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# Perception of College Librarians on Preservation of Library Documents with Special Reference to the Aided Arts and Science Colleges Affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University, Tamil Nadu

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# **Perception of College Librarians on Preservation of Library Documents with Special Reference to the Aided Arts and Science Colleges Affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University, Tamil Nadu**

## **Abstract**

The perceptions of the librarians reveal the entire functioning of the library. The quality of the library is being measured with collection building, services and other routines of the library. Printed documents are considered as important documents in the Arts and Science College libraries to support the teaching and learning in the college even though the electronic resources are enormously available in the Internet. The printed documents deteriorated due to various reasons. One of the roles of the college librarian is to preserve those and keep them available in usable condition for the present and future generations to know the heritage of the country. To know the perception of the librarians, a structured questionnaire was prepared and distributed among the 29 Aided College Librarians and 25 filled-in questionnaires were received and analysed. The study reveals that 92% of the librarians opine that preservation of the documents is necessary. Age of the documents and bad shelving are the two factors ranked first and second respectively, as causing deterioration.

**Keywords:** *College Library, Librarians, Documents, Deterioration and Preservation*

## **Introduction**

Library is a place where documents are stored for reading and consultation. College library is the storehouse of print, non-print and electronic resources to cater to the information needs of its users. College library is predominantly occupied with printed documents such as Books, Journals, Theses and Reports etc., to support the teaching, learning and research. The library documents get deteriorated by various reasons, such as age of the documents, bad shelving, and biological agents etc., and deterioration is an unavoidable factor in the present scenario. The college librarian must know the various reasons for deterioration of documents and also be familiar with different traditional and modern preservation techniques. Aided college librarians are more responsible in comprehending the modalities of preserving techniques compared to others, because the documents are being purchased with Govt. grant-in aid. It is the duty of the college librarians to keep all the documents in good/useable condition and adopt appropriate preservation technique to redeem the deteriorated documents for the benefit of both the present and the future generations. The present study deals with Physical storage of library documents, Security measures adopted in the library building, factors for deterioration, causes of deterioration, awareness level of librarians on preservation,

preservation techniques adopted in the college libraries and the constraints on effective preservation practices in the college libraries.

### **Madurai Kamaraj University: A Profile**

The University came into being through a bill passed in the Legislative Assembly of the State in the year 1965. Thus, it is a statutory University owned and funded by the Government of Tamil Nadu and the University Grants Commission. Currently it holds a total of 77 renowned departments and 20 schools. In addition to the departments and schools the University has 21 academic centres and quasi academic supportive units. It has 24 autonomous colleges, 14 aided colleges 33 self-financing colleges, 18 approved institutions, 4 evening colleges, 6 constituent colleges and one University college catering to the higher education needs of large number of students from rural and urban areas.

The Madurai Kamaraj University offers 41 post graduate, 35 M.Phil. and 17 Diploma, P.G. Diploma, Certificate courses in the various departments. Presently, 66 U.G. and 45 P.G. courses are offered in the affiliated colleges. At present 2428 students and research scholars are on the roll. Currently more than 163 individual research projects are being carried out on an outlay exceeding 34 Crores. The University has a modernized central library with 3 lakhs books, 15000 e-journals, 3000 e-books, 55000 reference and text books. The one GBPS internet connection, INFONET centre with 50 nodes and smart class rooms have enriched the ICT enabled teaching and learning.

Madurai Kamaraj University strongly believes in de-centralized and participatory governance. As a visionary step, academic and administrative autonomy has been granted to select schools. The University has established linkages with the communities around through its various outreach activities. The National and International level connectivity and visibility of this University is a pointer that the University is moving from the status of University with Potential for Excellence to the status of University of Excellence.

### **Review of Literature**

1. **Schobernd, E.M. (1999)**, recognizes the following: the importance of preservation of library materials from the ravages of time, use of chemically unstable products, how few libraries have full time preservation personnel appointed exclusively for the protection of the valuable documents. He also outlines a proactive programme covering

environmental control, repair, binding, reformatting, de-acidification, disaster preparedness, education and administration.

