

Archives in Pakistan^{*}

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Introduction

Pakistan came into being on August 14, 1947 as a result of the partition of British India. On its east and southeast lies India, on the north and northwest is Afghanistan, to the west is Iran, and toward the south is the Arabian Sea. Pakistan shares a common border with China. According to the 1998 Census, its population included 135 million citizens and estimates suggest that number increased to 145 million by 2003. Two-thirds of the population live in rural areas, and engage in agriculture as the main source of livelihood. The majority of the population is composed of Muslims; the remaining are Hindus, Christians, and Parsees. About twenty languages are spoken in Pakistan. Urdu is the national language of the country, but English continues to be used for education, commercial, and other official purposes. Pakistan's literacy rate was 47 percent in 1998. Politically, Pakistan is a federation of four provinces (Punjab, Sindh, Northwest Frontier Province, and Balochistan). Administratively, the provinces are comprised of districts, which are divided into small subdivisions (*Tehsils*). These are further divided into union councils (1).

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Background

The archival profession in Pakistan is in its formative stage. Information on archives and archival development in the country is rather obscure. Periodical literature is very limited; with the exception of a few journal articles written primarily by visiting experts during the early 1980s, there is very little on the subject for international readers. As a matter of fact, these writings could be termed as neither comprehensive nor current. Their authors, for the most part, depended on their limited personal observations or information conveyed to them by individuals and government functionaries with whom they met in connection with their assignments. Of the indigenous sources, *Pakistan Archives*, a biannual publication of the Directorate of Archives of the government of Pakistan, deserves special mention. The same Directorate also publishes a newsletter. But these publications are not issued regularly. Moreover, obtaining these publications is a Herculean task in itself, mainly because of the bureaucracy involved. The *Pakistan Library Bulletin*, the sole regular journal of its kind, occasionally publishes contributions on archival subjects. There is also a booklet entitled, *National Archives of Pakistan* (1981), published by the Directorate of Archives (2). The first and only publication to appear in Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, *Tahafuzz Dustavezat wa Kutubkhana (Preservation of Documents and Libraries)*, by Ashraf Ali, is also a valuable source for its coverage of the development of archives in Pakistan (3). But it is not well organized; its coverage on certain topics is sketchy and lacks proper documentation. The print media has always been aware of the need to develop archives in the country. For example, the *Dawn*, a leading English language daily from Pakistan, has included some important editorials on the subject.

What follows is an attempt to trace the origin and development of archives in Pakistan, review the activities of the National Archives of Pakistan and other important archival institutions and agencies, and discuss those archival training facilities available in the country. Some of the archival problems of

current interest are also discussed, along with suggestions that would improve the archival landscape in Pakistan.

Perspective

Pakistan was deprived of its share of the National Archives of India, which had been accumulated over the years under British rule, despite a clear-cut decision of the Partition Council to provide the new nation with records of its past. The proceedings of the Council included the following provisions:

1. Full facilities should be provided to the nominees of the Pakistani government for examining indexes and records with a view to listing records of interest to the Pakistani government, such lists being prepared in agreement with officers designated by the Government of India for the purpose;
2. One printed copy of the records mentioned in the lists referred to in (1) above, should, if available, be given to the Pakistani government as soon as possible;
3. If any of the records mentioned in the lists referred to in (1) above are microfilmed in the ordinary course, one copy should be supplied to the Pakistani government free of charge;
4. If the Pakistani government is able to place additional microfilming units at the disposal of the government of India, the government of India should with the help of subunits agree to microfilm the records in which the Pakistani governments are specially interested and to supply one copy thereof to the Pakistani government free of cost (4)

But these provisions were never implemented, and Pakistan was initially deprived of those records from the National Archives of India, an institution that was established and developed from

joint resources of British India. Thus, Pakistan had to begin from scratch in developing an archival institution.

The other main archival collection of joint interest to India and Pakistan resides at the India Office Library and Records in London. The case involving the division of assets has yet to be decided, but an agreement exists for the exchange of microfilm between the India Office Library and Records and the Government of Pakistan (Cabinet Division/National Documentation Centre), that allows for the free exchange of microfilmed records when required by both parties.

Pioneering Efforts

At the very first Pakistan History Conference, held in Karachi from November 27 to December 1, 1947, Dr. I. H. Qureshi, the country's eminent historian and educator, offered a resolution to establish a Historical Records and Archives Commission (5). Consequently, the Pakistan Historical and Archives Commission emerged as early as 1948, with Dr. Qureshi serving as its first president. The Commission's objective was to safeguard the cultural heritage of Pakistan and to organize the work of discovering, preserving, and publishing public records. At its meeting in December 1948, the Commission recommended the establishment of the Directorate of Archives in Karachi, then the capital of Pakistan, along with six regional survey committees in the provinces (6). Following this recommendation, the Pakistan government established the Directorate of Archives and Libraries in November 1951. How the National Archives of Pakistan developed under the aegis of this Directorate will be discussed elsewhere in this article.

