

ARCHIVAL STUDIES

COURSE CODE: M21HS02SC

Postgraduate Programme in History
Skill Enhancement Compulsory Course
Self Learning Material



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SREENARAYANAGURU
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SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

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To increase access of potential learners of all categories to higher education, research and training, and ensure equity through delivery of high quality processes and outcomes fostering inclusive educational empowerment for social advancement.

Mission

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Pathway

Access and Quality define Equity.

Archival Studies
Course Code: M21HS02SC
Semester - IV

Skill Enhancement Compulsory Course
Postgraduate Programme in History
Self Learning Material
(With Model Question Paper Sets)



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Semester- IV

Skill Enhancement Compulsory Course
Postgraduate Programme in History

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MESSAGE FROM VICE CHANCELLOR

Dear learner,

I extend my heartfelt greetings and profound enthusiasm as I warmly welcome you to Sreenarayanaguru Open University. Established in September 2020 as a state-led endeavour to promote higher education through open and distance learning modes, our institution was shaped by the guiding principle that access and quality are the cornerstones of equity. We have firmly resolved to uphold the highest standards of education, setting the benchmark and charting the course.

The courses offered by the Sreenarayanaguru Open University aim to strike a quality balance, ensuring students are equipped for both personal growth and professional excellence. The University embraces the widely acclaimed “blended format,” a practical framework that harmoniously integrates Self-Learning Materials, Classroom Counseling, and Virtual modes, fostering a dynamic and enriching experience for both learners and instructors.

The University aims to offer you an engaging and thought-provoking educational journey. The Master’s program in History aims to familiarise learners with the complexities of historical research and facts through courses on historiography and research methodologies. Learners will develop skills to analyse historical dynamics, allowing them to step deeper into the nuances of historical narratives and reexamine past events with an appropriate outlook. The curriculum’s interdisciplinary nature is evident in its incorporation of concepts from various fields. The Self-Learning Material has been meticulously crafted, incorporating relevant examples to facilitate better comprehension.

Rest assured, the university’s student support services will be at your disposal throughout your academic journey, readily available to address any concerns or grievances you may encounter. We encourage you to reach out to us freely regarding any matter about your academic programme. It is our sincere wish that you achieve the utmost success.



Warm regards.
Dr. Jagathy Raj V. P.

01-01-2025

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Archives – An Introduction

BLOCK-01



Definition, Scope, and Nature

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ understand what is meant by the term archives
- ◆ learn the scope and nature of the archives
- ◆ get acquainted with the historical evolution of the archives

Background

Archival science, once confined to private domains, has evolved into a public discipline requiring a scientific approach. It focuses on collecting, preserving, and disseminating original records. In Kerala, religious institutions like temples, churches, and mosques all hold valuable records. However, due to a lack of awareness and expertise, these records deteriorate. Immediate government intervention is needed to engage all stakeholders in preserving these historical materials. Educating record keepers is essential for effective maintenance and longevity.

While investigating and interpreting historical events, communities, movements, and other subjects, historians inevitably rely on archival sources. However, it is imperative to recognise that archives are not infallible repositories of information but rather complex entities that enable critical examination. They are primary source collection hubs that contain a wide range of documents, manuscripts, photographs, recordings, and other materials that direct us towards a comprehensive understanding of the past. Archives provide researchers access to original, first-hand accounts and records, which are inevitable for conducting in-depth textual analysis and gaining a nuanced understanding of historical events.

However, archives are subject to certain limitations and biases. They often reflect the perspectives and priorities of the dominant, leading to the suppression or exclusion of certain voices and narratives. Historians must know the potential gaps and silences within the archival record. By critically engaging with archival materials and using rigorous analytical techniques, historians can reveal the hidden narratives and shed light on suppressed voices while reconstructing the past. The ability to conduct textual analysis and effectively read archival material are among the vital aspects of the historical method. In this unit, let us discuss the definition, scope and nature of the archives.



Keywords

Archives, Record-Keeping, History, National Archives, Record, Fonds, Provenance, *Respect des fonds*, Original Order, Content, Context, Digitisation

Discussion

1.1.1 What is an Archive?

Archives play a major role in understanding history, administration, and cultural identity of a society. It focuses on preserving original, unpublished materials, such as manuscripts, documents, photographs, and other primary sources, often related to administrative, legal, or governmental activities. Archives serve as essential resources for understanding socio-, economic, political and cultural development of a society. It exists in both physical and digital forms due to advancements in technology. Physical archives, like the National Archives of India, preserve important manuscripts and documents, such as administrative files, court documents, census data, and personal letters, which help scholars trace the development of social, political, and economic systems. Digital archives provide open access to digitised materials from various countries across the world. It revolutionises the accessibility of primary sources.

◆ *Definition and significance of archives*

◆ *Physical and digital archives*

Archives contribute to a deeper understanding of the past, informing contemporary issues, and influencing the way we perceive our history and culture. It serves as a bridge between the past and present. It ensures that essential cultural and historical narratives are preserved for future generations.

◆ *Connecting culture*

1.1.2 Definition, Scope and Nature

1.1.2.1 Definition of Archives

According to Kathleen. D. Roe, the term ‘archives’ technically refers to the permanently valuable records received and accumulated by formal organisations such as governments, businesses, and non-profit organisations in the process of conducting their daily business. The interpretation of the term ‘archives’ may vary depending on the context. It may refer not only to the records of organisations and individuals but also to the institutions or entities responsible for preserving these records.

◆ *Definition by Kathleen D. Roe*

However, the definition of archives has expanded due to the rapid development of technology. It has led to the inclusion of



- ◆ *Expansion of archival definition*
- ◆ *Archival practices in India*

digital records, multimedia collections, and electronic databases. Nowadays, archives include not only traditional paper-based documents but also digital files such as emails, databases, and online resources. Archives in India include the National Archives of India and various state and regional archives. These archives preserve critical documents essential to understanding India's colonial and post-independence history.

1.1.2.2 Scope and Nature

- ◆ *Scope of archival studies*

Archival studies constitute a multidisciplinary field that focuses on the management and preservation of archives. This process is essential for safeguarding the collective memory of a society and facilitating access to valuable information for academic, legal, administrative, and cultural purposes. Archives play a crucial role in reconstructing past events, understanding administrative systems, and preserving cultural identities. For example, it documents revolutions, treaties, administrative frameworks, and social movements that mould nations and cultures. It also helps historians, researchers, and policymakers in the government to understand and interpret major events and processes in human history.

- ◆ *Role of archives in history*

Archives also serve as an invaluable resource for academic research by providing primary source materials such as manuscripts, photographs, administrative records, oral histories, maps, and more. It offers the foundation for creating nuanced and evidence-based narratives about historical events and social changes. It also shapes public memory by allowing the historians to trace personal or genealogical histories.

- ◆ *Archives as sources of evidence*

The nature of archival studies is not static. It evolves to accommodate changes in technology, governance, and social needs. Archives preserve a wide range of information, including manuscripts, administrative records, photographs and maps, oral histories, and digital files. Despite its importance, it faces challenges such as preserving fragile materials, digital preservation, accessibility, and resource constraints. One of the persistent issues include that the preservation of the fragile materials requires constant technological updates and migration to prevent data loss, while balancing open access with the need to protect sensitive or confidential information.

- ◆ *Physical Archives*

As we mentioned above, archives are vital repositories of enduring value, preserving the documentary heritage of societies. They are defined by their form, function, and materials they house. Modern archives include both traditional physical formats and advanced digital systems. Physical archives are traditional forms of archival repositories, which store tangible materials such as

manuscripts, documents, photographs, maps, and other paper-based records. They require secure and controlled environments to prevent deterioration, including climate control for temperature and humidity, as well as protection from pests and light. Advantages of physical archives include a tactile connection to historical records, while challenges include space constraints, physical degradation, and limited accessibility due to geographical location.

◆ *Digital Archives*

Meanwhile, digital archives represent the evolution of archival practices, using technology to store and manage records in electronic formats. Major advantages of the digital archives include accessibility, searchability, and preservation. However, some challenges such as robust infrastructure, regular maintenance, and protection against data breaches or technological obsolescence are also part of the maintenance of the digital archives.

◆ *Archives, libraries, and museums*

Archives, libraries, and museums are institutions dedicated to preserve cultural and historical materials. However, they differ in their purpose and scope. Libraries contain published works, cater to a broader audience, and preserve and display artefacts, objects, and exhibits of historical, artistic, or cultural importance. Museums curate and interpret tangible items for exhibition.

◆ *Hybrid repositories*

Modern archives often integrate physical and digital formats and create hybrid repositories that maximise accessibility and preservation. Examples include the British Library combining its extensive physical holdings with digital databases accessible worldwide, and the Reserve Bank of India Archive preserving physical records while digitising materials for long-term accessibility.

◆ *Source analysis*

As mentioned, archives, the storehouses of primary sources, offer invaluable insights into the lives, events, and ideas that have shaped our past. Historians use archives to access the primary materials necessary for constructing historical narratives. Through the examination of a diverse range of sources such as documents, reports, journals, diaries, memoirs, artefacts, and visual material, researchers can weave together the past. However, it is vital to approach these sources critically, considering their context, authorship and intended audience. Through meticulous textual analysis and interpretation, historians can uncover multiple perspectives, challenge biases, and reconstruct more nuanced narratives.

◆ *Custodians of collective memory*

Archives are custodians of collective memory, safeguarding the struggles and achievements of communities and nations. The archival material serves as a gateway to the social, political, and cultural setting of the past, giving voice to marginalised groups



and expanding the understanding of history beyond dominant narratives.

◆ *Non-traditional sources*

While historical research mainly focuses on traditional documents in archives, it is essential to recognise the use of non-traditional sources. Visual and aural materials, such as photographs, artwork, oral histories, and folklore, offer alternative perspectives and glimpses into historical events and experiences. Using these sources in the analysis, historians can construct a more comprehensive and multi-dimensional view of the past.

◆ *Power dynamics within archives*

As mentioned, archives play a pivotal role in historical research in constructing narratives, preserving collective memory, and throwing light on the complexities of power and knowledge production. Hence, archives cannot be considered a mere collection of documents; they are permeated with power. They serve as custodians of historical records and influence what is remembered and forgotten. The colonial archival systems, for instance, have been considered a paramount source of diverse information on the functioning of the colonial state. It keeps a wide range of documents, such as official records, census reports, correspondence letters, and commission reports, meticulously organised by the colonial state. Thus, it renders invaluable services for historians engaged in research on colonialism. The colonial archival system determined what was deemed credible history, often silencing the marginalised voices and projecting the narratives that reinforced colonial authority. Understanding the power dynamics within archives is essential for critically analysing historical sources and challenging dominant narratives.

◆ *Challenges*

There are challenges in the use of archives. The availability and accessibility of archival material can vary, and researchers have to deal with bureaucratic systems and digitisation efforts to access relevant sources. Furthermore, archives themselves can reflect biases and omissions, requiring a critical approach to the material. Historians must be aware of these limitations and actively engage in careful analysis and interpretation to resolve these challenges.

1.1.2.3 Importance of Archives in Historical Research

◆ *Access to original documents*

Archival studies are crucial for understanding the role of archives in preserving historical records and their application in research and cultural preservation. They provide access to original documents that form the basis of historical narratives. It enables historians to verify facts, analyse socio-political contexts, and examine administrative policies. The National Archives of India houses administrative records critical for studying colonial governance and

the British Library's India Office Records provide information on the East India Company's operations and the British Raj's policies.

1.1.2.4 Impact of Colonialism on Archival Practices in India

◆ *Imperial Record Department*

Under British rule, India implemented systematic record-keeping to manage its vast empire. Institutions like the Imperial Record Department, now the National Archives of India, were established in 1891. Records primarily served administrative and colonial interests, including land revenue systems and governance policies. Indigenous records were often overlooked or destroyed, reflecting a colonial bias. The colonial archives often prioritise colonial perspectives over indigenous narratives, which indicates the need for integrating diverse sources in contemporary archives.

1.1.2.5 Colonial Archive - A Contested Site

◆ *Colonial archive as a multifaceted body*

Contemporary historians exploring the intricacies of colonialism have begun to look at the colonial archive as a multifaceted body actively producing specific knowledge rather than merely serving as a repository of vast information. Eminent scholars such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida paid much attention to examining the power and the structures materialised by the archives. Archives represent the creation of the authoritative state. It carries knowledge about people, their environment and information related to health, family welfare, and education. The colonial state has been collecting such information and surveying and mapping activities undertaken. They segmented this information of a region into distinct categories.

◆ *Creating social categories*

Historical sources have undergone rigorous critical examination with the advent of the 'linguistic turn'. Historians have begun questioning the reliability of accepting a 'fact' at face value. Scholars such as Roland Barthes have argued that the fact is not a separate entity waiting to be discovered, studied, and drawn conclusions from; instead, it is constructed through language within a particular discourse. According to Ann Stoler, the colonial archive is not merely an institution that abides with information; it generates specific knowledge and imposes particular categories for remembering the past. Statistical data, reports, and commissions contribute to creating social categories.

◆ *Need to scrutinise the nature of the archive*

Consequently, colonial historians examined the archive as a site where knowledge undergoes selective production, processing, and preservation. It is also a place where certain knowledge is often erased. Stoler argues that instead of accessing information directly from the archive, we need to scrutinise the nature of the archive itself.



◆ *Language used in state records*

As mentioned, the archive provides extensive sources for understanding the past, especially the colonial period. Ranajit Guha, an Indian historian, uses the concept of Roland Barthes and directs the attention of historians to the language used in state records. Guha contends that histories of peasant movements, tribal uprisings, or soldier revolts were documented as acts of insurgency against the state. It is not that the subaltern elements are absent from the colonial archive; instead, they appear as ‘fanatics’ or ‘insurgents’ violently challenging the state. The problem lies here: not only do the words used in the documents reflect a distortion of what could be deemed a ‘normal’ situation, but these narrations also take away rational agency from those who participated in the revolts.

◆ *Three levels of discourse*

The discourse is created and perpetuated at three levels based on their temporal proximity to the events. The first two levels involve administrative agents of the state. Guha argues that even the tertiary discourse produced by historians, which happens much later, continues this narrative and upholds the viewpoint of the elite state without providing sufficient reasoning for it.

◆ *Archive as a subject of analysis*

According to Shahid Amin, to uncover subaltern histories, relying on new sources will not resolve the problem. The historian has to analyse the official statements and reports of the state that are constructed within the boundaries of the discourses of the state. Here comes the relevance of oral histories, literature, art, or photography. The study of the archive can be approached through these methods, thereby transforming the archive into the subject of analysis. For instance, in the Chauri Chaura incident, Amin demonstrates how the peasants involved in the incident became implicated through the testimony of a chosen approver. He mentions the construction of the approver’s testimony and how it is used in delivering a judgment that aligns with the discourse of the state, thereby providing a criminal sense to the event. Amin highlights that the most suitable testimony was deliberately chosen among the options. He also discusses other factors which influenced these testimonies. Consequently, the judgment becomes an integral part of the political agenda of the state, erasing the political agency of the accused.

◆ *‘Against the grain’*

Ann Stoler raises doubts about the expectation of Guha for historians to consider the archive as the state’s discourse and emphasise the importance of moving against it. Stoler argues that interpreting the archive ‘against the grain’ would make historians assume the colonial state and its intentions as a monolithic and unchanging entity.

During the nineteenth century, the relevance of knowledge in

◆ *Distancing the ethnographic endeavours*

South Asia gave way to a more regularised form of governance. The American historian Nicholas Dirks also observes how the archives of Colonel Colin Mackenzie on Peninsular India became irrelevant to the colonial state by the late nineteenth century. Those who contributed to the creation of such archives were overshadowed by the colonial strategies of distancing the state and its knowledge production from ethnographic endeavours. Nonetheless, Stoler asserts that knowledge never lost importance for the colonial state; instead, the modes of acquisition and circulation changed. Thus, we discern that the colonial state was fraught with dilemmas, lack of consensus, and uncertainty. A comprehensive analysis of the archive enables historians of colonialism to comprehend the notions of the colonial state of its subjects. It also sheds light on the intricate nature of the colonial state itself.

1.1.2.6 Reading the Archival Material- Analysis of Primary Sources

◆ *Analysing primary sources*

For historians, the analysis of primary sources holds an essential part in the study of history. Analysing the type of documents, such as written documents, artefacts, maps, posters, photos, videos, cartoons, videos, and sound recordings, is the initial step in analysing the primary sources. Written sources, including memoirs, autobiographies, biographies, newspaper articles, journals, diaries, letters, reports, judicial records, and novels provide significant insights into historical events. In the case of medieval documents, the layout, language, and ownership reveal much information about the period, including the legal disputes, resolutions, land acquisitions, land transactions, individual rights, financial transactions and cultural aspects of the era. Acquiring the skills of palaeography and deciphering the intricacies of handwriting, interpreting abbreviations, and analysing the layout and linguistic aspects of these medieval documents further enriched the understanding of this period.

◆ *Two important aspects in the analysis*

Historians bring their experiences and skills in analysing primary sources that lead to diverse interpretations. Since there does not exist a single correct interpretation, conducting a meticulous and comprehensive analysis is inevitable to avoid making incorrect conclusions. While analysing a primary source, one must consider two important aspects: the document and the historical period in which it originates. After gaining foundational knowledge of the period, independent thought and source analysis are necessary. There are specific preliminary questions one must remember while analysing a primary source. The initial step is to identify the source type, such as a letter, report, diary, photograph, artefact, or artwork, and describe its most salient aspect in writing for those unable to

see it directly. While examining the form of the source, especially the original documents, the type of paper used, handwriting and markings have to be considered. In the case of medieval documents, the size of the document and the quality of the materials used offer clues about its cost and importance. Furthermore, deciphering the handwriting, decorative elements, use of coloured inks or pigments, and illustrations can help determine the purpose and value of the document.

◆ *Exploring the format and languages used*

By exploring the format and languages used in documents, researchers gain deeper insights into the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which these documents were produced. For instance, in the later medieval period, the three main languages used in England were Middle English, Anglo-Norman (or French), and Latin. Authors during that time made deliberate choices regarding their languages, often incorporating multiple languages within the document. Over time, English emerged as the standard literary medium, but Latin continued to be used in legal documents until the eighteenth century. Additionally, Hebrew and Aramaic were used by the medieval Jewish community in England, reflecting the linguistic diversity of the time. In the case of India, medieval sources were found in Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Sanskrit, Prakrit, Awadhi and other indigenous languages. Hence, acquiring skills in the languages of the document the scholar refers to is the most essential aspect of textual analysis.

◆ *Acquiring contextual knowledge*

Further analysis involves knowing the creator of the source, whether an individual or a group or an organisation, determining its period, and noting any personal or specific information provided about the creator. In acquiring contextual knowledge, consider the historical backdrop and discern details within the source that reflect the perspective or background of the creator. Additionally, analysing the purpose behind creating the primary source is vital. The researcher has to reflect on the purpose of the source, which means identifying the argument the author intends to convey and evaluating the method used.

◆ *Analyse the perspective of the author*

Every individual has a unique perspective shaped by their background, beliefs, and experiences reflected in their writings. Hence, it is critical to analyse these perspectives reflected in the work for a deeper understanding of the meaning of the source. The researcher has to identify the intended audience, reflected in the source's content and tone. The language used in the work has to be analysed based on the metaphors or symbols and the word choices used by the author. Similarly, the author's omissions and silences within the text must be carefully analysed.

