

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE USE OF
PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION
PRACTICES
FOR AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS IN
ACADEMIC AND SPECIAL LIBRARIES OF
SRI LANKA**



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Abstract

This study attempts to understand and compare the present situation in conservation and preservation of audiovisual materials. Focus was given on the investigation of the existing preservation measures and to make comparison for the purpose of understanding similarities and differences in the level of use of preservation measures. It also aimed to find out a suitable culture media to culture fungi varieties found in various audiovisual collections. Tentative hypotheses were built up to test in the investigation and the sample survey techniques and laboratory experiments were utilized as the methodologies for the study.

Structured questionnaire were used as the main instruments for the gathering of data from sample. 69 academic and special libraries were selected for the study and 25 out of 49 special libraries and 19 out of 20 academic libraries responded. 4 libraries were selected for case studies and out of them 3 libraries were selected to gather fungi samples.

As the findings reveals that most of the libraries have audiovisual collections, however, availability of preservation policy, preservation awareness programme and separate preservation unit/ staff, maintenance of collection and equipment, availability of emergency preparedness plans are far from satisfactory level. There is significant difference between levels of use of preservation measures between academic and special libraries and thus null hypothesis that there is no difference between academic and special libraries were rejected. . Effects of following factors on level of preservation of academic and special libraries were also significant.

- Use of environmental control measures
- Availability of equipment for preservation
- Availability of instruction on careful handling of audiovisuals
- Availability of difficulties in preservation
- Availability of future plans in preservation

Preservation activities in audiovisual collections are still not widespread among academic and special libraries in Sri Lanka despite some individual initiatives, which have been carried out. Most of the librarians have understood the importance of preservation rather than remedial treatment, but tremendous practical difficulties hinder its implementation. Consequently low cost preservation strategies have become an absolute priority. Current economic constraints, frequent power failures and power cuts make environmental control for 24 hours in our libraries totally unrealistic.

Being a tropical country with inadequate funds, most of the libraries facing similar administrative and budgetary problems in preservation of audiovisual collections. Majority of the library preservation programmes are still towards the traditional paper based media and during the case studies, it was revealed that most of the audiovisual collections, especially videos were affected by fungi.

Findings emphasis the need to implement urgent preservation measurers in order to safeguard the existing collections which are experiencing problems such as fungal infections, vinegar syndrome etc.

Findings of the laboratory experiments were negative and thus concluded as fungus varieties found in three separate environments are not grown in used five types of media. It will be needed more specialized media to culture and identify them.