan, Research Scholar, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras
Memory and Practice of Musical Instrument Making

The proposed paper argues that space (archive), process (recorded), written (documented) sources for a practice like instrument-making are in the practitioners' body and in their memory while practicing the craft. Making instruments with their tools in the workshop and the memory embedded with the changing technological environment and improvement in the instrument give a cloud space (community memory) for a community archive that does not form a physical space (like a typical archive). The paper further explains why the written documents are limited for the craft practices and how they are passing on the knowledge they have on material and making through the pedagogical process. Scholars who worked on craft practices and practitioners mention the limitations of written sources on craft practices and practitioners. The paper uses the available archival sources and the author has done fieldwork with the community of practitioners and connected actors (oral history interviews, following the actors' networks, observing workshop practices, and shop floor conversations). The paper uses the history of science and technology and the STS perspective in articulating the knowledge and skill of the practitioners' community.

Madhu Narayanan, Research Scholar, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras
Archiving Bamboo Basket Making Practices in South India

My paper examines the scope and limitations of archiving the practices of artifact/object making in India. Object making comprises various sets of complex networks and activities.

While looking at the history of an artifact/object for archiving purposes, the people, their skills, and knowledge of the material process are significant. Capturing these aspects and their historical and contemporary narratives is highly problematic. In this context, my paper examines the bamboo basket-making practices in South India. Basket-making is not a set of practices that can be communicated and curated only through formal descriptions or instructions. At the same time, these sorts of practices are learned and disseminated through a set of enculturation processes. Thus, I want to raise the question of why do we need to archive the practices of basket making, its skill, knowledge, and materiality? How can we capture the tinkering knowledge of such practices as curated data in the archive? How do we represent the memory of a community and their making practices in the web of the archive? Are there any methodological, epistemological challenges to bringing the comprehensiveness of a living tradition and practice?

Lunch Break (12:30 – 14:00)

Session 4 *Chairperson Maya Dodd*, Associate Professor, FLAME University, Pune

14:00 – 15:30

Sukanta Chaudhuri, Fellow of the British Academy, founder of the School of Cultural Texts and Records, Jadavpur University, Kolkata
Shabdakalpa: A History of Language, a Vision of Words

This paper presents *Shabdakalpa*, a computer-assisted historical dictionary of the Bengali language under progress in the School of Cultural Texts and Records, Jadavpur University. A historical dictionary incorporates the entire living memory of a language, running the past into the present. It employs technology to collect, organize and retrieve this material. It is virtually an epitome of the central themes of this conference. The project comprises two chief components: a database of texts, and the software to process it. Non-Latin scripts pose special challenges. Those concerning Bengali font and keyboard software have largely been solved. The database requires texts in TXT format. With few though sometimes major exceptions, Bengali texts available online are in PDF format and must be converted to TXT using OCR. Bengali OCR is still imperfect, but we have obtained excellent results with GoogleDocs.

The crucial challenge arises from the highly inflected nature of Bengali, above all in verbs. Bengali operates on two grammatical registers, the virtually obsolete but once dominant formal (*sadhu*) and the now near-universal informal (*chalit*). In each register, the tenses, aspects, gerunds and participles make for 14 categories, usually with separate inflections for five grammatical categories of subject, covering three persons and three levels of respect or familiarity. There are also two common enclitics suffixed to verbs. A Bengali verb can assume 300 to 400 forms.

Aggregating these forms involved manually creating a set of verb tables based entirely on morphology without heed to etymology or grammar – forms that a computer could recognize solely by their distinctive combination of characters. Bengali verb paradigms were restructured on a radically new basis, matching the AI methodology of direct assimilation of surface variables rather than an analytic grasp of principles. The same process was repeated with pronouns. Nouns posed a different problem. They have an indefinitely variable range of forms, but a fixed range of suffixes indicating number, case, and gender. Their aggregation required a different process with more manual intervention. The final requirement is a format to retrieve the various forms,

meanings and usages of a word. This will form the basis of the actual dictionary entry. Our work creates a digital template for a historical dictionary in virtually any language with a phonetic alphabet. This gives the project versatility beyond its immediate outcome.

