
CENTENARY PROJECTS



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

UNION CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

ALUVA

PROJECT 1

The Oral History Archives and Research Centre (OHARC)

*"I was fond of playing basketball. But when the classes end by 3. 30, all the good players of the college will be in the court. So, I decided to cut the last hour and invented a technique for doing so. When the teacher marked the attendance register, I would ask the student sitting next to me to say, 'Present Sir', despite me being in the class. On the first day, realising that he heard a different voice, the teacher looked out for me and found that I was there. This went on for some days, until the teacher no longer felt the need to verify my presence. During the days that followed, I cut the class without the teacher even realising it." - The **Very Rev. Philipose Mar Chrysostom***

*"Only a few girls were there in the class in those days. For the first group, out of 90 students, there were only 5 girls. So, we usually entered the class along with the teacher, fearing pandemonium." - **Mrs. Mary Oommen***

*"When CP Mathew Sir contested for the 1951-52 parliament elections from Muvattupuzha, at the insistence of Pandit Nehru, I campaigned for him in Kaduthuruthy. When he was elected, I felt proud to have participated in the process of nation building. - **Prof. A. M. Chacko***

These oral testimonies are a few minute utterances priced out from the vast sea of people's memory about Union Christian College. The first testimony indicates the tactics of subversion a student of the college employed just so that he could play the game he liked. The second testimony throws light on the ways in which women students negotiated their way through the college, at a time when it was heavily dominated and controlled by men. The third testimony reveals the political commitment exhibited by the students of the college during the first general elections, and the obligation they felt towards their country and people. These testimonies are not mere individual utterances, but texts that are historically relevant, that go beyond the history of a particular institution and embraces the domain of a region's social, political and cultural history. This is what makes these utterances all the more valuable and

hence, it is important to archive them and make them available for posterity lest they be lost forever.

It is towards this end that the present project for developing an oral history archive is being conceived. Generally, histories are crafted based on written documents. Most often, these written documents are produced by a few articulate and literate members in a society, who feel more at home with the practice of writing. This is where oral history becomes important as it provides a space for the unrepresented and unheard voices of history to speak and record their history as they wish to narrate it, and therein contest the dominant historical narratives, thus democratising the discipline and the society at large. Hence, these memories need to be recorded and made available to posterity.

The initial efforts of the present project would be to collect, digitize, preserve and make available memories about the college, but in the long term, to do the same for memories related to themes such as migration, environment, gender, caste, religious and cultural practices, social and political movements, traditional knowledge, public institutions, etc. The spoken memories shared during an interview are from witnesses or participants in an event or a time period, hence, they can be counted as primary material through which history is known and understood. The objective is to develop a pool of such primary historical accounts, first hand, preserved and made available, and eventually, pave the way for establishing one of the pioneering centres of oral history in South Asia.

Objectives

The primary objectives of this project may be laid out as follows:

1. To put in place a system that would record, preserve and disseminate voices from the past and about the past, and therein create an organic resource base for studying and understanding the past.
2. To recognize and acknowledge unheard memories and voices that would otherwise remain invisible or marginalized in a world where the written or the printed word is prioritized.
3. To document histories with all its emotional content.
4. To develop a resource base for research students of history and other disciplines.

5. To train students in oral history.
6. To democratize historical knowledge, wherein, anyone can contribute their memories and access those memories.
7. Towards Total history

Extension from Academics (Target group)

Our perspective regarding extension activities goes on a different level. It is conceived on a different platform, a spring board wherein the jump from academics to extension happening spontaneously. The plan here is to associate with local self governing bodies in tapping oral testimonies on varied themes that would be ultimately digested and in the long run, the creation of a Centre for Oral History Research or Memory Studies. This engagement has the chances of going trans-disciplinary that would ultimately dispel notions of cubicalised learning practices. The PG and UG students of the Department and from other departments like English, Malayalam will be the participant researchers in this service learning process. A section of students from the NSS unit of the college too will be co-opted for the speedy completion of the programme.

