

Unit 4

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Indian Historical Records Commission (IHRC)

The Indian Historical Records Commission (re-designated Indian Historical Records Committee) was set up by the Government of India in 1919 as a consulting body, whose opinion would carry weight with the public and which would make enquiries and recommendations regarding (i) treatment of archives for historical study, (ii) the scale and plan on which the cataloguing, the calendaring and reprinting of each class of documents should be undertaken, (iii) the sums required for encouraging research among, and publication of records, (iv) selection of competent scholars for editing documents, and (v) the problems of public access to records (Department of Education Resolution No.77 dated 21 March, 1919). With a view to promoting active cooperation of the various State Governments in India as also the universities and learned institutions in the country in the activities of the Committee, the Government of India by their Department of Education, Health and Lands Resolution No.F.92-9/40-E, dated 10 September, 1941, took steps to reform the Constitution of the Committee providing for the inclusion in it of nominees of the various State Governments in India as also those of the Universities and Learned Societies.

The Committee since its inception has held 61 Sessions and has contributed significantly to the growth of public interest in the conservation and use of archives. The Government of India do recognize that it was through the initiative of the Committee and its different Committees that many new sources of information have been brought to light and saved for posterity, many collections of documents have been published and made accessible to scholars, facilities for the use of records have been materially enhanced and a new conscience has been aroused in the public mind in respect of the sanctity of historical evidence. While the Government of India note with deep appreciation these and other achievements of the Committee, they do feel at the same time that much work still remains to be done and that a host of important problems are still awaiting to be tackled. Many records collections are still without any guides or hand-books let alone comprehensive descriptive lists, and very few repositories, public or private, have yet developed a well-articulated program of documents-publication. Most of the collections still continue to be housed in primitive conditions and are subjected to the ravages of insect pests, molds and other destructive agents. Very little systematic effort has been made to survey, describe, organize or make use of records in private custody, and particularly, those of institutional, religious or commercial origin. Lack of trained archivists continues seriously to impede the archival work in the country and the training facilities available in the National Archives have hardly stimulated an adequate response

among the owners of archival holdings. The Government believes that these constitute very serious lacunae in the academic life of the nation and that greater and more whole-hearted cooperation between Keepers of Records and historical materials on the one hand and their users on the other, is the only means by which these deficiencies could be removed.

The International Council on Archives (ICA)

The International Council on Archives (ICA) was organized in 1950 by the UNESCO for the International community engaged in Archival profession. It uplifts the organizational developments in the field of Archives at regional, National and International levels. After the outbreak of World War II, the Archivist of many countries united for the following problems.

1. Preservation of the Archives of International Government.
2. Rehabilitation War Damage Archives
3. Defense of Archives against the destructive agents of modern Warfare.
4. Archives in the International peace settlement.
5. Problems dealing with modern records in bulk.
6. Handling modern types of records.
7. Photographic reproduction of records.
8. Promotion of definite program of International exchange of photographic facsimiles.
9. Promotion of uniform Archival terminology.
10. Promotion of more general agreement as to the most effective finding aids to research in Archives.
11. Cooperation in the training of Archivists.
12. Cooperation in the preparation the International guide and similar undertakings International in scope.

Objectives of the ICA

1. To hold periodically an International Archives Congress.
2. To strengthen the relation between Archivists in all countries.
3. To promote the art of preservation, protection and defense against damage for the historical heritage.
4. To promote Archival training to Archivist.
5. Frequent uses of Archives materials for the impartial study on them.
6. To promote organized and cooperate for international scale in Archive administration.

7. Preparation of documentation work with the cooperation of the international agencies both Governmental and private.

ICA: Membership

The following are the various types of membership available in the International Council of Archives.

- a. Central Archives Directorate
- b. National or International Regional Archives Association.
- c. Institutional Membership
- d. Individual Membership
- e. Honorary Members.

SWARBICA

South and West Asian Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives is shortly known as "SWARBICA." A Headquarters of the organization is under the National Archives of India, New Delhi. The founder member countries are Iran, Srilanka, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. The first meeting held in Vignan Bhavan, New Delhi on 11th December, 1976. This organization published a journal called SWARBICA JOURNAL and the first issue of the same is released on March 1978.

To further the aims of ICA and to strengthen co-operation within South and West Asia. SWARBICA is responsible for carrying out the policy and programs of ICA in this region, where these are relevant to SWARBICA members.

SWARBICA operates under the Constitution of the South and West Asian Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (SWARBICA) adopted at the branch's inaugural conference, New Delhi, 1976 (published in SWARBICA Journal, vol. 1 no. 1, 1978).

The aims and objects of SWARBICA according to Constitution of SWARBICA are:

To establish, maintain and strengthen relations between archivists of all countries in the region; and between all institutions, professional bodies and organisations which are concerned with the custody, organisation, administration or utilisation of archives, whether in public or private possession;

To promote all measures for the preservation, protection and defense against all manners of hazards of the archival heritage of the region, and to further the progress of all aspects of the administration and conservation of these archives;

- To promote and co-ordinate the efforts by the countries in the region with a view to completing the national archival heritage by appropriate methods;
- To provide increasing facilities to the accredited scholars to use the archives of the region;
- To promote, organise and co-ordinate activities in the maintenance, utilisation and conservation of archives in the region;
- To sponsor professional training of archivists in the region;
- To co-operate with other organisations or institutions concerned with the use of that documentation for the benefit of mankind;
- To organise seminars, symposia and other meetings, on specific themes of mutual interest to the member countries in the region;
- To obtain international assistance for archival development of the countries in the region; and
- To generally follow the aims and objectives of the International Council on Archives.

ARBICA

ARBICA is responsible for carrying out the policy and programs of ICA in this region, where these are relevant to ARBICA members. ARBICA operates under the Constitution of the Arab Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives adopted in Seville 1985 (published in 1986).