The establishment of a single directorate for two distinct subjects looks somewhat strange. Why were libraries linked with archives? Both archivists and librarians often raise this question. While there is no definitive answer, a number of explanations have been offered. One possible explanation is that there may have been the need to accommodate a particular person in the new

administrative structure of the country. Most likely, that person was K. B. Asadullah, the former librarian of the Imperial Library of India, who had opted to be part of the government of Pakistan and was awaiting a permanent posting in the Ministry of Education. This explanation is given further credence by the claim of a group of librarians, who asserted that the Directorate owed its existence to a proposal put forward by Asadullah, a close relative of Chowdhury Muhammad Ali, then Secretary-General of all the Ministries and later Prime Minister of Pakistan (7). However, the untimely death of Asadullah in 1949 left this question unanswered. It is also possible that two separate proposals were simultaneously accommodated in a single organizational structure that helped curtail expenditures. The inclusion of archives with libraries could also be attributed to a prevailing concept in the United States, where libraries have greatly influenced archival development and practice. Perhaps someone with experience of working in the United States might have suggested combining both institutions.

Despite the efforts of the Pakistan Historical Records and Archives Commission and the personal interest of some prominent historians, significant progress in developing the archives was limited. With independence, Pakistan faced a multitude of social, economic, and political issues that needed immediate attention. The remarks presented by Dr. Qureshi on the eve of the Second Conference of the Commission held at Peshawar in 1954 captured the problems that the Commission faced:

The Commission came into existence in the year 1948, but various difficulties hampered its efficient working. These difficulties have not yet been overcome in Pakistan as we have to begin right from scratch. We have record offices in some of our Provinces. There is still no full-fledged Central Archives and Record Office. At present, we have only a skeleton staff, but it has multifarious duties to perform and has no place it can call its own and where it can work. At this stage of our history, as indeed at all times, there is considerable data that exists in the provinces, which will be

of great value to the historian. And when the records are not kept scientifically, it is essential that properly equipped and staffed records offices should come into existence speedily. Unfortunately, the great value of the records is still not fully recognized (8).

National Archives of Pakistan: The Formative Phase

The establishment of a small Central Records Office in 1951 at Karachi, and the appointment of Riazul Islam, a historian, as its first Deputy Director, marked the beginning of the National Archives. Very little information is known of the formative years of its existence. In fact, prior to October 1958 the National Archives developed very slowly. Some of the initial problems that persisted included the lack of proper awareness of the importance of archives in the life of a nation; limited numbers of trained archivists; the lack of proper training programs; and a feeble interest in archival work among high-level administrators.

In its early years the National Archives consisted of just a few records rooms located in Karachi, then the country's capital. These rooms were equipped with requisite furniture, shelves, racks, and equipment. Space was also provided to research scholars to make use of the available records. Efforts were also made in the late 1960s to set up similar records rooms in Rawalpindi/Islamabad, pending the construction of a permanent building in Islamabad (9). According to the archivist Humayan A. K. Kabir, a plan for the development and expansion of the National Archives of Pakistan was included in the country's *Second Five Year Plan* (1960-1965), but there is no mention in the Plan itself except that "the Department of Archives and Libraries will be strengthened" (10). Nonetheless, the Government did approve funds for the Directorate to renovate the building and establish microfilming and copying units. Machines and other equipment were purchased from the United Kingdom, the United States, and West Germany. Between 1960 and 1968 the units microfilmed 600,000 pages of archival records. At least 1.8 million copies of

old records, historical documents, and valuable manuscripts were supplied to various Ministries/Divisions and Departments of the Governments of Pakistan and to research organizations, institutions and scholars throughout the country as well as abroad (11).

The Repair and Preservation Unit, which traces its history back to the early years of the Directorate, was further expanded and strengthened. The unit was responsible for fumigating, cleaning, flattening, and repairing the records and archives, manuscripts, documents and rare books that were in the custody of National Archives. It also recommended standards for the repair and preservation of records and archives, and provided consultation service throughout the central government (12).

In addition to these vital units, the National Archives established the Archival Museum for the display of rare manuscripts, documents of national importance, rare and out-of-print books, and works of master painters, all of which were part of the collections. Finally, the National Archives Library emerged as one of the major achievements of the early years of the Directorate. Between its establishment in 1949 and 1960, the library built a collection of 10,000 volumes on subjects of history, social sciences, and culture of the subcontinent, as well as books on records management and archives administration. The library provided services to the officers and the staff of the National Archives as well as to those of other departments of the government. The academic and independent scholars, researchers, and students of Indo-Pakistan history made extensive use of its collections, particularly the rare and out-of-print books (13).

Notwithstanding these developments, there is a general consensus that progress was made at a rather dismal pace. In truth, nothing significant in terms of real achievements occurred. There are a number of reasons for this slow development. First and foremost is that persons appointed to key positions in the Directorate of Archives and Libraries had no formal education and training or experience with archival administration. As a matter of fact, they demonstrated limited interest in developing the archives

or libraries. Their main function was to carry out routine administrative tasks and maintain the status quo. Second, the inclusion of archives with libraries retarded the growth of archives. Third, the absence of training facilities for prospective archivists in Pakistan further weakened archival development. Fourth, the lack of public awareness with regard to the importance of archives in national life served as a further obstacle to improve conditions for archival administration. In 1966, another plan suggested ways to improve the National Archives but “lack of funds and other factors” curtailed its implementation (14).

