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NOTIFICATION

No.H.12018/221/2003-LJD, the 18th.July, 2011. The following Act of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly which received the assent of the Governor of Mizoram is hereby published for general information.

The Mizoram Public Records Act, 2011 (Act No. 15 of 2011)

{Received the assent of the Governor of Mizoram on the 13th July, 2011}

THE MIZORAM PUBLIC RECORDS ACT NO. 15 OF 2011

AN ACT

to regulate the management, administration and preservation of public records of the Government of Mizoram, Public Sector Undertakings, Statutory Bodies and Corporations and Committees constituted by the Government of Mizoram and matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

It is enacted by the legislative Assembly of the State of Mizoram in the Sixty-second Year of the Republic of India as follows :

Short title and commencement-

- (1) This Act may be called the Mizoram Public Records Act, 2011.
- (2) It shall come into force on such date as the Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

Definitions-

- In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,-
- a) 'Board' means the Archival Advisory Board constituted under this Act;
 - b) 'Director' means Director of Art & Culture Department, Government of Mizoram, and includes any officer authorised by the Government to perform the duties of the Director;
 - c) 'Government' means the Government of Mizoram,
 - d) 'Head of the Archives' means Archivist, Mizoram State Archives or any other officer authorised to perform the duty of the Archivist;

- e) “Official Gazette” means Mizoram Gazette.
- f) ‘prescribed’ means prescribed by rules made under this Act;
- g) ‘public records’ includes-
 - i) any document, manuscript and file;
 - ii) any microfilm, microfiche and facsimile copy of a document;
 - iii) any reproduction of image or images embodied in such microfilm (whether enlarged or not); and
 - iv) any other material produced by computer or by any other device, of any records creating agency.
- h) ‘records creating agency’ includes-
 - i) in relation to State Government-Any Administrative Department, Directorate, or office under the State Government.
 - ii) in relation to any statutory body or corporation wholly or substantially controlled or financed by the Government, or Commission or any Committee Constituted by the State Government or the offices of the said body, Corporation, Commission or Committee;
 - i) ‘records officer’ means the officer nominated by the records creating agency,’

Power of the State Government to co-ordinate, regulate and supervise operations connected with administration, management, etc. of public records.

- 3. (1) The Government shall have the power to coordinate, regulate and supervise the operations connected with the administration, management, preservation, selection, disposal and retirement of public records under this Act.
- (2) The Government in relation to the public records of the records creating agencies specified in sub-clauses (i) & (ii) of clause (h) of section 2 may, by order, authorise the Director or the Head of the Archives, 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, preservation 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 the techniques for improvement of the records management system;
 - (g) ensuring the maintenance, arrangement and security of public records in the Archives and in the offices of the records creating agency;
 - (h) promoting utilisation of available space and maintenance of equipments for preserving public records;

- (i) tendering advice to records creating agencies on the compilation, classification and disposal of records and application of standards, procedures and techniques of records management;
- (j) survey and inspection of public records;
- (k) organising training programmes in various disciplines of Archives administration and records management;
- (l) accepting records from any private source;
- (m) regulating access to public records;
- (n) receiving records from defunct bodies and making arrangement for securing public records in the event of national emergency;
- (o) receiving reports on records management and disposal practices from the records officer;
- (p) providing authenticated copies of, or extracts from public records;
- (q) destroying or disposal of public records;
- (r) obtaining on lease or purchasing or accepting as gift any document of historical or national importance.

Prohibition against taking of Public Records out of Mizoram

4. No person shall take or cause to be taken out of Mizoram any public records without the prior approval of the Government.

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

Records Officer

5. (1) Every records creating agency shall nominate one of its officers as records officer to discharge the functions under this Act.
 (2) Every records creating agency may set up such number of record rooms in such places as it deems fit and shall place each record room under the charge of a records officer.

Responsibilities of records officer

6. (1) The records officer shall be responsible for :-
- (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;
 - (c) appraisal of public records which are more than twenty five years old in consultation with the Head of Archives/Mizoram State Archives with a view to retaining public records of permanent value;
 - (d) destruction of public records in such manner and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed under sub-section (1) of section 8;
 - (e) compilation of a schedule of retention for public records in consultation with the Mizoram State Archives;
 - (f) periodical review for downgrading of classified public records in such manner as may be prescribed;

