

Documenting and Archiving the Ramleela Legacy in Trinidad¹:

Practice and Prospects

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Abstract

This paper examines Ramleela as a component of our Caribbean cultural heritage. It attempts to inform on the current practice of Ramleela and the extent to which this cultural expression is documented and archived in Trinidad. It also proposes strategies for documenting, archiving, facilitating access to researchers and conserving this heritage. The proposals put forward will be beneficial to librarians, archivists, museum curators, Ramleela practitioners, institutions, and other stakeholders concerned with the preservation of any intangible form of cultural heritage. Data for this paper was collected from online library catalogues and electronic databases, websites, telephone and email reference queries, in-person interviews, and site visits to institutions. It should be noted that this research was limited to the island of Trinidad, although there is a small Hindu presence in Tobago.

Keywords: Kumaree Ramtahal; Marilyn Kumar; Ramleela; Ramlila; Ramdilla; Ramayana; Trinidad; Hindu Festivals; Cultural Heritage; Documenting and Archiving.

Introduction

Ramleela also spelt as *Ramlila* or *Ramdilla* is a theatrical performance of one of the Hindu epics, the Ramayana, originally written in Sanskrit but re-written as the Ramacharitmanas in the Awadhi dialect of Hindi by Tulsidas in the sixteenth century (Riggio 2010). The Ramcharitmanas or Ramayana – the main scripture of Hindus in Trinidad - tells the story of Rama, one of the Hindu forms of God, who lives and walks the path of duty and righteousness. The Oxford English Dictionary defines Ramlila or Ramleela as a Hindu folk drama, representing episodes from the Ramayana and commemorating the victory of Rama over Ravana (Oxford University

¹ The country is the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, however the scope of the project is specific to the larger of the two islands, Trinidad.

Press 2016). Writers such as Riggio (2010) refers to Ramleela as the play that enacts episodes from the life of Lord Ram while Hess (1988, 236) views the Ramleela performance as a *sacred drama*. In Trinidad, Ramleela is performed as a form of folk theatre in the community and it maintains the portrayal of the significant events from the Ramayana. The performance which is free, takes place over an extended period, usually nine to eleven days, for approximately two to three hours each evening, in an open public space.

Ramayana – the Story in Brief

Below is the authors' brief adaption of Daman's (2014) summary of the epic Ramayana:

King Dasharatha of Ayodhya had three wives – Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi, who gave birth to four sons Rama (Kausalya), Lakshmana, Shatrugana (Sumitra), and Bharatha (Kaikeyi) respectively. Rama was bestowed the title of Crown Prince by his father. Rama got married to Sita (also spelt Seeta), the daughter of King Janak. In the Rama household, a self-seeking maid called Manthara, influenced Kaikeyi to believe that her son Bharatha should become king instead of Rama. Kaikeyi, who was granted two boons by King Dasharatha for once saving his life, asked her husband to let her son Bharatha become the King and to exile Rama to the forest for 14 years. Her request was granted and Rama went into exile accompanied by Sita and his brother Lakshmana. While in exile, a demoness who was attracted to Rama, attacked Sita. Lakshmana cut off the demoness' nose and the news reached the demoness' evil brother Ravana, King of Lanka, who took revenge by kidnapping Sita.

Rama and Lakshmana met Sugriva and Hanuman (Hindu God of Wind) during their search for Sita. Hanuman brilliantly rescued Sita who was held captive by Ravana in Lanka. Through much trials and tribulations, Rama was victorious in destroying the evil Ravana with the help of Sugriva, Hanuman and Lakshmana. Rama returned to the Kingdom of Ayodhya with Sita and Lakshmana. He was welcomed back joyfully into the kingdom as the embodiment of righteousness. Rama's brother Bharatha, returned the throne to him and Rama was crowned the King of Ayodhya.

The Ramleela Legacy - From India to Trinidad

Indentured labourers were brought to Trinidad from India between 1845 and 1917. The 143, 939 men, women and children who came were mostly Hindus (Brereton 1996, 59). They brought their culture with them, including the Ramleela tradition. The Ramleela began in Trinidad soon after the arrival of the indentured labourers, in fact within the first forty years of their coming to Trinidad (Balkaransingh 2010, 95). Even under the harsh conditions of indentureship, they were able to maintain the traditional performance of Ramleela, and even non-Hindus participated (Crowley 1957, 822). The performance was organised and performed by the community with the players providing the costumes and props (Klass 1961, 159). This is still true today as Ramleela performances take place throughout Trinidad, in urban as well as rural areas – from Aranguez in the north to Sangre Grande in the east, from Charlieville, Felicity and Dow Village in central, and further south in Palmiste and Avocat. At present, there are thirty-seven Ramleela groups registered with the National Ramleela Council of Trinidad and Tobago Inc. (NRCTT Inc.) which is the main body that plans and organises annual Ramleela performances in the country (NRCTT 2015). During this research, we found a few other established Ramleela groups that were not registered with the NRCTT Inc.

