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## MANUSCRIPT PRESERVATION IN THE SANSKRIT COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, WEST BENGAL (INDIA).

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**ABSTRACT:** The Manuscript preservation is very importance in College, University and Museums libraries. Discuss the matter is preservation of manuscript in The Sanskrit college and University libraries, West Bengal (India). Discuss what is manuscript preservation. Here is a detail discussion on the various types of manuscripts available. The preservation of manuscripts has been discussed in details taking into consideration environmental factors and modern techniques of preservation. An analysis of the reputed college and University libraries of West Bengal gives an idea the present scenario of manuscript preservation in renowned The Sanskrit College and University libraries of West Bengal. Here is mainly discussed Manuscript Preservation of The Sanskrit College and University libraries.]

As 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 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 library and archival collections. Most of these are subject to natural deterioration. Physical climate to which library collections are exposed has a profound effect on their long time survival.

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 humid 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 decidification 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.

Traditionally, libraries have independently undertaken activities to preserve their collection by providing proper housing, protection from fire and theft, 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 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.

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 colleges and university 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 libraries in the colleges of west Bengal, and the users of the 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 library materials.

The terms preservation and conservation, and to lesser extent the term restoration, have been used interchangeably in 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 1980 as 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 minimal further sacrifice of aesthetic and historic integrity)

In countries like India which is situated in the tropical and sub-tropical regional of the globe the pathological problem of library materials are very acute and complicated. Here library materials deteriorate quickly and if preventive measures are not timely and adequate restorative measures are either difficult to apply or cannot be applied at all.

In most European countries, since the pathological problems of library materials are much less acute. Yet they have been very serious about the need for education in conservation of library materials, particularly after the Second World War when they have had to face these formidable situation, enormous production of various kinds of documents, growth of mammoth size libraries, commercial production of very inferior quality of paper, and the atmospheric and environmental pollution. Their concern about the education in 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 singularly with library conservation. Also, the importance of conservation of 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; Library Conservation News, a current awareness bulletin, published by the British 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 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 discs 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 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, mud wasps, 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.

Manuscript, as it implies, means anything written by hand. In a broader sense, manuscript means early stage of printing documents. These old documents are an essential **part** of the cultural and literary heritage of a nation. They not only document the historical, **cultural** and socio-economic development of

country, providing the basis of cultural identity. **but** are also a basic source of evidence of progress of a nation. This valuable treasure of the society deserves proper maintenance and earnest attention. Types of manuscript – Stone and Metal, Clay Tablets, Papyrus, Animal skin, Palm leaf Manuscript Birch – bark, Paper etc.

Over a century, Sanskrit college has built up an invaluable collection of some 22000 manuscript anof 3,000 rare books on various topics. These manuscripts include Hindu and **Bud** dhist religious texts, Sanskrit literary texts and many others of its nature in Bengali. Tamil, **Oriya**. Tibetan and in other oriental languages. Most are more than 200 years old, the oldest eating back to the 15 century. Rare books include very old editions of some oriental and ideological texts, Sanskrit and Vedic literatures and bound journals of Royal Asiatic Society, London: journal of the American Oriental Society; Journal of Oriental Research; Journal of the 13handarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune; Hibbert Journal; Journal of Asiatic Society. Kolkata and many others its kind. Besides records of government correspondence between 1854 and 1910 are also a treasure of this college. The attendance register of Panditlswar Chandra Vidyasagar, when he was a student of this college, and official correspondence of Vidyasagar, when he was the Principal of this college, are also valuable assets of this college. All these documents are invaluable sources of information to research scholars. The nature and type of manuscripts housed in The Sanskrit College and University Library are as follows

Plarn leaf mss.	99
Brich bark mss.	106
Paper mss.(both handmade & machine made)	21,912
Other materials	10
<b>Total no. of Manuscripts:</b>	<b>22,127</b>

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

Language	Script	No. of manuscripts
Sanskrit	Bengali	20905

Sanskrit	DevNagari	412
Oriya	Oriya	7
Tibetan	Tibetan	2
Bengali	Bengali	800
<b>Tami</b>	Tamil	1

The earliest manuscript in the collection is dated 1371 sake (1450 A.D.). It is worth mentioning that one coloured and illustrated manuscript (on Tantra) named "Chakrabali" is also in the collection. This detailed list of various types of manuscripts on various subjects reveal its supremacy.

