

PROBLEMS OF CATALOGUING TAMIL LANGUAGE MATERIALS

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Abstrak: *Recana ini membincangkan beberapa masalah entri katalog nama diri pengarang-pengarang berbahasa Tamil. Masalah-masalah entri katalog yang khusus umpamanya yang berkaitan dengan struktur nama dan skrip (transliterasi dan ejaan) diuraikan. Perbandingan dibuat tentang cara-cara pengkatalogan nama-nama tersebut di Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka, Malaysia dan Singapura. Kajian ini berdasarkan pada pengamatan pengarang sendiri kepada katalog-katalog bahan-bahan Tamil yang terdapat di tiga perpustakaan utama di London. Beberapa langkah yang boleh diambil bagi mengatasi masalah entri katalog nama diri pengarang-pengarang Tamil telah dicadangkan.*

Abstract: *This article discusses the cataloguing entry problems of personal Tamil authors. Specific cataloguing entry problems, i.e. those relating to author's name structure and script (transliteration and spelling) are highlighted. Comparisons with prevailing practices in Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore are made wherever relevant. Particular examples cited are from the author's observations of catalogues of the three main library holdings of Tamil language materials in London. Possible solutions to overcome these problems are also suggested.*

The vast 780 million population of the Indian sub-continent represent diverse communities, linguistic groups, cultural entities and religious sects, each having its own peculiarities, traditions and practices, which, in turn, affect the structure of Indian names. The Tamils emanating from the former state of Madras (renamed Tamil Nadu in 1968) migrated freely to all corners of the world.

Wherever there are Tamils, interest in the Tamil Language and culture, materials in the Tamil Language and about Tamil studies flourished, and they are recorded for posterity by libraries and archives, cultural and educational institutions. Surprisingly, much invaluable scholarly research materials are found in the western world; to name a few, the School of Oriental and African Studies Library, the British Library Department of Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books, the India Office Library in the United Kingdom and in the university libraries of Chicago, California, and New York in U.S.A.

Research studies and experience have shown that the pattern and structure of Indian names including Tamil names have changed from region to region among various cultural linguistic groups not only within India but also elsewhere. In the main Tamil speaking country of Tamil Nadu, the pattern and structure of Tamil names have undergone changes due to social changes, fusion of cultures, modernisation (Europeanisation) and whims and fancies of the individual authors. Outside India, it is characterised further by local and cultural practices and adaptations. This has made the foremost cataloguing entry problematic in determining the main entry element of an author's name which consists of several components such as name of place, surname, family name, personal name, and even the caste title sometimes adopted as an integral part of an author's name.

Despite efforts made by eminent librarians, especially, S. R. Ranganathan and Benoyendra Sen Gupta, regarding cataloguing problems of Oriental

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(India) materials there is no satisfactory cataloguing entry rules for Tamil names that can be universally accepted. Nor is there an internationally standardised transliteration scheme of the Tamil script into the Roman script. The absence of these give rise to difficult problems for the cataloguers and bibliographers.

In this article, I am confining myself to the cataloguing entry problems of personal authors only. Specific cataloguing entry problems, i.e. those relating to authors' name structure and script (transliteration and spelling) will be discussed. Comparisons with prevailing practices in Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore will be made wherever possible. Both the bibliographers and the cataloguers point of view will be considered. I have based my study by perusing relevant published materials, discussions with bibliographers and cataloguers, personal observations and experience. Particular examples cited are from personal observations of the three main library catalogues of Tamil Language materials in London, i.e. School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), Department of Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books, (British Library) and India Record Office. Possible solutions to overcome these problems are suggested.

It is generally accepted cataloguing rule that for personal authors the authors' name should be the main entry. Compared to most other languages, the Tamil Language materials pose far greater problems in cataloguing because of the complex structure of Tamil authors' names which consist of several elements made more confusing by the non-uniformity of these elements which vary from region to region, and according to the diverse culture and linguistic groups and their traditions and practices. Thus, there is conflict in the choice of surname, family name, father's name, personal name, caste "name" (title). etc. and in the case of women writers, between the maiden names and their husbands' names. Sometimes the personal name itself creates a number of problems because it comprises two or three components.

