
ARCHIVES OF CONTEMPORARY INDIA (ACI) COLLECTIONS AND ACCESS POLICY

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1. Introduction

This document outlines the broad principles followed by the Archives of Contemporary India for building and managing a rich and diverse collection of archival resources to promote and support the use of primary source material for research on modern and contemporary history of India. The policy tries to keep in view the evolving dynamics of acquisition, management, and preservation of archival resources in the interest of stimulating and facilitating the production of knowledge and its dissemination.

1.1 Mission Statement

ACI promotes the production and a wide dissemination of knowledge through:

- a) the collection and creation of primary source material in the form of private papers and institutional papers for study and research on modern and contemporary history of India
- b) with major thrust on polity, economy, and society
- c) preserving collections and ensuring their coordinated management
- d) making such source material available to students, researchers, and teachers and to the wider scholarly community
- e) delivering quality and effective service for their application in the form most relevant to users

1.2 Vision Statement

ACI aims to create:

- a) one of the foremost centres for historical and social science research in the country
- b) build the finest and an indispensable repository of public affairs.
- c) pursue best international standards in preservation and archiving.
- d) ensure the preservation of rich cultural, social, and political heritage of India for posterity.

2. Directive Principles for the Collection Policy

2.1 Individual and Institutional Collections

ACI is committed to building archival collections through donation of papers by eminent individuals (whose life and work has been of special relevance to the study of contemporary history of India) and institutions (that have played a key role in nation building). These may pertain to

- a) economic reforms initiated in the 1990s.
- b) science and technology

- c) art, culture, and literature
- d) environment and climate change
- e) women empowerment
- f) social, educational, political movements
- g) constitution and judiciary
- h) business and entrepreneurship
- i) print and electronic media

2.1.1 ACI aims to build a rich and relevant collection of primary source material (both analogue and digital) ranging over rare original documents and archival materials including:

- a) correspondence (holographs/ autographs/ emails)
- b) diaries and notes
- c) published/ unpublished articles, speeches, and writings.
- d) published/ unpublished reports and reviews.
- e) newspaper clippings
- f) drafts/ manuscripts of books/ novels/ plays
- g) rare printed books
- h) rare issues of periodicals
- i) drawings, maps
- j) photographs, photo albums (b/w, colour/ digital format)
- k) negatives/ slides
- l) audios/ cassettes/ spool tapes and videos
- m) microforms/microfilms
- n) digital material (hard drives/ pen drives/ CDs, etc.)

2.2 Donation of Papers: Donors

ACI seeks to acquire collections:

- a) through personal and professional contact with prospective donors of private/individual and institutional papers
- b) through agreements and collaborations with academic institutions, other archives, and universities in India and abroad

2.3 Custodian: Archives of Contemporary India (ACI)

ACI assumes the role of Custodian of the private papers/collections donated by individuals and institutions on a permanent basis to ACI. It lays no claim to ownership of the collections donated to ACI.

2.3.1 Purchase/ Auction

Only in very special and rare cases, ACI may bid for a special collection in an auction or opt for online purchase after the approval of the committee of experts appointed for this purpose by competent authorities and these would need to be vetted by the committee on a case-by-case basis.

2.4 Terms and Conditions

In order to protect the rights of the Donors and the integrity of ACI, it shall abide by the following terms and conditions.

- a) As the Custodian of the donation, ACI will enter into a written Agreement with the Donor/Donors detailing the specific terms and conditions of the donation.
- b) All acquisitions will be recorded in the Accessions Register. Information on the nature and circumstances of each acquisition will be recorded. This will include the date and terms of transfer, the name and contact details of the Donor, brief details of the records and any reference number necessary to trace the documents.
- c) ACI shall make all arrangements and bear all expenses for bringing the collection donated by the donor to ACI located at Ashoka University, Sonapat.
- d) The papers may be transferred in more than one instalment.
- e) The collection/ papers will be preserved in the name of the individual/ institution on a permanent basis.
- f) ACI will
 - i. preserve, store, and maintain the collections by using the latest archival preservation and conservation techniques.
 - ii. digitize the collections and preserve them in original as well as digital format and microfilm.
 - iii. catalogue the collections and supply a copy of the catalogue to the respective Donor/Donors.
 - iv. make the collections available to scholars for historical research in the Reading Room of ACI situated in the premises of ACI and on its website as per the Access Policy to be decided by ACI now and then. (We aim to provide public access to the archive collections at the earliest opportunity, but we will only do so once the collection has been properly catalogued, for security reasons).
- g) Copyright
 - i. ACI shall not have any copyright claims on the papers donated by the Donor to ACI. The Donor and his legal heirs will own the copyright of the papers.
 - ii. ACI shall allow scholars to use the material donated by the donors only for non-commercial research purposes and shall take a written undertaking from the scholars to abide by the

