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A Study of Preservation Aspects of Libraries in Srinagar

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A Study of Preservation Aspects of Libraries in Srinagar

Abstract

Although libraries are in existence from the time writing got evolved. However, preservation aspects were not taken into consideration seriously till recent times when the damage by different factors was noticed. The damage by insects, human, environmental factors and others could cause a vacuum to the already accumulated knowledge over the centuries of human history. The present study is an effort in this direction to ascertain the various facts related to preservation in different libraries in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu & Kashmir. The situation can be considered to be threatening as there is lack of awareness among the Library and Information Science professionals. Further, the libraries are not well equipped and well maintained except few ones.

Keywords

Preservation, Conservation, Libraries, Srinagar, Preservation-Libraries, Libraries-Srinagar, Archive-Srinagar, Preservation in Libraries-Srinagar, Manuscripts, Rare Documents, Manuscripts-Preservation, Rare Documents-Preservation.

Introduction

Libraries, museums and archives traditionally are the custodians of valuable artefacts and information. These valuables are acquired/gifted and stored with well-managed conservation practices to ensure the long-term access thereof in minimal institutions. As such, institutions are now facing new access and preservation issues (Groenewald & Breytenbach, 2011). Preservation of materials in libraries as a distinct area of work and study is relatively new and has come into the fore largely as a result of the worm eaten and brittle book crisis that was identified over the last few decades. Although libraries have been concerned with preserving cultural and intellectual

heritage for centuries, it is only in recent years that preservation and conservation have become activities in their own right with professional associations and scholarship emerging. Conservation has grown into important area of research and there has been a growing recognition of the importance of the resource as artifact and the historical and evidential value that may be inherent in an information object (Sinha, 2007).

Conservation is treating the objects chemically (Kharbade & Bhatia, 2003) if they are in damaged condition while as preservation encompasses the steps taken in advance so that damage to the objects is stopped. Actually conservation is a broader term including examination, preservation and restoration. In other words, preservation deals with the maintenance aspect while as conservation deals with the remedial treatment and restoration of the already damaged object (Perti, 1992). However, one of the critical issues in library administration is selecting deserving items from vast library collections for conservation attention (Holland, 1984).

Preservation and conservation encompass a wide range of experts working across disciplines including librarians, archivists, historians and, in relation to digital resources, computer and technology specialists. Although the preservation of material is concerned primarily with what has been created in the past, preservation specialists are often called on to predict the future in terms of how or indeed whether a resource might be used and in what environment. In this sense those concerned with the preservation of materials must also look far into the future to guarantee that access to material is ensured over centuries (Sinha, 2007). However, there are several problems related to the preservation of library material.

General Problems in Preservation

Deteriorating paper represents an enormous and complex preservation and conservation challenge for library professionals (Morrow, 1983). Among the major challenges include:

a) Not being considered important

Due to unawareness regarding preservation in libraries, it is not considered important even by the Library & Information Science professionals.

b) Meagre amount spent on preservation

While allocating funds for various purposes in libraries, preservation is not taken into consideration. However, this area demands money as the process is continuous in nature and cannot be taken as one-time process.

c) Shortage of standard writing, covering, reinforcement materials and equipment

Lack of standards in publishing a book, making binding material, rough handling, poor storage and lack of proper equipment in libraries are some of the major problems in preservation. Further, the existing standards of building for libraries, design of building for archives and quality binding are not being followed which are must before taking decisions regarding construction of libraries, archives and starting binding of books (Prajapati, 2005).

d) Diversity of climate

For the preservation of documentary heritage climate plays a crucial role. However, the climate in Indian sub-continent is not uniform. Frequent variation of temperature affects the preservation process.

e) Lack of skilled staff

The lack of skills among the people working in libraries, archives and museums is the main cause behind the appalling state of heritage whether available in libraries, archives or museums (Prajapati, 2005).

Keeping in view the above challenges, the present study makes an endeavor to look into the preservation aspects of different libraries in Srinagar.

Review of Related Literature

The review of related literature is divided into two major headings to provide a clear view regarding the aspects of preservation and conservation.

Conservation

The conservation aspect is not taken into consideration by many libraries and archives throughout the world because of less expertise, lack of skilled staff and proper conservation lab facility. Although, Cunha and Cunha (1972) have compiled a bibliography on conservation of library

materials and Harrison (1982) has prepared bibliography on conservation of archival and library materials, resources for the preservation and conservation of library collections are seldom adequate to meet the overwhelming needs that exist.

