

TYOSPHERE - KOLKATA

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Kolkata, India

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The so called *Pavement Typists* in front of the High Court in Kolkata, India, have often spent their entire working day on the pavements in front of the courthouse. An era is coming to an end here. Most of the men are already of retirement age, and their typewriter - often an American *Remington* - has been their work tool for thirty to forty years.

Lived history and many written stories are associated with this faithful and reliable companion, which has certainly aged just as much as the typists' low work tables, on which the machine, which is brought daily from a nearby depot, finds its place.

It is a small income that can be earned there under precarious working conditions in the open air, in all weathers, in monsoon rain as well as at 40 degrees in the shade. For many, this income is the sole financial support for their families, making the long daily commutes worthwhile.

Their clients are primarily lawyers who frequent the High Court, relying on the typists to convert their handwritten notes into typed documents in English. These lawyers often have established long-standing relationships with the same typists, some spanning decades.

Before the digital age rendered many analogue skills obsolete, as many as sixty typists could be found in front of the Kolkata High Court. Today, on a good day, only about twenty remain.

The *Tables* series from the *Typosphere* project captures photographs of these work tables, typewriters, and various personal items belonging to the typists. For the project, the tables and machines were temporarily moved to a rented room near the High Court for photography.

Also at the *Lal Bazaar* in Kolkata, the men and a few women work primarily for the local police and do various typing jobs for authorities and associations. The sidewalk is so narrow that the large and heavy Indian *Godrej* typewriter, often several decades old, which is mainly used here, is simply placed on a small stool, with a board clamped underneath serving as an additional storage space for papers.

The portraits of the *Pavement Typists* from *Lal Bazaar* were taken outdoors with a mobile studio in a nearby quiet side street.