

# **Challenge of identifying library resources with historical value of Library of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and preserving them for future generations.**

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## **Abstract**

The Library of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura which has a long history was initially called the Sri Lanka Vidyodaya University Library. This library, which began with a small book collection in the early days, has now grown up to a huge collection. 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 are to prove that they have used various materials for writing in the past. During that time, writing activities were began 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, palmyra 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 generation.

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 It is also possible to explore the functioning of the university library in preservation of historical documents as well as modern methods for their improvement.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 officers 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 problem 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.

**Key words:** Ceylon Room, conservation, library resources, Palm-leaves, preservation, University of Sri Jayewardenepura