

“Without knowledge of the past we would be without identity, we would be lost on an endless sea of time.” Arthur Marwick

AN APPEAL:

HELP US PRESERVE THE HISTORY OF THE WAR OF LIBERATION OF
BANGLADESH

A PROJECT OF THE LIBERATION WAR MUSEUM, BANGLADESH AND THE
NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR SOUTH ASIA STUDIES, USA

As many of you may know, the documents relating to the liberation war of Bangladesh have been rapidly disappearing from the libraries across Bangladesh. One may find it very appalling to know that major libraries in Bangladesh, including the Central Public Library, Dhaka University Library and Bangla Academy Library currently hold very few documents concerning the war and atrocities occurred in Bangladesh in 1971. Many of these historical documents are either destroyed because of lack of proper preservation or missing for reasons yet to be known. Against this backdrop, beginning summer of 2005, the Liberation War Museum (LWM), Bangladesh (<http://www.liberationmuseum.org.bd>) and the North Carolina Center for South Asia Studies (NCCSAS), USA, have embarked on a project with a goal to preserve the historical documents of the war of liberation of Bangladesh. Please visit the link <http://www.jhfc.duke.edu/csas/index.php> to know more about the North Carolina Center of South Asia. This project shall give us opportunity to promote our heritage and educate our current and future generation about the hard-earned freedom of Bangladesh. We need your support in preserving these documents.

Please read the synopsis of the project and provide us your support as outlined in the last section.

Why is this project so important?

As the quotation by Professor Arthur Marwick indicates and as Woodrow Wilson states that “A nation which does not know what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do,” we must preserve and protect the history of our past. Archiving the war of liberation documents will ensure that the current as well as the future generations receive an accurate account of what happened in 1971 in Bangladesh.

The main goals of this project are:

- to preserve the historical documents relating to the liberation war of Bangladesh.
- to utilize the archived documents in research related to south Asia and genocidal studies.
- to incorporate the documents in the south Asia courses taught in four consortium institutions, namely, Duke University, UNC-Chapel Hill, NC State University and NC Central University.

- to ensure that the documents are available in the public domain.

The projects implementation stages

- In the first stage, the late S. A. Jalal collection of more than 3500 newspaper clippings published in various foreign newspapers during March through December of 1971 will be digitized.
- Concurrently, the search for the missing documents will continue.
- In the subsequent stages, documents in Bangla news papers and magazines published, movies produced, minutes of meeting and any other related documents produced, published and/or written during the war of liberation in 1971 will also be digitized.
- All digitized documents will be archived, depending on the space availability, at the libraries of Duke University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and North Carolina Central University. Digitized materials will be available through various search engines for the readers for inter-library loans, hopefully, during the fall (third week of August) of 2006.

Current source of funding

The NC Center for South Asia studies have provided the initial funding for this project. With this startup fund, the Liberation War Museum has set up a computer system with necessary digitized equipments. The Center has also approved additional funding for the continuation of the project.

The duration of the project

The duration of the project depends on the availability of archiving space, future funding and generous support from the public.

How can you contribute?

As stated in the first paragraph, a large volume of historical documents is currently out of the public domain. Some are destroyed and many are in the hands of public who may have been keeping them for safe preservation. One of the major objectives of this project is to locate these missing documents published, produced or/and written during the war of 1971. To accomplish this objective, we need your kind and invaluable support.

We, therefore, earnestly request you that, if you are currently holding or if you know anyone (any place) or/and who (which) may be holding pamphlets, magazines, newspaper clippings, minutes of meeting (those of the Freedom fighters, the paramilitary forces like Rajakar, Al-badr, Al shams, Shanti Committee), photographs, movies, books, tapes, personal diaries produced, published, written during the war time, please contact or send copy(es) to Mr. Mofidul Haque, Trustee, Liberation War Museum or to ABM Nasir at the NC Center for South Asia Studies at the addresses below.

We will recognize your contribution and efforts. By sharing such documents with historical significance concerning our liberation war will greatly help these libraries and Liberation War Museum disseminate them to larger readership.

Let us work together in preserving our past.

Earnestly,

ABM Nasir

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MMR Jalal