

Designing a Framework for Conservation of Library Materials in the National Library, Kolkata

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ABSTRACT: The paper deals with the application of five key components and identification of various facets of those components. The relationship with various components and facets are established to design an **Integrated Conservation Management Framework** for the conservation of paper-based library materials of National Library.

KEYWORDS: Conservation, Framework, National Library

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I. INTRODUCTION

National Library of India is an Institution of National Importance under Article 62 of the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution and a subordinate office under the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India. This Library The National Library started its journey as the Calcutta Public Library in March 1836 at 13 Esplanade Row in the house of Dr F.P. Strong, Civil Surgeon of 24 Parganas, Bengal. The Imperial Library was formed in 1891 by bringing together the collections of a number of Secretariat libraries, had limited access. The Viceroy George Nathaniel Curzon, 1st Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, merged the collections of the

Calcutta Public Library with those of the Imperial Library. The new library was opened to the public on 30 January 1903 at Metcalfe Hall, Kolkata. At the opening Lord Curzon declared:

“It is intended that it should be a library of reference, a working place for students, and a repository of material for the future historians of India, in which, so far as possible, every work written about India at any time can be seen and read.”

After Independence, the Government of India changed the name of the Imperial Library to the National Library with the enactment of the Imperial Library (Change of Name) Act, 1948, and the collection was shifted from the Esplanade to Belvedere Estate. B. S. Kesavan was appointed Librarian and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Minister for Education at the time, inaugurated the library at its new location on 1 February 1953.

The main objective of the National Library is the acquisition of any printed documents in any language published in India and foreign material required by the country and conservation of those documents for generations to come. Therefore, this Library acts as a Depository Library under legal deposit act, the Delivery of Books and Newspapers (Public Libraries) Act, 1954 and Repository Library for the publications of the United Nations. In that aspect, conservation of the printed paper documents is the fundamental responsibility of the National Library.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research is carried out with the following objectives:

(i) To study the various aspects of Preventive, Curative/Restorative conservation techniques with respect to paper based library materials followed in the National Library and to find out the problems faced by the Preservation Divisions of National Library and suggesting probable solutions.

(ii) To investigate the conservation strategies with respect to paper based library materials followed in other Institutions of National Repute.

(iii) To study the awareness of conservation issues among the officers, staffs & readers of National Library.

(iv) To design a model of **Integrated Conservation Management Framework** as a research outcome.

(v) Finally, to formulate a comprehensive & effective **Conservation Policy for the National Library of India** for a planned, coordinated and scientific management for the preservation of cultural heritage

III. METHODOLOGY

The preliminary observation and study on the topic suggested that the concerned research work was an **exploratory or formulative** research as well as **experimental research**.

The research work was exploratory or **formulative**, because it intended to formulate a new scientific integrated system of conservation management of paper-based materials

Such work was also **experimental one**, because besides collecting and generating data from several readings of survey and observation methods, few experiments/chemical treatments were also need to be conducted in the laboratory to ensure reliability of the result of the research work, and an inference has been drawn on the basis of causality.

The research problem in question required data from diverse sources using different methods, such as, sampling, survey, interviews, observations, laboratory experimentation and practical experience.

