

Preservation and Conservation of Library Materials (Books in Library): User Guidelines

Khin San Oo*

Abstract

Preservation and conservation of library materials are an important aspect of library and information management. This study is to introduce the caring and handling of library materials for users and library staff with little or no preservation knowledge. The provision of better guidelines is made for library staff and users that books are treated with respect to prolong the useful life of books. These guidelines are intended to assist libraries with preservation and conservation. This study is conducted through analytical study and required data is collected through various documentary sources. It is useful and beneficial for libraries not to lose and damage of books in libraries.

Keywords: Conservation, guidelines, library materials, preservation

1. Introduction

A library is a repository of wisdom of great thinkers of the past, present and the future. Thus it is obvious that libraries have responsibilities to preserve, conserve, and restore libraries materials. The essential missions of libraries are preservation and access to classified information.

Librarians in all over the world have the responsibility of acquiring, processing, disseminating information to users.

Libraries acquire materials to meet the informational or recreational needs of its clientele. When the materials in one's care are allowed to deteriorate unchecked or become damaged in anyway, it may be difficult and may be ultimately difficult the information it embodies available for use. It is the responsibility of the library staff to keep these materials in good physical condition so that they are available for users at all times.

The preservation guidelines described are used by the libraries in the care of its collections and are considered suitable by the library as described.

Nowadays many large libraries are taking efforts to preserve and conserve library materials, but more efforts are required by other small libraries in the world.

Preservation and conservation of library heritage are very important as it could be related to social, economic, political, historical, legal or religious and could be used for future purpose. They are vital role so that other generations can take advantage of it. It is the duty of the head of the institution and management to draft a suitable policy to preserve or conserve rare or old material in different ways.

Objective of the Study

The study of preservation and conservation activities in the library is to prolong the usable life of useful research information is preventive preservation and prescriptive preservation. The objectives of the study are:

- i. to reduce risks of damage
- ii. to provide suitable storage environments and safe handling procedures.
- iii. to slow down the rate of deterioration
- iv. to introduce the caring and handling of library materials for users and library staff.

* Lecturer, Department of Library and Information Studies, Yadanabon University

Scope of the Study

This paper introduces the preservation and conservation of library materials, especially functional items like books as users' guidelines. These will help to protect books in the library.

Method of the Study

Methodology applied in the present study is conducted through analytical study and required data is collected through various documentary sources as primary source and with experience and study of preservation and conservation of library materials.

Analytical study is an important process to the interpretation of the data. And then documentary approach is used to get available information contained in.

2. Literature Review

Meaning and Definition of Preservation and Conservation

The terms preservation, conservation, and restoration as used in these guidelines are the simple definitions used by Wesley L. Boomgaarden:

"Preservation is an action taken to anticipate, prevent, stop or retard deterioration."

"Conservation is the maintenance of each item in the collection in a usable condition."

*"Restoration is the act of returning the deteriorated item to its original or near-original condition."*¹

Preservation is the task of minimizing or reducing the physical and chemical deterioration of documents. Conservation is the maintenance of documents in a usable condition through treatment and repairs of individual items to slow the process of decay or to restore them to a usable state. Conservation includes study, diagnosis, preventive care, examination, treatment, documentation using any methods that may prove effective in keeping that property in as close to its original condition as possible and for as long as possible. The conservation actions are carried out for a variety of reasons including aesthetic choices, stabilization, needs for structural integrity or for cultural requirements for intangible continuity.²

Preservation and Conservation of Library Materials: The library keeps the document by considering the long-term preservation of the items while still allowing the end user to access the material easily. But all library collections experience damage from use and decay from aging. So there is a need of preservation and conservation of library materials.³

(a) Need of Preservation and Conservation: When an important, often used book is found in a poor physical condition that restricts its future use and denies the borrower the pleasure of its reading, then the need arises for its preservation and conservation. The need of preservation and conservation are-

(i) **Compendium of Information:** Books, journals, newspapers are the sources of information. They reflect social, economic, political and cultural life. They also depict the latest trend on all subjects or topics and, as such, they are a valuable asset of our society

1. ALA, "Guidelines for Preservation and Conservation, and Restoration of Its Local History and Local Genealogical Materials," ALA User Menu, (1996): 2-6, accessed February 16, 2019, file:///D:/Preservation Guidelines For Preservation, Conservation, and Restoration.