Entwisle (1983) covers the technical aspect of conservation while as Nyuksha (1983) covers some special cases of biological deterioration of books. Khan (2011) focuses on the bio-deterioration of paper manuscripts and their control. Shukla (1980) describes the issues which come in the way of preservation of library materials such as dust, insects, termites, dampness, etc. Gupta (1974), Prajapati (1995) and Harinarayan (1995) have categorized and discussed the various causes of deterioration while as Church (1959) tries to find out the effect of heat on paper. Chandel and Kumar (1981) have pointed out the increase in deterioration due to careless handling. Smith (1969) demonstrated the effect of temperature on performance of paper while as Agrawal (1977) studied the effect of environment on the preservation aspect of paper. Prasad (1995) examined the destructive effect of light on paper. Alegbeleye (1987) holds excessive heat and humidity mainly responsible for deterioration of bibliographic resources in African countries. Excessive sunlight (ultraviolet rays) experienced in tropical countries, particularly Nigeria is chemically active and has a bleaching effect on cellulose and colour pigments. Ovowoh and Iwhiwhu (2010) also examine the preservation and conservation of different materials in libraries of Nigeria. Chopra (1994) conducted a study of manuscript depository of Guru Nanak Dev University. Findings of the study reveal that mishandling, rough and repeated use of rare documents and manuscripts are the factors for their deterioration. Agrawal and Barkeshli (1997) elaborate the practical instructions on various aspects of conservation of manuscripts and rare books. Besides, they present some case studies of actual restoration work.

Blank and Stavisky (1997) state that the library of the Jewish theological seminary of America in New York includes manuscripts, fragments, incurables, archival material, graphics, and rare printed books from the 16th century to the present time. The library undertook the conservation of 23 manuscript fragments in 1996. Most of the documents were cleaned in the text free areas with the gloom stick. The unsightly paper patches were removed with a poultice of 4% Methyl cellulose including the removal of paste residue with homemade bamboo and Teflon spatulas. Aini and Maltsev (1988) provide us information about the Manuscript Repository of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan. The manuscript repository has at its disposal chemical analysis and photo

laboratories, a bindery, and a restoration lab where workers work to preserve, restore, and microfilm the manuscripts (Aini & Maltsev, 1988).

Balloffet and Hille (2009) have illustrated various techniques of preservation and conservation of library and archival material. They have illustrated with diagrams the preservation and conservation techniques along with techniques of holding exhibition of library material. Kathpalia (1974b) outlined some new approaches to conservation of paper that include improvement in the quality of paper, control of acidity, sizing of old paper and proper storage of documents. Dean (1997) elaborated various conservation techniques for saving the manuscripts particularly palm-leaf manuscripts. Besides, Boustead (1972) recommends conservation techniques in relation to archives.

Preservation

Harvey (1994); Langwell (1974); Mahapatra and Chakrabarti (2003) have discussed the various causes of deterioration of library material. Narang and Singh (2014) analyse the factors for deterioration of the rare manuscripts and preservation techniques being employed to curb further damage to rare documents in Sikh Reference Library of Golden Temple, Amritsar. However, Huntington Library has given a great deal of time and thought to the preservation of rare books and manuscripts (Iiams, 1932). Nikam, Ganesh and Tamizhchelvan (2004) are of the opinion that preservation should be the central focus in libraries because of availability of manuscripts and rare books including various other collections. By taking care of these collections, the culture and language could be preserved for posterity. Morrow (1983) presents case studies of seven preservation programs in seven different libraries while as Conway (1990) presents the results of the first nationwide study of archival preservation practices in the United States. The findings of the research and analysis suggest that although archivists now understand the significance of their preservation efforts and have absorbed information on basic prevention and treatment techniques, they have only partially integrated into their professional practice the set of innovative approaches to safeguard the heritage. Warraich and Tahira (2010) explore the issues of conservation and preservation of the rare manuscript collection in the Punjab University Library (Lahore). Ganesan (2010) focuses on preservation efforts for books and related materials of Roja Muthiah Research Library (RMRL) in Tamil Nadu.