2. **Srivastava (2010)**, states that preservation is an essential part of library's activities. The concept of preservation is now gradually becoming a central issue in modern librarianship. Preventive conservation plays a key role in preserving the documentary heritage for posterity. Librarians can provide in-house training to the staff.
3. **Vasudevan, T.M. and Amrutha, K.G. (2011)**, stresses the need for preservation and conservation of manuscripts in the libraries. The authors discuss the various techniques used in the preservation and conservation of manuscript and examine the causes of deterioration, existing preservation and conservation techniques and constraints limiting effective preservation and conservation. The authors conclude that oiling and cleaning of manuscripts are the most commonly used techniques. They also revealed that lack of training and inadequate funding was the most severe inhibitor to effective preservation and conservation.
4. **Sarika Sawant, (2014)**, reveals that there was no written policy on preservation and conservation in nearly all libraries in Mumbai. Lack of written preservation policy, lack of trained manpower and lack of funding were the main constraints on preservation and conservation practices. Higher authorities and policy makers need to be convinced to provide staff and budget not just for preservation but for the seemingly long term survival of libraries

In summary, a review of literature on the perception of college librarian on preservation of library documents, reveals that there was no written policy for preservation of documents, traces the various preservation practices adopted in the libraries, identifies the constraints for effective preservation practices. It concludes that with development of policy on preservation and support of authorities' in terms of allocation of budget and appointment of skilled staff a librarian can achieve the preservation practices in the college libraries.

## **Methodology**

Census method was adopted for the present study. A well-designed questionnaire was designed and distributed among the 29 Aided Arts and Science College Librarians working in the colleges affiliated to the Madurai Kamaraj University and 25 (86%) filled-in questionnaires were received and taken for data analysis and interpretation.

## Objectives of the Study

1. To know the physical storage of library documents in the Aided College Libraries.
2. To study the various causes for the deterioration of documents in the Aided Arts and Science College Libraries.
3. To know the awareness level of college librarians on preservation of documents.
4. To find out the preservation procedures and techniques adopted in the College Libraries.
5. To identify the various constraints on effective preservation practices in the libraries.

## Analysis and Interpretation

The data were collected from the 25 Aided Arts and Science College Librarians working in the colleges affiliated to the Madurai Kamaraj University, Tamil Nadu. The final response rate is 86 percent.

**Table 1**  
**Physical Storage of Documents**

S. No.	Physical Storage of Documents	All	Most	Half	Some	None
1	Documents are stored in clean area	56 % (14)	44% (11)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
2	Documents are stored in an area with lighting facility	64% (16)	32% (8)	4% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
3	Documents are stored in an area protected from dust, dampness, insect, rodents,	48% (12)	28% (7)	12% (3)	8% (2)	4% (1)
4	Documents are stored in areas with air-conditioning during working hours	0.0% (0)	8% (2)	8% (2)	76% (19)	8% (2)
5	Documents are stored in areas with 24 hour air-conditioning	0.0% (0)	4% (1)	0.0% (0)	8% (2)	88% (2)

Table no.1 shows, physical storage of documents and reveals that 56% of the respondents stated that all the documents are stored in clean area, 64% of them stated that all the library documents are stored in an area with lighting facility, 48% of them stated that all the documents are stored in an area protected from dust, dampness, insect, rodents, 76% of them stated that some documents are stored in an area with air-conditioned facility and 88% of them stated that none of the documents are stored in an area with 24 hour air-conditioning facility.

**Table 2**  
**Deterioration of Printed Documents**

S. No.	Deterioration of Printed Documents	All	Most	Half	Some	None
1	Chemical Factor (Oxides of carbon, Nitrogen and hydrogen sulphides)	16% (4)	12% (3)	8% (2)	16% (4)	48% (12)
2	Biological Factor (Micro-organisms- Fungus or moulds, bacteria, insects, Rodents, Micro- organisms)	12% (3)	16% (4)	8% (2)	36% (9)	28% (7)
3	Environmental factor (Light, heat, Humidity and moisture, dust & dirt)	12% (3)	32% (8)	8% (2)	40% (10)	8% (2)
4	Human factor (Improper storage, faulty replacement, rough handling, deliberate abuse, folding)	12% (3)	28% (7)	20% (5)	28% (7)	12% (3)
5	Natural Disaster (fire, floods, high winds, cyclones, earth quakes)	8% (2)	12% (3)	8% (2)	8% (2)	64% (16)

Table no. 2 illustrates causes of deterioration of documents and reveals that 48% of the respondents stated that none of the documents deteriorated owing to chemical factor. 36% and 40% of the respondents stated that some of the documents deteriorated owing to biological factor and environmental factors respectively. 64% of them stated that none of the documents deteriorated because of natural disaster.