Ramleela Performance in Trinidad – Matilda Ramleela Group

The Ramleela ends its activities with the burning of Ravana's effigy which symbolises good over evil. The popular Hindu festival of Divali, celebrating the *Festival of Lights*, follows the Ramleela performances.

The Matilda Ramleela Group of Princes Town, performs Ramleela for nine days in the Matilda Recreation Ground. The last performance is usually held on a Sunday, facilitating attendance by the public. One organiser, Kissoonndath (2016), stated that the main drama performed each day at the Matilda Ramleela Group's 2016 events were as follows:

- Day 1: Birth of Rama, birth of Sita
- Day 2: Birth of Hanuman
- Day 3: Rama and Lakshmana's departure with guru, marriage of Rama and Sita

- Day 4: Kaikeyi and Manthara; Rama's exile for 14 years; death of King Dasharatha
- Day 5: In exile, Rama's encounters with Anasuya, Shabari and Shurpanakha
- Day 6: Sita, the golden deer and Lakshmana's Rekha; Sita's kidnapping by Ravana
- Day 7: Rama's meeting with Hanuman; Hanuman's meeting with Sita in Lanka;
Burning of Lanka
- Day 8: Building of bridge to Lanka; Battle in Lanka; Lakshmana's fatal injury, Hanuman carrying the entire mountain with herbs
- Day 9: Last day - Battle in progress until conclusion; Death of Ravana's 2 brothers;
Rama's destruction of Ravana (see Figure 1);
Burning of effigy of Ravana (see Figure 2);
Return of Rama to Ayodhya and the Kingdom of Ayodhya

Figure 1: Characters - Ravana, Shiva, Rama at Ramleela 2016



Photo Courtesy: Matilda Ramleela Group

Figure 2: Ravana's Effigy Before Being Burnt



Photo Courtesy: Matilda Ramleela Group

Recognition of Ramleela

The Ramleela, the traditional folk theatrical performance of the Ramayana in India, was proclaimed by UNESCO in November 2005 as a *Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* (UNESCO Press 2005). Several communities in Trinidad have been performing the Ramleela every year, for approximately 171 years, as a prelude to the Hindu festival of Divali. The Ramleela of Trinidad has retained much of the characteristics of the traditional expression and performance and it can be considered as an oral and intangible heritage of humanity. The cultural practice was also recognised by the 1992 Nobel Laureate for Literature Derek Walcott. He opened his Nobel lecture with reference to the Ramleela in Felicity, Trinidad, and compared the Trinidad Ramleela with the Ramleela of India, asserting that “the performance was like a dialect, a branch of its original language, an abridgement of it, but not a distortion or even a reduction of its epic scale” (Walcott 1992).

Ramleela as Cultural Expression in Trinidad

The Trinidad and Tobago 2011 Population and Housing Census Demographic Report indicates that 35.4% of the population is of Indian origin (Trinidad and Tobago. CSO 2012). The report states that Hindus constitute the second largest religious group. Ramleela is a significant component of this religious group and so should be considered important to the cultural

heritage of Trinidad. As such, this cultural expression should be properly documented and archived for the present and future generations. This folk theatre has been a remarkable retention of East Indian cultural heritage from the time of the arrival of indentured labourers in Trinidad from India in 1845.

Documenting and Archiving the Ramleela Legacy in Trinidad

Shah (2015, 272) defines documentation as the process of “identification and recording” of all relevant physical and functional information about cultural heritage assets with a view of formulating an appropriate strategy for its conservation and management. Documenting can take the form of a record of an event, person or thing so that the information will be preserved for future retrieval. The record or document may be in print, electronic or in fact, any “information-carrying medium, regardless of format” (Feather and Sturges 2003, 144) that serves as an official record. The term ‘archive’ is used as a place or collection containing records, documents, or other materials of historical interest (Farlax Inc. 2016). The function of the archive, in a library context, is “to preserve in perpetuity, the documents it contains” (Feather and Sturges 2003, 22).

