

# **TOPIC**

**PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF LIBRARY  
MATERIALS: A PRATICAL HINTS**

**Speaker:**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This paper discusses the physical treatment of individual Library materials before and after damage has occurred. It is also concerned with preventing damage in order to extend the life expectancy of library collections. It further highlights on why collections deteriorate, why preservation and conservation is important, what is involved in preserving collections, who should be responsible for preserving and proffering recommendations addressing issues bordering preservation and conservation of library collection by the judicial librarian.*

*Keyword: The Judicial Librarian, Preservation and Conservation.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

My assignment is to make a presentation on “Preservation and Conservation of Library Materials”. This presentation however cannot be discussed without briefly discussing the nature of a judicial conserver, bearing in mind how the custodian of information prevents his collection from damage by accomplishing the preservation and conservation strategies and its importance, the agent of deterioration, how to preserve collection, who is responsible for collection, knowing the activities involved in preservation, the possible challenges a judicial librarian encounters before and after its collections and proffering suitable suggestions to overcome these challenges.

### **Nature of Judiciary Libraries**

Judicial Libraries are law libraries found within the court premises. They are often referred to as court libraries. They are established to serve the judiciary arm of government. They serve the judges, magistrates and practicing lawyers in the preparation of cases and justice dispensation. They include the Supreme Court Library, Customary Court, Court of Appeal Libraries including Sharia Court of Appeal, Federal and State High Court Law Libraries. National Industrial Court Libraries across the country. The basic function of the law library is to acquire and process law materials as well as to preserve and conserve such materials for future use and efficient justice administration by the courts. As the law grows and evolves to meet the needs of society, so do the sources of law and bibliography becomes even more important. Distinguishing the most useful and reliable sources to the same information from among many has several layers beyond mere cost. Some sources may be expensive or even free but may be more (or less) useful for same purposes than commercial sources that cost much more. It is in conceivable that same one with no knowledge of legal bibliography or law itself could curate a research law library for the useful benefit of judicial officers.

### **Conceptual Definition of terms**

According to Encyclopedia of communication and information (2002), Preservation involves maintaining an object or information in a format that the continued use and accessibility of information ensures provided. It includes developing criteria for selecting materials that have cultural or historical importance and assessing their preservation needs; halting the deterioration of material by providing a stable environment and proper supplies and equipment for storage; developing and providing the resources necessary to engage in an on-going preservation program committed to the continued existence of valued materials by providing a stable environment and proper implementing policies for the safe use

of materials; and providing the resources necessary to engage in an on-going preservation program committed to the continued existence of valued materials. Preservation also includes preparing for potential disasters such as floods, fires, tornadoes, and earthquakes. Conservation is to stabilize and restore an object in its original form through various treatment methods. Professional conservators are trained to apply conservation treatment methods and make recommendations for long-term preservation of materials in suitable environments.

Preservation and conservation decisions are dependent on a variety of factors, the most important of which is the value of the information or intellectual content an object provides. Other factors that are considered include the uniqueness of an object; its connections with significant events, individuals or places; its significance in relation to an institution and the mission of that institution; whether the information provided by the objects is available elsewhere; and the consequences of the loss of the item or the information it contains. The current condition of an object, including its fragility and level of deterioration or wear that occurred during its use serves as an important factor in preservation and conservation.

Various materials and formats have special preservation needs, these are a few recommendations that are common to the long-term preservation of nearly every type of item. These recommendations deal with high temperatures, high humidity or large fluctuations or changes in temperature and humidity can damage most materials. High humidity encourages the growth of mold and mildew and affects the chemical makeup of items such as film, photographic prints, and audiotape or videotape. High temperature often speeds up the deterioration of materials. Although individual items have specific requirements for temperature and humidity, generally, a stable temperature of 70° Fahrenheit and a humidity range between

30% to 50% is recommended for proper storage. Light can fade ink and paper and alter the appearance of photographs. Consideration because dust, dirt and other airborne pollutants can contribute to the deterioration of objects and artifacts.

