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INDIAN HISTORICAL RECORDS
COMMISSION

CONSTITUTION

1965

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CONSTITUTION OF THE INDIAN HISTORICAL RECORDS
COMMISSION, 1965*

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 editors for the publishing of documents, and (v) the problem of public access to records (Department of Education Resolution No. 77, 21 March 1919). With a view to promoting active cooperation of the different 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 and Health Resolution No. F.92-9/41-E, dated 16th September 1941, took steps to reform the constitution of the Commission providing for the inclusion in it of nominees of the various Governments in India as also those of the universities and learned societies.

2. The Commission has since its inception held 36 sessions and its Research and Publication Committee, which has been in existence since 1942, 31 meetings at various important academic centres in India, and has contributed significantly to the growth of public interest in the conservation and use of archives. Government recognise that it was through the initiative of the Commission and its different Committees that many new sources of information have been brought to light and saved to 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 kindled in the public mind in respect to the sanctity of historical evidence. While Government have noted with very deep appreciation these and other achievements of the Commission, they 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 attacked. Many record-collections are still without any guides or keys, let alone comprehensive descriptive lists, and very few repositories, public or private, have yet developed a well-articulated programme of document-publication. Most of the collections still continue to be housed in primitive conditions and to be subjected to the ravages of insect pests, molds and other destructive agents. Very little systematic effort has been made to survey, describe, organise or make use of records in private custody, and particularly, those of institutional, religious or commercial provenance. 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. Government believe that these constitute very serious lacunae in the academic life of the nation and that greater and more wholehearted cooperation between Keepers of records and historical

*Ministry of Education, Government of India, Resolution No. F.6/25/63-A:10(C.5), dated 20 November 1965.

materials on the one hand and their users on the other are 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 Ministry of Education and Scientific Research Resolution No. F.8-2/57-C.2, dated 28th August 1957 and all earlier Resolutions on the same subject, are pleased to sanction a reconstitution of the Commission on the following lines :

I. The Commission shall in future consist of the following members :

A. *Ordinary Members* :

- (1) The Education Minister, Government of India—*ex-officio* President.
- (2) A representative of the Ministry of Education.
- (3) Three eminent historians or archivists appointed by the Government of India on the basis of their specialised knowledge of the treatment of archives or their original contribution to the modern period of Indian history.
- (4) The Director of Archives, Government of India—*ex-officio* Secretary.
- (5) One nominee each of the State Governments, having an organised record repository of its own, the nominee being invariably the custodian of the State Archives.
- (6) One nominee each from such universities in India having a faculty of history of its own as may encourage research among and publication of, original records and cooperate with the Commission in organising its own archives and in conducting survey and exploration of records in private and semi-public custody.
- (7) One nominee each from such learned institutions, research bodies, or repositories approved by the Government of India as may have archival holdings of their own, or may be actively engaged in original research among such records, and may cooperate with the Commission in conducting survey and exploration of records in private and semi-public custody and in promoting archival programmes sponsored by the Commission.

B. *Corresponding Members* :

The selection of members in this category will be confined to persons actively interested in records, only published works of sufficient merit being accepted as evidence of such interest. Their number should not exceed twenty, excluding persons residing outside India.

The Government of India desire that nominees of the State Governments should be persons thoroughly conversant with archives and archival techniques and that the nominees of universities, learned institutions and other research bodies should be men of academic distinction with considerable amount of original research work on the history of India of the post-1500 period to their credit. The nominees of all these bodies will technically become members of the Commission after their nomination has been formally approved by the Government of India. The Corresponding Members are to be selected and appointed by the Government of India.

The Ordinary Members of the Commission other than *ex-officio* Ordinary Members and also all Corresponding Members of the Commission will be appointed for a term of five years as follows :

- (1) All appointments and re-appointments for a full term of five years will be made *en bloc* with effect from the same date, but on the expiry of their terms, the members concerned will be eligible for reappointment.
- (2) 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 portion of the term.

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

- (1) To act as a forum for exchange between 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.
- (2) 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 seminars promoting such discussions at its annual or other meetings; and to promote discussions on disciplines ancillary to archives, such as Diplomatic, Sigillography, Paleography, Toponymy, and Heraldry.
- (3) To promote the salvaging and use of materials in private and semi-public custody (including institutional, religious, and business records) in collaboration with universities, libraries, museums, learned societies and, particularly, with State Regional Survey Committees and similar local bodies; and to act as a clearing house of information on the work done in this field.
- (4) To act generally as an intermediary between record and historical manuscript repositories on the one hand and bodies interested in research on the other.
- (5) To publish proceedings and bulletins embodying reports on its activities and on other matters promoting its objective.

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

- (1) A public meeting devoted to the report presented by the Secretary on the archive work in the country and other reports that may be submitted by members to the Commission on archival and research activities or newly discovered source materials.
- (2) A business meeting for the discussion of problems relating to keeping and use of archives that may be referred to it by members and for review of programmes undertaken by different bodies under its auspices.

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- (3) Discussion meetings or seminars held on source materials on one or more selected historical problems requiring investigation or any other ancillary matters. Topics for such discussions should be selected by the Commission at least one year in advance to enable the members to present papers on them in time.

For the purpose of efficient discharge of these duties the Commission may elect one or more Committees to deal with particular problems requiring investigation. Such Committees are to submit their reports to the Commission.

All members will be equally entitled to participate in all the meetings of the Commission except its business meetings to which only Ordinary Members will have the right to attend. Corresponding Members may attend the business meetings only by special invitation.

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.

IV. The travelling allowance of the *ex-officio* President and Secretary of the Commission and the nominees of the Government of India (referred to in para. 3.I.A. above) will be a charge on the Central Revenues. The *ex-officio* President and Secretary, and such nominees of Government of India (referred to in para. 3.I.A. above) and such Committee members as are Government servants will draw travelling allowances as on tour for attending the meetings of the Commission, or its Committees, and the expenditure will be debitable to the same head as their pay.

Non-officials appointed by the Government of India as Ordinary Members (see para. 3.I.A.) will draw travelling allowances for attending meetings of the Commission or its Committees at rates admissible to Grade I Officers of the Central Government and daily allowance 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, India. Persons appointed as Corresponding Members will bear their own expenditure on T.A. etc. for attending the meetings. The State Governments, the universities, and other constituent institutions will be required to bear the travelling allowances of their nominees. The travelling allowance and daily allowance for non-official members other than Central Government's 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 (para. 3.I.A. above).

