

[Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta Archive and its Open Access Resources on South Asia](#)

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Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta Archive

Our research organization, the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (<https://cssscal.org/>) was founded in 1973 and is financed primarily by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (Ministry of Education, Government of India) and the Government of West Bengal. The CSSSC Archive is one of the pioneers of open access archiving in South Asia. It has in the past thirty years or so copied and digitally preserved archival material from numerous public and private collections in India, and has made available about seventy percent of the digital output on various open access platforms.

Set up initially in 1993 with a grant from Enhanced Research Capacity (EnReCa) project of the DANIDA program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Denmark, the CSSSC Archive (<https://cssscal.org/archive.php>) was subsequently funded by various other bodies, such as, Japan Foundation - Asia Centre, Ford Foundation, SEPHIS (South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development), India Foundation for the Arts, Center for Research Libraries, Chicago; US National Endowment for Humanities through the University of Chicago and the Endangered Archives Programme of the British Library (supported by Arcadia Fund, London). During the first phase from 1993 - 1998, the Archive copied 118 Bengali periodicals of various frequencies and microfilmed nearly 1,000,000 pages, mainly from the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat and Konnagar Public Library. The Archive also copied from the collection of the Shilpashram, Purulia the issues of their periodical, *Mukti*. Syed Abdul Rahman Ferdousi of Khoshbaspur had gifted several issues of rare periodicals from his personal collection to our late Professor Hitesranjan Sanyal which we have digitized in due course.

During subsequent phases the archives gradually developed a combined pool of textual and visual materials mostly in the digital format and at present the collection roughly consists of digital reproductions of 800 Bengali periodical titles, 3 Assamese periodical titles from Assam Sahitya Sabha (Jorhat), some Odia, Nepali, Urdu, Hindi periodicals, 7,000 printed books from early 19th and 20th century, and 3100 manuscripts (mostly in Sanskrit, Bangla, and Farsi). Apart from the digital material, the archive holds a small but rich collection of ephemera and papers - including the

private papers of the historians RC Majumdar, Barun De, and Hitesranjan Sanyal, correspondence of the painter Nandalal Bose, and private papers and correspondences of Sivanath Sastri, Bijaychandra Majumder, Priyanath Bhattacharya, Madhusudan Rao, Hemlata Sarkar and their extended families from Sevati Mitra collection.

The CSSSC Archive has also digitally preserved a vast number of visual archival material including 35,000 bromide prints, copy negatives and colour photographs, and 20,000 popular prints and paintings. The Archive has copied photographs, specimens of commercial art, and paintings from the collections of Sanjeet Chowdhury, Amitabha (Siddhartha) Ghosh, Radhaprasad Gupta, Ranen Ayan Dutt, Parimal Ghosh, Himanish Goswami, P.C. Kejriwal (Chitrakoot Art Gallery), Gautam Bhadra, Barada Gupta, Prabir Mukhopadhyay, Debaleena Majumdar, Chitrabani Society, and others. Even though financial limitations and copyright conventions have prevented us from displaying the visual material extensively online, they have been used in the virtual reality museum that the Ministry of Culture, GOI and the Archaeological Survey of India have set up in Metcalfe Hall, Kolkata. As part of our outreach activities, the Archive has organized exhibitions around the visual material in Kolkata and Delhi. One can read more on the visual material in our collection at <https://cssscal.org/archive.php> , <https://jbmrc.cssscal.org/archives/>, and <https://jbmrc.cssscal.org/facilities/jbmrc-archives/>

During the period 2013 to 2021, the main activities of the Archive have been organized around the Endangered Archives Programmes at the British Library, London. Other activities included the digitization and cataloguing of the papers of the Kolkata Improvement Trust (formerly Calcutta Improvement Trust), as well as the private papers and collections of some eminent Bengali practitioners of classical Indian music (including Birendra Kishore Roychowdhury).

Under the several grants from the Endangered Archives Project, the Archive has digitized runs of the famous Calcutta-based dailies Amritabazar Patrika and Jugantar, and has digitized the collections of the Chandannagar Library, Akshay Granthagar in Santipur, Santipur Puran Parishad, Shishirbani Library in Guptipara, Nihar Press in Kanthi, Rajnarayan Basu Library, Vidyasagar Memorial Museum and Library in Birsingha, Brahma Samaj Library in Santipur, Sadharan Brahma Samaj Library in Kolkata, Bauddhadharmankur Sabha, Santipur Public Library, the collection of Saratchandra Pandit (better known as Dadathakur) in Raghunathganj, Krittibas Library in Phulia, and Bankim Bhavan Gabeshana Kendra in Naihati.

As a signal contribution to the field of urban studies, we have digitized the entire proceedings of the Santipur Municipality and of the Kolkata Improvement Trust. In 2014, the Digital Empowerment Foundation acknowledged the Archive's contributions to the making an information rich society in South Asia and awarded it the Manthan Award. In 2015, the Archive was nominated for the World Summit for Information Society Award 2015. Over the past decade, our Archive has pioneered in eastern India the use of sophisticated digital technology to copy fragile manuscripts, books, and periodicals without causing any significant damage to the original material. As outlined above, we have successfully digitized the collections preserved in various remote locations of West Bengal without displacing the originals.