The Ramleela legacy in Trinidad can be preserved through proper documentation, in all aspects and forms, as well as through archiving documents, artefacts and recordings of historical and heritage interest.

Research Methodology

Aim of Study

This study was done to determine whether the Ramleela performance was being documented and archived in Trinidad and to ascertain the extent of documentation available. The data collection, undertaken between 2015 - 2016, sought to determine the availability of primary and secondary resources, in both print and non-print formats, including, books, theses, brochures and other ephemeral materials, articles from periodicals including newspapers, resources in online databases and websites, photographs and images, audio and video

recordings, interviews, scripts and Ramleela costumes and artefacts. The findings were used to make recommendations and proposals for a plan to document and preserve the cultural legacy of Ramleela.

Data Collection

The mode of data collection comprised the following:

- Searches of online library catalogues, electronic databases and websites using variant spellings 'Ramleela', 'Ramlila' and also 'Ramdilla' to broaden the results;
- Telephone and e-mail reference queries;
- Telephone and in-person interviews
- Visits to institutions

The Sample

We investigated resources available from the following broad and extensive range of information centers and sources (See Figure 3) which included:

- 23 public libraries of the National Library and Information Systems Authority (NALIS)
- Libraries in two tertiary level institutions: The University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine and the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT)
- National Heritage Library. Although this is a NALIS library it was treated separately because of its mandate to collect and preserve the heritage of Trinidad and Tobago
- National Museum and Art Gallery of Trinidad and Tobago
- Indian Caribbean Museum of Trinidad and Tobago (ICMtt)
- National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago
- Five Ramleela Groups - NRCTT Inc., Pandavas, Dow Village, Avocat, Knox St and Environs Sports and Cultural Association
- Three Hindu organisations - Swaha International, Hindu Prachar Kendra (HPK) and Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha (SDMS)
- Trinidad and Tobago Government websites

Figure 3: Data Collection Methods used for Searching the Different Institutions/Sources Investigated

INSTITUTIONS/ SOURCES INVESTIGATED	DATA COLLECTION METHODS				
	Online Catalogues/ Electronic Subscription Databases	Telephone/E -mail Reference Queries	Websites	Telephone /In person Interviews	Site Visits
NALIS Public Libraries	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
UWI Libraries	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
UTT Libraries	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
National Heritage Library	No	Yes	No	No	No
National Museum and Art Gallery of Trinidad & Tobago	No	Yes	No	No	No
Indian Caribbean Museum of Trinidad & Tobago	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
5 Ramleela Groups	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Hindu Organisations (SDMS, HPK and Swaha International)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Trinidad and Tobago Government Ministries	No	No	Yes	No	No

Findings

The findings of this research are restricted to the type of resources found, if any, in the following categories: print, non-print and electronic/online resources. A summary of the quantity or extent of resources available is presented below for each type of institution/information source or holding.

National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS) 23 Public Libraries:

A search of the integrated catalogue of the NALIS' public libraries, using variant terms 'Ramleela' and 'Ramlila' resulted in only 6 print items (NALIS 2016). Telephone reference queries were made, with responses received from 17 libraries. Of these, 4 libraries held newspaper articles and 2 held brochures. None of the 17 libraries archived photographs, images, audio visual materials or Ramleela costumes.

Tertiary Level Institutions:

The libraries' holdings of two tertiary level institutions namely the UWI, St. Augustine Campus and the UTT were examined. Apart from searching the libraries' catalogues and electronic databases, personal visits and physical searches were also made.

UWI Libraries:

Through catalogue searches and site visits, investigations were made at two (2) UWI libraries, namely the Alma Jordan Library (AJL) and the Department of Creative & Festival Arts Library. Print and non-print materials were found in both libraries. At the AJL, print resources included 14 Caribbean Studies projects, 4 post graduate theses, a small selection of other printed materials in books, magazines and calendars. With respect to non-print items, a popular and well-used video recording entitled "A Ramleela" was found. The AJL's electronic databases were searched and returned 9 peer reviewed articles, and a search of the UWI's Institutional Repository revealed 8 records (UWI. Alma Jordan Library 2016). The Department of Creative & Festival Arts Library held some conference papers, videos of the popular "A Ramleela"

production (which is heavily used by students as a course resource), a Master's thesis and some newspaper articles.

UTT Libraries:

A catalogue search was done across 8 UTT Campus libraries' using the terms "Ramleela" and "Ramlila" individually in two searches but only 2 results were found (UTT Libraries 2016). Of the 8 UTT libraries contacted, 3 archived newspaper clippings and 1 had images. No audio-visual materials were found in the UTT libraries' collections.