- (g) adoption of such standards, procedures and techniques as may be recommended from time to time by the Mizoram State Archives/National Archives of India for improvement of record management system and maintenance of security of public records;
 - (h) compilation of annual indices of public records;
 - (i) compilation of organisational history and annual supplement thereto;
 - (j) assisting Mizoram State Archives for public records management;
 - (k) submission of annual report to the Head of Archives in such manner as may be prescribed;
 - (l) transferring of records of any defunct body to the Head of Archives for preservation.
- (2) The records officer shall act under the direction of the Head of Archives while discharging the responsibilities specified in sub-section (1).
- Records Officer to take appropriate action in the event of unauthorised removal, destruction, etc. of public records in his custody**
7. (1) The records officer shall, in the event of any unauthorised removal, destruction, defacement or alteration of any public records under his charge, forthwith take appropriate action for the recovery or restoration of such public records.
- (2) The records officer shall submit a report in writing to the Head of Archives without any delay on any information about any unauthorised removal, destruction, defacement or alteration of any public records under his charge and about the action initiated by him and shall take action as he may deem necessary subject to the directions, if any given by the Head of Archives.
- (3) The records officer may seek assistance from any Government officer or any other person for the purpose of recovery or restoration of public records and such officer or person shall render all assistance to the records officer.
- Destruction or disposal of public records.**
8. (1) Save as otherwise provided in any law for the time being in force, no public record shall be destroyed or otherwise disposed of except in such manner and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed.
- (2) No record created before the year 1892 shall be destroyed, except where in the opinion of the Head of Archives, it is so defaced or is in such deteriorating condition that it cannot be put to any Archival use.

- Penalty for Contraventions.**
9. Whoever contravenes any of the provisions of section 4 or section 8 shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years or with fine, which may extend to ten thousand rupees or with both.
- Public records bearing security classification.**
10. No public records bearing security classification shall be transferred to the Archives of Mizoram.
- Receipt of records from private sources.**
11. (1) Mizoram State Archives may accept any record of historical or national importance from any private source by way of gift, purchase or otherwise.
- (2) Mizoram State Archives may, in such manner and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed, make any record referred to in sub-section (1) available to any bonafide research scholar.
- Access to public records.**
12. (1) All unclassified public records which are more than thirty years old and are transferred to the Archives may be subject to such exceptions and restrictions as may be prescribed made available to any bonafide research scholar.
- Explanation-For the purposes of this sub-section, the period of thirty years shall be reckoned from the year of the opening of the public record.
- (2) Any records creating agency may grant to any person access to any public records in its custody in such manner and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed.
- Archival Advisory Board.**
13. (1) The Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, constitute an Archival Advisory Board for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) The Board shall consist of the following members, namely :-
- (a) Secretary to the Government of Mizoram - dealing with Art & Culture - Chairman, Ex-Officio.
 - (b) Director of Art & Culture Department, Government of Mizoram - Member, Ex-officio.
 - (c) Three persons to be nominated by the Government for a period not exceeding three years from Colleges of Mizoram, Department of History from any recognised University - Members.
 - (d) One Deputy Director of Art & Culture Department, Government of Mizoram - Member.
 - (e) Head of Archives - Member Secretary, Ex-Officio.
 - (f) One Officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary to the Govt. of Mizoram each from the Home Department DP&AR, Finance Department and Law & Judicial Department - Member, Ex-Officio.

- (3) The members nominated under clause (c) of sub-section 2 shall be paid sitting allowances as prescribed by the Govt. from time to time.
- Functions of the Board**
14. The Board shall perform the following functions, namely :-
- (a) advice the Government on matters concerning administration, management, conservation and use of public records.
 - (b) give directions for acquisition of records from private custody ;
 - (c) deal with such other matters as may be prescribed.
- Protection of action taken in good faith.**
15. No suit, prosecution or other legal proceedings shall lie against any person in respect of anything which is done in good faith or intended to be done in pursuance of this Act or the rules made thereunder.
- Power to make rules**
16. (1) The Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules to carry out the provisions of this Act.
- (2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the forgoing power, such rules may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely :-
- (a) the period after which public records of permanent nature may be accepted under clause (b) of sub-section 2 of section 3.
 - (b) the manner in which and the conditions subject to which public records can be destroyed under clause (d) of sub-section (1) of section 6;
 - (c) the manner in which periodical review of classified public records for downgrading shall be undertaken under clause (f) of sub-section (1) of section 6;
 - (d) the manner in which the records officer will report to the Head of Archives under clause (k) of sub-section (1) of section 6;
 - (e) the manner in which and the conditions subject to which public records may be destroyed or disposed of under sub-section (1) of section 8;
 - (f) the manner in which and the conditions subject to which records of historical or national importance may be, made available to research scholar under sub-section (2) of section 11;
 - (g) exceptions and restrictions subject to which public records may be made available to research scholar under sub-section (1) of section 12;
 - (h) the manner in which and the conditions subject to which any records creating agency may grant to any person access to public records in its custody under sub-section (2) of section 12;

- (i) the matters with respect to which the Board may perform its functions under clause (a, b, c) of section 14;
 - (j) any other matter which is required to be 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 Assembly while it is in Session for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following or the successive session aforesaid, Assembly agree in making any modification in the rule or Assembly agree 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 that rule.

Sd/-
Secretary,
Law & Judicial Department,
Govt. of Mizoram.