◆ *Determining the historicity*

After analysing a source's physical features, the text's historicity has to be determined - whether the text can be considered historical evidence. First, how the source mentions the belief of people in a way something should happen or it has already happened. Then evaluate whether the source mentions the society's ideological beliefs or behavioural patterns. Also, consider whether the source is written from the perspectives of the 'elite' or 'ordinary' people. It is necessary to identify the historical questions that can be solved using this source.

◆ *Understand the limitations of the source*

◆ *Gather multiple viewpoints*

However, it is necessary to understand the limitations of the source and its inability to answer specific questions. As historical evidence, primary sources may leave questions unanswered, requiring the exploration of additional sources. It is also crucial to fact-check the presented information and assess its support or contradiction in other sources. Primary sources may represent only one perspective. However, researchers must strive to gather multiple viewpoints.

◆ *Critical scrutiny of a primary source*

Moreover, scholars reflect on their perspectives, influenced by their background and the contemporary period. Hence, assess how the analysis aligns or diverges from the interpretation of other historians on this source or similar sources. Also, determine whether this source supports or challenges their arguments. All these come under the critical scrutiny of a primary source, and it is inevitable to analyse and interpret the sources.

◆ *Case of medieval sources in India*

In the case of Medieval sources in India, it is vital to know the nature, form, and literary traditions that influence these sources. Recognising the significance of genre in shaping discourse within historical texts is imperative. Hence, scholars should explore different genres prevalent in Mughal texts, such as court chronicles, memoirs, official documents, and poetry and understand how the genre influences the construction of historical narratives. Also, consider the multiple interpretations and perspectives related to the source.

1.1.3 Key Concepts

◆ *Preserving the original structure and organisation of archive*

The principles of provenance and original order are crucial in preserving the original structure and organisation of archives, rather than reorganising them based on artificial classification systems or anticipated uses. This methodology is based on the belief that records convey two essential types of information: Content and Context.

Content refers to the actual information within records, including subjects, topics, and issues, and reflects the perspectives

◆ *Content and Context*

of the creator. **Context**, on the other hand, refers to the circumstances surrounding the creation of records, such as historical period, social environment, or specific conditions.

◆ *Provenance*

Provenance is a principle in archival science stating that records must be maintained according to their origin, respecting their organisational or personal creator. Kathleen Roe states that provenance refers to the relationship between records and the individuals or organisations that created, accumulated, and used them in personal or corporate activities. It emphasises maintaining records according to their origin, not intermingling them with those created by another person or agency. Records should be kept together based on the organisation or person that created, used, or accumulated the group of records.

◆ *Original order*

The principle of **Original Order** is the preservation of records as they were created, accumulated, or maintained by the creator. This includes retaining physical structures like groupings and subdivisions. This provides information into the context and usage of records, aiding archivists in accurately representing their origins and purpose. It also helps users in analysing and interpreting records by preserving the relationships and logic inherent in their original arrangement.

◆ *Respect des fonds*

The principle of **Respect des fonds** requires that records created, accumulated, assembled, and maintained by an organisation or individual should be preserved as a unified entity. These records should be kept in their original order, and not intermingled with other records. This ensures the integrity of the records' provenance and maintains the context and relationships inherent in their original structure.

◆ *Digitisation*

Digitisation converts physical records into digital formats to enhance accessibility and ensure preservation.

1.1.4 Origin and History of Record Keeping

1.1.4.1 Early Methods of Record-Keeping

◆ *Greek archival origins*

Record-keeping has evolved significantly across civilizations and time periods. It reflects changes in governance, society, and technology. The concept of archives has a long and varied history, rooted in the ancient civilizations of Greece, Rome, and China. The term “archives” originates from the Greek word *archion*, meaning a public office or a place where official records are kept. The practice of preserving important documents can be traced back to the 5th and 4th centuries BCE when the Athenians safeguarded their important records, including treaties, laws, and minutes of public assemblies, in the Temple of the Mother of Gods.

◆ *Chinese archival practices*

In parallel, the Chinese also maintained records, with early documentation being created by priests, kings, and merchants. These records were inscribed on durable materials such as stone, rock, and wood, covering religious, administrative, and commercial matters. As technology advanced, softer materials like palm leaves, papyrus, parchment, and vellum became prevalent, eventually giving way to paper, which became the primary medium for writing and record-keeping.

◆ *Roman archival system*

The Sumerians and Egyptians were pioneers in systematic record-keeping, a tradition that was further refined by the Greeks and Romans. The Romans, in particular, placed great importance on the maintenance of records. Emperor Justinian (527–565 CE) issued a decree mandating that public buildings be designated for storing official records, with custodians appointed to ensure the integrity and accessibility of these documents. This practice was upheld by the Catholic Church following the fall of the Roman Empire.

◆ *Mesopotamian record keeping*

Mesopotamia is considered the cradle of systematic record-keeping, where the Sumerians pioneered the use of cuneiform writing on clay tablets to document transactions, trade, and administration. For example, the Code of Hammurabi outlines laws and penalties, and economic records like inventories and contracts.

◆ *Egyptian inscriptions*

Egyptians used hieroglyphic inscriptions on monuments and papyrus scrolls for record-keeping, with royal decrees and tax records being important for governance. Religious texts, including the Book of the Dead, served as spiritual guides for the afterlife. Papyrus, a durable and portable medium, revolutionised record-keeping. It helped to store and transmit information across generations.



Fig.1.1.1 Palm Leaf Records
Source: Kerala State archives website

◆ *Indian collection*

India used palm leaf manuscripts and inscriptions on rocks, pillars, and temple walls for record-keeping. The Ashokan edicts are inscribed on stone surfaces. It conveys moral and administrative messages of the Emperor Ashoka to his subjects. Temples in India often served as repositories of historical and religious records, preserving genealogies, land grants, and literary works. We have collections of manuscripts and palm leaf records kept in the Kerala State Archives as well.

◆ *Chinese method*

China developed record-keeping practices using bamboo slips, silk, and later paper, with administrative records like census data and tax registers. These records are meticulously maintained and it reflects bureaucratic efficiency.

1.1.4.2 Evolution of Archives

◆ *Early archival traditions*

The record keeping can be traced back to ancient civilizations like Babylon and Egypt, where temples and royal courts played a crucial role in storing records related to religious rituals, property ownership, and economic transactions. These archives provided stability in governance and ensured the continuity of administrative and legal systems. The medieval period saw an increased emphasis on legal and feudal documentation. It reflected the hierarchical nature of feudal societies. European monastic archives preserved religious manuscripts, charters, and land records, which became critical during the Renaissance. The Islamic world developed advanced archival practices, maintaining records of legal proceedings, scientific advancements, and trade.

◆ *Modern archival institutions*

The modern period saw the institutionalisation of archives, driven by the need for systematic record-keeping in governance and scholarship. By the Middle Ages, Spain emerged as a cultural center with a well-organised archive in 1543. However, modern archival institutions were first established in France (Archives Nationales, 1790), followed by England (Public Records Office, 1838) and the United States (National Archives, 1934). In India, the Imperial Record Department (1891) later became the National Archives. Today, every Indian state maintains its own archival institution.

◆ *Technological advancements- Digital archives*

Technological advancements, such as the printing press, typewriters, and photocopiers, have enhanced the efficiency of record-keeping and archival processes. The 20th and 21st centuries have witnessed transformative changes in record-keeping with the advent of digital technologies. Digital archives have redefined archival practices. It ensured broader accessibility and easier preservation. Hybrid models of archives now maintain physical and digital records, combining traditional preservation methods with cutting-edge technologies for enhanced durability and usability.

1.1.4.3 Prominent Historical Archives

◆ *British archival system*

This section discusses the importance of archives in preserving the collective memory of civilizations, institutions, and individuals. British archival systems, particularly during the colonial period, introduced systematic practices to manage the vast British Empire. These archives documented governance, taxation, trade, and socio-cultural aspects of the colonies. The India Office Records, located in London, house extensive materials related to British India, serving as a vital resource for scholars studying colonial history, governance, and socio-economic transformations in South Asia. The British archival policy crucially shaped India's record-keeping and archival institutions. It led to the establishment of the Imperial Record Department in 1891, aiming to centralise and preserve historical, administrative, and legislative records. British archival systems influenced state archives in post-independence India and private archival collections maintained by princely states and prominent families.

◆ *Library of Congress*

◆ *The Vatican Secret Archives*

The Library of Congress, one of the world's largest libraries, houses extensive collections of manuscripts, maps, photographs, and sound recordings. Its digital initiatives have made significant historical materials accessible worldwide. The Vatican Secret Archives, located in Vatican City, contain documents related to the Catholic Church's administration over 12 centuries, including correspondence of popes and treaties. Access to these archives has been restricted, but the Vatican has opened portions to scholars, providing insights into religious and European history. Important documents include records of the Council of Trent and letters from historical figures like Michelangelo and King Henry VIII.



Fig.1.1.2 Collections
Source: Library of Congress website

1.1.4.4 Archives in India

◆ *The National Archives of India*

India has archival repositories that play a crucial role in preserving the administrative, cultural, and historical heritage of the country. These archives, ranging from national institutions to private collections, house an extensive array of materials, including manuscripts, official records, photographs, and maps. The National Archives of India, established in 1891 as the Imperial Records Department, is the largest archival repository in South Asia. The NAI houses a vast corpus of records spanning from the 18th century to the modern era. It includes public records, private papers, oriental records, cartographic records, and microfilms. The Director General of Archives oversees the implementation of the Public Records Act, 1993 and the Public Records Rules, 1997 for managing, administering, and preserving public records in various ministries, departments, and public sector undertakings. The Department, located in New Delhi, functions as an Attached Office of the Ministry of Culture and has a Regional Office in Bhopal and three Records Centres in Bhubaneswar, Jaipur, and Puducherry. The NAI has launched several digitisation projects, making rare and historically significant records accessible online through their portals.

◆ *Courses offered*

The National Archives of India offers a renowned postgraduate diploma in archival studies, reflecting the growth of archival studies as a distinct field. This science prioritises record preservation and management, distinct from history and archaeology.



Fig.1.1.3 National Archives of India

Source: NAI website

Every state in India maintains its own archives. These state archives preserve records pertinent to local governance, culture, and ministration. Examples include the Kerala State Archives, Tamil Nadu State Archives and Maharashtra State Archives. The Kerala State Archives Department, established in 1962, is an independent

◆ *Kerala State Archives Department*

department under the control of the Cultural Affairs Department of the Government of Kerala. The specialised library in Trivandrum houses archival old and rare books, Assembly proceedings, Census reports, Research Journals, Gazettes, newspapers, and old books on law. The Kerala State Archives houses an extensive collection of documents dating back to 1424 CE., including paper records, palm leaves, bamboo splints, micro films, and copper writings. Public records include those from the erstwhile princely State of Travancore (C.E. 1424-1885), Cochin State (1567-1949 CE), Malabar District of the Madras (1805-1956), and transferred records from Government Secretariat Cellar and Malabar Collectorate records.

◆ *Conservation challenge*

However, according to the former archivist, C.P. Abdul Majeed, the archives in Kerala require more attention. Sometimes the lack of proper training leading to poor conservation practices in government and private repositories. He urges for a pressing need for awareness and collaboration to protect these records.



Fig.1.1.4 Central Archives, Kerala
Source: Kerala State archives website

◆ *University archives*

Apart from these, universities maintain their own archives to facilitate academic research. Examples include the Jawaharlal Nehru University Archives, which focus on academic materials and records for research purposes, collection of theses and dissertations and the digital repositories contain old newspaper collections. Aligarh Muslim University Archives, which house records of educational reforms and the contributions of prominent figures like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan is another prominent example.

◆ *Specialised archives*

Specialised archives maintained by religious institutions and cultural organisations include the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library in Patna, which holds an extensive collection of Persian and Arabic manuscripts, the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune, which preserves ancient Sanskrit texts and rare manuscripts, and the archives of religious centres like the Golden Temple in Amritsar.



Fig.1.1.5 Entrance of PMML, Teen Murti Marg, Delhi

Source : Wikipedia

◆ *PMML*

Apart from the above discussed archives, there are archival collections in the Prime Minister's Museum and Library (PMML), formerly known as the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML), located at Teen Murti Bhavan, New Delhi. PMML documents India's nationalist movement and post-independence history, focusing on Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders. Designed by Robert Tor Russell and constructed in 1929–30 as part of Lutyens' capital plan, the building initially served as the residence of the Commander-in-Chief in British India. After independence, it became the official residence of Jawaharlal Nehru, who lived there until his death in 1964. That same year, the Government of India resolved to preserve the site in Nehru's memory, and on his 75th birth anniversary, it was inaugurated as a museum by President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. The Prime Ministers' Museum and Library Society was formed in 1966 to oversee the institution. As the library's holdings expanded, a dedicated library building was opened in 1974, followed by the construction of an Annexe building in 1989, which now houses the Centre for Contemporary Studies. Over the years, PMML has become a major centre for the study of modern and contemporary India. Its collections, spanning from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, include books, manuscripts, and archival materials.

Summarised Overview

Archives are essential for understanding history, culture, and governance, providing skills for historical analysis, interdisciplinary applications, and memory preservation. The transition from physical to digital archives enhances accessibility and ensures record longevity. Archival studies play a crucial role in preserving and understanding human history by safeguarding cultural heritage, enabling academic research, and enhancing connections between disciplines. They provide critical inquiry, methodological rigour, and a commitment to preserving collective memory of humanity.

Archives are evolving to meet society's needs and technological advancements. Physical archives maintain tangible heritage, while digital archives improve record accessibility and management. By adopting hybrid models, archives ensure comprehensive past preservation, allowing future generations to connect with their heritage meaningfully.

Understanding key theoretical frameworks and terminologies helps researchers and archivists manage and interpret archival materials, ensuring their relevance in a rapidly evolving digital world. Historical archives, including records of the British Empire, National Archives of India and the regional archives are crucial for understanding our collective history. Studying these archives provides insights into governance, culture, and socio-economic systems that have shaped societies over centuries, ensuring continued exploration and exploration.

Assignments

1. Define archives and discuss their evolving scope and nature in the modern world.
2. Analyse the role of archives in preserving cultural heritage and collective memory.
3. Explain the importance of archives in historical and administrative contexts.
4. Describe early record-keeping practices across ancient civilisations.
5. Evaluate the impact of colonialism on archival practices in India.
6. Trace the transition of archives from physical to digital spaces.

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1.

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Functions of Archives

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ explain the key functions of archives
- ◆ identify public, private, corporate, and special archives
- ◆ differentiate records like manuscripts, photographs, and digital files

Background

Archives play a pivotal role in historical research by providing raw materials to historians to understand the past and enabling them to construct narratives, preserve collective memory, and challenge dominant narratives. They can reshape the understanding of the past by uncovering hidden stories and multiple perspectives. The colonial archive is regarded as a significant source of information, including the diverse collection of colonial state records, correspondence and commission reports. However, recent historians argue that it is a complex entity that produces and disseminates knowledge rather than a mere repository of information. A scholar must understand the nuances of the colonial archive and the power dynamics within the colonial state that reflects in these archives. Scholars such as Ann Stoler find archives as a centre where knowledge is selectively produced, processed, preserved, and sometimes omitted. It is also essential to understand the biases, ideologies, and limitations of archival material. Through close reading and critical scrutiny, the researcher engages through the complexities of the archive and its role in framing historical narratives. Also, they engage with the nuances and challenges of historical methodology.

Keywords

Archives, Historical Records, Repositories, Family Collections, Film Archives, Digital Archives, Manuscripts, Photographs, Maps, Letters, Audiovisual Records, Administrative Records, Oral Histories



Discussion

1.2.1 Functions of Archives

◆ *Connecting the past and future generations*

Archives are vital memory keepers, safeguarding historical, cultural, and administrative records. They preserve knowledge, connecting past and future generations. Their primary functions include preservation, accessibility, and dissemination. It makes them crucial for heritage preservation, governance, education, and research. Without them, crucial materials like letters, treaties, and photographs could be lost forever.

◆ *Different roles of archives*

Preservation is an important aspect of archival management, which involves measures to safeguard fragile records. Environmental control is essential, as temperature and humidity can degrade materials. Conservation techniques use acid-free materials and deacidification. Archives prepare for disasters through duplicate storage and protective measures. Digitisation enhances preservation by reducing original handling and expanding global access to records. However, the role of archives extends beyond preservation as it ensures records are accessible. They aid researchers by providing access to primary sources, aiding historians and scholars. Tools like catalogues and finding aids assist navigation, while archivists provide expert guidance. Archives engaging with the public through exhibitions and educational initiatives bring history to life. Digital platforms further expand accessibility.

◆ *Historical significance of archives*

As we mentioned earlier, archives are not just repositories of dusty documents, but they are vital tools for preserving historical, cultural, and legal evidence. Hence, they support administrative functions, and provide educational and public benefits. They serve as the foundation upon which our understanding of the past is built. Archives house documents, records, and materials that tell the stories of a community, nation, or civilization. They provide the means to safeguard these items from decay and destruction and act as guardians of cultural identity. The historical significance of archives is evident when considering the role they play in documenting the evolution of civilizations. For example, ancient Indian archival records such as Sanskrit manuscripts provide information about philosophical, literary, and scientific contributions.

Archives are instrumental in preserving intangible aspects of culture, such as oral traditions, music, and rituals, which would otherwise be lost in the passage of time. Through the preservation of documents, archives ensure that cultural narratives remain



◆ *Preserving cultural heritage and ensuring continuity*

intact and accessible. They serve as a crucial link to the past and allow societies to maintain continuity and a sense of identity. As stewards of these records, archivists perform the critical task of preserving not just the content but also the context in which these records were created. Archives provide future generations with a deeper understanding of the social, political, and cultural forces that shaped them.

◆ *Role in administrative and legal functions*

Archives play a crucial role in administrative and legal functions, particularly within governmental and institutional frameworks. They maintain essential records such as legislative documents, treaties, census data, and policy related papers, which are vital for shaping future policies and decisions. Government archives house materials that document the establishment of laws, executive orders, and agreements, ensuring consistency of governance over time.

◆ *Providing crucial evidence in court cases*

Legal professionals and researchers often turn to archives for historical documents that may provide crucial evidence in court cases. For example, land ownership records are central to resolving property disputes, while treaties and international agreements are referenced to resolve conflicts between nations.

◆ *Collaborate with academic institutions*

◆ *Public engagement*

Archives aid individuals, scholars, and researchers to engage with historical records. Archives also collaborate with academic institutions, such as academic libraries and research centres, to develop curriculum materials, support student research, and offer training opportunities for emerging scholars. This collaboration contributes to the intellectual development of future generations by providing primary source materials that serve as the foundation for research, analysis, and learning. Archival collections of letters, journals, or newspaper clippings offer information on historical periods or figures that textbooks alone may not provide. This collaboration enhances the educational experience by encouraging critical thinking and primary-source-based research. Archives are also pivotal in cultural programming and public engagement, organising exhibitions, lectures, and events related to historical themes or milestones. These initiatives help bridge the gap between academic scholarship and public knowledge. It also creates a shared understanding of the past that is accessible to all.

1.2.2 Kinds of Archives

1.2.2.1 Public Archives

Public archives house a wide range of documents, including legislative records, administrative files, treaties, and other materials reflecting the workings of government and society. In India, public archives serve as the central repositories for official

◆ *Central repositories for official government records*

government records, including census data, tax records, land ownership documents, and correspondence between governmental departments. They also preserve significant documents such as treaties, constitutional amendments, and legislation, which are essential for understanding the legal and political frameworks of the country.