We are committed to more intensive and democratic use of digital tools, and to work towards the establishment of a more information rich society in South Asia. We are dedicated to preservation of important historical materials which are invaluable sources in understanding of the trajectories social, intellectual, economic, and political development in the region. The archive is committed to the principles of open-access archiving as envisioned under the Creative Commons charter. Thus, about seventy percent of the textual materials held in the archive have been also uploaded on various open-access servers such as the EAP online repository (eap.bl.uk), National Digital Library of India (Government of India), JStor-Open Access, and the online CrossAsia Repository. For further information, please get in touch with Abhijit Bhattacharya, Documentation Officer, CSSSC Archive at abhijit@cssscal.org and abh1232@gmail.com

Open Access Resources

1. *CSSSC Archive makes available through the open-access CrossAsia portal a number of nineteenth and twentieth century Bangla periodicals*

<https://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/Englisch/fachinfo/suedasien/zeitschriften/bengali/overview.html>

Since 2011, CSSSC Archive has collaborated with the University of Heidelberg to contribute digital copies of Bangla periodicals microfilmed mainly from the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat (Kolkata), Konnagar Public Library (Hooghly), Shilpashram (Purulia), Moheary Public Library (Howrah), Kolkata Little Magazine Library-o-Gabeshana Kendra (Kolkata) and the private collections of Indranath Majumdar and Syed Abdur Rahman Ferdousi to the CrossAsia portal. The periodicals were microfilmed by the CSSSC during 1993-2002 mainly with funds available from Enhanced Research

Capacity (EnReCa), a collaborative research programme supported by the Government of Denmark; the Ford Foundation and the Japan Foundation - Asia Centre. These microfilms were then digitised with the support of the South Asia Microform Project at the Center for Research Libraries (Chicago).

2. *CSSSC Archive makes available through the open-access CrossAsia portal three unique Assamese periodicals*

<https://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/Englisch/fachinfo/suedasien/zeitschriften/assam/overview.html>

CSSSC Archive has collaborated with the University of Heidelberg to contribute digital copies of three path-breaking Assamese periodicals microfilmed from the Assam Sahitya Sabha (Jorhat) with financial support from the Ford Foundation-New Delhi Office.

3. *CSSSC Archive makes available through the open-access CrossAsia portal over a hundred Bangla books and twenty-four rare publications in English*

<http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/view/collections/22.html>

During 1998-2002, the CSSSC Archive copied 116 Bengali books of the circa 1800-1950 period and 24 other rare publications in English from the amazing private collection of Indranath Majumdar, Konnagar Public Library (Hooghly) and Moheary Public Library (Howrah), and later collaborated with the University of Heidelberg to share them here.

4. *CSSSC Archive, in its first ever collaboration with eap.bl.uk, copied two leading newspapers of South Asia, Jugantara Patrika and Amrita Bazar Patrika - approximately 270,000 pages available now on the open-access British Library portal*

<https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP262>

During 2009-11, CSSSC Archives copied two leading newspapers, Jugantara Patrika (Calcutta, Bengali, daily: 1937 - 1980) and Amrita Bazar Patrika (Jessore/Calcutta, bilingual / English, bi-weekly / daily: 1872 - 1890; 1892 - 1905; 1911; 1919 onward). Approximately 270,000 pages copied.

5. *CSSSC Archive, in collaboration with eap.bl.uk, digitized rare books and periodicals, mostly in Bangla and English, from the collections of Chandannagar Pustakagar (Hooghly), Bankim Bhavan Gabeshana Kendra (Naihati), Bali Sadharan Granthagar (Howrah), Jadunath Sarkar Resource Centre, and Mudiali Library (Kolkata). Digitized in 2010-12, the project output is now available on the open-access British Library portal.*

<https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP341>

6. *Seat of Advaita Acharya's lineage since the 15th century and medieval center of Sanskrit pedagogy, Vaishnavism, Shakti worship, and textile production, what animates Santipur (Nadia district, West Bengal, India) now? CSSSC Archive's collaboration with eap.bl.uk takes its viewers on that very quest*

<https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP781>

In 2014-15, CSSSC Archive, in collaboration with eap.bl.uk, copied 1265 Sanskrit manuscripts from Santipur Bangiya Puran Parishad; 78 bound volumes of resolution books from Santipur Municipality (one of oldest in West Bengal); 584 books and serials in Bengali and Hindi from Santipur Bangiya Puran Parishad, Santipur Brahmo Samaj, and Krittibas Memorial Library cum Museum (Fulia); 510 paintings, sketches, prints and photographs by the artist Lalit Mohan Sen (1898-1954).