Methodology (Action Plan)

The method of collecting oral testimonies would include planned interviews, project related interviews, and open testimonies. Planned interviews would follow the conventional method of asking a pre-determined set of questions to and eliciting answers from a particular interviewee, with a particular agenda in mind. Collection of oral testimonies as part of a project would involve gathering memories revolving around a particular theme that a major or minor research project is concerned with. Open testimonies is primarily concerned with creating a space for people in general, to voluntarily come and share their testimonies on any topic of their choosing and in any narrative structure that they would like to employ.

Local History and Photo Archives

Complementing the oral history archives, the project also proposes to constitute a local history and photo archives. The local history archive would undertake the digitisation and chemical preservation of documents related to the history of the college, which

includes college magazines, letters, reports, memoirs, etc. Meanwhile, the photo archive would undertake the collection, digitisation and indexing of photographs related to the college and region around it. This would be done with the assistance of retired faculty, alumni and others living in and around the college. Photographs are texts which narrate the past and are evidences to understand changing fashion, dress, jewellery, landscapes and buildings.

Expected Outcome

In the long term, this project hopes to digitize the entire written documents, testimonies, and photographs on the college, and therein, convert it into a virtual archives with provisions for online access and consultation, so that it may be yet another addition to the rich history of the college and the times gone by; to collaborate with national and international centres, and begin short term courses on oral history; to develop the archive into a premier centre for Oral history research in the country; and to offer consultancy services to other institutions in opening oral history archives in their own institutional settings thus making it one of our **Best Practices**.

PROJECT 2

Centenary Erudite Lecture Series

The Centenary Erudite Lecture series aims to showcase lectures from leading national and International high profile scholars and eminent teachers from all over the world, speaking on topics of their choice, in their areas of research.

It would engender a scholarly environment of unique learning experience and provide better opportunities for the talented young students in the department while opening up opportunities of research collaboration for teachers besides raising the profile of the College and Department.

The target audience would also include leading researchers, students, from all over India in addition to our own students.

These lectures provide students an exposure to listen to eminent scholars from various domains. They can go a long way in motivating students to aspire higher and learn better.

The Centenary Erudite Lecture Series is successful in bringing in many renowned academics from within the country. The first lecture was delivered by on 5th September by J. Devika, Professor, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum a path breaker in the area of Gender Studies. Since then, several distinguished scholars have delivered the Centenary Lecture series, viz., Prof. Gopinath Ravindran, Vice Chancellor of Kannur University, Prof. Rajan Gurukkal, Vice Chairman, Kerala Higher Education Council, Prof. Pius Malekandathil, JNU, and Prof. Mridula Mukherjee, JNU.

PROJECT 3

Archaeological Museum

Introduction

The UCC Archaeological Museum was founded in 1975. It is an educational museum with sections from Prehistory to Modern history. There are archaeological artefacts from south India and western India including Harappan. The ethnographic collection is from Indonesia and north east India. Besides these, there are terracotta images and models in this museum.

As the UCC centenary falls in 2021 this museum is nearing half a century. During this period the Museum has not only used by the students of the department of History but also by several school students and teachers during their training programs. The collection has been used for research by twenty doctoral scholars. A journal article on the Iron Age Beads in the museum was published in 2019. Another journal article on the Iron Age iron objects will be published this year.

Centenary vision of UCC Archaeological Museum

Something more than the ordinary has to drive this small old museum with priceless collection and the centenary vision has been drawn up by keeping in mind the long-term needs of the discipline, in tune with the New Educational Policies and pedagogical shifts and in the context of legalisations governing archaeological museums, and expanding the footfall in the museum and its scope in both formal and non-formal learning. The five functions of the museum, collections and engaging with audience particularly from the field of education has to be driving force in the centenary vision

Stages

I Setting up a Museum Committee with experts from outside including one of the founders Prof. Rajan Gurukkal

II Enhancing space for the museum with sufficient space for storage of the 2000 objects acquired from Kulangara house. In view of the proposed MA Course in

Archaeology and Material Culture Studies materializing, excavations have to be conducted as part of curriculum and material excavated has to be accommodated.

