CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings based on the study are:

7.1.1 General

1. While specific studies have been taken up in areas such as Management, Preservation and Automation of Archives, no study in the field of Church Archives in India has been undertaken.

2. There are 139 Catholic Dioceses in India, out of which a large number of Dioceses were established in Kerala (26), followed by Tamil Nadu (17) and Bihar (13), (Table 4.1).

3. The first Catholic Diocese was established at Goa in 1533. The post independence era witnessed the establishment of 93 Dioceses in India, (Table 4.2)

4. There exists two types of Archives namely Historical and Secret Archives. All the respondents do maintain Historical Archives, (Table 4.3).

5. Generally, Archives do not have trained Archivists, (Table 4.4).
7.1.2 Infrastructure Facilities

1. 72 (97.2%) Dioceses are not providing funds to maintain the Archives. (Table 4.5).

2. Although none of the Archives have a separate building, they are provided space in the Diocesan Headquarters to maintain the Archives with limited physical facilities, (Table 4.6).

3. Different types of storage equipments are used to house archival materials. (Table 4.7).

4. About one third of the sample do not have any equipments to preserve the Archives. None of the Archives do possess facilities for fumigation, lamination or for deacidification. Further it is observed that none of the Archives have the laboratory facilities to maintain archival materials, (Table 4.15).

5. There exist poor infrastructure facilities in the areas of Man power, Building, Furniture and Equipments, Preservation and Financial resources in the Archdiocese of Madras – Mylapore.

7.1.3 Archival Collection

1. Different types of Sources of Information are maintained. A major portion of the collection is of Primary nature, such as, Baptism and Marriage Registers, Burial records, Correspondence, Account Books, Property Deeds etc., (Tables 4.8 and 4.9).
2. While a major portion of the collection is reported to be in good condition, it has been observed that in most of the cases proper care and maintenance activities are not undertaken regularly, (Tables 4.10 and 4.11).

7.1.4 Access to Archives

1. About 88% of the sample do not maintain Catalogues or Index or any other Bibliographic files. Further the existing Catalogues in 9 (12.2%) Archives are not based on standardised practices, (Table 4.12).

2. General public do not have access to the Church archival materials.

3. 75% of respondents impose no restriction in the usage of their collection, (Table 4.14).

7.1.5 Care and Maintenance Activities

1. It is observed that none of the Archives use latest methods of preservation and conservation. Further, there is an evidence of following traditional methods of preservation. In other words, there is a lack of minimum preservation techniques being adopted in the Archives under study, (Table 4.16).

2. There exists a significant positive correlation between the size of the Archives, Condition of records and maintenance of the Archives, (Table 4.17).
3. While the size of the Archives and maintenance of Archives do differ significantly in relation to the year of establishment of the Diocese, the condition of Archives do not differ significantly by the year of establishment of the Diocese. (Table 4.18).

4. It is observed from ANOVA table that condition of records is same in almost all the Archives. In other words, the year of establishment does not have any relation to the condition of records. (Table 4.19).

5. As per the Tukey’s Test, archives established before 1800 A.D are well maintained vis-a-vis those after 1800 A.D (Table 4.20).

6. Two clusters each have been formed while grouping the types of records. One based on quantum of availability (Figure 4.10) and named as “Most Common Primary Sources” and “Common Information Sources” (Tables 4.21 and 4.22). The other on the condition of records (Figure 4.11) and named as “Well Maintained Records” and “Records that Needs Proper Maintenance”, (Tables 4.24 and 4.25).

7. It is observed that four types of documents cluster together in both the dendrograms, but the order in which they appear varies within the cluster. (Figures 4.10 and 4.11).

7.1.6 Barriers

1. Eleven barriers have been identified in the maintenance of Church Archives. Lack of Information Technology (IT) applications, lack of Guidelines and lack of Coordination among the Church Archives are the prominent barriers, (Table 4.27).
2. Similar barriers have been identified in the Archives of Archdiocese of Madras – Mylapore.