One of the primary factors that provided a stimulus to the development of archives in Pakistan was the acquisition of the records of the All-India Muslim League in October 1966, and later the Quaid-i-Azam papers in August 1968, by the University of Karachi. This collection was named the “Archives of the Freedom Movement” after the university received a number of private collections of notable freedom fighters. How this collection was acquired and saved from extinction is itself a miracle. The correspondence between Dr. Qureshi and the President of the Pakistan Secretariat provides insight into the complex bureaucracy and red tape involved in the acquisition of these historical collections, especially since Qureshi was the country’s most famous historian and had himself been a freedom fighter and a former member of the Cabinet (15). He worked diligently to overcome bureaucratic obstacles in saving this valuable material for posterity. In fact, his success can be considered the turning point in motivating the government to support the development of archives as an independent discipline in Pakistan. In particular, government planners suddenly took special interest in archives.

Other developments that occurred during this period and accelerated the pace of development for the National Archives included the establishment in the Ministry of Education of the Quaid-i-Azam Paper Cell (Papers of the Founder of Pakistan, popularly called “The Great leader”) in 1970 (16). This development paved the way for full recognition of archives as a

separate entity on the part of the high administrators in the Pakistani government. However, political events taking place during this period, specifically war between India and Pakistan that resulted in the secession of East Pakistan and the subsequent creation of Bangladesh, delayed substantial progress.

Establishment of the Directorate of Archives / National Archives

It was not until 1973 when a separate Directorate of Archives was established, with its headquarters in Islamabad. The officer-in-charge of the Quaid-i-Azam Paper Cell, Atique Zafar Sheikh, was entrusted with the responsibility of establishing and developing the National Archives of Pakistan. One of the first acts concerned the transfer of the records and staff from Karachi to Islamabad. Initially, the Directorate was housed in rented accommodations in Satellite Town, Rawalpindi. In 1976, it succeeded in acquiring a spacious bungalow in Islamabad, but soon found that space to be inadequate to accommodate the rapidly expanded functions performed by the Directorate. In 1981, it moved into another rented building as the foundation stone of the long-projected building was laid down in Islamabad. The National Archives building was completed and all records and equipment were transferred between April and December 1988 (17).

The National Archives Building

The revised building project of the National Archives had been approved in 1973 at a total cost of 17.6 million rupees. M/S Robert Mathews John Marshal and Partners of Scotland prepared the initial design. The project was to be executed in phases by the Capital Development Authority, which earlier had allocated a plot of land near the Secretariat Complex in Islamabad. Construction began in 1981 and the first phase was completed in 1988. The building, which covers 150,000 square feet, is divided into three areas: the administrative block, the stack area, and the Library-cum-Auditorium (18).

Functions of the National Archives

The charter and functions of the National Archives are outlined as follows:

1. Preserve and maintain Category “A” files of Ministries/Divisions/Departments of the federal government.
2. Microfilm sensitive records of the government and other private records of national importance.
3. Acquire and preserve private collections of historical and national importance, such as the Quaid-i-Azam papers and Miss Fatima Jinnah papers.
4. Create and maintain the Oral Archives, which consists of sound recordings of speeches and interviews of eminent freedom fighters.
5. Acquire and maintain government printed material, publications, newspapers and periodicals.
6. Maintain the Archives Library for use by research scholars.
7. Publish finding aids (catalogues, accession lists) relating to the collections available in the National Archives of Pakistan.
8. As a member of the International Council on Archives (ICA), maintain liaison with foreign institutions and organizations that are also members of the ICA.
9. Organize seminars, exhibitions, and short-term practical training courses.
10. Provide advisory services to the Provincial Archives and other allied institutions in conserving and restoring documents of historical importance.
11. Provide reference services to visiting research scholars from within the country and abroad in connection with their research projects.
12. Implement the “Archival Material (Preservation and Export Control) Act of 1975” (19).

Advisory Board

The *National Archives Act of 1993* mandated the establishment of an advisory board to oversee the operations of the National Archives. The Advisory Board includes a Chairman, the Director General, and no more than fifteen additional members appointed by the Federal Government, including two current members of Parliament. The functions of the Board are to create the policies and guidelines for effective management of National Archives; to review the work of the National Archives; to develop the framework for coordination among archival institutions; to establish formal rules to conduct official business of the National Archives; and other functions assigned to it by the Federal Government (20).

Organization

The professional work in the National Archives has been organized into three major sectors: private archives, public archives, and duplication services.

The Private Archives Sector involves all the work relating to collection of private papers of important personalities, collection of manuscripts, farmans (royal decrees), recordings of interviews and collection of other material in the form of oral archives (documentary films, recordings of various types) is carried out by this sector. The Sector is also responsible for the management of the Archives Library, including conservation and binding activities.

The Public Archives Sector includes the preservation and maintenance of Category “A” files of Ministries/ Divisions/ Departments of the Federal Government as well as newspapers and periodicals.

The Reprography Sector includes all forms of reproductions, such as microfilming, photocopying, and photography. It is also responsible for microfilming the records of various ministries, divisions, and departments, and prepares

microfilm and photocopy requests from research scholars and other institutions.