Providing the preservation status of the Royal Palace, now a museum, Dean (1990) discloses the storage aspect of manuscripts. The author is of opinion that most practical preservation strategy is to constantly copy deteriorating manuscripts, a task traditionally performed by various religious scholars. Binding is must for the preservation of a document. Manuscripts were bound in leather only in Kashmir to give strength to the document (Chopra, 1995). Kathpalia (1974a) mentions about restoration aspect of paper especially different processes of lamination adopted and experimented by Singapore Archives and National Museum, New Delhi.

Prajapati (2003) presents a study that describes the accumulation of dust particles on documents in National Archives of India (NAI). Walters and Hanthorn (1998) carried out a study of archival preservation management utilized sound survey research techniques to query 170 archival repositories about the extent of preservation program development and integration in research libraries. The results show that not everyone is able to maintain optimal environmental conditions. 70% archives stated that their storage areas are equipped to control temperature. A lower number of archives (59%) can control relative humidity levels. 53% are not using thermometers, 72% are not using hygrometers, and 76% are not using the technology in monitoring equipment, data-loggers. Although 91% of the repositories indicated that they possess a fire extinguisher but only 55% use a fire detector.

Besides, Punjab University Library has adopted fumigation for preservation of oriental resources (Ameen & Shafique, 2009) but Williams and Walsh (1989) list some of the problems with the use of fumigants if used for the long periods of time, using data from the Carnegie Museum. The fumes were found to cause bleaching of colour, corrosion of metals, weakness in the structure of cellulose materials, decrease in the pH (percentage of Hydrogen) of organic materials, movement of fats and oils to the surface of leather and skin objects causing darkening and tackiness of some adhesives (Williams & Walsh, 1989).

Microfilming is listed by Lydenberg and Archer (1960) among the last options to save the content of a document. Boock and Vondracek (2006) throw light on massive microfilming projects as a means of preserving print holdings. Newspaper microfilming and digitization projects continue to successfully reformat thousands of rare, crumbling newspapers. They advocate microfilming as increasing number of libraries, from the largest academics to the smallest publics, have taken

advantage of relatively cheap and easy-to-use technology to preserve their unique print-based holdings, including photographs, postcards, books, manuscripts, maps, and analog audio and video recordings. Slavin (1991) reports that the National Archives of Pakistan boasts a strong preservation program. The microfilming of public records from the ministries (for security purposes) as well as that of newspapers and the private collection has resulted in more than 7,000 rolls of microfilm. The National Archives of Pakistan has stabilized many of its collections and greatly reduced many hazards, primarily through preservation by means of microfilming. Ameen and Shafique (2009) also report about Punjab University Library adopting microfilming for preservation of oriental resources. Many microfilms of rare and precious manuscripts in Arabic, Persian and Urdu are available in the library.

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the preservation status in various libraries in Srinagar.
2. To find out the various pest control measures adopted by different libraries in Srinagar.
3. To reveal the facilities available in various libraries in Srinagar.

Scope

The scope of study is confined to the area under the jurisdiction of Srinagar district only. Further, only those libraries, institutions, museums, archives etc. are covered under the study which are in possession of rare manuscripts or rare documents as the preservation aspects are required generally for these resources.

Methodology

The study used a survey method and a schedule is used as a tool to gather the data from different libraries in Srinagar. Interview with different persons is also conducted to get a lead regarding these institutions in Srinagar. The data is gathered personally by the investigator while paying visit to each institution. The data gathered is organized under different headings to achieve the set objectives.

Analysis of Data

Preservation Policy

A preservation policy is must for an institution to take care of the important resources. A policy gives a direction to the efforts taken by an institution. However, the study reveals that only a single institution (J&K Academy of Arts Culture & Languages) claims to have a preservation policy, out of 37 institutions having manuscripts or rare documents (Annexure-I).

Condition of the Collection

As institutions are facing new preservation issues, scrutinizing the present condition of a document is very important for initiating an appropriate preservation method (Groenewald & Breytenbach, 2011). As the documents become old, they have tendency to become brittle, fragile and sometimes get worm eaten as well.

