



A HANDBOOK
FOR
RECORDS MANAGERS

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

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Introduction

It is admitted by one and all that there cannot be any administration without records. But very few are aware of the fact that there can be no administration without any Records Management. This fact is much less obvious in the countries of Asia, where Records Management is entirely a new concept. The need is not yet urgently felt everywhere because administration in these countries is still in the stage of re-organisation and development. They would do well to introduce Records Management at an early stage so as to avoid the confusion in handling of records, which plague so many older administrations.

In ancient India the tradition was particularly well entrenched, though some writing did exist on clay, stones, copper plates, palm leaves and birch bark. Introduction of paper, however, ushered in a revolution in the world of information. Nicolo Conti refers to the use of Samarqandi rag paper in Gujarat, while Amir Khusrau alludes to what he calls the Shami or Syrian paper in Delhi. Amir Khusrau and Barni give a vivid description of book-sellers of Delhi. But it appears that the quantity of paper was not sufficient to cope with the demand, and people had to exercise great economy in the use of paper. Barni refers to an amusing instance in which the royal *farmans* or letter patent were literally washed under Balban's instructions in order to be able to re-utilise them for purposes of writing.

This, however, was not the case with the Mughal administrators who had to thumb through many papers in their official transactions. It is because of this enormous transactions on paper, from one department to another, that the Mughal Administration has been described as the *Kaghazi Raj* or Paper Government by late Sir Jadunath Sarkar. It is an irony of history that very few papers of this *Kaghazi Raj* have survived to enable us to have some idea of their original bulk.

The fact, however, cannot be denied that Archivists of Medieval India were not as much exercised over the problem of bulk as are the Archivists of Modern India. It is true that mechanical devices like telephone, dictaphone, wireless, etc. have been responsible in reducing the bulk of paper work but introduction of typewriter, duplicator, xeroxing and other devices of multiplication of documents have resulted in an enormous production of records. The problem is further complicated by the variety of physical forms of modern records viz., films, photographs, video and audio tapes. The Archivists are, therefore, naturally exercised over the quantum of records and their complexity.

In 1960, when the Committee on Archival Legislation submitted its Report, it was estimated that the main Ministries and Departments of the Government of India along with their attached and subordinate offices had records which would occupy 290 kilometres of shelf space. Eight years later the Estimates Committee of Parliament found that the quantum of unappraised records had gone up to 410 kilometres. This shows that the Central Government alone has been creating records at the rate of 14 kilometres per annum. At this rate the records available with different Central Government agencies alone occupy more than 500 linear kilometres of shelf space. While there has not been any attempt to compute the per capita creation of records by Central Government officials, the fact cannot be denied that 'Record Explosion' has an overwhelming effect on all of us. Unless we catch up with this new phenomenon and contain it within limits, we shall soon be swamped.

It had been estimated in 1975 that mere shelving cost per file in Metropolitan cities in India came to about Re. 1/- per annum. In view of the escalating cost the storage cost per file could not now be less than Rs. 1.50 per year. As many as 4.5 millions of files have piled up in the corridors and basements of various Central Government offices alone. Thus, in terms of storage only the Government has been spending Rs. 6.5 millions per annum. This does not include the cost of up-keep and maintenance of these records.

Imbued by professional doubts, Archivists are putting more and more questions about the cost involved in maintaining records. We cannot ignore any longer the fact that the cost of keeping and administering records has terribly increased in particular by the world-wide inflation. In this changing world the Archivists have to meet the challenge of growing responsibilities against shrinking resources, especially in the Third World.

In the Indian context microfilming does not come to our rescue in as much as we cannot resort to substitute microfilming—I mean retaining the microfilms and discarding a part of the originals, as has been the practice in a few countries. We in India have been following the British pattern. We do security microfilming wherein microfilms are preserved along with the originals required for their evidential value in as much as the legal validity of microfilms as primary evidence has not yet been provided under the Indian Evidence Act.

The Archivists are, therefore, much concerned about these records not only in their non-current stage but also in their current and semi-current stages. They have to think about them right from the conceptual stage so that their recording, classification and appraisal, and retrieval of information contained in them could be facilitated. After all, these records are meant to guide and assist the Government and the people in planning and conducting their activities. This objective could well be achieved to the satisfaction of both the Administrator and the Archivist if these records are looked after by a competent trained Records Manager of sufficient status and authority in each agency of the Government. He could be of aid to the administrators in planning of forms and procedures for correspondence and issuance, distribution and maintenance of directives and consequent reporting practices. This will lead to prevention of creation of unnecessary documentation, early identification of papers of lasting or enduring value and systematic planning and retirement procedures.

Records Management, thus, establishes standards of good management in respect of creation, classification, maintenance, retrieval and retirement of current and semi-current records and

seeks to promote their adoption by the various record-creating agencies. In sum, Records Management spans the life cycle of records from 'cradle to grave'.

I must put on record my appreciation of the assistance I have received from my colleagues Shri Nirmal Kant, Archivist and Dr. R.K. Perti, Assistant Director of Archives (Policy and Legislation) in the preparation of this booklet. If this work helps to stimulate discussion and create congenial climate for Records Management in our country, it would have justified itself.

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CHAPTER I

Controlling Creation

1.1 In the bygone days the pace of human activity was slow with the result that creation of records was limited. However, in modern times, diabolical changes in the sphere of human society in general and welfare state in particular have expanded the field of activity of the government. This trend received further fillip with Industrial and technological revolutions.

1.2 In the wake of these developments the pace of documentation also increased creating more problems about their disposal, retention and safe-custody. Documentation system, therefore, needs to be systematised and ways have to be found out for controlling mass of papers produced in Government offices, business houses, banking and other institutions in such a manner that their storage and maintenance costs are kept within reasonable limits and information contained in them becomes easily retrievable. This is possible if efforts are directed towards streamlining the record creation process so that the chaff could be segregated from the grain at a minimum cost. This enormous task could be attempted in a number of ways through correspondence management, forms management, directive management, report management, mail management, etc.

1.3 When letters, postcards, memoranda and telecommunications are received and despatched in large numbers everyday by the Government Departments and private institutions in pursuit of their policies and programmes, it is but natural that a system has to be devised on a rational basis. It must be ensured that files are opened only in respect of those cases where future correspondence is likely to be generated. Other papers could just be dealt with under diary number and filed

and subsequently destroyed after a year. Growth of files could as well be controlled if an attempt is made to send the reply on the original communication itself. In such cases need for opening fresh files could be obviated.

1.4 Moreover, papers are required to be filed in a manner that promotes efficiency, quality and reduces expenditure. In this connection it needs hardly to be emphasised that papers of ephemeral value are segregated and kept separately right at the initial stage itself. In order to achieve best results, it is desirable that correspondence is properly docketed and referenced so that papers could be easily located and consulted. Further, correspondence should be directed to the point and brief so that the purport of the subject is very clear and helps avoiding unnecessary correspondence.

1.5 It is essential that standard forms should be designed wherever there is a likelihood of recurrence of correspondence on any specific subject. The layout of the forms should be so planned and designed that they are capable of furnishing data/information without much loss of time and effort. Besides, these forms have to be prepared after taking into consideration the ease with which they can be shuffled and handled during the course of their currency and conveniently retired when no longer required for day-to-day work.