Personnel

Each sector is headed by a deputy director, while the director general is responsible for the overall administration of the archives, including all financial matters. The deputy directors have a supporting staff of archivists, assistant archivists, senior and junior technical assistants, microfilming and reproduction officers, and laboratory assistants. There is a total of 100 staff members in the National Archives.

Holdings

The important categories of material with the National Archives are:

- 15,000 Category “A” files of nine Ministries of the Government of Pakistan.
- Private collections, such as the Quaid-i-Azam Papers, Lakha Collection on Quaid-i-Azam, Nawab Siddiq Ali Collection, Isfahani Collection, Miss Fatima Jinnah Collection, Manzoor-ul-Huq Siddiqui Collection, Ghafoor Collection, Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk Collection, Ehsan Danish Collection.
- 300 rare manuscripts.
- 213 *Farmans* (royal decrees).
- 418 volumes of manuscripts.
- Government publications, including gazettes, gazetteers (some dating back to the nineteenth century), press handouts and other publications issued by the Federal Government.
- Newspapers and periodicals of local interest, even some dating back to the mid-nineteenth century (21).

Important Collections

The National Archives has acquired several significant collections that richly document the history of Pakistan. Among these are the following:

Archives of the Freedom Movement. Formerly known as the Muslim League Records, this collection traces its history back to October 1966, when it was brought to Karachi University in 123 gunnysacks and 46 steel trunks. The inventory included nearly 100,000 documents, including more than 25,000 pertaining to the Pakistan Muslim League from 1947 to 1958, several thousand copies of approximately 300 different publications, pamphlets, and brochures (22). In August 1968, the Quaid-i-Azam Papers (the personal papers of the founder of Pakistan) were also acquired by the University of Karachi. All this material was housed in the Dr. Mahmud Husain Library, under the custodianship of Dr. A. Moid, the University Librarian. This author served as the liaison between the library and the newly created Muslim League Records unit. Within a short period of time a small staff headed by Aqueeluzzafar Khan and Muhammad Saleem, both historians, was assembled. Dr. Zawwar Husain Zaidi of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, provided unofficial administrative leadership during the initial stages of the project. Subsequently, additional private collections were added to this record through the efforts of Dr. Z. H. Zaidi. The Muslim League Records were renamed the Archives of the Freedom Movement, at the suggestion of Dr. Qureshi. An account of how the complex and arduous task of restoration and conservation of the Muslim League papers and other material was accomplished is contained in M. H. Siddiqui's *Handbook of Archive & Archival Material on Pakistan Freedom Struggle* (1988) (23).

In 2002, the Archives of the Freedom Movement was shifted to National Archives of Pakistan; however, a photocopy of all such documents has been preserved at the Documents Section of the Karachi University Library.

Quaid-i-Azam Papers (Papers of the Father of the Nation) (24). Following the death of Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 1948, the Quaid-i-Azam Papers resided in the custody of Miss Fatima Jinnah, his younger sister.

After her death in 1967 the papers were sent to Karachi University on the order of the Government of Pakistan. The personal papers of Miss Jinnah were also transferred at the same time. But both these collections came under the responsibility of the Ministry of Information in early 1969. Finally, the Quaid-i-Azam Papers Project received approval by the Government. At present, the papers are being edited and published by a team of experts under the overall supervision of Dr. Z. H. Zaidi. A few volumes have already been published. It will take many years to complete this project.

Other important archival material in the National Archives include the private collections of Miss Fatima Jinnah, Khalil-ur-Rehman Dawoodi, Abdul Hameed Lakha, Nawab Siddiq Ali Khan, M. A. H. Ispahani, Nawab Wiqar-u-Mulk, and Mian Afzal Husain.

Other Activities of the National Archives

In addition to the above records projects, there are other activities pursued by the staff of the National Archives. These include maintaining a reference library of 15,000 rare and current books on different subjects, particularly on history and political science; organizing short courses and workshops for working archivists, often in collaboration with other government agencies; and actively participating in the activities of the International Council on Archives and its regional branch, SWARBICA (the South and West Asian Regional Branch of International Council on Archives).

Provincial Record Offices/Provincial Archives

Each province maintains a record office at its capital city. The Punjab Record Office is the oldest and largest active collection in the country with at least 700 million files and a collection of over 100,000 printed books. The records, some dating back to the year 1804, cover the social, cultural, political, and administrative history of the province. They fall into two main categories: Persian

and English records (25). Presently, the Punjab Record Office is faced with a serious space problem.

The Record Office of Northwest Frontier Province was established in 1946 on the recommendation of the Indian Historical and Records Commission, with Professor S. M. Jaffer serving as its first director.

There are 36,000 files that belong to the Offices of Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, the District Collector Offices of Chitral, and the Home and Tribal Affairs department. These files document events that took place between 1840 and 1940. There are also 696 volumes of reports relating to the administration of border and tribal areas, as well as reports issued periodically by the various departments of the provincial government (26). The provincial archives has also acquired some private collections of notable citizens of the area. In addition to activities associated with collections, the archives also organizes courses in restoration and preservation of records for various government functionaries.

