



Building a career in manuscript conservation –opportunities and challenges

Padmavathi P. R., Assistant professor in Economics, Government First grade College, Hassan

Abstract

Conservation of documents /manuscripts / heritage artifacts is a great concern of the governments across the globe. There has been several employment opportunities related with conservation. Authenticated appraisal of historical documents and archival materials needs experts in the trades. Besides, preserving and maintaining documents and historical objects needs trained personnel. There are several opening of employment in creation and maintenance of computer archives and databases, Organizing and classifying archival records, Safeguarding records, filming, digitizing copies & micro filming. Hence lots of opportunities for people, who can help, arrange, exhibit, and maintain collections is needed. This paper analyses the opportunities provided through National archives of India & focuses on the key significance of capacity building training for apprentices & internships in conservation sector. There is a need for an integrated education policy focusing on inclusion of training through capacity building trainings.

Keywords: Conservation, opportunities of employment, self-employment capacity building training

Introduction- National Archives of India the school of archival studies imparts training under one year diploma in archival studies and various short term courses of 4 & 8 weeks duration to Indian and foreign trainees. National Museum conducts two years degree course in Museology and conservation of records. There are several employment & career opportunities for individual who are interested in manuscript conservation.

- Authenticate and appraise historical documents and archival materials
- Preserve and maintain documents and objects
- Create and maintain computer archives and databases
- Organize and classify archival records to make them easy to search through
- Safeguard records by creating film and digital copies

Archivist career –responsibilities



- Direct workers who help arrange, exhibit, and maintain collections
- Set and administer policy guidelines concerning public access to materials
- Provide help to users
- Find and acquire new materials for their archives

Curator careers –responsibilities-
Curators, museum technicians, and conservators work towards

1. Acquire, store, and exhibit collections
2. Select the theme and design of exhibits
3. Design, organize, and conduct tours and workshops for the public
4. Attend meetings and civic events to promote their institution
5. Clean objects such as ancient tools, coins, and statues
6. Direct and supervise curatorial, technical, and student staff
7. Plan and conduct special research projects

Nature of the job of an Archivist-
They preserve many documents and records for their importance or historical significance. Most archivists coordinate educational and public outreach programs, such as tours, workshops, lectures, and classes. In addition, archivists may research topics and items relevant to their collections. Some archivists specialize in an area of history, such as colonial history, so they can more

accurately understand which records from that time period should become part of the archives. Archivists work with specific forms of records, such as manuscripts, electronic records, websites, photographs, maps, motion pictures, and sound recordings.

Archives technicians help archivists organize, maintain, and provide access to historical documentary materials.

Curators manage museums, zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, nature centers, and historic sites. The *museum director* often is a curator.

Curators direct the acquisition, storage, and exhibition of collections, including negotiating and authorizing the purchase, sale, exchange, and loan of collections. They also may authenticate, evaluate, and categorize the specimens in a collection.

Curators often oversee and help conduct the institution's research projects and related educational programs. Today, an increasing part of a curator's duties involves fundraising and promotion, which may include writing and reviewing grant proposals, journal articles, and publicity materials. In addition, many curators attend meetings, conventions, and civic events. Most curators specialize in a particular field, such as botany, art, or history. Those who work in large institutions may be highly specialized. A large natural history museum, for example, might employ separate curators for



its collections of birds, fish, insects, and mammals. (Report of the Archeological survey of India 2012) Some curators focus primarily on taking care of their collections, some on researching items in their collections, and others spend most of their time performing administrative tasks. In small institutions with only one or a few curators, one curator may be responsible for a number of tasks, from taking care of collections to directing the affairs of the museum. (Report of the Archeological survey of India 2012)

Museum technicians, commonly known as **registrars**, help curators by preparing and taking care of museum items. Registrars also may answer questions from the public and help curators and outside scholars use the collections.(Report of the Archeological survey of India 2012)

Conservators manage, preserve, treat, and keep records of works of art, artifacts, and specimens—work that may require substantial historical, scientific, and archaeological research. They document their findings and treat items to minimize deterioration or to restore them to their original state. Conservators usually specialize in a particular material or group of objects, such as documents and books, paintings, decorative arts, textiles, metals, or architectural material. They use x rays, chemical testing, microscopes, special lights, and other laboratory

equipment and techniques to examine objects, determine their condition, and decide on the best way to preserve them. (National mission for manuscripts -Government of India - official website 2014). In addition to their conservation work, conservators participate in outreach programs, research topics in their specialty, and write articles for scholarly journals. They may be employed by a museum or other institution that has objects needing conservation, or they may be self-employed and have several clients. (National mission for manuscripts -Government of India - official website 2014).

Short Term Certificate Courses – Careers in manuscript conservation also opens up careers in

1. Records management
2. Reprography
3. Archives management
4. Care and conservation of books, manuscripts and archives
5. Servicing and repair of records

other profession opening- There are several related jobs related to this such as

1. Conservation administrator,
2. Conservation educator,
3. Conservation scientist,
4. Conservation technician,
5. Conservation of collections head
6. Conservation care /preservation specialist.



Conclusion- Thus careers in manuscript conservation helps in appraisal of historical documents and archival materials , motivates preserving and maintaining documents and objects , supports creation and maintaining of computer archives and databases , helps to organize and classify archival records to make them easy to search through . The careers opens up various opportunities towards safeguarding records by creating film and digital copies and opens opportunities in arranging , exhibiting , and maintaining collections scientifically.

References-

National mission for manuscripts - Government of India - official website 2014
Indira Gandhi National Center of Arts Official Website 2014

The times of India Newspaper article on Manuscripts 2010
The proceedings of the national library 2010-2014
The proceedings of the ORI Mysore 2010
The report of the National Manuscript library 2012
Marjorie Shelley, "Storage of Works on Paper," in Conservation Concerns: A Guide for Collectors and Curators, ed. Konstanze Bachmann (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 1992),
Mary C. Baughman, "Approaches to Insect Problems in Paper and Books," Harry Ransom Center, Accessed 13 April 2014
Library of Congress, "Care, Handling, and Storage of Works on Paper," Library of Congress, Accessed 13 April 2014