

RECORDS COMMISSION – 1990.*

The Indian Historical Records Commission 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 21st 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 Commission, the Government of India by their Department of Education, Health and Lands Resolution No. F.92-9/40-E, dated 10th September, 1941, took steps to reform the Constitution of the Commission providing for the inclusion in it of nominees of the various State Governments in India as also those of the Universities and learned Societies.

2. The Commission has since its inception held Fifty-Eight 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

*Department of Culture, Government of India, Resolution No. F.32-34/84-Lib.(P&A), dated 15.10.1990 and amended **vide** corrigendum, dated 14.02.1992, F: 18-15/96-Lib.II dated 26.11.96, F.No.18-20/2002-A&A dated 10.6.2002. and F.No.19/2007-CC dated 12-06-2009.

Commission 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 Commission, 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-book let alone comprehensive descriptive lists, and very few repositories, public or private, have yet developed a well-articulated programme of documents-publication. Most of the collections still continue to be housed in primitive conditions and are subjected to the ravages of insect pests, moulds 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.

3. In order to promote such cooperation the Government of India, in supersession of the Department of Culture Resolution No. 32-34/84-Lib.(P&A) dated 15.10.90 and all earlier Resolutions on the same subject, are pleased to sanction a reconstitution of the Commission on the following lines:-

The Commission shall consist of the following members:-

A. Ex-officio Members

1. Minister of Tourism and Culture, Government of India. Ex-Officio President
2. Secretary to the Government of India, Member
Ministry of Culture, New Delhi.
3. Additional Secretary/Joint Secretary to the Government of India Member Ministry of Culture, New Delhi
4. Director General of Archives, Member- Secretary
Government of India, National Archives
of India, New Delhi.
5. Deputy Director of Archives, Government of Joint Secretary
India, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
(dealing with the Commission)

B. Nominees of the Government of India:

There shall be 10 eminent historians and archivists to be appointed by the Government of India on the basis of their specialized knowledge of the treatment of archives or their original contribution to the Post-1600 period of Indian History.

C. Representatives of the Central Government and Semi-Government Institutions, one each from the following agencies:

1. Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi.
2. Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi.
3. Ministry of Defence, New Delhi.
4. Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, New Delhi.
5. University Grants Commission, New Delhi.
6. Ministry of Culture(Financial Advisor), New Delhi.

D. Representatives of State Governments/Union Territories

15 nominees from State Governments/Union Territories having an organized records repository to be appointed on rotation basis alphabetically, the nominee being invariably the custodian of the Archives of the State/Union Territory.

E. Representatives of Universities teaching post-1600 period of Indian History:

10 nominees from Universities in India (to be selected on rotation basis alphabetically) teaching post-1600 period of Indian History and encouraging research and publication of original records and co-operating with the Commission in organizing its own archives.

F. Representatives of Learned Institutions:

5 nominees from Learned Institutions with proven contribution in encouraging historical research, publication, and in conducting survey and exploration of records in private and semi-public custody.

4. The Government of India desires that nominees of the State Governments should be persons thoroughly conversant with archives and archival techniques and that nominees of Universities, Learned Institutions and other Research bodies should be persons of academic distinction with considerable amount of original research work to their credit. The nominees of all these bodies will become members of the Commission after their nominations have been notified by the Government of India..

5.

I. The Members of the Commission, other than ex-officio Members, will be appointed for a term of five years as follows:

All appointments and re-appointments for a full term of five years will be en-bloc with effect from the same date. Vacancy due to resignation or otherwise which may occur within the period of five years will not be filled for a full term of five years but only for the unexpired period of the term.

II. The scope of the Commission's activities shall be limited to the following:

(a) To act as a forum for exchange between creators, custodians and users of archives and historical documents, of ideas and experiences relating to treatment, preservation and use of archives, and to make recommendations to appropriate bodies, official or non-official in this behalf.