- access rules of the ACI.
- iii. ACI shall further take an undertaking in writing from the scholars, who wish to use the archival material for publication/ exhibitions/ films/ any other public display, to abide by the copyright rules pertaining to the Collections of ACI.
- iv. Copyright rules would apply to duplication of all documents, images, photos, audios, videos, etc.
- v. Acquisitions purchased with the assistance of grant aid will be held subject to the terms and conditions of bodies from whom such aid has been received.

2.5 Closed Papers

ACI shall give Donor/Donors (if he/she/they desires/desire) the choice of keeping certain papers/files of a sensitive nature within a collection closed for a specific period of time. ACI shall strictly abide by the instructions stipulated by the Donor/Donors (in writing) regarding restricted access.

3. Collection Management

Within the terms of this Policy and other aspects such as Collection Development, ACI will follow a policy of non-discrimination, that is, it will not exclude materials, or restrict access to them on the basis of the race, nationality, religion, ethnic or linguistic identity, gender, sexual preference, doctrinal or sectarian considerations of either their producers or their users. Acquiring a collection, or providing access to it, does not imply that ACI or the University endorses any statement or opinion contained in it.

The Collection Management Policy of ACI is designed to be read with its Collection Development Policy. It is aimed at the effective management of the archives that include cataloguing and classification; digitization; storage; conservation and preservation; budgetary management; security; and user-access.

3.1 Cataloguing and Classification

- a) Cataloguing of collections to be done by professional archivists confirming to international standards.
- b) Catalogues to be scholar-friendly and serve as a reference tool/ user guide to collections.
- c) Catalogues to be made available to bona fide scholars both in analogue and digital format on the desktop in the reading room of ACI as well as on its website: <https://archives.ashoka.edu.in>

3.2 Digitization and Microfilming

- a) In the absence of in-house capacity, a pilot project of digitization is to be initiated and completed within a specified time frame. The work is to be assigned to experienced service-providers who meet the technical and financial requirements specified by ACI in its invitation for bids. In exceptional circumstances, the board and leadership might recommend a service-provider over the lowest bidder because of their proven record of excellence or the sensitive nature of the documents to be digitized.
- b) In due course, as the number of collections increases, it will be imperative to develop in-house capacity for digitization and microfilming for better management and maintenance of digital archival records.
- c) Digitization to be done only after the collection has been catalogued.
- d) Identifying items to be digitized will be guided by research needs, the heritage status of the items, significance to the wider community of scholars and citizens, urgency relating to conservation and restoration.
- e) It is recommended that the metadata of digitized material created follow international standards in order to conform to the protocols demanded in international collaborations.
- f) Digital archives to be made available on desktops in the Reading Room of ACI and on the its website <https://archives.ashoka.edu.in> as per the website access policy of ACI formulated by experts committee appointed for this purpose by competent authorities of the university.
- g) Digitization enhances access, but preservation is achieved through microfilms. If and when the materials are identified for microfilming, procedures similar to those for selecting materials to be digitized, service providers would be engaged following principles and procedures adopted in the case of outsourcing the work for digitization till the time in-house capacity for microfilming is developed.
- h) Microforms acquired by ACI through microfilming its collections or through gifts must be stored in a dedicated section secured against variations in temperature, water leakage and fire.
- i) Microfilms will be read in the Reading Room of ACI using microfilm readers. Copies of microfilmed materials may be allowed at the discretion of ACI Management against a fee specified in ACI Rules.