1.6 The developed countries have adopted yet another technique of directive management for reducing proliferation of records. They have emphasised that preparation, issuance and distribution of directives and instructions should be a well thought out and planned process. It should be done in a manner that does not permit supersession of directives at quick succession. This procedure not only ensures their sanctity and prompt execution, but also reduces paper work required in their revision and calling explanation in respect of deviations during execution of policies and programmes. Besides, maintenance of directives should be centralised so that their retrieval and reference at a later stage could be much facilitated.

1.7 Further, a system of internal reporting needs to be devised for evaluating the execution of programmes and policies of an Office/Organisation, and economy effected in the record

creation and record maintenance process. It would sometime be desirable to apply pressure by resorting to the use of different forms of paper work management and frequent appraisal and weeding of ephemeral papers by restricting supply of filing equipment.

1.8 In addition to the paper work that is being done in government offices and private institutions, a lot of information is being collected and disseminated on a non-conventional media consisting of audio and video tapes, punch-cards and tapes, etc. It is, therefore, desirable that the information collected by various agencies should be controlled and ways and means adopted for handling and disseminating it without much inconvenience.

1.9 It may, however, be emphasised that the problem of paper work management is far more accute than that of the non-conventional media and urgent steps are required to be initiated towards that end. Various forms of paper management outlined above are sure to yield results, if properly implemented.

Recording and Classification

2.1 Records are created for a specific purpose in the transaction of various functions allotted to Government, Semi-Government Agencies or private organisations. During the course of such transactions a number of papers are accumulated. These papers are usually placed in a file according to a pre-planned classification system in order to facilitate future reference and continuity of action.

2.2 A file remains active so long as basic issues dealt with in it are alive and continue to demand attention for transacting day-to-day business, and is required to be closed as soon as issues discussed in it are settled. In this process care has to be taken that files are not allowed to remain active beyond a specific period, which could be a fiscal or a calendar year. In case any file demands continuity over a number of years, it is desirable that a new file is opened giving a brief summary of action already taken on the first page note sheet of the new file and the earlier one is closed and recorded. This criteria or procedure is, therefore, not applicable to files of a purely ephemeral nature containing papers of little reference or research value. Such files need not formally be recorded but destroyed after one year.

2.3 While recording files, it may be ensured that all papers on the correspondence side and notes portion have been duly paginated and pages dog-eared or damaged during the course of their movement are properly repaired. Papers of routine nature should also be removed from them. All references, particularly previous and later, should be carefully given both on the first page note sheet and the file cover. At this stage the title of the file could also be revised so as to adequately reflect its contents. To facilitate future referencing, the subject head of the file

should be indexed. Entries for the index should be as crisp and catchy as possible. It is also desirable that note by a responsible officer should be recorded on the last page of the notes portion indicating that the issues considered on the file had been fully considered or a new file on the subject had been opened. Besides, the word 'Recorded' should be prominently indicated in red ink on the File Register. At this stage, fresh covers for the files could be used, if necessary. But then it has to be ensured that all the entries on the earlier file covers are duly made on the new ones.

2.4 There have been instances when some files require segregation right at the time of their creation or even before the issues dealt with on them have been settled. Such files usually pertain to sensitive issues and are kept separately under the charge of a responsible officer. The general guidelines indicated in respect of recording of unclassified files are required to be duly taken note of while dealing with files bearing, secret, top secret or confidential classification. Such files should, however, be amalgamated with the main series of unclassified files once they have been downgraded. An indication about files marked secret etc. should, however, be given in the File Register so that such files could be retrieved and consulted if a need arises to consult them.

2.5 Once files have been closed, it is desirable to classify them so that they could serve the needs of current operations of the agency that creates them as well as for keeping them in an orderly and accessible manner. It is as well necessary for segregation of records of ephemeral value and their subsequent disposal. This scheme of classification of files takes within its purview both the physical arrangement and assignment of symbols for identifying units of records and showing their relationship with the organisation that creates them as also its functions.

2.6 Files are created to serve various purposes and are required to be retained for various periods of time, depending upon the subject matter of each file. These files can be classified into different categories like A, B, or C.

2.7 Files of 'A' category are the most important ones that are created by an agency. They are required to be

preserved for posterity at all costs for reasons of their intrinsic value. The agencies would be losers in case they were lost or the pages in those files were mutilated. It is, therefore, desirable that consultation of such files in the original form by administrators or scholars should be restricted. Care, however, has to be taken that they are edited with a view to weeding out papers of ephemeral nature and reducing the bulk. Materials which could be considered fit for removal from the files are generally reminders, acknowledgements and the like:

2.8 Papers which usually fall into this category pertain to evidence of rights or obligations of or against the government, major policy decisions, preparation of legislation, constitutional amendments, functions and working of commissions appointed on all-India basis, Centre-State or Inter-State meetings, Centre-State relations, administrative memoranda historical reports, summaries and legal opinions on matters of importance, important litigation or *cause celebre* in which the administration had been involved. Papers relating to origin of a Department or agency, its functions, organisation and, if defunct, reasons for its winding up are also of great importance and are attracted towards this 'A' category. Other subjects which could fall in this category are International or bilateral agreements, negotiations and conventions, opinions, well-known public or international events or other issues giving rise to interest or controversy at national level.

2.9 There is a group of files which need to be retained permanently but does not demand their printing or photo-duplication. Such files would be retained in original in the same manner as those of 'A' category. Files falling into such category would contain information pertaining to data about achievements and implementation of policies of Department/ Agency, trends of developments in political, social, economic or other fields, scientific and technical research. Files of this nature are categorised as 'B'.

2.10 There is, however, a category of records which does not permit its retention for all times. Such files are designated as 'C' class files. As these files are of limited administrative or historical importance, they will usually constitute a major

bulk and will be retained for not more than 10 years. Files falling in this category generally deal with house-keeping or administrative matters, or issues of not great historical or administrative importance. However, it has to be ensured that files of this category should carry the retention period and the year of its review prominently on the file cover.

CHAPTER III

Retention Schedules

3.1 One of the pre-requisites of a sound records management system is that there should be a reasonable ratio between the creation and destruction of records. The geometric growth of records puts a limitation on space that can be provided for storing them, on funds that could be made available for their scientific maintenance in good physical state and on servicing personnel required for their care and processing. There is, therefore, an imperative need that their bulk should be kept in manageable proportions. One of the steps towards achieving this aim is the preparation of retention schedules for records, indicating their retention period.

3.2 Retention Schedules for records are of two types : First covers the records relating to activities which by nature are common to all Ministries/Departments/ Offices of the Government and pertain to administrative or house-keeping jobs. The second type of schedule deals with records pertaining to substantive functions of a Ministry or Department or an Office. The task of preparing a retention schedule for the former type of records which are produced by all Ministries/ Departments, etc. in a large number is rather simple. Most of the records that fall into this category pertain to all aspects of establishment and house-keeping matters such as : establishment, welfare, vigilance, common office services, Hindi, public relations, finance, budget, cash and accounts and parliamentary matters. An attempt to compile a record retention schedule for such type of records in the Government of India was undertaken in 1963 and was finalised after much detailed discussions and examination in 1974.

