



The Kerala Public Records Act, 2025

Act No. 11 of 2025

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GOVERNMENT OF KERALA
Law (Legislation-D) Department
NOTIFICATION

No. 53/Leg. D1/2023/Law.

*Dated, Thiruvananthapuram, 5th November, 2025
19th Thulam, 1201
14th Karthika, 1947.*

In pursuance of clause (3) of Article 348 of the Constitution of India, the Governor of Kerala is pleased to authorise the publication in the Gazette of the following translation in English language of the Kerala Public Records Act, 2025 (11 of 2025).

By order of the Governor,

K. G. SANAL KUMAR,
Law Secretary.



[Translation in English of “2025-ലെ കേരള പൊതുരേഖ അക്ട്” published under the authority of the Governor.]

ACT 11 OF 2025

THE KERALA PUBLIC RECORDS ACT, 2025

An Act to regulate the appraisal, collection, classification, preservation, administration of public records of the Government Departments, Local Self Government Institutions, State Public Sector Undertakings, Commissions, Boards and Committees constituted by the Government and accepting records from private sources and matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Preamble.—WHEREAS, it is expedient to regulate the appraisal, collection, classification, preservation and administration of public records of the Government Departments, Local Self Government Institutions, State Public Sector Undertakings, Commissions, Boards and Committees constituted by the Government and accepting records from private sources and matters connected therewith or incidental thereto;

BE it enacted in the Seventy-sixth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

CHAPTER I COMMENCEMENT

1. *Short title and commencement.*—(1) This Act may be called the Kerala Public Records Act, 2025.

(2) It shall come into force at once.

2. *Definitions.*—In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(a) “appraisal” means the evaluation of historical value of public records;

(b) “Board” means the Archival Advisory Board constituted under sub-section (1) of section 13 of this Act;

(c) “defunct institutions” means departments or institutions under the Government, private institutions which have ceased to function due to economic, technical or other reasons;

(d) “Director” means the Director of the State Archives Department;

(e) “file” means collection of records with a file number including correspondence and notes that are part of the public records and relating to a specific subject;

(f) “Government” means the Government of Kerala;



- (g) “Head of the Department” means head of the agency creating the public records;
- (h) “periodical review” means the process of re-evaluation of disposed files within the period of retention or destruction of them;
- (i) “prescribed” means prescribed by rules made under this Act;
- (j) “public records” includes,—
- (i) any manuscript, copper plates, copper rolls, bamboo splints, palm leaves, ancient texts, leaves, case files, diagram, maps, photos, charts, documents, paper records, files, canvas records, plans, audio clippings and in other various media records;
- (ii) any microfilm, microfiche and facsimile copy of records;
- (iii) any reproduction of image or images in its real size or not, embodied in such microfilm;
- (iv) any other records produced by computer or any other device, of any records creating agency;
- (k) “public records of archival value” means records having historical, national or administrative importance which is recommended by the board to be acquired by the State Archives Department;
- (l) “public records of permanent value” means the records which are identified as not destructible after appraisal under various office manuals prevailing in the State which provides for the administration, preservation, appraisal, disposal etc., of public records;
- (m) “Purchase Committee” means the committee constituted under sub-section (1) of section 17 of this Act;
- (n) records creating agency means,—
- (i) Government departments and offices;
- (ii) commissions, boards and their offices constituted under any Act and institutions and committees functioning wholly or substantially under the control or with the financial assistance of the Government;



(iii) Local Self Government Institutions and related offices;

(o) “records from private sources” means records in possession of a private individual or any non-governmental organisations;

(p) “records officer” means the officer authorised by the records creating agency under sub-section (1) of section 5 of this Act;

(q) “reference media” means any checklist, transfer list, subject list, descriptive list prepared and maintained by the records creating agencies or the Archives Department, as the case may be, for finding public records and such other methods as may be prescribed for this purpose;

(r) “retention schedule” means the schedule prepared under clause (e) of section 6;

(s) “rules” means rules made under this Act;

(t) “State” means the State of Kerala.

CHAPTER II PUBLIC RECORDS

3. *Power of the Government to co-ordinate, regulate and supervise operations connected with administration, maintenance and appraisal of public records.*—(1) The Government shall have the power to co-ordinate, regulate and supervise the operations connected with the administration, management, maintenance, selection, appraisal, disposal and destruction of public records under this Act.