In ancient India surname and family names are rarely used. This practice came with western influence in the 19th century. Writers were very few and they were distinguished by their individual personal names.

Examples: Valmiki, Kamban, Kapilar, Paronar Thiruvalluvar.

Before the middle of the 19th century, Tamil authors' names consisted of one or two elements only, usually the first part being the personal name and the second part the honorific title. The surname, family name, caste 'name', etc. was not in vogue then.

Examples: Pavananti Munivar; Ilanko Adikal

Catalogue entries were "in direct order under the first element unless this is an honorific. Honorifics are either placed at the end of, or not included in, a heading."¹

Since the mid-19th century, the cataloguing rule stated² "names frequently indicate, through the use of initials, etc. that a part of a name is used as a surname, following western practice, and this should be used as the entry element."³

Examples: RAO, V.K.P.; AIYAR, V.V.S.; RAMAN, K.V.

The problem of determining the personal names of Tamil authors are becoming even more difficult when there are many elements of the name structure like the Christian names, surname, family name, name of place, personal name, caste titles, etc. and especially when the many elements of the name structure were not consistently written. The name structure of Tamil names consists of 4 parts as explained by S.R. Ranganathan namely:

- (i) Personal name denoted by the Christian name i.e. first name or forename.
- (ii) Family name denoted by surname i.e. last name.
- (iii) Place name i.e. the name of place of birth or place of ancestors.
- (iv) Caste or other honorific attributes.

The first three elements are proper nouns and the fourth i.e. the attributes to the name are common nouns. These attributes are called irremovable and removable attachments, discussed later in this articles. Some examples of Tamil authors' names illustrating the foregoing are:

- (i) Place name + personal name
SARVAPALLE RADHAKRISHNAN
- (ii) Place name + father's name + personal name
SHIYALI RAMAMRITA RANGANATHAN
- (iii) Personal name + caste name
SUBRAMANIA AIYAR
- (iv) Father's name (initial) + personal name
M. VARADARAJAN
- (v) Personal name + honorific title
NILAKANDA SASTRI

(1) IFLA : *Names of Persons: National Usages for Entry in Catalogues*, 3rd ed. IFLA International Office for UBC, 1977, p. 51.

(2) *Ibid*, Pg. 51.

(3) Ranganathan, S.R. *Classified Catalogue Code*, 5th ed. Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1964, pp. 207-212.

- (vi) Personal name + father's name
(used by unmarried women)
LALITHA NATARAJAN
(Kumari can be added as a prefix)

- (viii) Personal name + husband's name
(used by married women)
LAKSMI VENGADACHALAM
(Thirumathi can be added as a prefix)

I agree with S.R. Ranganathan's assertion that "a name of person of Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu and Viet-Nameese cultural groups, the last proper noun is usually the name specific to the individual."⁴ The preceding proper nouns may be the names of father, and place of birth or place of ancestors. This can be seen in the examples above. I also agree with S.R. Ranganathan that common nouns, if they occur in a name of a person "denotes some attributes of the person such as academic, civic, military, ritualistic or other distinction, or the profession of the person or some of his dominant ancestors. They may also denote denomination by caste, creed, or religion. Some may be terms of respect".⁵

Examples of these common nouns are:

- (i) Personal name + common noun
(caste attribute)
SUBRAMANIA Aiyar
- (ii) Personal name + common noun
(religion attribute)
ILANKO Adikal
- (iii) Personal name + common noun
(Scholarly and ritualistic attribute)
NILAKANKA Sastri

Another common element of Tamil names is that the common nouns attached after a given name are always taken along as irremovable attachment⁶ to the given name. Popular examples of such selected common nouns are shown below (underlined).

