



ANNUAL REPORT

April 2025 - February 2026



Photo Credit: Museum of Art and Photography, Bengaluru

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🌐 www.qamra.in

📷 [qamra.archive](https://www.instagram.com/qamra.archive)

FOREWORD

2025 has been a significant year for the Queer Archive for Memory, Reflection, and Activism (QAMRA). Based at the National Law School of India University, QAMRA is a physical archive dedicated to collecting, preserving, and making accessible material relating to gender, sexuality, and law in India. Our holdings document both the public history of queer movements and the private lives that have shaped them. In this report, we hope to give you an overview of the past year at QAMRA, and highlight a few events and changes.

A major milestone this year was the launch of our first online catalogue. On 25 November 2025, we introduced the digital finding aid for the Maya Sharma and Indira Pathak Collection at the Bangalore International Centre. We are profoundly grateful to Maya Sharma and Indira Pathak for the trust they have placed in us. It is an honour to steward their material and to make this collection searchable and accessible online. We had the pleasure of launching the collection with a discussion with Maya Sharma and Q&A.

We concluded the year with a memorial festschrift for Priya Thangarajah on Human Rights Day. Organised with care by Mario da Penha in collaboration with QAMRA, the gathering created space to revisit Priya's work and reflect collectively on its ongoing relevance. Coming together to remember, mourn, and think as a community remains central to how we understand archival practice and responsibility.

In 2025, we expanded the archive through new acquisitions, including the Pravartak Magazine Collection, the Ramdas Rao Collection, and a second donation from Ivan John. Each strengthens our documentation of queer organising and legal advocacy across regions and generations.

We have the good fortune of welcoming new members to our advisory group: Dr. Aqsa Shaikh, Dhamini Ratnam, and Dr. Surabhi Shukla. We look forward to their guidance and insight as we continue to grow.

We thank our advisory group members for their patient assistance and leadership this year. We would especially like to thank T. Jayashree, Arvind Narrain, Pawan Dhall, Vivek Divan, Dr. Svati Shah, Dr. Curt Gambetta and Dr. Kush Patel for their efforts and input last year.

We are also grateful to the many researchers, students, journalists, and visitors who spent time in the archive this year. Whether for a single afternoon or an extended research stay, your engagement with the material affirms the importance of preserving and making these histories accessible.

We acknowledge the continued support of Dr. Nivedita Ram, and to the many other individuals whose commitment to our work has kept us going. We would like to thank all those who have contributed to QAMRA through their donations and by helping us organize fundraising events. We would especially like to thank Dr. Svati Shah for organizing a successful online panel discussion at CLAGS: the Center for LGBTQ Studies at the City University of New York that showcased QAMRA's work. It was wonderful to see the spectacular turn out from students and faculty at NLSIU at the fundraiser for QAMRA organized as part of the Fall Ball at NLSIU by Mariam Beg and her wonderful team at The Pre Loved Co; and the students from the NLSIU Queer Alliance and Event Management Committee – a huge thank you to them. We are grateful to the Mariwala Health Initiative and to all of our donors for their support and guidance. As we start publishing online finding aids, we are especially thankful for the help and insights of Malathi Renati. We are grateful as well to Amalina Dave, our colleagues at NCBS, Ojas Kadu, and the NLSIU administration and communications team for their collaboration and advice. We thank the members of Bengaluru's trans community who consulted with us regarding our metadata practices – their insights help us to form a more ethical archive.

We remain indebted to the individuals and communities who have entrusted us with their collections and to the queer community in Bengaluru for its continued interest, engagement, and trust.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to strengthening access, preservation, and responsible stewardship of the material in our care.

2025 ACQUISITIONS

Pravartak Magazine Collection

The Counsel Club, Kolkata was one of the first support groups for queer people in East India. This collection consists of journals published for private circulation, digital copies of which were donated to us by Pawan Dhall. As an unregistered publication, it was funded through suggested contributions and distributed via word-of-mouth, queer networks, and Counsel Club meetings. QAMRA's holdings include digital copies of issues from 1991 to 2000.

Ramdas Rao Collection

Prof. Ramdas Rao, of PUCL-Karnataka, who worked in and around Bengaluru, donated PUCL material around gender, sexuality, and other marginalized groups.