Alamkara	151
Chhanda	99
DesavahiVivritinirghanta	57
Jaina	224
Joytisha	734
Kama Sastra	8
Kavya	1136
Kosa	287

Mimamsa	100
Nataka	197
Niti	21
Nyaya	3347
PatanjaliDarsana	43
Purana	1432
Sahitya	138
SamkhysDarsana	24
Sangeeta	8
Srnriti	3934
Stava-Kavacarnala	268
Tantra	1837
Vaidyaka	297
Vaishnava	473
Veda	764
Vedanta	423
Vyakarna	1425

Other	4638
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(Data collected from The Sanskrit College and University record)

In Sanskrit College and University, most of the manuscripts are written on early materials like palm leaf, birch-bark, handmade paper. Like physical and chemical damage, damage due to wrong storage system, damage by air-decay due to faulty handling and use, decay due to climatic condition etc. The old materials become yellowish and brittle in course of time for such reasons.

## MANAGEMENT OF MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

Management of manuscript collection is a strenuous and time consuming job. This includes several stages like -

1. Identification of manuscript
2. Taking notes on each manuscript
3. Descriptive cataloguing of manuscript
4. Shelving of manuscript
5. Again, shelving scheme may be any one: of the following methods —by chronology, by subject matter, by language in which manuscripts are written.

Again, sub-grouping may be done alphabetically by title of the manuscript. The next steps allocating a shelf number to each manuscript and arranging; them in the shelves by that number. This type of arrangement is generally preferred because of its simplicity and easy administration.

In our college and University, manuscripts are classified by the subject. Number is allocated against each manuscript. Main cards along; with shelf- list cards are prepared and cards are filed in the card cabinet. Separate registers under each subject category are also maintained.

## SUGGESTED REMEDIAL MEASURES

Preservation of manuscripts against decay is essential for procuring valuable documents of the nation for future generation. Some steps are usually taken to prevent deterioration of manuscripts. These are of two categories — Preventive measure and — curative measure.

Preventive measures are techniques or aids which can help in arresting the fast rate of decay and damage of such documents caused by the attack of its various enemies. On the other hand, curative measures are the activities :which are applied to protect the documents against the physical and chemical hazards and other intrinsic dangers like flood, fire, earthquake etc. holding a special planning right from no including planning of a functional building in a modern scientific way to arrest the growth of insects and micro-organisms; to create and maintain proper atmosphere and environment which is in favour of conservation policy.

## SOME PREVENTIVE MEASURES

The essential elements of preventive measures usually taken are

- i) Dusting and cleaning.
- ii) Scientific storage and shelving of materials.
- iii) Control of atmosphere and environment.
- iv) Proper lighting and air circulation.
- v) Preventive care against living organisms.
- vi) Use of micrography, xerox and optical disk.
- vii) Air—conditioning of stack area.

## CURATIVE MEASURES

Curative measures comprise following methods of action  
 De-acidification of manuscripts  
 Repairing and restoration of manuscripts  
 Lamination. Encapsulation.

## PRESENT SCENARIO

The treasure of manuscripts in The Sanskrit College and University Library is by no means negligible both quantitatively and qualitative, in comparison with any other single unit of this nature in our country. But these are dying a slow death for lack of funds. Manuscripts are kept on open steel racks, wrapped in red cloth (Salu) as it protects against the attack of insects. Dusting is done, and fumigation by thymol is sometimes done as well. Naphthalene balls are used to prevent insect attack. But these are mere routine work and are not sufficient to prevent decay. Major preservation work has not yet taken due to a lack of fund and expertise. There is neither any separate allotment for preservation in the regular government grant, nor any special college land for this purpose. It is glad to mention that recently the National Archives. New Delhi has released a major grant with a matching 25% aid from the State government against a proposal requesting special grant from the college and University authority for preservation of manuscripts and rare books.

