# Description and Rationale

## Title

Leftist Serials in Tamil: *Markcist Mata Italkalai* and *Cemmalar*

## Project Description\*

Building on increased interest in the “global left” and deepening the growing corpus of leftist material made available in digital format through SAMP & SAOA (for example, *Nalupu, Amukh, Kranti, Viplav, Viplavi Tract, Bagi,* the *Sajjad Zaheer Archive*), we propose to digitize and make openly available two communist journals in Tamil:

* *Markcist Mata Italkalai* (1991-2020) (not in OCLC)
* *Cemmalar* (1970-2021) (OCLC: 5119595)
  + 7 print holdings (CRL, Cornell, NYPL, Wisconsin, California [2—one UCU, one NLRF], and Texas)--presumably all LCCAP supplied
  + The latest holdings in US libraries end in 1996
  + 1973-1996 are available in Hathi but those issues are not open access, many of the scans are blurry, have lost content in gutters, and have the thumb/finger problem that was frequent in the Google mass digitization process.

We propose to digitize an estimated 61,440 pages with SAMP funding and further propose to have the resulting files ingested into, discoverable via, and accessed through SAOA. This dual approach model has successfully been used by SAMP and SAOA in the past as it draws upon the noted strengths of the closely interrelated initiatives: intellectual vetting and careful reformatting through SAMP, robust discovery on both the open web and JSTOR through SAOA.

We seek $16,452 in this proposal to SAMP. The University of Texas has already committed $2,000 for this project (to be used in FY22); we seek the remaining project costs through SAMP. If this SAMP proposal is successful, we will route it through the SAOA Content Working Group for consideration before any work begins. If this proposal is successful but the content is not accepted for the SAOA platform, we seek approval to host in DDS Next at CRL.

## Reasons for Consideration\*

Discussions of the left in South Asia tend to dominate on the North--in English, Hindi and Urdu--and to draw upon the experiences of groups such as the Progressive Writers. Politico-literary attention to/from the South and Tamil Nadu tends to gravitate towards regional party focus (Dravidian Movement and subsequent political developments). In this proposal, we seek to geographical, linguistically, and politically diversify our understandings of the South Asian left.

*Cemmalar* has a rich literary and graphic tradition, while *Markcist Mata Italkalai* reveals the inner workings of the Communist Party. Alongside content such as *Nalupu* (in Telugu), these Tamil journals will allow researchers of South India to explore the literary and political past and present of the progressive left in South India.

Francis Cody, Associate Professor of Anthropology & Asian Institute, and the Director of the David Chu Program in Contemporary Asian Studies at the University of Toronto shares that

*“Making Cemmalar and Markcist Mata Italkalai widely available to scholars will not only change our understanding of the Left in Tamil Nadu.  It will provide a much-needed perspective on wider issues in Tamil and Indian politics that has been under-represented in research in Tamil and will furthermore enable a better appreciation for the role of the Left in the development of modern Tamil literature.  My own research on the Arivoli Iyakkam mass literacy movement and associated trends in Tamil literature would have benefited greatly from such a collection.”*

We are fortunate in this project that the CPI(M) TNSC has already granted us permission to digitize these materials. It is rare for SAMP and SAOA projects to reformat material still in copyright and as such, this project is an important chronological intervention in the SAMP and SAOA corpus as both journals under consideration run right up to the contemporary moment, namely 2020 and 2021 respectively.

If this project is successful, we anticipate that the CPI(M) TNSC will grant us similar permissions to digitize their holdings of the journal *Tikkatir* for the years 1978-1993 (the added expense would need a separate, future proposal).

## Authors

n/a

## Publishers

The CPI(M) Tamilnadu State Committee is the publisher and rights holder for this material. We have already received rights permissions from them to digitize and make the *Cemmalar* and *Markcist Mata Italkalai* openly available.

## Proposal Contributors

This proposal is submitted jointly by the G. Sundar of the Roja Muthiah Research Library and Mary Rader of the University of Texas. The University of Texas has already committed $2K in FY22 to jumpstart the project.

# Details and Sources

## Resource Types\*

Serials

## Regions\*

South Asia

## Countries of Origin\*

India

## Major Languages

Tamil

## Source Format\*

Paper

## Target Format

Digital

## Identifiers

OCLC for *Cemmalar*, 5119595

## Links

*Cemmalar* in HathiTrust: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006190268/Home>

## Source and Holdings

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Location** | **Format** | **Holdings/Range** | **Notes** |
| CPI(M) Tamil Nadu State Committee | Print | *Markcist Mata Italkalai* 1991-2020 348 issues 22,272 pages |  |
| CPI(M) Tamil Nadu State Committee | Print | *Cemmalar* 1970-2021 612 issues 39,168 pages |  |

## Source and Holdings Notes

The material is currently in Chennai at the CPI(M) TNSC offices and will be digitized at RMRL.