3.3 Compilation of retention schedule for records pertaining to substantive functions of a Ministry, a Department or

an organisation is rather more difficult and complex, as records covered by it are peculiar in nature and require careful analysis of the position or placement of a Ministry/Department/Organisation that creates them in the hierarchy, its functions and activities. Generally records of fundamental importance are the records produced by the apex bodies. They usually contain matters concerning policy, procedural and organisational issues. Records created by the lower formations are greater in bulk. They deal with implementation of policies, programmes and procedures laid down by the apex agencies and their records reflect the effectiveness with which given directions have been carried out.

3.4 The next major step towards compilation of a Retention

Schedule is the analysis of the organisational set up of the concerned records creating agency and its existing documentation practices, and identification of record groups produced by that agency. Knowledge acquired by constant touch with the needs of the creators of records as also their users is always an asset and helpful in determining the retention period of the various categories of records.

3.5 If a clear idea about the organisational set up of a Department/agency and the nature of records produced by it has been formed, the stage is said to have been set for examining the current, semi-current and non-current records. File Registers of the concerned sections/units should be perused with a view to see that no record group is left out of the retention schedule. In this connection study of inventories, reports published or in manuscript, classification form, and filing manuals, along with personal discussion with the creators of records is always desirable.

3.6 The officer responsible for the compilation of retention schedules should be very careful in suggesting the categorisation of records. 'A' classification should be prescribed when the records are very important and contain information about policy decisions or papers leading to such decisions, such as Acts and statutes; International agreements, conventions, etc.; constitutional matters; inter-State or Centre—State relations; inter-State

boundary disputes; constitution, functions or working of important commissions; rules; regulations; procedures; departmental guides, etc.

3.7 All records groups which are required for more than 10 years should be given 'B' classification. And, all records which are to be retained for less than 10 years should be listed under 'C' category. Generally files pertaining to house-keeping and establishment matters are covered by this category.

3.8 Once the retention schedules for records have been compiled, it can be used as an instrument by which limited and costly shelf-space in the various units and the Departmental Record Rooms could be released for housing the more important records. With the help of these schedules weeding and appraisal of records could be systematised and haphazard destruction of records prevented. They would also facilitate the classification and appraisal process and ensure speedy disposal of records.



CHAPTER IV

Appraisal

4.1 Every records creating agency produces a large body of records in pursuit of different programmes and policies for which it had come into existence, but all the records thus produced cannot be retained for obvious reasons. We have, therefore, to resort to what is called "Selective Retention" of records. Chaff has to be segregated from the grain and the process of appraisal is to be carried out in as objective a manner as possible.

4.2 Appraisal of records has generally been described as the process of determining the value of records based upon their current administrative, legal and fiscal use as well as their evidential, and informational value. At times, the intrinsic value of records depends upon some unique factors, such as age, circumstances regarding their creation, a signature or an attached seal.

4.3 The process of appraisal has to be extremely cautious, as records are unique and have generally no duplicates. If destroyed carelessly, they could mean permanent loss to both the administrators and the research scholars. The appraisal standards, however, cannot be precise or definite. They could only provide the appraiser with guidelines, which could be applied with discretion. It obviously means that this work could be conducted by persons of sufficient maturity and experience, as records with passage of time acquire values, which are unimaginable while they are still current. Wholesale destruction of records created for a definitely temporary purpose need not be pursued vigorously, as it is always advantageous to retain the end-product of such records.

4.4 Further, records are to be appraised after taking into consideration the significance of the record creating body,

its position in governmental hierarchy, nature of its activities and relation of its activities with those of superior or subordinate administrative units. Besides, acquaintance with the nature of series of records demanding appraisal and the organisational history of the agency, whose records are to be subjected to appraisal, would be desirable before the appraisal operations actually commence.

4.5 The process of appraisal should commence normally at a date not far from the actual closing of files and be conducted before the meaning of transactions dealt with in them have completely faded from the memory. Files which could be identified right at the time of their recording as of permanent value should not, however, be subjected to review or appraisal at this stage. Files coming up for review at this stage would be of 'C' category, which has been explained earlier. The process would become simple and easy to apply if the files are appraised purely from the administrative point of view. Before commencing the process of appraising files, the appraiser should, however, invariably address himself a question whether a file under review would be required as a precedent or a guide to a possible action, should a similar circumstance arise in the future. He should not look at any one of them simply on the basis of the fact that the activities with which it dealt with have ceased to exist. If, however, it is felt at that stage that a file deserves another lease of life, it could be granted; but it should be weeded out thereafter without subjecting it to any further review. Possibility of upgrading a 'C' category file to 'A' or 'B' category could as well be considered at this stage. In case, files contain information of a recurring nature, it is desirable to retain a few samples thereof, as illustrations. Papers which are of purely ephemeral value and kept unrecorded can be weeded out without undertaking any review.

4.6 As most of the files about House-keeping jobs have short-term administrative value, they could be weeded out quickly at the initial stage. Files which could fall into this category would pertain to routine personnel record, purchase orders, stock control records, programme or servicing of typewriters, furniture, stationery and forms, different types of

machines, etc. Files dealing with purchase of sale of stocks may be destroyed after the files have been duly audited and entries made in the stock registers. Files dealing with individual matters can also be weeded out after the purpose in view has been served by them. Similar treatment should be accorded to records of establishment, welfare matters, public relations, etc. Files dealing with Parliament Questions could also be weeded out, provided they do not contain information in a consolidated form.

4.7 Historical or research criteria in appraising records can be applied after sufficient time has elapsed since an event or decision on an issue had been taken. As historical research is in no way connected to normal work of the record creating department, it would not be proper to leave final appraisal of files/records to the record creating agencies alone. They have neither the expertise nor actual experience of research, let alone the question of their being aware of conceivable means to forecast with certainty papers which future researchers might consider important. It would, therefore, be desirable to associate Archivists with the appraisal process at this stage. Association of Archivists at this stage is also advisable for the reason that they generally come into contact with research scholars and are aware of what the latter would wish to consult. It should, however, be left to the Archivists if at any stage of appraisal, they would like to seek assistance from professionals and specialists in other fields for assessing the value of records.

4.8 With the passage of time, most records acquire values other than purely administrative. Historians, genealogists and researchers in other fields get interested in them along with the administrators for the information contained in them. At this stage, files classified as of 'A' or 'B' category above referred could be looked at with certain amount of objectivity and a perspective necessary for their historical significance. It is, therefore, desirable that they should be subjected to review afresh from the point of informational value that they might possess. In Central Government offices in India, this review is being conducted after a file has completed 25 years of its existence.