The Sanskrit college and University must have a separate conservation unit. So far as technical hands are concerned, there were no technically trained personnel. Recently, two library assistants of this college and University have taken training from State Archives in some of the areas of preservation. It will obviously be effective for administration. There is also a dearth of competent manuscripts. Though this college possesses a binding unit with necessary equipment; the posts of two binders have been lying vacant for a long time. Binding work is done maintained and on the spot control is possible. Descriptive catalogue for identification and location of manuscripts are an essential tool for outside readers and research scholars. Three volumes of this catalogue have been published so far. Publication of the descriptive catalogue has been stopped due to lack of fund and competent descriptive cataloguer. Again, the posts of calligrapher and manuscript collector are also vacant for years. For these reasons, neither can old manuscripts be maintained properly, nor new manuscripts acquired in the library.

Again, the library has only one fumigation chamber, which is insufficient according to its stock. Two more fumigation chambers are needed for the purpose. More fire extinguishers are also needed.

Manuscripts are in great demand among research scholars of the country and abroad. Many queries demanding copies of some portion of a particular manuscript or rare book are still received by the library almost every day. Separate reprography unit is of utmost necessity to preserve and maintain flow of service to the users in need. For a big collection of old documents like The Sanskrit College and University, the need for a separate recurring grant for preservation purpose is urgently solicited.

Further, I wish to mention that as preservation as a continuous process, a conservation policy should be adopted for proper guidelines. To overcome the barriers in preservation. Maintenance and administration of

such a huge collection, effective steps must be taken and proper effort must be put in by the library, college and University staff also.

Environment Control – Air quality, Building, Light, Temperature, Housekeeping are mostly important manuscript of preservation in libraries. Also modern techniques is very important libraries that since Humidity and Moisture, Water, Smoke, Bust and Dirt, Atamospheric pollution etc. Insects damage the 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 form insects by Biological pests, mainly moulds, insects and rodents. Library collection are a veritable warehouse of foodstuffs for there pests, and have the added advantage of offering benevolent surroundings that are not subject to extremes of climate. The most affective control measures are temperature and humidity regulation and regular cleaning. Important procedures for controlling insect pestes 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 two 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 mostfully valuable manuscript preservation of libraries.

I would like to say that preservation is a neglected area of library service. Library should be given due importance. In most libraries, damage of library materials caused to a great extent by sheer negligence of staff and authorities. We, the librarians are the care- takers of knowledge. Careful planning, adequate funds, professional expertise and above all, serious intention can make our mission a success.

I carried out a survey on ManuscriptPreservationin**libraries**of west Bengal namely,*TheSanskrit College and University, 1, BankimChatterjeeStreet,Kolkata-73 .The SanskritCollege and University,on theotherhand,wasestablishedin1784andpreservesapproximately22,000manuscripts* in Bengali, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telegu, and Tibetan languages over a period from 1500AD.to850AD,Again.There is a separate manuscriptaridsomeoftheoldestmanuscriptsofourcountry.

ThereisaseparatemanuscriptssectionwithA.C.facility.The**library**alsoadoptsanumberof**techniques**forpreservationofmanuscripts.These techniques include regular dusting by vacuum cleaners, disinfection of the stock areausing'Pip'insecticide,placingofnaphthalenebricksontheshelfofbooks/manuscripts,fumigation of insecticide(book worm)volume, de-acidification and fragile sheets by aqueousand nonaqueousmethod, lamination of de-acidifiedsheets, 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 library gives much importance to the preservation of old manuscripts, on the other hand The Sanskrit College and University Library doesn't have AC. facility and doesn't pay much attention to the preservation of its manuscripts or adopts any specific technique of preservation and preserves its manuscripts by fumigation.

TheSanskrit College and University Library receives special grant from the Govt. of India and receives special grant from National Archives, Govt. of India. However, the subject of preservation is not satisfactory in these libraries and they need to improve upon it.

So the 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 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 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 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 libraries. All major libraries will have a disaster preparedness plan. There will be increased emphasis on education for preservation in library schools. Preservation administrators will be more likely to be librarians with preservation training than conservators, as a detailed knowledge of 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 library materials, for there will be those whose qualification was obtained before preservation was considered necessary knowledge for inclusion in 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 library schools becomes more established and more research is undertaken by students enrolled for higher degrees.

A good number of manuscript, 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 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 library created by the government of India. The Sanskrit College and University Libraries is mainly all collection of various materials Manuscripts Preservation very important libraries .

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