- (a) SEENIVASA Aiyangar
(b) VENKATESA Aiyar
(c) VAIYAPURI Pillai
(d) SOMASUNDARAM Chettiar
(e) NAGAPPA Mudaliar
(f) NAGALINGA Swamikal
(g) ILANKO Adikal
(h) ARUMUGA Navalar
(i) NILAKANDA Sastri
(j) THANDAPANI Desikar

- (k) KOTHINAYAGI Ammal
(l) SAARATHAMANI Ammaiyar
(m) BHARATHI Thasan

In addition to the irremovable attachment mentioned above, there are also removable attachments to Tamil names which can be prefixes or suffixes and which can be confused, especially by foreign cataloguers as the main element. S. R. Ranganathan describes this as, "A word for word-group make of common nouns or adjectives, attached as honorific or courtesy term after or before or in the middle of a name, deemed removable, and not to be retained in the heading of an entry."⁷

Selected examples are given below (the removable attachments are underlined).

- (a) AGASTIYA Munivar
(b) Swami VIVEKANANDA
(c) IRAMALINGA Swamigal
(d) NITHIANANDA Swami
(e) Pulavar ARUNACHALAM
(f) Pandit M. RAMALINGAM
(g) Pandita K.P. RATNAM (Sri Lanka)
(h) Vidwan MEENAKSHI SUNDARAM
PILLAI
(i) Kavimani DESIKA VINAYAKAM PILLAI
(j) Kumari (title of unmarried girl in India)
ATHILAKSMI
(k) Selvi (title of unmarried girl in Sri Lanka)
KAMALA
(l) Tirumathi (title of a married lady)
SUBBHALAKSMI
(m) Mudaliyar CHOKA LINGAM (Sri Lanka)

Another common feature among Tamil names which could perhaps be attributed to Western cultural influence is the tendency to split the given names, and Ranganathan says, that "the words in the split given name taken together are to be used as entry element."⁸ Some examples of split names (underlined) are:

- Panchapekesan SANKARA NARAYAN
Sundara Raman SIVA RAMA KRISHNAN
Kesava Pillai DESIKA VINAYAM
Umpathi GANAPATHI SUBRAMANIAM

This practice can cause the greatest confusion to cataloguers in the determination of the entry element. The common tendency is to take the last part as the entry element but this will not do justice to the author concerned. Thus in the first

(4) *Ibid*, p. 207

(5) *Ibid*, p. 206

(6) *Ibid*, p. 212

(7) *Ibid*, p. 217

(8) *Ibid*, p. 226

example cited, entry under "NARAYAN, Panchapekesan Sankara" is incorrect. The entry element should be "SANKARA NARAYAN, Panchapekesan". This problem is even more complicated with Sri Lanka (Jaffna) Tamil names. (Ranganathan did not deal with Jaffna Tamil name in his classified cataloguing code). For example, a Jaffna Tamil name KANAPATHI PILLAI can be interpreted by a foreign cataloguer (who cannot distinguish South Indian Tamil names from Jaffna Tamil names) and make the catalogue entry by the last part as PILLAI, KANAPATHI. This can be misleading for "Pillai" here is a part of the split given name and it should be entered rightly as KANAPATHI PILLAI. Examples of Sri Lanka (Jaffna Tamil) names are:

- (i) Place name + personal name
Nallur GNANAPRAKASAR
- (ii) Father's name + personal name (initials)
 - (a) S. ARASARATNAM
 - (b) K. KANAPATHI PILLAI
- (iii) Father's name + personal name surname
(Christian name)
JERONIS ANTHONY MIRANDA
- (iv) Religious title + personal name
Swami GANAPRAKASAR
- (v) Personal name + religious title
VIPULANANDA Adikal
- (vi) Personal name + scholarly title
ARUMUGA Navalar
- (vii) Personal name + caste attribute
SAMBASIVA Aiyar
- (viii) Personal name + father's name
(unmarried woman)
UMA Mahesvaran
(word 'Selvi' may be added)
- (ix) Personal name + husband's name
(married woman)
Indrani NALLIAH
(word 'Tirumathi' can be added)

