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## **Conservation Knowledge in Art**

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**Abstract:**

*Artists are very much involved with the aesthetic aspect of their creations. To give prolonged life to their creations two aspects are to be given due importance. Firstly, artists must have a good scientific knowledge about the methods and materials used in their artifacts. Because organic and inorganic materials are used in artifacts. Their behavioural character are different. So artist should know the compatibility, durability of materials. Use of incompatible materials create stress and strain in the artifacts. Secondly, nothing can avoid the onslaught of natural and circumstantial degrading effects like that of pollution. So the artifacts must be kept and preserved properly. Hence a basic knowledge of conservation is essential.*

### **1. Introduction**

Creativity is the source of greatest happiness to human beings. Man creates different types of artifacts to express diverse ideas or thoughts. Artifacts are thus born and after a certain period of time they are subjected to inevitable deterioration may be internally or externally. Thus, every art object needs major precaution for enhancement of its lifespan. Here, we can say that artist is mortal, but the artifacts are not, with proper conservation artifacts' life can be prolonged.

We live in nature. There are different types of elements in nature which affect living being as well as inanimate objects in direct or indirect ways. When we are not able to prevent pollution, we become ill and take medicines to cure it. Whereas inanimate objects are not able to express so their deterioration starts in an invisible way. Thus, the heritage artifacts are deteriorated and we lose them after a time.

It is essential to know the definition of conservation.

Any direct or indirect actions which are taken for any object, to enhance life, is called conservation.

How many classification of conservation are there? Conservation has two divisions.

### **2. Preventive Conservation**

All indirect actions aimed at increasing life expectancy of undamaged or damaged cultural property is termed as preventive conservation. Like dusting, maintaining light, temperature, humidity etc.

#### *2.1. Curative Conservation*

All forms of direct actions aimed at increasing the life expectancy of undamaged or damaged cultural property is termed as curative conservation, e.g. Solvent cleaning, lining etc.

We are unaware, but we do practice conservation in our daily life. Different kinds of activities are being done by us daily for maintaining ourselves that can be termed as conservation. For example-

Brushing teeth in the morning.

Washing clothes and keeping them properly.

Daily dusting and cleaning house, furniture etc.

Arrangement of kitchen and the goods kept there.

Proper storing of books and clothes in almirah.

All these are activities included in conservation. Directly or indirectly these types of work are executed everywhere. May be unconsciously, but we have an age old tradition of conservation in village or urban areas. For preventing insects, traditionally neem leaves red chilies are kept in books since long. Camphor used in clothes in almirah. Smoke of resin spread in rooms, to prevent insects and germs are conservation.

Now it is clear that every person is involved in conservation work in their own place. Every object, like furniture, lights, fans, T.V, computer, paintings etc. needs conservation. Otherwise all objects will be deteriorated by different factors of deterioration, like, insects, dust and dirt, Pollution etc.

Heritage artifacts depict old history, for example artifacts of Indus Valley, Egyptian civilization express the social and cultural life of the period. It is clear how important the heritage artifacts are to the new generation. Today's creative works will be history in the long run. Human life gets treatment for good health. It is obvious that artifacts too demands conservation treatment for prolonged life.

There are many museums in India (Private and Government) for conserving and suitable arrangement for display of these objects and stored objects. Generally museums have conservation lab and conservators. Besides there are lots of private collections of art work, whose owners need proper conception of conservation.

### 3. There Are Different Kinds of Factors of Deterioration of Artifacts or Objects

#### 3.1. Environmental Factors

The environmental factors include the influences of moisture, light, insects etc. Study of these deterioration factors become systematic if we further classify them as:

Physical factors: Moisture, Light, Temperature.

Biological factors: Fungi, Insects

Chemical factors: Pollutants

#### 3.2. Inherent Factors

Poor quality of materials used and implementation of faulty techniques.

Mishandling, neglect of objects

Vandalism etc.

All materials for creating artifacts can be divided in two categories-(i) Organic (ii) Inorganic.

Any material derived from living organisms forms organic materials. For example-linseed oil, canvas, wood, leather, paper, palm leaves, barks, textiles, bone and ivory and feather etc.