◆ *State and district level archival institutions*

Public archives are not limited to the central level of government; archival institutions operate at the state and district levels, providing a more localised perspective on governance and historical development. State archives house records related to the specific needs and history of the state, such as regional administrative documents, local laws, and records related to regional development projects. Regional archives focus on local governance and provide insight into how administrative processes and policies impact communities at the grassroots level. These regional archives help researchers, historians, and policymakers understand the intricacies of governance at a local level and how state decisions affect individual communities.

◆ *NAI*

The National Archives of India (NAI) in New Delhi, is an example for public archives. The NAI houses records from both pre-independence and post-independence periods of Indian history. It also plays a major role in preserving documents related to India's post-independence democratic processes, such as general election records, legislative proceedings, and presidential declarations.

◆ *State and regional archives*

India also has state and regional archives that support local governance and regional history. For example, the Tamil Nadu State Archives in Chennai is a repository for documents related to the governance of the state, including records related to the Madras Presidency, the history of the Tamil language, and the region's colonial past. Regional archives such as those housed in places like Kochi and Kozhikode in Kerala play an essential role in documenting local governance.

◆ *Efforts to make the materials accessible to public*

Efforts are being made to digitise archival collections, improve storage facilities, and train archivists in modern archival practices. Open access policies and collaborative partnerships with academic institutions are helping to make archival materials more accessible to the public.

1.2.2.2 Private Archives

Private archives are collections of records and documents managed by private entities, rather than governmental institutions. They serve the purpose of preserving materials that are important to the specific interests, histories, or activities of the organisations

◆ *Managed by private entities*

or individuals who own them. The scope of private archives is broad, ranging from records created by corporations and non-profit organisations to personal collections maintained by families. These archives are critical for understanding specific aspects of history, from the growth of industries to the stories of individual families.

◆ *Rich sources of personal history*

Family archives are another aspect of private record-keeping, typically containing personal letters, photographs and diaries that tell the story of an individual or family over generations. These archives can be incredibly rich sources of personal history. It preserves intimate details about the lives, traditions, and experiences of families, often passing down memories that shape the identity of future generations. Family archives allow individuals to reconnect with their ancestry and gain a better understanding of the personal narratives that contribute to the broader historical context.

◆ *Storing and preserving digital records*

Digital archives represent another specialised type of archive, focusing on the storage and preservation of digital records. With the rapid growth of the internet and digital technologies, ensuring that these records are preserved is of paramount importance.

1.2.2.3 Digital Archives

1.2.3 Kinds of Archival Records

1.2.3.1 Manuscripts and Letters

◆ *Personal and official manuscripts*

Archival records come in various forms, including manuscripts and letters, photographs and maps, and audiovisual records. Manuscripts and letters are vital archival records that offer personal accounts of historical events, social conditions, and the lives of individuals. They provide rich primary source material, such as the letters of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru during India's independence movement and the experiences of ordinary people during times of war or social upheaval. Official manuscripts, such as government records, legal documents, and administrative papers, serve as critical sources for understanding the functioning of institutions and governments. They provide evidence of decision-making processes, policy changes, and the evolution of laws and regulations.

◆ *Preserving manuscripts and letters*

However, manuscripts and letters are fragile archival materials, susceptible to physical degradation. To preserve them, archivists often use acid-free paper, specialised storage boxes, and climate-controlled environments. Digitisation is also becoming an essential method for preserving manuscripts and letters. It ensures their contents remain accessible even if the physical materials deteriorate over time.

1.2.3.2 Photographs and Maps

◆ *Photographs and maps as two crucial archival records*

Photographs and maps are two crucial types of archival records that provide unique insights into historical narratives. Photographs serve as powerful visual documentation of past events, people, and places, offering a direct, unmediated connection to the past. They capture social conditions, cultural practices, and emotional tone of particular events, such as the 1947 Partition of India, which shows the scale of displacement, human suffering, and social upheaval caused by the division of the country. For example, www.1947partitionarchive.org.

◆ *Maps provide information about boundaries and territories*

Maps provide geographical and historical data that are indispensable to the study of urban planning, exploration, and territorial changes. They can offer valuable information about the boundaries of empires, the expansion of cities, and the exploration of new territories. Historical maps of India during the British colonial period reveal the shifting boundaries of princely states, districts, and colonial territories. It allows historians and geographers to study the political landscape and the ways in which colonial powers organised and controlled vast regions. Cartographic efforts and surveys during the colonial period offer invaluable information regarding the British efforts to identify India and their specific interests in certain geographic areas.

◆ *Preservation of photographs and maps through digitisation*

Preserving photographs and maps is challenging due to their physical properties, as they are sensitive to light, temperature, and humidity which can cause them to fade, warp, or discolour. Both types of records are often preserved through digitisation, which allows for the storage of high-resolution images and facilitates easy access for research and educational purposes.

1.2.3.3 Audiovisual Records

◆ *Audiovisual records as archives*

Audiovisual records, including recordings of speeches, performances, interviews, and other audio-visual materials, are another important category of archival records. They offer dynamic perspectives on historical events, capturing not just words but tone, inflection, and emotion, the elements often lost in written accounts. The preservation of audiovisual records presents unique challenges, as they are subject to degradation due to format obsolescence and the deterioration of magnetic or digital media. Archivists must continually assess and manage the technological challenges posed by audiovisual records. It ensures they are preserved in formats that can be accessed in the future. This often requires specialised equipment for playback and careful consideration of digital preservation strategies, such as cloud storage or long-term digital preservation systems. We can

consider the examples of speeches of the national leaders during Independence.

1.2.3.4 Government and Institutional Records

Government and institutional records are crucial for understanding the political, economic, and social structure which in turn shape nations, institutions, and societies. They provide insight into the functioning of governments, public bodies, and organisations. They represent the official narrative of state actions and institutional practices. Government records, such as policy documents, gazetteers and administrative files, offer detailed information into the economic strategies and priorities of the country, while institutional records, such as reports, memorandums, and minutes of meetings, document the activities and decisions of organisations, whether public or private.

◆ *Governmental and policy documents play a crucial role in preserving official history*

Philip C. Brookes, a renowned American archivist, mentions that records ensure accountability in a democracy. They act as tools for administration, organisational memory, protection of legal rights, and sources of valuable information. This perspective reflects the importance of records in providing consistency and continuity to governmental actions.

◆ *Democratic accountability*

Furthermore, archival institutions mirror the spectrum of important governmental activities, thereby offering extensive research value. In this context, German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey remarked that every historical document reflects a “living, active, creative, and responsive soul,” emphasising the human experience captured in records.

◆ *Research potential*

1.2.3.5 Born-Digital and Digitised Records

In the digital age, the management of born-digital and digitised records has become increasingly critical in archival work. Born-digital records are created in electronic form from the outset and include emails, electronic databases, digital reports, and other digital documents. These records reflect the operational and transactional nature of contemporary life. However, they face challenges such as format obsolescence, which can quickly become obsolete due to the lack of compatible software or hardware. The rapid expansion of digital data has created the need for sophisticated strategies to ensure long-term preservation and easy accessibility.

◆ *Created in electronic form from the outset*

Digitised records, on the other hand, are physical records that have been converted into digital formats, such as scanned documents, photos, or handwritten manuscripts. This process has vastly improved the preservation of fragile materials and increased

◆ *Preservation of fragile materials through digitisation*

their accessibility. For example, a large number of archival materials related to India's colonial period have been digitised by the National Archives of India and State Archives for easier public access. Digitisation not only helps protect delicate physical records from wear and tear but also provides a platform for global access. It helps scholars and researchers from around the world to engage with materials previously restricted by physical location or condition. It was one of the advantages to the researchers across the world when the Covid lockdown happened in 2020.

◆ *Challenges of archiving digital records*

Both born-digital and digitised records are part of the ongoing evolution of archival practices. While they offer opportunities for more efficient storage and access, they also require new strategies and technologies for preservation. Archiving digital records presents unique challenges, such as ensuring the integrity of the files, managing the sheer volume of data, and adapting to technological changes. As more records are created digitally, archival management must stay ahead of digital preservation techniques, such as regular format migrations and robust metadata management. It makes digital preservation essential.

Summarised Overview

This unit delves into the crucial role of archives in preserving history and supporting societal functions. They serve multiple functions beyond mere preservation, such as safeguarding cultural, legal, and administrative narratives for future generations, supporting governmental, legal, and organisational functions, and providing valuable resources for public access, educational purposes, and cultural programming. Archives transform historical records into living tools for progress and reflection.

Public archives are central to preserving historical, administrative, and legal records that shape governance of the nation. They support transparency, facilitate legal research, and contribute to academic scholarship by providing access to invaluable primary sources. Both private and specialised archives play an indispensable role in preserving the vast array of materials that document human history and culture. Private archives safeguard important records reflecting the identity, contributions, and legacies of individuals and organisations, while specialised archives focus on preserving materials related to specific themes, such as film, digital records, or focused thematic collections. These archives enrich our knowledge and ensure that important aspects of our collective past are never lost.

The diverse types of archival records, including manuscripts and letters, photographs and maps, and audiovisual materials, each offer distinct and invaluable contributions to historical research. Manuscripts and letters provide intimate insights into personal and official histories. Photographs and maps capture the visual and geographical dimensions

of the past. Audiovisual records help us to preserve the voices and sounds of historical moments.

Government and institutional records, born-digital and digitised records, and specialised archival collections each serve a crucial role in documenting and preserving the past. Archival management must ensure the careful preservation and accessibility of these records, recognising the unique challenges each type presents. Archives are foundational to preserving and understanding society's past, making it accessible for future generations.

Assignments

1. Explain the functions of archives with examples.
2. Differentiate between public and private archives. Discuss their roles.
3. Describe the various kinds of archival records and their significance.
4. Critically analyse the challenges of preserving digital archives.
5. Discuss how specialised archives such as film or oral history contribute to research.
6. Discuss the role of archives in preserving cultural heritage.

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Archives and Libraries

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ draw the functional and structural similarities and differences between archives and libraries
- ◆ differentiate between the purposes, methodologies, and audiences of archives and libraries
- ◆ explain the significance of archives and libraries in knowledge preservation

Background

Archives and libraries are essential institutions for knowledge preservation and dissemination. It plays a crucial role in promoting education, research, and cultural continuity. Archives are repositories of original, often unpublished materials, while libraries focus on providing access to published works. Their evolution reflects their adaptation to changing needs of society, from ancient manuscripts to digital databases and e-books.

Archives are repositories of primary sources, such as government records, personal letters, or manuscripts, offering direct insights into historical events, while libraries house secondary sources, such as books and journals, which analyse, interpret, or synthesise information. Libraries often serve as accessible hubs of learning for the public, while archives cater more specifically to researchers seeking unique, original materials.

Keywords

Archives, Libraries, Preservation, Knowledge, Information, Accessibility, Researchers, Public, Records, Access, Catalogues, Collections, Primary Sources, Secondary Sources

Discussion

1.3.1 Functional Differences between Archives and Libraries

◆ *Archives - firsthand evidence of historical events*

Archives hold primary sources, which are original documents and records that offer first hand source materials in the form of evidence of events, decisions, and experiences. These materials include government records, personal letters, diaries, photographs, and audiovisual recordings. For instance, the National Archives of India holds critical documents like correspondence between British officials and Indian leaders during the colonial period, which are invaluable for historians studying India's freedom movement. Similarly, personal letters and diaries, like those of national leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru, preserve intimate glimpses of the political, social, and cultural milieu of their times.

◆ *Libraries focus on secondary sources*

On the other hand, libraries focus on secondary sources, such as books, journals, articles, and other materials that interpret, analyse, or summarise primary sources. Libraries offer access to a wide range of published works, including fiction and non-fiction, academic journals, and reference materials. They are essential for research and offer scholars the tools to understand and engage with the broader intellectual discourse in various fields. Both archives and libraries are essential for research, but they serve different functions in the research process. Libraries offer tools to understand and contextualise information, while archives provide raw data for scholars to generate new knowledge.



Fig.1.3.1 JNU Library, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
Souce:jnu.ac.in

Libraries organise their collections based on subject, author, or genre. They follow standardised cataloguing systems like the Dewey Decimal Classification or the Library of Congress

- ◆ *Archives are organised by provenance*
- ◆ *Libraries use standardised cataloging systems*

Classification. Libraries are designed for browsing and searching for published works, while archives are organised around the provenance of materials, based on the creator or series in which they were produced. Archives may be arranged by the institution or individual responsible for creating the documents, such as personal papers of the government department or a historical figure. They often retain the original order of documents as they were created, which is crucial for understanding the context of the records. Archives may also preserve documents in formats that are not easily accessible, such as handwritten manuscripts, audio recordings, or photographic negatives, requiring specialised care for preservation. Libraries are designed to serve the general public, while archives are more specialised and may have restricted access due to the fragile nature of many archival materials.

- ◆ *Libraries organise secondary sources*
- ◆ *Archives preserve primary materials*

Libraries organise collections based on subject, author, or genre. They offer easy access to a wide range of materials, from literature to scientific research, under a framework. Libraries provide access to secondary literature. Thus, they help students and researchers understand the context of primary sources. Archives provide raw materials, such as letters written by freedom fighters or government files, for original research. In-depth studies require examining primary sources at archives for information not available in published works.



Fig.1.3.2 Teen Murti Bhavan, where the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library functioned from 1966 to 1974

Source: Wikipedia

- ◆ *Gaining authenticity and context from archival materials*

The key function of archives is to preserve the authenticity and context of historical materials. Through careful preservation techniques like climate control, digitisation, and specialised

conservation methods, archives safeguard materials in their original form, retaining the accuracy and integrity of the information they contain. Any alteration or loss of primary sources can lead to a distorted or incomplete understanding of history.

1.3.2 Similarities between Archives and Libraries

As we mentioned above, archives and libraries preserve historical records and published works. Both archives and libraries promote public access to knowledge and offer tools and resources to help individuals engage with various subjects. Libraries provide access to a wealth of published works, while archives offer first hand documents that give information into historical events or personal stories. Both institutions recognise the importance of democratising knowledge by providing open or controlled access to their collections for the benefit of the public.

◆ *Different roles with regard to access to knowledge*

Both archives and libraries contributed to community engagement and knowledge-building through outreach programmes, events, and educational initiatives. Libraries host workshops, book clubs, and educational sessions, while archives offer guided tours, exhibitions, and educational programmes.

◆ *Engaging communities through outreach and education*

When it comes to organisational features, such as cataloguing and classification systems, archives and libraries share similarities. This process helps them manage, catalogue, and retrieve materials in an efficient way. Archives use ‘finding aids’ to provide detailed guides about the materials within a collection. This method allows researchers to access primary source materials in their original form. As we mentioned above, libraries use classification systems like the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) or Library of Congress Classification (LCC) to organise collections by subject. It makes it easier for users to find materials on specific topics.

◆ *Archives and libraries use systems to organise and retrieve materials*

Archivists and librarians manage collections of archives and libraries respectively. Archivists specialise in maintaining, preserving, and organising archival materials. They ensure the accessibility and longevity of those materials. They are trained to handle unique and fragile items by implementing conservation techniques to extend their longevity. Librarians are experts in organising and managing books and other published materials. It helps users accessing library collections and provides assistance with research, reference materials, and retrieval of information.

◆ *Archivists preserve primary sources*

◆ *Librarians manage published works*



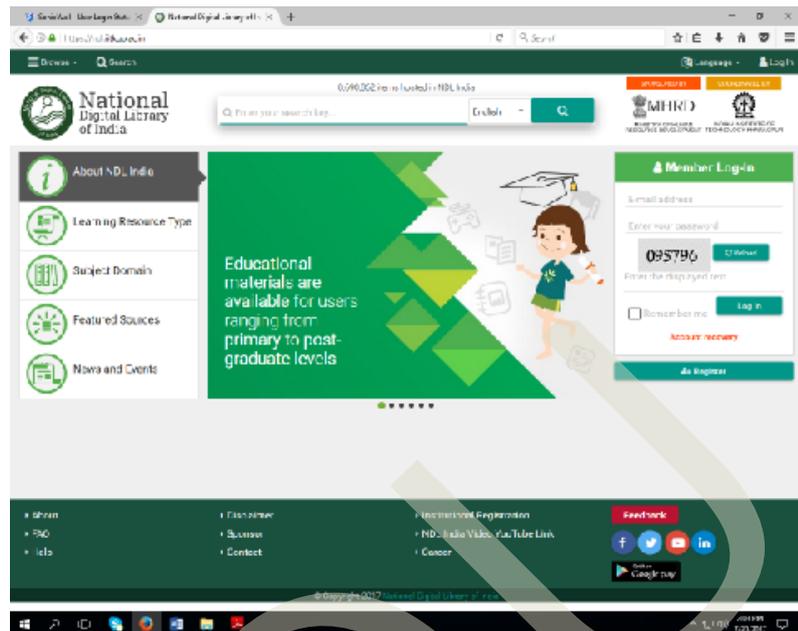


Fig.1.3.3 National Digital Library of India Website

◆ Sources differ greatly- primary and secondary sources

Archives provide primary sources, such as government records, personal letters, photographs, and institutional reports. It helps researchers to reconstruct historical narratives, analyse social movements, and examine past decisions with authenticity. Libraries support research and education by offering curated collections of secondary sources, such as books, journals, and articles, that analyse and interpret primary materials. Libraries also support learning by offering textbooks, reference materials, and access to online databases. University libraries house encyclopaedia, scholarly journals, and digital resources that help students or research scholars understand their subjects in depth and from various perspectives. They also provide access to modern digital technologies which helps learners across the world.

1.3.3 Differences between Archives and Libraries

◆ Original order preserved

We discussed the similarities between the archives and libraries in detail. Now, let us have a look at their key differences. Archives and libraries differ in their approach to organisation. Archives follow the principle of original order, preserving the arrangement of materials as they were created or maintained by the record creator. This principle emphasises the context and relationships between records. It ensures that documents remain in their original form and sequence. Archivists develop finding aids to explain the structure and contents of collections which help users with

materials that may not have a predefined or easily accessible system of classification.

◆ *Libraries classify materials by subject for easy access*

Libraries use subject-based classification systems such as the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) or the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC). These classification systems are designed for ease of access. These hierarchical systems group materials by broad topics such as science, literature, and history. It allows users to quickly locate relevant resources. The goal in libraries is not to maintain the original order of items, but rather to categorise them based on subject or genre for ease of search and use.

◆ *Unique vs. published*

Archives contain unique items with intrinsic historical value, such as government documents, personal letters, institutional records, photographs, oral histories, and audiovisual materials. These items are often one-of-a-kind or exist in limited copies. It makes them invaluable for historical research. Archival materials are preserved with special care, using techniques like climate control, digitisation, and proper storage conditions. Libraries, on the other hand, focus on published materials like books, periodicals, newspapers, and digital resources. They are generally more accessible and less fragile than archives, but may contain original records related to a specific history. Libraries provide access to a broad range of secondary sources, such as textbooks, scholarly articles, and journals, that offer analysis, interpretation, and summaries of primary sources. These secondary materials are the result of extensive research and are more widely circulated to support education, research, and public access.

◆ *Access in archives is restricted*

◆ *Libraries offer open access*

When we consider user interactions with materials, both institutions differ in their rules. Archivists often manage access to archival materials due to their rarity, fragility, and sensitive nature. They oversee the handling and preservation of these materials, and access may be restricted based on condition, legal considerations, or privacy concerns. Researchers must submit specific research requests to consult archival materials, which help archivists prepare them for use. Libraries provide direct access to most materials which allow users to browse shelves, check out books, and access digital platforms freely. They aim to make their collections accessible to anyone, whether for casual reading or academic research. Libraries are designed to be user-friendly, with open stacks and digital access that support individual and group learning.