4.9 Records which are of historical importance and deserve retention for administrative and research purposes would generally deal with enactment of laws, framing of rules and regulations executive orders relating to creation, organisation and re-organisation of offices, their discontinuance; their achievements and consolidation of functions; establishment matters like policy about recruitment, promotion, retirement, pension etc., interpretation of rules, legal functions and the like. Files pertaining to titles to property, appointment of committees and commissions and their reports, agreements and conventions, public or international events or functions which created great interest or controversy on the national plane would also merit permanent retention. Papers relating to change of policy are not easy to recognise, yet files containing summary for a Minister, appointment of departmental or inter-departmental committees, note for the Cabinet, instructions to executive agencies along with relative forms or major policy decision of administrative, political, economic, legal or the like issues could always be preserved for posterity. In this connection care has to be taken that a complete set of papers may be kept by departments mainly concerned with those issues. Files containing unpublished statistical or financial data covering a long period or a wide area as also about important aspects of scientific or technical research and development could also qualify for permanent retention. Files dealing with matters of local importance could also be retained provided it is reasonably felt that evidence about them would not be available locally. Files containing information on obsolete activities or investigations or important schemes which could not be executed could as well be retained for posterity. Besides, files containing information of biographical or antiquarian interest should be retained.

Records Centres

5.1 Records Centres are intermediate records repositories, housing semi-current records, which might be active or inactive depending upon the contents of the files, the thinking of the government or the creating agency. In order to ensure economy and efficiency, they should be moved from valuable office space to the less expensive space of the records centres till they are finally weeded out or retired to the archival repository for permanent preservation.

5.2 The idea for organising records centres was developed in the United States during the Second World War under the severe wartime pressure for space. In the years following the war there was a net-work of records centres in that country. Such records centres have been organised in other countries also. In the United Kingdom they are known as 'Limbos'. There are records centres in Canada and New Zealand. In the Federal Republic of Germany they are called 'Intermediate Archives'. It is significant to note that these centres, with whatever description they are known, are serving all the agencies of the government and are functioning under the administrative control and supervision of the archival repositories of those countries.

5.3 India is a vast country and the Central Government Departments/Offices are dispersed all over it and produce a very large body of records. According to the survey conducted some time back more than 45 millions of record accumulations have piled up with different Central Government record creating agencies, which are required to be accommodated. The conditions under which these records are maintained could not obviously be congenial for their proper upkeep. Since very few departments and offices of the Government have their own Departmental Records Rooms, more than 50 per cent of these accumulations continue to remain in the sections, occupying

valuable office space, others are kept in the corridors of the office building or in places with unhealthy surroundings along with unused furniture and obsolete office equipments.

5.4 It is, therefore, essential that production of records and their retirement should be planned in advance and the flow thereof regulated through well settled procedures. This would not only ensure protection to valuable records but also help preparation of reference media and guides to these records. These programmes could be executed provided there are well planned Records Centres. Inactive records could be transferred by the creating agencies to such records centres without delay, disturbance or inconvenience. There would also be no difficulty in case the creating agencies requisition any file for reference purposes.

5.5 These Records Centres should be located not very far from the premises of the records creating agencies. These Centres would provide most of the usual services of a Departmental Records Room— accessioning and storage of semi-current records; preservation; arrangement and description of records; reference service; and disposal of records. The records managers working in the Records Centres could also assist the offices in record administration problems, including disposal of ephemeral records. Preliminary checklists, inventories, organisation and administration of such records could also be taken up by the Records Centres. These Records Centres could function under the control and supervision of the National Archives of India and help the archivists in planning systematic retirement of records after they have been subjected to review according to the procedure laid down in the Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure.

5.6 The Record Centres should be located in a functional building consisting of an administrative block and the muniment rooms. The building should be waterproof and free from getting flooded. It should have proper drainage system with no water pipes or drains passing through or under the muniment rooms. The muniment rooms should have proper ventilation. The window in the muniment rooms should have rain water shades to prevent splashing of rain water inside the

stack area. For the safety of records, the windows should be provided with iron grills or wire mesh nets. The windows should have lemon colour curtains so as to check sunlight falling directly on the records. Humidity and temperature in the muniment rooms should be kept under control, preferably by air-conditioning, if not, by installing air circulators, ceiling fans, exhaust fans etc. Humidity could as well be controlled by using Silica Gel in wire mesh cloth or Anhydrous calcium chloride in enamelled or glazed earthen pots placed at convenient points. To prevent accidental fire, the fire-fighting equipment should be kept handy near the gate and at other suitable places. Along with the environmental factors, the Records Centres should take care of biological and chemical factors to ensure longevity to the record materials that they take over. Fungi and insects of various types should be controlled by making a discrete use of chemicals.

5.7 The muniment rooms in the Records Centres should have shelves which are functional, durable and easy to clean. Besides, they should offer maximum protection to records against fire and dust. They should also facilitate servicing of records. Shelves should preferably be of steel, with a paint which is rust-proof and non-injurious to records. They should be fixed away from the walls with sufficient space between them for the movement of records. The records should be kept preferably in carton boxes, failing which in bundles tied between two pieces of 5-ply vanista boards.

5.8 Good lighting with either natural or artificial light, is necessary for every muniment room. Modern defused lighting arrangements are most desirable for every muniment room. The lighting arrangement could be improved by using paints that reflect light.

5.9 The Records Centres developed on the foregoing lines would function as intermediaries between the records creating agencies and the archival institutions. They would provide temporary storage space which is considerably less expensive and more extensive than that available with the agencies themselves or archival institutions. The availability of space would obviate the danger that the creating departments would weed out records, regardless of their value in a bid to clear the much needed space. For the same reason the archival institutions would be spared of records of dubious value.

CHAPTER VI

Retrieval Tools

6.1 Efficiency of a records creating agency depends directly on the ease with which the required information could be culled out from the mass of records produced by it. The basic tools which help in quick retrieval of information are : (i) Organisational history, (ii) File Registers, and (iii) Indices.

6.2 Growth and change in the machinery of a records creating agency is a natural phenomena. This must be reflected in such a way that it gives sufficient idea of its organisation. The organisational history thus compiled constitutes a most useful instrument for retrieval of information. It provides not only a correct picture of the agency concerned but also helps in tracing any particular series of records created by that agency as also in understanding the nature of files/records. It also comes to the rescue of the Archivist concerned in assessing the value of records at the time of their appraisal. These are the reasons why the Archival Policy Resolution issued by the Government of India in 1972 has made compilation of organisational history obligatory for all records creating agencies.

6.3 The organisational history should reflect (a) date of creation of the organisation, (b) subsequent changes made in the organisational structure, with date and year, (c) functions allocated to it at the time of its creation, with organisational structure, (d) allocation and re-allocation of functions, with reasons for such changes, and (e) committees/commissions appointed to look into specific problems or issues, with dates of their appointment and specific recommendations made by them.

6.4 Besides the organisational history, each section/unit in a Department/Agency should keep a Register of files which are opened during a calendar/fiscal year so that control on the

creation and location of files could be maintained. The Register should clearly indicate the Main Subject or Standard Head and the Sub-Heads, file number and subject, in brief, of each file. File number should consist of the serial number of the Standard Head and be followed by a serial number of the Standard Sub-Head, followed by the year of opening and at the end an abbreviated symbol identifying the section. The year of closing, classification given to each file and remarks about its transfer to the Records Room/Records Centre or otherwise should be clearly stated. The File Registers should normally be preserved for 15 years.