**Table 3**  
**Awareness level of Preservation of Documents**

S. No.	Awareness level of Preservation	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
1	Cleaning & dusting	0.0% (0)	8% (2)	40% (10)	20% (5)	32% (8)
2	Shelving	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	44% (11)	28% (7)	28% (7)
3	Simple repairing	0.0% (0)	9% (2)	32% (8)	36% (9)	20% (5)
4	Pest control	8% (2)	8% (2)	32% (8)	24% (6)	28% (7)
5	Binding	0.0% (0)	8% (2)	36% (9)	28% (7)	28% (7)
6	Lamination	16% (4)	32% (8)	24% (6)	4% (1)	24% (6)
7	Copying techniques	12% (3)	16% (4)	48% (12)	12% (3)	12% (3)
8	Installing Air-conditioners	48% (12)	20% (5)	16% (4)	4% (1)	12% (3)
9	Digitization	12% (3)	16% (4)	44% (11)	16% (4)	12% (3)
10	Fumigation	16% (4)	24% (6)	44% (11)	8% (2)	8% (2)

Table no.3 illustrates awareness level of preservation of documents which reveals that 40% of the college librarians have awareness on cleaning and dusting at moderate level, 44% of them on shelving at moderate level, 36% of them on simple repairing at high level, 32% of them on pest control at moderate level, 32% of them on pest control at moderate level, 36% of them on binding at moderate level, 32% of them on lamination at low level, 48% of them on copying techniques at moderate level and 48% of them on installing Air-conditioners at very low level, 44% of on digitisation and fumigation at moderate level respectively.

**Table 4**  
**Preservation Procedure for Documents**

S. No.	Preservation Procedures	Always	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
1	Simple repairs	40% (10)	8% (2)	28% (7)	24% (6)	0.0% (0)
2	Keeping Journals in boxes	56% (14)	16% (4)	12% (3)	4% (1)	4% (1)
3	Binding of Books	48% (12)	24% (6)	24% (6)	4% (1)	0.0% (0)
4	Binding of Journals	40% (10)	24% (6)	20% (5)	4% (1)	12% (3)
5	Rebinding of Books	32% (8)	8% (2)	24% (6)	32% (8)	4% (1)

Table no. 4 provides illustration of preservation procedures for documents and reveals that 40% of the college librarians are always doing simple repair preservation procedure, 56% of them always keep journals in boxes, and 48% of them always involve in binding of books, 40% of them always involving involve in binding of journals and 32% of them always work on rebinding of books as the preservation procedure in the college libraries.

**Table 5**  
**Traditional Preservation Techniques**

S. No.	Traditional Preservation	Always	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
1	Shelving documents air-free	64% (16)	20% (5)	12% (3)	0.0% (0)	4% (1)
2	Cleaning and dusting of library documents	44% (11)	40% (10)	12% (3)	0.0% (0)	4% (1)
3	Use of insecticide/ reptiles repellents	20% (5)	36% (9)	36% (9)	4% (1)	4% (1)
4	Use of natural repellents (Vasampu, Manjal, etc.)	16% (4)	24% (6)	16% (4)	24% (6)	20% (5)
5	Pest control	20% (5)	32% (8)	24% (6)	12% (3)	12% (3)

Table no.5 shows traditional preservation techniques and reveals that 64% of the college librarians always shelve the documents air-free, 44% of them always do cleaning and dusting of documents, 36% of them occasionally use insecticides/repellents, 24% of them rarely use the natural repellents for preservation and 32% of them use the pest control often as traditional preservation techniques.