*Table 1. Present Condition**

Category	All Good	Good	Brittle	Worm Eaten	Fragile	Fungus Affected
Institutions (n=37)	3 (8.1)	34 (91.9)	27 (73)	31 (83.8)	34 (91.9)	3 (8.1)

*(*The figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentage)*

The study reveals that thirty-four (91.9%) institutions have fragile collection, 31 (83.8%) have worm eaten collection, 27 (73%) possess brittle collection and 34 (91.9%) have good collection also. (Table 1)

Meanwhile, Misra (n.d.) also reports about worm eaten and brittle collection in all the 8 libraries studied in Uttar Pradesh and 87.5% libraries have fungus affected collection while as fungus

affected collection is reported in few institutions (8.1%) in Srinagar may be due to low level of humidity here.

Awareness Programmes

Awareness programmes are important to invite attention of the users towards the important collections. Seven institutions (18.9%) are conducting awareness programmes about rare books/manuscripts. Out of them, 6 (16.2%) institutions are conducting the programmes annually.

The awareness programmes are reported to be conducted in all the libraries studied by Balakrishna (2015b) in Andhra Pradesh. The programmes include exhibitions (70%), seminars (60%), awareness creation camps (60%), consultation (60%) and others but in Srinagar these programmes are not conducted actively by many institutions.

Preservation Measures

According to Hedstrom (1998), much remains to be done to preserve cultural, intellectual, and scholarly resources in traditional formats that form the foundation for our cultural research and teaching. Within developed countries, major institutions tend to have the most extensive preservation programmes and preservation techniques are better developed for print material but in developing countries like India only few institutions have sophisticated technology and tools for preservation of printed material.

Floor Cleaning

Regular effective housekeeping is second only to maintaining stable temperature and humidity levels as the most effective preventive preservation method (Harvey, 1994).

The condition of the adjacent area where precious resources like manuscripts are kept has greater influence towards the safe upkeep of these resources. In this milieu, floor cleaning is vital for the safety of the collection. The floor cleaning is carried out in almost all institutions (97.3%) and only one institution doesn't carry out this operation. This housekeeping operation is also performed by all the individuals/families and religious institutions.

Among the institutions, 13 (36.1%) clean the floor weekly and 5 (13.9%) have monthly cleaning programme while as 18 (50%) are cleaning the floor daily. Hence, daily cleaning is dominant feature in institutions. Those cleaning the floor on monthly basis are clearing exposing the collection to insects. The dirt from the floor can easily move to shelves with slight movement in air. (Table 2)

*Table 2. Floor Cleaning Routine**

Category	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
Institutions (n=36)	18 (50)	13 (36.1)	5 (13.9)

(*The figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentage)

Shelf Cleaning

Shelf cleaning is important particularly in those places where open shelves are used for the collection. Among the institutions, only one institution is not taking care of shelves. Otherwise, shelf cleaning is reported in all the other institutions.

Majority of the institutions (22 institutions i.e., 61.1%) clean the shelves on monthly basis while as 11 (30.6%) institutions perform this operation on weekly basis and only 8.3% institutions clean shelves daily (Table 3). The frequency needs to be at least changed to weekly basis, if not daily, so that clean environment prevails in the libraries.

*Table 3. Shelf Cleaning Routine**

Category	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
Institutions (n=36)	3 (8.3)	11 (30.6)	22 (61.1)

(*The figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentage)

Pest Control Status

Pest control measures are often required in libraries and depend upon the climate of the place and condition of the collection. In this scenario, it is important to understand the status of pest control measures taken by the institutions. Among the institutions, pest control measures are taken by only 13 (35.1%) institutions out of 37 institutions studied.

It is quite evident from the study that pest control techniques are not frequently performed as 53.8% institutions reported to carry out this operation not regularly. Seven institutions have taken pest control measures but do not conduct this operation frequently while as 5 (38.5%) institutions claim to be taking the measures monthly good for the life of rare collection. (Table 4)

*Table 4. Pest Control Process: Frequency**

Category	Monthly	Annually	Not frequently
Institutions (n=13)	5 (38.5)	1 (7.7)	7 (53.8)

*(*The figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentage)*

De-acidification

De-acidification is a process that neutralises the acidic components in paper in order to improve durability (Mahapatra & Chakrabarti, 2003). Londhe, Desale and Patil (2011) reveal the de-acidification process conducted on some manuscripts for preservation purpose. De-acidification is a costly process and is not carried out by many institutions. The study identifies 3 (8.1%) institutions performing the process of de-acidification. The frequency of conducting such process is annual (33.3%) in one institution but two institutions are not frequently (66.7%) carrying out the de-acidification.

