

## **Challenge of identifying and preserving library resources with historical value in the Library, University of Sri Jayewardenepura**

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### **Abstract**

*The Library of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura which has a long history was initially named as Sri Lanka Vidyodaya University Library (1959). This library, which began with a small book collection in the early days, has a collection around more than two hundred and fifty thousand books, hundreds of journals and few electronic databases. The library with such a long history has library resources of rich historical value.*

*Historical library resources are created due to untiring efforts of the ancient people. There are archaeological evidence to prove that they have used various materials for writing in the past. During that time, writing activities had begun using stones, clay and wood. Because of the size and difficulty of manipulation of these materials humans began using the leaves of trees instead.*

*In Sri Lanka as well as in many countries in Asia, Palmyrah leaves (Thalpath) were used for this purpose. Most of the palm-leaves manuscripts used for writing in the past are found in the present libraries. These can be described as library resources having rich historical value. With the onset of the use of paper in the aftermath, print books and various documents have been published.*

*The problem of this study is to identify library's resources with historical value in the Ceylon Room collection of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, and identifying the challenges of preserving them. The main objective of this study is to identify historical value of books and documents in the Ceylon Room of the university library, and to find out the defects that have caused damages in materials, and to propose methods for preservation of those materials for the future generations.*

*Through this study, it is expected to promote readers awareness of books and documents with historical value, and make suggestions for the preservation of materials for future generations. It is also possible to explore the functions of the university library in preservation of historical documents as well as modern methods for their improvement.*

*Although there is a book binding section in the university library, there is a dire need of a conservation section and training staff for the preservation and conservation of books and documents of historical value. In addition to that, funding issues, time and energy consumption, lack of opportunities for training were identified as problems in preserving these historical books and documents for future generations.*

*Various research methods have been used for this research. Primarily survey method and qualitative method were used to examine the collected information. Primary and secondary data were used to validate the argument.*

*Collections of various types of books housed in the Ceylon Room of the Library of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura were taken as the sample. The collection contained historically valuable books and documents.*

*This research was carried out primarily to identify the historical and valuable books and documents in the Ceylon Room collection of the Library of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, and to study their current situation. At present preservation of palm-leaves collection has been successfully accomplished using the conservation methods.*

**Keywords:** Ceylon Room, conservation, library resources, Palmyrah leaves, reservation, University of Sri Jayewardenepura