(2) The Government may, in relation to the public records of the records creating agencies, by order, authorise the Director or any other officer, subject to such conditions as may be specified in the order, to carry out all or any of the following functions, namely:—

(a) supervision, management and control of the archives;

(b) acceptance for deposit of public records of permanent nature after such period as may be prescribed;

(c) custody, use and withdrawal of public records;



- (d) arrangement, protection and exhibition of public records;
- (e) preparation of inventories, indices, catalogues and other reference media of public records;
- (f) analysing, developing, promoting and co-ordinating the standards, procedures and techniques for improving the records management system;
- (g) ensuring the maintenance, arrangement and security of public records in the State Archives Department and in the offices of the records creating agencies;
- (h) promoting utilization of available space for the preservation of public records and maintenance of equipments;
- (i) rendering advice to records creating agencies on the compilation, classification and disposal of public records and for application of standards, procedures and techniques of records management;
- (j) survey and inspection of public records;
- (k) organizing training programmes in the fields of archives administration and records management;
- (l) accepting records of archival value from private sources;
- (m) regulating access to public records;
- (n) receiving records from defunct institutions and making arrangement for ensuring the security of public records in the event of national emergency;
- (o) receiving reports on records management and disposal practices from the records officer;
- (p) providing certified copies of, or extracts from, public records in the manner as may be prescribed;
- (q) destruction and disposal of public records;



(r) accepting any record of historical, national or administrative importance by way of purchase or as gift or in any other manner as may be prescribed;

(s) providing guidelines for the preservation of public records that are destroyed in disasters which comes under the definition of ‘disaster’ under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (Central Act 53 of 2005).

4. *Prohibition against taking of originals of public records of permanent value out of the State.*—No person or institution shall take or cause to be taken out of the State the originals of public records of permanent value without the prior approval of the Government:

Provided that no such prior approval shall be required if any originals of public records of permanent value are taken or sent out of State for official purpose.

5. *Records officer.*—(1) Every records creating agency shall authorise one of its officers as records officer to discharge the functions under this Act.

(2) Every records creating agency shall set up such number of record rooms in such places as it deems fit in such offices and shall authorise one records officer for each record room.

6. *Responsibilities of records officer.*—The records officer shall have the following responsibilities, namely:—

(a) proper arrangement, maintenance and preservation of public records under his charge;

(b) periodical review of all public records and weeding out public records of ephemeral value in such period as may be prescribed;

(c) appraisal of public records of more than twenty-five years old, in consultation with the State Archives Department, for retaining public records of permanent value, in such manner as may be prescribed;

(d) destruction of public records as provided in sub-section (1) of section 8;

(e) preparation of a schedule of retention indicating period of retention of public records;



(f) submitting recommendations after conducting periodical evaluation in such manner as may be prescribed, for declassifying the classified documents;

(g) adoption of such standards, procedures and techniques as may be recommended from time to time by the State Archives Department for the improvement of records management system and security of public records;

(h) compilation of annual indices of public records;

(i) consolidation of organisational history and annual supplement thereto;

(j) assisting the State Archives Department for public records management;

(k) submission of annual report to the Director in such manner as may be prescribed;

(l) transferring the records of any defunct institutions to the State Archives Department in accordance with the directions of the Director.

7. Records officer to take immediate action in the event of unauthorised removal, destruction, etc., of public records in his custody.—(1) If the records officer is satisfied that any public records in his custody has been unauthorisly removed, destructed, defaced or altered,—

(i) the said information shall be reported to the Head of the Department within a maximum period of one month and the Head of the Department shall take further action on it by conducting departmental inquiry; and

(ii) the records officer shall take immediate and appropriate steps to recover and restore such public records.

(2) The details regarding the action taken under sub-section (1) shall be communicated to the Director in writing within a maximum period of three months.

(3) For the purpose of recovering or restoring the public records, the records officer may,—

(i) seek assistance of any Government Officer and such officer shall render all such assistance;



(ii) accept technical or other kind of assistance from any person related thereto.

8. *Destruction or disposal of public records.*—(1) No public record shall be destroyed or otherwise disposed unless subject to the provisions and in such manner under the Kerala Destruction of Records Act, 1961 (2 of 1962) and rules made thereunder, or under such rules made under this Act, as the case may be.