Fumigation

Fumigation is a known method in libraries and museums to control the growth of pests (Harvey, 1994). Fumigation is a gaseous treatment of materials to destroy micro-organisms and infestation

by insects and is usually done in a vacuum air tight chamber. Fumigation of documents is the effective method for destruction of all biological enemies including fungi, mould, insects etc. (Mahapatra & Chakrabarti, 2003). The data reveals that 8 (21.6%) institutions are following the process of fumigation and out of them, 2 (25%) are doing it on monthly basis while as the other six (75%) are not doing it frequently.

The findings of the study are alarming as only few institutions in Srinagar have fumigated their collections which is not a healthy trend.

Lamination

Lamination, here, connotes protecting and strengthening paper by covering both sides with transparent polythene sheet. Lamination is not possible for some of the very fragile manuscripts and lamination also makes a visual change to the paper's original colour. Apart from this, heat generated during lamination also has tendency to damage the paper (Londhe et al., 2011). But still this method was used by few to preserve the precious documents almost a decade ago.

Among the institutions, lamination is reported in one library (2.7%) on need basis but it is now regarded as the last step to save a document. Apart from this, three other institutions were using lamination but have now stopped it perhaps for its ill effects. Lamination is not reported from any individual/family or religious institution under study.

The finding of this study relating to institutions differ with the study by Rosy Jan, Mirza and Khan (2012) where 4 libraries report using lamination. The difference could be because of the fact that few libraries have stopped its use by now but earlier they were using this facility.

Microfilming

Boock and Vondracek (2006) find microfilming relatively cheap and easy-to-use technology to digitize the unique print-based holdings. This method of preservation was commonly used about two-three decades ago but is not being used by many now (Harvey, 1994). The National Archives of Pakistan has adopted microfilming of public records from the ministries (for security purposes) as well as that of newspapers and the private collection has resulted in more than 7,000 rolls of

microfilm (Slavin, 1991). Similarly, Ameen and Shafique (2009) also report about Punjab University Library adopting microfilming for conservation of oriental resources. Microfilming is also reported in two institutions in Odisha (Sahoo & Panda, 2013) and 5 institutions (62.5%) in Uttar Pradesh (Misra, n.d.). Gaur and Chakraborty (2009) are of the opinion that to ensure the preservation and access to manuscripts techniques including microfilming and digitization should be resorted to.

The data reveals that microfilming was done by two libraries but both have now stopped it which is not in tune with the recommended preservation process.

Digitization

Digitization has almost replaced the microfilming and is mostly used to preserve the content of the documents for future use. The study identifies eleven (29.7%) institutions having digitized their collections and all are carrying this process on need basis.

General Facilities of Preservation

Due to latest advancements in the field of preservation, it has become imperative for the institutions holding precious collections to keep minimum common facilities available. The common facilities include binding, fumigation chamber, scanners, conservation lab etc. The study identifies 28 (75.7%) institutions having bindery facility. Fumigation chamber is available in 4 (10.8%) institutions almost similar to the findings of Misra (n.d.) who reports about 25% libraries in possession of fumigation chamber in Uttar Pradesh. Scanners are possessed by 2 (5.4%) institutions while as conservation lab and spray pumps are in 3 (8.1%) institutions each. One of the institutions has lamination facility not recommended by experts but is the last step to save a document. (Table 5).

The study reveals that the general facilities are lacking in the institutions except binding. The situation demands immediate attention so that the oriental resources are safeguarded with the help of genuine instruments and techniques of preservation.

Misra (n.d.) informs that most of the institutions (62.5%), out of select 8 libraries in Uttar Pradesh, have bindery service which is almost equal in proportion to the figures in Srinagar.

