

Unit 3

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The National Archives of India

This is the repository of the non-current records of the Government of India. It is an attached office of the Department of Culture under Ministry of Tourism and Culture. It was set up in March 1891 in Calcutta (Kolkata) as the Imperial Record Department and subsequent to the transfer of the National Capital from Kolkata to New Delhi in 1911, it was shifted to its present building in 1926.

The main function of National Archives of India and State Government's Archives are to collect, preserve and organize government's records and other materials of historical importance. National Archive of India, being an apex archival institution of the country, is generally expected to provide technical know-how and requisite training to the professionals of state and other archival institutions. With the growth of concept of preservation of cultural heritage of the country as well as that of the various regions, the archives are expected to inculcate the awareness about preservation of cultural heritage. National Archive of India as well as various state archives mount exhibitions and organize lectures and celebrate archives week for the fulfillment of this objective. Though the main clientele of the archives are decision makers of the Central and State Government, but in recent years the main thrust is shifting towards the researchers, who come to the archives to consult the records created by various Ministries of the Government, in pursuit of their researches. The National Archive of India is running various training programs ranging from short duration to one year Diploma course in Archives keeping with the objective to provide technical knowledge to the individuals and organizations interested in records management, preservation etc.

The National Archive of India has an established library, which provides secondary sources of information and requirements of creators of the records of the Government of India, Legislators, Judiciary, decision-makers, Gazetteers, Parliamentary debates, Census of India, India Office list, India Army list, Civil list, Travel Accounts, Newspapers, Journals and Bulletins, Freedom Struggle Papers/Books, New Media and technological collections, Application of Computers, Electronic Books and Journals, Institutions and Organizations, Research Scholars of the Universities of India and abroad etc., as a useful adjunct to the government of India records available in the National Archive of India.

Tamil Nadu Archives

Tamil Nadu occupies a unique position in the Archives administration. of India. It is, perhaps, the first among the states to realize the official and historical value of Archives. It enjoys the distinction of being the one and the only and well organized Archives in India.

The records of this Archive preserved here reflect the origin, growth and expansion of British Rule by territorial conquest and the final establishment of supremacy over all rival powers of both foreign and Indian. This also contain, of a mine of information on the aspirations and achievements of the British Government on all matters of administration covering all aspects of socio-economic problems, besides throwing light on the views and ideas of able and experienced administrators, statesmen and legislators of the past, on all matters of public interest.

The Tamil Nadu Archives which had carved itself out a niche among the Archival institutions of India, was formed in the year 1805 when, Lord William Bentick, the then Governor of Madras Presidency, ordered for the centralization of secretariat records of Fort St. George, which hitherto were record keeper and sometimes as superintendent of the General Record Department, until the increasing mass of records and a better appreciation of their value as public Archives compelled the Government to create it into a separate department and it lay the foundation of a department of research. Presently, the Tamil Nadu Archives is under the control of Education Department of the Government of Tamil Nadu.

Activities and Objectives

The records preserved in Archives for use either by the creating agencies or by research scholars. There is vast accumulation of Government records every year. These records may be often required for references and administrative purposes. Hence they are to be well arranged, listed, indexed and preserved properly. The major activities of the Archives are to centralized all permanent records, to arrange them properly, to preserve them on scientific lines; to throw them open for historical research, to publish regularly of historical and administrative interest and to make them all promptly and readily available for official references for day to day administration of the State. One of the important activities is to supply records to the Government Departments for administrative purposes scholars and for research as well as. to private individuals on birth, death, nationality or services of their ancestors~ on payment of search and copying fees. Certified copies of gazette notification are supplied to the public on request by collecting search fees and other charges.

Regional Archives

Bhopal

National Archives of India established regional offices in important cities. The first regional center was started in Bhopal on 23rd November, 1954. This office came into existence as a result of an offer from the former Princely State of Bhopal to hand over all its records to the government of India as a gift. This offer was accepted and a Keeper of records with other necessary Staff was sent to Bhopal to take charge of the records. This archive contains major collections of Pre- Mutiny and Mutiny Papers, Original authenticated copies of laws written on Parchment.

Panaji

The second regional center was started in 1965 at Panaji in Goa. The major collections of Archives were Portuguese Military Records, including Military court, Judicial court of Savestee; Village Community books of Ponda, Books of Perneum, Travel registers and so on. It also did all routine work of archival keeping. The research scholars were also permitted to consult them.

Jaipur

The third regional center of National Archives was started at Jaipur, in Rajasthan on 3rd January 1977 for housing the non – current records of the central government.

Puducherry

In 1979, the National Archives of India started the fourth regional center at Puducherry. It accommodated the records pertaining to French administration in Puducherry.