



MANUSCRIPT PRESERVATION IN ASUTOSH MUSEUM OF INDIAN ART MUSEUMS LIBRARIES, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY, WEST BENGAL (INDIA)

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ABSTRACT: Discuss the matter is preservation of manuscript in Asutosh Museum of Indian Art Museums Libraries, Calcutta University, West Bengal (India). Discuss definition the manuscript preservation. The manuscript preservation is very important in museums, college and university libraries. There is a mostly detail discussion on the various types of manuscripts available. The preservation of manuscripts has been discussed in details taking into consideration modern techniques and environmental factors of preservation. An analysis of the reputed museums libraries of West Bengal gives an idea the present scenario of manuscript preservation in renowned Asutosh museum of Indian Art Museums Libraries , Calcutta University, Museum Libraries of West Bengal. Know the concept of manuscript preservation . Plan the steps required of various manuscript preservation in the library . Discuss the inherent weakness of the materials . Explain the need for suitable . Comprehensive manuscript preservation programmed . Discuss their care , repair and preservation aspect . There is mainly discussed manuscript preservation of Asutosh Museum of Indian Art Museums libraries.]

The heritage of manuscript is preserved in proper method so that it can be utilized for service to the needful users and that results the increasing dignity of our society. So from the point of my realization I believe that the manuscript preservation should be maintained in such a way that it serves (i) to maximum use of the available museum library material to perform the museum library task with economic and efficiently, (ii) To imply to formulation of policies that will serve, (iii) To ensure effective control of the ancient library material and (v) To make an archive the rare material of the museum library.

Preservation of a thing means to save it or protect it from damage , loss , destruction or decay . One common measure is to treat the thing with some preservative . This term is popular among museum libraries and is generally used in connection with museum library materials preservation of a books or a manuscripts.

As museum libraries and information centers are gradually moving towards the multimedia age, today the preservation of manuscripts is becoming crucial for the library and information managers. The deterioration of any media begins at the creation stage only. The life of the various museum library materials can be extended not only through proper methods of manufacturing but also by improving condition of storage and use. Most of the countries have an enormous amount of library and archival material, which needs to be persevered for the use of future generation. Paper-based material form bulk of museum library and archival collections. Most of these are subject to natural deterioration. Physical climate to which museum library collections are exposed has a profound effect on their long time survival.

In these manuscript repositories these bundles of manuscripts are kept in wooden or steel boxes of varying sizes according to the size of the manuscripts, or in almirahs or even in cardboard boxes. The manuscript is preserving in the ideal environment for long term and to be a constant temperature between 22-25 degree centigrade and Relative Humidity between 45 — 55%. This is possible only by air-conditioning. Use of Insect Repellants the most formidable enemy of palm — leaf manuscripts in tropical conditions is the so called book worm (gastrulas induce), It should be remembered that the most serious among the damages made manuscripts is caused by repeated use indifferent hands. What this also calls for importance to the manuscript. Recurring use of the manuscripts infuses the absorption of humidity from the atmosphere. The soft humidity leaves naturally invite the insects to bite into the edges of the manuscripts. Moreover the repeated use of fingers of the leaves of the manuscript cause corrosion to the edges of the manuscripts. To get rid of all sorts of damage, both the field of preservation and conservation are simultaneously explored. The process de-acidification and fumigation being over, the librarian should initiate the work of conservation and better get it done he expert professionals in the field. Specially the work of encapsulation should be done with the help of polyester film and double adhesive tape at the edges of manuscripts.

Museum libraries have independently undertaken activities to preserve their collection by providing proper housing, protection from fire and theft, museum library binding and occasional repair and restoration. A preservation treatment must be appropriate and economical. Its appropriateness is measured by its ability to capture all information of significance. Controlling the environment (temperature, relative humidity, air impurities and light levels) reduces rate of deterioration; protective enclosures mitigate the effects of a poor environment or housing arrangement and reduce wear; sensible handling and use help preserve books for many decades of continued research. Chemical **treatment**, “mass de-acidification” is used to reduce the rate of chemically caused deterioration.