3.3 Preservation and Conservation

- 3.3.1** Preservation is aimed at complementing the work of acquisition of collections and other archival material.
- 3.3.2** Preservation entails the environment in which collections are stored and used; procedures of handling; treatment of materials in the process of repair and conservation; guidelines related to displays and exhibitions; security measures and the training of staff and users.
- 3.3.3** Preservation strategy will be guided by the following principles:
 - a) respect for the integrity of the original object
 - b) reversibility of treatment wherever technically feasible
 - c) minimal approach to intervention

- d) technical documentation of treatment
- e) respect for cultural diversity and values
- f) paying due regard to aesthetic, historical, scientific, and social dimensions of concerned items

3.3.4 The broad strategy for preservation will include:

- a) careful handling of items by staff and users for which periodic preservation training for staff and advice to users would be arranged.
- b) restricted photocopying of materials at risk
- c) identifying, following and, if needed, developing standard professional protocols for archival materials for document delivery in the reading room, for exhibitions and display, for repair and treatment
- d) using gloves, book-rests for delicate and valuable items with vulnerable spines, or any other such item serving a similar function by staff and readers as and when required
- e) ensuring controlled lighting for aging print items and manuscripts
- f) ensuring appropriate temperature and humidity control in the stack area of ACI and photo/ microfilm storage area.
- g) observing principles of preservation and care for items taken out for exhibition and display
- h) creating user copies in physical or electronic formats for use and exhibitions when the original is deemed vulnerable.

3.3.5 Environment for Preservation

The following standards to be maintained in ACI to ensure appropriate physical environment for Preservation:

Ideal Preservation Environment

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Temperature</u>	<u>Relative Humidity</u>
Combined stack and user area	21-degree Celsius maximum	30 to 50%
Stack without user area except for access and retrieval	18-degree Celsius maximum	30 to 50%
Optimum preservation stacks	1.6 to 18 degrees Celsius maximum	30 to 50%
Maximum daily fluctuation	Minus-plus (- +) 3 degree Fahrenheit	-/+ 3%
Maximum monthly fluctuation	Minus-plus (- +) 3 degree Fahrenheit	3%

Pollutant Levels (Particulate/ Air Filtration)

Combined stack and user area	60 to 80 %	Filtration
Stack without user area except for access and retrieval	90 to 95 %	Filtration
Optimum preservation stacks	95 %	Filtration

Gaseous Pollutants/ Contaminants Levels

Sulfur dioxide	1 to 10 micrograms/cubic meter
Nitrogen dioxide	5 to 10 micrograms/cubic meter
Ozone	2 to 25 micrograms/cubic meter

Light Levels

Stack and user area	200 to 600 lux
Storage area	Below 10 to 50 lux

- a) The above stated temperature and humidity levels are to be maintained at controlled levels throughout the day and throughout the year. Vulnerable items will need to be acclimatized slowly when moved to avoid thermal shock to the material.
- b) Exposure to sharp light results in degradation of physical materials. Overhead lights in stacks should be switched off when the stack is not being used.
- c) Air-filtration system to be installed to minimize suspended particulate matter.
- d) Routine cleaning and pest-control exercises are to be carried out in consultation and supported by the authorities entrusted to look after the property. Dusting in controlled atmosphere, however, is to be minimal and guided by advice from experts in preservation of the objects housed.

3.3.6 Conservation refers to professional care taken by ACI through the application of technical means to protect and enhance the longevity of archival material. Key points for consideration:

- a) Use of state-of-the-art techniques of conservation for enhancing the life of documents.
- b) Fumigation of the collections to be carried out before storage of material in the stack area. Chemicals for fumigation to be used with extreme caution and great care. The strictest safety procedures and

other measures to ensure adequate ventilation must be incorporated in all fumigation techniques.

- c) Providing protective measures for all documents including acid-free paper folders and acid-free boxes.
- d) Ensuring appropriate storage for acquired archival material by providing steel cabinets, large storage units and protective enclosures for all the collections including oversize and unbound materials such as drawings, architectural plans, graphic prints, newspapers, posters, oversized unpublished theses, etc.
- e) Keeping in view the minimal approach to intervention, the latest technique of encapsulation to be put in place for restoration of brittle but valuable paper documents and photographs. Encapsulation machines to be installed for this purpose.
- f) Trained personnel to be engaged to carry out the work of conservation in ACI.

3.4 Security

The Security of ACI pertains to violations of ACI building and property through abuse, theft, and infringement of ACI rules. Violations against persons are subject to other University policies and regulations.