*Table 5. General Facilities**

Institutions	Binding	Lamination	Fumigation Chamber	Spray Pumps	Scanners for Digitization	Conservation Lab
37	28 (75.7)	1 (2.7)	4 (10.8)	3 (8.1)	2 (5.4)	3 (8.1)

(*The figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentage)

Conservation Lab: Facilities

Conservation includes proper diagnosis of the decayed material, timely curative treatment and appropriate prevention from further decay. Conservation lab is needed in institutions with all the facilities to check the deterioration of the documents and make necessary repairing wherever required. This facility exists in only three institutions. All the facilities are available in these three conservation labs except one institution does not use solvent while other is not flattening or inducing flexibility. (Table 6)

*Table 6. Conservation Lab Facilities**

Available Facilities	Institutions (N=3)
Cleaning is done using brush	3 (100)
Cleaning is done using solvent (Toluene/Acetone etc.)	2 (66.7)

Fumigation is done whenever required	3 (100)
De-acidification technique is used	3 (100)
Cover boards are changed	3 (100)
Flattening/Inducing flexibility using Chua oil etc.	2 (66.7)
Lamination with tissue paper by experts (Conservators)	3 (100)

(*The figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentage)

Pest Control: Chemicals/Pesticides used

Naphthalene (76.9%) is found to be the most widely used chemical/pesticide among the 13 institutions in Srinagar as reported in earlier. Naphthalene is also reported in most of the select libraries (87.5%) of Uttar Pradesh (Misra, n.d.).

Thymol is used by 5 (38.5%) institutions while as Paradichlorobenzene is also used by 6 (46.2%) institutions. Further, Ethyl Alcohol and Camphor is also reported to be used by three libraries each. (Table 7)

*Table 7. Pest Control: Chemicals/Pesticides used**

Category	Institutions (N=13)
Menthol	2 (15.4)
Thymol	5 (38.5)
Nepthalene	10 (76.9)
Camphor	3 (23.1)

Formaldehyde	
Ethyl Alcohol	3 (23.1)
Dicholorobenzene	1 (7.7)
Paradicholorobenzene	6 (46.2)

*(*The figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentage)*

Instruments

The humidity, light and temperature mainly affect the manuscripts and rare documents. Too high or too low humidity, light and temperature are dangerous for them. So, their proper recording and maintenance is essential to keep the collection in a good condition. The study reveals that the institutions do not have any kind of instrument to check the level of humidity, temperature and intensity of light.

The figures are worrying in nature as the institutions don't possess the instruments/gadgets to record the levels of temperature, light and humidity. When different techniques/instruments are adopted in well-known libraries and archives of the world like Walters and Hanthorn (1998) report that 70% archives studied by them are equipped with a system to record/control temperature and a lower number of archives (59%) record/control relative humidity levels.

Light Control Methods

Light is a form of radiant energy and as such is a source of the energy needed for chemical reactions such as the breakdown of complex cellulose molecules to simpler molecules in paper and other organic material. Hence, direct sunlight easily damages the collection of any library (Harvey, 1994). For this, different techniques are adopted to control the harmful effects of light. The study identifies three institutions (8.1%) having installed fibre glasses while as most (59.5%) have installed power savers. Further, two (5.4%) institutions have installed LEDs in their libraries.

Table 8. Light Control Methods*

Category	Filters over Windows	Fibre Glass	Power Savers	LEDs
Institutions (n=37)	--	3 (8.1)	22 (59.5)	2 (5.4)

(*The figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentage)

The study reveals that the collection in Srinagar is prone to get damaged for not installing appropriate material though power savers are used by 59.5% institutions. In Uttar Pradesh, Green paint is used in 62.5% institutions (Misra, n.d.) while as in Srinagar only one library has partially used Blue/White paint on the windowpanes to check the harmful effects of sunlight.

Humidity Control Methods

The study reveals that only few institutions (13.5%) have installed exhaust fans as a measure to avoid humidity while as twenty-eight institutions (75.7%) make use of fans. Misra (n.d.) reports that all the 8 select libraries in Uttar Pradesh have installed fans due to high temperature in this region.

Air conditioner (AC) facility is completely missing in the institutions. In Srinagar, the institutions are not having AC facility but in Andhra Pradesh a reasonable number (30%) have installed this facility (Balakrishna, 2015b) while as in Uttar Pradesh half of the institutions have this facility (Misra, n.d.) which may be because of the hot environmental condition.

Table 9. Humidity Control Methods*

Category	Silica Gel	Air Conditioner	Fans	Exhaust Fans
Institutions (n=37)	5 (13.5)	--	28 (75.7)	5 (13.5)

(*The figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentage)

Silica gel is used by 5 institutions (13.5%). Likewise, in Andhra Pradesh only two, out of ten, libraries studied use silica gel/nikka pellets (Balakrishna, 2015b).