IV. PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

1. The study reveals that there is no systematic and periodic collection assessment for rare and vulnerable documents.
2. There is no balance between the total budgetary allocation and expenditure on conservation, which happens to be the most important mandate for depository and repository library.
3. The study reveals that Mass De acidification process is not adopted in NL, although it is practiced in other National Libraries across the globe.
4. Although the present process of both aqueous and non-aqueous de acidification is efficient, but time consuming. Alternative methods like spraying mixture of Magnesium, alcohol and water is reported to raise the life of paper about six times (pH 6.1 to 8.7), Gaseous de acidification by Ammonia (10% solution) raises the pH to 8 after 48 hrs etc. may be introduced to cover more books.
5. The study reveals that there is no man-hour assessment against work output of Chemical treatment, binding, digitization and microfilming. The data are highly variable in nature.
6. The study reveals that the vacancy position of NL of the preservation is almost 75%, which is affecting the work output piling into lakhs of backlog for binding and restoration of books. However, some manpower have been outsourced.
7. Although, there is an attempt of modernisation in the Laboratory Division, but in actual reality, the equipment are not fully utilised to obtain reliability of results.
8. The study reveals that non-chemical method by freeze-drying is tested to be highly efficient and reliable method of disinfection. Results of vacuum fumigation chamber reveals that 20gm/cum for 5 hrs is the optimum dose of Ethylene oxide dose for mass disinfection.
9. The study reveals that there is absolutely no awareness/knowledge about preventive conservation best practices both among the staff and users. This is alarming for the general health and upkeep of the documents.
10. It is found that the preservation staffs are not exposed to mid-career training in modern technologies.
11. The study reveals that the digitisation is carried out in three phases but the metadata are not merged into a single database, which is actually decreasing the effectiveness of information retrieval.
12. It is also revealed that NL only undertakes on-demand digitisation and it is not regular activity, which is very peculiar
13. It is observed that no OCR is used for Indian Language digitised document.
14. There is no linking of metadata of digitised materials through Virtua ILMs and Dspace
15. The study reveals a major lacuna in modernisation of reprographic equipment and technologies as compared to British Library, London
16. The study reveals that there is no scope for digitisation of microfilms through Archive Writer.
17. The study reveals that metadata in card catalogue of microfilms are not as per AACR-II and there is no metadata is available in online database
18. The development of microfilm rolls manually takes approx. 90-120 minutes, and there is no automation in this process.
19. The study reveals that there is no damage control system in microfilm storage areas in case of Air-conditioning System failure, as some of the films having silver halide exposure have been damaged due to liquefying of silver compound.
20. The study reveals that microfilming is the only dependable method of preservation of newspapers as the longevity is almost 500 years
21. It is also noted that there is no selection criteria for digitisation of materials. It is judgemental on the librarians.
22. It is observed that the transportation of rare/brittle books to the Book hospital is not undertaken in temperature-controlled trolleys. Exposure to uncontrolled environmental condition casues damage.
23. It is observed that NL has not collaborated with IFLA to open IFLA-PAC Centre as compared to most of the National Libraries in the world.

24. The study reveals that there is a lack of initiative on the part of NL in international collaboration and partnership with publishers and CSR like Google Books, Infosys Foundation etc. Similar collaborations with various archival database publishers needs to be initiated on the lines of British Library, London

25. The study reveals that NL does not have any written Disaster Preparedness, Digital Disaster Recovery Management System, Counter Disaster Plan: Prevention, Preparedness, Reaction and Recovery as compared to other National Libraries of the World.

26. There is a need of Conservation Policy Framework, which is my research outcome

V. INTEGRATED CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

MajaKrtalic' and DamirHasenay (2012) proposed a national preservation management model for Croatia which comprises five key components:

- (i) Strategic and theoretical
- (ii) Economic and legal
- (iii) Educational
- (iv) Technical and operational
- (v) Cultural and social

These five key components were used to design the Conservation Management Framework for the National Library. The approach chosen in this work is based on frameworks within which conservation is conducted (institutional and in this case, National Library, social and cultural) and on resources necessary for implementing preservation activities (financial and human, including necessary knowledge and competence). The guiding idea is that preservation is a complex process that must be strategically planned by following goals set on specific vision and mission of National Library. Such plans should be grounded in theoretical knowledge and achievements in the field of preservation. Further, the preservation process must comply with the economic and legal framework within which an institution functions, but with an emphasis on overcoming limitations that such frameworks often pose. Since education on different levels (from formal education of information specialist and conservators, to training of staff and user awareness) is considered to contribute to the efficiency of preservation, the educational element in managing preservation is also taken into consideration. An important part of conservation management refers to handling and safeguarding the collections, and knowing their conditions and needs as the content (information) and container (physical form) are the focus of conservation activities. Finally, it is assumed that preservation should result in preserving information (and access to it) that is significant and usable in different segments of cultural and social life. Bearing in mind these basic premises, the proposed Integrated Conservation Management Model for National Library comprises the five key components that can be described by answering a set of questions within each component:

Design of Conservation Framework of Library materials of National Library

Finally, after understanding and analysing all the relationship of layers of conservation framework, we finally can design the Conservation Framework of Library, Materials of National Library. The framework has been illustrated in Fig 6. The five components of the framework are mutually related with each other. There are three kinds of relationships denoted by three broken line in blue, red and green colour. Blue/violet lines denote the external relationship of any sub-facts with external agencies. Red lines denote Inter/intra sub-facts relationship and green lines denote Inter-facet relationship.

The component "Conservation Policy Strategic Plan" has eleven facets related with it like Vision and Mission of NL, ISO standards, security system, like RFID systems, CCTV systems, Disaster Planning, Strategic partnership, Selection Criteria, Digitisation Policy, Digital Disaster Recovery Management System Periodic Risk Assessment, Consultancy Services. The sub-facet Consultancy services have an external relationship with other organisations.

