

***Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, the second oldest Indian professional science journal**

Anantanarayanan Raman

Although the publication of English-language newspapers started in Madras only in 1833, a journal committed to publication of professional literature and science articles entitled the *Madras Journal of Literature and Science* (*MJLS*) was started in 1830, through the efforts of the office bearers of the Madras Literary Society (MLS), which functioned from 1812 in Madras (Figure 1). MLS became an auxiliary of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1830, and was renamed as Madras Literary Society and Auxiliary of the Royal Asiatic Society¹. But, oddly, MLS's name appears as the Literary Society of Madras in 1827 and the journal name as the *Transactions of the Literary Society of Madras* for that year alone¹.

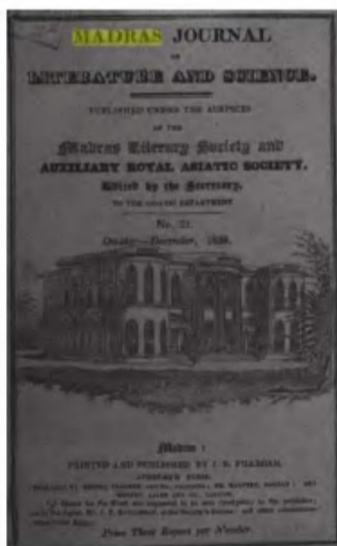


Figure 1. Cover of an issue of *MJLS* (October–December 1838).

MJLS continued up to 1894 with reasonable reputation because Otness¹ lists different European and North American professional journals that cited the articles published in *MJLS*. Two digitized versions of select volumes offer the following details on their respective fly leaves.

Madras Journal of Literature and Science (April–September 1858) edited by the committee of the Madras Literary Society and Auxiliary of the Royal Asiatic Society (volume IV, number 7, new series; volume XX, number 46, old series). Madras: Printed by Pharoah and Co., Athenaeum Press, Mount Road, 1859.

Madras Journal of Literature and Science (1880) edited by Gustav Oppert Ph D (Professor of Sanskrit, Presidency College, Madras; Telugu Translator to Government; Curator Government Oriental Manuscripts Library; Fellow of the Madras University &c). Published and sold by the Madras Literary Society and Auxiliary of the Royal Asiatic Society, Old College, Nungumbaukum, also sold by Higginbotham & Co., Madras, and Messrs Trübner & Co., London, 1881. The reverse of the fly leaf includes the following citation 'Printed by E. Keys, Government Press, Madras'.

MJLS is the second oldest professional science journal in India; *Gleanings in Science* published by the Asiatic Society, Calcutta² and printed in the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, pre-dates *MJLS* by two years. *MJLS* published a range of articles on literature and science. A few examples are supplied below from volume 4, dated July–October 1836, which was edited by Robert Cole (Madras Medical Establishment and Secretary to the Asiatic Department of the Society):

1. Notes on the geology of the country, between Madras and the Neilgherry Hills, via Bangalore and via Salem – by P. M. Benza of the Madras Medical Establishment, pp. 1–27.
2. Notes on Persia, Tartary and Afghanistan – by Colonel K. L. S. Monteith of the Madras Engineers, pp. 28–46.
3. A cursory view of the present state of Astronomical Science, with a summary of the Desiderata; together with a Notice of the Astronomical results of the Madras Observatory – by T. G. Taylor, H. E. I. C. Astronomer, pp. 47–56.
4. Observations on the Flora of Courtallum – by Robert White, pp. 57–67.

MJLS also seems to have served as a medium for the community, because the reports on the exhibitions and proceedings of the Photographic Society of Madras established through the initiative of Alexander Hunter, a military surgeon, in 1857 were published regularly in this journal. Hunter will be remembered in Madras for his vision in starting the College of Arts and Crafts, which was presided over by the famous Indian artist-sculptor Debi Prasad Roy Chowdhury (1899–1975) until the 1950s.

1. Otness, H., *Bull. Int. Assoc. Orient. Lib.*, 1998, **43**, 9–17.
2. Kumar, D., *Indian J. Hist. Sci.*, 1994, **29**, 1–7.

Anantanarayanan Raman is in Charles Sturt University, P. O. Box 883, Orange, NSW 2800, Australia.

e-mail: araman@csu.edu.au