III Engaging with audience within education sector, extension activities for nearby schools through annual exhibitions and extension lecture without students

IV Increasing virtual presence of the museum by starting YouTube channel with small videos on each artefact by experts in each area to be identify by the committee

V Publication of the catalogue of the museum

Timeframe (December 2020 to December 2021)

I By December, 2020

II By August 2021

III By August 2021

IV By December, 2020

V By December 2021

PROJECT(4)

MA in Archaeology and Material Culture Studies**Background**

The Department of History, U.C College has been promoting the study of Archaeology since its inception and Archaeological Museum was founded in 1975 which was the first such museum in any college or university in Kerala. A Diploma in Archaeology was started in 1996 and this was the first archaeology course in Kerala. At present, there is a conservation lab and a library attached to the museum. The UGC sponsored Advanced Diploma in Archaeology & Museology began in 2002 and is the only dual degree cum diploma program under Mahatma Gandhi University. One of the faculty on roll has an M.A. and Ph.D. in Archaeology & Ancient History.

These pioneering efforts by the department were in tune with the tradition of U C College 'leading than following'. In continuation of that tradition, a **PG Program in Archaeology and Heritage Management** was proposed to the Governing Body in August 2017 by Dr. Jenee Peter and forwarded by the then Head of the Department Dr. Sebastian Joseph. But it could not be taken up with the University. This is a golden opportunity as the Government itself is mooted new generation courses. Hence the department would like to propose a new course **MA in Archaeology and Material Culture Studies**.

In the recent years, there has been a strong demand from students of both B.A. History and other UG disciplines in UC College to start a PG course in Archaeology as it can reach out to students from both science and social science streams. Archaeology papers are already offered by the Mahatma Gandhi University (B.A History Model I) and our own students do the three-year Advanced Diploma in Archaeology and Museology. Besides, there are nearly 150 students enrolled in four colleges affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University under BA History and Archaeology programme. At present, there is only one centre offering PG in Archaeology (Department of Archaeology, University of Kerala).

Taking into consideration the future educational needs and employment opportunities of prospective students, the Department of History proposes to start MA in Archaeology and Material Culture Studies in the aided/self-financing stream by the next academic year as one of its Centenary projects.

Infrastructure

The current infrastructure in the college can support not only a flagship MA programme but also cater to future research as well as strengthen the existing undergraduate program in Archaeology and Museology. The current infrastructure includes a) Archaeological Museum b) Conservation Laboratory c) Archaeology Library with nearly 300 books and journal copies and c) ongoing and completed archaeological projects.

The Department of History has been facing exigencies in running the add on dual degree diploma program which started in 2002. In recent years particularly after the introduction of CBCSS in undergraduate courses and students and faculty finding it difficult to address the demands and aspirations of the students who come from far and wide to study this course. With a post graduate department in place, Archaeological studies can be taken up seamlessly forward. The conservation Laboratory set up with UGC funds (2002-2007) can be spruced up for the basic practical with the support of the science departments of the college and the PG program is conceived as a transdisciplinary course as suggested in the GO dated 10 June 2020.

The Archaeological Museum has a good collection of artefacts from all periods of the past and it recently acquired a collection of 2000 artefacts. Annual exhibition materials are available to support the Material Culture Studies aspects in this MA program.

Future infrastructure requirements include space for classrooms, expanded museum and conservation laboratory considering provisions for both in person and online learning.

Project -5

Snapshot on Historiography

A series of book talks from faculty, students and alumni of the department of history under the rubric ***Snapshots on Historiography*** for transmitting the values of critical history as we see in great works. This programme aims at inspiring people from all walks of life to read good and analytical histories. As we select books that mark departures in historiography, the project would certainly disseminate critical thinking based on latest theoretical and empirical perspectives on the past. Eventually, the programme would transform as an epistemological engagement in the digital spaces that bring in debates and discussion. On an extension plane, the programme would entail popular and people centric debates on what is written on their own pasts in various spatial and temporal dimensions.