6.5 Equally important tool of retrieval is an index. It is an instrument for search of specific information in a file/record. Records need indexing more fully than books or periodicals, as demands of the users are quite often unpredictable. It is desirable that the information in a file should be indexed under a number of subject-heads. It should furnish the minutest clue to the contents in a file or record so that the enquirer/user's search for information could be facilitated.

6.6 Generally a file deals with one main subject. But during the course of its currency information is collected in it on a number of allied issues, which remain unreflected in the main subject of the file. Index should be compiled of all files which are categorised as 'A', and 'B' as well as those which are to be retained for a period of 10 years. It is imperative that records of permanent retention are indexed in-depth and with imagination.

6.7 Two types of indices are usually prepared, i.e. nominal and subject indices. In a nominal index, entries of names of persons, places and subjects are prepared and arranged in an alphabetical order. Each entry is to consist of name or title or both together or a subject word as a heading, followed by a reference. Reference is to be given by the number of the file. While compiling such an index the following points should be kept in view :—

- (i) Proper names of persons, places, ships, books, newspapers, public bodies or institutions, etc. should be indexed ;

- (ii) Entries of titles or official designations should be made (a) when they are unaccompanied by a person's name and when the person referred to cannot be identified ; (b) When no actual person is mentioned, but only the office or post is referred to, e.g., qualification of a doctor could be indexed as Doctor, qualification of ;
- (iii) Titles accompanied by place names or place or places implied but not given under that name need also be indexed, e.g., letter from the Governor of Maharashtra may be indexed as Maharashtra, Governor of ;
- (iv) Compound names of public bodies, as institution, are generally indexed under the first word and not by an article, unless they contain a place name. For example, the Board of Examiners should be indexed as Board of Examiners.
- (v) Business firms with two or more names are to be indexed as one head, e.g., Ramlal Swaroop Chand, Timber Merchants;
- (vi) Spellings of Indian place names, as appearing in the Gazetteer of India may be adopted ;
- (vii) Indians under their first names may be indexed unless they have adopted European style and give only the initials of their first and second names. For example, Lal Singh, Chander Pal, Ram Narain may be indexed as it is. But the second type will be indexed as Choudhry, S. N., Arora, N. P. or Sharma, A. K., etc.
- (viii) It is difficult to index Muslim names unless one has some knowledge of Persian or Arabic. It is, therefore, necessary to analyse the composition of Muslim names. They mostly begin with one of the following pre-fixes :—
 - (a) Abdul - A name with this prefix is invariably indexed under it.
 - (b) Abu or Abul- If followed by one word as Abu Bakr, Abu Salih, Abul Hasen, etc. it may be

indexed under 'A', but if another pair of words is joined on to it as Abu Salih Muhammad Ibrahim, it is to be indexed as Muhammad Ibrahim, Abu Salih.

- (c) Agha or Aga is not a part of a name. Agha Musa should be indexed as Musa, Agha. Similarly Agha Ahmed Ali as Ahmed Ali, Agha, but Agha Khan is different. Here Khan or Jan is not a name in itself, and is inseparable from Agha.
- (d) Khwaja is treated exactly like Agha.
- (e) Mir (A Synonym of Saiyed) is rarely treated as a part of the name and is not indexed.
- (f) Mirza - (A prefix of names of persons of Persian origin). This prefix is treated like Mir, but the name Mirza Khan is to be dealt with like Agha Khan.
- (g) Muhammad - This may or may not be a part of a name. If followed by two or more words (Khan is not one), it need no longer be regarded as a name, e.g., Muhammad Ali, Muhammad Hasan, Muhammad Husain Khan, Muhammad Ismail Khan etc. all these are to be indexed under Muhammad ; but Muhammad Altaf Husain, Muhammed Abdul Ali should be indexed as Altaf Hussain, Muhammad & Abdul Ali, Muhammed.
- (h) Saiyid - (A descendant of Prophet Muhammad). If only one word follows it, it may be regarded as part of the name and indexed under 'S', as
Saiyid Ahmad
Saiyid Husain.

If it precedes more than one word as Saiyid Ahmad Ali or Saiyid Abu Salih Muhammad Ibrahim, it is no longer a part of the name. It will then be indexed as

Ahmed Ali, Saiyid.

Muhammad Ibrahim, Saiyid Abu Salih.

(i) Sheikh - is not a part of a name, e.g., Sheikh Abdullah, Sheikh Ali Bakhsh should be indexed as

Abdullah, Sheikh
Ali Bakhsh, Sheikh.

(j) Poets are better known by their pseudonyms than by their actual names. Pseudonyms should, therefore, be given preference. Mohammad Iqbal should be indexed under Iqbal.

(k) Some of the common endings of Muslim names are Ahmed, Ali, Bakhsh, Beg, Din, Haidar, Haq, Hasan, Husain, Imam, Khan, Muhammad, Zaman, etc. Ordinarily names are not indexed under these terminations but under the words that precede them.

6.8 As far as subject indexing is concerned, entries should be made under (a) the most important catch word in the Standard Head which will naturally occur to any user searching for information and which will determine the position of the relevant index slip in the consolidated index ; (b) Standard Sub-Head, i. e., the catch word in the Standard Sub-Head and/ or the content of the title which will give a further and more specific clue to the file under search. For example, Amendment of Bombay Port Trust Act 1879 can be indexed under main entry, i.e., Act, Bombay Port Trust, 1879, amendment of, this will be followed by file number. The subsidiary entry would be Bombay Port Trust, see Acts. Further, index slips should be prepared for all significant items figuring in the body of the file.

Index slips should be prepared on slips of equal size and one slip should cover only one entry. These slips should be arranged alphabetically and got neatly typed for consolidation.

APPENDIX I

Note on the Minimum Requirements for a Departmental Records Room

1. Introductory

All Ministries and Departments of the Government are expected to have their own Records Rooms. But at present only a few Ministries/Departments have proper Records Rooms. In some cases even those Ministries/Departments who have their own buildings have their Records Rooms in ordinary Office Rooms. Occasional survey of conditions of maintenance and preservation of records in Government Departments have shown that adequate measures which will ensure proper upkeep and longevity of records are wanting.

1.1 The present note, therefore, discusses and lays down the basic requirements which are essential for the health of the semi-current and non-current records, which the Ministries/Departments have to preserve till their retirement to the National Archives.

1.2 The salient features described below do not take into consideration the broad guidelines which have to be kept in view while planning new buildings for offices with adequately well-equipped Records Rooms for which a reference to "IS:2663-1964 Code of Practice for the Basic Elements in the Design of Buildings for Archives" will be helpful.

2. Records Room

2.1 A separate Records Room/Stack Area is a vital necessity for all Government Ministries and Departments. A Records Room should, as far as possible, be located either on the ground floor of a building or in its basement. If its windows open into

the space outside or in the courtyards in the interior, they should be fitted with metal grills and wire mesh nets. To avoid splashing of rain water in the room, rain shades should be provided at all their openings. For reasons of safety of records and security, it is advisable to permit limited entry into such rooms.

2.2 The floor of a Records Room should be such as to permit easy movement of records carrying trolleys etc.

2.3 Where accommodation and design so permits, the stack area, the record reference and reception portions should be separate.