7. In 2016-2018, the CSSSC Archive, in collaboration with eap.bl.uk, copied 195 manuscripts, 23 printed books, rarest of rare issues of the *Chuchura bartabaha* from the collection of Sisir Bani Pathagar (Guptipara, Hooghly); 80 manuscripts, some books and periodicals from the collection of Dr. Shyamal Bera; complete run of *Nihar*, the celebrated weekly newspaper from Nihar Press (Contai, Medinipur); 57 periodicals, 48 books, 3 manuscripts from the Bauddha Dharmankur Sabha (Bengal Buddhist Association); 491 volumes of periodicals from Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Library (Kolkata); 77 books and 73 manuscripts from Birsingha Vidyasagar Memorial Hall Rural Library (Medinipur) and Rajnarayan Basu Smriti Pathagar (Medinipur) together.

<https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP921>

*Working with languages as diverse as Odia, Farsi, Sanskrit, Pali, and Bangla, copying manuscripts from the royal court of Shrichandan kings of Narayangarh, documenting the local stirrings of anti-colonial nationalism in Medinipur to the articulations of Buddhist revival and Brahmo reform, this one remains the CSSSC Archive's project with the most prodigious digital output. **THE DIGITAL OUTPUT IS NOT YET UPLOADED.***

8. <https://www.jstor.org/site/saoa/>

CSSSC Archive, one of the pioneers in the region to work consistently for open-access archiving, is a founding member of South Asia Open Archives (SAOA) <https://www.crl.edu/programs/samp/saoa> a consortium of North American and South Asian libraries and archives. SAOA and the not-for-profit learning organization ITHAKA <https://www.ithaka.org/> have come together to share archival materials related to

South Asia through the open access portal of JStor. As a contributing member of SAOA, the CSSSC Archives has already shared on open access JStor digitized copies of the *Census of India* reports from 1872 to 1951, *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and *Jugantara* - two preeminent newspapers from Bengal, and several Bangla periodicals, and is exploring the possibility of contributing more and more digital resources from its repository.

9. *Founded by the brothers Shishir Kumar Ghose and Mati Lal Ghose, Amrita Bazar Patrika shaped anti-colonial nationalist discourse in ways more than one. In 2009-11, CSSSC Archives copied the newspaper and shared the 1898-1905 issues with the open-access portal CrossAsia for wider circulation.*

<http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/view/schriftenreihen/sr-257.html>

10. *Printed at Serampore Press and then at Bengal Secretariat Press, the multilingual Government Gazette carried information about the legislations and regulations of the India and Bengal Governments, news about auctions, job openings and court rulings. The CSSSC Archive copied some issues from Bangiya Sahitya Parishat, Konnagar Public Library, Indranath Majumdar's private collection, and shared them with CrossAsia portal for unrestricted public access.*

<http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/view/schriftenreihen/sr-71.html>

11. *CSSSC Archives copied a volume of The Calcutta Police Journal (1939) from Kolkata Little Magazine Library-o-Gabeshana Kendra and shared it with the open-access CrossAsia portal for unrestricted public access. Brought out by the Calcutta Police, the publication had on offer articles on murders, pick pockets, suicide, criminology, psychology, forensic techniques and other crime detection methods by authors including Jadunath Sarkar, N.N. Law, and B.C.Law. Also musings on "Can the Police Laugh?"*

<http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/2666/>

12. *National Indian Association (NIA) was founded in 1870 by Mary Carpenter in Bristol, with the assistance of Keshub Chunder Sen and it soon had several branches in United Kingdom and British India. Focused on women's education and social reform, the association assisted Cornelia Sorabji to travel to England and complete her education. The CSSSC Archives copied some issues of the Journal of the National Indian Association from the private collection of Indranath Majumdar and shared it with the open-access CrossAsia portal.*

<http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/view/schriftenreihen/sr-273.html>

13-14.

<https://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/Englisch/fachinfo/suedasien/buecher/bengali.html>

<https://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/Englisch/fachinfo/suedasien/buecher/english.html>

During 1998-2002, the CSSSC Archives copied 116 Bengali and 24 English rare books, published between 1799-1950, from Indranath Majumdar's private collection, Konnagar Public Library (Hooghly) and Moheary Public Library (Howrah) and shared them with CrossAsia portal for unrestricted public access.

Biographies, poetry, legal digest in Sanskrit, satires, grammars, textbooks, caste-histories, local histories, Sanskrit plays, medieval lyrics, philosophy, sexology, disease, music, royal tours, Hindu social reforms, evangelism, organizational reports are a few keywords that one can immediately think of.

15. During 2018-2021, in collaboration with eap.bl.uk, the CSSSC Archive has digitized all extant 4242 issues of the *Jangipur Sambad*, a weekly newspaper started by Saratchandra Pandit (1879-1968) better known as "Dadathakur" in 1914 and published from Raghunathganj (Murshidabad district, West Bengal, India); around two hundred ninety four Sanskrit and Bangla manuscripts plus one Sanskrit book printed in manuscript form from Akshay Granthagar in Santipur (Nadia district, West Bengal, India), over four hundred books, chap-books, weekly newspaper issues, periodical-issues in Sanskrit, Bangla, Urdu, Farsi, Hindi, Rajasthani, Nepali, Bhojpuri languages from the private collection of Dr. Rajarshi Ghose (Kolkata, India), and nine rare printed items published by Visva-Bharati. **THE DIGITAL OUTPUT IS NOT YET UPLOADED.**