Considering the collections of archives and libraries, archives primarily house primary sources, original and unaltered materials, which are crucial for research and understanding past behaviours.



- ◆ *Archives hold originals*
- ◆ *Libraries provide analysed versions*

These primary sources include letters, photographs, official documents, and artefacts. Libraries, on the other hand, focus on secondary sources, such as books, textbooks, encyclopaedia, and scholarly articles. Most of these works are written by experts who have analysed and interpreted primary materials. For example, a history book on the Mughal Empire might rely on a range of primary sources, including royal decrees, letters, and historical records, but the book itself is a secondary source that synthesises, interprets, and presents these materials to a broader audience. Libraries focus on providing users with these synthesised materials that support education, research, and public learning. Hence, in general, we can say archives are repositories of unaltered records documenting history, while libraries provide resources to help users understand and analyse these records.



Fig.1.3.4 Representational image of a book stack in a library
Source: <https://cardozo.yu.edu/>

- ◆ *Archives restrict users*
- ◆ *Libraries welcome the general public*

In access policies and user demographics, archives have more restrictive policies, especially for rare or fragile materials, and are often limited to researchers, historians, legal professionals, and specialised scholars. Access is often restricted to appointments or specific permissions. They may impose restrictions on materials that are not yet public or contain sensitive information. Libraries, on the other hand, are generally open to a broader public and accommodate a diverse user base, which includes students, researchers, and the public. They offer more lenient access policies, offering resources for borrowing or use within the library itself. Libraries aim to provide resources necessary for learning and research to anyone who requires them. Hence, it allows a wider audience to engage with the materials.

Summarised Overview

Archives and libraries are two distinct institutions that play a crucial role in preserving and disseminating knowledge. Archives safeguard primary sources of historical events, while libraries provide secondary sources for interpretation and contextualisation. Both institutions have evolved to meet research requirements of the society, and their organisational structures reflect their respective functions. Archives are vital for preserving primary sources, maintaining authenticity, and supporting accountability. Libraries provide access to a wide range of published materials that support education, research, and leisure. They ensure that knowledge is disseminated to the public and preserved in forms that can be widely accessed and used. While archives focus on preserving unique, primary sources that offer unmediated access to history, libraries curate and disseminate secondary materials that support learning, interpretation, and scholarly analysis. Understanding the differences between archives and libraries enhances the ability of learners to use both institutions effectively.

However, archives and libraries differ in several important areas, including their organisational structures, types of materials, interaction with users, and access policies. Archives are focused on the preservation of unique primary sources, organised by original order, and typically provide controlled access for specialised users. Libraries, in contrast, offer published secondary sources, organised through classification systems for ease of access, and cater to a broader public.

Assignments

1. Compare and contrast the purposes of archives and libraries.
2. Discuss the similarities and differences in the organisation of archives and libraries.
3. How do the access policies of archives and libraries differ?
4. Evaluate the role of archives and libraries in the digital age.

Reference

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Suggested Reading

1. Abdul Majeed. C.P, *Archival Science, Past, Present and Future*, SPCS, Kottayam, 2017.
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SGOU

SGOU





Archival Management

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ explain principles of archival management
- ◆ explain the core functions and responsibilities of an archivist in managing archival materials
- ◆ identify and analyse archival legislation relevant to the protection and accessibility of historical records

Background

Archival management is crucial for preserving, organising, and providing access to historical and administrative records. These repositories safeguard the collective memory of societies, institutions, and individuals. It supports historical research and maintains transparency in governance and protects legal rights. Archivists play a major role in ensuring records are preserved in their original state, accessible to researchers and institutions, and complying with relevant legal frameworks. The core principles of archival management include provenance, *respect des fonds*, and original order. It ensures the authenticity and usability of archival materials. Archives serve historical, administrative, legal, and educational roles. Record management system includes the lifecycle of records, from creation to disposal. The role of archivists includes preparing reference media, such as finding aids, indexes, and catalogues, to facilitate access to archival materials. Archival legislation, such as the Public Records Act, 1993, governs the management and preservation of public records in India. It ensures accessibility while protecting sensitive information. The advent of digital archives has expanded the scope of roles of archivists in maintaining both physical and digital records. It necessitates an understanding of digital preservation, metadata standards, and information systems. In this unit, let us have a close look at the intricacies of the archival management, archival legislation and the role of archivists in this process.

Keywords

Archivist, Archival Management, Provenance, *Respect des fonds*, Original Order, Record Management System, Archival Legislation, Digital Preservation, Reference Media, Public Records Act, Metadata Standards



Discussion

1.4.1 Archival Management

◆ *Preserve records for future use*

Archival management is a crucial discipline that ensures the preservation, organisation, and accessibility of records with enduring value. It involves the technical and philosophical processes of managing documents, materials, and other records to ensure they remain accessible for future generations while preserving the wealth of information encapsulated in these materials. Archives are repositories of knowledge, culture, and history. They preserve everything from personal letters to government records and institutional data. Without effective archival management, the wealth of information encapsulated in these materials could be lost and it would in turn hinder the ability of researchers, governments, organisations, and communities to understand their past and make informed decisions in the present.

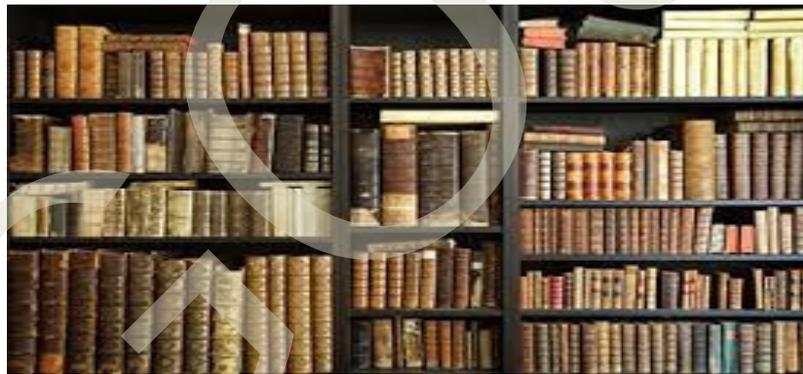


Fig.1.4.1 Record Management

◆ *Aim is to protect vital documents*

The primary purpose of archival management is the safeguarding of records with historical, legal, cultural, or administrative importance. These records are typically irreplaceable or hold unique value. These features make their preservation crucial for both historical research and ongoing administrative needs. Effective archival management ensures the continuity of historical documentation.

◆ *Archives support institutions and research*

Archival management extends beyond mere record-keeping to provide foundational support for various institutions. Governments rely on archives to preserve legal documents, historical government policies, diplomatic communications, administrative history, corporate decisions, and legal obligations. In academic and research fields, archives are indispensable as primary sources for reconstructing historical events, studying social transformations, and analysing personal narratives.

Archives help citizens and historians to scrutinise the actions of

◆ *Archives reveal India's rich heritage*

their governments and institutions. In India, archives are essential for understanding the diverse cultural and historical heritage of the country including ancient manuscripts, colonial records, and contemporary digital documents. The preservation of these materials is essential for understanding India's past. Ancient manuscripts in languages like Sanskrit, Persian, and Tamil are a rich source to understand India's religious, philosophical, and literary traditions. However, if not preserved and managed properly, these records risk being lost to time, neglect, and deterioration. Colonial records, such as official reports, personal letters, administrative papers, and legal documents, document the British Raj in India and provide primary evidence of the economic, social, and political strategies of the Colonial State.

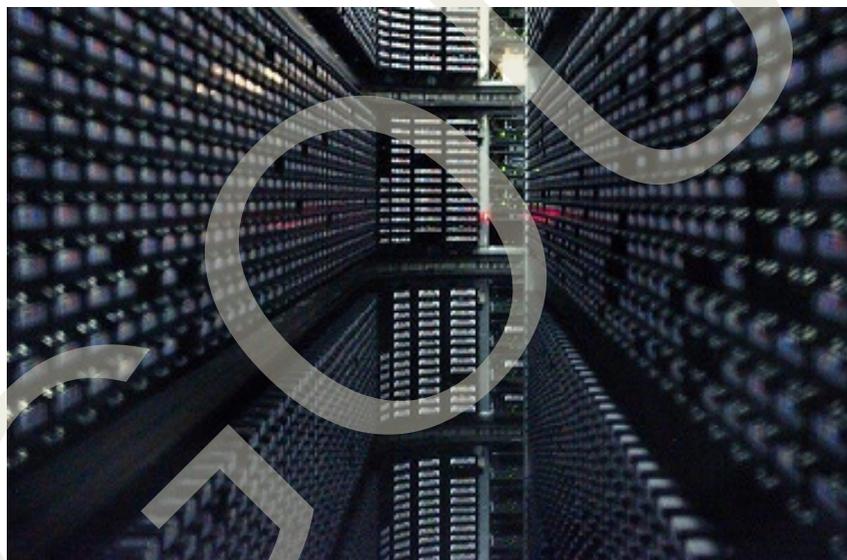


Fig.1.4.2 Digital Tape Library
Source: nationalarchives.gov.uk

◆ *Digital records need careful preservation*

The rapid growth of digital materials in the modern age presents both opportunities and challenges for archival management. Digital archives include various materials such as emails, websites, digital photos, audio recordings, and social media content. The challenge lies in their vulnerability to technological obsolescence, file corruption, and data loss. Archives must use cutting-edge tools and strategies like digital preservation techniques and software, in order to ensure the longevity of these records.

◆ *Digital archives also need safeguarding*

Digital initiatives such as Digital India Programme, have led to the creation of vast digital archives of government documents, historical records, and cultural materials, which must be preserved with the same rigour as traditional physical records.

The future of archival management in India depends on digitising cultural heritage materials that are at risk of deterioration due to their age or fragility. Digitisation extends the lifespan

◆ *Digitisation protects and shares heritage*

of these materials and enhances access to archival collections by making them available online for a worldwide audience. The National Mission for Manuscripts is an initiative that conserves and digitises ancient manuscripts in India. It combines modern technology and traditional archival practices to preserve India's rich manuscript tradition. These days, the importance of sound archival management is critical for heritage preservation.

◆ *Archivists ensure records are preserved*

An archivist plays a crucial role in the preservation, organisation, and accessibility of records with lasting historical, legal, or cultural significance. They are responsible for ensuring that these materials are protected from the ravages of time and available for future generations. The key functions of an archivist include acquisition and appraisal, arrangement, description and cataloguing, preservation and conservation, and outreach and education.

◆ *Collect documents from many sources*

Acquisition involves identifying and acquiring materials with archival value from various sources, such as government departments, private entities, businesses, or individuals. Archivists work closely with public institutions to preserve important policies, decisions, or events. They also evaluate records to determine if they meet preservation criteria, based on factors such as authenticity, uniqueness, and research potential.

◆ *Appraise records for lasting importance*

Appraisal, on the other hand, involves the evaluation of records to determine whether they meet the criteria for preservation in an archive. The appraisal process is based on several key factors, such as the authenticity of the records, their uniqueness, and their research potential. Archivists assess whether the materials contain information that is significant for understanding historical events, social trends, or legal matters. In Indian context, the selection of British-era documents, such as colonial government records, is essential for understanding the governance and policies of the British Raj. For instance, British government records concerning land taxation policies in colonial India are critical for scholars studying the socio-economic impacts of British colonialism. To determine what materials are worthy of preservation, archivists must have a deep understanding of history, research needs, and the significance of the records in question.

◆ *Organise files to retain original context*

Archivists organise records to preserve their context and make them easily accessible for researchers. They follow the principle of "original order", which focuses on the way records were created or accumulated by their creators. This method helps preserve the context and relationships between material. It makes it easier for researchers to understand the intent behind documents. For



example, the records of a government department might be organised by the sequence in which they were created or by their functional categories.

◆ *Describe records for user understanding*

Description is crucial in providing detailed summaries of records by making them understandable to users unfamiliar with the materials. Archivists create finding aids or descriptive inventories that provide information about the provenance, content, and format of the records. This helps researchers understand the relevance and scope of the materials they are working with.

◆ *Catalogue materials for easy retrieval*

Cataloguing is the process of creating searchable tools that facilitate easy retrieval of records. This involves entering detailed information about each record or collection into a database or catalogue system, creating an index, cross-referencing materials, and ensuring data accessibility through digital platforms. Modern archival management increasingly relies on digital cataloguing tools, which allow for easier access to records and increase the visibility of archival collections.

◆ *Preserve physical and digital documents*

As we discussed, archivists play a crucial role in the preservation and conservation of archival materials. **Preservation** involves preventive measures to protect records from damage or deterioration, such as controlling environmental conditions and keeping them in acid-free boxes or containers. **Digital preservation** involves using technology to safeguard electronic records from becoming corrupted or obsolete. Archivists use specialised software and strategies to migrate files to new formats. Hence, they ensure long-term accessibility and usability.

◆ *Restore and repair damaged records*

Conservation involves the physical repair and restoration of damaged materials, due to age, mishandling, or environmental factors. Conservation efforts can include cleaning, repairing tears, reinforcing brittle paper, or digitising fragile records to prevent further damage. Old manuscripts or rare books may be repaired using acid-free materials or treated with fumigation to protect against pests. In some cases, conservation might involve re-binding damaged books or performing delicate restoration work on fragile photographs or maps. By using both preservation and conservation strategies, archivists ensure that archival materials are kept in the best possible condition for future generations.

Archivists are not only concerned with the preservation and accessibility of records but also with promoting archival materials to the public. They develop strategies to make archives more visible and accessible, working with community organisations, museums, schools, and universities to raise awareness of their collections. This may involve conducting outreach campaigns, creating

◆ *Promote archives through outreach efforts*

educational materials, or collaborating on projects that highlight the importance of archives. Archivists often organise exhibitions to showcase the treasures of an archive, such as rare manuscripts, historic photographs, or important governmental records. These exhibitions can take place within the archive or in public spaces like museums or cultural centres. Archivists also play a crucial role in education by conducting workshops, seminars, and training programmes to promote archival awareness. These initiatives help people understand the value of archives and the importance of preserving records. Archivists also teach researchers, students, and the general public how to use archival materials.

◆ *Ensure record authenticity, integrity*

◆ *Three key principles*

1.4.3 Principles of Archival Management

Archival management principles are essential guidelines for preserving and organising records to maintain their authenticity, integrity, and research value. These principles protect the historical, cultural, and legal significance of materials while making them accessible to researchers and the public. Three key principles are involved in the work of an archivist: provenance, original order, and *respect des fonds*.

1.4.3.1 Provenance

◆ *Provenance keeps records with original creators*

◆ *Preserves historical context*

Provenance is the principle of respecting the origin or source of records by ensuring that records from one creator are kept separate from others. This helps maintain the historical and contextual integrity of the materials. For example, government records from a specific department should not be mixed with materials from a different department, as it could obscure the administrative processes and relationships inherent in the original collection. Respecting provenance also means keeping records within their original groupings or series, based on the administrative or functional activities that led to their creation. This allows future researchers to trace the records back to their creators and understand the context in which they were produced. The principle of provenance is critical in ensuring that archives remain accurate and truthful representations of the past.

1.4.3.2 Original Order

◆ *Keep original arrangement*

Original order is the principle of preserving the arrangement of records as they were established by their creators. This principle ensures that records retain the relationships and context in which they were created by protecting the integrity of the materials and enhancing the ability of researchers to understand and interpret them. For example, a personal collection of letters may be arranged chronologically by the creator. It reflects the progression of their correspondence over time. When archiving institutional records,

the materials are often arranged by the administrative functions or activities that produced them.

1.4.3.3. *Respect des Fonds*

Respect des fonds is a principle that emphasises the preservation of records from the same source or creator, regardless of their format or content. It builds on the concept of provenance and suggests that records should not be divided based on format, subject matter, or medium. Records should remain intact within the context of their original creator or function, even if they exist in different formats. The core idea behind *respect des fonds* is to preserve records in their original context, with all related materials grouped together. This helps maintain the authenticity and integrity of the records which allows for a more holistic understanding of the activities or decisions of the creator. For example, an archive holding a collection of records from a government department should include official correspondence, policy documents, photographs, memos, and related audiovisual materials.

◆ *Ensures full context of records*

Respect des fonds also ensures that the value of the archival collection is not diminished by unnecessary fragmentation. Separating administrative records from personal records within a government official's collection could make it difficult for researchers to understand the connections between personal and professional aspects of the official's life. Keeping records together allows for a clearer understanding of the historical and cultural forces at play at the time of their creation. For example, records of the Indian National movement might include letters, speeches, photographs, and audio recordings, all documenting different aspects of the movement.

◆ *Avoid fragmenting archival meaning*

1.4.4 Roles of Archives and Record Management Systems

Archives and record management have a vital role in preserving their authenticity and usability of historical, legal, and cultural records for research, legal, and administrative purposes. Effective archival management involves custodial roles, managing the record lifecycle, and integrating digital record-keeping systems. These elements contribute to the long-term safeguarding of documents and records.

◆ *Serve legal, cultural, research needs*

The custodial responsibility of an archive involves ensuring the safe custody and long-term preservation of records. This involves careful management of physical and environmental conditions to prevent deterioration. Preserving techniques include climate control, pest management, and security protocols. Regular

◆ *Custodial Role*

monitoring and pest control measures, such as fumigation or pest-repellent materials, are vital for the integrity of archival collections.

- ◆ *Security measures*
- ◆ *Protect archives from theft and damage*

Security protocols are also essential for the custodianship of archives. They often house valuable or sensitive records, such as government documents, personal manuscripts, or rare books. To protect these materials from theft, vandalism, or unauthorised access, archives implement strict security measures, including surveillance systems, access controls, and restricted entry to sensitive areas. In some cases, materials may be digitised or microfilmed to minimise physical wear and tear.

- ◆ *Record Lifecycle*
- ◆ *Creation, maintenance, and disposal*

The record lifecycle is an important concept in archival and record management systems, describing the stages that records undergo from creation to final disposition. It includes three primary phases: creation, maintenance, and eventual disposal or permanent preservation. The creation phase involves accurately documenting and categorising records to facilitate future use and determining whether a record has long-term value or is temporary.

- ◆ *Maintenance phase*

The maintenance phase involves actively using and managing records, such as digital file servers or physical filing cabinets. Effective record-keeping practices are crucial, and some records may be subject to a retention schedule based on their legal, administrative, or historical value.

- ◆ *Final Phase: Preservation or Disposal*

Once a record's administrative value ends, it transitions to the final stage: preservation or disposal. Archival materials with enduring historical or cultural value are transferred to the archives for long-term preservation, organised, described, and catalogued according to archival principles. Records without ongoing administrative, legal, or historical significance may be disposed of through destruction or shredding. Understanding the record lifecycle helps the archivists prioritise which records should be preserved and which should be discarded by optimising resource use and ensuring valuable records are preserved for future generations.

- ◆ *Digital record-keeping systems*

Digital record-keeping systems have revolutionised the way organisations manage records and archives. With the advancement of technology, many records are now created and maintained electronically. Digital record-keeping systems, such as software platforms and digital asset management (DAM) systems, are increasingly being adopted by archives and organisations to manage and preserve electronic records.

One of the primary benefits of digital record-keeping systems is the improved searchability of records. With large volumes of records being created daily, finding specific pieces of information

◆ *Searchability and Access*

in traditional physical archives can be time-consuming and labour-intensive. Digital systems allow archivists to tag records with metadata. It makes it easier to search and retrieve materials based on keywords, dates, or other criteria. This increases the efficiency of archival work and enhances the ability of users to access relevant materials quickly. Another advantage of digital record-keeping systems is the significant reduction in physical storage needs. Traditional archives require vast amounts of physical space, reducing costs associated with maintaining large, climate-controlled storage rooms. Digital systems also allow for easier backup and disaster recovery, protecting records against loss due to natural disasters or accidents.