Ivan John Book Collection

This is the second donation received by us from Ivan John, consisting of books relating to gender and sexuality. His first donation in 2021 consisted of a collection of books, magazines, DVDs and newspaper clippings.

I said now all my clippings can go to QAMRA because they are working for a cause, and their cause is to educate and create awareness about what they believe in (...) I had this intrinsic faith that [NLS] must have found some worth in QAMRA. (...) And I really, really believe that QAMRA will, in years to come, expand, maybe become a far bigger institution.

Ivan John,
Teacher, Sophia College, Mumbai
QAMRA donor

QAMRA'S 1ST DIGITAL CATALOGUE

QAMRA launched our first online finding aid, a digital catalogue of the Maya Sharma and Indira Pathak collection, on 25 November 2025 at the Bangalore International Center. We were fortunate to have Maya Sharma present at the launch, and she shared reflections on her work, journey, and what it meant to live as women who loved women during a moderated discussion between her, T. Jayashree, Alice Baudequin, and our audience.

The inauguration of this digital catalogue marks a crucial step in QAMRA's journey to make our material more accessible. We hope to continue building on this, and making more of our collections available on the web.



You can browse through the digital catalogue of the Maya Sharma and Indira Pathak collection via [this link](#).

The recording of the event is available at [this link](#).

QAMRA - MHI

QUEER MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT

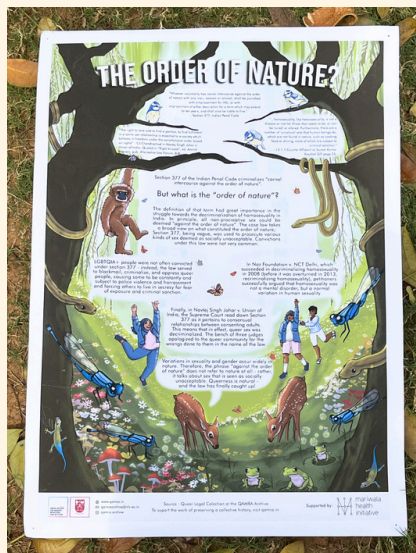
QAMRA was supported by the Mariwala Health Initiative in conducting research in the Queer Legal Collection, with a focus on how mental health is represented in the archive.

In our research, we focussed on a psychosocial approach to mental health rather than a biomedical one. We sought to center the lived experiences and unique realities of queer people. These themes were very much present in the Queer Legal Collection, and though much of the material referenced great suffering and oppression, we also found joy, togetherness, and resistance.

We developed public engagement material to communicate some of our findings, and produced the following:

- a pamphlet on representations of mental health in the Queer Legal Collection
- a set of postcards highlighting experiences of queer joy and protest based on images of Bengaluru Pride 2008
- a poster reflecting on the phrase “order of nature”, used in section 377 of the Indian penal code, and its impact on the lives of queer people

We relied on the material in our archive to bring an alternative approach to the medical and diagnostic framework around mental health of queer people.



REMEMBERING PRIYA THANGARAJAH

A Queer Feminist Festschrift

Ten years ago, in 2015, we lost Priya Thangarajah — an aspiring young lawyer and activist who had worked both in India and her native Sri Lanka on issues of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, violence and human rights — when she took her life. Priya was a graduate of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, and Georgetown University, Washington DC, where she was also a Fulbright scholar.

To commemorate her life and work, Mario da Penha, a friend and colleague of Priya, organized an event remembering her in collaboration with QAMRA. On Human Rights Day, 10 December 2025, we revisited three publications Priya authored. Experts in the field, some of them also colleagues, friends, and loved ones of Priya's, offered contemporary reflections on the themes the papers covered. Their talks work towards a festschrift: a selection of reflections on a scholar's legacy published to celebrate their life and contributions.

The publications and themes discussed were :

- a. Queer couples and Habeas Corpus in India (co-authored with Ponni Arasu);
- b. Tamil - Muslim relations in Sri Lanka (co-authored with Mirak Raheem);
- c. Legal protections for queer persons in Sri Lanka;
- d. Queerness and mental health, with a focus on suicide.

A recording of the event is accessible [here](#).