The western impact, coupled with other multi-racial, multi-lingual cultural groups prevalent in Malaysia, and the distance from their mother countries have made them shed some of their traditional practices and customs. The general tendency is to take the father's name (initials) and personal name in the original, simple manner (no contractions, no split forms etc.). Thus there are less problems in the entries as place name and caste title are all discarded. Some examples of local Tamil names are:

- (i) Father's name (initials) + personal name
R. V. KANDIAH
K. RAMANATHAN
- (ii) Personal name + religious title
RAMANATHAN, Swami
- (iii) Surname + Christian name + personal name
J. BENJAMIN JEYARATNAM
- (iv) Christian name + father's name
Joseph SELVAM
- (v) Father's name (initials) + personal name
(Indian Muslims)
M. MUHAMATHU YUSUP
N. M. BAHADUR
- (vi) Father's name (initials) + personal name
(unmarried woman)
P. CHANDRAKANTHAM
(word 'Kumari' may be added)
- (vii) Personal name + Father's name
(unmarried woman)
Leelavathy MURUGASU
(word 'Selvi' may be added)
- (viii) Personal name (initial) + Father's name
(unmarried woman)
M. SATHASIVAM

Another cataloguing entry problem arises when the Tamil author contracts the first of the two components of his personal name into its initial letter and uses the second part as if it was the full name, e.g.,

Contracted name	Full name
(i) Sir C.V. RAMAN	C. VENKATARAMAN
(ii) S. S. NATHAN	S. SITHAMPARANATHAN
(iii) S. S. NATHAN	S. SWAMINATHAN
(iv) S. S. NATHAN	S. SAYAMPANATHAN

Here the problem can become acute if the initials of the father's name and the first part of the author's name is the same, as is illustrated in examples (ii), (iii) and (iv) above.

The complex structure of Tamil names has posed great problems especially to foreign cataloguers who find it difficult to identify the irremovable and removable attachments mentioned earlier, recognise split names or contractions and differentiate South Indian Tamil names from Jaffna Tamil names. This is clearly observed in the three major catalogues of Tamil materials in London: e.g.:

* Note: In Sri Lanka 'PILLAI' does not denote caste as in Tamil Nadu. It is a part of the name. In Malaysia and Singapore the Tamils have lesser elements in their name structure than those in their countries of origin – Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka.

- (i) In the SOAS card catalogue where the entry is the last part of the name there are over 100 catalogue cards beginning with "AYYAR", "PILLAI" and "KURRUKAL" which are all caste names.
- (ii) In the British Library, in most cases the entry is under the personal name but the irremovable and removable elements are taken as part of the personal names. (Dr. Albertine Gaur hit the nail on the head in saying, "ideally Tamil names have four parts: Place name, father's name, personal name, caste name").

Example. KUPALAKIRUSNA AYYAR,
Anaitantápuram Páрати.

Grammatically speaking, it is not correct to take the attribute denoting cast (Ayyar) as a name and to give it so much importance as to make it the main entry element when, in actual fact, it is not a name at all. S. R. Ranganathan calls it a common noun. Here I agree whole-heartedly with S.R. Ranganathan's apt explanation where he says, "If there is any common noun in a name of person, which is irremovable attachment, it has no potency as a result of its being a common noun. It has no claim to become the entry element."⁹

Cataloguing entry problems also arise when authors take a fancy or deliberately, for certain reasons (political, personal, social, etc.) use pseudonyms instead of their original name. As a general rule, all entries are under the original name. But if the author writes all his works under a preferred pseudonym which appears on the title page (original name is not given), then the entry is made under the preferred pseudonym with cross-references made from the original name to the pseudonym. Cataloguing entry problems become more difficult when one author uses many pseudonyms or the same pseudonym is used by different authors. Observations show that this problem of pseudonyms of Tamil authors is greater among foreign cataloguers than among the native Tamil cataloguers. For example, in one library catalogue, two copies of the same title "Kulantai vaittiyam" has been entered as two separate entries, one under the original name of the author S. TIRIPURACUNTARI and the other under the pseudonym 'Laksmi'.