◆ *Reference tools aid access*

1.4.5 Preparation of Reference Media

The preparation of reference media is crucial in archival management, as it ensures the efficient organisation and accessibility of records. This is achieved through techniques like cataloguing, indexing, and creating finding aids and metadata for digital archives. These processes maintain record integrity, ensure long-term usability, and facilitate efficient access for researchers, scholars, and the public. Properly prepared reference media enhances the utility of archives and aids in preserving historical and cultural heritage for future generations.

◆ *Catalogues describe items*

1.4.5.1 Cataloguing and Indexing

Cataloguing involves creating detailed records for each item or group of related records, ensuring they are adequately described and easily locatable. A well-structured catalogue provides essential information about each item, including its title, creator, date of creation, and brief description of its content. Indexing complements cataloguing by enabling more specialised searches allow records to be arranged thematically, chronologically, or by other relevant criteria. Thematic indexing organises records by subject matter. It makes it easier for researchers to find documents related to a particular topic or field of interest. Chronological indexing organises records based on time periods and provides a historical context to the materials.

◆ *Indexing saves time*

Indexing systems reduce the time and effort required to locate specific records. Both cataloguing and indexing must be done with consistency and accuracy to avoid confusion and errors in retrieval. User-friendly indices, with clearly defined categories and cross-references, help users in accessing archival collections.

1.4.5.2 Finding Aids and Metadata for Digital Archives

◆ *Finding aids guide users*

Finding aids help users understand what records are available and how they are organised, helping researchers to determine if a particular archive contains the materials they need before physically or digitally accessing the collection.

◆ *Metadata explains records*

Metadata serves as descriptive, administrative, and technical data that provides context for digital records and structures the information in a way that facilitates searching, retrieval, and long-term preservation. Descriptive metadata characterises the content, such as titles, creators, subjects, and keywords. Administrative metadata includes details about the record's management and processing, such as file formats, access restrictions, and digital rights management. Technical metadata refers to information about the digital format, file size, and creation date, which helps archivists manage and preserve the file for the long term. Digital tools, such as metadata tagging, timestamps, and format identification, improve the searchability and organisation of records. As digital archives continue to grow, metadata will become even more important in maintaining the organisation, integrity, and usability of records.

◆ *Laws ensuring the protection of records*

1.4.6 Archival Legislation

In India, laws regulate public and private record handling, ensuring preservation for future generations and providing guidelines for accessibility, security, and management. International frameworks guide archivists worldwide, promoting record protection, cultural heritage access, and maintaining privacy and confidentiality.

◆ *India's Public Records Act, 1993*

1.4.6.1 Indian Laws

India's Public Records Act, 1993 mandates the creation of a central registry for public records and requires all government departments to take adequate steps to protect and maintain the records under their control. The Act also stipulates the proper procedures for declassification, transfer, and disposal of records no longer needed for administrative purposes. The Public Records Act emphasises the importance of preserving government records for historical significance and holding governments accountable. It encourages systematic collection, organisation, and preservation of such records. The Public Records Rules, 1997, issued under the Act, specify the procedural details for appraisal, retention, and transfer of records, ensuring standardised practices across departments.

We have other laws that indirectly influence archival management, such as the Copyright Act, which governs intellectual property rights, including the copyright status of works held within archives.



◆ *Laws that indirectly influence archival management*

Archivists must be aware of the restrictions imposed by copyright laws, especially when digitising records. The Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, allows citizens to request access to government records. With the digitisation of government documents and the rise of e-governance, archival legislation faces new challenges in managing electronic records. Issues such as format obsolescence, metadata standards, and long-term digital preservation now require urgent attention within the existing legal framework.

◆ *UNESCO guidelines for preserving cultural heritage*

UNESCO has established guidelines for preserving cultural heritage, advocating for the protection and preservation of cultural materials. UNESCO also promotes universal access to archival materials. It urges member states to preserve records for education, research, and cultural engagement.

◆ *Memory of the World (MoW) Programme*

UNESCO's *Memory of the World (MoW) Programme*, launched in 1992, is a global initiative to safeguard the documentary heritage of humanity from neglect, decay, climatic damage, and deliberate destruction. It seeks to prevent collective amnesia by preserving valuable archives, library collections, and private records across the world. The programme also supports the restoration of dispersed or displaced documentary materials and works to make them more accessible through digitisation and public dissemination. A notable example is the preservation of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) archives held in multiple countries. By encouraging international cooperation, MoW ensures that these irreplaceable sources of memory are protected for future generations.

◆ *ICA sets standards for archival work*

The International Council on Archives (ICA) sets standards for archival work, ensuring archivists adhere to internationally recognised best practices in areas such as record appraisal, preservation, and access. The ICA's Code of Ethics emphasises the importance of maintaining the authenticity and integrity of records while promoting their accessibility. International Archives Day is observed annually on 9 June to raise awareness about the importance of archives in preserving the historical memory of societies and promoting transparency, accountability, and identity. This date commemorates the founding of the International Council on Archives on 9 June 1948 under the auspices of UNESCO.

◆ *The Indian Historical Records Commission*

India has its own institutional framework for safeguarding documentary heritage. The Indian Historical Records Commission (IHRC), established in 1919, functions as an advisory body to the Government of India on issues related to archival policy and the preservation of historical records. It promotes research in history through better management of public records and encourages

coordination among various archival institutions.

1.4.6.3 Ethical Considerations

- ◆ *Respect for individual privacy*
- ◆ *Providing attribution for copyrighted works*

Archival materials, such as personal correspondence or medical records, may contain sensitive information that could cause harm or violate privacy rights. Archivists must carefully consider these factors when determining access policies. They should ensure records are handled with respect for individual privacy while promoting transparency and accountability. Archivists must ensure they do not violate copyright laws when reproducing, distributing, or displaying records. This includes obtaining permission from copyright holders and providing appropriate attribution for copyrighted works. Digitisation of archives also raises concerns about digital rights management and the potential for unauthorised use or reproduction of copyrighted materials.

Summarised Overview

In India, where history is shaped by millennia of cultural richness and colonial encounters, archival management serves as the bridge between past, present, and future. It is essential for preserving the tangible and intangible heritage of India and providing tools and knowledge necessary for future generations to build upon.

The functions of an archivist include acquisition, appraisal, arrangement, description, cataloguing, preservation, conservation, and outreach. They work to ensure that valuable records are preserved for future generations. They were made accessible to researchers and the public and utilised to inform current and future social needs. The principles of provenance, original order, and *respect des fonds* are essential for ensuring the integrity and authenticity of archival records.

As digital records continue to grow in importance, archivists must adopt strategies to preserve and manage these materials for future use. Archives and record management systems ensure the long-term safekeeping of valuable materials, from the safe custody of records to managing their lifecycle and integrating modern digital technologies. Archival legislation, both domestic and international, provides a legal and ethical framework that governs the management, preservation, and accessibility of records. Ethical considerations, including privacy, copyright, and access, are vital to maintaining the integrity of archives. It ensures that records are accessible while respecting individual rights and cultural sensitivities.

Assignments

1. Explain the key functions of an archivist and their ethical responsibilities.
2. Discuss the principles of archival management.
3. Evaluate the role of archival legislation in preserving public records in India.
4. Explain the lifecycle of records and its relevance in modern record management.
5. Discuss the importance of preparing reference media in archival management.

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Conservation Techniques

BLOCK-02



Preservation of Archival Records

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ understand the role of preservation in the context of archival records and historical research
- ◆ identify various forms of deterioration that affect archival materials
- ◆ explain the factors contributing to the deterioration of archival records
- ◆ know general rules and techniques for repairing and preserving archival materials

Background

Preservation of archival records is one of the most important factors in both historical research and preserving our cultural past. Archives serve as repositories of evidence, holding valuable materials such as manuscripts, photographs, maps, and official documents. These records allow us to reconstruct the past with accuracy and depth. But what happens if they aren't preserved? They degrade, become inaccessible, and valuable pieces of history risk being lost forever.

In India, archival preservation faces unique challenges. The Indian climate, which is marked by high humidity, fluctuating temperatures, and intense monsoons, creates conditions that are particularly tough on paper-based materials. Issues like mould growth, pest infestations, and chemical deterioration are common. If you've ever noticed how quickly a paper yellows or becomes brittle in humid weather, you'll understand why this is such a significant problem on a larger scale. Institutions like the National Archives of India (NAI) and the regional archives have taken significant steps to address these challenges. They use both traditional methods and modern techniques to mitigate damage. One example is deacidification, which helps counteract the brittleness caused by acidic ink and low-quality paper pulp. Such measures are essential for ensuring that these records remain accessible to future generations. For scholars of history, the importance of this work cannot be overstated. These archives are not just sources of information, they are the foundation of how we understand and interpret the past.

Another pressing issue in archival preservation is the fragility of the materials themselves. Many historical records were created using materials never meant to last



centuries. Problems like ink corrosion, the weakening of cellulose fibers in paper, and the breakdown of leather bindings are all tied to the chemical makeup of older materials. These factors slowly but steadily erode the physical integrity of these records and make them vulnerable to damage or even complete loss.

In this unit, let us explore the nature of preservation and the importance of safeguarding records. We'll also examine the various causes of deterioration, from environmental factors to material vulnerabilities. Finally, we'll explore the practical strategies and ethical considerations involved in ensuring these records remain accessible for future generations.

Keywords

Deterioration, Archival Records, Techniques, Archival Preservation, Preventive Measures, Historical Research, Documentation, Deacidification, Fumigation

Discussion

“When archives cease to be of current use, their proper conservation should still be regarded as an essential object of national concern because they, and they only, can give us that unimpeachable guidance for the conduct in the present. The preservation of historical evidence should thus be viewed neither as a luxury, nor as something generally academically desirable, but as a national necessity.” - Hilary Jenkinson, A British archivist



Fig.2.1.1 Hilary Jenkinson
Source: getarchive.net

◆ Significance of Preservation

Sir Hilary Jenkinson astutely observed that the preservation of archives is not merely an act of storing historical records but a fundamental necessity for guiding contemporary actions. Similarly, the 1910 International Congress of Archivists and

Librarians in Brussels emphasised that a nation's dedication to safeguarding its documentary heritage is a true reflection of its cultural advancement. By meticulously protecting these records, societies not only pay homage to their historical legacy but also provide future generations with an authentic and comprehensive understanding of the past.

2.1.1 Importance of Preservation in Historical Research

◆ Purpose of preservation

Archival records are the backbone of historical research and documentation. They consist of materials created or received by individuals, institutions, or organisations during their daily activities. Those materials were preserved for historical, legal, cultural, or administrative purposes. They include handwritten manuscripts, printed books, maps, photographs, films, digital records, and audio recordings. For instance, the records of the East India Company provide information on colonial governance, trade practices, and social structures during British rule in India. One of the most important features of the archival records is its distinctness from other records because of their long-term value and role as primary sources in research. A document becomes an archival record when it is appraised and determined to be worth preserving for its importance. Similarly, family letters or documents preserved over generations bring light on genealogical, personal and social histories.

◆ Category of archival records

Archival records are often categorised into public, private, and institutional archives. National or State archives come under public archives, which house government records. Private archives contain materials belonging to individuals or families, while institutional archives store records of organisations, corporations, or academic bodies. All these archival records preserve knowledge for present and future use.

◆ Repositories of evidence

As we have mentioned, the preservation of archival records is critical in historical research. Archives act as repositories of evidence that helps scholars in inquiring into the past. These documents allow researchers to reconstruct events, trace developments, and analyse trends across time and space. For instance, letters of the national leaders or the proceedings of the Indian National Congress, give information into the ideological and organisational underpinnings of the struggle for independence in India. Without preservation, these records could deteriorate or be lost, which denies researchers the primary sources needed to interpret historical phenomena.

The authenticity of primary sources depends on their protection



◆ *Preservation efforts*

from tampering, loss, or unauthorised alterations. For instance, court records from colonial India must retain their original context and content to be valid sources. Preservation efforts involve physical protection and measures to ensure the value of records remains unaltered over time.

◆ *Preservation of oral histories and non-traditional sources*

As we have seen, archives serve as repositories for legal and administrative records. These records can be used as evidence in disputes or proof of rights and entitlements, such as property records. Archival records also help to the preservation of cultural and social memory. It documents the achievements, struggles, and transformations of communities. In the context of India, the preservation of oral histories, folk manuscripts, and other non-traditional materials is especially important. For example, the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune houses ancient manuscripts that shed light on Indian philosophy, religious practices, and literary traditions.

2.1.2 Deterioration of Archival Records

2.1.2.1 Types of Deterioration

◆ *Types deterioration*

One of the major challenges archivists face with regard to the archival records is that they are highly susceptible to deterioration. We can broadly classify the deterioration into three- physical deterioration, chemical deterioration, biological deterioration, and environmental deterioration.

◆ *Physical deterioration*

Physical deterioration is caused by wear and tear from improper handling, frequent use, or natural ageing of materials. Records stored in libraries and public archives often face extensive physical damage, such as repeated folding of brittle paper or weakening binding of books. This damage is common in frequently consulted records like government correspondence or legal documents. Poor storage practices, such as stacking heavy materials on fragile papers, increase physical deterioration. In the case of ancient manuscripts in India, those written on palm leaves faded due to mechanical stress caused by traditional storage methods.

◆ *Chemical deterioration*

The high content of iron in some archival materials causes chemical reactions and results in deterioration. This comes under the category of chemical deterioration. For example, many archival papers manufactured in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were made from wood pulp containing lignin, a substance that causes acidification. Over time, the acid within the paper reacts with moisture in the air, leading to yellowing, brittleness, and eventual disintegration. Ink corrosion, caused by the high iron content in some inks, is another common form of chemical deterioration.

This phenomenon often creates holes or tears in the areas of paper where the ink has been applied. Colonial records written with acidic inks on low-quality paper are particularly vulnerable to this deterioration.

◆ *Biological deterioration*

Biological agents like mould, fungi, insects, and rodents are also destructive threats to archival materials. This can be termed as biological deterioration. Humid environments, particularly in tropical regions, are conducive to mould growth, which disfigures paper and photographs, weakens fibers, and renders the material brittle. Insects, such as silverfish, bookworms, and termites, consume paper and glue, leaving behind perforations that render records illegible.

◆ *Environmental deterioration*

Environmental factors like light exposure, temperature fluctuations, and humidity also contribute to the deterioration of archival records. Ultraviolet light can cause the fading of ink and weakening of paper fibers, which makes records unreadable. High temperatures accelerate chemical reactions, while excessive humidity promotes mould growth and ink bleeding. In older storage facilities without temperature and humidity control systems, materials often degrade at an alarming rate. To prevent these issues, extensive conservation efforts are required to preserve these valuable records.

◆ *Internal factors*

2.1.2.2 Factors Contributing to Deterioration

Archival records are susceptible to deterioration due to internal and external factors. Internal factors refer to the inherent properties of the materials used in archival records that make them prone to deterioration. Many older documents were created using low-quality paper, ink, or adhesives. Paper made from wood pulp, as mentioned earlier, is particularly vulnerable due to its acidic composition. Similarly, leather bindings used in early books can crack and disintegrate over time due to the natural breakdown of collagen in the leather. Manufacturing processes, such as the use of chemicals not intended for long-term stability, can also contribute to degradation. The use of copper-based pigments in medieval manuscripts has led to chemical degradation in many cases.

External factors are those that originate from the environment or human activity. Improper handling is one of the most preventable causes of archival deterioration. Folding documents, using adhesive tape, or writing on archival materials with ballpoint pens can lead to irreversible damage. Many archival collections in India suffer from damage caused by users folding fragile documents to fit them into small storage containers. Environmental exposure,

◆ *External factors*

such as pollutants, moisture, and temperature fluctuations, can also accelerate the degradation process. Dust particles also can attract insects and accelerate the degradation process. In urban archives near industrial areas, Sulphur dioxide and other pollutants can cause chemical reactions that degrade materials.

2.1.3 General Rules for the Repair of Records

The principle of the archival repair is to adopt minimally invasive techniques that prioritise the durability and authenticity of the records.

2.1.3.1 Guidelines for Minimally Invasive Repairs

1. Any repair conducted on an archival record should be reversible, allowing future conservators to undo or revise the intervention without causing additional harm. Japanese tissue paper adhered with reversible adhesives, such as wheat starch paste, is often used to mend tears.
2. Materials used for repair must be chemically and physically compatible with the original. Acid-free paper and neutral adhesives are preferred to prevent chemical reactions that might degrade the record further.
3. Each repair must be meticulously documented by detailing the materials and techniques used.

◆ *Minimally Invasive Repairs*

In practice, minimally invasive repairs are often applied to records of high historical or cultural value, such as ancient palm-leaf manuscripts in India.



Fig.2.1.2 Polyester L-Sleeve used for damaged or unstable original records
Source: archives.gov

◆ *Handling the records*

2.1.3.2 Proper Handling Techniques

Proper handling techniques are essential for archival materials, including using clean, dry hands or cotton gloves, supporting fragile items with a flat surface or book cradle, and avoiding adhesive tapes and staples.

◆ *Archival repair techniques*

2.1.3.3 Types of Repairs

Archival repair techniques vary based on the type and extent of damage. Common types include fixing tears in paper using Japanese tissue paper, rebinding books and bound records with damaged spines or loose pages, and fragile documents in polyester film sleeves. Tears in paper are often repaired using Japanese tissue paper, a thin yet durable material that blends seamlessly with the original. A reversible adhesive is applied to the edges of the tear, and the tissue is gently pressed into place, reinforcing the damaged area without obscuring the text or image. For books and bound records with damaged spines or loose pages, rebinding is often necessary. However, archival rebinding uses techniques and materials that preserve the original look and feel of the book while ensuring durability. Acid-free thread and adhesives are commonly used for this purpose. Polyester film wraps can be used for fragile papers. This method permits viewing of the record while shielding it from physical manipulation. Encapsulation is particularly useful for maps, posters, and large-format documents.

◆ *Responsibility to maintain the authenticity*

2.1.4 Ethical Considerations in Preservation

Archivists must balance the need to preserve and stabilise records with the responsibility to maintain their authenticity. Repairs should aim to preserve the original form and content of the record. Alterations that majorly change the appearance or structure of a document are generally discouraged. Over-restoration, or attempting to return a record to a perceived 'pristine' state, is considered unethical in archival practices, as it risks erasing evidence of the historical context of the record. Archivists must clearly communicate the reasoning behind repair decisions to stakeholders, including researchers, historians, and funding bodies. This is to ensure the larger community understands and supports the preservation efforts.

2.1.5 Techniques of Archival Preservation

Archival preservation techniques include chemical treatments, mechanical processes, and the use of archival-quality materials.

2.1.5.1 Chemical Treatments

1. Deacidification

◆ *Methods of deacidification*

As discussed above, chemical treatments are crucial in stabilising archival materials, particularly paper, which is highly susceptible to degradation due to its composition and ageing process. Two prominent chemical preservation methods are deacidification and fumigation. Deacidification is an essential conservation process that neutralises acidity in paper to prevent deterioration. Acidity in documents results from the materials used in their production and environmental contamination. The process involves treating paper with alkaline substances such as calcium hydroxide or calcium bicarbonate. There are three primary methods of deacidification: aqueous (wet), non-aqueous (dry), and gaseous. The aqueous method is preferred for most documents, except those with water-soluble inks. Non-aqueous and gaseous methods are suitable for materials sensitive to water exposure. Deacidification prolongs the lifespan of historical and archival documents, ensuring their preservation for future use.

