

Preservation and Conservation of Digital Resource Practices in Academic Libraries in Coimbatore: A Study

A.Mangayarkarasi¹ and R.Sarangapani²

¹Research Scholar & ²Professor & Head

Department of Library & Information Science

Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

Email: mangayj31@gmail.com, rspani1967@gmail.com

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Abstract - A survey using a structured questionnaire was adopted to study preservation and conservation practice in academic libraries in Coimbatore. The study revealed that there was no written policy on preservation and conservation in nearly all libraries. In addition to the lack of written preservation policy, the lack of trained manpower and lack of funding were the main constraints for preservation and conservation practices. Higher authorities and policy makers need to be initiated in staff and budget not just for preservation, but seemingly for the long term survival of libraries.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, preservation and Conservation, Digital Resources, Various Techniques.

I. INTRODUCTION

Preservation tends to include conservation, but also comprehends techniques of partial preservation of the physical object (e.g., a new binding), as well as procedures for the substitution of the original artefact by materials conversion, whereby the intellectual content of the original is at partially preserved. Conservation is one aspect of preservation activity. It implies the active use of preventive measures, or processes to repair damaged material and ensure the continued existence of individual items.

According to Srivastava & Kumar conservation and preservation are used synonymously. Technically, these two words have defined implications through they are related to each other. The conservation and preservation are the processes of keeping an object safe from harm or loss, damage, destruction or decay and maintaining it in a reasonably sound condition for present and future use. Preservation deals with the regular maintenance aspect, whereas conservation deals with the curative treatment.

The present paper attempts to study preservation and conservation practices carried out by academic libraries in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, and India.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chavan and Deshmukh (2012) have analysed the digital preservation in libraries: an overview. This article has emphasized the important of digital preservation and value of digital media. Panage, B.M (2013) have explained the

conservation and preservation of library materials. This paper discussed about the different type of conservation and preservation methods handled by librarians through the technical in modern era. Sawant Sarika (2014) in his attempts to study on preservation and conservation practise in academic libraries in Mumbai. The study revealed that the implementation of written policy on preservation and conservation for academic libraries in India and these survey studies found that majority of libraries there was no written policy for preservation and conservation.

III. PRESERVATION OF DIGITAL DOCUMENTS

Digital document preservation is a process by which digital data is preserved in digital form in order to ensure the usability, durability and intellectual integrity of the information contained therein. Sawant discussed four approaches or strategies that are currently advocating for preserving digital resources. These strategies are refreshing technology preservation, encapsulation and migration.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the existing preservation policy practiced by the librarian in an academic library
2. To access the needs of preservation;
3. To identify the difficulties of preserving implementation plan;
4. To analyse the preservation policy for library materials;
5. To improve a preservation plan and appropriate techniques for preservation materials;
6. To identify the preservation and conservation techniques of electronic material practiced by librarians;

V. METHODOLOGY

The study in nature description. Bharathiar University constituted with 113 affiliated colleges in four districts. Among the 113, 96 colleges were selected for the research under simple random sampling method and framed questionnaire were distributed. A complete date sheet and response received from 76 colleges.

VI. ANALYSIS

simple percentage analysis were applied for the data interpretation.

For analysing the data collected from the respondents a

TABLE 1 RESPONDENTS SAMPLE

No.	Status	Frequency	Percentage
1	Incomplete Respondents	15	13.27%
2	Disqualified Respondents	22	19.46%
3	Final Cleaned Complete Respondents	76	67.26%
	Total	113	100

A total of 113 library professionals were distributed to the questionnaire. Out of which only 76 respondents (67.26%) were selected for the chosen study. The below table shows

the distribution of total number of respondents and the sample of 76 respondents chosen for the study.

TABLE 2 DIGITAL COLLECTIONS SAMPLES

No.	Collections	Frequency	Percentage
1	0000 -1000	42	55.26%
2	1001 - 2000	16	21.05%
3	2001 - 3000	12	15.79%
4	3001 - above	06	07.89%
	Total	76	100%

About 12 (15.79%) libraries had collections between 0 to 1000. An equal number of libraries 16 (21.05%) had

collected between 1001 to 2000. The majority of the libraries 42 (55.26%) were collected between 0000 to 1000.

TABLE 3 PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION TECHNIQUES FOR DIGITAL RESOURCES

Sl.No.	Techniques	Response	Percentage
1	Refreshing	16	21.1%
2	Technology Preservation	12	15.1%
3	Migration	27	35.2%
4	Emulation	10	13.2%
5	Encapsulation	4	5%
6	Microfilming	07	9.2%

It was found that migration 27(35.2 %) colleges were the most commonly followed preservation methods. It was also observed that occasionally libraries do refreshing 16

(21.1%) followed by technology preservation 12 (15.1%). It also was observed that 07 (9.2%) libraries do lastly encapsulation.

TABLE 4 REASONS OF HINDRANCE

Sl.No.	Reasons	Response	Percentage
1	Lack of Funding	58	76.31%
2	Lack of Trained Manpower	62	81.58%
3	Lack of Written Preservation Policy	53	69.74%
4	Administrative Problems	65	85.53%
5	Lack of Infrastructure	61	80.26%
6	Harsh Environment Conditions	68	89.47%
7	Outdated Hardware & Software	72	94.74%

It was observed that the lack of digital preservation policy (69.74%) and lack of trained manpower (81.58%). Found to be the most important reasons of hindrance of effective preservation and conservation of digital resources. Very few libraries were acquainted with preservation management, thus remaining militating against any comprehensive preservation programmes. The commercial and open source software in the library can be utilised in their best way to keep the digital documents.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

1. Librarians should find out digital documents to apply basic conservation techniques such as digitization for shelving books before getting further deteriorated.
2. A good policy on preservation and conservation of electronic documents should be formulated so that the library can work on par with the guidelines.
3. Semi professional and professional staff has to be recruited especially for preservation activities. If not then, to the existing staff should be given in house training or by allowing them to participate in training and workshops.
4. Libraries should approach the funders like UGC, Trusts or welfare associations to rise to save their electronic collections.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The study investigated the preservation and conservation of library electronic collections in college libraries in Coimbatore. The study revealed that there was no written policy on preservation and conservation in nearly all libraries even though it was found that more than half of the libraries were having electronic collations. The majority of the colleges are not following any techniques in preservation and conservation of digital resources, which places digital resources at a high risk of extinction.

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