Zoe E. Headley, Co-director of the CEIAS (CNRS-EHESS) France and **Ponnarasu S,**
Archive Project Leader, IIT Madras
Documentary Evidence and Digital Dilemmas. A View from the Village

This paper will describe the genesis, process and (provisional) outcome of a digital archive of private family records produced between 1650 and 1950 in rural stretches of present-day Tamil Nadu, address some of the practical and ethical issues which arose and, time permitting provide a specific example of the kind of scholarship which can emerge from the study of these documents.

The DATAH project (Digital Archive of Tamil Agrarian History) which aimed to create *ex-nihilo* an archive of copper plates, palm-leaf and paper documents, was designed and coordinated by two social anthropologists (Zoe Headley and S. Ponnarasu) working in Tamil Nadu. It has resulted in bringing together a body of over 100 000 documents. These digitally collected documents provide a rare and unique opportunity to glimpse a variety of aspects of the social history of village life in the more remote parts of the Tamil region at a time when new power structures and social identities were being forged both with and against local traditional feudal systems and British colonial legislation. The specificity of this archive is that the original documents are scattered in villages, mostly in the homes of descendants of traditional power holders (lineage headmen, caste headmen, Zamindars, Palayakkarars, etc….) who are for the most part unaware of the importance such documents can have to unravel the social history of rural Tamil society.

Shalom Gauri and Siddarth Ganesh, QAMRA Archival Project at NLSIU, Bengaluru
Digital Fever: Reflections of A Queer Archive

The Queer Archive for Memory, Reflection and Activism (QAMRA) has had in its growth to introspect upon the role of digitisation and the onlining of material in the structure and practice of archiving contemporary histories of the Indian queer movement. Given that contentions between identity and the public sphere are central to these histories, questions around privacy, consent and access are of particular concern. The digitalisation turn in archive promises an exciting extension of access and preservation, yet, archival standards need to be re-articulated to accommodate systems of knowledge production and circulation endemic to queer communities. Further, the permanency afforded by preservation challenges the labour of archiving queer lives and performativity, which are by nature, ephemeral. As the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated, we are increasingly living hybridised lives online and offline. Since the advent of the internet, a significant portion of queer networking has taken place online, leaving us with conundrums on archiving material that is born digital. This leads us to question methods employed in documenting contemporary digital queer cultures, and the myriad experiences of dating, trolling, mobilisation, and self-construction that take place simultaneously in the digital and analogue worlds. Research, the currency of academic economy, produces gross inequalities between the researcher and the researched. Archives as repositories of the lived experiences of marginalised peoples accrue academic capital. Where does the researcher derive the authority from to capitalise upon this? Can the democratisation of archives occur through a dialogue between technology and physical, living spaces?

16:00 – 17:00

Sundar G, Director, Roja Muthiah Research Library, Chennai
Archives and Collective Memory

We are at a very crucial juncture in the history of archiving. There is an archival consciousness and wide awareness now about archiving. One reason for this is the availability of cheap and accessible technology that helps in the transformation of the physical archives to virtual. Another is the increasing awareness of the relationship between archives and identity (of people, of culture, and of institutions). Now, it has become the responsibility of archives (both public and private) to align themselves to the shifting technological changes. Roja Muthiah Research Library (RMRL) as an archive holds the memory of the past and is in the process of keeping this memory alive. RMRL faces a lot of challenges and has been dealing with them for quite some time. The presentation will deliberate on some of these key aspects.