2. Fumigation

- ◆ *Eliminates mould, insects*
- ◆ *Uses chemical vapours*
- ◆ *Prevents further deterioration*

Fumigation is a chemical technique used to treat materials infested with biological agents like mould, fungi, or pests. Fumigation is a crucial curative measure in document conservation, primarily aimed at eliminating mould, insects, and fungi. It involves exposing infested documents to chemical vapours or gases within an airtight fumigation chamber. Common fumigants include thymol, para-dichlorobenzene, and ethylene chloride, which act as insecticides and fungicides. Thymol fumigation is particularly effective against fungal infestations, using heated thymol crystals to generate disinfecting vapours. Documents are arranged in an inverted 'V' shape on a wire mesh frame for effective exposure. This method helps prevent further outbreaks and protects archival materials from deterioration. Proper ventilation post-fumigation is essential to remove residual chemicals.

2.1.5.2 Mechanical Processes

- ◆ *Stabilises, protects, durable*

Mechanical processes are essential in archival preservation to stabilise damaged documents and materials and allow them to be handled and stored without further harm. Two common mechanical preservation methods are lamination and microfilming. Lamination involves encasing archival materials in a thin plastic film to protect them from physical wear and environmental damage. However, improper application can cause irreversible damage. Modern

techniques use acid-free and reversible plastic films to preserve documents while making them more durable.

1. Lamination

◆ *Protective film enclosure*

Lamination is often used for heavily worn or frequent-handling materials like historical maps, posters, and photographs. In India, archives use lamination for high research value maps and records that are too fragile to withstand regular handling. Encapsulation may be used for particularly valuable records to ensure reversibility.

2. Microfilming

◆ *Photographic reproductions of documents*

◆ *Compact long-term storage*

Microfilming is a preservation technique that creates a photographic reproduction of archival materials on microfilm, allowing large volumes of records to be preserved in a compact, durable format while reducing the risk of damage caused by frequent handling. It can preserve records indefinitely when stored in optimal conditions and can be digitised for broader access to researchers without physically interacting with the original records. Prime Minister's Museum and Library (PMML), Teenmurti, Delhi has a huge collection of microfilm records. Mostly the newspapers of the colonial period are found there. Researchers, historians and others make use of this collection.

2.1.5.3 Use of Archival Quality Materials

◆ *Materials and Importance*

◆ *Acid-free, durable, protective*

Archival-quality materials are acid-free, durable, and non-reactive, preventing degradation. Acid-free paper is essential for prolonging document life due to its neutral pH and lignin-free properties. National Archives of India use acid-free folders and envelopes to protect documents from internal chemical degradation.

◆ *Protective Enclosures*

◆ *Barrier against deterioration*

Protective enclosures, such as acid-free folders, boxes, and sleeves, protect archival materials from physical damage. These enclosures provide a protective barrier against dust, dirt, and environmental factors like light and humidity. Materials like polyester, mylar, and polypropylene are commonly used for encapsulating delicate documents. Archival-quality boxes are used to store records and protect them from external environmental factors. These boxes are made from durable, acid-free, and moisture-resistant materials. This minimises physical stress and exposure to damaging elements.

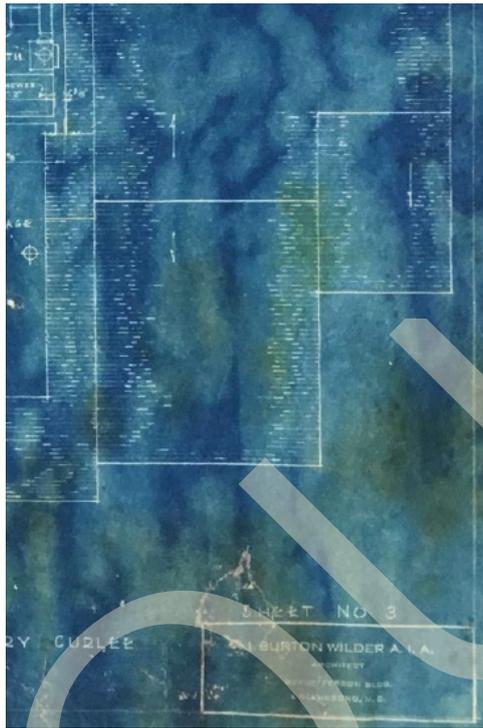


Fig.2.1.3 Close-up of treated materials
Source: <https://www.lib.ncsu.edu>

2.1.6 Stages of Preservation

- ◆ *Identifies risks*
- ◆ *Records details*

The three primary stages of preservation are Assessment and Documentation, Stabilisation and Repair, and Long-Term Storage and Monitoring. The first stage involves assessing the condition and risks of archival records to identify those in immediate need of intervention and develop a long-term preservation strategy.

2.1.6.1 Assessment and Documentation

- ◆ *Initial condition review*

Archivists must conduct a thorough assessment of the physical and chemical condition of the records, including signs of deterioration such as yellowing, brittleness, tearing, fading, or the presence of mould. They also assess the environment in which the records are stored, including factors such as temperature, humidity, and light exposure.

- ◆ *Keeping the detailed records*

After the assessment, detailed records should be kept regarding the materials, their physical state, the causes of deterioration, and recommended preservation treatments. This documentation serves as a reference for future preservation efforts, ensuring that interventions are tracked and can be reviewed.

2.1.6.2 Stabilisation and Repair

The first step involves preventing further physical damage to the records. Place fragile or torn documents in acid-free folders

◆ *Prevention of further physical damage*

or mylar sleeves to prevent further tearing, folding, or handling. Protective enclosures can also be used to limit the impact of environmental factors such as light and dust. Repair of damaged records involves minimally invasive techniques to restore the physical integrity of materials without altering their original form. Torn paper can be repaired using Japanese tissue and a reversible adhesive, while damaged bindings can be reinforced or re-stitched using archival thread and glue.

◆ *Damage control phase*

Ethics of repair has to be considered during this stage, as interventions should aim to prolong the life of the records without changing its historical value. When rebinding a rare manuscript, care should be taken to preserve the original covers and text block while respecting the historical structure of the document.

◆ *Controlled environment storage*

2.1.6.3 Long-Term Storage and Monitoring

The ideal conditions for archival materials include a cool, stable temperature, low humidity, and low light levels. National Archives of India have implemented controlled storage systems to maintain optimal conditions. Ongoing monitoring includes regularly checking for signs of deterioration, such as mould growth, pest infestations, or excessive acidity in paper. Monitoring systems, such as data loggers, are increasingly used in archives with large collections to track temperature, humidity, and light exposure. These systems alert archivists if conditions fall outside the optimal range. It helps timely intervention to prevent damage. Regular audits of the collection are also essential for ensuring materials remain accessible and conservation strategies are being adhered to. Digital copies of materials are often created to facilitate access and prolong the lifespan of original records.

◆ *Preventive and curative measures*

2.1.7 Methods of Preservation

The preservation of paper materials primarily involves two key methods: preventive and curative measures. Preventive measures aim to protect documents from deterioration through environmental control, proper storage, and pest management. Curative measures, on the other hand, involve restoring, cleaning, and treating documents after damage has occurred, ensuring their longevity and usability.

◆ *Strategies to prevent deterioration*

2.1.7.1 Preventive Measures

Preventive measures focus on strategies to prevent or mitigate the deterioration of records before intervention is needed. These measures include creating optimal storage conditions and reducing exposure to harmful agents. Thus, we can extend the lifespan of records and reduce the need for invasive treatments.



Various preventive measures include environmental controls, pest management, and best practices for handling and storage.

Environmental Controls

◆ *Climate-controlled preservation*

In India, where there is a hot and humid climate, archives and libraries must prioritise the management of temperature, humidity, and light exposure to slow the degradation of records. A stable and cool temperature has to be maintained, as high temperatures accelerate chemical reactions in paper and other materials, speeding up the process of degradation. Air conditioning systems are often used by archives in India, such as the National Archives of India in Delhi, to regulate temperature in storage rooms. Consistent temperature control can slow the chemical breakdown of inks, paper, and bindings.

◆ *Humidity*

Humidity is another major factor, particularly in regions like India where high moisture levels can be detrimental. Excessive humidity encourages the growth of mould and mildew, which can destroy paper, photographs, and textiles. The recommended relative humidity for archival storage is between 30% and 50%, with many archives using dehumidifiers or humidifiers depending on seasonal fluctuations.

◆ *Light control*

Light control is also essential, as ultraviolet (UV) light accelerates the degradation of paper, ink, and photographs. To prevent light damage, archival records should be stored in low-light conditions, using UV-filtering materials on windows or fluorescent lighting.

◆ *Insect control*

Pest Management

Pests, including biological and insect-related ones, pose a significant threat to the preservation of archival materials. These pests can destroy materials by feeding on them, nesting in them, or promoting the growth of fungi. Insect control involves using integrated pest management (IPM) systems to prevent, monitor, and control insect infestations.

◆ *Non-toxic pest control*

Regular inspections of storage areas are essential to detect any signs of pests early. Modern archives often use non-toxic options like diatomaceous earth or freezing to eliminate pests without harming the archival materials.

◆ *Fungicide treatments and cleaning protocols*

Mould and fungal growth are common problems in humid environments, causing irreparable damage to paper and other organic materials. Effective pest management begins with proper environmental controls, as mould thrives in high humidity and fluctuating temperatures. Archives also use specific fungicide treatments and cleaning protocols to prevent and manage mould outbreaks.

◆ *Handling and Storage*

Preventive measures in archival preservation involve not only environmental controls and pest management but also the handling and storage of records. Proper handling techniques, such as using gloves, avoiding writing, and supporting fragile items, are crucial for reducing the risk of damage. Safe storage enclosures are essential for preventing physical damage. Acid-free folders, boxes, or custom-made enclosures provide protection from dust, light, and mechanical stress for paper documents. Specialised storage methods are needed for photographs and textiles.

2.1.7.2 Curative Measures

◆ *Treatment for already damaged documents*

Curative measures are undertaken to actively treat and restore documents that have already suffered damage due to environmental factors, biological infestation, or chemical deterioration. Unlike preventive methods that aim to avoid damage, curative measures intervene directly to stabilise and recover the document's integrity.

◆ *Pagination helps organise and track document pages*

Some of the most essential curative actions include pagination and washing and flattening, which help in restoring both the structure and readability of archival materials. **Pagination** is done immediately after fumigation to provide a clear sequence to the document's pages, which is crucial for maintaining order during further treatment. Each sheet is numbered in pencil, with broken sheets marked with sub-numbers (e.g., 25a, 25b), ensuring they are not misplaced.

◆ *Washing cleans; flattening smooths paper*

Washing and flattening, on the other hand, serve the dual purpose of removing stains and distortions while reducing acidity. Washing in distilled water helps remove soluble impurities and relaxes the paper fibres, making it easier to flatten. Flattening is essential for documents with folds or wrinkles, which, if left untreated, can break at the creases over time.

◆ *Fumigation removes pests*

◆ *Deacidification neutralises acids in paper*

It is worth noting that **fumigation** and **deacidification**, which are central curative procedures, have already been discussed in detail in the section 2.1.5.1 in this unit.. While fumigation is used to eliminate mould, insects, and their larvae, deacidification aims to neutralise acids within the paper to extend the life of the document. These treatments, along with the other curative methods, form the core of restorative preservation practice in archival settings.

Summarised Overview

Preservation ensures the availability of archival records for research, documentation, and cultural memory. Whether through the restoration of fragile paper documents or the digitisation of audiovisual materials, preservation efforts are fundamental to sustaining the integrity and accessibility of archives for all. The techniques like chemical treatments, mechanical processes, and archival-quality materials are essential components of a comprehensive archival preservation strategy. By applying these methods, archivists ensure that records remain accessible, usable, and intact for future researchers. The selection and implementation of these techniques depend on the specific needs of the materials and available resources within the institution.

The preservation of archival records is an ongoing process that involves three key stages: assessment and documentation, stabilisation and repair, and long-term storage and monitoring. Each stage plays a vital role in ensuring that records remain intact and accessible.

Preservation of paper materials involves two key methods: preventive and curative measures. Preventive measures aim to protect documents from deterioration through environmental control and pest management, while curative measures involve restoring and cleaning documents after damage has occurred.

Assignments

1. Explain the most common factors that lead to the deterioration of archival records.
2. Discuss the general rules for the repair of archival records. How do these rules ensure the longevity of records?
3. Discuss why deacidification is important in preserving paper documents.
4. Elaborate on the preventive measures that can be taken to minimise the deterioration of archival records.
5. Compare and contrast traditional and modern techniques of archival preservation.

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU





Conservation Measures and Techniques

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ understand the importance of conservation in archival work
- ◆ differentiate between methods for preserving paper manuscripts and palm leaf documents
- ◆ evaluate different types of archival materials and their unique preservation needs
- ◆ learn specific conservation techniques

Background

When we talk about conservation in archival studies, we are really referring to the methods used to slow down or prevent the deterioration of historical documents. As we've seen in earlier units, archival materials, whether they're paper documents or palm leaf manuscripts, carry immense cultural, historical, and informational value. It's the responsibility of archivists and conservators to make sure these resources are protected. They use various techniques and materials to shield these items from environmental damage, biological threats, and physical wear.

If we look back at ancient manuscripts and early printed works, we'll notice that the materials they were made from, while effective at the time, haven't held up well over the centuries. For example, paper used in early manuscripts often had high acid content, which speeds up the breakdown process. Palm leaf manuscripts, on the other hand, are vulnerable to humidity, pests, and improper handling. Understanding the specific needs of each type of material is crucial for ensuring long-term preservation. The techniques covered in this unit aim to address these challenges.

Keywords

Preservation, Techniques, Paper, Manuscripts, Palm leaf Documents, Conservation, Archives, Preventive Conservation, Interventive Conservation



Discussion

2.2.1 Conservation Measures

◆ *Conservation preserves records*

Conservation measures are vital practices that aim to extend the life of archival materials, whether they are paper, parchment, or palm leaves. Archives contain records that hold not only cultural and historical importance but also legal and social relevance. Conservation methods are often divided into two main categories: preventive conservation and interventive conservation. Preventive conservation refers to practices aimed at reducing the risks of deterioration, such as controlling the environment in which documents are stored. This includes the use of temperature-controlled rooms, humidity control, and ensuring proper storage materials like acid-free boxes. Interventive conservation, on the other hand, involves actively repairing or treating documents that have already suffered damage. This could include repairing tears in paper manuscripts, cleaning, or deacidification.

2.2.1.1 Material-Specific Techniques

◆ *Materials require specificity*

Every material used in the creation of archival documents, be it paper, parchment, or palm leaf, has distinct physical and chemical properties, which require different methods for preservation. Paper is sensitive to factors such as acidity and light exposure, while palm leaf manuscripts may be prone to cracking, brittleness, and pest infestations. These material-specific needs are essential for creating effective conservation strategies. This is why conservationists and archivists often specialise in particular materials, allowing them to develop and apply the most appropriate techniques.

Let us explore the techniques used to conserve both paper manuscripts and palm leaf documents.

2.2.2 Preservation Techniques for Paper and Manuscripts

2.2.2.1 Characteristics of Paper and Manuscripts

◆ *Paper decays naturally*

As we know, paper has been the material of choice for writing, but it comes with inherent challenges. Paper manufactured prior to the 20th century has high acidic content. It has made paper brittle and discoloured over time, which led to a breakdown of the cellulose fibers. Another challenge is ink fading caused by exposure to light, air, and moisture. This fading can result in a loss of the text or images on the paper.



◆ *Acidity worsens deterioration*

Paper manuscripts, particularly older ones, often suffer from a combination of environmental stress, poor handling, and natural deterioration. The acid content is especially problematic because it accelerates the chemical breakdown of paper fibers. This is why modern preservation methods focus heavily on neutralising the acids in paper through deacidification processes and using archival-quality materials, such as acid-free paper and storage boxes.



Fig 2.2.1 Processor pointing out damaged
Source: ib.ncsu.edu

2.2.2.2 Conservation Methods

◆ *Cleaning prevents damage*

◆ *Deacidification halts decay*

Several conservation methods have been developed to address the common issues faced by paper manuscripts. One of the primary techniques used is cleaning, which involves the careful removal of dirt, dust, and pollutants from the surface of the manuscript. This must be done gently to avoid damaging the paper. For manuscripts that have been exposed to acidic environments, deacidification is mandatory. This process involves neutralising the acids within the paper to prevent further degradation. There are several methods of deacidification, including spray methods and immersion methods, where solutions of alkaline substances are applied to the paper.

◆ *Repair maintains structure*

◆ *Reinforcement ensures stability*

Another important technique is repairing tears and reinforcing bindings. Over time, manuscripts can suffer physical damage, such as tears or broken bindings. Repairing these damages is vital to preserve the structural integrity of the manuscript. Japanese tissue paper is often used in such repairs, as it is strong and can be seamlessly integrated into the damaged area without compromising the appearance of manuscripts. Reinforcing book covers and bindings make the manuscript remain in a stable, readable condition.



Fig.2.2.2 Source:<https://siarchives.si.edu/>

2.2.2.3 Archival Storage Solutions

Paper manuscripts are stored in acid-free boxes and folders. These materials ensure that the paper is not exposed to harmful acids that could accelerate degradation. Climate-controlled storage environments are crucial. Maintaining a consistent temperature and humidity level helps prevent the paper from becoming too dry or too moist, both of which can contribute to deterioration. A temperature of 18–22°C with relative humidity levels between 30% and 50% are considered ideal for paper storage.

- ◆ *Archival storage protects*
- ◆ *Regulated climate essential*

2.2.3 Preservation Techniques for Palm Leaf Documents

Palm leaf manuscripts were widely used across South Asia, particularly in regions like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka, to record religious texts, philosophical treatises, medical knowledge, literature, and administrative records. Unlike paper, which originated in China and spread to other parts of the world, the use of palm leaves as writing material has been unique to many Asian cultures.

- ◆ *Indigenous material use*

Palm leaf manuscripts are crafted from the Talipot palm or coconut palm, both of which are indigenous to the Indian subcontinent. The leaves are carefully prepared, scraped, and then inscribed with ink using sharp tools. Once the text is written, the manuscript is often stored in bundles, wrapped in cloth, and sometimes secured in wooden or metal boxes to protect them from external elements.

- ◆ *Crafted with care*

The value of these manuscripts lies not only in their textual content but also in their unique cultural and historical relevance. The Tamil epics, ancient Sanskrit texts, and other religious scriptures preserved on palm leaves have provided us with a wealth of knowledge regarding the ancient past of India. However, despite

- ◆ *Storage ensures safety*

their importance, palm leaf manuscripts face many preservation challenges, which will be explored in the following sections.

2.2.3.1 Challenges in Preservation

◆ *Environmental and biological factors*

Palm leaf manuscripts, though durable in certain conditions, are highly vulnerable to a variety of environmental and biological factors. Brittleness is one of the most common issues, which occurs over time as the leaves lose moisture and become dry and fragile. When the leaves crack or break, it compromises the text. It leads to the potential loss of valuable historical records.