Now that museum libraries we have been increasing experimenting with using mechanical devices, many kinds of chemicals, there is also a great deal of choices to be made. One need not feel diffident about one's ability to muster sufficient resources, to apply latest technologies and techniques in the preservation of books & materials.

Today conservation and preservation is no longer viewed only in terms of maintaining what we have, we also promote conservation and preservation to mean multiplication. For example, photocopying has come in a big way. Photocopy allows the original material to be preserved without being used too often, too much and therefore be exposed to the decay. Damage which using a book or particular material too often could cause. Of course, when we use photocopies we have to be careful about copyright laws.

Museum libraries use of digital scanning processes also open infinite possibilities that we are not aware of as yet. There has been consensus about the duration they can be used. But there is no doubt that from the existing CD disk, one can go on to using another disk. So, the possibilities are infinite, and the possibilities within the limitations of the museum libraries of West Bengal, or for that matter, the limitations of the National Library or other big libraries, are not small.

The same is true for the application of technologies or techniques for preserving and conserving books, manuscripts, documents. Land sure; this seminar will go along way towards relation awareness among those who run museum libraries in the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University of West Bengal, and the users of the museum library materials, problems surrounding the maintenance of library materials and the possibilities of solving them in more than one way. The options can be infinite, as a matter of fact. That itself will create a condition for better preservation of museum library materials.

The terms preservation and conservation, and to lesser extent the term restoration, have been used interchangeably in museum library literature until the last few years. Present usage allocates to preservation the more general. All encompassing meaning, while conservation and restoration are defined more specifically. Care must be taken when reading the literature, as publications before the early 1980s may not use these terms in the same sense as the current terminology does. Take, for example, the terms used by the National Conservation Advisory Council (United States) in 1983. Here conservation is the all encompassing term; it includes examination (assessment of the item), preservation (action taken to retard deterioration by control of their environment and/or treatment of their structure) and restoration (action taken to return a deteriorated artifact as nearly as is feasible to its original form with minimum further sacrifice of aesthetic and historic integrity). In countries like India which are situated in the tropical and sub-tropical regional of the globe the pathological problem of museum library materials are very acute and complicated. There museum library materials deteriorate quickly and if preventive measures are not timely and adequate. Restorative measures are of ten either difficultly applicable or cannot be applicable at all.

In most European countries, since their pathological problems of museum library materials are much less acute. Yet they have been very serious about the need for education in conservation of museum library materials, particularly after the Second World War when they have to face these formidable situation, enormous production of various kinds of documents, growth of mammoth size museum libraries, commercial production of very inferior quality of paper, and the atmospheric and environmental pollution. Their concern about the education in museum library conservation is evident in their activities. Thus in 1950 as established in London the International

institute for conservation of Historic and Artistic works, with the aim to provide a permanent organization for co-ordination and improvement of the knowledge and methods of working standards needed to protect and preserve precious materials of all kinds, It serves as an agent of supplying information on research in to all processes connected to the conservation, these processes. Mention may particularly be made of the Institute of Book Pathology, Rome, which, as its very name suggests is an academic body to deal regularly with museum library conservation. Also, cognizance of the importance of conservation of museum library materials is evidenced by the publication of several journals on the subject, such as studies in Conservation, the quarterly organ of the International Institute for Conservation, London: Restoration, a quarterly journal published by Unesco, which is of much interest to librarians and Archivists: Museum Library Conservation News, a current awareness bulletin, published by the British Museum Library. Conservation is a by-partite subject: one part is concerned with preventive measures or preservation, and the other part with curative measures or restoration. So far as museum library materials are concerned, Conservation has to deal with two categories of materials. These are; Paper based materials, such as block books, printed books and pamphlets, journals and newspaper, clippings, leaflets, posters, printed pictures, materials, such as papyrus, palm leaves, birch-barks, vellum, parchment, phonograph discs, tapes, microfilms, microfiche, computer floppies, CD Rom disc etc.

