



EMBARGOED RELEASE

1200hrs, Sunday 5 September 2021

“OUR JOURNEY (2000 – 2020): LOVE TAMIL, SPEAK TAMIL” TLC COMMEMORATES 20 YEARS OF TAMIL LANGUAGE PROMOTION

Singapore, 5 September 2021 – The Tamil Language Council (TLC) is pleased to launch its 20th anniversary commemorative publication titled “Our Journey (2000 – 2020): Love Tamil, Speak Tamil”, which documents the TLC’s strategic collaboration with community partners to promote the active use of the Tamil language in Singapore.

TLC member and the Chairman of the Resource Sub-Committee, Mr Azhagiya Pandiyan worked closely with a team of researchers to complete the project over one and half years.

“Our Journey” captures the impetus for the TLC’s formation, the vision and aspirations of the pioneers and some of the major initiatives and milestones achieved. It also provides a brief insight into the history of Tamil language education and Tamil newspapers in Singapore, highlights the many partners and individuals who have supported the promotion of Tamil in the community. Backed by extensive research and oral interviews, “Our Journey”, published in Tamil and English over 128 pages, will be cherished by our community partners and key stakeholders. (Refer to Annexes A&B)

In his foreword, Mr S Iswaran, Minister for Transport and Minister-in-Charge of Trade Relations, Advisor (2000-2016) to the Tamil Language Council and Guest-of-Honour at the launch of the commemorative publication, notes, “The task of ensuring that a language is preserved and continues to flourish is never-ending. The Tamil language and community in Singapore have come very far. To sustain its continued relevance and vibrancy in Singapore, we must imbue our young with a life-long interest in our Mother Tongue, for they are the future guardians of our language.”

Mr S Manogaran, Chairman of the Tamil Language Council, says, “For 20 years, the Tamil Language Council has worked hard to promote the Tamil language in Singapore. We have nurtured the Tamil Language Festival into a much-anticipated annual highlight for the community, with support from the Tamil Language Learning and Promotion Committee, Lee Kuan Yew Fund for Bilingualism and National Translation Committee. The support of donors and grants enabled capacity building programmes that benefitted especially the young in their language appreciation journey.”

For an online copy of the publication, please visit <https://www.tamil.org.sg/en/about/tamil-language-council-20th-anniversary-commemorative-publication> (URL is live only from 11am on 5 September 2021). Copies for reading and borrowing will be available at all public libraries. For other enquiries, please contact: NHB_TamilLanguageCouncil@nhb.gov.sg

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About the Tamil Language Council

The Tamil Language Council (TLC) was formed in 2000 to promote awareness and greater use of the Tamil language in Singapore. It aims to promote the use of the Tamil language, particularly among the young, and works with government, educational institutions, social organisations, community partners and individuals to achieve these objectives.

Since 2007, the TLC has organised the annual Tamil Language Festival with partner organisations, marking it as a major yearly event in Singapore's cultural calendar. It has enjoyed working with a strong number of partners over the years to present literary, oratorical and cultural events that encourages Festival participants and the community to embrace their Mother Tongue and use it in their daily lives.

Since 2017, the Tamil Language Council has extended additional funding to support and cultivate capacity building initiatives for the youths and students within the community, in an effort to inspire them to use and develop the Tamil language.

2020 marked the 20th anniversary of the Tamil Language Council. The unforeseen onset and prolonged nature of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a delayed 2021 debut of its commemorative publication, "Our Journey (2000 – 2020): Love Tamil, Speak Tamil". The TLC also inaugurated its Tamil Youth Festival in 2021.

Annex A

PUBLICATION SYNOPSIS

“Our Journey (2000 – 2020): Love Tamil, Speak Tamil” 20th Anniversary Commemorative Publication of the Tamil Language Council

While TLC was formed only in 2000, the journey to promote Tamil language in Singapore started well before that, led by prominent pioneers, poets and pundits of Tamil, working independently or in associations and groups established to cater to the needs of the Tamil-speaking community in Singapore.

The publication shares the story of that journey; narrated in the following four main areas:

- The Pioneering Efforts undertaken by various prominent persons, organisations, associations and publications, in Singapore, both pre- and post-independence;
- The Partnerships Forged over the years between TLC and various other Tamil/Indian organisations and associations, all working together to promote the awareness, love, study and greater use of Tamil language among the Tamil community in Singapore;
- The Programmes Organised by TLC and its partners over the years, particularly during the annual Tamil Language Festival period; and
- The Path Forward that needs to be taken to ensure these efforts continue to develop into the future, especially for our youth, by leveraging on a greater use of technology and the various forms of social media.

Annex B

FACT SHEET

- Number of pages in hard-cover book: 128 (Pages in Tamil: 74, Pages in English: 49 {excluding Annex and References})
- Number of hours worked on project by the Publication Team: estimated 1,300 hours
- Number of interviews conducted: 38
- Number of partners featured: 48
- Number of photographs featured in the book: 223
- Oldest photographs used in the book:
 - Photograph of the Methodist Mission at Anglo Tamil School (C1880s), Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore (Refer to Page 10 of Tamil and English sections)
 - Photograph of one of the oldest Tamil newspapers published in Singapore, *Singai Nesan* {27 Jun 1887, Singapore Paper (Reproduction)}, Courtesy of National Library Board (Refer to Page 15 of Tamil section and Page 14 of English section)
- Photograph obtained from outside of Singapore (only ONE):
 - Children of Tamil rubber plantation workers reciting their lessons in school (1949), Courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, United States of America (306-NT-1216B-3) (Refer to Page 10 of Tamil and English sections)
- Meaning of cover design:



The circle signifies focus, strength from within, and movement in the continuous journey to foster the love and use of the language. The colour teal - a revitalising and rejuvenating colour - represents clarity of thought and open communication and collaboration. The hand cradling the blooming mandala flower represents the collective efforts of the Tamil Language Council, its partners and the community at large to continue nurturing and nourishing the growing love for Tamil in Singapore.

- Number of References: 108