Amil Varghese, Research Scholar, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras
Archiving the Labour: Documenting the Life Experiences of Tea Plantation Workers

A majority of the plantation workers employed in the tea estates of Munnar, located in the south Indian state of Kerala, are descendants of Dalit Tamil workers, who migrated to Munnar during the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Existing accounts on life in plantations are written by the planters and managerial class, which mostly speak of their achievements. However, unlike the planter class, the contributions of plantation workers are not acknowledged and continue to remain unrepresented and marginalized. On account of the workers' social backwardness, the literature on their life experience is absent. The tea museums, too, fail in representing the life of labor in plantations adequately.

The presentation aims to critically examine the portrayal of labour in the Tea Museum, Munnar, and emphasis on the importance of using oral history as a tool to document the lives of tea plantation workers. Recording the life history or experiences of tea workers should be taken up seriously, especially in the aftermath of the Pettimudi landslide on 6th August 2020 that claimed the lives of eighty people, mostly tea workers'. The presenter argues here that the valuable history of their lives too was lost along with their death. The presentation suggests that the documentation can follow the model of the Federal Writers Project, initiated in the USA in 1935, which went on to document the lives of former slaves.

17:00 – 18:00
Concluding remarks (Round Table)

Day 3 – Friday 8 April 2022

Theme – Archives, Communities and Society

Session 5 *Chairperson Aparna Vaidik,* Associate Professor of History, Ashoka University, Haryana

9:30 – 11:00

Srijan Sandip Mandal, Head of Studies, Center for Public History, Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Bengaluru
Curating a Contemporary Archive: The Construction of the Published Record on Constitution-Making in India

The framing of India's Constitution, over and above laying down the textual foundation of a sovereign, democratic republic, represents a unique archival moment. It is unique because the members of the Constituent Assembly of India, where the Constitution of India was framed, were conscious of producing a published record for every word that was spoken in the Assembly – almost as soon as it was spoken. What this collective archival urge produced was the twelve-volume *Constituent Assembly Debates* (CAD) in 1950 itself, the very same year the Constitution came into effect. One of the Assembly members, B. Shiva Rao, went even further by producing a series of archival volumes in the 1960s to complement the CAD, starting with the single-volume *India's Constitution in the Making* (1960) and the five-volume *The Framing of India's Constitution* (1966-68). Taken together, these volumes represent the published record of constitution-making in India. This presentation will be dedicated to the construction of this published archive, the phenomenon of the historical actor as archivist that it produced, and the politics and silences of the archive, which continues to dominate academic and public attempts at engaging with the making of India's Constitution.

Albert Varghese, Research Scholar, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras, Chennai
Documenting Histories of Science for Social Change: The Archives of Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad

People's Science Movements (PSM), which emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, were instrumental in connecting science and the public in India. In present times, the cultural gulf between science and the public is arguably expanding and the life and times of actors who built bridges between the two entities attain historical relevance. However, there has been little effort from historians to trace the history of science movements and to document what they have done on the ground - how they have communicated, educated and translated science to the masses. This presentation attempts to examine the role and limits of the archives of Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), India's largest PSM, in reconstructing the contemporary history of science movements in the 'Third World'. Do the archives of a People's Science Movement inspire historians to write a people's history of science? Does it give voice to the people they claim to represent? and most importantly, does it document a history that corroborates the existence and continuity of the social movement? KSSP and its archives have been shaped and evolved by time; the documents, publications, manuscripts and digital information of over sixty years from the 1960s to the present can be of great help in understanding and analyzing how the social movement changed when the world moved from collective to virtual action.

Roland Wittje, Associate Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras
Indian and German Archives in Contemporary Science and Technology

What happens to history writing if there is no archive? Most of human history remains inaccessible or fragmentary due to the lack of sources. While this applies especially to ancient history and prehistory, history writing in the contemporary period is characterized by the availability or absence of specific types of sources as well. By drawing on my own experience of writing about the early history of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, I want to discuss the importance of archives of contemporary science and technology in India and the impact of the absence of archives for history writing.

