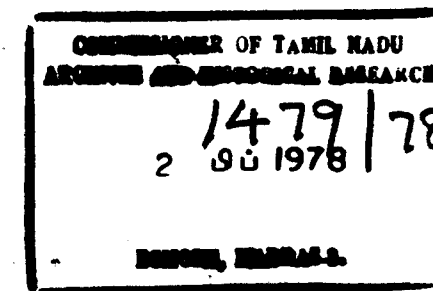


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SWARBICA

NEWS BULLETIN

No. 1



South and West Asian Regional Branch of the
International Council on Archives
New Delhi

1977

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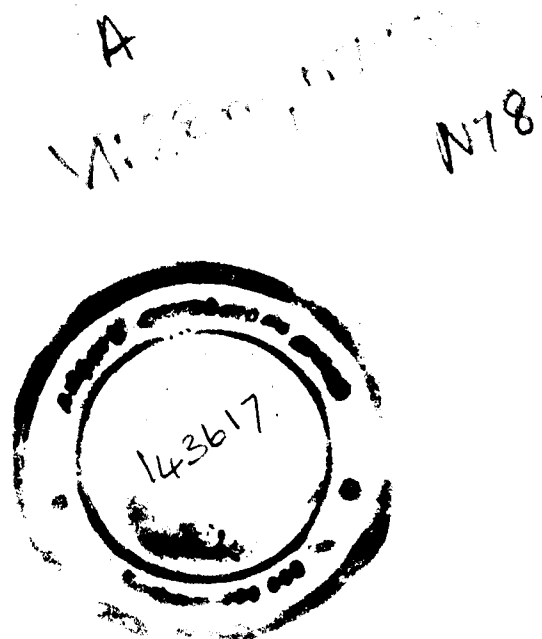
SWAREUCA NEWS BULLETIN

Proposal for Formation of SWAREICA - background history

The decision to set up a Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives covering the countries in South West Asia (SWAREICA) emanated at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the International Council on Archives held at Brussels in 1973. The countries envisaged in the region were, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Dr. S.N. Prasad, Director of Archives, National Archives of India, and then a member of the Executive Committee of the International Council on Archives, was authorised to explore the possibility of setting up of such regional organisation. The move initiated by him in the same year, was welcomed by the Government of India and received ready response from three more countries, viz., Iran, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Encouraged by the initial, positive reactions, Dr. Prasad framed a draft constitution for the proposed organisation and circulated the same to the heads of the national archives organisations of the concerned countries, as also to Mr. Charles Kecskemeti, Executive Secretary of the International Council on Archives, for their comments. The principal objective of SWAREICA, like similar organisations functioning in other regions, was to establish and strengthen relations between the archivists, professional organisations and other institutions concerned with the custody, administration, conservation and utilisation of archives within the region, and also to co-ordinate the efforts of the countries concerned to complete their national archival holdings by bilateral arrangements. The stage was thus set for the formation of the regional branch, and after informal consultations with the heads of the national archives organisations of the respective countries, it was decided to set up SWAREICA officially in an inaugural function to be arranged at New Delhi in December 1976.

Birth of SWAREICA

The Department of Culture in the Ministry of Education, Social Welfare and Culture of the Government of India agreed to bear all the expenses of the inaugural function of SWAREICA, including air fares and boarding and lodging expenses of the