3. Drainage

3.1 While selecting the location of the Records Room, it may be ensured that no water pipes or drains pass near, above, or under the Records Room building. Further, in order to prevent any inflow of water in the stacks due to blockage of drains or accidental damage to water pipes in the building, its floor level should be raised a few centimeters above the general level of the other floors of the building.

3.2 To allow free movement of trolleys, ramps should be provided near the entrance.

4. Air-Conditioning

4.1 Storage of records in an air-conditioned atmosphere is conducive to its longevity. Air-conditioning is, therefore, essential for Records Rooms. In existing buildings, which do not have central air-conditioning, use of package type air-conditioner or window type air-conditioner is recommended.

4.2 For effective air-conditioning, ventilation should be so planned as to permit minimum leakage of the conditioned atmosphere. While calculating conditioning load, bulk of shelving equipment, archive material, the number of persons sitting in the Records Room, the bulk of records moving in and out, and the lighting wattage should be taken into account.

4.3 Humidity and temperature in conditioned Records Room should be measured regularly. The ambient conditions for storage of records are (i) temp. 22°C — 25°C and (ii) relative humidity 45%.

4.4 In order to maintain proper humidity control in the conditioned area, it is necessary that permeation of dampness through the walls or floors does not take place. The floor should be laid water proof and the walls should be given water proof oil paint coating.

4.5 While considering air conditioning of the Records Rooms, it may be taken into account that the air-conditioning plant has to be planned for clock-wise air-conditioning all the year round. Such running of plant will often lead to occasional service breakdowns, and a provision for stand by plant may have to be made. Otherwise such breakdowns are likely to create conditions which lead to accelerated damage to records.

5. Non-Conditioned Area

5.1 Keeping in view economy in resources, in many cases it may not be possible to get Records Room air-conditioned. In such a case step should be taken to provide circulation of air in the storage room by providing air-circulators, fans and exhaust fans to counteract the effect of high humidity and prevent formation of pockets of stagnant air in the storage room. Use of chemicals, like silica gel or anhydrous calcium chloride in enamelled or glazed earthen pots, help to reduce humidity in the room. Mechanical dehumidifiers are now available and during rains their use will help to check the deleterious influence of excessively humid climate.

5.2 Temperature in Records Room can be kept within reasonable range by choosing such rooms, which are in the interior or have a verandah around them. During summer, if the Records Room is fitted with air-circulators, electric fans and exhaust fans for proper circulation of air, high temperature can be brought down by installation of room coolers in windows. Care should be taken to see that direct sunlight does not fall on the records. This can be achieved by fitting either ground glass panes or heat resistant glass panes on the windows and by providing curtains.

6. Shelving

6.1 Shelving in a Records Room should be functional, durable easy to clean, simple in design and which offers maximum

protection to records. It should provide maximum safety from fire, dust etc. and offer maximum facility and convenience for servicing.

6.2 Shelves should be fixed away from the walls on upright fixers and at equi-distance throughout the storage area. Distance between successive shelf rows may vary from 0.71 M to 1 M with a central gangway of 1.5-2 M or in accordance with the requirement laid down in "IS: 2663-1964 Code of Practice for the Basic Elements in the Design of Buildings for Archives". Distance between successive rows of shelves may depend on the dimensions of records/files and the manner of keeping the record series on them. A perusal of Indian Standards code referred to above will be helpful.

6.3 If steel shelving is provided in the Records Room, it should be painted rust proof. The paint should be stable and non-injurious to documents. Steel shelves may preferably be slotted for vertical free circulation of air. Where wooden shelves are provided, the wood should be protected against termite infestation. Sharp edges and corners in the shelves and supports, which can result in physical damage to documents, should be rounded off.

7. Storage

7.1 Collections in Records Room differ in bulk, size and shape and commonly consist of bound volumes, loose sheets, files, manuscripts, maps, charts, plans & drawings. Shelving arrangement needed for specific materials need designing according to the nature, shape and bulk of the material. While designing these shelves, it may be ensured that neither these nor the materials kept on them touch either the walls, ceilings or the floor. The distance from wall, ceiling and floor should be at least six inches (15 cm.).

7.2 The records should be loosely packed on the shelves to enable free circulation of air and prevent formation of pockets of high humidity. Unbound records may either be tied between 2 pieces of 5 ply boards or kept in carton boxes for safety.

7.3 Use may be made of step ladders or platform type ladders and trolleys fixed with swivel castors for movement and proper servicing of records.

7.4 For safeguarding the records against damage due to insect infestation, the Records Room should be sprayed with insecticidal solutions beneath the shelves, behind the cabinets and also in corners etc. All cracks in the floor and walls should be filled up to deny any hiding place to pests. Use of spray guns or pressure guns or any other similar equipment can be made. However, only those chemicals should be sprayed whose effect on the durability and permanency of paper and other record components has been properly studied.

7.5 In a non-conditioned area, use of preservatives like napthalene in the form of balls tied in meshed cloth or bricks kept on shelves helps to keep the records safe from insects. The insecticidal formulations like flit, Shell-tox and other related insecticides are effective.

7.6 Much damage to record is usually done by rodents. Whereas it is desirable to prevent their entry into the Records Room by using proper wire mesh at the outlet drains, a few rat traps should be kept handy for eliminating their menace in case of their entry in the Records Room. Neither eatables nor smoking, nor naked flame should be allowed in the storage area.

7.7 At the first sign of rise in humidity in the Records Room preventive action should be initiated. Also, help of Institutions like the National Archives, New Delhi, should invariably be sought when any insect infestation or fungus growth is noticed or detected.

7.8 Inspite of dust-proof buildings and air-conditioning, dust does find its way to the stored materials. Regular dusting operation in the storage area with the help of a vacuum cleaner is, therefore, desirable to remove dust from the stored material. The Records Room itself should also be kept absolutely clean. Staff engaged in dusting should be provided with dust respirators. A cloth bag with surgical lining which can be changed occasionally, works as a satisfactory respirator.

8. Lighting

8.1 Good lighting with either natural or artificial light is necessary for every Records Room. Modern lighting practice is to provide defused lights of varying intensity for different rooms. Lighting can be improved by using paints that reflect light.

9. Fire Fighting Arrangements

9.1 To protect against any accidental fire, all electric wiring should be through conduit pipes and the main control switches of lights etc. installed in the storage area should be located outside the Records Room. As far as possible the Records Room should be made fire resistant. In big Records Rooms the storage space should be divided into separate fire resistant compartments and additional automatic dampers should be installed in the centrally air-conditioned ducts to ensure the immediate closure and thereby preventing the spread of fire to other compartments. It is advisable to provide emergency exits, besides the main entry door to the Records Room to remove valuable archival material to safety, when necessary. Every Records Room should be fitted with a fire detection alarm system to detect any fire in the storage area. Use of naked light, heaters and smoking in the room should be prohibited. As a preventive measure against accidental fires, all light and power circuits should be switched off after office hours. Watch and Ward Staff provided for this area may use torches, if necessary. Use of temporary lights, loose and ordinary flexible wire for fans, air-circulators and other Electrical appliances for the repository should be avoided and instead 'Workshop Braided and Armoured' flexible wire should be used. Electrical appliances and fittings in the repository should be periodically checked for loose connections and defects rectified.