◆ *Susceptibility to pests*

Another major challenge is the susceptibility to pests. Palm leaf manuscripts are often attacked by insects such as termites or bookworms, which feed on the leaves and can cause irreparable damage to the inscribed content. Furthermore, moisture presents a serious threat. Humid climates, in particular, cause the expansion and contraction of the leaves. It led to warping and the potential for fungal growth. Over time, this repeated expansion and contraction make the manuscripts more likely to suffer from breaks and splits. In many cases, palm leaf manuscripts are kept in damp, humid environments due to lack of appropriate facilities, which further increases the problem.

◆ *Traditional oiling techniques*

To address these challenges, various traditional and modern conservation methods have been used to protect palm leaf manuscripts. Traditional oiling techniques have been used for centuries to preserve the leaves. One such method involves the application of citronella oil, a natural oil derived from lemongrass, which helps to moisturise the leaves and prevent them from becoming brittle. The oil also acts as a repellent for pests, thus providing a dual function of preserving the manuscript and safeguarding it from biological threats.

◆ *Repairing cracks* ◆ *Cracks require attention*

Another method involves repairing cracks that form in the leaves. When a palm leaf manuscript suffers from cracks or splits, conservators use fine needlework and specially designed adhesive materials to close these gaps. In some cases, reinforcing leaves with cotton or other soft materials helps restore the structural integrity of the manuscript without compromising its legibility.

◆ *Protective enclosures* ◆ *Controlled environment critical*

Furthermore, proper storage is crucial for ensuring the longevity of palm leaf manuscripts. Just like paper documents, palm leaf manuscripts need to be kept in dry, cool environments. Protective enclosures made of cloth, acid-free paper, or specially designed boxes can shield the manuscripts from light, dust, and physical damage. For added protection, climate-controlled environments

that regulate temperature and humidity are essential. In some conservation centres, UV-resistant films are also used to protect manuscripts from harmful light exposure.

- ◆ *Digitisation ensures continuity*
- ◆ *Access without handling*

While traditional techniques continue to be effective, digitisation has become an increasingly important part of palm leaf manuscript preservation. Scanning and digitising manuscripts create high-quality digital copies that can be accessed and studied without handling the fragile originals. This not only reduces the risk of further damage but also ensures the preservation of the text for future generations, even if the physical manuscripts eventually deteriorate beyond repair.

Summarised Overview

Conservation measures aim to extend the life of archival materials, such as paper, parchment, and palm leaves. Archives contain records with cultural, historical, legal, and social relevance. Preventive conservation involves controlling the environment in which documents are stored, such as temperature-controlled rooms, humidity control, and ensuring proper storage materials like acid-free boxes. Interventive conservation involves actively repairing or treating documents that have already suffered damage, such as repairing tears in paper manuscripts, cleaning, or deacidification.

Paper manuscripts face inherent challenges due to their high acidic content, which makes them brittle and discoloured over time. Modern preservation methods focus on neutralising acids in paper through deacidification processes and using archival-quality materials like acid-free paper and storage boxes. Cleaning is a primary technique used to remove dirt, dust, and pollutants from the manuscript surface, while deacidification is mandatory for manuscripts exposed to acidic environments.

Repairing tears and reinforcing bindings is another important technique for preserving the structural integrity of manuscripts. Japanese tissue paper is often used in such repairs, as it is strong and can be seamlessly integrated into damaged areas without compromising the appearance of the manuscript. Acid-free boxes and folders are effective solutions for paper manuscripts, and climate-controlled storage environments are crucial. A temperature of 18-22°C with relative humidity levels between 30% and 50% are considered ideal for paper storage.

Palm leaf manuscripts, crafted from the Talipot palm or coconut palm, were widely used across South Asia for recording religious texts, philosophical treatises, medical knowledge, literature, and administrative records. They face many preservation challenges, including brittleness, susceptibility to pests, and moisture. Traditional and modern conservation techniques have been used to protect palm leaf manuscripts, such as applying citronella oil to moisturise leaves and act as a repellent for pests. Proper storage is also essential for ensuring the longevity of palm leaf manuscripts, with protective enclosures made of cloth, acid-free paper, or specially designed boxes.

Assignments

1. Compare and contrast various conservation techniques used for paper and manuscripts.
2. Analyse the challenges involved in the preservation of palm leaf manuscripts compared to paper documents.
3. Critically examine the role of traditional methods in conserving fragile documents.
4. In the case of fragile manuscript collection, what would be the conservation plan you would use. Explain the techniques and materials that would help you in it.
5. Visit any archives and examine samples of conserved and non-conserved manuscripts to identify the differences and discuss the effectiveness of the conservation techniques applied.

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



Digitisation of Archives

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ understand the significance of digitisation in the preservation and accessibility of archival materials
- ◆ identify traditional and modern methods of archival reproduction
- ◆ explain the evolution of archival systems in India, from traditional record-keeping practices to modern digital solutions
- ◆ evaluate the role of national and regional archives in preserving historical records and facilitating research

Background

Archival collections are at the heart of historical study, whether we're talking about physical documents, photographs, or other materials. These records offer primary sources for research and give us a window into past events, policies, and cultural practices. But, of course, preserving these materials comes with its own set of challenges. Over time, physical archives inevitably degrade. Whether it's due to the natural wear and tear of handling, exposure to environmental factors, or simply poor storage conditions, these records are vulnerable. And now, with the rapid pace of technological development, archives face an added pressure. They have to evolve in order to stay relevant and accessible.

Digitisation has become a game-changer in preserving fragile documents while ensuring future generations can still access them. Through this process, i.e., scanning, imaging, and microfilming, the physical records are converted into digital formats. It has also opened the door for remote access, so researchers don't have to travel halfway around the world to view a single document.

But while digitisation has clearly transformed the way we interact with archives, it's not without its own set of challenges. How do we ensure that digital files are preserved in the long run? But there are also ethical questions. Who controls access to these digital materials? And how do we manage the sharing of sensitive information? These are questions that archivists and historians must continue to address as we move forward.

Keywords

Digitisation, Archival Preservation, Archives, Digital Archives, Historical Research, Reprography, Microfilming, Metadata, Record Management

Discussion

2.3.1 Digitisation in Archival Preservation

◆ *Digital format*

Digitisation refers to the process of converting physical records and materials into a digital format that can be stored, accessed, and managed using electronic systems. In the context of archival studies, digitisation plays a vital role in the long-term preservation of documents, manuscripts, photographs, and other forms of historical records. With the rapid decay of physical materials due to environmental factors such as temperature, humidity, and light, digitisation offers an effective solution to ensure that important documents do not deteriorate over time.

◆ *Remote access enabled*

Digitised archives can be stored in vast digital repositories. It allows researchers, scholars, and the general public to access historical materials remotely and instantly. This has made the research process more efficient, as individuals no longer need to travel long distances to access physical records. Moreover, digital formats enable advanced search capabilities. It makes it easier to locate specific documents and information.

◆ *Digital Humanities digitises archives*

◆ *Enables new analysis*

2.3.1.1 Digital Humanities and the Transformation of Archival Practices

The digitisation of archives has undergone a fundamental shift with the emergence of Digital Humanities (DH), an interdisciplinary approach that integrates humanities research with digital methodologies. Primary sources, whether manuscripts, artworks, architectural drawings, or photographs, were once confined to special collections with controlled access. In digital form, however, these materials become part of a flexible and interconnected environment, where they can be reassembled, annotated, and widely shared. This increased accessibility allows historians and researchers worldwide to examine primary sources without geographical limitations, enabling more inclusive historical analyses. Libraries, too, have become active sites of DH engagement, supporting digitisation, metadata enrichment, and user access to digital repositories. Moreover, digitisation aids in

preserving fragile historical documents by minimising physical handling and offers interactive platforms for public engagement. Hence it enhances education and broadens the reach of historical narratives.

◆ *Uses data mining, text analysis, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS)*

Digital Humanities integrates tools like data mining, text analysis, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to examine large datasets, revealing patterns and trends that enhance understanding of historical contexts. For instance, text analysis enables scholars to detect word frequency patterns in texts, helping to understand the language usage and themes associated with historical events. Similarly, GIS facilitates the mapping of textual, historical, and cultural data onto spatial representations. It allows researchers to uncover spatial patterns and relationships that contribute to a deeper understanding of human experiences.

2.3.2 Digital Archives for Historical Research

◆ *Access without limits*

One of the most noteworthy advantages of the digital archives is accessibility. In traditional archival settings, researchers often face limitations due to geographical constraints, opening hours, and the condition of the physical materials. Digitised archives, on the other hand, allow scholars to access a wealth of historical documents from anywhere in the world, at any time, via the internet. This has greatly expanded the potential for collaborative research, where scholars from different parts of the world can work together without the need to physically be in the same location.



Fig 2.3.1 Preparation for digitisation
Source: <https://siarchives.si.edu>

◆ *Preservation of Fragile documents*

Another benefit is the preservation of fragile documents. Many historical records are delicate and at risk of deterioration, especially if they are handled frequently or are exposed to unsuitable environmental conditions. Digitisation allows these records to be preserved in a digital format. It reduces the need for physical handling and prevents further degradation. Moreover, digital preservation techniques enable archives to back up their collections, ensuring that multiple copies exist, safeguarding the material against loss due to disasters such as fire, flood, or theft.

◆ *Tools enhance analysis*

Furthermore, digital archives facilitate advanced research techniques. Historians and researchers can use digital tools to analyse large volumes of data, conduct text mining, and perform searches across thousands of documents. This not only speeds up the research process but also opens up new possibilities for analysing historical records in ways that were not possible with traditional methods. For example, through digitised archives, researchers can study patterns in language, trends in historical events, and even analyse social, economic, and political developments through the lens of primary documents. There are facilities like ‘internetarchive.org’ that helps researchers to avail documents which were earlier available only at physical archives.

◆ *Copying protects originals*

Reprography refers to the reproduction of documents, records, or images using various methods, which are essential for preserving the content of archival materials without putting the original documents at risk. The goal of reprography in archival settings is twofold: to create copies of historical records for research purposes, and to ensure the preservation of these records by reducing their physical handling. Reprography techniques have evolved significantly over the years, from traditional methods like photography and microfilming to more modern, digital technologies.

◆ *Traditional methods for document reproduction*

The primary focus of reprography was to create physical copies of archival records, using technologies that could handle documents without damaging them. The two most significant traditional methods for reproduction were photography and microfilming.

2.3.3.1 Photography Techniques for Document Reproduction

◆ *Photography preserved details*

In the early days of archival reproduction, photography was one of the most widely used techniques. Photographic reproduction allowed for a direct visual copy of a document or image, preserving the original’s details, including text, signatures, and images. The process typically involved using large-format cameras and

specialised photographic films to capture high-quality images of documents. The advantage of this method was that it provided a faithful representation of the original, which could then be stored or printed for use in research.

However, photographic techniques had some limitations. The quality of reproduction depended heavily on the lighting conditions, camera resolution, and the skill of the photographer. Over time, it became apparent that photographs, while accurate, could not address certain archival challenges, such as making the copies easily searchable or accessible to a wider audience.

◆ *Searchability remained limited*

2.3.3.2 Microfilming Processes

Microfilming emerged as a more efficient solution for preserving large volumes of documents in a compact format. Microfilm is a photographic film that stores miniaturised images of documents, typically at a scale where the text is legible only under magnification. The primary advantage of microfilming was its ability to condense vast amounts of documents into a much smaller physical space. It allows archives to store large quantities of materials without the need for a significant storage room.

◆ *Compact storage solution*

Microfilming involved several steps: first, the documents were carefully placed in front of a camera that captured the image onto a reel of film. These films were then stored in controlled environments to prevent deterioration and ensure their longevity. One of the major benefits of microfilming was that it helped the archiving of documents without requiring excessive physical handling of the originals, thus helping to preserve them. Furthermore, microfilms could be duplicated and distributed to other institutions or researchers. This made it a valuable method for increasing access to historical materials.

◆ *Durable access ensured*

Despite these advantages, microfilming also had its drawbacks. The quality of reproduction could vary depending on the conditions of the filming process. Furthermore, retrieval of specific documents was time-consuming because the entire roll of microfilm had to be manually examined, a process which lacked the speed and efficiency of modern digital search systems.

◆ *Drawbacks of microfilming*

2.3.4 Modern Digital Reproduction

As technology progressed, digital reproduction methods revolutionised the way archives were preserved and accessed. Digital reproduction offers several advantages over traditional methods, particularly in terms of ease of use, storage, and access. Today, digital imaging and scanning technologies have become the primary methods used for archival reproduction. It offers

◆ *Digital transformation benefits*



high-quality copies and the ability to make records searchable and accessible online.

2.3.4.1 Scanning High-Resolution Images

◆ *Rise of scanning technology*

One of the biggest breakthroughs in modern reprography has been the rise of scanning technology. Digital scanners capture high-resolution images of documents and photographs and turn them into digital files that can be stored and shared easily. Scanning has become the go-to method for reproducing historical records, and for good reason. It allows us to create precise copies of documents, whether they're in PDFs, TIFFs, or JPEGs. The high resolution of digital scanners means that even the finest details of the original document, including faded text and intricate illustrations, can be captured with clarity.

◆ *High-resolution scanning advantages*

In archives, high-resolution scanning is especially important for fragile or rare items, like manuscripts, rare books, and ancient texts. These are materials that need to be handled carefully, so scanning allows us to preserve them without the risk of further physical wear and tear. Once scanned, these digital files are stored on servers or in the cloud which makes them easily accessible to researchers around the world. What's even better is that these digital versions can be reproduced in multiple formats, meaning more people can access and study these records without ever touching the original.

2.3.4.2 Digital Imaging Technologies

◆ *Imaging enhances preservation*

Let's take a look at how digital imaging technologies have further advanced the preservation of archival records. Beyond basic scanning, tools like high-definition cameras and multi-spectral imaging are helping us capture details in ways we couldn't before. Multi-spectral imaging, for instance, uses different wavelengths of light to uncover hidden details in documents that the naked eye would miss, such as things like faded ink or watermarks. This allows conservators to learn more about a document's history without ever physically touching it, which is a huge advantage when working with delicate items.

◆ *Creation of interactive digital records*

Another development in digital imaging is the creation of interactive digital records. Imagine having not just a digital copy of a document but one that's enhanced with metadata, links to related materials, or even audio and video elements. These interactive records transform archives into much more than just static reproductions.

2.3.4.3 Creating and Managing Metadata for Digital Archives

◆ *Metadata ensures accessibility*

Metadata plays a crucial role in digital archiving. Metadata is the information that describes a digital file. This can include basic details like the document's title, creator, date, and subject matter. By managing metadata effectively, archivists ensure that digital archives are well-organised and easy to navigate. With accurate metadata, users can quickly search for and find specific documents within a digital archive. For instance, when a researcher is looking for documents related to the Indian independence movement, the metadata for relevant records would include keywords like 'Independence,' 'Gandhi,' 'Freedom Movement,' and relevant dates. Metadata also includes technical information about the file, such as the resolution and format. These elements help maintain the quality and integrity of digital reproduction. Metadata is also important for long-term preservation. It provides future researchers and archivists with the context and history of the digital records. Proper metadata management is vital for ensuring that digital archives remain functional and accessible over time.

2.3.5 Record Keeping in India

◆ *Evolving archival traditions*

India's history of record-keeping stretches back thousands of years, and it's fascinating to see how different methods and practices have emerged based on the cultural, technological, and administrative contexts of each period. From inscriptions on stone and copper plates to the development of modern archival systems, the way records have been preserved in India has evolved significantly. In this section, we'll briefly look at the historical development of record-keeping practices and then examine how India transitioned from traditional methods to more modern ones.

2.3.5.1 Evolution of Archival Systems

◆ *Early archival traditions*

The story of record-keeping in India can be traced back to Mauryan and Gupta periods, as we have evidence of inscriptions and manuscripts that documented important events, decrees, and decisions. These inscriptions were often carved into stone and copper plates. One well-known example is the Ashokan Edicts, a series of inscriptions ordered by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE. These records, found on stone pillars and rocks, not only document his administrative policies but also give evidence into his moral teachings. As we move into the medieval period, record-keeping becomes even more prominent, especially under the Mughal Empire. The Mughals expanded the use of manuscripts written on paper and palm leaves, which were carefully stored in imperial archives. These records covered everything from royal

decrees to chronicles of military campaigns.

◆ *Colonial book-keeping method*

Then, during the British colonial period, record-keeping in India took a significant turn. The British established a formal system for documenting and preserving records, which laid the foundation for modern archival practices. The introduction of paper-based record-keeping, alongside the creation of government departments to manage these records, formalised the process. They also introduced systematic methods of classification, such as the India Office Records, which housed important documents related to colonial administration. These records were carefully cataloged and indexed, making them easier to retrieve and reference.

◆ *Creation of National Archives of India*

Following India's independence in 1947, the need for preserving national records became a priority for the newly formed government. The creation of National Archives of India in 1948 marked a significant step in formalising the archival system that could manage and preserve the records of the Indian state and its historical documents. This institution became responsible for maintaining not only historical records but also contemporary documents related to India's independence, its constitution, and governmental decisions.

2.3.5.2 Importance of Proper Record Management

◆ *Enhances access*

For anyone involved in historical research, access to primary sources like official records, manuscripts, and letters is absolutely essential. These materials are the backbone of research and allow historians to reconstruct narratives, analyse political decisions, and understand the social and cultural system of the past. But access isn't just about having the records. It's about organising them in a way that makes them easy to retrieve. In the past, Indian archives struggled with physical storage issues, disorganised collections, and inadequate cataloguing systems, all of which hindered access. Over time, the development of archival standards, classification schemes, and digital cataloguing systems has made it easier to access these vital records.

◆ *Safeguarding the records from deterioration*

As physical records age, they naturally become more vulnerable to deterioration, whether from poor storage conditions, frequent handling, or environmental factors like humidity, temperature, and light. If these records aren't properly preserved, valuable historical information can be lost. For example, documents from the colonial period or the early years of India's independence are especially at risk of decay. So, proper record management goes beyond just storing documents; it involves safeguarding them through conservation methods like proper storage, restoration, and, increasingly, digitisation.

◆ *Protection from disasters*

By converting physical records into digital formats, archives can ensure that important documents are no longer at risk of being lost due to wear and tear. Digitisation also allows for backups and secure storage across multiple locations. It offers protection in case of disasters like fires or floods. The National Archives of India, as well as regional archives, have made significant strides with digitisation projects. These efforts have helped preserve critical government documents, manuscripts, and photographs, and the bonus is that they're now accessible to a much broader, even global, audience.

◆ *Contribution to the academic study*

With properly organised archives, researchers can trace shifts in governance, policy, and society over time. Take, for instance, records from India's struggle for independence, letters, speeches, and government files, each document adds a layer of insight into the political and social currents of the time. By ensuring that these records are not only preserved but also well-organised and accessible, archival institutions make an invaluable contribution to the academic study of history. After all, the accuracy of historical research depends on having reliable, well-preserved sources to work from.



Fig 2.3.2 National Archives of India
Source.national archives nic.in

◆ *Beyond the realm of academia*

The impact of effective record management extends well beyond the realm of academia. In democratic societies, access to public records is seen as a fundamental right. It's not only about preserving history. It's also about ensuring transparency and accountability in government. By making official documents accessible to the public, archives allow citizens to see how decisions are made and hold public institutions accountable for their actions. In India, for instance, the Right to Information Act (2005) empowers citizens to request access to government records.

2.3.6 National Archives of India

The National Archives of India (NAI) is the main institution responsible for preserving and managing national records of India.

◆ *Preserving and managing national records of India*

It was established in 1948, shortly after India gained independence. The NAI has played a crucial role in safeguarding the historical heritage of the nation and supporting research on governance and cultural history. Let us have a look into the history and significance of the NAI, its key functions, contributions to archival preservation, and its role in adopting digital technologies for record management.

