

# Pre-Independence Indian Official Publications

## **Deposit of Pre-Independence Indian Official Publications from the British Library at the University of Chicago Library.**

In order to set the minds of UK-based researchers at rest, it may be useful to clarify the nature of the deposit of Indian official publications from the British Library at the University of Chicago Library and to outline the procedures followed.

As part of the planning for maximizing the use of storage space in the British Library's new building at St Pancras, various duplications within the Library's holdings were identified. Among these were the two sets of Indian Official Publications which had been received separately by the British Museum Library and the India Office Library & Records, largely under colonial legal deposit, up to Independence.

To improve world-wide access to pre-Independence Indian Official Publications, it was decided that one set - that originally acquired by the British Museum Library - would be deposited with the University of Chicago Library. No substantial set was to be found at any major centre for Indian historical research in North America - this deposit has almost tripled the availability of pre-1947 Indian Official Publications in the United States - whereas very good holdings existed in India itself, for instance at the Central Secretariat Library in New Delhi. This deposit at Chicago - *\*not\** outright donation, as ownership still rests with the British Library - also built upon the strategic partnership for cooperation already being developed between our two libraries.

The India Office Library & Records set is retained at the British Library as it is the more complete and because the British Library is mindful of its obligations towards any part of its collections subject to outstanding ownership claims. In order to ensure that UK researchers would still enjoy access to the most comprehensive set of Indian Official Publications possible, as part of the deposit process the holdings of the two sets at the British Library were matched to identify unique items within each set. This process was a considerable undertaking and out of nearly 20,000 volumes checked, it appears that just 13 titles that were unique were initially deposited at Chicago. This represents an error rate of less than 0.075%, which shows the thoroughness of the checking process.

The University of Chicago Library has also made a major contribution to access to this material by having full MARC records created for each title. The bibliographic records are searchable on the University of Chicago's website whilst the MARC records are available on request to libraries from the University of Chicago.

Lastly, it must be stressed that under the terms of the deposit agreement those few unique volumes sent in error have already been returned by the University of Chicago Library to the British Library.

## **Accessing Pre-Independence Indian Official Publications at the British Library.**

Following the deposit of the British Museum Library set of Indian Official Publications at the University of Chicago Library, readers should consult the remaining set, belonging to the former India Office Library & Records. Most titles in the shelfmark ranges I.S. to I.S.UP. for the pre-Independence period for which references may be found in Explore the British Library are no longer available.

While the main focus for official publications and related materials in the British Library at St Pancras is the Social Policy Information Service Reading Room (Business & IP Centre - Floor 2) (SPIS) - for pre-Independence Indian official publications readers should apply in the first instance to the Asian & African Studies Reading Room on the 3rd Floor, where staff have access to a list of deposited I.S. shelfmarks with their equivalents. These copies have shelfmarks primarily in the India Office Records V/8-27 ranges, but also the L/MIL range, and the India Office Library ranges beginning T, V, W or Tr. [for monographs] or ST, SV and SW [for serials]. The V/8-27 and L/MIL classes may be ordered via Explore the British Library [click Request List, Asia Pacific Africa Collections, India Office Records], where the India Office Library titles may also be ordered [click Request List, Asia Pacific Africa Collections, Asia Pacific Africa Collections Printed Books and Serials].

Also available at the Asian & African Studies and SPIS Reading Room desks is a list of unique titles in the I.S. to I.S.UP. shelfmark range, retained at the British Library. Please note that these unique copies are housed at Boston Spa, Yorkshire, and are available with 24 hours' notice.

Another way to find the equivalent shelfmarks between the I.S. and IOLR sets of official publications is to search the bibliographic records for these materials now available via the University of Chicago website.

Researchers interested in pre-Independence Indian official publications generally should consult the V-class of the India Office Records [V-lists 4, and 6-27, on open access in the Asian & African Studies Reading Room], and also the L/MIL class [see 'Guide to the Records of the India Office Military Department' by A. Farrington, 1982, in the Asian & African Studies Reading Room at OIR026.954]. Please note that series titles - principally V/8-25, but also some others - are also accessible via option 2 of Explore the British Library as are some monographs. Finally, the Asian & African Studies card-catalogue [Western languages, Printed Books] includes some official material. Readers should also note that for the pre-Independence period, Indian official publications include those for Burma.