

Conservation of Books, Manuscripts and Paper Documents



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Preface

Paper has been used by man since very early time for making notations, writing, drawing and painting. As a result a large number of documents, manuscripts, books have been produced in each era in all parts of the world. Today, all these works constitute the Written Heritage of Man-kind and is invaluable for understanding the history and evolution of each period and region. It is obligatory on our part to protect and preserve this heritage for as long as possible. Such a goal is achievable, if proper treatment is provided to those documents which have already deteriorated and then to observe precautions for their care and maintenance.

This book has been prepared with the objective of providing guidance for conservation of manuscripts and books not only to the practitioners of art of conservation but also to those who are custodians of the collections of manuscripts, books and documents. It has been prepared with the aim of giving practical step-by-step instruction in various aspects of conservation. Wherever necessary, theoretical considerations for each step have also been mentioned. The entire work has been divided into 6 Parts.

Part I deals with writing materials, their history, methods of fabrication and their general properties. This is the basic foundation of the whole subject.

Part II describes the principles and methods of Preventive Conservation. This part has two chapters, one chapter dealing with

deterioration factors and the other with the methods of care and maintenance of documents.

Part III describes the techniques of conservation treatment. This is the most important Part and includes a chapter on "examination", a chapter on "cleaning and stain removal", another chapter on "deacidification of documents" and then yet another chapter on "restoration and repair". In Part IV are included some special situations, like "conservation of water damaged documents" and "conservation of the tracing papers".

We feel that Case-studies of some actual restoration work will illustrate in practical manner some of the points made in the main body of the text. Therefore, some case-studies have also been included in Part V of the book.

Some relevant materials and methods, for instance, methods of analysis of paper fibres, identification of sizing material, preparation of pulp for leaf casting and so on are included in Part VI.

The book has taken several years to complete and we have tried to include results of as many recent researches as possible. However, we are conscious that the developments in the field of conservation are very fast, and it is quite likely that by the time the book is out in print, some new advancements may already take place.

It has been our desire, that the publication should be available at a reasonable cost so that it can be used by institutions and conservators also in developing countries. To some extent, we have been able to achieve it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In preparation of this book, we have received assistance from many quarters. First and foremost our thanks are due to the Ford Foundation for providing the financial assistance which has made this publication possible. We would also like to express our gratitude to late Mrs. Pupul Jayakar, then Chairman, INTACH who was

very supportive of the idea from the very beginning. It is our regret that she could not see the completed work during her life time. We would like to thank Mrs. Usha Agrawal for her continued moral as well as technical support. We have also received help from Mrs. Mamta Misra, Chief Conservator, INTACH Indian Conservation Institute, Lucknow for line-sketches as well as much of the technical material. She has prepared the layout of the book. We are most grateful to her. Most of the photographs have been prepared by Mr. Ram Sagar Prasad, Photographer of ICI, to whom also we are beholden.

Our thanks are also due to Mrs. Diksha Rajput, Sub-Editor INTACH, for going through the entire manuscript and making necessary corrections at many places. Mr. Ashok Rawat, Mrs. Radhamma. D, and Ms. Neeta Pant have worked very hard and ungrudgingly, typing and retyping several times the whole book. We are extremely thankful to them for their untiring effort.

We would also like to thank Ms. Rashmi Pathak for her assistance in correcting references and going through the manuscript for comments.

We take this opportunity also to thank Anuj Printers for printing the book in an excellent manner in a record time.

October 22, 1997

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