The National Heritage Library:

The National Heritage Library which is responsible for documenting and archiving West Indian material held some booklets and newspaper articles based on a reference query made to the department.

National Museum and Art Gallery of Trinidad and Tobago

Through a telephone reference query to this institution, it was revealed that there were no materials archived on Ramleela.

The Indian Caribbean Museum of Trinidad and Tobago:

Through a site visit made to the museum, it was revealed that only a few print resources were available at the museum. Of interest was a single copy of the Ramayana (printed in 1903) as well as a few books with selected information on Ramleela.

National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago:

Telephone reference queries and searches of the online catalogue were made but no documentation was available.

Ramleela Groups:

Telephone interviews, searches on an existing website and site visits were made to 5 Ramleela groups in Trinidad and these were the findings:

1. *NRCTT Inc.:*

The NRCTT Inc. held print materials consisting of programmes of Ramleela events, performance scripts, brochures, invitations, minutes, reports and some audio visual materials. The website contains historical and current information on Ramleela including its history in Trinidad, video clips of presentations made at its First International Ramleela Conference held in 2014 as well as photographs of other Ramleela events (NRCTT Inc. 2015).

2. *Pandavas Ramleela Group:*

A telephone interview was made with a member of the Pandavas Ramleela Group which is located in Palmiste, south Trinidad. Although this group does not have an organised collection of materials archived, they do have personal collections of photos, videos and some costumes which are kept by the group to be re-used for future events.

3. *Dow Village Ramleela Group:*

The Dow Village Ramleela Group, one of the oldest and popular groups, archives Ramleela costumes, crowns, print and audio-visual materials on Ramleela but they are kept in personal collections.

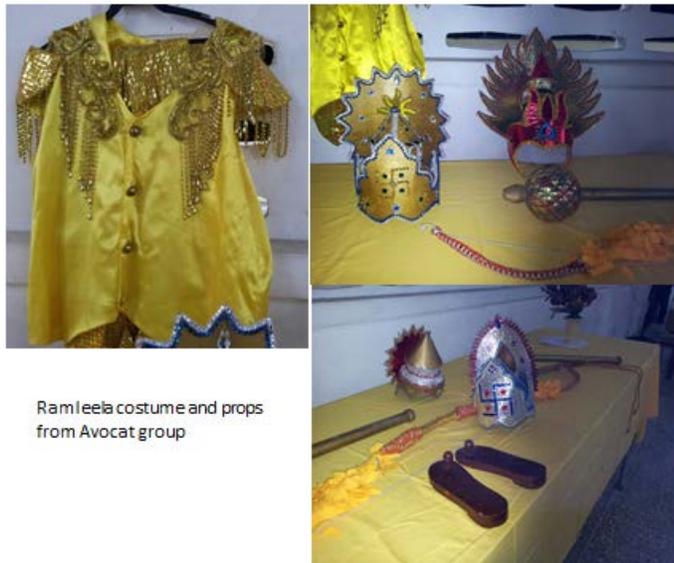
4. *Knox St. and Environs Sports and Cultural Association:*

This is a community group based in San-Fernando. Scripts for the plays, many photographs, video-recordings and costumes for re-use, are held in the personal collections of its members.

5. *Avocat Ramleela Group:*

This group has photos and videos which are kept in personal collections. Some costumes are kept for re-use. Figure 4 shows images of some of the Ramleela costumes that are used by the players of the group.

Figure 4: Ramleela Costumes



Ramleela costume and props
from Avocat group

Photo Courtesy: Marilyn Kumar

Hindu Organisations:

Three Hindu organisations were researched: The Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha (SDMS), the Hindu Prachar Kendra (HPK) and Swaha International.

The SDMS held some print and non-print resources comprising some books, magazines, and audio-visual materials. The HPK maintained a very good documentation and archiving practice which include brochures, photographs of the Ramleela workshops and productions, videos, newspaper articles and costumes of the Baal Ramdilla celebrations which are re-used. Swaha International has 10 Ramleela groups within its ambit. It does not have any organised documentation or archiving system at present. There are flyers, brochures and other print materials but they are kept as e-copies for reuse, on a personal computer. There are also newspaper articles which are not really organised and video recordings in personal collections. Swaha's website contained some information on Ramleela.

Trinidad and Tobago Government Websites:

Through website searches of government websites, only 4 records were found on the Trinidad and Tobago Government portal, TT Connect (Trinidad and Tobago. TT Connect 2016).