All these materials are prone to deterioration and decay, or even destruction. Many of us may have seen termite affected materials, particularly paper-based materials, getting partly or wholly destroyed. Large-scale destruction of museum library materials are caused by accidents like fire, floods, earthquakes, ravages of war. Such sudden destructions apart, library materials are constantly being affected by different kinds of deteriorating agents. These agents are normally grouped into three categories:

Physical agents, such as heat, light, moisture etc.

Biological agent, such as termites or white ants, cockroaches, rodents, mice, silver-fish, book-lice or psocids, book-worms (as many as 160 species), moths, mudwasps, bedbugs, bacteria, Fungi, micro-organisms, and of course, library users themselves, who through their misbehavior with books greatly cause them unfit for use.

Chemical agents, such as acidity, atmospheric gases, dust and pollution, etc.

Most museum libraries have acquired books, journals, manuscripts, maps etc. , over the years and their librarians did not bother about policy and option, if any, of preservation of the materials. It should have major elements of the program environmental control. Careful handling and storage, education and training, maintenance and repair techniques, can be applied to different categories of items in a museum's library collection. Reliable assessment of brittleness of paper, the condition of the binding and nature of mutilation and other forms of vandalism, evidence of fungal growth and damage by insects, should be done at regular intervals it can be done by covering representative sample of the intire museum's library materials. Thus evolve effective management practice to improve the quality of preservation of our museum library materials .

Environment Control – Air quality, Building, Light, Temperature, Housekeeping are mostly important manuscript of preservation in museum libraries. Also modern techniques is very important libraries that since Humidity and Moisture, Water, Smoke, Dust and Dirt, Atmospheric pollution etc. Insects damage the museum library materials. That name of insects are – Cockroaches, Silverfish, Termites, Book lice or Solids, Book Worms, Moths, Mudwasps and Bed bugs, Rodents, Mice etc. Protection from insects by Biological pests, mainly moulds, insects and rodents. Library collection are a veritable warehouse of foodstuffs for these pests, and have the added advantage of offering benevolent surroundings that are not subject to extremes of climate. The most effective control measures are temperature and humidity regulation and regular cleaning. Important procedures for controlling insect pests are those relating to building maintenance. Chemical controls such as fumigation, and the application of pesticides and fungicides, usually offer only temporary relief of the problems they are intended to control for example chemical spray is applied. Palm leaves preservation – is most important library. Lamination is process most important in our library. That is matter most fully valuable manuscript preservation of museum libraries.

Types of manuscript – Stone and Metal, Clay Tablets, Papyrus, Animal skin, Palm leaf Manuscript Birch – bark, Paper etc.

It is reiterated that cleanliness is the ethics of preservation . All endeavor of the conservators in the domain of preservation of collections will be like building castles in the air if the norms of cleanliness like clean atmosphere ,clean surroundings , regular house cleaning etc. are not maintained . Finally I would like to mention in this connection that the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art museum library is in possession of enormous collections of old rare books which are regarded as raw source materials in the domain of historical research and throw a flood of light upon the past . So the concerned personnel should leave no stone unturned to protect those materials and all of us should stand by them in fructification of their endeavor.

Preservation of museum library materials has until recent years suffered from a bad press. It was long felt to be the concern only of rare books librarians or manuscript librarians in large academic and research museum libraries. No possible relevance was perceived by most librarian in public or special museum libraries, or institutions. Over the last decade there has been a gradual recognition: that the issues recognized and addressed in a handful of research museum libraries have a much wider significance. The real issue is now stated more generally than merely in terms of **unique**, very expensive and otherwise demonstrably valuable items applicable to all libraries **and** all museum library materials: it is now about making our museum libraries useful and is concerned with preserving materials for as long as they are wanted.