The terms “Preservation” and “Conservation” are sometimes confusing. The American Institute for Conservation (AIC) defines preservation as: “The protection of cultural property through activities that prevent loss of information content.

**CONSERVATION:** is a broader term, concerned with reducing or preventing damage in order to extend the life expectancy of collections.

**PRESERVATION:** is a more specific term, referring to the physical treatment of individual items. Usually after some damage has occurred.

## **HOW CAN PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION BE ACCOMPLISHED**

**Collections** - that is fragile or brittle, faded or discolored, broken, usually spotted or sticky. One might ask “when did the damage occur” how could it have been prevented? Often such questions have no single concrete answer. The causes of collection deterioration are varied and sometimes complex they may include poor manufacture, improper storage, rough handling and pests.

These are risks that can be reduced or prevented by identifying, monitoring and controlling them. The person designated to take charge of preserving a collection should become informed about preservation issues and keep up with recent developments in the field. One should try to share preservation information to non-librarians in a non-threatening way so that they do not resent “preservation policies”.

One way to begin addressing preservation problems within an institution is to conduct a survey.

The purpose of a general needs assessment survey is to identify hazards to the collection overall and to help preserve materials using preventive maintenance strategies, for example, this type of survey examines building conditions storage and handling procedures, disasters, preparedness and policies that impact preservation. A formal report is then prepared which:

- Identify hazards to the collection
- Identify actions required to help ensure the long time preservation of collection
- Prioritize the needs of the collections and identifies steps necessary to achieve required preservation actions.

## **IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVATION**

Once collections deteriorate it could be due to “internal or inherent vice” caused by weakness in the chemical or physical make up of an object being introduced during its manufacture. This is the fundamental problem you face as you begin to consider the preservation of collections. For example, papers composed of wood pulp may turn yellow and brittle in just a short period of time. Some adhesive will dry out and fall, while others may discolour and turn into a sticky mass. Old writing inks may seem to burn through a paper sheet, or may have faded and become illegible. Audio tapes become sticky and unplayable. Photographic prints can fade or become yellow and brittle, and photographic films can emit an odour, or be wavy or spotted. These problems are due in part to internal vice and they affect all types of collections. For example, did you know that 33% of all research collections in academic libraries are brittle to some degree and that many items are damaged beyond the points of safe use?

There are, of course a number of other contributors to collections deteriorate which can be labeled “external agent of deteriorate” they include physical handling, theft, vandalism, fire, water, pest, pollutants, light and uncontrolled temperature and relative humidity (RH).

The Agents of deteriorate are:

**Environmental factor** – which is generally associated with temperature, relative humidity, light and pollutant because each of these elements affects the rate of deterioration.

- HEAT: Generally speaking, heat accelerate deterioration. The higher the temperature, the more rapidly your collections will deteriorate. Infact the rate of most chemical reaction is doubled with an increase of 18 degree F, in other words, “the lower the temperature, the longer the life” with reference to National Judicial Institute Library the Installation of functional air conditioners in every corner of the library to preserve and conserve our collections and provide suitable atmosphere for our judicial officers.
- LIGHT: Practically speaking, light causes papers, book binding and many media (such as inks and dyes) to fade, yellow or discolour. Light will weaken and bristle paper fibers, textiles and leather due to high frequency UV energy which is destructive. Again the National Judicial Institute Library has taken care of the light factor by using energy server bulbs to preserve ultra violate energy and also the window blinds of the library are dark wooden blinds to protect our collections from deteriorate due to sunlight and dust.
- POLLUTION: Airborne contaminants in form of gaseous pollution such as industrial discharge, motor vehicle exhaust and indoor originate substances such as paint, cleaning supplies, untreated wood and certain types of paints and photocopiers give off ozone. Interestingly, National Judicial

Institute Library has one of the best interior facilities, so there no place for untreated woods or paints.

### **Biological Factors:**

Molds and pest can cause serious, often irreparable damage to paper materials. It is important to learn to identify conditions that are conducive to infestation, and take measures to prevent and control problems before they become wide spread.