The data reveals that 29 (78.4%) institutions possess any kind of instrument/material to check the humidity. (Table 10)

Awareness regarding optimum use of instruments/material to check humidity is equally important for the rare collection. However, only 7 (24.1%) institutions have staff aware of the optimum use of such instruments/material. (Table 10)

Table 10. Awareness regarding Humidity Control Methods*

Category	Institutions having any kind of Instrument/Material to check Humidity	Awareness regarding Humidity Control Methods	
		Yes	No
Institutions (n=37)	29 (78.4)	7 (24.1)	22 (75.9)

(*The figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentage)

Use of Special Techniques

Special care is needed to take care of special collection of manuscripts/rare documents. The special care includes wrapping the manuscripts in acid free handmade paper, keeping them in air tight containers and providing limited access to them. The protective enclosures provide protection from water, smoke, heat and other destructive agents (Harvey, 1994).

About 8.1% institutions place the rare resources in the air tight containers while as 10.8% institutions wrap them in acid free hand-made card boards and 44.4% provide limited access to their rare collections. (Table 11)

Table 11. Special Techniques used*

Category	Wrapping in Acid Free Hand-made Paper/Card boards	Keeping in Air tight Containers	Limited Access or Access to Experts only
Institutions (n=37)	4 (10.8)	3 (8.1)	16 (44.4)

(*The figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentage)

While enquiring about the special care taken by the institutions/families, some different innovative approaches are revealed. Two institutions (5.4%) make use of polythene bags to preserve the rare resources while as two libraries (5.4%) report the use of cloth to wrap the rare collection. But in Uttar Pradesh, most of the libraries (87.5%) report the use of cloth for wrapping the precious collection (Misra, n.d.). Similarly, in Assam all the manuscript repositories make use of cloth of different colours to wrap the manuscripts (Das, 2013).

So, the study reveals that the manuscripts and other rare collections in Srinagar require special care to increase their shelf life. Certain guidelines must to be followed for conservation/ preservation of such documents like the guidelines put forth by Jeyaraj (2010).

Human Resource

Skilled human resource is essential ingredient for providing adequate services to the users and particularly for maintenance of the resources. The institutions are mostly being run by non-professionals. The study identifies 82 professionals with varying degrees and skills working in these institutions. Conservators are in only 4 institutions which is alarming keeping in view the preservation and conservation status of the precious resources.

Besides, sixteen (43.2%) institutions are being run by non-professionals which may prove hazardous at a later stage. (Fig. 1)

Balakrishna (2015a) reveals the professional staff strength (96 professionals) of 10 manuscripts libraries in Andhra Pradesh which is quite higher than the professional staff strength of 37 institutions in Srinagar. Similarly, Sahoo and Panda (2013) have identified 20 trained staff in 16 libraries which indicates a situation not better than Srinagar.