7.1.7 Findings in relation to Hypotheses

The study undertaken has indicated that the hypothesis -- growth of dioceses after independence, status of Church Archives, difficulties in maintenance, methods of preservation, availability of bibliographic records and application of IT -- formulated (Vide Sec.1.5) are valid.

7.2 BYPRODUCTS OF THE CASE STUDY

The Case Study of Catholic Church Archives of Archdiocese of Madras – Mylapore has resulted in the production of the following Byproducts:

1. **Microfilm project:** The investigator in collaboration with Genealogical Society of Utah, USA has undertaken the Microfilming of Genealogical records like Baptism Registers, Burial records and Marriage Registers. A total of 47,161 pages were microfilmed consisting of 42 rolls of 35 mm film. Further, the list of microfilmed documents has been placed on the Web with URL: [http://www.ozemail.com.au](http://www.ozemail.com.au) This is one of the byproducts of the study.

2. **Listing of Archival records of 18th and 19th Century:** Another Byproduct of the Case Study is the preparation of catalogue of 18th and 19th century documents belonging to the Missions of Bengal, Burma and other parts of India. These documents are mostly in French, Latin and Portuguese.
3. **DOCCAM Package**: A software programme called DOCCAM (along with the manual) for the Church Archival Materials has been designed and developed. This may be considered as one of the byproducts. (Chapter 6 and APPENDIX K).

### 7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The diocesan archives is the hub of the administrative activities of the diocese. Being so it should be consulted as and when new policies are set and old policies evaluated. The archives provide a mechanism for preserving the diocese's corporate memory and draws upon for commemorative activities, for public relations, and for an understanding of past activities and present trends. Keeping in view this statement and based on the findings listed in the section 7.1, the following are the recommendations:

#### 7.3.1 National Church Archival Policy

*There is an urgent need to draft a National Church Archival Policy on the lines of NAPLIS (National Policy on Library and Information System) to augment the Church Archival Resources.*

In this connection, it is pointed out that in 1993, the Indian Government has enforced archival legislation entitled "Public Records Act" to preserve and conserve the archival materials. Likewise the Church also has enforced legislation on Archives in the Canon Law, 1983. "The Pastoral Function of Church Archives" (A Circular Letter from The Pontifical Commission for the
Cultural Heritage of the Church, No. 2.4) insists on the common guidelines for the Episcopal Conferences. It urges national and regional Episcopal Conferences to promote a common orientation in the Particular Churches in order to better coordinate the actions taken in favour of historical-cultural goods and more specifically archives, with due respect for the legislative power proper to the diocesan Bishops by divine right. (Cfr. Code of Canon Law, 1983. Canon 381; 375 § 1; 455 § 4). Therefore, it is suggested that Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) may take efforts in drafting a common policy on Archives and its maintenance.

7.3.2 Archival Mission Statement

Considering the significance of Archival Management, it is recommended that an Archival Mission Statement be formulated by the individual Diocesan Archives.

An Archival Mission Statement is a written expression of the nature, scope, functions, and rationale for existence of an Archives. A mission statement provides needed information about the archives' role for the organisation's governing board, employees, resource allocators, and the research community.

A typical mission statement should accomplish three things:

- It should clearly state the programme's main purposes. Since the primary purposes of an archives is always to identify, preserve, and
make accessible for use of archival records, it should be the focal point of the statement. The mission statement might also address the potential use of the archival materials for public relations of the Archives and its role in the community.

- It should clearly state the archives' acquisition scope. For an archives to be effective, it should have a mission that gives it responsibility and authority, to care for all the archival records, whether they are physically centralised or preserved in far-flung parishes.

- A mission statement should clearly spell out the relationship between the parish archives and the parent organisation of which it is a part.