The Record Office of the Province of Sindh was established in 1976 with the objective of keeping "records scattered all over the world on Sindh under one roof." It possesses 34,465 files of Sindh Commissioner Records (1818 to 1935), and 17,530 files and cases of the nineteenth century Chief Court of Sindh, Karachi. It also contains 1,783 old maps containing a wealth of information about Sindh during the pre-partition era. But unfortunately, these precious records lack proper organization due to the absence of professionals conversant with the management of archives (27). The Sindh Archives also possess the private collections of Dr. N. A. Baloch, Khalid Shamshul Hassan, Pir Ali Muhammad Rashdi, and others. These collections are relatively well organized.

The Sindh Record Office/Provincial Archives has its own new facility, but the structure's lack of air conditioning and its location in the vicinity of the sea has created environmental

problems. The Department also confronts additional problems with inadequate furnishing, poor lighting, and no photocopying machines.

In addition to the Provincial Archives of Punjab, the Northwest Frontier, and Sindh, the Record Office in Balochistan has been recently established at Quetta. It is in its formative stage of development.

District Records

There are district records of various kinds (e.g., revenue records, judicial records, general administrative records) that contain documents of immense value for studying the economic, social, and administrative development of each district from the time of British annexation around 1850 to the present time. But unfortunately, and for unknown reasons, these centers of archives did not attract the attention of the Directorate of Archives until recently. In 1986 and 1987, Martin Moir of the India Office Library and Records, in association with the National Archives of Pakistan, conducted a sample survey of twenty-one districts, to learn more about the nature, scope, and condition of these records. The survey results indicated that there was a general lack of awareness among the public as to the research value of these records, and that very little use is made of them. They further discovered that these records suffered from the absence of proper records management and preservation policies and procedures. In their report, the Moirs offered the following suggestions: (1) transfer district records to the provincial archives/record centers; (2) microfilm all district records; and (3) formulate a record management policy and frame rules for public access to these documents (28).

Other Institutions

There are other institutions throughout Pakistan that contain archival records and historical collections. Among the most significant are:

- Institute of Sindhology, Jamshoro, Sindh
- Punjab Public Library, Lahore
- Central Library, Bahawalpur
- National Documentation Centre of the Cabinet Division, Lahore
- Directorate of Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad
- Punjab University Library
- Directorate of Archives, Ministry of Defense, Islamabad
- Islamia College, Peshawer
- Quaid-i-Azam Academy, Karachi
- Lahore Museum, Lahore

Facilities for Archival Training

In South Asia, the concept of archives as an independent discipline did not gain legitimacy until 1891, when the Imperial Record Department was established at Calcutta (Kolkata). The initial staff recruited for the Department received job training from British authorities. Local citizens with an interest in history were preferred for appointment in the Imperial Record Department and the subordinate record offices as well as in such offices in the Princely States. This tradition continued for many years. In 1941, the Department instituted a short-term course in archival administration (29). This was the first course of its kind in British India. Serving as both theoretical and practical, the course was offered until 1976, when the Institute of Archival Training was established at the National Archives of India. The Institute was subsequently renamed as the School of Archival Studies in 1981, with responsibility for conducting a one-year Diploma Course (30).

At the time of its independence in the territories now constituting Pakistan, there was no provision at all for the training of archivists and records managers. As early as 1948, the Central Record Office, North West Frontier Province (now named the Provincial Directorate of Archives, N.W.F.P.) had begun a training

program under the supervision of the historian S. M. Jaffer, who proved to be one of the pioneers of the archival movement in Pakistan. Except for a brief reference to this course in Jaffer's booklet, *Archives* (1949), very little is known about the course (31). It was a course of short duration and was basically intended to instruct those working in the provincial archives and students wishing to perform archival work. The participants were not charged a fee. Jaffer conducted the course until 1953. A diploma course was also planned under the auspices of the Central Record Office, Peshawar, but it was never introduced. As a matter of fact, training for archivists has always been neglected. This could be attributed to the domination of the archival profession by history graduates who did not consider formal training as an essential requirement for their work. Their emphasis, for the most part, had always been on the acquisition and preservation of documents rather than on the records organization and use. The technicalities involved in classification and indexing of documents do not interest archivists in this part of the world. Under such prevailing notions, attendance at some kind of archives-related course, even of short duration, was considered more than enough on the part of working archivists to justify calling themselves qualified archivists. A few of our early archivists succeeded in obtaining scholarships through international exchange programs for practical training and observation at prominent repositories outside the country, particularly in Europe. Ashraf reports the presence of at least six such beneficiaries in 1985 in the National Archives of Pakistan (32).

At present, there are various methods of training for Pakistani archivists, as outlined below.

Short Courses/ Workshops/ Seminars: The first such formal course at the national level was organized at Karachi University (Muslim League Records) in 1969, in collaboration with the India Office and Records, with the financial support of British Council. Attended by the staff of the Muslim League Records Unit (now named the Archives of the Freedom Movement) and the staff of

the provincial archives and other archival agencies, the course was conducted by Mrs. Zawwar Zaidi, with the assistance of a British archivist (33). In 1973, a one-week course on Modern Archives was organized at Islamabad by the newly-created Directorate of Archives. It was both a theoretical and practical course and was attended by archivists from all over the country, including those of the provincial record offices and the staff of libraries associated with archival work. Such topics as the causes for deterioration of paper and possible remedies, the effects of acidity on paper, its diagnosis and possible chemical treatment, were highlighted. The course proved to be successful in terms of its impact on work conducted in the record offices and archival agencies (34).