9.2 For combating fires, adequate equipment of carbon dioxide (CO_2) type should be provided at suitable places in the building for easy accessibility. Besides, water pipes and hoses should be installed at convenient points to fight any major conflagration.

9.3 All the equipment for either detecting of fire or combating of fire should be checked at regular intervals to ensure

their being in active operative state at all times. Similarly, staff connected with the storage of records should be trained in fire fighting. A fire drill may be arranged at least once in two months to keep the trained staff alert.

9.4 Instructions regarding prevention of fire and fire fighting
 in case of fire for the common man should be prominently displayed in the Records Room. Likewise telephone number of District Fire Service for contact in emergency should be prominently displayed at a central place in the Records Room. It will help seeking quick aid of the expert fire fighting agencies, whenever exigencies so demand.

10. Care & Vigilance

10.1 To sum up, good house keeping, creation of hygienic conditions, proper breathing environment, combined with constant staff vigilance alone facilitate maintenance of records in healthy state and for prolonging their life.

11. List of Firms Dealing in Equipment and Preservatives etc.

11.1 Spray Machine

11.1.1 M/s. America Spraying and Pressing Works (P) Ltd.,
 Malad,
Bombay-46.

11.1.2 M/s. Khandelwal Amarnath,
 24/31, Shakti Nagar,
Delhi-7.

11.1.3 M/s. Jardin Henderson Ltd.,
 4, Clive Row,
 P.B. No. 73,
Calcutta-1.

11.2 Vacuum Cleaner

11.2.1 M/s. General Electric Co. of India Ltd.,
 Connaught House, Connaught Place,
New Delhi-1.

11.2.2 M/s. Rallis India Ltd.,
 10/90-B, Connaught Circus,
New Delhi-1.

11.2.3 M/s. Gardeners Corporation,
P.B. No. 299,
6, Doctor's Lane,
New Delhi-1.

11.2.4 M/s. Hindustan General Electrical Corporation Ltd.,
5, Royal Exchange Place,
Calcutta.

11.2.5 M/s. Spencer & Co. Ltd.,
19-A, Alipore Road,
Delhi-54.

11.3 *Fire-Fighting Equipment*

11.3.1 M/s. Minimax Ltd.,
Mercantile Building,
Lall Bazar,
Calcutta.

11.3.2 M/s. Zenith Fire Service,
166, Dadabhai Naoroji Road,
Bombay-1.

11.3.3 M/s. Koverji Devshi & Co. Pvt. Ltd.,
Arun Chambers,
Tardeo Road,
Bombay-34.

11.3.4 M/s. Vijay Machinery Store,
Plot No. 35,
Chandival Village,
Bombay-72.

11.4 *Naphthalene*

11.4.1 M/s. Barare Coke Co. Ltd.,
4, Clive Row,
Calcutta-1.

11.4.2 M/s. Bengal Chemical & Pharmaceutical Works Ltd.,
6, Ganesh Chander Avenue,
Calcutta-3.

11.4.3 M/s. Shalimar Tar Products Ltd.,
Mercantile Building,
E-Block, Connaught Place,
New-Delhi-1.

11.4.4 M/s. Bird & Co.
74, Janpath,
New Delhi-1.

11.4.5 M/s. Bengal Tar Products,
6/22, Roop Nagar,
Delhi-6.

11.5 *Insecticidal Solutions, 'Flit' 'Shell-tox'*

11.5.1 Any Local firm dealing in chemicals and general merchandise.

11.6. *De-humidifier*

11.6.1 M/s. Technical Refrigeration Industries,
Mangra Bhawan,
No. 2, Dr. Annie Besant Road,
Bombay-1.

11.6.2 M/s. C. Doctor & Co.,
11, Bruce Street,
Bombay-1.
or
Bank of Baroda Building,
Gandhi Road,
Ahmedabad-1.

11.7 *For Measuring Temperature and Humidity : Thermograph*

11.7.1 M/s. Bestobell India Pvt. Ltd.,
21, Camac Street,
Calcutta-16.

11.7.2 M/s. Sehgal Sons.,
A-14/3, Asaf Ali Road,
New Delhi-2.

11.8 *For Measuring Relative Humidity : Hair Hygrometer (Dial Type)*

11.8.1 M/s. Sehgal Sons.,
A-14/3, Asaf Ali Road,
New Delhi-2.

11.8.2 M/s. Starch & Allied Products,
Electronics Division,
308, Kharck Bazar,
Bombay-9.

Jobs to be Performed in Departmental Records Room by Various Categories of Staff

1. *Departmental Records Officers*

- 1.1 Planning for the proper maintenance and management of semi-current and non-current records in a scientific manner in the Departmental Records Room.
- 1.2 To ensure transfer of all semi-current records from the sections to the Departmental Records Room regularly and according to rules framed from time to time.
- 1.3 To ensure that all Confidential/Secret etc. records are de-classified by officers appointed for the purpose as per para 7(d) of the Archival Policy Resolution and to get these de-classified records transferred to the Records Room for amalgamation with their respective Record groups *which is a must in order to ensure that no record groups get disintegrated.*
- 1.4 Providing guidance to sections for proper recording, reviewing and appraisal of semi-current (Category C-type) records as per rules and archival standards.
- 1.5 Liaison work with National Archives of India and sections within the Department for proper implementation of the provisions of the Archival Policy Resolution and other rules framed from time to time.
- 1.6 Preparation of Retention Schedule for records of the Central Ministries/Departments/Offices and review after every five years in accordance with para 6 of the Archival Policy Resolution.
- 1.7 To ensure regular review and weeding out of A and B classes of records in consultation with National Archives

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of India and in accordance with para 84(3) of the Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure and Statutory rules framed for the purpose.

- 1.8 To ensure transfer of all records selected for permanent preservation to the National Archives of India, with lists in triplicate and properly arranged.
- 1.9 Compilation of organisational history and annual supplements to it.
- 1.10 Guiding the staff for the arrangement of semi-current records received from sections in their respective fonds.
- 1.11 Maintenance of liaison with the National Archives of India in the day to day problems concerning management and administration of semi-current and non-current files in the Departmental Records Room.
- 1.12 Supervision of Departmental Records Room and the staff working under him and safeguarding of records from various enemies of records, i.e. Fungi, Insects like Silverfish, White Ants, Fire etc.

2. Junior Departmental Records Officer.

- 2.1 Receipt of Semi-current Records from various sections in accordance with provisions laid down in the Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure.
- 2.2 Checking and arrangement with regard to new accession of semi-current records for qualitative analysis of reviewing, recording & indexing, as per provisions of the Central secretariat Manual of Office Procedure so that these may be properly requisitioned in future by the sections.
- 2.3 Location of missing record series in the sections.
- 2.4 Compilation and issue of Annual Indexes of records.
- 2.5 Preparation of Check-List of records
- 2.6 Preparation of Subject-listing of records after arrangement in their respective series.
- 2.7 Supervision of issue/restoration of records.

3. Records Clerks (U.D.C./L.D.C.)

- 3.1 Preparation of Reminder Lists
- 3.2 Typing of check lists, index entries, index slips, subject

lists, retention schedules, reminder list, accession list etc.