In one catalogue perused by me, works of R. KIRUSNAMURTHI, who is more popularly known by his pseudonym 'Kalki' is sometimes entered as Kalki (R. Kirusnamurthi) or as just Kalki

with no indication that it is a pseudonym, or a cross-reference being made. This omission militates against collocation of the author's works.

Another observation from the same catalogue was that the author Punithavathiyar is clearly not known by her original name at all. All entries are under the name she is popularly known in her village, that is, Káraikkal Ammaiyár (the lady of Karaikkal) which is not knowingly, taken as her real name.

However, this problem of pseudonyms can be solved by using biographical dictionaries, "Who's Who" and "Dictionary of Pseudonyms."

Now I consider the transliteration problems. Though the spelling of Tamil authors' names are generally uniform in the vernacular form and script, individual authors, when writing in western languages, transliterate their vernacular names into the Romanised script in their own fanciful manner. Influence and adaption of the Sanskritised form of spelling, other religious and cultural practices cause greater confusion. The lack of a standardised transliteration scheme from Tamil script to the Roman script has given rise to many different methods of transliteration, each major library following its own, eg. Library of Congress, the Indian National Library, The Sahitya Akademi, etc. The Library of Congress follows the scheme used in the Tamil lexicon of the University of Madras and is now used by all western libraries which use computerisation for information storage and retrieval. The British Museum had devised its own scheme but has now agreed to follow the Library of Congress. Dr. John Marr uses his own unique scheme in organising the catalogue entries in the India Office Library. Thus, there are a large number of variations for the Tamil letters used in different systems and the comparatively fewer alphabets in the Tamil Language has necessitated the use of diacritical marks which can be very complicating.

Some of the glaring differences between the various transliteration systems used for Tamil consonants by different libraries are:

Tamil Script	Library of Congress follows the Tamil Lexicon Scheme	British Museum (L.D. Barnett's Scheme)	Indian National Bibliography
	na	na	na
	la	ra	zh
	ra	ra	ra

(9) *Ibid*, p. 207

One problem in transliteration is caused by the reduced number of letters in the Tamil script which necessitates some letters to do the duty for others, thus changing their pronunciation according to position. For example the letter C can do the duty for S, J. However, the letters representing S and J which are found in Grantha alphabet (Sanskrit alphabets) are generally used in spelling of Tamil names especially in the Tamil Nadu. However the Jaffna Tamils usually do not use the Grantha alphabets. Thus, we have discrepancies with the same author spelling his name in different forms even in the vernacular script itself, what more when transliterated.

Examples: RĀJAMĀNIKAM, RĀJAMĀNIKKAR
RĀCAMĀNIKANAR,
IRĀCAMĀNIKKANAR,
IRĀCAMĀNIKKAM

Other examples are:

- (i) LAKSAMANAN, LATCHUMANAN, ILAKKUMANAN, LETCHUMANAN
- (ii) LAKSMI, LECUMI, LATCUMI, ILAKKUMI
- (iii) IRĀMALIŅKAM, RĀMALIŅKAM
- (iv) RĀMA, IRĀMA, RĀMAN, IRĀMAN
- (v) IRĀMACĀMI, RĀMACĀMI
- (vi) KAMBAN, KAMPAN, KAMPAR
- (vii) CUNTARAM, CUNTARANĀR

These examples illustrate the apparent arbitrary suffixing of -AR and prefixing of I to names beginning with R and L. In Tamil grammar the suffix -AR is added to proper names, pronouns, and common nouns to denote respect.

Example: CUNTARAM and CUNTARANĀR
(Proper name)
AVAN and AVAR
(Pronoun)
Vaithiyan and Vaithiyan
(Common noun)

This practice is popularly adopted by authors too. Grammatically, in Tamil language, words do not begin with ய , ர , ல (ya, ra, la) and, therefore, (I) is used as "caphonic prothesis of the nature of an on-glide in Sanskrit words beginning with ய , ர , ல .