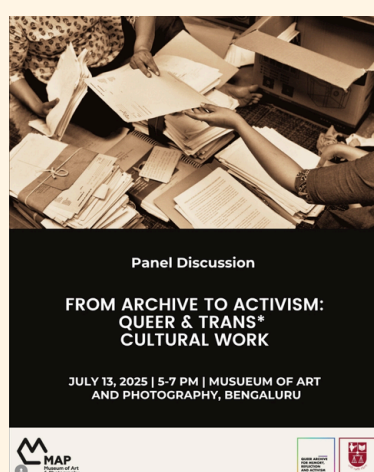
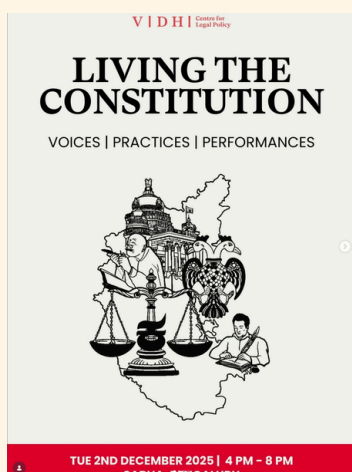
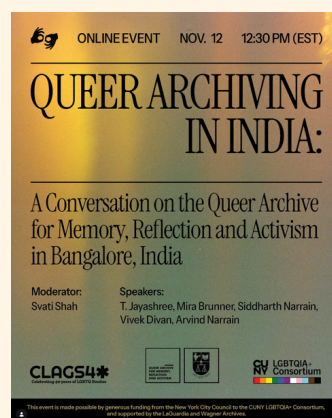
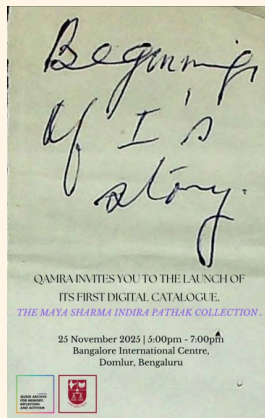
QAMRA IN THE PUBLIC EYE

2025 has been a very busy year with public engagement activities of many types. We have participated in screenings, talks, thrift store fundraisers, conferences, workshops and classes on the NLSIU campus, in the city of Bengaluru and many parts of India, and around the world via Zoom.

Here's a snapshot of what we've been up to:

Total outreach events (April 2025 - December 2025): 15

- Workshops & Classes: 4
- Talks & Panel Discussions: 3
- Screenings with subsequent talks : 1
- Conferences: 2
- Displays: 2
- Hosted by QAMRA: 2
- Capacity building: 1



Workshops & Classes

Archives and Queer Counter-Narratives, a Workshop at MAP

Mira Brunner conducted a hands-on workshop exploring preservation, organisation, and access through queer archival practices, encouraging participants to reflect on memory, history, and future narratives at the Museum of Art and Photography, Bengaluru.

Screening in Prof. Kanav Sahgal's class on "Contemporary Queer Rights And Politics In India"

T. Jayashree's film *Many People Many Desires* was screened in Prof. Kanav Sahgal's class, as a part of the course "Contemporary Queer Rights And Politics In India". This was followed by a Q&A section, with reflections from the class, accompanied by a display of archival materials for the students to browse.