2. UGC NET Guide, "Preservation and Conservation of Library Materials," (June 2019):1, accessed February 16, 2019, file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/ Preservation%20 and%20 Conservation%20of%20Library%20Materials%20-%20Free%20Online%20NTA % 20UGC%20NET _JRF%20Guide% 20Book%20for%20June%202019.htm. (Hereafter cited as UGC)

3. UGC

(ii) **Raw Materials of History:** The old reading material constitutes the raw materials of our history and provides background information about an event in history. Nostalgia for such works is another point of consideration.

(iii) **Wide Range of Users:** Everyone from a child to an old man, from layman to researchers, turns to information even after hundred years of the publication of the material.

(iv) **Future and Heavy Use:** Hard copies of the old as well as new materials are prone to decay. So, to provide continuous and wider access to the collection preservation is a must.

(v) **Rare Materials:** Manuscripts and other materials are of immense value from the cultural and historical point of view and therefore they need to be preserved. Priority should be given to high-value, at-risk materials of national interest. The purpose should be to serve preventive preservation, as well as security, goals by reducing the handling of the originals.⁴

(b) Strategies in Preservation and Conservation: The strategies in preservation and conservation of library material can be viewed in following points-

(i) **Document Selection:** If preservation and conservation practices will be followed then the goal should be to bring as many worthy collections as possible for the document at risk to improve access.

(ii) **Options:** Choosing the options will be followed to meet the requirements of the custodial function of the library as well as its current use.

(iii) **Budget:** Preparing a budget for the preservation and conservation of the reading materials includes cost in procuring equipment, and others.

(iv) **Procuring Necessary Infrastructure:** According to the option chosen for preservation necessary infrastructure should be developed. In case of digital preservation necessary hardware and software should be procured. If possible the archive or library can go for automated management systems that will manage digital resources for acquisition, use, and archiving automatically.

(v) **The Conservation Laboratory:** Conservators routinely use chemical and scientific analysis for the examination and treatment of the works. The modern conservation lab uses equipment such as microscopes, spectrometers, and x-ray machines to understand better the objects and their components. Thus the data collected help in deciding the conservation treatments to be provided to the object.⁵

(c) Types of Preservation and Conservation Techniques: The preservation and conservation techniques can be of the following types:-

(i) **Preventive Conservation:** Many cultural works are sensitive to environmental conditions such as temperature, humidity and exposure to light and ultraviolet light. Taking sufficient measures protect materials in a controlled environment where such variables are maintained within a range of damage-limiting levels called preventive conservation.

(ii) **Interventive Conservation:** Interventive Conservation refers to any act by a conservator that involves a direct interaction between the conservator and the cultural material. These interventive treatments could involve cleaning, stabilizing, repair, or even replacement of parts of the original object or consolidation such as securing flaking paint.⁶

4. UGC

5. Ibid.

6. UGC.

(d) Ethics in Conservation: The conservator applies some simple ethical guidelines, such as:
 (i) Minimal Intervention: It is essential that the conservator should fully justify the intervention for conservation if necessary before the work is undertaken and if necessary after the work is over.

(ii) Reversible Methods: Using appropriate materials and methods that aim to be reversible to reduce the possible problems with future treatment, investigation, and use is one of the guiding principles of conservation. It means that all interventions with the object should be fully reversible, and the object should be in a position to be returned to the state in which it was, prior to the conservator's intervention. This principle, nowadays, has been widely criticized within the conservation profession itself.