Taking into consideration the usefulness of such courses for the promotion of archives in the country, the National Archives of Pakistan continued to organize short courses, often in collaboration with others, on different aspects of archival administration, both in Islamabad and at other capital cities. These included a two-week course on Microfilming and Preservation in October, 1979, held in Islamabad; three courses on Preservation of Archival Material in 1981 in different cities of the country, including one at Hyderabad in collaboration with the Institute of Sindhology, Jamshoro; a one-week seminar on Training Needs and Policies in Archives, held in December 1989, in Islamabad; a two-week course on Conservation of Archives and Library Material, in collaboration with the Netherlands Library Development Project Pakistan, in October 1992, in Islamabad; and a two-week Practical Training Course on Conservation of Library Material, held in June 1997, in Islamabad (35).

Role of Universities: With the importance placed on university education in recent years in Pakistan, the need for archival training at the universities has also been emphasized in professional circles and efforts have been directed toward this end. In the reports on archives submitted to the government of Pakistan by Martin Moir in the early 1980s, there included a specific proposal to establish archival education courses in the universities.

One recommendation suggested establishing a six-month or one-year course at the Quaid-i-Azam University, which was strategically located near the National Archives in Islamabad (36). In his report, Moir suggested that staff working at the National Archives could act as part-time lecturers, conducting classes in the afternoon or in the evening. Unfortunately, this proposal failed to receive approval from the authorities. Also ignored at this time was a resolution passed at the International Symposium on Archives, held at Istanbul on February 13, 1982, that focused on the need for establishing instruction in archives administration in Pakistani universities (37).

Over a decade passed before a graduate course in archival studies appeared within the walls of a university. In January 1993, the University of Sindh instituted a Post-Graduate Diploma in Archive Studies, within the Department of Library and Information Science (38). Martin Moir, in association with a committee formed for this purpose by the Vice Chancellor, developed the curriculum for a two-semester program, with each semester consisting of five courses as follows (39):

First Semester: Introduction to Archives; Archive Administration; Records Management; Administrative History; Paleography and Manuscript Studies.

Second Semester: Historical Development of Archives; Conservation of Archives; Archive Arrangement and Preparation of Finding Aids; Historical and Bibliographical Studies; Administration of Rare Books, Newspaper.

The entire course included both classroom and laboratory work. The first class consisted of five students who graduated in 1995; both the second and third classes had only one student each. All those who completed this program are currently working in various archival agencies throughout Pakistan (40). But unfortunately the program had a short life, ending in 1996.

At least six public universities in Pakistan that teach library science at the postgraduate level include optional archives-related courses in their master's degree program. As early as 1966, a course entitled, "Archival Library Service" was incorporated as an optional course in the final year of the two-year MA in Library Science program at the University of Karachi (41). Its title changed to "Archives Management" in 1973. This course is still included in the curriculum but was never offered until 2004. Other universities that offer degree courses at the postgraduate level, have also incorporated archives-related courses in their curriculum, such as Rare Books, Manuscripts and Special Collections; Public Records, Rare Materials and their Conservation; and Public Records and Documents. But although listed in the curriculum, these courses were never offered because of limited interest of students.

Overseas Training: Participation in overseas training programs by Pakistani citizens has been limited in all academic disciplines because of infrequent opportunities and numerous bureaucratic obstacles. Among these disciplines, archival administration is no exception. But unlike other subjects, there had never been provisions for formal education leading to a diploma or degree course in this field in overseas training. Traditionally, overseas training for Pakistani archivists has taken place at a particular institution in the country that extends an invitation. Such programs were meant for the working archivists in the National Archives of Pakistan or other leading archival institutions. The United Kingdom has been most cooperative in this regard. Other countries extending such invitations include the United States and Germany. But only a handful of Pakistan's archivists have benefited under this system of training. The earliest occurrence was in the early 1970s, when two staff members of the Muslim League Archives at the University of Karachi, through the assistance of the British Council, were sent for training in United Kingdom. Subsequently, six archivists from the National Archives, including the former director general, participated in overseas training programs (42).

Problems in Need of Attention

The development of archives in Pakistan has always been faced with a number of problems. The creation of a single Directorate for two independent disciplines in a developing country like Pakistan, and particularly at the initial stage of its creation, has been a favorite topic of discussion in the professional circles of librarians, archivists, and historians. In fact, all three groups disliked the idea of combining archives with libraries, since the development of both suffered as a result. Nothing of significance was achieved in either discipline during twenty-two years of the Directorate. The Directorate, though always headed by a professional historian, failed to provide the leadership necessary to develop either the archives or the libraries. Its administrative structure reflected that of a typical government department, and its leaders lacked professional training. There was always a climate of stagnation, so extensive that the Directorate failed to create awareness to the importance of archives, even within higher government circles. This situation continued for several years. But with the transfer of the Muslim League Records to Karachi University in 1966 came gradual change. The government began to think more about the country's archival resources and those institutions responsible for their management. Although progress was slow, the transfer of Quaid-i-Azam Papers (Personal Papers of the Father of Nation Muhammad Ali Jinnah) to the Ministry of Education in 1970 triggered the government's interest in the archival development of the country. But again, the events in 1971 slowed the pace of change. More importantly, the move of staff from East Pakistan, including the Director of the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, to the newly-created state of Bangladesh, has tremendously affected the working of the Directorate. But this situation was short-lived as unprecedented changes took place in several sectors of national life during this time. With the government experiencing changes, including the reorganization and restructuring of several divisions and departments, the Directorate of Archives and Libraries divided in 1973 into two independent directorates. The newly-established Quaid-i-Azam