- INSECT AND RODENTS are attracted to dark, small, seldom – disturbed spaces, where significant damage can be done before the problem is discovered. Similarly, in National Judicial Institute Library, the library is not an eating zone for users so as to avoid being attracted to the crumbs and eventually destroying our collections. We also have a strategy known as integrated pest control management whereby fumigation policy is adopted periodically.
- MOLD: Mold spores are everywhere. Mold and mildew are types of fungi micro organisms that depend on other organisms for sustenance. If collections get wet from flood, leaks and moisture goes unchecked for more than a couple of days, mold growth is inevitable. Other factors that contribute to mold growth in the presence of moisture are high temperature, stagnant air and darkness. In National Judicial Institute Library, water hazards which occurs due to leaking roofs, dripping pipes etc. are often due to managed by the maintenance of the Institute.

### **Mechanical Factors of Deterioration**

Mechanical damages to collections can be caused by a range of events, including vandalism, earthquakes, fire and water damage,

careless handling, improper support during storage, and inadequate packaging for transport. These direct physical forces are extremely likely to result on damage, so every effort must be made to protect collections from physical harm.

### **How is Collection Preserved**

At the initial stage, an institution should develop a clear defined mission statement and collection policy when resources are limited as they often are.

- It makes most sense to concentrate presentation efforts on materials that serve the real needs and mission of an organization

Look critically at materials that may have been gathered haphazardly and decide whether they really belong in your collection, once this has been done. And presentation needs have been identified; you will need to set priorities for presentation action. Unfortunately, presentation needs usually out number available resources.

- It is important to keep in mind that few institutes have the time or the money to meet every preservation and conservation need to their collection. Practical resources are limited; choices may have to be made amongst preservation activities. Every institute with collections of enduring value should have a preservation place that weighs the needs of the collection against institutional resources and provides a list of priority. E.g. in National Judicial Institute Library, we preserve our collection by binding old newspapers and transforming workshop articles into CD's, floppy disks etc.

### **Who should be responsible for Preservation**

The care of collection is no longer considered to be solely the responsibility of the conservator or the librarian as was once the case. While some large institutions have a separate preservation administrator (or even a separate department). If you are responsible for preservation in a smaller institution, it is likely that preservation will be only one of many “hats” that you wear. You should try not to be discouraged by the scope of the preservation problem, but try instead to break tasks down into management projects that can be completed in a sense of accomplishment.

Remember that if preservation is to be effective, it must become part of all activities within the organization. Part of your job will be to make your colleagues aware of their roles in the preservation program.

The following are preservation activities

- Acquisition (Use of non damaging spine labels, etc)
- Binding (Use of archival materials and non damaging binding techniques that allow the book to open completely etc)
- Shelving (storing oversized books flat or Pire down using proper bookend)
- Photocopying (Using a “edge” photocopies with an edge platen and being careful not to damage the spine of books) and
- Exhibition (supporting collections properly and using non-damaging exhibiting technique, etc).

Conservator/Librarian activities are

1. The ability to identify the need to preservation and conservation of material
2. Duplicating of the identified items of conservation due to heavy Usage. For example photocopying and scanning and scanning.

3. Migration to digital material, that is from the traditional Library to an e-library which is paramount in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Librarians where filming is done by creating a negative format of the original materials in order to preserve it from over use. E.g. the microfilm and microfiche.

Migration is a process where a material is migrated into a recent technology e.g. floppy disc to new disc Digitalization is the process of transforming conventional materials into a digital format.