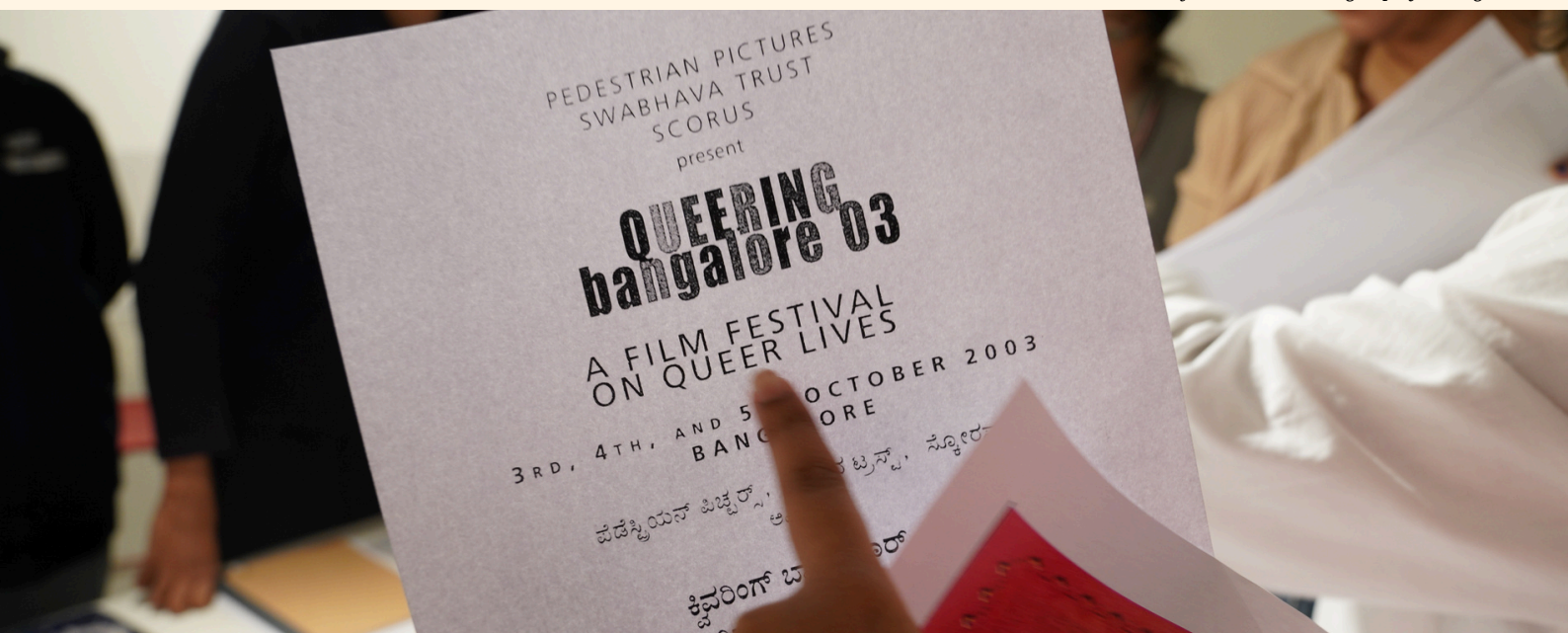
Guest Lecture at Srishti-Manipal Institute of Art and Technology

Mira Brunner conducted a guest lecture to Kush Patel's class at Srishti-Manipal Institute of Art and Technology, introducing students to community archiving and queer archiving practices.

Reading (in) the queer archive, a workshop with the JustArchives Collaboratory

QAMRA hosted a workshop reflecting on archival practice in collaboration with the Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Bengaluru and the JustArchives Collaboratory.

Photo Credit: Museum of Art and Photography, Bengaluru



Talks & Panel Discussions

Queer Archiving in India: A Conversation with the Queer Archive for Memory, Reflection and Activism

T. Jayashree, Mira Brunner, Dr. Siddharth Narrain, Vivek Divan, and Arvind Narrain were part of a conversation on Queer Archiving in India, reflecting on QAMRA's journey and considerations for archiving queer material, hosted by the City University of New York. A video recording of the conversation is accessible [here](#).

From Archive to Activism: Queer & Trans Cultural Work

QAMRA participated in a panel discussion titled "From Archive to Activism: Queer & Trans Cultural Work", with participation from Alternative Law Forum, Jeeva, Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design, and Technology, and hosted at the Museum of Art and Photography, Bengaluru.

Book Talk with the Queer Judgements Project

QAMRA hosted a book talk to accompany the release of The Queer Judgements Project book, which brings together friends, colleagues, scholars, and activists who are interested in improving and challenging the law and its application to make life better for LGBTQIA+ communities. We hosted a book talk to discuss the implications of the work, and the evolving context of queerness in India.

Screenings, with conversations & engagement

Unfolding Memory: Many People Many Desires - Reflection on Archiving Queer History in India

QAMRA screened T. Jayashree's film Many People Many Desires at the Bengaluru International Centre, followed by a discussion among T. Jayashree and Dr. Siddharth Narrain, reflecting on the journey of the queer movement over the past few decades.

Conferences

Archiving Like a Feminist workshop, hosted by Archives@NCBS

T. Jayashree presented at the Archiving Like a Feminist workshop hosted by Archives@NCBS, Bengaluru. She presented QAMRA's work, and the considerations we have to keep in mind in the digital age and given the fragility and sensitivity of queer multimedia material.

Milli Sessions 2025

Mira Brunner attended the 2025 Milli Session conference in Ahmedabad, which focussed on benchmarking archives. It offered useful insights into the workings of other archives, in terms of cataloguing across various media and managing infrastructural challenges such as climate vulnerability.

