



Culture & Communities

- Language, Archaeology and Archives
- The State in Religion: Delhi State Haj Committee, Gurudwara Election Office and Delhi Waqf board

Language, Archaeology & Archives

The Language, Art and Culture Department aims to preserve heritage monuments. Promotion and development of languages, literature, art and culture are its other activities. These activities are carried out through Sahitya Kala Parishad and the Language Academies: Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit and Sindhi, which are autonomous bodies. The Archives Department is responsible for preservation of records, which are more than 25 years old whereas the Archaeology Department is responsible for preservation and maintenance of monuments in Delhi. The total approved outlay for the Tenth Five Year Plan is Rs 69 crore. Table 1 details the approved outlay for various bodies under the Department.

Table 1: Approved Outlay (Rs in lac)

<i>Name of Department/ Sector</i>	<i>Approved Outlay 2003-04</i>	<i>Approved Outlay 2004-05</i>	<i>Approved Outlay 2005-06</i>
Department of Archaeology	125	100	150
Delhi Archives	35	120	160
Hindi Academy	135	135	135
Punjabi Academy	240	240	245
Urdu Academy	185	185	185
Sanskrit Academy	130	130	125
Sindhi Academy	47	44	43
Sahitya Kala Parishad	800	280	425
Delhi Gazetteer	5	5	1
Setting up of City Museum	1	1	
Library in all Assembly Constituencies	75	75	80
Total	1,780	1,315	1,549

Source: Govt of NCT Delhi. 2003, 2004, 2005. Annual Plan: Plan Outlay and Expenditure. Vol. 3. Department of Planning

There are more than 1,300 historical monuments of different periods spread throughout the length and breadth of Delhi, out of which 165 monuments are of national importance thus, are preserved by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). At present only 20 monuments are under the maintenance of the Department of Archaeology. The

Haveli of Mirza Ghalib at Chandni Chowk was restored and conserved to its original splendor.

An archaeological museum has been set up in Dara Shikoh Library Building at Kashmere Gate comprising of two galleries. Artifacts unearthed from excavations from the sites in Delhi ranging from the late Harappan times to the medieval period are on display in one gallery and sculptures in the custody of the Department are on display in the second gallery. Thus, the Department is currently maintaining only these two museums. While the citizen charter of the Department says that the Department is supposed to set up a City Museum behind Kashmere Gate, which would reflect the history, and culture of the city in its totality, the scheme has been dropped in 2005-06.

Delhi Archives

The Department of Delhi Archives, established in 1972, has been in consonance with the Archival Policy Resolution discharging its archival function in preserving precious and valuable dimensions of heritage in various modes such as manuscripts, maps, books and micro-films having information since 1785. The functions of this Department are:

- To accumulate and preserve every bit of information relevant and make it available to those who need
- Organise exhibitions, seminars and symposium to generate awareness among people about the importance of archives
- Acquire any sort of archival material in people's possession by way of donation, purchase and gift
- Freedom fighters or prominent personalities of Delhi are contacted for oral history programs.
- Extensive guidance in relation to preservation and effective record management of old records is offered to officials responsible for record rooms of various departments
- Preserved records are microfilmed for everlasting retention.

All the functions mentioned above are actually undertaken by the Department. The Department performs exhibitions at least twice a year on specific topics like health and life in Chandni Chowk. The Department maintains an Archival Library at its premises. The Library con-

tains records like Central Jail Records, Deputy Commissioner Office Records, Registrar Office Records, Gazette records and Properties or Rent Records. On considering the decaying and torn condition of precious archival records, digital conversion seemed beneficial. A budget of Rs 25 lac has now been placed at the disposal of this department for the same purpose.

Delhi Gazetteer

The Gazetteer Unit is a part of the Archaeology Department. In 1995, Chauhan Committee was set up by the Delhi Government to provide recommendations to the Art, Culture and Language Department. This Committee came up with a Report on Preservation and Development of Cultural Heritage of Delhi. Some of the recommendations by the Committee are as follows:

- Listing and mapping all ancient monuments remains and sites in Delhi with reference to an existing list of 1,317 monuments and new discoveries
- Implementation of the antiquities and art treasures at Delhi to encourage private collectors to get their collections duly registered
- Strengthening of the conservation wing of the Department by appointing more Conservation Assistants and Foremen
- Conservation of the monuments through the Memorandum of Understanding with non-government organisations like the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)