4. Physical treatment of materials: this is the ability to restore back a damaging material in order to conserve it.
  - (a) Preparation: Site Structure of information centre away from flood, marshing area, it's necessary to study the area the library will be built on in order to avoid building on a swampy soil that would eventually dampen the point and non print materials in the library.
  - (b) Erect low library building away from wind wave and water. If it is not a new one, make sure a drainage system is in place.
  - © Erect the building in such a way that the window should be sited away from wind direction, concrete pavement should be made to elevate structure above the particular length.
  - d) Mitigation – This is remedy that is after installing a resource house with a server which must have a generator to cool the servers, a water evaporator is also needed so also is a humidifying fan.
  - (e) Recovery: If damages happen in a muddy area, digital materials can be covered with trampoline or water resistance materials and use water evaporators or sun dry.

In other words preservation should not be an add-on activity, rather it must be an integral component of the day-to-day operations and responsibilities in every department, office or division. Think for a moment about the people in your institution who have responsibilities that affect preservation of collection, perhaps without being aware of them. What are those responsibilities? How could you work with them to improve procedures?

One of the most important steps an institution can take is to support ongoing education and training of staff members with preservation responsibilities. Some preservation projects such as weeding and shelf maintenance do not require a large investment in equipment or supplies but they do require a commitment of staff time also needed are knowledge of preservation principles and proper procedures for care of collection. There should be an investment in training and for those who carry out preservation activities and it will serve to extend the useful life of the collection.

## **CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY THE JUDICIAL LIBRARIANS IN PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF LIBRARY COLLECTIONS**

The care of collections is no longer considered to be solely the responsibility of the conservator, as was once the case. Much should be done by collection managers and custodians, guided by published resources and advice from preservation professionals.

While some large institutions have a separate preservation administrator (even a separate department), if you are responsible for preservation in a smaller institution it is likely that preservation will be only one of many “hats” that you wear. You should try not to be discouraged by the scope of the

preservation problem, but try instead to break tasks down into manageable projects that can be completed in a reasonable amount of time. This will give you a sense of accomplishment.

Remember that preventive preservation is to be effective; it must become part of all activities within the organization. Part of your job will be to make your colleagues aware of their roles in the preservation programme.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Some useful suggestions to be adopted in addressing the challenges of preservation and conservation should be a part of all activities including but not limited to:

- Acquisition (use of non damaging spine labels etc)
- Binding (use of archival materials and non-damaging binding techniques that allow the book to open completely).
- Shelving (storing oversize books flat or spine down, using proper bookends)
- Photocopying, laminating and scanning of judicial library collection
- Exhibition (supporting collections properly and using non-damaging exhibit techniques, etc.)
- Installing burglary to prevent theft.

One of the most important step a judicial librarian can take is to support ongoing education and training of staff with preservation responsibilities and to provide the time needed to carry out these responsibilities. Some preservation projects such as weeding and shelf maintenance do not require a large investment in equipment or supplies, but they do require a commitment of staff time; also needed are knowledge of preservation principles and proper procedures for care of collections. An investment in training and time for those who carry out preservation activities will serve to extend the useful life of the collections.

In conclusion, preservation assists in keeping information accessible and useful overtime. Conservation treatments help to ensure the longevity of objects that have value for their content, so information can be learned from them as artifact. Preservation and conservation efforts assist in research and scholarly activities but also affect daily life. Access to architectural records provides safety information for building and construction details that may prove useful during a natural disaster, municipal records that outline information on the storage of waste can ensure that housing developments are not placed in areas that once have waste materials. Photographs, maps and other visual documents can help with the revitalization of neighborhoods and business districts. The records of organizations may help them plan community programmes for the future.

The existence of information in its myriad forms, maintained or preserved over time, has benefits for all generations. It continues to provide the foundation for development of new information, knowledge, and skill. Society and groups of people throughout history have sought to document their experience. It is from recorded information that we have learned about past cultures and peoples how they lived, what they thought, what they placed value on, be it ideas or objects and even what may have led to their demise. Information stored on paper, in books through skill and moving images, on sound recording and electronic media and in works of arts in original or surrogate form, help to define culture and society, drives economic and political decisions and should remain essential to our global heritage and cultures. Libraries, archives, local and state historical societies, conservation labs, museums and related judicial libraries serve as a custodian of these resources and as such make the effort to preserve information for generations to come.

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