Manuscript collection in Asutosh Museum of Indian Art

Asutosh Museum of Indian Art the collection of manuscript of some 8000 and 2200 rare books on various topics. These manuscripts include various languages like Bengali, English, Sanskrit, Assamian, Tibetan, Islamic, Urdu. Most are more than 200 years old, the oldest dating back to the 18th century. And these rare books collection has very old editions and some oriental and ideological texts. Now-a-days every year a huge quantity of books and other museum library

materials are purchased. So the stock of books and other materials is ever increasing. Many books are used frequently, many books are used occasionally, many books are used rarely built no book is weeded out. This Asutosh Museum library is primarily a collection of manuscript and rare books. In the museum library these materials are kept and preserved from its establishment. Conservation of museum library materials is an important element of collection development in a museum library as much as acquisition, classification and cataloguing. This museum library technical processing like classification of particular in manuscript maintaining by own scheme. A document saved is a document earned — should be the policy of this museum library. If once a document is damaged or decayed it is lost forever, scientific investigations have identified the factors responsible for damage and deterioration of museum library materials for damage and deterioration of museum library materials and a good number of process and techniques for preservation and restoration of books, manuscript and archival materials have been developed. The nature and type of manuscripts housed in Asutosh Museum of Indian Art museum library are as follows:

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|--|--------------|
| Plam leaf mss. | 167 |
| Brich bark mss. | 97 |
| Paper mss.(both hand made& machine made) | 8,045 |
| Other materials | 15 |
| Total no. of Manuscripts: | 8,324 |

All these manuscripts are written in various languages and scripts; of which a detailed list is given below:

| Language | Script | No. of manuscripts |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Sanskrit | DevNagari | 4357 |
| Tibetan | Tibetan | 269 |
| Bengali | Bengali | 2854 |
| Assarmian | Assamian | 241 |

| | | |
|---------|---------|-----|
| English | English | 395 |
| Islamic | Islamic | 125 |
| Urdu | Urdu | 83 |

Librarians and staff of this museum library should keep in view that knowledge of conservation methods and preservation of museum library materials is an important aspect of stock maintenance and management.

MANAGEMENT SOME PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Considering the above discussion the following proposal may be drawn for conservation of Asutosh Museum of Indian Art museum library materials properly of Asutosh Museum of Indian Art museum library. To implement a successful conservation programme, the staff and the librarians must know and /do a) Know the environment conditions and special storage methods most suited to each form of documents and examine the environment in the museum library and the condition of the collection. They must know\ the methods of cleaning, maintenance and handling of each item and prepare disaster plan for combating enemies of documents (i.e. books and non-book materials) of the museumLibrary. c) They must ascertain what professional conservation advice and expertise are available in/to the museum library. And the time when an item needs treatment beyond the facilities available in the museum library or needs to be withdrawn from the circulation. d) It is very important at the time or receipt or even before to select materials keeping in view of its usability and useful life, to examine conditions of all materials and useful life, to examine conditions of all materials acquired, to provide proper storage and housing in accordance with its conservation needs as well as its use.

PRESENT SCENARIO

Now the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art museum library Preserve the museum library material by maintaining various method for long time usable condition and heritage of manuscript are conservation purpose the museum library controlling the various atmospheric conditions like - a) control of dust, dirt and smoke to save the museum library collection; from these damaging factor, regular and proper dusting and cleaning essential. In this museum Library, it can be done by using dry cloth, duster and vacuum cleaner (called dry cleaning method) and soap mixture, solvents like hydrogen peroxide etc. (called wet cleaning method).b) Control of light The effect

of light can be controlled by taking the following precautions — i) Reduce the intensity of light falling upon the object. ii) Expose the objects to the light only for a short period of time, iii) Filter out photo chemically active radiations like UV rays from light. There is however, little scope of adopting such measures in Asutosh Museum of Indian Art of West Bengal. c) Control of heat and humidity Two main components of weather are heat and humidity, These can be controlled by proper air-conditioning system, which is not possible in our museum library. Room temperature can be controlled to certain extent by making proper ventilation and using electrical fans. In very hot season, it should be ensured that hot air does not enter the museum library. The ideal temperature to be maintained within the museum library is 22 degree to 23 degree centigrade.