## Physical Details

RMRL reports that there are no concerns with the physical material.

## Existing Reformatted Materials

A portion of *Cemmalar* (1973-1996) is already ingested in Hathi but those issues are not open access, many of the scans are blurry, have lost content in gutters, and have the thumb/finger problem that was frequent in the Google process. We propose to re-digitize the entire run available in India (1970-2021) and make that content openly available.

## Intellectual Property Considerations

CPI(M) TNSC has granted us permission to digitize and make the content available. Google translation of and original email correspondence below:

-------------------------------------------

K. Balakrishnan  
Secretary of State  
  
19.11.2021  
  
Recipients:  
Director,  
Roja Muthiah Research Library,  
Chennai.  
  
Hello.  
  
The work done by your organization Roja Muthiah Research Library to preserve the dilapidated historical documents is commendable. Especially since you digitize Janashakthi magazines and publish them in the British Library, we are able to pick up and use documents related to the early days of our party.  
   
We request you to digitize our Communist Party of India (Marxist) Tamil Nadu State Committee publications such as Theegadhir Daily, Chemmalar, Marxist Monthly Magazine and provide us with copies. The work done by our movement for the benefit of the working class is embedded in these publications as historical documents. This effort will help to protect them properly and use them for future transportation.  
  
We would like to inform you that we have no objection to digitizing these under your archive scheme, providing us with copies of the original documents and publishing these journals in the Free Research Internet Library for public use.  
  
Congratulations on continuing your work better!  
  
Sincerely,  
K. Balakrishnan  
Secretary of State

---------- Forwarded message ---------  
From: **CPIM TN State Committee** <[cpimtn2009@gmail.com](mailto:cpimtn2009@gmail.com)>  
Date: Fri, 19 Nov 2021 at 12:41  
Subject: இந்திய கம்யூனிஸ்ட் கட்சி (மார்க்சிஸ்ட்) வெளியீடுகளை டிஜிட்டைஸ் செய்வது தொடர்பாக  
To: <[sundargee@gmail.com](mailto:sundargee@gmail.com)>

கே.பாலகிருஷ்ணன்  
மாநில செயலளார்

19.11.2021

பெறுனர்:  
இயக்குனர்,  
ரோஜா முத்தையா ஆய்வு நூலகம்,  
சென்னை.

வணக்கம்.

அழிவுநிலையில் உள்ள வரலாற்று ஆவணங்களைப் பாதுகாப்பதற்காக  உங்கள் நிறுவனம் ரோஜா முத்தையா ஆய்வு நூலகம் ஆற்றி வரும் பணிகள் பாராட்டுக்குரியவை. குறிப்பாக ஜனசக்தி இதழ்களை நீங்கள் டிஜிட்டைஸ் செய்து பிரிட்டிஷ் நூலகத்தில் வெளியிட்டதால், எங்கள் கட்சியின் தொடக்க காலப் பணிகள் குறித்த ஆவணங்களை எங்களால் எடுத்துப் பயன்படுத்த முடிகிறது.

எங்களுடைய இந்தியக் கம்யூனிஸ்ட் கட்சி (மார்க்சிஸ்ட்) தமிழ்நாடு மாநிலக்குழு  வெளியீடுகளான தீக்கதிர் நாளேடு, செம்மலர், மார்க்சிஸ்ட் மாத இதழ்களை உங்கள் நிறுவனம் டிஜிட்டைஸ் செய்து எங்களுக்கு மென்பிரதிகளை வழங்கிடுமாறு உங்களை கேட்டுக்கொள்கிறோம். எங்கள் இயக்கம் தொழிலாளர் வர்க்கத்தின் நலனுக்காக ஆற்றிய பணிகள் வரலாற்று ஆவணங்களாக இந்த வெளியீடுகளில் பொதிந்துள்ளன. அவற்றை உரிய முறையில் பாதுகாத்து எதிர்காலத்துக்குக் கடத்திப் பயன்படுத்துவதற்கு இந்த முயற்சி உதவும்.

உங்களுடைய ஆவணக் காப்பகத் திட்டத்தின் கீழ் இவற்றை டிஜிட்டைஸ் செய்து, எங்களிடம் மூல ஆவணங்களின் மென்பிரதிகளை வழங்கிவிட்டு, இந்த இதழ்களை பொதுப் பயன்பாட்டிற்கான இலவச ஆய்வு இணைய நூலகத்தில் வெளியிட்டுக்கொள்ள எங்களுக்கு ஆட்சேபணை ஏதும் இல்லை என்பதையும் தெரிவித்துக்கொள்கிறோம்.

உங்கள் பணிகள் சிறப்பாகத் தொடர எங்களது வாழ்த்துகள்!  
  
தோழமையுடன்,  
கே.பாலகிருஷ்ணன்  
மாநிலச் செயலாளர்  
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Read: [marxist.tncpim.org](http://marxist.tncpim.org)