(iii) Complete Documentation: Complete documentation of the work is carried out before, during, and after the treatment if necessary. It is a must for all kinds of documents as it will provide what was done with the document in the past and accordingly it helps in taking the right decision in future treatment process.⁷

Preservation and conservation are commonly used interchangeably. Preservation means regular maintenance of library material, whereas Conservation means the remedial treatment and restoration of the already damaged material.

The preservation and conservation will repair the special handling of library materials. These guidelines are intended to assist libraries with preservation, conservation and restoration of heavily used library materials. Preservation and conservation practices and techniques is an important aspect of library and information management.

The preservation guidelines are used by the libraries in the care of its collections and are considered suitable by the library as described.

Review of the Related Literature

The literature survey reveals that the published literature in this field is numerous and scattered. It was not possible to record all the literature for this review. So few related studies have been observed before conducting this study.

Conservation and preservation of deteriorating information resources in libraries have become a global phenomenon to which libraries must aggressively respond if their mission of providing information needs of their patrons would be met (Akande, 2009).⁸

Guidelines for University Library Services to Undergraduate Students were *approved by the ACRL Board of Directors at ALA Annual Conference, June 2005. Revision approved October 2013*. Those guidelines are intended to apply to library services to undergraduate students at university libraries and to be used in conjunction with the ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education.⁹

Libraries acquire material to meet the informational or recreational needs of its clientele. When the material in one's care is allowed to deteriorate unchecked or become damaged in anyway, it may be difficult and may be ultimately difficult or the information it embodies for use. It is the responsibility of the library staff to keep these materials in good physical condition so that they are available for users at all times. Materials in many libraries

7. Ibid.

8. Samson Oyeniyi Akande, "Knowledge, Perception, and Attitudes of Library Personal towards Preservation of Information Resources in Nigerian Federal University Libraries." *Library Philosophy and Practice (e journal)*, (November 2009), accessed February 16, 2019, <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>.

9. ACRL Board of Director, "*Guidelines for University library Services to Undergraduate Students*" (June 2005), accessed February 16, 2019, www.ala.org.

and archives throughout the country are still housed in conditions that leave much to be desired (Olatokun, 2008).¹⁰

The fundamental factor in minimizing unnecessary damage to the library material also depends on the careful handling of the materials on the part of both staff and reader. Books should never be pulled off the shelves by head caps. When more than four to five books have to be carried within the library, care should be taken to reduce the possibility of dropping off the books. Over-sized books should be handled with great care. Books should not be jammed on overcrowded shelves that may cause damage to binding (Kneale, 2000; Ovwoh and Iwhiwu, 2010).¹¹

Improper and faulty actions taken by the library staff may cause deterioration to library materials. Cheap and improper materials are often used for mending and repairing. Wrong insecticides are used for fumigation, repairing, restoration and lamination work, which are usually done by untrained personnel. And all these conditions cause deterioration or worse, aggravate deterioration of library materials (Mahapatra and Wamukoya, 2004).¹²

Edhebe (2004) stated that much avoidable damage is done to books by well-meaning but untrained librarians through the following:

1. Use of pressure sensitive tapes.
2. Indeterminate use of polyvinyl acetate and other synthetic adhesives.
3. Use of highly acid paper for protective wrappers.
4. Use of wood backing in print, picture and map frames.
5. Amateur lamination.
6. Improper storage.¹³

3. Preservation and Conservation of Library Materials (Books in Library): User Guidelines

Some users are unquestionably the greatest careless handling techniques of library materials. Most of them have library education with little or no preservation knowledge. The general library mission statement and goals serve as a framework for its activities, including services for users. This planning process provides an overall direction that helps to guide day-to-day activities and decisions regarding services to users. The provision of better handling techniques and guidelines is made for library staff and users so that books are treated with respect to prolong the useful life of books. They are intended to assist libraries with preservation and conservation. Staff training for safe handling practices is important to ensure that materials will be preserved during processing and also when being used by the public. Users should be instructed in the careful handling of bound volumes and in the use of the cradles and snakes in an initial orientation, as well as when formats change and require different handling practices. There can be many ways to educate users on the proper care of library materials.