4. *Records Attendants/Daftries.*

4.1 Labelling of bundles.

4.2 Stitching/Docketing of files.

4.3 Requisitioning of records from the sections/offices,

4.4 Restoration of records.

4.5 Repair of torn-out, old and brittle records.

4.6 Arrangements of records in series on the shelves.

4.7 Supervision of special dusting and general dusting of records in the Departmental Records Room.

5. *Dusting Bearers/Peons*

5.1 General daily dusting of records.

5.2 Special dusting of records.

5.3 ~~Carrying~~ of files from sections to Records Room and vice versa (Manual Work).

Policy Resolution in Respect of the Records of the Union Government, 1972

1.1 There has been a persistent public demand for legislation for the purpose of proper maintenance and management of the records of the Union and State Governments, and for grant of reasonable access to these records for purposes of research. The Committee on Archival Legislation, which enquired into the matter and reported on the subject in 1960 has *inter alia* made the following recommendations :—

1.1.1 "Steps be taken to amend the Constitution by making suitable entry in the Concurrent List to enable the framing of a single Central Law that would take care both of the Union and the State Archives.

1.1.2 Pending the amendment proposed, separate Archival Laws be enacted for the Centre as well as for each of the States".

1.2 While an amendment of the Constitution is not considered feasible at present, it is possible to have a common Archival Law which will be applicable to the Union and such of the States as accord their consent under Article 252 (1) of the Constitution. The Government of India propose to undertake in consultation with the State Governments suitable legislation in this behalf. Since such legislation would take time, it is not considered desirable to delay action on the substantive recommendations of the Committee on Archival Legislation, at least in so far as the records of the Union Government are concerned. Accordingly, with a view to defining and regulating the responsibilities of the Ministries, Departments and all offices of the Union Government for proper custody, care and management of records in their possession, for selection and retirement of records of permanent

value to the National Archives, laying down the responsibilities of the National Archives in respect of Public Records in its custody and also those with Ministries and other offices, and prescribing the limits and conditions governing public access to the records retired to the National Archives, Government of India have approved the measures set out below :

2.1 These measures will extend to the records of (i) all the Departments/Ministries of the Union Government, (ii) all Committees and Commissions set up by them, (iii) the Union Public Service Commission, and (iv) such of the attached and subordinate offices of Ministries/Departments as may be determined from time to time, but not to the records of the Supreme Court, the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Election Commission and the Parliament or of autonomous bodies set up by the Union Government, including nationalised undertakings and enterprises. It would, however, be open to any of the above excluded bodies to seek the assistance of the National Archives in any matter coming within the scope of the Resolution and to retire their non-current records of permanent value to it, if they so desire, at any time, in consultation with the National Archives of India. The term "records" for this purpose would include documents, rolls, codices, sheets, files, dossiers, microfilms, photographs, charts, plans, diagrams, maps, sound recording, etc.

3.1 The Ministries/Departments and other public offices coming within the purview of this Resolution will be responsible for their current and semi-current records, periodical appraisal and elimination of ephemeral records and for orderly and systematic transfer of records of permanent value to the National Archives.

4.1 The Departmental Records Rooms holding semi-current records, should be placed in the charge of properly trained, suitable and responsible full time staff.

5.1 Suitable training/reorientation programmes should be organised by the National Archives of India for the officers in charge of the Departmental Record Rooms and their Assistants, to enable efficient discharge of the duties entrusted to them.

6.1 The Departmental Record Officers should be responsible for the proper maintenance and management of the semi-current records entrusted to their care, for compilation and periodic revision of Retention Schedules of the Department, for appraisal and weeding of records in accordance with the procedure laid down, for compilation and issue of Annual indexes to Records, for compilation and issue of the Organisational History of the Department and annual supplements to it, for maintenance of general liaison with the National Archives, and for tendering advice generally on all matters pertaining to records management to all sections within the Department.

7.1 Retention Schedules, indicating the periods for which particular classes or categories of records should be preserved, shall be drawn up by the Departmental Record Officers in consultation with the National Archives and should be got approved by the Ministry/Department concerned. The Schedules should be revised once in five years to ensure that adequate notice is being taken of the changing and expanding activities of the Department.

7.2 The authority given to Departmental Record Officer to draw up retention schedules in consultation with the National Archives of India should not, however, over-ride the instructions contained in the Manual of Office Procedure, according to which officers dealing with the records at appropriate levels will have to take decisions regarding the period of retention of different records. The function of the Departmental Record Officer will be only advisory.

8.1 All records and files selected for permanent preservation should be transferred to the National Archives 25 years after being closed or recorded, as laid down in the Manual of Office Procedure, subject to the following limitations :-

- 8.1.1 Files bearing any security classification should not be transferred to the National Archives.
- 8.1.2 The President's Secretariat, the Cabinet Secretariat, the Prime Minister's Secretariat and the Union Public Service Commission may prescribe a period longer than 25 years for the transfer of their non-confidential records.

8.1.3 Any individual file or records series may be retained by a Ministry/Department or Office beyond the stipulated period for any reason subject to the National Archives being apprised of the position.

8.1.4 Classified files remaining untransferred to the National Archives at the end of the stipulated period should be appraised once in five years with a view to downgrading them and down-graded files fit for permanent preservation transferred to the National Archives.

8.1.5 File once transferred may be withdrawn from the National Archives by the Ministry/Department or Offices concerned for a stipulated period, apprising the National Archives of the reasons for taking such action.

8.1.6 The administrative Ministries would have sole authority to decide on the consigning of particular records of the attached and subordinate offices to the National Archives.

9.1 Records pertaining to a body becoming defunct with no successor taking over its functions, should be transferred to the National Archives soon after the body is defunct.

10.1 No records more than hundred years old should be destroyed.

11.1 The Director of Archives will be responsible for the custody, proper care and management of all records received in the National Archives of India.

12.1 The Director of Archives may receive public records of any public office or organisation falling outside the scope of this Resolution or papers of historical value with private institutions and individuals, subject to the conditions mutually agreed upon.

13.1 The Director of Archives is required to co-ordinate and guide all operations connected with public records in respect of their administration, preservation and elimination, with a view to ensuring that records of permanent value are not destroyed and are transferred to the National Archives at the appropriate time.

14.1 The Director of Archives will tender such advice and render such assistance as may be possible to offices and institutions falling outside the scope of this Resolution in respect of technical problems bearing on record management.

15.1 The Director of Archives will be responsible for attending to ancillary matters, such as archival commissions and committees, archival publications, compilation of the National Register of Private Archives and organising exhibitions and for developing general archival consciousness in the country.

16.1 The Director of Archives will submit a report to government every year on the management of public records, with particular reference to the actual working of the record management system.

17.1 All non-confidential public records, transferred to the National Archives, of the period prior to the 31st December 1945, and prospectively all such records more than 30 years old, will be open to *bonafide* Research Scholars, subject to such exceptions and restrictions as may be found necessary by the Departments concerned in consultation with the Director of Archives, National Archives of India.

18.1 The Ministries/Departments and other offices may, in consultation with the National Archives of India, grant special access to records not transferred to the National Archives of India.

I. D. N. SAHI
Secretary to the Government of India