Any object made from materials of mineral origin are called as inorganic materials. For example- stone, ceramics etc.

These organic and inorganic materials have different behavioral characteristics. They react differently when affected by fluctuation in the atmospheric elements like temperature, humidity, light. For example organic materials like paper, parchment, wood etc are all hygroscopic in nature and therefore swell with increase in the humidity of the atmosphere and shrink with its decrease. When these materials are arranged with synthetic materials which are not that responsive to changes in humidity then the artifacts will undergo stress and strain which will affect their longevity.

So compatibility and durability of materials and their suitability are to be properly identified and judged before being used by the creators. Although artists create with their emotion and passion, they should be aware of the above factors to provide a long life for their creations

#### 3.3. Artist should Know the Materials before Using

Visual arts depict themes in different ways than other languages. It depends on materials (like colour, canvas, paper etc.). In Present time, the advanced technology is utilized in modern art and this language of art expressed in different ways. Artists accumulate different materials and mediums, like light and sound, video, two and three dimensional assimilation. In this context artist should think about compatibility and durability of materials for prolonging the artifacts life. That is why painters need to survey the market for different materials.

Artist should know that the use of cheap materials not only affects the quality of their work but is often not economical; a pure, strong colour will go further than weaken one. Materials will make a good painter and that good painter can turn out surprisingly good things under adverse condition.

Few examples of eminent artist are there whose works are brilliant, but for use of poor quality materials, their works can not be preserved properly. Like the works of Ramkinkar Baige.

In this context, art students and artists should know the paintings anatomy and materials' categorical characteristics, otherwise, the technical fault and lac of materials' knowledge will reduce the life expectancy of artifacts.

It has already been discussed that the paintings or artifacts' life depend on artist's skill, technical knowledge which are utilized in artifacts. Conservation knowledge should be known to all artist and art lovers.

#### 3.4. Requirement of Suitable Atmosphere of Artifacts

Maintaining the temperature between 20°C to 22°C and relative humidity between 50 to 55% for artifacts. The maximum amount of light permissible for sensitive material like water colour paintings is 50 lux and oil paintings it can go as high as 150 lux. Damp area should be avoided for all artifacts.

Storage area should be maintained clean and unnecessary things should not be stacked in the storage.

No object should be directly placed on the floor.

Insecticide should be spread in store area.

#### 3.5. Awareness of Conservation

Art awareness transcend human's mentality that is very healthy for our society. Similarly awareness of conservation is equally essential for all. Personal collection or public property get proper value if timely restoration is done. For protecting public property, public should take the responsibility to see that such art collections are well maintained.

There is no sufficient conservation training institute in India except NRLC, Lucknow, Delhi, National Museum and Chennai. But there are many art Institutions in different places in India. Students are getting knowledge of art technique, thoughts, history, but

without art conservation knowledge. So it essential that students need the minimum knowledge of conservation for protecting artifacts. There are different advantages of this.

This experience helps to protect their own paintings.

They can give the idea to protect public heritage.

They can spread the awareness of conservation to public that can be a part of social awareness. Social awareness is very important, because there are many public heritages in India, like temples mosques etc. Indirectly public damage the heritage, due to lack of conservation knowledge and values of artifacts.

### *3.6. Different Activities for Awareness*

To arrange seminars and workshops at different places, such as museums, schools, colleges, universities, Public institution etc.

Conservation and art books are kept in every library (School, College, and University).

Conservation activities are to be displayed at public place or museum.

Conservation laboratory is very essential in every museum. That should be displayed in front of public by photograph or visual media.

Public will be interested seeing these activities.

It is pointed that we are aware of our health generally. We are aware of the effect of cold and hot weather on our health and we take precaution for that. So thus we need to know the deterioration factors of objects or artifacts. If we know the actual reasons, obviously we can take precautions as early as possible.

### *3.7. Conservation Ethics*

First of all patience is very important for conservation.

Minimum intervention is needed in conservation of artifacts.

Preventive conservation is more essential than curative conservation.

Observation and decision making are important before conservation or restoration.

Conservation most important part of maintenance of art work.

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