**Table 6**  
**Constraints on Effective Preservation Practices**

S. No.	Constraints on Effective Preservation Practices	SA	A	UD	DA	SD
1	Inadequate funding	36% (9)	46% (12)	4% (1)	12% (3)	0.0% (0)
2	Lack of competent manpower	16% (4)	44% (11)	20% (5)	12% (3)	8% (2)
3	Lack of preservation policy	16% (4)	32% (8)	36% (6)	8% (2)	8% (2)
4	Inadequate infrastructure	16% (4)	44% (11)	36% (9)	4% (1)	0.0% (0)
5	Administrative bottlenecks	16% (4)	28% (7)	40% (10)	8% (2)	8% (2)
6	Environmental conditions	8% (2)	48% (12)	20% (5)	4% (1)	0.0% (0)
7	Out-dated Software or non-existent of equipment	12% (3)	44% (11)	20% (5)	20% (5)	8% (1)
8	Lack of awareness	20% (5)	32% (8)	16% (4)	20% (5)	12% (3)
9	Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)	8% (2)	52% (13)	16% (4)	20% (5)	4% (1)
10	Evaluation of format of Media	14% (1)	44% (11)	36% (9)	12% (3)	4% (1)

SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, UN-Undecided, DA-DisAgree, SD-Strongly Disagree

Table no.6 illustrates the constraints on effective preservation practices and reveals that 46% of the college librarians agreed on the aspect of inadequate funding, 44% of them agreed on lack of competent manpower and inadequate infrastructure, 40% of them were undecided on administrative bottlenecks, 48% of them agreed on an environmental condition, 44% of them agreed on out-dated software or non-existent of equipment, 32% of them agreed on lack of awareness, and 52% of them on an intellectual property rights and 44% of them agreed an evaluation of format of medias as the main constraints on the effective preservation practices in the college Libraries.

### **Results and Discussions**

The shelving of documents in the library is one of the phenomena of preservation. The study clearly indicates that more than half (56%) of the college librarians are stored all the



documents in clean area, majority (64%) of them stated that all the library documents are stored in an area with lighting facility, majority (76%) of them stated that some documents are stored in an area with air-conditioned facility and high majority (88%) of them stated that none of the documents are stored in an area with 24 hour air-conditioning facility.

The library documents deteriorated by various factors. The study illustrates that 48% of the college librarians stated that none of the documents deteriorated due to chemical factors, 36% of them stated that some of the documents deteriorated due to biological factors (micro-organisms- fungus or moulds, bacteria, insects, rodents, micro- organisms), 40% of them stated that some of the documents deteriorated owing to environmental factors (light, heat, humidity and moisture, dust & dirt).

The study intended to know the awareness level of college librarians on preservation of documents and reveals that 40% of the college librarians have awareness at moderate level on cleaning and dusting, 44% of them have awareness at moderate level on shelving of documents, 36% of them have awareness at high level on simple repairing, 48% of them have awareness at moderate level on copying techniques and 48% of them have awareness at very low level on installing Air-conditioners and 44% of them have awareness at moderate level on digitisation and fumigation.

It is observed that the college librarians adopted various preservation procedures and techniques to safe guard the library documents from deterioration and the findings reveal that 40% of the college librarians are always doing simple repair, 56% of them are always keep journals in the boxes, 48% of them are always working on binding of books, 40% of them are always working on binding of journals and 32% of them are always involving in rebinding of books and 64% of the college librarians always shelve the documents air-free, 44% of them are always do the cleaning and dusting of documents, 36% of them occasionally use insecticides/repellents, and 32% of them use the pest control often as traditional preservation techniques in the college libraries.

The study identified the various constraints on effective preservation practices in the college libraries. It reveals the realities of the present conditions in the college libraries: 46% of the college librarians agreed on inadequate funding, 44% of them agreed on lack of competent manpower and inadequate infrastructure are the main constraints on the effective preservation practices in the college libraries.

## **Conclusion**

The study on perceptions of the college librarian on the preservation of library documents was carried out among the college librarians. It reveals that more than half of the documents are stored in a conducive air-free and dust free environment. The college librarians have an average level of awareness on preservation of documents and know the various factors of deterioration of documents. The librarians are also familiar with the various preservation procedures and traditional preservation techniques. The study reveals the realities of the present conditions in the college libraries on preservation practices and has identified that inadequate funding, lack of competent manpower and inadequate infrastructure as the main constraints on effective preservation practices in the college libraries.

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