

Methodology Report of EAP1475

EAP1475: Digitisation of archival material and rare books preserved at the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Kolkata, 1878-1950

Initially, the EAP 1475 Project Team planned to digitize the archival material kept at the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj consisting of roughly three categories:

1. The bound volumes of private records of Sophia Dobson Collet (1822-1894), the biographer of Raja Rammohun Roy, who meticulously collected information relating to the history and activities of Brahmo Samaj.
2. The bound volumes of the Minutes Books of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj since its inception in 1878 up to the 1950s.
3. The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj has a rich library containing around 25000 old books on history, philosophy, theology, and literature, of which 8000 books are rare, including the private collection of some of the eminent leaders of the Samaj who donated their collection to the library of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj.

The Advisory Panel observed that the rare books should be removed from the project. Accordingly, the project was revised, dropping the rare books from the project. However, the title of the project remained unchanged, which might be confusing to the scholars who will consult the archive in the future. The EAP 1475 Project Team recommends revising the title of the archive to be created based on the project as “Digitization of archival material preserved at the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Kolkata, 1878-1950”, replacing the previous one, if possible.

During the operation of the project, the Project Team explored another kind of archival material preserved at the Samaj, the Trust Fund Books. The Trust Fund Books contain complete documentation of the property of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj and contributions made by its members from time to time. However, the Project Team got access to only two such Trust Fund Books which were digitised accordingly.

The EAP 1475 Project Team ultimately digitized three collections

1. Private Records of Sophia Dobson Collet (58 volumes)
2. Minutes Book of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, 1884-1957 (19 volumes)
3. Trust Fund Books of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj (2 volumes)

Previously, under EAP921, the collection of the periodicals of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj was digitized by the Urban History Documentation Archives of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata. With the completion of the EAP1475, the digital preservation of archival records of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj was virtually completed except for some remaining Minutes Books of the Samaj from 1958 onwards, which is beyond the timeframe of the Endangered Archives Programme. The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj authority is eager to digitize the old books under their possession. However, those books should be surveyed thoroughly to be qualified as rare books.

Sd/-

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