Language Department

The Language Department coordinates the activities of language academies and Sahitya Kala Parishad. It processes and sanctions the grant to these autonomous bodies. It also processes applications for financial assistance and land allotment from Delhi Kalyan Samiti and Government of India to NGOs/ registered cultural institutions. This Department organises Hindi and Urdu workshops, competitions, training in Hindi typing, shorthand, noting and drafting with a view to encourage government officials to do maximum work in Hindi. All the academies of Department perform their activities under the following plan schemes:

- Seminars and conferences are organised in Delhi on various literary

subjects by the Academies in collaboration with colleges, universities and various literary institutions and reputed NGOs.

- Manuscripts received from authors are scrutinised and selected by the Sub-committees of the Academies. Financial assistance ranging between Rs 7,000 to Rs 15,000 is offered for publication of literary books.
- 20 scholarships or fellowships are available for research work on important and eminent subjects to needy writers and scholars. The quantum of financial assistance is a maximum of Rs 15,000 per annum to an individual.
- The language academies sponsor writers, artists and poets for participation in programs organised by Delhi-based schools, colleges, NGOs and trusts.
- Under another scheme run by the Language Department, NGOs in all assembly constituencies will provide library facilities with the assistance of Delhi Government. A minimum of one and maximum of two libraries can be opened by the NGOs. For this, grant in aid of Rs 1.03 lac for five years per library is given to each NGO, subject to the condition of availability of funds, fixture and reading material. 56 libraries have been opened so far and applications are being invited for setting up more libraries.
- The academies publish their own books and magazines containing masterpieces of eminent authors and writers. The old and famous books of various languages are also published by the academies after translating them into other languages.
- Awards and prizes ranging from Rs 5,100 to Rs one lac is given to eminent writers, scholars, artists and journalists for their excellence in promotion of language, art, literature and culture.
- The academies run teaching centres and conduct job-oriented training in computers, typewriting and shorthand in different parts of Delhi. Hindi Academy runs a special programme of Hindi translation and editing at the academy premises. In addition, the Urdu Academy runs 300 and Punjabi Academy runs 160 adult education centres. Preference is given to the socio-economically underprivileged and some seats are reserved for them.
- The academies have started new schemes under which conferences, seminars, symposiums and poets meet will be organised in other

states and in Delhi by collaborating with state academies or NGOs and renowned institutions.

The number of employees in the Department is shown in Table 2. It only substantiates the size of the department and how little is actually achieved.

Table 2: Information on Employees in the Departments 2004

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Sanctioned Posts 2004</i>	<i>Working Employees 2004</i>
Department of Archaeology	53	43
Delhi Archives	42	39
Hindi Academy	118	111
Punjabi Academy	15	57
Urdu Academy	11	51
Sanskrit Academy	48	24
Sindhi Academy	29	19
Sahitya Kala Parishad	44	43

Source: Government of NCT Delhi. 2004. Census on Employees in Government of Delhi & Autonomous Bodies. Directorate of Economics and Statistics

Reforms

The language academies of the Art and Culture Department divulge into the area of language promotion, which is not its core competence. This could be delegated to the Education Department or the universities in Delhi. The work can be just contracted out to them. The Department has a total allocation of about Rs 15 crore, which can be utilised in a better manner if the functions are given to professionals whose core competence is teaching and propagation of languages.

There is definitely a need for more libraries in the city. The idea of NGOs' opening libraries in their respective constituency is also an example of those people being handed down functions unsuited for their competence. A better way to have more libraries in Delhi would be to expand the existing network of state libraries, and also open new libraries through collaboration with the other competent departments of Delhi Government. The libraries should be managed by public-private collaborations and private parties should be given more incentives like tax breaks, prizes and other supportive schemes for encouraging their participation in this sector.

The ASI should be handed over the entire responsibility of

preserving and conserving the monuments, as it is the most competent authority in this field. Rs 1.25 crore that the Department is allocated for the same purpose should be diverted to ASI. The entire staff could be utilised by the ASI for its work that would ensure better quality of maintenance and preservation.

The management and maintenance can also be given to private parties. It is necessary to have a participative collaboration between communities, individuals and corporations for promotion of art, culture and language in Delhi.

—Prepared by Kriti Kapur with the help of Sabith Khan

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