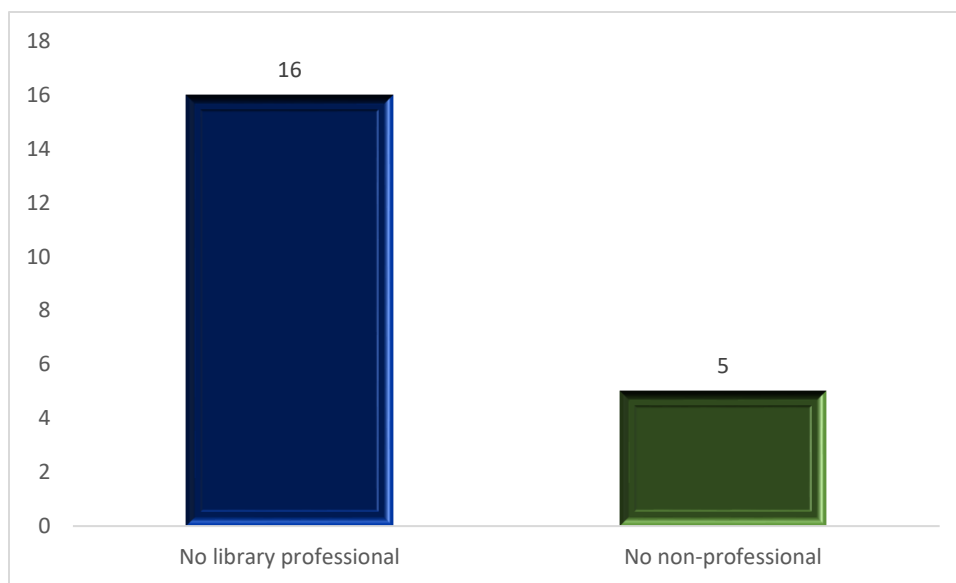


Fig. 1. Non-availability of Staff

Conclusion

The status of preservation in libraries is not good as most of them are having worm eaten and fungus affected collections. With no government policy, the situation is going to get debauched as there is system in place to check the quantum of damage in the libraries studied. Chemical/pesticide use is not as per scientific standards. The libraries have seldom gadgets of preservation. The light and humidity control methods are also not upto mark. Regarding the use of special techniques, it is disheartening to see that only few libraries use acid free card boards and air tight containers for the manuscripts and rare collections. The situation has got worsened due to no professional in libraries and only few conservators in select institutions in Srinagar. The techniques like deacidification, fumigation, microfilming and digitization are yet to make an impact in Srinagar. However, much focus of experts over the last decade has remained on digitization.

Preservation is very important as information is produced and encountered by individuals and institutions in escalating volumes, and it is likely that part of information will be permanently lost due to lack of care. To prevent deterioration and loss of library material, libraries should choose digitization, as an additional method for reformatting endangered and fragile paper-based materials to both preserve and provide increased access to library (Vrana, 2011). Digitization allows preservation of rare, fragile, and unique materials. However, digitization also is also a dream in many libraries studied in Srinagar as only 11 institutions have reported to have digitized or are digitizing their unique and precious collections.

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Annexure-I

List of Libraries/Institutions/Museums/Public Places Studied

S. No.	Library/Institution/Museum/Public Place along with Address
1.	Oriental Research Library, University of Kashmir Campus, Hazratbal
2.	Sri Pratap (SP) College, M.A. Road
3.	Sri Pratap Singh (SPS) Library, M.A. Road
4.	Amar Singh College, Gogji Bagh
5.	J&K Academy of Arts Culture & Languages, Lal Mandi
6.	Directorate of Archives Archaeology & Museum, Old Secretariat
7.	Gandhi Memorial College, Babi-deem
8.	Government College for Women, M.A. Road
9.	Hanafia Arabic College, Noorbagh
10.	Government College for Women, Nawakadal
11.	Islamia Higher Secondary, Rajouri Kadal
12.	Vishwa Bharati Women's College, Rainawari
13.	Darul-Uloom Qasmia, Budshah Mohalla, Lal Bazar
14.	Darul-Uloom Bilalia, Ahmada Kadal, Bhagwanpora, Lal Bazar
15.	Department of Persian, University of Kashmir, Hazratbal
16.	Department of Sanskrit, University of Kashmir, Hazratbal
17.	Islamia Oriental College, Rajouri Kadal (Now, Noor-i-Islam Oriental College)
18.	Darul Uloom Illahiya, Illahi Bagh, Buchpora
19.	Darul Uloom Naqshbandi, Rainawari
20.	Central Asian Museum, Centre for Central Asian Studies, University of Kashmir, Hazratbal
21.	Department of Urdu, University of Kashmir, Hazratbal
22.	Shah-i-Hamadan Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Kashmir, Hazratbal
23.	Department of Kashmiri, University of Kashmir, Hazratbal

24.	Allama Iqbal Library, University of Kashmir, Hazratbal
25.	Ram Krishan Mission Library, Karan Nagar
26.	Government Oriental College, Bagi Ali Mardaan Khan
27.	Department of Hindi, University of Kashmir, Hazratbal
28.	Sri Pratap Singh (SPS) Museum
29.	Gani Memorial Reading Room Centre, Rajouri Kadal
30.	Department of History, University of Kashmir, Hazratbal
31.	Iqbal Institute of Culture & Philosophy, University of Kashmir, Hazratbal
32.	Alkulyat-us-Salafia, Batamaloo
33.	Kashmir Research Institute, Nishat
34.	Al-Maktab-Assaiutia (Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies), Soura
35.	Reference and Research Section, Directorate of Information, Srinagar
36.	Sultan-ul-Arifeen Library, Nowhatta
37.	Amar Singh Club Library, Sonawar