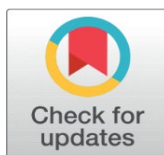


ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS MATERIALS

Hemant Fransis Jadhav 

¹ Librarian, KES Anandibai Pradhan Science College, Nagothane Tal-Roha, Dist-Raigad



Corresponding Author

Hemant Fransis Jadhav,
hfjadhav@gmail.com

DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v3.i1.2022.6487](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v3.i1.2022.6487)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Copyright: © 2022 The Author(s).
This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.



ABSTRACT

Visual and performing arts materials, including manuscripts, musical scores, photographs, stage designs, costumes and audio visual recordings are crucial for preserving India's cultural heritage but are highly vulnerable to physical decay technological obsolescence and loss of context. Effective library collection management in this field ensures the documentation, conservation and accessibility of these resources supporting research, education and creative practices. Institutions such as IGNCA, Sangeet Natak Akademi, NFAI Pune and NCPA Library, Mumbai implement preventive and remedial conservation, digitization, microfilming, and proper archival storage to safeguard rare and fragile materials. These initiatives not only preserve ephemeral art forms and tangible cultural artifacts but also promote wider access and inter-institutional collaboration.

Keywords: Conservation, Visual and Performing Arts Materials

1. INTRODUCTION

Visual and performing arts materials such as paintings, photographs, manuscripts, musical scores, costumes, stage designs, audio recordings and video archives are vital for safeguarding cultural heritage. They are highly vulnerable to physical decay technological obsolescence and loss of contextual meaning. Conservation and preservation strategies ensure their long-term survival, accessibility and transmission to future generations. Library collection management in visual and performing arts is not just about storing books. It is about preserving cultural memory supporting education and creativity documenting ephemeral traditions and ensuring equitable access to artistic knowledge.

The importance of library collection management in the field of visual and performing arts

1.1. PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

Many forms of performing arts (folk dance, theatre scripts, oral traditions, music notations, performance recordings) are fragile and may be lost without systematic collection and preservation.

Libraries safeguard rare manuscripts, recordings, posters, costumes, photographs and archives that represent India's rich artistic traditions.

1.2. ACCESS TO MULTIFORM RESOURCES

Visual and performing arts are not limited to books; they include scores, scripts, stage designs, catalogues, videos, photographs, digital recordings and even oral histories.

Collection management ensures diverse formats are acquired, catalogued, digitised and made accessible.

1.3. DOCUMENTATION OF EPHEMERAL ART FORMS

Many performing arts (live theatre, dance, concerts) are time-bound events. Unless documented and archived in a library they disappear.

Proper collection management ensures recordings, reviews and stage designs are preserved for future generations.

1.4. RESOURCE SHARING AND NETWORKING

Managed collections allow inter-library networks, databases and digitised repositories.

This increases visibility of Indian art globally, supporting cultural exchange.

1.5. TYPES OF MATERIALS IN VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

Print & Manuscripts – scripts, scores, catalogues, playbills, journals.

Audio-Visual – gramophone records, cassettes, CDs, DVDs, films, digital recordings.

Visual Artefacts – paintings, posters, photographs, stage designs, costumes, props.

Digital Resources – online archives, e-books, born-digital art, 3D models.

2. CONSERVATION METHODS (PHYSICAL CARE)

Digitisation: Scanning manuscripts, recording live performances, transferring analogue tapes/films to digital formats.

Migration & Refreshing: Regularly transferring digital files to updated formats/hardware to avoid obsolescence.

Metadata & Cataloguing: Proper documentation for discoverability (e.g., MARC, Dublin Core, multimedia catalogues).

Backups & Redundancy: Multiple storage solutions (cloud + local + external drives).

Legal & Ethical Safeguards: Copyright permissions, artists' rights and ethical handling of indigenous/folk materials.