Another example will show extreme difference between strict Romanisation and the Europeanised form based on the pronunciation and also the problem raised by the use of initials. David Hall¹³ cites 18 different forms of the name SUBRAMANIAN in Roman script (7 in the Tamil script). Among them are

- (i) CUPPIRAMANIYAN (Ca.Ve)
- (ii) CUPPIRAMANIAN (Es.Vi)
- (iii) SUBRAMANIAN (S.V.) – Anglicised spelling.

A part of the author's name beginning with the sound S and V are transliterated by the initial syllables Ca.Ve(i) transliterated spelling Es.Vi(ii) and initials S.V. (iii).

David Hall has a good solution for this problem of 19 variant spellings. He has adopted one heading, i.e. SUBRAHMANYA as a standard form for the variant spellings with cross-references made from each of the 19 variant spellings to the adopted format. In this way, all works by SUBRAHMANYA in all variant spellings are collated.

In the same way, variant spelling of names with the suffixing of -AR and the prefixing of I to names beginning with R or L and the letter C doing the duty for S and J etc. can be solved. But if there are not too many variations of spellings, then "see references" will be adequate.

Other problems arise with the Sanskritised and Tamilised versions of spellings of the same name of Sanskrit origin, i.e. the former version using Grantha alphabets and the latter version not using Grantha alphabets.

Example:

Sanskrit original Romanised	Sanskritised version with Grantha alphabets	Romanised spelling	Tamilised version without Grantha Alphabets	Romanised spelling
Sanmukha	சம்முகா	Sanmukan	சம்முகன்	Canmukan
Svāminātha	ஸ்வமிநாதா	Svāminathan	ஸ்வமிநாதன்	Caminatan

(13) Hall, David. Problems of Oriental names in cataloguing SCOUNL Group of Orientalists. Libraries Report of the Annual Conference, 1977.

In such a case, I will recommend that the Tamilised version of the spelling be taken as entry because the authors are of Tamil origin but have been influenced by or taken a fancy for the Sanskritised spellings. Such problems rarely occur in Sri Lanka Tamil names where the standard Tamil is written in pure Tamil script, that is with/without any Grantha (Sanskrit) letters. Names of translated works from a non-Tamil language into Tamil will appear differently in the Tamil script. Thus, Tamil will appear differently in the Tamil script, as follows:

SHIVA SHANKAR will be CIVA CANKARAN
 KALIDÁSA will be KALITÁSAN
 TULASI DÁS will be TULASI TÁS
 BHARATHÁ will be PARATÁ

For this problem, I recommend that the transliterated spelling in the origin Indian Language be taken as the entry because that is the closer version of the author's original spelling. Entry should be KALIDASA and not KALITASAN, but cross-reference should be made from the latter to the former.

Problems also arise with Christian and Muslim authors' names when they are transliterated from their Tamilised spelling.

Thus:

European spelling		Tamilised spelling	In Tamil script
(i) DAVID	becomes	TEVIT	டேவிட்
(ii) SAMUEL	becomes	CAMUVEL	சாமுவேல்
Arabic spelling			
(iii) DAWOOD	becomes	DAWUD	தாவுது
(iv) MUHAMMED	becomes	MUKAMMATU	முகமது

Here, I agree with Dr. John Marr that entries should be made under the European or Persian or Urdu source and cross-references be made from the Tamilised spelling to the original entry eg. TEVIT, see David.

Thus, the problems of cataloguing entry of Tamil Language materials (as seen earlier) is not so great in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka where they have the language expertise and cultural, linguistic 'know-how' to the name-structure. In Malaysia and Singapore, too, the problem is not great because of fewer materials in the languages, fewer numbers of users as usage at research level is only at the University Malaya where catalogues are mainly in the vernacular script. The National Library of Malaysia has however transliterated its small number of Tamil literary works received by way of legal deposit. The problem is more acute in the U.K., U.S.A. and other European countries, where there are vast holdings of research materials in and about the Tamil Language, and lack of adequately qualified expertise in the Tamil language, literature and culture to know the complexity and difference of practising name structures of Tamils in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka (Jaffna).

Perhaps the time is ripe for concerted action by Tamil scholars and concerned librarians to meet and formulate standards and rules for cataloguing and transliteration of Tamil names.