Preservation of paper based documents means preserving the paper-based collection of the library.

-
10. Wole Michael Olatokun, "A Survey of Preservation and Conservation Practices and Techniques in Nigerian University Library," *Library and Information Science Research Electronic Journal* 18, no.2 (September 2008), accessed February 16, 2019, [http:// Libres. Curtin.edu.aul/](http://Libres.Curtin.edu.aul/).
 11. Kneale RA, "Reclaiming the JAC library: Preserving and Conserving Library Materials." *Information Outlook*, 4 (7). *Greener Journal of Social Sciences* Vol. 3 (1) (2000). Accessed February 16, 2019. www.gjournals.org.
 12. Mahapatra and Wamukoya, "Improper and faulty actions taken by the library staff." (2000). Accessed February 16, 2019. https://www.academia.edu/22943392/Problems_of_Conservation_and_Preservation_of_Library_Resources_in_African_Academ.
 13. C. Edhebe, 2004. *The Preservation and Conservation of Materials in the College of Education Library, Warri*. Abraka: Delta State University.

Now in this study improvement of handling Techniques and Guidelines for Using Research Collection are instructed for staff and patrons concerning proper use and handling presented as below.

Improvement of Handling Techniques

Once library material becomes part of a collection of historical or research importance it must be handled much more carefully than before to reduce wear and tear.

Books must be treated with respect, be removed from themselves with greater care and opened thoughtfully to prolong the life of the binding.

Taking care when handling any collection item, especially functional items like books with flexing parts, is one of the most effective, cost-efficient, and easily achieved preservation measures.

Take proper care when handling books by:

- (a) Hand should always be clean and be kept clean while touching paper. Both skin oil and perspiration are both acidic and stain paper.
- (b) Books should be removed from shelves by holding either side of the spine on the covers by one thumb and forefinger, never by hooking the forefinger over the top of the spine. If books are tightly shelved push the two adjacent books in a little to allow for more careful removal.
- (c) More than three books should be transported by box or trolley to reduce the chance of dropping them.
- (d) Documents and loose papers should be handled gently and turned with care, reducing bending and folding to the minimum. Work with papers laid flat on table, not held in hands.
- (e) Boxes of papers should be carried without shuffling the contents. Withdraw and replace papers in groups or bundles to reduce abrasion.
- (f) Only pencil should be used when consulting reference or historical books, documents and records. Ink marks are difficult to remove.
- (g) Keep food and drinks away lunch, snacks, beverages do not belong in the stack.
- (h) Provide a clear roomy workspace with good lighting.
- (i) Constant supervision will be necessary while any part of the collection is in use.
- (j) Use a flat bookmark to make your place.
- (k) Store oversize book flat or spine down. It is less damaging proper
- (l) Avoid using metal paper clips and rubber bands

Collection Maintenance

Collection maintenance is really good housekeeping. It is a very effective way to make an impact on a collection without spending huge amounts of money. The techniques involved are simple:

- (a) Cleaning shelves
- (b) Cleaning and dusting covers and text block
- (c) Placing items in new enclosures (boxes and folders)
- (d) Performing minor repairs to covers and text block
- (e) Tipping in loose pages
- (f) Removing tapes, clips and elastic bands etc.
- (g) Sewing items into pamphlet binders
- (h) Attaching new labels
- (i) Replacing items in correct sequence on shelves

This work is ideally carried out in the stack area. Work stations equipped with all the necessary repair materials and tools are placed nearby. The advantage of this system is of course that it saves a lot of time and handling. It is not necessary to record the movement of

the items as they do not leave the stack area. Items are readily accessible if required by a client.

Guidelines for using research collections

Research facilities are made available to the public on the understanding that the material is handled carefully and appreciating that some items may be original or irreplaceable.