IIT Madras was established as a collaboration between India and the Federal Republic of Germany between 1956 and 1974. The German side of the story is well documented in the archives of the German Foreign Office, the Federal Archives and the archives of the German technical universities that were part of the collaboration. On the Indian side, the Heritage Centre of IIT Madras curates an extensive photo collection and has conducted a series of oral history interviews. While these are invaluable sources, the lack of an institutional archive at IIT Madras leads to an overwhelming reliance on personal accounts and biographical memoirs when attempting to narrate the history from the Indian perspective. Facilitating a more balanced and comprehensive history writing has therefore been the main incentive for setting up the Archive of IIT Madras.

Tea/Coffee Break (11:00 – 11:30)

11:30 – 12:30

Benedetta Zaccarello, Senior Researcher at the Institut des Textes et Manuscrits Modernes, (ITEM, CNRS/Ecole Normale Supérieure), France; head of the "Archives of International Theory" project (AITIA)
An Intercultural, Transnational, Contemporary Archive: The Sri Aurobindo Ashram Collections

From the early nineties on, human and social sciences developed critical views on archives as cultural and political devices structurally reassessing national rhetoric and memorial strategies, rather than voicing the multiple perspectives offered by the variety of the documents as by the plenty of their possible interpretations. Despite the precious light cast on the different forms of power structuring archival institutions, such conception ends up implicitly reassessing a post-romantic paradigm of the archives as rooted in a single nation and (very often) in its one language. When we come at writers' or thinkers' manuscripts, the habit to read the complexity of their archives as the work of a single, isolated personality according to a romantic conception of the author is even stronger. On the contrary, this presentation proposes to understand such typology of archives as a set of traces of thinking and writing practices and the memory of an interacting network of people. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration amongst the different actors involved in the production of the documents as in the organization of the collections. Such a performative and dialogic perspective on the archives will orientate some considerations on the literary archives related to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram once observed through the lens of genetic criticism philological methodology. The relation between the community, the genesis of the manuscripts and the organization of the archives will be observed from the standpoint of a comparative approach, retracing the transnational and transcultural, multilingual, collective work witnessed by such body of documents.

Jayaprabha Ravindran, Assistant Director (Retd.), National Archive of India, New Delhi
In Search of Unsung Heroes/ Freedom Fighters in India's Struggle for Freedom: Exploring Records in the National Archives of India, with Special Reference to the Indian National Army

'History' is described as an encompassing term including not just past events but everything related to the events including people related to the events, memories of the events, circumstances, discovering the events, interpretations of these past events, etc. Through intense research, the history of a nation, society is built by researchers and Historians. But does History, as narrated, provide justice to all past events and their participants? It may not be fair to expect a positive answer as research is based upon the availability of sources of information. Nowhere will it be clearer than the history of India's freedom struggle.

Our freedom struggle has a long history of protests covering a long period of over a century (including pre-1857 revolts). Extensive research has been done by an array of historians on the different phases of our freedom struggle and the ideologies of the prominent leaders. What is evident is that only a few of the freedom fighters rose up to be national heroes whereas countless people participated and many laid down their lives for the country.

As a professional Archivist, I am not to analyse or interpret past events. I'm here to share information on the availability of sources that can shed light on many of the 'unsung' heroes/freedom fighters of the Indian freedom struggle.

Where does one find information related to freedom fighters?
A major chunk of archival records related to the freedom struggle is in the National Archives of India among its public records and private archives. Records in NAI (Public Records and Private Archives) have substantial information on the major milestone events of our freedom movement right from 1857 to 1947.

Do the records in NAI provide comprehensive information on the freedom movement?
Though there have been some revolts and mutinies against the colonial powers even in the 1700s, it was the uprising of 1857 that has been referred to as the First War of Independence. Different phases of protests and resistance saw different leaders coming to the forefront. But behind all these leaders was a huge horde of followers who actively participated in anti-colonial activities inviting the wrath of the colonial masters.