(2) No records that are more than hundred years old shall be destroyed except with the permission of the Government and on the report of the Director that it is so defaced or is in a condition that it cannot be put to archival use.

9. *Power to file case and punishment.*—(1) The Head of the Department or any Officer authorised by him shall file case before the court in respect of any matter punishable under this Act or rules made thereunder.

(2) Whoever contravenes any of the provisions of section 4 or section 8 of this Act, as the case may be,—

(i) offences in respect of the public records which are more than hundred years old or having archival value, shall on conviction, be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extent to five years or with fine which may extent to fifty thousand rupees or with both;

(ii) offences in respect of public records of permanent value, shall on conviction, be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extent to three years or with fine which may extent to twenty five thousand rupees or with both;

(iii) offences in respect of the public records other than those referred to in item (i) and item (ii) shall on conviction, be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extent to six months or with fine which may extent to ten thousand rupees or with both, or with community service.

10. *Public records classified as confidential or bearing security classification.*—No Public records which are classified as confidential or bearing security classification shall be transferred by the record creating agency to the State Archives Department.



11. *Receipt of records from private source.*—(1) The State Archives Department may accept any record of historical, national and administrative importance from private source by way of gift, purchase or otherwise as may be prescribed.

(2) The State Archives Department may, subject to such conditions and in such manner as may be prescribed, make any record referred to in sub-section (1) available to any *bona fide* research scholar.

12. *Access to public records.*—(1) All unclassified public records which are more than thirty years old and are transferred to the State Archives Department may, subject to such exceptions and restrictions as may be prescribed be made available to any *bona fide* research scholar.

Explanation.—For the purposes of this sub-section, the period of thirty years shall be reckoned from the year of the creation of the public record.

(2) The records creating agency may grant to any person access to any public record in its custody in such manner and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed.

CHAPTER III ARCHIVAL ADVISORY BOARD

13. *Archival Advisory Board.*—(1) The Government shall by notification in the Gazette, constitute an Archival Advisory Board for the purposes of this Act.

(2) The Board shall consist of the following members, namely:—

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|---|----|-------------------------------|
| (a) Minister in charge of State Archives Department | .. | Chairperson (ex-officio) |
| (b) Secretary, State Archives Department | .. | Vice-Chairperson (ex-officio) |
| (c) two Members of Legislative Assembly nominated by the Government | .. | Member |
| (d) an officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary, Cultural Affairs Department | .. | Member (ex-officio) |
| (e) an officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary, Personnel and Administrative Reforms Department | .. | Member (ex-officio) |



(f)	an officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary, Finance Department	..	Member (ex-officio)
(g)	an officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary, Local Self Government Department	..	Member (ex-officio)
(h)	an officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary, Home Department	..	Member (ex-officio)
(i)	an officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary, Law Department	..	Member (ex-officio)
(j)	Director, State Archeological Department	..	Member (ex-officio)
(k)	Director, Museums and Zoos Department	..	Member (ex-officio)
(l)	an archivist nominated by the Government having a degree in History from a recognised University and Diploma/Degree in Archives recognised by the Central/State Government	..	Member
(m)	a person nominated by the Government having a degree or Post Graduation in Information Technology from a recognised University	..	Member
(n)	a person nominated by Government having Post Graduate Degree or Doctorate in History from a recognised University	..	Member
(o)	a person nominated by Government having Post Graduate Degree or Doctorate in Manuscriptology from a recognised University	..	Member
(p)	Director, State Archives Department	..	Member Secretary (ex-officio)

14. *Term of Board.*—(1) The members nominated to the Board shall hold the office for the period fixed by the Government, not exceeding three years, from the date of notification constituting the board.

(2) The nominated members shall be eligible for re-appointment:

Provided that no person shall be nominated as a member for more than two consecutive terms.

(3) The members of the board shall continue to hold office until a new board is constituted subject to the provisions of this Act and rules made thereunder.



(4) A member nominated to fill a casual vacancy shall continue for the remaining term of the member in whose place he is nominated.

(5) A nominated member may resign his office by writing addressed to the Government, but he shall continue his office until his resignation is accepted by the Government.

(6) No act or proceedings of the Board shall be deemed to be invalid by reason of any defect or irregularity in its constitution or on the ground of existence of any vacancy in the office of any member.