nominees of the participating countries, and also expenses of the representatives of the International Council on Archives during their stay at New Delhi. A three-day programme, commencing from 10th December 1976, was arranged for the occasion. Invitations were extended to each country in the region to depute one archivist and one historian to attend the functions. India being the host country, was to be represented by two archivists and two historians. Also invited were, Dr. James B. Rhoads, President of the International Council on Archives, Mr. Charles Kecskemeti, Executive Secretary of the International Council on Archives and Dr. Morris Rieger, Chairman of the Committee on Archival Development (CAD). Among those who were present on the occasion were, Mr. Cyrus Farham, Director of National Archives and Prof. Iraj Afshar from Iran; Mr. A. Dewaraja, Director, National Archives and Mr. Jayantha Uduwara, Director of Museums from Sri Lanka; Dr. K. M. Karim, Director of National Archives and Prof. Serajul Islam of Dacca University from Bangladesh; Dr. Shaphalya Amatya, Chief Exploration Officer of Department of Archaeology and Mrs. Sanu Maiya Rana, Archivist, National Archives from Nepal; and Mr. Hedayatullah Akram, Deputy Director of Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Afghanistan. India was represented by Dr. S. N. Prasad, Director of National Archives of India, Mr. M. P. Dash, Superintendent of Orissa State Archives, Prof. R. S. Sharma, Chairman of Indian Council of Historical Research and Dr. A. R. Kulkarni, Professor of History of Poona University. Dr. Rhoads being unable to attend, the International Council on Archives was represented by Mr. Charles Kecskemeti. Dr. Morris Rieger and Dr. Heinz Eberach, Executive Director of German Federal Archives, attended the meeting as Observers. Among the heads of archives organisations in the States in India who attended the session as Observers were, Dr. K. P. Srivastava of Uttar Pradesh, Mr. V. G. Khobrekar of Maharashtra, Mr. M. K. Gomethagavellu of Tamil Nadu, Mr. T. S. Sinha of Bihar, Mr. J. M. Nanavati of Gujarat, Mr. M. L. Kachroo of Delhi, and Mr. C. P. Mathur of Haryana.

Finalisation of Constitution

On the 10th December 1976 the delegates from the participating countries met informally at Vigyan Bhawan to finalise the draft constitution of SWARBICA. The meeting was chaired by Dr. S. N. Prasad. The draft, which was circulated earlier, was modified in the light of the comments received and the discussions that followed in the meeting. Several organisational matters,

Dr. Kulkarni informed the Committee that India had offered consultancy services to Bangladesh for its archival building. His suggestions that national correspondents for survey of third world archival needs be appointed in consultation with regional rapporteurs and that Fund support should be extended to third world personnel only after confirming that they would be employed in archive work were accepted by the Committee. The Committee informed that Sri Lanka's request for aid to air-condition their new archives building has been referred to UNESCO. The Committee would consider request for Fund support for a regional reprography demonstration Centre for South and West Asia on recommendations from SWARBICA Executive Board.

Dr. Kulkarni reported to the Committee on the formation of SWARBICA. That India should take the lead to set it up without any international aid was very much appreciated by the Committee. SWARBICA countries, however, have been urged by the Committee to submit their national and regional archival development projects at the earliest in due form for consideration of financial aid. The Committee is likely to hold its next meeting at Nairobi.

XVII Round Table on Archives

The XVII Round Table on Archives met at Forte Village Hotel, Santa Margherita di Pula, near Cagliari on 5-8 October 1977. More than a hundred countries of the world were represented by their delegates. From among the SWARBICA countries Dr. Kulkarni attended the Round Table in the absence of Dr. S. N. Prasad, Director of Archives, Government of India. Sri Lanka was represented by Mr. Devaraja, Director of Sri Lanka Archives. He is also a Counsellor for the bureau of the Round Table.

The main themes of the discussions at the Round Table were the theoretical, legal and practical aspects of Constitution and re-constitution of National Archival Patrimony. Two studies on the subject, one by Mon. Christian Gut, Secretary of the Round Table and the other by Mr. Charles Kecskemeti, Executive Secretary, International Council on Archives, were discussed at the Round Table and the views of all the countries which have archival claims on other countries were heard and debated. The proceedings of the Round Table will be sent to UNESCO for further action. The Government of Kenya have invited the Round Table to hold its next meeting at Nairobi in 1978 which has been accepted.

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Future Programmes of SWAREICA

All institutions and individuals interested in the archival development in South and West Asia are being approached to join the organisation. Dr. N.H. Kulkarnee is attending the 38th session of the Indian History Congress being held at Bhubaneswar on 23-28 December 1977.

It is planned to hold a General Conference of all categories of SWAREICA members in December 1978 at Colombo.

The SWAREICA Executive Board will meet in April 1978 to prepare for the General Conference as well as to arrange for the symposium on archival training requirements also to be held at Colombo in December 1978.

All current and prospective members are requested to contribute news items of archival interest in the South and West Asian region for inclusion in the SWAREICA News Bulletin. Detailed contributions discussing various archival problems in SWAREICA countries are also very much welcome. These will be published in the Journal to be brought out shortly.

SWAREICA will carry out such assignments as are entrusted to it by the International Council on Archives, its parent body, and initiate projects and programmes of its own for conservation and utilisation of the documentary heritage within the region. Every effort will be made to secure international assistance for these programmes.

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