What has made the majority of freedom fighters 'unsung' heroes'/freedom fighters?
Primarily, lack of information about sources.

Records of Indian National Army (INA):
While extensive research continues to be undertaken on Subhas Chandra Bose, the Supreme Commander of INA, very little is known about the commanding officers/ soldiers/military set up of the 50,000+ army based outside India. In depth study of these records would reveal a lot about these 'unsung' heroes/ freedom fighters.

Conclusion:
Academicians and archives professionals can help discover many such 'unsung' heroes/freedom fighters lying hidden among various archival sources across the country. This would be the biggest tribute, during this 'Amrit Mahotsav', to those countless freedom fighters who fought for the freedom of our country.

Lunch Break (12:30 – 14:00)

Session 6 *Chairperson John Bosco Lourdusamy,* Associate Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras

14:00 – 15:30

Albert Dichy, Literary Collections Supervisor, Institut Mémoires de l'Edition Contemporaine, Caen, France
Networks, Movements, Interactions: The Collective Making of the Archives

Which kind of archive can we imagine witnessing the making of a literary work or of a work of art in general? And how such an archive can be rooted back in a painter's studio or a writer's desk? How can institutional archives carry the memory of such kinds of materials?

This presentation will be based on the very peculiar history of the making of IMEC (*Institut Mémoires de l'édition contemporaine*), an archival institution created in France at the request of researchers and not of archivists. Throughout its 30 years of life, IMEC became the most important repertory in the world for printing houses' archives and its collections of literary and cultural records are nowadays amongst the most prominent in France. The evolution of such an institution can tell us about the changes occurring in our current image of a literary archive. The idea at the core of the IMEC project is that of the creation of a space, capable of constantly connecting a network of specialized researchers, witnessing the complexity at work in the literary field (from writing to press, from journals and newspapers to essays and novels) and thus contributing to reshaping the way in which contemporary research takes into account the archives. Despite the attention still paid to the writings of famous authors or to the irreducible genius of a single artist, is nowadays research focusing more and more on the collective making of a work, and does it need so far more and more diversified archives?

Madhucchanda Sen, Professor of Philosophy, School of Cultural Texts and Records Jadavpur University, Kolkata

Re-Interpretation of Classical Indian Texts by 19th-20th Century Anglophone Indian Scholars in Colonial India

In this paper I would like to explore why one would want to archive works by 19th-20th century Anglophone Indian philosophers that re-interpret Classical Texts. I would also like to debate on how this archive can be made. I am interested in working out a kind of conceptual geography, or even alternative conceptual geographies that would guide one to make this archival map of the works of these scholars --- scholars who look at texts which are a part of an ancient intellectual (though significantly multi-cultural) tradition with the tools that a foreign education system had endowed them with. This is not a new effort. Many philosophers of independent India have offered many such conceptual geographies each of which is tied to an effort in understanding the larger sociological and academic motivations of these anglophone Indian philosophers that emerge through the re-interpretation of classical texts. The more known anglophone philosophers (many of whom were not professional philosophers) of period are Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, K.C. Bhattacharya, B. N. Seal, Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghosh, Swami Vivekananda, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, A.K. Coomaraswamy, M.K. Gandhi, S. Radhakrishnan, M.Hiriyanna, R.D. Ranade, Ras Bihari Das, Hiralal Haldar, P.T. Raju, G.R. Malkani, Ganeswar Mishra. There are of course great many other philosophers whose works would need attention. Some of these philosophers, though Anglophone, wrote in the vernacular – that effort being a part of the larger nationalistic project. Daya Krishna calls these philosophers "a strange species – a stranger in

his own country", whose understanding of his own culture "is shaped by an alien civilization". Many of these re-interpretations of classical texts are seen as a part of a larger project -- the project of creating a unified Indian national identity. These philosophers – many through their written works, many through their public addresses, many through their efforts in academic administration, many through their participation in the Nationalist Movement transformed Indian society and culture by simultaneously engaging with a Classical Knowledge system and with the contemporary trends in European philosophy. The texts they wrote, the syllabi they constructed for various Indian universities, the speeches they delivered, to mention a few, would constitute this archive. The archive would also host the works by their immediate successors who have tried to understand their motivations and aspiration and whose interpretations and understandings provide what I call a conceptual Geography for mapping the archive we want to make.

