

50th Golden Jubilee Meeting of the National Committee of Archivists concludes in Chennai

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The two-day 50th Golden Jubilee Meeting of the National Committee of Archivists (NCA), jointly organized by the National Archives of India (NAI), Janpath, New Delhi and the Tamil Nadu Archives and Historical Research, Chennai, concluded successfully on 19th September 2025 at the Tamil Nadu Archives in Chennai. This was the fourth time that Chennai hosted the NCA meeting, marking a significant milestone in India's archival journey.



The event was inaugurated with the facilitation of Dr. Govi Chezhan, Minister of Higher Education, Government of Tamil Nadu, alongside senior officials including Shri Sanjay Rastogi, IAS, Director General of Archives, NAI & Chairman, NCA, Shri Har Sahay Meena, IAS, Principal Secretary/Commissioner, Tamil Nadu Archives & Local Secretary, NCA, Neha Bansal, IAS, Additional Director General, NAI, Dr. D.P. Shankar, IAS, Secretary, Higher Education Department, Tamil Nadu, and Shri Naoroibam Raju Singh, Deputy Director (i/C), NAI & Member Secretary, NCA.



In his inaugural address, Dr. Govi Chezhian highlighted the Tamil Nadu Government's commitment to archival preservation, noting that ₹10 crore had been allocated last year for adopting the Japanese tissue mending technique, with another ₹10 crore allocated this year. He further announced a stipend of ₹25,000 per month for young researchers to encourage studies and publications on the history of Tamil Nadu. The Minister also launched the official Web Portal of Tamil Nadu Archives and released two publications titled:

- Revolts against British Rule in Tamil Nadu and Supreme Sacrifices Prior to 1857 AD
- The Four Mysore Wars and the Conquests of Tamil Nadu.

Speaking on the sidelines, Shri Har Sahay Meena stated that eight lakh archival documents had already been preserved under the Japanese tissue mending technique, out of the targeted ten lakh in the first year. While most military records have been preserved, the next phase will focus on revenue records.



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Shri Sanjay Rastogi, DG, NAI, in his remarks, emphasized the institution's digitization efforts. He shared that the NAI's flagship digital platform Abhilekh Patal now hosts nearly 14 million pages of public records, private papers, and manuscripts. He further stated that NAI aims to digitize its entire collection within the next two years. Addressing the gap in Centre-State collaboration, he noted the absence of a centrally funded scheme for archives and announced that a new scheme, Abhilekh-Sampada, is being formulated, inviting further deliberations on its contours during the meeting.



Dr. D.P. Shankar, Secretary, Higher Education Department, Tamil Nadu, underlined the significance of the two new publications, which highlight the bravery and supreme sacrifices of early Tamil Nadu heroes such as Puli Thevar, Veerapandiya Kattabomman, Marudupandiya Brothers, Rani Velu Nachiyar, Hyder Ali, and Tipu Sultan. "Archives are not just records of the past, but the memory of a nation, the voice of society, and a mirror of humanity," he said.

The two-day meeting also featured deliberations on bridging archival knowledge and cultural heritage through technological advancements. The technical sessions discussed the use and potential of AI in enhancing access to digitized archival material, along with advanced techniques to increase the utilization of archival resources.

Papers were presented by Shri Har Sahay Meena, Principal Secretary/Commissioner, Tamil Nadu Archives, on "Challenges and Problems Faced by Archival Institutions." During the technical sessions, presentations included: Tmt. Vibha Sudarshan, Chief Librarian, The Hindu, on "Lamination Process at The Hindu Archives"; from the National Archives of India, the JDG (IT) on "Born Digital Records"; ADA (Pub/Exh) on "Sources of Indian Genealogy and the Use of Artificial Intelligence"; and the Scientific Officer on "Problems in Restoration of Records and Solutions." Additionally, Dr. Manash Ranjan, ADA (i/C), presented two papers: "Abhilekh Sampada (Formulation of NAI Grants Scheme)" and "NAI's Social Media & Outreach Campaigns."

At last, the delegates visited the Tamil Nadu State Archives where they witnessed the ongoing conservation and digitization initiatives, along with two detailed presentations on these processes. The 50th NCA Meeting also saw active participation from 19 States and Union Territories, reflecting its truly national character.

Established in 1953, the National Committee of Archivists serves as an all-India forum of professional archivists, chaired by the DG of Archives, NAI, and comprising representatives from all State/UT archives. Its first meeting was held in Hyderabad in 1954. Recent meetings include the 47th NCA in Jammu & Kashmir (March 2024), the 48th at Kevadiya, Gujarat (November 2024), and the 49th in Jammu (April 2025). The 50th Golden Jubilee Meeting in Chennai stands as a landmark in advancing the cause of archives in India.

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