3.4.1 The following actions constitute violations of ACI security:

- a) mis-handling archival material leading to damage to mutilation or defacement of document/ documents.
- b) ignoring instructions of ACI staff about original archival material
- c) stealing archival documents/ or possessing stolen items
- d) refusing to produce membership or identification documents on request from ACI staff.
- e) refusing to leave ACI premises after the closure timings.
- f) submitting false documents and information for availing services
- g) using any type of capturing/ recording device

3.4.2 In the interest of security, ACI staff are authorized to:

- a) check books and possessions such as bags of users leaving ACI in spite of the self-check-in and self-check-out facilities.
- b) request users to show identification documents.
- c) question a person found engaged in violating ACI rules and security.
- d) report violators to the University authorities for inquiry and disciplinary measures

3.4.3 Disciplinary Procedures

- a) Any violation or suspected violation of ACI security will be reported for inquiry and equitable disciplinary measures by the competent authority

- appointed by the University.
- b) Punitive actions may range from reprimand to dismissal depending on the offence of the user.
 - c) Law enforcement agencies have to be informed in cases of criminal offences.

3.5 User Access: Service to students/ scholars

- a) ACI will strive to provide efficient service to the scholars:
 - i. professional management including processing, catalogue-making, preservation, and display.
 - ii. providing information services adapted to user needs and modes of access.
 - iii. providing access to materials both in analogue as well as searchable digital format.
 - iv. ensuring well-equipped and comfortable spaces for differently abled users.
 - v. organizing events, exhibitions, and programmes to promote lifelong learning, intellectual creativity, and user-awareness of primary source material.
 - vi. to digitize and microfilm the primary source materials as it would help in restricting access to the physical, occasional brittle, documents, and yet enable access.
 - vii. ACI Rules and Regulations to be made available to registered scholars along with the identity card/ ACI pass.
- b) All bona fide scholars who register themselves with the Archives may have access to the resources of ACI. It is mandatory for all users of ACI to register and become members by filling up the membership form and procure identity cards or access passes for use of ACI.
- c) Scholars wishing to use archival material for research and study may acquire membership of ACI by producing identification documents on a membership fee decided by the University/ ACI Board. Prevailing rates of fees will be notified on the website.
- d) The University may make provision for the use of ACI resources and services without the payment of membership fee by
 - i. immediate family members of the donor/ donors of collections
 - ii. all faculty members of Ashoka university
 - iii. research students working under the direct guidance of a member of the faculty.
 - iv. visiting faculty and research students

- v. members of partner institutions in collaborative programmes and teaching
 - vi. faculty and students on exchange or extension programmes
 - vii. the citizens of India when the relevant material sought may be deemed a resource for public service (e.g., a document needed by the law courts)
- e) Reprographic services will be provided. Prevailing rates of reprographic charges will be notified on the website.

4. Collection Development

4.1 Budgetary and Financial Management

- a) The Budget for ACI sanctioned by the University is the primary source of funds for the management of ACI including collection, storage, processing, and dissemination of primary source material.
- b) To meet its mission goals and be consistent with its vision statement, ACI has to supply and sustain resources through strategic financial management and practicable budgeting. For this purpose, the Collection Policy of ACI comprising both Development and Management needs supportive funding.

4.2 External Funding

- a) Additional sources may include external fund-raising, special one-time grants, endowment incomes and donations. External funding will be sought and accepted in consonance with the nature and goals of ACI.
- b) Private and public sources of funding may involve conditions and obligations. Once accepted after careful consideration, all such conditions and obligations will be fully met.

4.3 Collaborations

- a) Agreements and collaborations with other universities in India and abroad as per ACI Directive Principles of the Collection Policy.
- b) Collaborations on contract with academic foundations and institutions in India and abroad.

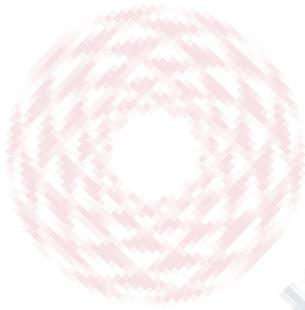
5. Location

1.2 Physical Location

Archives of Contemporary India (ACI) is located in the basement of AC 04 building. There are facilities for storing the collections in an ideal environment in compactors in the Archives Repository; a Reading Room for scholars to consult the papers; space for installation of scanners for digitization of collections; room for sorting, listing and preservation of collections; a fumigation room for disinfecting the papers; and a store for new arrivals.

1.3 Digital Location

ACI Website: <https://archives.ashoka.edu.in> gives information about its collections, catalogues, and activities. The digitized documents and audio-visual material of the collections will be uploaded on the website from time to time for the consultation of researchers and scholars as per ACI access policy.



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