Ravi Ahuja, Professor, Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Göttingen, Germany
Modern India in German Archives

Since 2014, "MIDA", a long-term project on sources on the modern history of India in German Archives has been generously funded by the German Research Council (DFG). The project has been conducted by historians of South Asia based at Humboldt University Berlin, at the Leibniz Centre for Modern Oriental Studies Berlin and at the University of Göttingen.

Until recently, the richness and the potential of the holdings of German archives on modern Indian history were appreciated insufficiently. The "MIDA" project strives to introduce the international community of historians of India to resources that can open up new research perspectives, which have remained obstructed by an excessive fixation on British colonial archives. We began on the assumption that innovative research questions can be generated for purposes of transnational historical comparison and for the historical analysis of "globalization" processes through an exploration of the modern history of German-Indian entanglements. MIDA is <u>not</u> involved in the digitization of archival holdings as such—a task far too voluminous to be achieved by any research project. Instead, we have set ourselves three major objectives:

1. MIDA systematically collects in a single database catalogue and keyword information on holdings of German archives on modern India and the history of German-Indian entanglements, from the eighteenth century until 1990. This database is made available to the international academic community on a long-term basis as a "growing" and open digital resource. The database currently covers more than 13,000 documents from fifty German Archives: https://www.projekt-mida.de/marchiv#!/suche