Discussion

This research set forth to find out the extent to which there was evidence of documenting and archiving of Ramleela resources in two tertiary institutions, public libraries, national archives, museums and other key organisations in Trinidad. Although Ramleela has been celebrated in Trinidad for approximately 171 years, the findings reveal that documentation and archival practices exist but were not very extensive. There were more secondary than primary source data available. There was no evidence of any formalised archiving system or special collections dedicated to Ramleela in any of these organisations.

Of the two tertiary institutions reviewed, the UWI libraries had a larger collection of documents. At the UWI libraries, there was evidence of documentation based on scholarly research done by students spread over the years 1972 to 2011, as well as other print and non-print resources, including articles in subscribed electronic databases. A 2010 doctoral thesis held at UTT focused on *Ramleela and other Indo-Trinidadian Festivals*. It is hoped that the UTT Ramlila Institute at the Southern Academy of Performing Arts (SAPA) which was launched in April 2013 to disseminate knowledge about the rich cultural and historical tradition of Ramleela, will fulfill its mandate when it becomes operational. Since UWI and UTT offer courses in Cultural Studies and Performing Arts, collection development in these libraries should also include Ramleela resources.

Within the public library system of NALIS and the National Heritage Library there were some Ramleela related materials but there is need for a focus on collection development in this area. Since Ramleela is celebrated at the community level, with over 37 groups spread across the country, it would be convenient to have related documentation so that Ramleela groups can readily access information in the respective public libraries within their communities. Moreover, the National Heritage Library can also consider developing a special collection on Ramleela. The National Museum and Art Gallery of Trinidad and Tobago and the National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago did not reveal any documentation or archiving practices on

Ramleela. It is noted that much of the Ramleela information is held in personal collections of persons associated with the community groups. It therefore suggests that these groups can either partner with the national institutions including the universities to deposit their materials for wider access, or seek guidance from these institutions to ensure adequate description, access and preservation of these resources.

The Indian Caribbean Museum of Trinidad and Tobago, NCRTT Inc., Ramleela groups and the Hindu organisations appeared to have some documentation and archiving practices. Of the three Hindu organisations, the HPK had an organised documentation and archiving system in place. However, there is still need for more collection development and archiving to be done by all these organisations as these entities attract researchers who call upon them for information. It is notable that some of these organisations host websites and produce annual magazines and newsletters on Ramleela. They can continue to exploit the use of technology to create digital images and archive documents to allow for more visibility and online accessibility. The NRCTT Inc., as the main Ramleela body in the country, also needs to develop a formal archive and a more robust system of acquiring and preserving Ramleela records.

With respect to the government ministries, there was little or no documentation available on these websites. Since visitors and researchers may very often search these sites to access culturally-related information, it is necessary to provide information that reflects the cultural diversity of the country. In terms of availability of documentation in the holdings investigated in this study, 70% held print resources, 30% had non-print resources and 50% had information available electronically via databases or websites. Figure 5 provides an overview of the availability and types of documentation found in the organisations reviewed in this study.

Figure 5: Types of Ramleela-related Documentation Available in Selected Holdings

Holdings	Print Resources Available	Non-Print Resources (Audio Visual) Available	Electronic/Website Resources Available
NALIS Public Libraries	Yes	No	NA
UWI Libraries	Yes	Yes	Yes
UTT Libraries	Yes	No	Yes
National Heritage Library	Yes	No	NA
National Museum and Art Gallery of Trinidad & Tobago	No	No	No
Indian Caribbean Museum of Trinidad & Tobago	Yes	No	No
National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago	No	No	No
Ramleela Groups	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hindu Organisations (SDMS, HPK, Swaha International)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Trinidad and Tobago Government Websites	NA	NA	Yes

Prospects for Preserving the Ramleela Legacy in Trinidad

Recommendations

Since Ramleela is recognised internationally as an oral and intangible heritage of humanity, there should be a greater thrust in Trinidad towards documenting and archiving this rich heritage. This can be achieved through planned collection development and archiving as well as proper cataloguing, classification and indexing practices. With the advent of digitisation, interesting possibilities are emerging for documenting, archiving, accessing and disseminating

cultural heritage information on Ramleela. Here are some practical cost-effective suggestions that can be considered:

- A designated Ramleela special collection can be established in collaboration with libraries, archives and other Ramleela organisations such as the NRTT Inc., to ensure that Ramleela costumes, artefacts, printed materials, oral history interviews, audio and video recordings are preserved for posterity.
- Both primary and secondary Ramleela resources can be part of a digital archive or museum with open access to the public. In addition, social media tools can be used by Ramleela groups to create an archival repository featuring a digital photo and video collection of activities. Links can be created to other 'cultural' websites.
- Research on Ramleela should be actively encouraged at both the UWI and the UTT, especially since they offer programmes in Cultural Studies and Performing Arts. Once the UTT Ramlila Institute at SAPA becomes operational, it should be one of the key repositories for Ramleela resources. Further research on the Ramleela groups in Trinidad and the island of Tobago is also required. Research can focus on the organisation and management of groups with respect to participants: gender, religion, role of the community and the religious priest or pundit. The findings of this research may shed some light on the social structure and hierarchy of Ramleela groups in the country.
- There must be a determined collection development thrust, by libraries, museums, archives, public and academic libraries to acquire both primary and secondary resources, including oral histories, scripts, interviews, manuscripts, theses, unpublished works, artefacts, books, newspaper articles, conference proceedings, theses, ephemeral materials and audio visual recordings.
- There must be an aggressive outreach program by libraries, museums, archives and other institutions to encourage research and documentation at all levels – in the Ramleela communities, primary and secondary schools and universities. Moreover, Ramleela practitioners can partner with local authors to document and publish children

stories on Ramleela in Trinidad so that education on this folk performance can start at a tender age.

- Librarians and other information professionals involved in acquiring and organising cultural heritage materials should create bibliographic records meeting indexing and classification standards so that they can be easily searchable and retrievable. In addition, there should be local-themed subject headings for cultural heritage records to facilitate improved retrieval.
- The development of an Oral History/Storytelling Programme to record all aspects of the Ramleela production is required. Key actors and stakeholders involved in Ramleela can be interviewed and videotaped. Digital recordings of Ramleela can include voices from the Ramleela arena, popular Ramleela families and players with biographical information, narrations of the players during the enactments/performances, music, dance, construction process of the effigy of Ravana, wire-bending, artefact and costume making, etc., all of which are part of the wonderful spectacle of Ramleela. These recordings can be made available digitally from culturally related websites.
- Training on documenting and archiving records should be spearheaded by the National Archives and the NRCTT Inc. for members of Ramleela groups throughout the country. This will enable them to become more aware about the proper practice and importance of safeguarding heritage information, in all formats.

Limitations of Study

The limitations of this study were:

- It was restricted to data collection from libraries, archives, museums and selected organisations in Trinidad.
- Some of the data collected were responses from telephone queries and interviews, and the assumption is that the persons who provided the information were well-informed about Ramleela and the resources that were available in their institutions' collections.
- There was no response to a few telephone/email queries.

- Catalogue search results would have been affected by subject headings assigned to resources during cataloguing. The term “Ramleela” as subject heading may not have been used as a local subject term during cataloguing.
- Catalogue searching omits those items held in library collections, but not yet catalogued, which may include resources such as brochures, magazines, newspaper articles and audio/visual media.
- Variants in spelling may have resulted in inaccurate search results when search terms were used.
- The lack of proper documenting, archiving, cataloguing, classification and indexing practices by some of these institutions may have contributed to the modest results found.

Conclusion

This study revealed that documenting and archiving of Ramleela-related materials exist in Trinidad but it is not extensive. There is a lack of primary source materials such as oral history, interviews and video recordings of key Ramleela practitioners, both past and present. These types of recordings must be actively encouraged in order to ensure that the stories of the pioneers in this field are recorded and archived for posterity.

There must also be a greater collection development initiative at all levels, particularly with respect to the acquisition of non-print resources. Since scholarly literature on Ramleela is welcomed, the onus is on researchers and students of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, who undertake projects, research and publications in this area, to lodge copies in libraries, archives and other heritage repositories. This practice would pave the way for other researchers to have access to a greater body of work on Ramleela.

There is also need to develop and adopt formalised and effective documenting and archiving practices across all the organisations reviewed in this research. Further research on the status of documenting and archiving in the island of Tobago is also required. This study did not attempt a comparative analysis with the documentation of other festivals, however it would be

informative to see the extent to which other festivals are documented in related institutions. Additionally discussions with the personnel responsible for collection development in these institutions can shed light on successes and challenges involved in identifying and collecting resources related to the festival.

As the interest in heritage research increases, there will always be a need to access and retrieve related information. This makes it necessary for librarians, archivists, curators, practitioners and other stakeholders to play an active role in acquiring, documenting and archiving heritage resources that reflect the cultural expressions of this country.

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