Paper Cell in the Ministry of Education was merged with the Directorate of Archives, and the officer in charge of the Cell was promoted to deputy director. While this action on the part of the government proved to be a turning point in the archival development of the Pakistan, old problems persisted and new problems surfaced.

Apathy Toward Archives: Notwithstanding the above developments, it must be pointed out that the place of archives is yet to be determined in the national scheme of priorities. This can be attributed to the lack of understanding on the part of government personnel on how a functional archival establishment can be helpful to a nation-building program. Again, this could be linked to the poor state of existing archival institutions. These institutions have failed to demonstrate how public records organizations could be helpful in increasing government efficiency through the preservation and use of public and private records as a primary national information resource. Lack of recognition for archives and records has led to neglect of those resources, thereby affecting funding in many organizations.

Lack of Competent Personnel: One of the major problems of archives in Pakistan has been the lack of professionally trained archivists to administer its records. The seriousness of the problem can be gauged from the fact that there are only ten archivists in Pakistan today with graduate degrees in archival studies. Moreover, irrespective of qualifications and experience, the available staff is not competent enough to meet the requirements of present day archival management. The short-term courses cannot serve this purpose. The curriculum of Post-Graduate Diploma in Archives offered by the University of Sindh does not meet the present-day requirements, since it represents the traditional approach to archival management. More specifically, it lacks courses related to information technology.

Lack of Coordination: There is very little coordination between the various archival establishments in Pakistan. It is a deeply rooted problem, which traces back to the early days of

archives in this country. This can be attributed to the absence of leadership on the part of both the Directorate of Archives and its predecessor, the Directorate of Archives and Libraries. The Directorate of Archives, a subordinate department of the Ministry of Culture that is charged with the responsibility of National Archives, has failed to fill this leadership vacuum. Another contributing factor for the lack of coordination among archival institutions is the nonexistence of a professional organization of archivists in Pakistan.

Limited Guides, Catalogues, and Finding Aids: The need to be able to identify and locate materials of interest in the absence of an archival guide has long been felt on the part of researchers and working archivists. Some progress has been made over the years at several archival establishments. For instance, a descriptive catalogue of Quaid-i-Azam Papers is being prepared at the National Archives of Pakistan and a few volumes have also been published. A list of microfilm holdings of the National Archives is also available. Likewise, a handbook of material available at the Archives of the Freedom Movement was prepared by Siddiqui in 1988 (43). Individual libraries are preparing catalogues of their manuscript collections. A comprehensive guide to the archival material available at the different archival institutions and establishments has not yet been compiled.

Non-Application of Information Technology in Archival Work: The use of computer technology in archival institutions is almost nonexistent. Pakistani archivists even lack awareness of the benefits of computer technology for various archival functions. Computer use in libraries is increasing, but only a few libraries in public sector institutions have made use of this technology. These libraries have applied this technology to a limited number of information activities. The situation in private sector libraries is much better, but there are fewer private libraries in Pakistan.

Other Constraints to Archival Development: In addition to the problems mentioned above there are four other constraints worth mentioning: (1) the absence of standards for archival

description; (2) the lack of comprehensive archival regulations; (3) limited interest in the archival profession among the younger generation, primarily because of low salaries and status within Pakistani society; and (4) the domination of the profession by a few individuals with vested interests.

Suggestions for Improving the Development of Archives

The preceding discussion reveals a number of areas that warrant immediate consideration for the development of archives in Pakistan. Some of these issues are listed below and possible solutions are suggested:

1. The National Archives of Pakistan must play a leading role in the development of archival institutions and the archival profession in the country. It needs to expand its services to include meaningful coordination among the country's archival institutions and assist with the development and implementation of standards for the profession, including descriptive standards for producing archival guides, catalogues and finding aids to the historical records of Pakistan that reside at the National Archives and at other archival agencies and institutions throughout the country.
2. There is a dire need for creating awareness for the use of computers in archival institutions to accelerate the pace of preparing records for administrative use and historical research. The National Archives of Pakistan must play an influential role in this regard. This organization needs to develop formal and informal links with policymaking government agencies, professional bodies, and professionals to persuade them to acquire skills and seize opportunities to implement computer technology in a timely manner for the storage and retrieval of country's archival resources.
3. To meet the challenges of the rapidly-changing information environment, the archival training program at the

University of Sindh needs to be revived and improved by incorporating information technology related courses into the curriculum. Assistance should be sought from those British and American universities that offer graduate programs in archival management.

4. The absence of a professional organization of archivists has seriously eroded the capability of communicating among the archivists of the country. The formation of a Pakistan Society of Archivists is strongly suggested.