2. MIDA generates further digital resources to facilitate access to German archival holdings on Modern India. These include, for one, "thematic resources", i.e. more detailed research data on specific archival collections, research topics or materials: https://www.projekt-mida.de/en/research-portal/thematic-resources/ As an innovation in response to the methodological challenges of the project, we also create a growing "Archival Reflexicon" consisting of short essays (most available in German and English versions) that discuss specific collections or themes: https://www.projekt-mida.de/rechercheportal/reflexicon/#
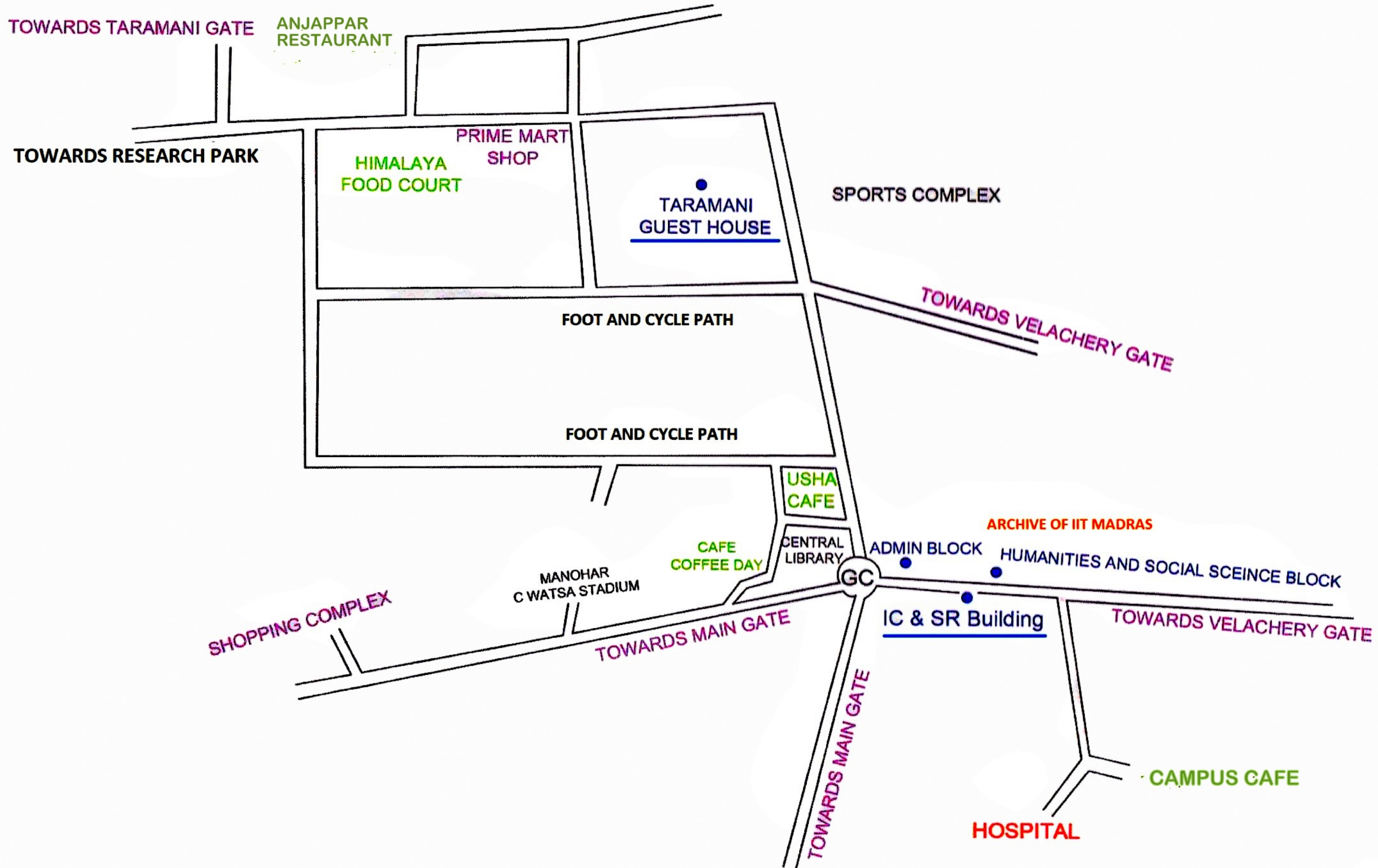
3. MIDA demonstrates the potential of German archival resources for India-related studies in exemplary pilot research projects (https://www.projekt-mida.de/project/) and publications (https://www.projekt-mida.de/en/mida-publications/)

After almost eight years, the project has made considerable progress and has also evolved in terms of content and methodology. The creation of new archival resources has foregrounded, in particular, issues that emerge when archival collections are digitally reordered and the problematique of replacing conventional bilateral perspectives on (post)colonial history by a more multilateral archival approach. This talk will discuss some problems and results that emerge from this ongoing project.

Tea/Coffee Break (15:30 – 16:00)

16:00 – 17:00

Round Table – Way forward
Concluding remarks

TOWARDS TARAMANI GATE

ANJAPPAR RESTAURANT

TOWARDS RESEARCH PARK

PRIME MART SHOP

HIMALAYA FOOD COURT

TARAMANI GUEST HOUSE

SPORTS COMPLEX

FOOT AND CYCLE PATH

TOWARDS VELACHERY GATE

FOOT AND CYCLE PATH

USHA CAFE

ARCHIVE OF IIT MADRAS

CAFE COFFEE DAY

CENTRAL LIBRARY

ADMIN BLOCK

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCEINCE BLOCK

MANOHAR C WATSA STADIUM

GC

SHOPPING COMPLEX

TOWARDS MAIN GATE

IC & SR Building

TOWARDS VELACHERY GATE

TOWARDS MAIN GATE

CAMPUS CAFE

HOSPITAL

"What is an Archive in India and Europe?" #2

Archiving the Contemporary: Memory, Technology and People

is an event organized by IIT Madras, AITIA IRN project and IFP

Humanities and Social Sciences –IIT Madras

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