Displays

Living the Constitution by the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy

QAMRA was invited to participate in an exhibition organized by Charkha, Centre for Constitutional Law at the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy at Sabha Bengaluru, where teams working on the Constitution through different lenses showcased their work. We showcased archival material on electronic screens, including video snippets which visitors could watch and listen to. We also displayed a slideshow of photographs of materials selected from our collections.

Crickets: a Thrift Store Fundraiser

In collaboration with The Pre Loved Co., the NLSIU Queer Alliance and the Event Management Committee, we hosted a fundraiser for QAMRA, as a pre-event to a student ball. We had copies of archival material up for display for the NLS community to engage with, and raised Rs. 50,000 from this initiative.

Hosted by QAMRA

Remembering Priya Thangarajah: A Queer Feminist Festschrift

On 10 December 2025, we commemorated the life of Priya Thangarajah, a young lawyer and activist working across India and Sri Lanka on gender, sexuality, ethnicity, violence, and human rights. We revisited three of her publications, featuring reflections from colleagues, friends, and experts. The discussions explored queer couples and habeas corpus in India, Tamil-Muslim relations and queer legal protections in Sri Lanka, and queerness and mental health, including suicide.

Launch of the Maya Sharma and Indira Pathak collection digital catalogue

On 25 November 2025, QAMRA launched its first online finding aid, the digital catalogue of the Maya Sharma and Indira Pathak collection, at the Bangalore International Centre. Maya Sharma joined the event, sharing reflections on her life and work in a discussion with T. Jayashree, Alice Baudequin, and the audience. This launch marks a key step in making QAMRA's collections more accessible online.

Capacity Building

Training on Financial Management & Compliance for NGOs

Anusha George and Gauri Mahajan attended a workshop on Financial Management in NGOs, learning about best financial practices in NGOs, and best systems to manage accounts in a project.



RESEARCHERS & VISITORS AT QAMRA

As in previous years, we have been fortunate to host a number of visitors from around the world. Our visitors' areas of interest are broad, and they come to us from a variety of fields.

From January 2025–December 2025, 160 individuals have visited the archive. Visitors have included members of the Bengaluru queer community, journalists, students, academics, and members of the general public. Visits have ranged from single-day consultations to research trips lasting several months.

We would like to thank our visitors for offering new perspectives on our archive and enriching our understanding of the material we hold.

These include faculty, students, and visitors from University of Sydney, GITAM Deemed to be University Bengaluru, University of Cambridge, Western University, Canada, George Mason University, Virginia, the Archives@NCBS team, and the Godrej Archives, among other independent researchers.



Alice Baudequin

PhD candidate,
Université Libre de
Bruxelles and Université
Bordeaux Montaigne

I have been coming to the archive for the last three years, as an intern and as a researcher, and I am looking forward to returning. Even after all this time, reading archives at QAMRA still feels endless – which is for the best! But this research also has deepened my interest not only in queer history, but in the very work of archiving and the daily care of materials. I am very grateful to QAMRA’s archivists and donors for their time and openness, in sharing their experience and expertise with me.

“The wealth of material available at QAMRA (only a small part of which I have had time to access during that short trip) will enrich my research tremendously. It is so important to center the voices of key actors in the movement, not only to have a richer picture of the past but also to be able to reflect on the future. I was delighted to hear of the digitization work you have been undertaking. Many thanks again to the whole team for all you do to collect, preserve, and facilitate access to this very important material. I look forward to following your work with great interest.”

Athanasios (Akis) Psygkas

Associate Professor and
Faculty Scholar
Faculty of Law,
Western University

Somak Biswas

Wellcome Trust
Postdoctoral Fellow
Affiliated Lecturer,
Faculty of History
University of Cambridge

“I loved researching at the QAMRA archive. The team - Mira, Gauri and Anusha - were brilliant and knowledgeable! They offered prompt support and guidance at every step. I look forward to visiting again!”

“During several visits to QAMRA in 2025, I was privileged to consult material from the Maya Sharma and Indira Pathak Collection, as well as the Sangama Collection. I was examining the stories, over the last twenty-five years, of queer couples in conflict with their families and the law. The archive holds the quivering tales of these vulnerable couples - escaping, eloping, on the run - carefully collected and preserved for the future by activists and archivists. The wealth of historical records that QAMRA holds, their meticulous classification, as well as intensive care for original materials, impressed me greatly. It is the first stop that historians and researchers studying queer organizing in India must make.