Project- 6

Edited Volume on History: Assorted Histories

An edited volume on various kinds of history with inputs from faculty of the *department and other institutions would be brought out from a premiere* publishing firm. This volume is expected to contain articles on intersectional fields in historiography like gender, oral, film, new political and environmental histories.

Project-7

One Hundred Memories on UC

A digital repository consisting of one hundred memories connected with UC College with representation from people belonging to all sections of the society. A democratic knowledge perspective on UC College is the ultimate objective of this project. Taking cues from the poor and the vulnerable along with the elitist notions of the *Ucean* past the project would focus on the holistic imagination of the institution culled out from memories.

Project-8

Founders' Gallery

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

- **June 1921- June 2021** It will be a fitting tribute to the founders and the pioneering teachers, students and administrators.
- Primary purpose is to engage students with the history of U C College.
- Secondary purpose is to engage old students with the history, heritage and legacy of U C College.

OBJECTIVES

1. To exhibit the legacy of UC College
2. To draw insights from the functioning of the college for 100 years

RESOURCES NEEDED

1. 200 sq.feet space in UP Block the oldest building with a temporary exhibition of the spiritual vision in the chapel

2. Website, virtual gallery with server space for uploading important documents for the public to access in real time

TIME FRAME

Steps to check for

1. October- Jan 2021: Background work
2. January 2021: First committee meeting
3. February 2021: Second committee meeting
4. March 2021: Dedicate virtual gallery
5. April 2021: Prepare permanent gallery, storyboard for the gallery, gather objects, display, texts
6. May 2021: Dedicate permanent gallery

Project 9

Revisit

Lecture Series by former students and faculty members of the Department of History

Revisit means to come back to or visit again. Revisits are often made in various disciplines to consider again a perspective through systematic methods of criticism and analysis. Revisit programme of the department of history is conceived with the aim of learning from their former students and faculty members, the perspective departures that they have made through their studies and other academic activities after leaving this institution. The revisitor engages in a three dimensional act here through revisiting the institution, revealing the results of several revisits to one's discipline and making it possible for us to do such revisits. The Revisit lectures were delivered by Prof Raian Gurukkal, Advocate Jayshankar and other Alumni. The last **REVISIT** Lecture was on- *Gender Studies In India: Possibilities and Challenges*- by Dr. Sreerekha M.S, from Virginia University, US.

Project 10

SEMINAR HALL

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

The Department of History purports to place its long term perspective within the rubric of higher education sensing the needs of the contemporary society as well as the futuristic demands. Therefore as part of its Perspective plan, the Department has embarked on an innovative series of Pedagogical strategies and interventions like 'History Connect which envisages taking of classes to a new level through the use of ICT which facilitates access to online lectures of eminent historians. Flipped class rooms as an effective pedagogical tool for augmenting debates, that would raise the cognitive levels of the students to new heights as the student is given advance lectures through a visual or audio method etc. for sharpening and re-orienting historical studies. We are also planning to strengthen our Advanced Diploma in Archaeology and Museology (ADAM) course through ICT enabled support to teaching.

Objectives

- To boost our efforts to upgrade the learning environment and make History Teaching come alive, using modern technological aids
- To establish a well-furnished seminar hall with the latest technical amenities for helping students to make effective presentations.
- To provide a perfect ambience for meetings, seminars, workshops, symposiums and research paper presentations.

Hence, for the realisation of the above, we propose to convert our Reading room into a perfectly designed, state of the art Seminar hall, fully air-conditioned with a seating capacity of 60, equipped with latest technology based LCD Projector, white-boards for delivering lectures, and Home Theatre for providing services such as video conferencing, webinars, a sound system audio-visual material, Interfaces for facilitating multimedia presentations by the students, the faculty and the visiting scholars.

Expected outcome

The **Expected outcome** of the Conference hall is to facilitate promotion of knowledge through interaction and exchange among students and scholars that ultimately benefit the society at large.