One of the most important problems of these museum libraries throughout the year is the problem of excessive dust, dirt and proper ventilation. These give rise to the problem like fungi growth. This problem is almost absent in air-conditioned museum libraries. Now the preservation section are installed air-condition machine for controlling these. For any repairing work, there should be certain prerequisites which are mentioned here — 1) The original quality of the paper document or the manuscript nature of the written materials and painting, should be as in original. 2) The repair must be aesthetically pleasing. 3) The repaired portion should be easily visible. 4) The writing or the painting should be damaged in any manner. 5) All chemicals and materials employed for restoration work should be durable and permanent, chemically as well as physically. 6) The economics of the process should also be worked out so that it does not become unduly costly. In reality, there are no such repairing rules in Asutosh Museum of Indian Art museum libraries.

Generally museums libraries are repositories of most of this priceless collection including documentary heritage of mankind. They serve as an index on civilization and any favorable environment they under go chemical, physical and biological changes which lead to their decay and sometime total destruction too. So preservation serves usefully policy of scientific conservation. It is obvious that every material object starts, decaying the moment its created. In this article it is intended to give utility of preventive/curative conservation treatment of documentary heritage preserved in museums libraries. Palm leaf and birch bark have been the writing materials most commonly employed in India and other countries for centuries before the advent of paper. All works of art/documental heritage are altered by humidity and temperature – the two most important components of the climate of a place which often pose a great challenge for the survival of documentary heritage. So the study of region wise climatic condition (humidity and temperature) is considered essential.

I carried out a survey on Manuscript Preservation in **museum libraries of** West Bengal namely - Asutosh Museum of Indian Art. Asutosh Museum of Indian Art which was established in 1893 and preserves about 8,000 manuscripts in Bengali, Sanskrit, Oriya, Hindi and other languages from 10th to 16th Century.

A comparative study shows that Asutosh Museum of Indian Art Museum Library has a larger collection of manuscripts and some of the oldest manuscripts of our country. There is a separate manuscript section of the oldest manuscripts of our country. There is a separate manuscript section with A.C. facility. The museum library also adopts a number of techniques for preservation of manuscripts.

These techniques include regular dusting by vacuum cleaners, disinfection of the stock area using 'Pip' insecticide, placing of naphthalene bricks on the shelf of books/manuscripts, fumigation of insecticide (book worm) volume, de-acidification and fragile sheets by aqueous and nonaqueous method, lamination of de-acidified sheets, binding of laminated sheets after section stitching. Loose sheet i.e., individual sheets are kept in bundle by wrapping red shalu (red cloth free from starch). Thus the museum library gives much importance to the preservation of old manuscripts. However, Asutosh Museum of Indian Art museum libraries has A.C. facility and preserves its manuscripts by fumigation.

Asutosh Museum of Indian Art museum libraries receives special grant from National Archives, Govt. of India. However, the subject of preservation is not satisfactory in this museum libraries and they need to improve upon it.

It can be said that regular work on preservation of manuscripts is done only in museum library with much care. So the museum library receives annual grant for the purpose. It has also received Vijyananidhi Award and also receives special grant from National Mission for Manuscripts, Govt. of India.