◆ *Origin*

Though officially formed in 1948, its origins go back to 1860 when Sandeman, the Civil Auditor, proposed consolidating important records into a central archive. In 1889, Professor G.W. Forrest, a distinguished archivist, was tasked with reviewing the Foreign Department's records. He recommended moving all records of the East India Company to a central repository, leading to the creation of the Imperial Records Department (IRD) in 1891 in Calcutta (now Kolkata). Forrest was appointed as its head, tasked with organising, cataloguing, and centralising government records. The IRD expanded under various directors, including S.C. Hill and C.R. Wilson, and became an important institution for record management.



Fig 2.3.3 National Archives of India
Source.national archives nic.in

◆ *Shifting of capital and renaming*

When the capital shifted to New Delhi in 1911, the IRD moved to a new location in 1926. Following independence, the department was renamed the National Archives of India, and the head was designated as the Director of Archives. Dr. S.N. Sen, who led the NAI from 1949, was instrumental in expanding its role, allowing public access to records in 1939 and opening all pre-1902 records by 1947. Dr. Sen's establishment of the Conservation Research Laboratory (CRL) in 1940 was a crucial step in the preservation of records.

◆ *Function*

In the post-independence years, the NAI began to manage both public and private records, train archivists, and set up regional offices in Bhopal, Jaipur, Puducherry, and Bhubaneswar. In 1990,

the title of department head was upgraded to Director-General of Archives. Today, the NAI functions under the Ministry of Culture and continues to expand its reach.

◆ *Location and Collection*

Now, NAI is located in a prominent building in Rajpath, New Delhi, designed by the renowned architect Sir Herbert Baker. The NAI's collection includes manuscripts, official records, photographs, maps, and personal papers of historical significance. These records provide essential information into India's governance, social changes, and political history.

◆ *Electronic record*

In recent years, the NAI has embraced digital cataloguing systems. These systems create electronic records of physical collections. It makes it easier for researchers to search and retrieve documents based on keywords, dates, or themes. The digital catalogues also help archivists monitor the status and condition of materials, which is essential for effective preservation.

◆ *Providing access to the records*

The NAI has made substantial progress in providing online access to its records. It allows researchers and the general public to explore India's history without needing to visit the archives in person. This has become particularly valuable for global research collaborations. The NAI is also part of the Open Access Initiative, which aims to make certain records freely available, supporting greater transparency and encouraging wider engagement with historical documents.

2.3.6.1 Preservation Efforts at the National Archives

◆ *Conservation Research Laboratory (CRL)*

The National Archives of India uses a combination of preventive, curative, and restorative measures to ensure the longevity of the records in its care. The Conservation Research Laboratory (CRL), set up in 1941, is at the heart of these efforts. The laboratory has been a pioneer in developing indigenous techniques for restoration and testing materials required for storage and conservation.

◆ *Solvent or Hand Lamination process*

One prominent innovation from the CRL is the Solvent or Hand Lamination process, which involves repairing and rejuvenating documents using cellulose acetate foil and tissue paper. This process is recognised at international level and is widely used to preserve fragile documents. The laboratory has also developed techniques to rejuvenate palm leaves that have become brittle and cracked due to age. It restores the flexibility and integrity of these documents.

◆ *Multifunctional chamber*

Another major achievement is the creation of a portable, thermostatically controlled airtight vault. This multifunctional chamber is used for sterilisation, vapour-phase de-acidification, and

drying of documents, books, and other materials, which improves the preservation process.

2.3.6.2 Reprography and Microfilming at the National Archives

◆ *Creating negative copies of documents*

In addition to physical conservation, the National Archives of India uses a microfilming programme that has been in place for over three decades. Microfilming helps preserve records by creating negative copies of documents, protecting them from deterioration due to use, ageing, and fading inks. This process is vital for safeguarding valuable documents against loss due to fire, floods, war, or sabotage. The microfilm rolls are stored in the Regional Office at Bhopal for security.

◆ *Archival Information Management System Software*

The Reprography Division also converts analogue microfilm images into digital format by integrating them into a specially designed Archival Information Management System Software. This transition enhances access to the records and ensures their preservation in a digital format for future generations. A mobile microfilming unit further extends the reach of the National Archives. It travels across India to microfilm documents that cannot be physically transported to the main offices or regional centres, ensuring that even remote collections are preserved.

2.3.7 Regional Archives

2.3.7.1 State Archives of Kerala and the Regional Archives in Kerala

◆ *Origins and Institutional Framework*

In addition to national institutions like the National Archives of India, regional archives play a vital role in preserving the history and cultural heritage of specific areas. These archives focus on collecting records of local relevance, documenting the social, political, and economic history of particular regions. This section will explore the role of regional archives, with a particular focus on the Kerala State Archives, its contributions to preserving Kerala's history, the challenges it faces, and its digitisation efforts. While national archives focus on records of broader importance, regional archives maintain materials that reflect the unique history and culture of a state or region. The state government, supported by academic institutions and technology partners, has funded digitisation projects aimed at preserving Kerala's historical records and improving access for researchers.

Kerala's State Archives Department, established in 1962 under the Cultural Affairs Department, is the custodian of the state's historical and administrative records. These records, which span

◆ *Functions and Historical Relevance*

centuries, offer invaluable insights into Kerala's historical past and continue to serve as an essential resource for governance, research, and cultural understanding. The headquarters is located in Thiruvananthapuram, with regional offices in Ernakulam and Kozhikode. The department manages a vast repository of documents that preserve the state's collective memory. Its activities are guided by a State-level Archives Advisory Committee, chaired by the Minister-in-Charge of Archives.

◆ *Role of archives*

At its core, the archives department strives to preserve Kerala's historical and administrative records while ensuring their accessibility for both research and governance. By safeguarding non-current records of permanent value, the Archives Department bridges the past and present, helping both scholars and policymakers draw lessons from history. It also plays a proactive role in providing technical assistance to other government departments for preparing retention schedules and managing their records efficiently.

◆ *Public Engagement and Education*

Beyond preservation, the department is committed to raising public awareness about the importance of archival records. Through exhibitions, workshops, and seminars, it brings the state's history to life, making it accessible to people of all ages. They also organise professional training for officers managing departmental records and ensure that best practices in conservation and documentation are upheld.

◆ *Heritage promotion*

The department goes beyond just keeping records by actively working with communities, students, and researchers. Heritage Clubs have been set up in schools across Kerala, giving students the chance to explore the history and traditions of their local areas. These clubs are supported through grants for projects like documenting local histories, creating short films, and carrying out heritage surveys. Schools that show the most promise are rewarded, which helps to build a sense of pride and motivation.

◆ *Events foster awareness*

Each year, students are invited to take part in history competitions that encourage them to learn more about Kerala's past. The top winners get the chance to visit historical sites, providing a deeper, more personal understanding of history. The department also hosts displays featuring rare records and artefacts, allowing people to see Kerala's history up close. These, along with camps, talks, and workshops, offer opportunities for learning that go beyond traditional methods. One of the events, the Malayalam Language Festival, focuses on the development of the language and its role in the state's written traditions.

The Community Archives Programme also plays a part in



◆ *Community Archives Programme*

preserving lesser-known records by working directly with local communities. This initiative seeks to locate and protect important documents that may otherwise fade into obscurity, ensuring that even small pieces of Kerala's history are not lost to time.

◆ *Diverse archival formats*

2.3.7.2 Collection of Historical Records

The Kerala State Archives holds a vast and diverse collection of records dating back to 1424 C.E. These documents come in various forms, including paper records, palm leaves, bamboo splints, microfilms, and copper writings, covering multiple languages and scripts. This extensive archive preserves historical records from Kerala's history and offers insights into both public and private matters over the centuries.

Public Records

The collection includes records from major historical periods and regions of Kerala, such as:

- ◆ **Travancore:** Records from the princely State of Travancore (1424–1885), are housed at the Central Archives in Thiruvananthapuram.
- ◆ **Cochin:** Documents from the former Cochin State (1567–1949), are found at the Regional Archives in Ernakulam. These records include both *cadjan* (palm leaf) and paper manuscripts.
- ◆ **Malabar:** Records from the Malabar District during the Madras Presidency (1805–1956), are preserved at the Regional Archives in Kozhikode.
- ◆ **Transferred Records:** Documents transferred from the Government Secretariat Cellar (1728–1956) and Malabar Collectorate records (1803–1898), are available at the Directorate of Archives, Thiruvananthapuram.

Private Records

Palm leaf documents make up a larger portion of Kerala's historical archives. The State Archives play a key role in preserving these ancient manuscripts, classified mainly into two types: *Churunas* and *Grandhas*.

- ◆ **Churunas:** These are bundles of palm leaf manuscript rolls, with over 14,000 examples in the State Archives, possibly the largest collection in Kerala. Written in ancient Kerala scripts like *Vattezhuthu*, *Kolezhuthu*, *Malayanma*, Tamil, and Malayalam, these *Churunas* cover a wide range of subjects, including

administrative orders, genealogies, and legal matters.

- ◆ **Grandhas:** These are larger palm-leaf manuscripts bound between wooden covers, often documenting social, political, and historical information.

Additional Records

- ◆ **Microfilms:** Around 458 microfilms, including those from the India Office Library in London and films prepared under a central assistance scheme, are also available in the archives.
- ◆ **Chellam Vaka:** These records, preserved in the Padmanabha Swamy Temple and Palace, deal with significant political events such as wars, treaties, and diplomatic strategies.
- ◆ **Ozhukus:** Covering the years 1802 to 1837, Ozhukus are records of landed properties, including details like tax assessments, trees, and property ownership.
- ◆ **Vilangipper Records:** These records focus on property assignments and inheritance sources, providing vital information on land distribution.
- ◆ **Huzur Khajana Eredavu:** These *Churunas* relate to treasury accounts and financial management.
- ◆ **Boundary Disputes:** Some *Churunas* address the boundary disputes between Travancore, Kochi, and neighbouring states, shedding light on territorial conflicts.
- ◆ **High Court Records:** Records from the erstwhile state of Travancore's High Court, including judgments and decisions, are preserved here.
- ◆ **Head Sirker Vakkeel Records:** This collection documents judicial decisions, including family pension matters related to the Royal Family.
- ◆ **Neettus (Royal Commands):** This collection includes royal proclamations and orders issued mainly to heads of departments
- ◆ **Mathilakom Records:** Around 3,000 *Churunas* preserved by the Sri Padmanabha Swamy Temple, this collection contains crucial historical and administrative records from the region.

Summarised Overview

The digitisation of archives represents a transformative shift in how historical research is conducted. It has opened up new avenues for research. Digital Humanities (DH) is an interdisciplinary approach that integrates humanities research with digital methodologies. Digital Humanities has transformed archival practices by digitising primary sources, improving accessibility, preservation, and analysis through tools like GIS.

Reprography, both in its traditional and modern forms, is essential for the preservation and accessibility of historical records. While traditional methods like photography and microfilming laid the foundation for document reproduction, modern digital technologies have dramatically improved the process. Scanning high-resolution images and using advanced digital imaging techniques allow for the creation of detailed, searchable, and widely accessible digital archives. As a result, digital reprography has become indispensable in the ongoing effort to preserve historical records for future generations. It makes archival materials easier to access, more secure, and available to a global audience.

The evolution of archival systems in India reflects a growing recognition of the importance of preserving historical records, not only for administrative purposes but also for historical research and public access. Proper record management in India plays a vital role in the preservation of historical materials, facilitating research, ensuring accessibility, and promoting transparency. The archival systems continue to modernise and there are ongoing efforts to preserve records, particularly through digitisation.

The role of National Archives of India and Regional Archives in India is crucial in preserving the historical records of the country. These archives ensure that they remain accessible to researchers, historians, and the public. These archives are involved in archival preservation, research facilitation and digitisation efforts.

While the National Archives of India was formally established under the Archives Act of 1961, its origins go back to 1891, when the Imperial Record Department was founded during British colonial rule. The department's primary purpose was to preserve records related to colonial administration and governance. The British recognised the importance of maintaining records not only for administrative purposes but also for legal and historical analysis. After India's independence in 1947, there was a clear need for an independent institution to manage national records. The NAI was officially founded in 1948 to take over this responsibility. Early efforts focused on safeguarding and organising records related to the Indian independence movement, the drafting of the Constitution, and other significant events in the history of the nation.

The Kerala State Archives Department serves as a crucial link between the past and the present. It ensures that records detailing the state's administration, culture, and daily life remain available. The Kerala State Archives holds an extraordinary collection of records that date back centuries. Public Records include documents from the Travancore

State (1424–1885), Cochin State (1567–1949), and the Malabar District under the Madras Presidency (1805–1956). In Private Records, Palm leaf manuscripts, or *Churunas*, are among the most significant private records. These rolls, written in scripts like *Vattezhuthu* and *Kolezhuthu*, cover topics ranging from royal commands to property disputes. The archives hold over 14,000 such manuscripts, the largest collection in Kerala. There are also *Grandhas*, palm-leaf manuscripts preserved between wooden covers, which date back to the 15th century. Moreover, the archives house microfilms of historical documents, including some sourced from the India Office Library in London, along with rare temple records like the Chellam Vaka manuscripts of the Padmanabha Swamy Temple. The library in Thiruvananthapuram is a hub for researchers, offering Assembly proceedings, gazettes, census reports, and over 11,000 palm leaf records. It also contains 4,356 rare Malayalam books.

Assignments

1. Define reprography and explain its significance in the digitisation of archives. How does it contribute to the preservation and dissemination of archival materials?
2. Discuss the role of the National Archives of India in record-keeping and digitisation. Mention the challenges and strategies implemented to ensure the accessibility and preservation of historical records.
3. Analyse the importance of regional archives in India, with a special focus on Kerala. How do regional archives complement the National Archives in preserving local history and culture?
4. Examine the impact of digitisation on traditional record-keeping practices in India. What are the technological and ethical considerations involved in transitioning to digital archives?
5. Identify a specific initiative or project undertaken by the Kerala State Archives for digitisation or preservation. Evaluate its objectives, implementation process, and outcomes. How has it contributed to the accessibility of archival records?

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Suggested Reading

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.



SGOU

MODEL QUESTION PAPER SETS





SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE:

Reg. No :

Name :

FOURTH SEMESTER MA EXAMINATION
SKILL ENHANCEMENT COURSE - M21HS02SC - ARCHIVAL STUDIES
(CBCS - PG)

MODEL QUESTION PAPER- SET- A

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

SECTION A

Answer any ten questions in a word or sentence Each question carries one mark.

(10X1= 10 Marks)

1. Define archives.
2. What is reprography?
3. Who is an archivist?
4. Name any two types of archival records.
5. What is reference media?
6. Name one major difference between archives and libraries.
7. Where is the National Archives of India located?
8. What is the purpose of a record management system?
9. What is archival preservation?
10. What is meant by the principle of provenance?
11. What is digitisation in the archival context?
12. Mention one natural factor that affects record preservation.
13. What is fumigation in the context of archival preservation?
14. Name one archival legislation in India.
15. What is a palm-leaf manuscript?

SECTION B

Answer any five questions in two or three sentences each. Each question carries two marks.

(5X2 =10 Marks)

16. List two functions of archives.



17. What is microfilming?
18. What is the importance of reference tools in archives?
19. Mention any two causes of deterioration in archival records.
20. Write a short note on the Kerala State Archives.
21. What is metadata?
22. How does digitisation improve access to archival records?
23. Explain the scope of archival studies.
24. What are the key functions of an archivist?
25. What is archival legislation?

SECTION C

Answer any five questions in one paragraph. Each question carries four marks.

(5X4 = 20 Marks)

26. Describe the origin and historical development of record keeping.
27. What are the different kinds of archives?
28. Discuss the functions and objectives of record management systems.
29. Explain the role of archives in historical research.
30. Evaluate the principle of archival management.
31. Outline the preparation of reference media in archives.
32. What are the preventive measures in archival preservation?
33. Examine the techniques used in the preservation of manuscripts.

SECTION D

Answer any three questions in two pages. Each question carries ten marks.

(3X10 =30 Marks)

34. Analyse the similarities and differences between archives and libraries.
35. Discuss the role of digitisation and reprography in modern archival practices.
36. Describe in detail the stages of deterioration and conservation of archival records.
37. Analyse the role of archives in shaping public memory and identity. In what ways can archival silences influence historical narratives?
38. Describe the functions of an archivist and the principles of archival management.
39. Examine the role of the National Archives of India in record-keeping and digitisation in India.





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SKILL ENHANCEMENT COURSE - M21HS02SC - ARCHIVAL STUDIES**

(CBCS - PG)

MODEL QUESTION PAPER- SET- B

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

SECTION A

Answer any ten questions in a word or sentence Each question carries one mark.

(10X1= 10 Marks)

1. What is the origin of the term 'archives'?
2. Where is the headquarters of the Kerala State Archives Department located?
3. What do you mean by private archive?
4. Where is Prime Minister's Museum and Library (PMML) located?
5. What is the full form of ICA in archival studies?
6. What is reprography used for?
7. Name one material used in paper preservation.
8. Define deterioration in archival terms.
9. Mention one type of archival record.
10. Name one UNESCO initiative for archive preservation.
11. Name a preventive measure in record keeping.
12. In which city was the Imperial Record Department (IRD) established in 1891?
13. What is Digital Humanities?
14. What is the significance of audiovisual records in the archive?
15. Name any two archival storage formats.



SECTION B

Answer any five questions in two or three sentences each. Each question carries two marks.

(5X2 =10 Marks)

16. What is the significance of provenance in archival classification?
17. Mention two challenges in digital archiving.
18. List any two responsibilities of an archivist.
19. Write a brief note on the National Archives of India.
20. What are two general rules for repairing damaged records?
21. What is meant by archival metadata?
22. Explain two characteristics of palm-leaf manuscripts.
23. Mention two differences between primary and secondary sources in archives.
24. What is the role of an archival finding aid?
25. Write a short note on the private archive.

SECTION C

Answer any five questions in one paragraph. Each question carries four marks.

(5X4 = 20 Marks)

26. Discuss the origin and development of archival institutions in the world.
27. Describe the ethical challenges in archival access and use.
28. Explain any one method used in the repair of damaged archival paper materials.
29. Explain the challenges of preserving audiovisual materials.
30. Describe various types of archival records with examples.
31. Outline the steps in the conservation of palm-leaf manuscripts.
32. Explain the functions of regional archives in Kerala.
33. How do archives support historical research and in preserving public memory?

SECTION D

Answer any three questions in two pages. Each question carries ten marks.

(3X10 =30 Marks)

34. Assess the significance of record management systems in institutional archives.
35. Examine the impact of colonial legacy on archival practices in postcolonial India.
36. Discuss preventive vs. curative conservation with examples.
37. Evaluate the evolution and scope of archival science as a discipline.
38. Discuss the principles and responsibilities involved in managing archival collections.
39. Critically analyse digitalisation as a tool for preservation and access.



സർവ്വകലാശാലാഗീതം

വിദ്യായാൽ സ്വതന്ത്രരാകണം
വിശ്വപൗരരായി മാറണം
ശ്രദ്ധപ്രസാദമായ് വിളങ്ങണം
ഗുരുപ്രകാശമേ നയിക്കണേ

കുതിരുട്ടിൽ നിന്നു ഞങ്ങളെ
സൂര്യവീഥിയിൽ തെളിക്കണം
സ്നേഹദീപ്തിയായ് വിളങ്ങണം
നീതിവൈജയന്തി പറണം

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Archival Studies

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