Readers are requested to assist in the conservation of the collection by reporting any damage and observing the following simple basic rules.

- (a) Do not put on book or anything else on top of an open book or document.
- (b) Do not lean on any research material while reading
- (c) Do not straighten out creased or dog-eared pages. Unfolding may cause the paper to break.
- (d) Do not bend books back lay them face downwards or otherwise damage the binding.
- (e) Do not write in or mark books or papers in any way.
- (f) Keep papers and documents flat on table while reading.
- (g) Do not write on paper resting on open or closed books, documents or plans.
- (h) Use pencil when making notes.
- (i) Keep all research material off the floor.
- (j) Do not bring into the research any materials which could harm the collections.

These include food, drink, paste or glue, adhesive tape of any sort pens or scissors. Damage to collections can be avoided by preventing overcrowded, careless, or haphazard storage conditions. Chemically unstable and improperly fitting shelving and storage enclosures accelerate the deterioration of materials they are intended to protect. Normal use causes wear, but inexpert and rough handling can quickly lead to extensive damage to collections requiring expensive repair or replacement. The longevity of collections can be extended significantly by putting into practice the guidelines discussed here.

4. Finding and Discussion

The present study intends to improve the handling technique and to apply to library services for both staff and users. The findings of this study are based on three kinds of techniques: improvements of handling techniques, collection Maintenance and Guidelines for using research collections. There are certain do's and don'ts which the library staff and the users should follow to increase the longevity of the library resources. This planning process provides an overall direction that helps to guide day-to-day activities and decisions regarding services to undergraduate users.

For improvement of handling techniques, taking care when handling any collection item, especially functional items like books is to develop a culture of best practice in handling materialist for staff and ideally users to receive regular training in appropriate handling techniques. If users cannot be given training, staff must be able and ready to intervene when harmful practice is observed. Handling methods have a direct impact on the useful life of collections. Instruction in careful handling techniques, clearly written procedures, and proper equipment are all essential to ensure quality and efficiency.

For collection maintenance is really good housekeeping. It is a very effective way to make an impact on a collection without spending huge amounts of money. Cleaning and dusting of library materials are the most commonly used technique. Damage to collections can be avoided by preventing overcrowded, careless, or haphazard storage conditions. Chemically unstable and improperly fitting shelving and storage enclosures accelerate the deterioration of materials they are intended to protect. Normal use causes wear, but inexpert and rough

handling can quickly lead to extensive damage to collections requiring expensive repair or replacement.

The guidelines are designed as a tool to help those providing services to users in a library. The standard of care and handling of books by their custodians and users is often pretty low. Improper storage, faulty repairmen, rough handling, deliberate abuse, folding the fore-edges of pages as a mark of reading, marking by ball pen, mutilation, vandalism are all examples of deterioration of books by human beings.

Users are also required to observe the Code of Discipline for Users. These regulations are subjects to alteration without notice; any amendments will be displayed on the library. Libraries were not effectively in use although the libraries all have preservation polices. A serious cause of deterioration often is the casual attitude of the library staff as well as the users of the library towards books. Librarians in charge of the documentary heritage are directly responsible for the overall conservation and preservation of their collections. But they are not always aware how to handle, store and use collections carefully to minimize damage and help preservation.

Indeed, there are incidences of deterioration of books becoming torn and cracking and scratching. Some of the libraries adopt and use some digital preservation techniques; they are still not effectively used.

5. Conclusion

Library materials are the heart of libraries. They are vital role to learning and studying information. Every library should have the planning for preventive preservation programme. And then, the outlined in the guidelines can be used within the library to raise awareness of library education to users and staff. Finally, libraries should not only strive to acquire materials but should ensure that the materials acquired are preserved and conserved in usable condition for generations of users. Thus library materials in damage are unavoidable, but with careful preventive measures, deterioration of the materials may be lessened or prevented as the old says "prevention is better than cure".

