

Report on
NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON
PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION OF DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

Organized by
Manuscript Conservation Centre at Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University
in collaboration with
National Mission for Manuscripts, New Delhi
21st October, 2019 to 25th October, 2019

The five day workshop on *Preventive Conservation on Documentary Heritage* started on 21st October, 2019. The workshop aims to preach awareness and develop preliminary knowledge among the participants from various institutes across north-east India working or having interest for manuscript conservation. The inaugural session started at the Council Hall of the University at around 10:30 A.M and hosted by Tinam Borah, Research Scholar, Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University. The dignitaries on the dias were, Professor Prasanta Kumar Das, Dean, Humanities and Social sciences, Tezpur University; Dr. Biren Das, Registrar, Tezpur University; Professor Debarshi Prasad Nath, Head of department, Cultural Studies, Tezpur University and the Chief Guest of the event, Dr. Y.S. Wunglengton, Director, Directorate of Museum, Assam.

The event started with a Saraswati Vandana by Miss. Chirantana Talukdar, Project staff, Manuscript Conservation Centre, Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University. This was followed by the welcome address by Professor Debarshi Prasad Nath, Head, Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University. Then, Professor Prasanta Kumar Das, in his inaugural address, emphasize the importance of the works undertaken by Manuscripts Conservation Centre, Tezpur University in relation with the mandate of the university to preserve and study the heritage of the region. There he specifically mention about the climatic condition of Assam and the reasons for deterioration of manuscripts, thereby advocating the importance of learning techniques for preserving the manuscripts and also for building an environment suitable for dealing with manuscripts. He talked about the changes of ‘map’ from the hand drawn maps to Google Map of today that have progressed through globalization as well indicating the need of digitization of these hand drawn maps.

Dr. Subhra Devi, Assistant Curator, Museum, Department of Cultural Studies and Coordinator, Manuscript Conservation Centre, Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University introduced about the Centre and works performed under this project introducing the basic steps in manuscript conservation for sanchipat manuscripts. It is followed by unveiling of a booklet on “Introduction to Conservation of Documentary Heritage”, prepared by Manuscripts Conservation Centre, Tezpur University.



The special guest for the event, Dr. Y.S. Wunglengton, Director, Directorate of Museums Assam mentioned about Assam State Museum in Guwahati, and how preservation works are done there, what kinds of artefacts preserved there and the lack of human resources in the museum leading to slow progression. He mentioned about the various Indian Museums and said that the Indian artifacts had received worldwide recognition. In his speech, Dr. Biren Das, Registrar, Tezpur University, extended his best wishes to the Manuscript Conservation Centre at Department of Cultural Studies for the works undertaken for preservation of important heritage of the region and also expressed his best wishes for the success of this event.

The event ended with a beautiful satriya performance by Miss Anusuya Goswami, a first semester student from Department of Cultural Studies, TU. Dr. Parashmoni Dutta, Assistant Professor, Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University, delivered the vote of thanks.





The technical sessions started with an ice breaking session moderated by Dr. Subhra Devi, where the participants introduces their collection and problems faces by them and the resource persons for the day Mr. Minesh Harinkhede (conservator, National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Property, Lucknow), Dr. Vandana Singh (Managing Director, Centre for Art Conservation and Research Experts, New Delhi) and Dr. Subhra Devi (Co-ordinator, NMM-MCC at Department of Cultural Studies, TU) responded to their general queries. The workshop started with the basic concept of *Preventive Conservation* by Minesh Harinkhede, who is a well-known conservator of the country . Later on, his session included both theory and practical on *storage, handling and transportation* which is one of the most important part of preventive conservation. His other lectures include, *Conservation Documentation* and *Basics of laboratory set up* for conservation of documents.

Another resource person for the first two days, Dr. Vandana Singh started her deliberation on the topic *Environmental factors and Deterioration* where she explains various causes of deterioration in documentary heritage .She also took a session on the *Ethics related to Preventive Conservation* and also on *Dry cleaning of Documents and Manuscripts*.

Mr. Lalit Pathak delivered a lecture on “*Techniques of Disinfection from insects and fungus*” after which practical sessions were conducted on “*Encapsulation, Mounting and Inlaying*”. Dr. Mukesh Saikia (Librarian, Tezpur University) delivered a lecture on *Cataloging and Accessioning of Manuscripts*. Dr. Utpal Das (Deputy Librarian, Dibrugarh University) presented his lectures on the topic “*Biological Deterioration of Wood Origin Documentary Heritage*” where he had shown different deterioration in Sachipat Manuscript. Jayashree Acharya introduces the participants with various “*Tools and instrument used for Environmental Monitoring* in storage and exhibition areas. Sachipat manuscripts are the most predominantly found in Assam and Dr. Subhra Devi introduces the participants *Sachi Pat Manuscript and its Process of Preparation for Writing*. Two sessions on *Disaster Management* was also taken during the workshop by Dr. Dipak Nath (Centre for Disaster Management, Tezpur University). A session on “*Conservation of Sanchipat Manuscripts and wooden artefacts of Assam*” was presented by Prof. Robin Dutta (Department of Chemical Sciences, TU) where he have shown his experimentations and his experiences relating to the topic. Dr. Girin Phukan (Director, Institute of Tai Studies, and Co-ordinator of NMM-MRC, Moranhut) delivered lectures on the topics “*Problems of Manuscript Conservation in Assam*” and the “*Importance of Conservation of Documentary Heritage*”.



The purpose of the workshop was to give some of the basic knowledge or how to preserve the *Documentary Heritage* using some primary techniques of *Preventive Conservation*. On the last day, valedictory session was organized where Dr. Girin Phukan , Director Institute of Tai Studies and Dr. Juri Gogoi Konwar, Asstt. Professor Tezpur University, Dept. Cultural Studies was present. Later on, some the participants shared their remarks and feedback on the five day worksho. The workshop ended with *Vote of Thanks* delivered by Dr. Subhra Devi, Co-ordinator of the workshop.