The Economic, and Legal Issues component has eight facets like Delivery of Books and Newspapers (Public Libraries) Act, 1954, Copyright Act 1957 and Copyright Amendment Act, 2012, RTI Act 2005, Manpower Assessment, Work Assessment, Work output, Budgetary Allocations and Outsourcing.

The legal provisions like Legal Deposit Act mandates that each and every printed material published in this country should be submitted and preserved for generations. The Copyright Amendment Act, 2012 allows same miscellaneous exceptions to copyright infringement. The RTI Act, 2005 ensures transparency and accountability of the authorities to public by maintaining records of purchase of equipment, materials and services. The budgetary allocation should establish a balance between expenditure in procurement of printed documents and maintaining that documents through conservation. A study of the Work Assessment and Work Output should be conducted to understand the nature of damage and qualify the backlog and accordingly, manpower assessment is conducted to understand whether permanent staff can complete the role or there is a need of outsourcing the job. The outsourcing may be only manpower or manpower and materials Outsourcing services is procured from their party agencies through e-procurement.

The Cultural and Social issues has sub-facts like Selection Criteria of documents for digitization or rare books, Library Services, Value-added Services, Rules for Handling and Care of Rare-brittle books, digital access rules, document usage, user profile, digital Access rules, lending rules.

Library services and value-added services are designed in response to social and cultural needs of the user like permitting the users for taking photographs with mobile camera is a consequence of abundant uses of smart phone by the users. The Rules for handling and care of the Rare/Brittle books is framed through previous experience of document usage by the citizens and necessary amendments are made.

The component "Education Issues" includes seven facets like Formal library training, professional Mid-career training, User-education programmes, printed Guides/Resources, Web Resources, Training workshops and Staff-education program.

Education is an important tool which reduces the causes of deterioration of documents by improper handling and use of documents. The education is used here to denote, both the professional education of libraries of formal training courses in preservation and conservation and also user-educational programs to create appropriate awareness all out the preservation, procedures of conservation.

User-education may be imparted through regular workshops/training or through printed guides/resources and even web-resources may be developed for creating timely awareness. Staff education programs for the professionals who are handling documents is an effective way to keep informed the ways and means for correct handling of books in the book shelves displayed racks and supply of the desired documents to the users. Mid carrier professional training program for the preservation staff is a way to keep informed the latest development in the field and develop the skill.

The component "Technical and operational Issue" has seven facets like conservation methods and techniques, CPWD, Collection Condition Survey, Digital Access, Display of books/periodical, Exhibition & Transport and Pest Control, Conservation Technique and Methods, which has four sub-facets like Work Manuals, Equipment, Consumables and Digitization.

Central Public Works Department is responsible for Building Maintenance, HVAC system, Fire Fighting System and Lighting. Digitization has two sub-facets like Hardware and Software and digital access has two sub-facets like on-site and public domain. The equipment is covered by AMC. The consumables has there sub-facets like chemicals, raw materials and specification.

Relationship established

The relationship among the components, among the facets and the sub-facets are being established based on the survey results, interview and data collected from the respondents. It is revealed that all the components like Conservation policy / Strategic Plan, Economic and Legal Issue, Cultural and Social Issues, Educational and Technical and Operational issues are mutually related with each other thus making an **Integrated Model of Conservation Management Framework**. There are a number of intra-facet relationships within the same component and an inter-facet relationship among the different components is identified.

In case of component "Economic and Legal issue" there is intra-facet relationship with work-output and outsourcing as the work-output of the existing staff members decides the need of outsourcing of job. There are intra-facet relationship between digitization policy and digitization.

Digitization Policy and selection criteria are the strategic angles which decides what, when and how to digitize. The Job Description and Manpower Assessment are having intra-facets relationship because it is very useful and pertinent to classify and quantify the job allotted to the existing manpower and identify the need of any extra manpower. The facet Budgetary Allocation has an important inter-facet relationship with strategic partnership, conservation methods & techniques and CPWD. The allocation of financial resources is dependent on the estimates received for the CPWD (Civil and Electrical Wings) in terms of maintenance of infrastructure and environment. Again the appropriate allocation of budget to the process of conservation work like investment on AMC of equipment and timely supply of consumables. The strategic partnership with any other organization in executing any special project is crucial to decide whether the cost of the project will be borne by the Library or the organization, with which the partnership is being established. The facets like Collection Condition Survey and Pest Control has an intra-facet relationship as the survey is essential to decide pest-control measures.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study will help to understand the dynamics of conservation economics and formulate Conservation Policy not only of the National Library, but also other large libraries and can pave the way to formulate National Conservation Policy of this country.

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