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Rector Dr Maung Maung Naing and Pro-rectors Dr Si Si Khin and Dr Tin Moe Thu Zar Yadanabon University for their interest and encouragement on the research work. Secondly, I would like to thank Dr Sanda Oo (Head, Department of Library and Information Studies, Yadanabon University) for her permission and encouragement. Finally, I am greatly indebted to all the teachers of the Department of Library and Information Studies, Yadanabon University. They are willingly helps and give suggestion me to complete this research in time.

Bibliography

- ACRL Board of Director. "Guidelines for University library Services to Undergraduate Students" (June 2005). Accessed February 16, 2019. www.ala.org.
- ALA. "Guidelines for Preservation and Conversation, and Restoration of Its Local History and Local Genealogical Materials." ALA User Menu. (1996): 2-6. Accessed February 16, 2019. [file:///D:/Preservation Guidelines For Preservation, Conservation, and Restoration](file:///D:/Preservation%20Guidelines%20For%20Preservation,%20Conversation,%20and%20Restoration).
- Ambika and Begum, Khaiser Jahan. "A study on Preservation and Conservation Practice and Techniques Law Cooiage Libraries in Karnataka Affiliated to Karnataka State Law University, Hubli." *International Journal of Library and Information Studies*. 7, no.4, (October-December 2017). Accessed February 16, 2019. <http://www.ijlis.org>.

- Chaudhary, S.K.2013. *Library Preservation and Conservation*. New Delhi: A.P.H publishing.
- Edhebe, C. 2004. *The Preservation and Conservation of Materials in the College of Education Library, Warri*. Abraka: Delta State University
- LC. "Care, Handing, and Storage of Books." (2017). Accessed February 16, 2019. file:///C:/User/ Downloads/ Care, Handing and storage of Books.
- Mahapatra, P.K. and Wamukoya. "Improper and faulty actions taken by the library staff." (2004). Accessed February 16, 2019. https://www.academia.edu/22943392/Problems_of_Consevation_and_Presevation_of_Library_Resources_in_African_Academ
- Olatokun, Wole Michael, PhD. "A Survey of Preservation and Conservation Practices and Techniques in Nigerian University Libraries." *Library and Information Science Research Electronic Journal*. 18, no.2. (September 2008): 1. Accessed February 16, 2019. <http://libres.Curtin.edu.aul/>
- Oyeniya Akande, Samson. "Knowledge, Perception, and Attitudes of Library Personal towards Preservation of Information Resources in Nigerian Federal University libraries." *Library Philosophy and Practice (e journal)*. (November 2009). Accessed February 16, 2019. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilparac>.
- "Preservation and Conservation of Book & Books in Asiatic Society Library, Mumbai: A Study." (November 2016). Accessed February 16, 2019. <http://www.ukessays.com>.
- Preservation and Conservation of Library Resources in Bingham University Library, Karu, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Applied Technologies in Library and Information Management*. 3, no.1, (2017). Accessed February 16, 2019. file:///C:/User/ Downloads/ Care, Handing and storage of Books.
- RA, Kneale. Reclaiming the JAC library: Preserving and Conserving Library Materials. *Information Outlook*, 4 (7). Greener Journal of Social Sciences Vol. 3 (1) (2000). Accessed February 16, 2019. www.gjournals.org.
- Sawant, Sarika. 'A Study on Preservation and Conservation Practices in Academic Libraries in Mumbai.' *Annals of Library and Information Studies*. 61. (June 2014). 153-159. Accessed February 16, 2019. Op.niscair.res.in.
- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Thesis, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researcher*. 8th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2013.
- UGC NET Guide. "Preservation and Conservation of Library Materials." (June 2019):1. Accessed February 16, 2019. file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/ Preservation %20 and%20 Conservation %20of%20Library%20Materials%20-%20Free %20Online%20NTA%20UGC%20NET_JRF%20Guide%20Book%20for%20June%202019.htm.