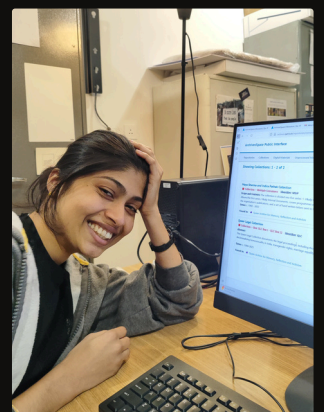
Mario da Penha
Historian and Researcher

We hope to continue our engagement with the NLSIU community, the larger queer community in Bengaluru, and individuals from around the world who make time and space for QAMRA in their travels.

MEDIA GALLERY



QAMRA TEAM BEHIND THE SCENES



UPCOMING @ QAMRA

We aim to continue cataloguing and consolidating our material, and making the catalogues available digitally. We hope to launch an online version of the Queer Legal Collection by the end of 2026.

We also hope to continue to refine our metadata practices in line with our ethical commitment to the people represented in our archive and our community at large. We will remain in dialogue with our community around our metadata practices, particularly around the evolving lexicon of queer self-identification.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gauri Mahajan and Anusha George's hard work and good humour have driven us forward this year, and we thank them.

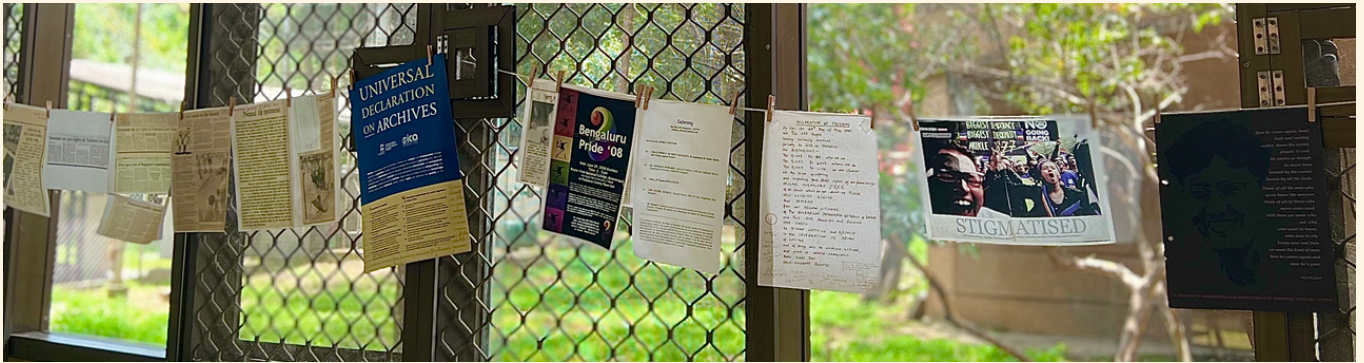
We would like to thank our interns — Advait, Daya, Ria, Sara, Sid, Swati, Vepa, Yamuna, and Sowparnica — for their work and commitment.

We thank and acknowledge the continued support of the NLSIU administration, especially the Finance Team, the Research team, the Communications team, the People and Culture team, and the Library team.

We would also like to thank the Bangalore International Center, the Museum of Art and Photography, Sabha-RBANMS, the Alternative Law Forum and the NLSIU Library for providing us space and support.

SUPPORT QAMRA

We preserve memories of struggles, achievement, conflict and most importantly, of love. This archive belongs to this society – it tells the stories of people, social movements and organisations.



Through collective funding comes collective ownership and collective care. Please help us by donating to this treasure trove of memories and stories! With your help, we can preserve this precious collective history.



All donations are tax-exempt in accordance with Sec. 80G of the Income Tax Act and FCRA 2010. You can choose between one-time and recurring donations. Any amount you can donate will be greatly appreciated!

Our funds go towards supporting full-time employees, undertaking archival processing, acquiring new collections, and building up a corpus for long-term stability and the assurance of independence and free access to the archive for everyone.

Please scan this QR code to donate:



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please write to us at
qamraarchive@nls.ac.in.

CONTACT US

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