(b) To act as a forum for discussion on archives in relation to historical problems requiring investigation, particularly in relation to those on which little or no work has been done, and to hold Academic Session. At this Academic Session papers based on newly discovered original records pertaining to the post-1600 period of Indian history be read and discussed. These papers should be written either by the Members of the Commission or communicated through them if written by other scholars. All such papers should be circulated in advance after getting them approved by an Editorial Committee to be constituted for the purpose with the following members:

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| (a) A Senior Member of the Commission | Chairman |
| (b) Two members representing the fields of history\archives | Members |
| (c) Director General of Archives | Member-Secretary |

(c) To promote the salvaging and use of material in private and semi-public custody (including institutional, religious and business records) in collaboration with universities, libraries, museums, learned societies, and particularly with the Regional Records Survey Committees and similar local bodies, and to act as a clearing house of information on the work done in this field.

(d) To act generally as an intermediary between records and historical manuscript repositories on the one hand and bodies interested in research on the other.

(e) To publish proceedings and bulletins embodying reports on its activities and on other matters promoting its objectives.

III. The Commission shall normally meet once a year at a place rich in archival materials being selected as the venue. Each session should include:

(I) A Public Meeting devoted to the report to be presented by the Secretary on the archival progress in the country.

(ii) A Business Meeting for the discussion of the Secretary's Report as also the problems relating to keeping and use of archives that may be referred to it by the members and for review of programmes undertaken by different bodies under its auspices.

(iii) Academic Session for reading and discussion of papers based on original records pertaining to the post-1600 period of Indian history. Such sessions shall be open to the interested public.

The Commission's meetings are to be presided over by the ex-officio President. He shall however, have the right to nominate a senior member to act as President in his absence.

6. Standing Committee:

The Commission may appoint one or more Committees to deal with the particular problems requiring investigation. Such Committees shall submit their reports to the Commission.

The Government of India shall set up a Standing Committee with the following composition and functions:

I. Composition:

- (a) Secretary to the Government of India,
Chairman
Ex Officio
Ministry of Culture.
- (b) Additional Secretary/ Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture,
Vice-Chairman
Member & Ex-officio
- (c) Five Members of the Commission to be
nominated by the Government of India
- (d) Director General of Archives,
Ex-Officio Secretary
Government of India, National Archives of India.
- (e) Deputy Director of Archives,
Ex Officio Joint Secretary
Government of India, (dealing with
the Commission.)

II. Functions:

The Standing Committee will review the action taken from time to time on the recommendations made by the Indian Historical Records Commission, consider all reports and items referred to it and express its views on the agenda for the Commission's meeting, and perform such other functions as the Government of India or the President of the Commission may assign to it. It will ordinarily meet twice a year.

7. Travelling Allowance:

The travelling allowance of the Ex-Officio President, Secretary, Ministry of Culture (Ex-Officio Chairman of the Standing Committee), Additional Secretary, Ministry of Culture, (Ex-Officio Vice-Chairman of Standing Committee) Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Secretary of the Commission, Joint Secretary of the Commission, the nominees of the Government of India, referred to in para 3 (A-B above) and such members of the Standing Committee who are Government officials attending the meeting(s) of the Commission and its Committees will be a charge on the Central Revenues, and the expenditure for the same will be debitable to the same head as their pay.

8. Non-officials appointed by the Government of India as Members of the Commission or its Committees will draw traveling allowances for attending meetings of the Commission or its Committees at rates admissible to Grade-I Officers of the Central Government and daily allowances at the highest rate admissible to Grade-I Officers of the Central Government for respective localities. The expenditure will be met from the budget grant of the National Archives of India. The State Governments, the Universities and other Constituent Institutions will be required to bear the travelling allowances of their nominees. The travelling allowance for non-official members other than Central Government nominees who may be appointed to serve on any Committee of the Indian Historical Records Commission will be paid at the same rate as those of non-official members appointed by the Central Government as Ordinary Members.