

Statement of Value
South Asia Open Archives (SAOA)

The South Asia Open Archives (SAOA, available at saoa.crl.edu) provides demonstrable value to its members, partners, and the general public. In SAOA's first five years (FY16-20), [member and partner organizations](#) invested critical resources (funding, content, and staff time) in order to make South Asia's rich history openly available to researchers worldwide. Researchers and students benefit from free access to this community resource of curated historical collections on South Asia, selected by expert librarians.

SAOA exemplifies and advances important values such as diversity of content, inclusive perspectives, collaborative approaches, democratized access, and equity among researchers. It is a part of the global open-access movement, bringing important materials out of the archives and out from behind paywalls, and making them freely accessible to anyone with an internet connection. SAOA is driven by collaboration. Member institutions help to shape SAOA by providing input and resources; their representatives serve in leadership and governance roles on the Executive Board and SAOA Working Groups on selection, infrastructure, and funding. SAOA prioritizes the inclusion of underrepresented and marginalized voices (in many languages of the region), not simply colonial and missionary perspectives.

Tangible benefits of SAOA's investments:

- As of June 2020, there are 20,000 items comprising 615,000 pages of historical content.
- The vast research material spans 13 languages from across the region.
- Continually expanding thematic collections include primary and secondary sources related to social and economic history, literature, women and gender, and caste and social structure. Content from underrepresented groups is also included in SAOA. Resource types include census reports, government documents, historic newspapers and periodicals, and more.
- SAOA's freely available collections are presented on JSTOR's open-access, 21st-century discovery and access platform.
- Resource discovery in SAOA is further enriched with integrated links to selected open-access materials hosted by other partners.
- Content contributors are acknowledged in the respective catalog records.
- The master and access files will be preserved over the long term in a digital dark archive that meets industry standards, ensuring access to these materials for years to come.
- Over a 5 year period, \$25,000 of individual member investments plus in-kind investments (staff time and digital content) resulted in over \$125,000 of digitization services, plus the additional discovery and description of the content.

Since its public launch in October 2019, SAOA has made an impact on South Asian studies.

- From October 2019 to June 2020 there were over 67,000 item requests and nearly 9,000 uses of the citation tool.
- Researchers from 150 countries have accessed SAOA, in locations such as Delhi, New York, London, Kolkata, Karachi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Los Angeles, Chicago, Colombo, Toronto, Sydney, Lahore, Pune, Oxford, Budapest, Berlin, and Rome.
- SAOA is accessed directly as well as via library research guides (LibGuides), JSTOR, library websites and catalog records, Facebook and other social media. Each item in SAOA is also discoverable through general Google searching.
- Over 25 institutions have linked to SAOA in their LibGuides and A-Z database lists
- SAOA has been highlighted in press releases, blogs, and social media posts. The increased publicity continues to raise SAOA's visibility to researchers worldwide.