A museum library building, properly designed with reference to its function and with account taken of the potential damage to books and manuscripts by insects and fungi, is the best possible protection that exists. In a humid climate there needs to be free circulation of air among manuscript stacks and as many through draughts as possible. In a very hot dry climate, in order to prevent desiccation by high temperatures and hot winds, thick walls may be necessary, be made by fans. Where extreme heat and dryness or extreme humidity for much of the year are experienced the only satisfactory solution to the manuscript preservation problem is air-conditioning. At all times scrupulous cleanliness of manuscripts, shelves and floor, and as much movement of manuscripts as is possible are of utmost importance. In preserving the manuscripts stock. Selection is the first preservation decision of the many which will be made in relation to an item in a collection. A collection development policy should have been established for the collection. Using this to provide a context, selection should then take into account the physical condition of the item and the permanence of the format. The physical condition is especially relevant for material received as a gift or on exchange and for out of print items, for which the preservation implications of selecting a deteriorated item may be the expenditure of a considerable amount of money on repairs. Binding or providing a protective enclosure to bring possible. In some cases there may be a choice of format for example paperback or case binding paper or microfilm, and here the collection development policy should give guidance on the preferred choice with respect to its permanence. Selectors and acquisitions staff has a together role to play, by alerting preservation staff to items received which have

special with several loose maps which will need special attention in binding, or an item whose binding is especially fragile and which will require a protective enclosure before it can be played on the shelves.

Microfilming or other reformatting technologies are more likely to be used in collections where long-term preservation is an important objective. There will also be a higher level of artifact conservation carried out than in museum libraries in the model three categories. Research into preservation and the development of new techniques may also be carried out. Examples of this are the application of optical technology for information preservation by the museum Library of Congress. Mass de-acidification processes will be more widely available and more widely used, but mass paper strengthening methods will not be wholly successful. More permanent paper will be manufactured and used in book production, to the benefit of museum libraries. All major museum libraries will have a disaster preparedness plan. There will be increased emphasis on education for preservation in museum library Preservation administrators will be more likely to be librarians with preservation training than conservators, as a detailed knowledge of museum libraries and their administration will be more importantly to effective preservation programs than will mastery of manual skills contracting out of preservation services will probably increase.

It is also essential to offer continuing education opportunities in the preservation of museum library materials, for there will be those whose qualification was obtained before preservation was considered necessary knowledge for inclusion in museum library education programs, and who have since realized that they need to know something about it. There will also be those who are seeking to update or build on knowledge about preservation already obtained, there are many ways in which continuing education in preservation can be offered. One is by running short courses. Other opportunities for continuing education will be found in local seminars and workshops. There are also possibilities in reading the considerable body of literature with of course. A critical eye to evaluate its worth in joining professional organizations concerned with conservation or subscribing to their publications, and by studying bookbinding.

Research into preservation has a place, and indeed is often noted as another essential, ingredient in the mix of solutions to the preservation problem. There is a need for new solutions, both technical and administrative, while the development of technical solutions is usually not within the purview of librarians, but is rather in the hands of scientifically trained conservators and research scientists, there is a place for research by those being educated and by the educators themselves. The next few years should see more research published as the place of preservation in museum library becomes more established and more research is undertaken by students enrolled for higher degrees.

A good number of manuscripts, which are so ignorantly and negligently kept by individuals are likely to be eaten up by white ants, spoiled by exposure to severity of weather, hence they rightly deserve every attention. Besides private appeals by individuals and museum libraries it is the duty of the Government to appeal to all people to deliver all such hand-written materials to the National Archives or State Archives or some manuscript museum library created by the government of India. To-day Manuscript Preservation is mostly importance of museums libraries . Museums libraries have independently under taken activities to preserve their various collection providing proper housing , Protection from fire and theft , museums library binding and occasional repair and restoration . That is all various matters preservation Manuscript museums libraries of society . Treatment of damaged museums library materials is mostfully importance in our country preservation of Manuscript . So, Manuscript Preservation in Asutosh Museum of Indian Art Museums

libraries , Calcutta University ,West Bengal (India) is preservation mostfully importance in our country museums libraries .

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