

## Formulating a Strategic Framework for Documenting and Preserving Tamil Newspapers Published in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries in the Jaffna District of Sri Lanka

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Newspapers serve as a medium that disseminates information on news, science, education, politics, sports, and social affairs to the public. In that context, Tamil newspapers published in Sri Lanka have gained the trust and support of Tamil-speaking communities. The purpose of preserving newspapers in libraries is due to their historical significance and their value as documents reflecting education, research, and social life. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, most newspapers are published electronically by their publishers, either through databases or on their websites. As a result, libraries have a significantly reduced role in preserving contemporary newspapers. This study aims to identify the existence of Tamil newspapers published in the Jaffna District during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, quantitatively analyze them, and understand the actions taken by libraries to preserve, safeguard, and document these newspapers. To achieve this objective, direct contact was made with libraries in the Jaffna District known to preserve newspapers during the study period. It was found that the University of Jaffna Library and the Jaffna Public Library are the primary institutions preserving these newspapers. Further data were collected through pre-tested questionnaires directed at library staff and librarians working in the newspaper sections of these two libraries. The findings revealed that the Jaffna Public Library preserves, *Indusathanam* (1916–1981), *Eelakesari* (1934–1956), *Udayatharakai* (1841–1980), *Eelanadu* (1981–1986) and *Uthayan* (1985–2025). At the University of Jaffna Library, the following newspapers were preserved mainly: *Indusathanam* (1899–1978), *Pathukavalan* (1935–1970), *Suthanthiran* (1952–1978), *Eelakesari* (1944–1953), etc. Regarding preservation efforts, the analysis found that the Jaffna Public Library had microfilmed *Indusathanam* and *Eelakesari*, and bound monthly editions of other newspapers. The University of Jaffna Library had preserved over 50 newspaper collections categorized annually and by title through binding. University library was involved in digitizing Tamil newspapers. The newspaper collections were proven useful in providing newspaper clipping services, as highlighted by staff in the relevant departments. Furthermore, many respondents emphasized the need for training library staff and librarians in both institutions on newspaper preservation and protection. Noolaham foundation played a significant role in the digitization of Tamil-related documents. Key goals include documenting, protecting, and digitizing knowledge relevant to Tamil-speaking communities in Sri Lanka to make it widely accessible. Based on the insights gained through this data analysis, the study proposes a strategic policy for the preservation and safeguarding of Tamil newspapers.

**Keywords:** *Digitization; Northern Province; Safeguarding; Tamil newspapers*