3. INSTITUTIONAL EFFORTS IN INDIA

3.1. IGNCA (INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE ARTS)

The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) plays a vital role in the preservation and conservation of library and archival materials especially rare books, manuscripts, photographs and audio visual collections. Through the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) and its own Conservation Laboratory, IGNCA undertakes preventive and remedial conservation, storage re-organization, digitization and microfilming to safeguard fragile materials. It has conserved collections in institutions like the Rashtrapati Bhavan Library, India International Centre and Delhi Police Archives while also training professionals in preventive care. By combining traditional methods with modern digital preservation techniques and collaborations such as the CSIR-TKDL project, IGNCA ensures the long-term protection and accessibility of India's rich cultural and documentary heritage.

3.2. SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI

The Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA), India's national academy for music, dance and drama undertakes important initiatives for the preservation and conservation of library and archival materials related to performing arts. Its library and documentation units collect, catalog and preserve rare books, journals, manuscripts, photographs, audio recordings and video documentation of performances. The Akademi focuses on digitization of fragile audiovisual materials, microfilming of rare texts and proper archival storage to ensure long-term accessibility. Through its Archives of Indian Music, Dance and Drama and by supporting state and zonal cultural centres SNA safeguards traditional and contemporary performing arts resources, making them available for researchers, artists and future generations.

3.3. NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE OF INDIA (NFAI), PUNE

The National Film Archive of India (NFAI), Pune is dedicated to preserving India's cinematic heritage through systematic conservation and restoration of films and related library materials. It collects and safeguards film reels, scripts, posters, photographs, journals and other archival documents, ensuring their longevity through proper storage in climate-controlled vaults and by undertaking film digitization and restoration projects. NFAI has digitized thousands of film reels and rare documents, while also maintaining a reference library with extensive literature on cinema. By combining traditional archival methods with modern digital technologies, NFAI plays a crucial role in conserving India's film heritage and making it accessible to researchers, students, and cine enthusiasts.

3.4. NCPA LIBRARY, MUMBAI

The NCPA Library, Mumbai part of the National Centre for the Performing Arts, focuses on the preservation and conservation of materials related to music, dance and theatre. Its collections include rare books, scores, journals, manuscripts, audio recordings and audio visual resources. The library employs proper archival storage, preventive conservation techniques, and digitization of fragile materials to ensure their longevity. By maintaining a well-organized and accessible repository the NCPA Library supports research, education and the documentation of India's performing arts heritage for current and future generations

4. CONCLUSION

Conservation and preservation of visual and performing arts materials is not only a technical necessity but also a cultural responsibility. These practices ensure that the ephemeral, living traditions of performance and the tangible works of visual expression are safeguarded against decay and loss. By combining traditional conservation, modern digitisation, and professional archival practices, libraries and cultural institutions can guarantee that India's artistic legacy remains accessible for education, research, and inspiration.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

REFERENCES

Gaur, R.C. and Chakraborty, M. (2009), "Preservation and access to Indian manuscripts: a knowledge base of Indian cultural heritage resources for academic libraries" paper presented at International Conference on Academic Libraries, 5-8 October, New Delhi, India, available at: http://crl.du.ac.in/ical09/papers/index_files/ical-14_227_489_2_RV.pdf

- Singh, P. (2015), "New lease of life for a dying culture: manuscripts and digitization in Punjab", *Galaxy*, Vol.4, No.1, pp. 88-91.
- Gaur, R. C. (2011), "Preservation and access to manuscript heritage in India", *International Journal of Information Research*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 1-15.
- Karekar, S.U. and Mudhol, M.V. (2014). "Digitization of Library Archives as a tool for Preservation of Cultural Heritage" *SRELS Journal of Information Management*, Vol. 51, No. 6, pp.349-353.
- IGNCA (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts): <https://ignca.gov.in/>
- Sangeet Natak Akademi <https://www.sangeetnatak.gov.in/>
- National Film Archive of India (NFAI), Pune <https://nfai.nfdcindia.com/>
- NCPA Library, Mumbai <https://www.ncpamumbai.com/libraries/>