Notes

1. This information is derived from numerous sources, including the various editions of the *Pakistan Year Book* and *Economic Survey of Pakistan*.
2. Atique Zafar Sheikh, *National Archives of Pakistan* (Islamabad: Department of Archives, Government of Pakistan, 1981).
3. Ali Ashraf, *Tahafuzz Dastavezat wa Kutub Khana* [in Urdu: Tr. *Preservation of Documents and Libraries*] (Islamabad: Muqtadara Qaumi Zaban, 1993).
4. Partition Council. Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums. *Proceedings*, chapter VI, 137. Quoted in Sheikh, 2.
5. Pakistan Educational Conference, held at Karachi from November 27 to December 1, 1947, *Proceedings* (Karachi: Pakistan Educational Conference, 1948), 37, 39.
6. Pakistan Historical Records and Archives Commission, *Proceedings of the First Meeting, held at Karachi on 3rd and 4th December, 1948* (Karachi: the Commission, 1948), I, II.
7. Anis Khurshid, "Standards for Library Education in Burma, Ceylon, India and Pakistan" (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1969), 240-242, 251. Asadullah was the husband of Muhammad Ali's maternal aunt. See Hameeda Akhter Husain Raipuri, *Hamsafar* (Karachi: Maktab-i-Danyal, 1999), 266.
8. Pakistan Historical Records and Archives Commission, *Proceedings of the Second Session held at Peshawar, February 1954* (Karachi: the Commission, 1954), 15.

9. Humayan A. K. Kabir, "Development of the National Archives of Pakistan," *Pakistan Library Bulletin* I (September 1968): 53.
10. Pakistan Planning Commission, *Second Five Year Plan, 1960-65* (Karachi: the Commission, 1960), 351.
11. Kabir, 55.
12. Ibid., 55-56.
13. Ibid., 53-54.
14. Mahmudul Hasan Siddiqui, "Dr. Qureshi: A Pioneer Archivist," in *Dr. Qureshi Ishtiaq Husain Memorial Volume II*, ed. Hilal Ahmad Zubairi (Karachi: Dr. Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi Academy, 1994), 42.
15. Ibid.
16. The Quaid-i-Azam Papers were originally part of the Archives of the Freedom Movement, University of Karachi.
17. Ashraf, *Tahafuzz*, 307.
18. For more information about the building, see Timothy A. Slavin, "The National Archives of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," *The American Archivist* 54 (Spring 1991): 222.
19. Sheikh, 6-7.
20. *National Archives Act, 1993* (Islamabad: National Archives of Pakistan, 1994). In fact, it took almost 20 years to have enacted this Act after the creation of National Archives of Pakistan. Earlier in 1975, the Archival Material (Preservation and Control) Act was passed by the Parliament.
21. Sheikh, 7-9.
22. Siddiqui, [A] *Handbook of Archive & Archival Material on Pakistan Freedom Struggle*, ed. M. H. Siddiqui, assisted by Aqeeluzzafar Khan. (Karachi: University of Karachi, 1988) p. xxiv. The All India Muslim League, founded in 1906, was the political party responsible for the creation of Pakistan.
23. Ibid.
24. Zawwar Husain Zaidi, "Quaid-i-Azam Papers and ML Records: Rich Material for Research," *Daily Dawn* (A Dawn Supplement on Birth Anniversary), 25 December 1999, p. I, V.
25. S. M. A. Aquil, "Punjab Archives: Organization and Holdings," *The Pakistan Archives* 1 (Jan/June 1984): 85-92.

26. Tariq Mansoor Jalali. 1984. "Directorate of Archives–NWFP," *The Pakistan Archives* 1 (Jan/June 1984): 115-118.
27. Bahzad Alam Khan, "Sindh Archives Department in Disarray," *Daily Dawn*, 15 May 2001, p. 18.
28. Martin Moir, "Administering and Preserving District Records in Pakistan," *Information Development* 6 (July 1990): 145-149.
29. National Archives of India. Available from <http://www.nationalarchives.nic.in/history.html> (August 10, 1997).
30. Ibid.
31. S. M. Jaffar, *Archives* (Peshawar: Central Record Office (N.W.F.P), 1949), i-ii.
32. Ashraf, "Conservation Problems in the Archives of South Region," *The Pakistan Archives* II (Jan/Dec 1985-1988): 89.
33. Zaidi, V.
34. Ashraf, *Tahafuzz*, 239.
35. Ibid., 240.
36. Moir, "Archives in Pakistan: Some Impressions and Suggestions," *The Pakistan Archives* 1 (Jan/June 1984): 80-81.
37. —, "Archives in Pakistan: Some Recent Developments," *SALG Newsletter* (South Asian Library Group) No. 21 (1983): 10-11.
38. Rafia Ahmad Sheikh, Personal communication, August 22, 2003.
39. Sindh University. Outline of the Course Post-Graduate Diploma in Archive Studies (mimeo).
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41. Karachi University. Department of Library Science, *Librarianship as a Career* (Karachi: the Department, 1966).
42. Ashraf, *Conservation*, 88-89.
43. Siddiqui, [A] *Handbook of Archive & Archival Material on Pakistan Freedom Struggle* (1988).