(7) The Board shall determine its own procedure for the conduct of its business.

(8) The allowances of the nominated members shall be such as may be prescribed.

15. *Meeting of the Board.*—(1) The Board shall meet in such place and time as decided by the Chairperson:

Provided that the period between two consecutive meetings shall not exceed six months.

(2) The Chairperson shall preside over the meeting of the board. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and in the absence of both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson, any member present from amongst themselves, shall preside over the meeting.

(3) The quorum for the meeting of the Board shall be one fourth of the total number of members.

16. *Functions of the Board.*—The Board shall perform the following functions, namely:—

(a) rendering guidelines in the matters relating to administration, management, preservation and use of public records;

(b) formulating guidelines for imparting training to Records Officers and employees of State Archives Department;

(c) providing necessary directions for acquisition of records from private sources;



(d) deal with such other matters as may be prescribed.

17. *Purchase Committee.*—(1) The board shall constitute a Purchase Committee consisting of the following members for every purchase of records from private sources, namely:—

Ex-Officio Members

- | | | |
|--|----|------------------|
| (a) Secretary, State Archives Department | .. | Chairperson |
| (b) Officer of the Law Department who is member of the board | .. | Member |
| (c) Officer of the Finance Department who is member of the board | .. | Member |
| (d) Director, State Archives Department | .. | Member Secretary |

Nominated Members

For the purpose of purchase of records from private sources, the board may if it considers necessary, nominate two persons who are experts in the subjects concerned.

(2) The purchase committee constituted under sub-section (1) shall give recommendations to the board in respect of each purchase and the board shall take appropriate decisions on such recommendations.

CHAPTER IV
GENERAL PROVISIONS

18. *Power to determine norms and standards for courses relating to training in archival science.*—Subject to the approval of the Board, the Director shall have the power to determine norms and standards for courses, curricula, assessment and examinations relating to the training in archival science and other allied subjects.

19. *Protection of action taken in good faith.*—No suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against any person for anything which is done or intended to be done in good faith under this Act or the rules made thereunder.

20. *Savings of other laws.*—The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of, the provisions of any other law for the time being in force.



21. *Power to remove difficulties.*—(1) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Government may, by order published in the Gazette, make such provisions not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, which appears to it to be necessary for the purpose of removing the difficulty:

Provided that no such order shall be issued after two years from the date of commencement of this Act.

(2) Every order issued under sub-section (1) shall as soon as may be laid before the Legislative Assembly.

22. *Power to make rules.*—(1) The Government may, by notification in the Gazette, make rules to carry out the provisions of this Act.

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely:—

(a) the period for which public records of permanent nature may be accepted under clause (b) of sub-section (2) of section 3;

(b) the period for conducting the periodical review of public records under clause (b) of section 6;

(c) the manner of appraisal of public records under clause (c) of section 6;

(d) the manner in which periodical review of classified public records for declassifying shall be undertaken under clause (f) of section 6;

(e) the manner in which the records officer shall submit annual report to the Director under clause (k) of section 6;

(f) the manner and conditions for destroying or disposing the public records under sub-section (1) of section 8;

(g) the manner by which records from private sources are to be received under sub-section (1) of section 11;



(h) the manner and conditions for making available records of historical, national or administrative importance to *bona fide* research scholars under sub-section (2) of section 11;

(i) exceptions and restrictions for making available the public records to a *bona fide* research scholar under sub-section (1) of section 12;

(j) the manner and conditions for granting permission by any records creating agency for accessing public records in its custody to any person under sub-section (2) of section 12;

(k) the allowances which may be granted to the members of the Board under sub-section (8) of section 14;

(l) any other matter which is, or may be, prescribed.

(3) Every rule made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before the Legislative Assembly while it is in session for a total period of fourteen days which may be comprised in one session or in successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session in which it is so laid or the session immediately followed, the Legislative Assembly makes any modification in the rule or decides that the rule should not be made, the rule shall, thereafter, have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be, so however that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under the rule.

23. *Repeal of existing Order.*—(1) G.O. (Ms.) No. 157/76/H.Edn. dated 11th day of October, 1976 issued by the Higher Education (A) Department is hereby repealed.

(2) Notwithstanding such repeal, anything done or any action taken under the said order shall be deemed to have been done or taken under this Act.