7.3.3 Provision for Better Infrastructural Facilities

Realising that the present archives do not have proper infrastructural facilities, it is recommended to have better Building and other Physical Facilities, Man Power, Finance and Processing Facilities.

i. Building and physical facilities: The survey reveals that all the archives in the dioceses in India are located in the diocesan headquarters in a single room. It is rarely possible to construct a new building to house a church archive, but in all cases it is essential to be aware of any potential natural dangers (e.g. flooding or earthquakes) and of dangers caused by nearby installations (e.g. gas or petrol deposits, factory pollution) or even the dangers caused by its strategic position in the event of war, terrorism or civil
disturbance. If a new building is commissioned, the site should avoid these dangers and be so located as to have good transport connections and the assistance of emergency services.

The archive building should aim to provide thermal comfort so that constant temperature and humidity can be maintained. The floor must be strong enough to take the weight of the items in store, but it is not advisable to use a basement, due to problems with humidity. Ideally, light would be artificial and if there are windows in the storeroom then a north facing position is best to avoid direct sunlight. Similarly, where possible, the lighting, both in the store room and the reading room should have diffuse lighting. In the store room it should, if possible, be activated by sensors so that there is only lighting where and when it is needed. For security purpose, there should be an emergency lighting system. The wiring system should be in accordance with safety norms and should be laid as far away from the store room as possible. There should also be electrical plugs in the store room for facilitating cleaning also and in the reading room for the benefit of researchers.

The whole archive should be fitted with flood, fire and burglar alarms. They should be tested regularly. All doors should be fire retardant and automatic locks should be avoided. The archive should have emergency exits and staff should have regular fire drills. There should be an adequate supply of manual fire extinguishers. It is advisable to have a disaster plan which is regularly updated and which assigns responsibilities to each member of staff in case of a disaster.
As regards the atmosphere of the store room, it is better to have only one archival medium per room in order to facilitate thermal inertia. Paper should be stored at 13-18°C and 55-65% relative humidity (RH). Microfilm and Magnetic tape should be stored at 4-16°C and 40-60% relative humidity whereas computer tapes should be stored at 18-22°C and 35-45% relative humidity.

All the items in store should be kept in acid free boxes or other coverings suitable to the medium of the document. Care must be taken not to damage the items by piling up boxes and large documents, such as maps, should be stored flat in special cabinets. The shelves should be made of metal or some other inorganic substance. Obviously, it should be strong enough to support the weight of the archives and should also allow sufficient space for ventilation. Aisles should be wide enough to permit easy access. Equipments like: vacuum cleaners, air-conditioners, dehumidifiers, insect repellers, photocopiers, microfilm readers, computers, printers and scanners are to be provided.

If outside researchers are likely to visit the archives, there should be a separate reading room. This should have sufficient desks, lighting and electrical plugs. If documents are stored on microfilm then there should be microfilm readers. In the interest of security, readers will not have access to the store room. It is wise not to allow bags or briefcases into the reading room.
ii. **Man power:** The success of the archival program greatly depends on the staff. At least one well educated, experienced, trained and competent archivist should be appointed to assist the Chancellor. Archival staff should be encouraged to participate in Continuing Education Programmes (CEP) to maintain and improve their skills for ongoing responsibilities.

iii. **Finance:** Certain percentage of funds from the regular budget may be allocated for the maintenance of Archives.

- Archives must have the means to acquire finances and to monitor and evaluate the use of money.

- Archivist should analyse the basic archival operations and should focus on three principal items supported by the budget: staff, equipment or supplies and space. These factors must be studied in relation to the three main activities of archives – appraisal, including records management; processing; and reference use

iv. **Preservation and Conservation:** The physical hazards to which the archival materials are vulnerable are fire, water, rodents, insects and theft. The danger of fire is obvious for inflammable materials paper, palm leaves and parchment. Rodents and insects also cause damage, if the archives are not made secure against their ravages. Equally harmful is excessive dryness which causes paper and other materials to go brittle. Deacidification and fumigation methods are to be followed to over come these problems. More harm can be done by using unsuitable materials and adhesives for preservation and, before any
attempt is made to repair damage, advice should always be sought from the experts, since archive repair is a highly specialised work.

One of the forms of preservation suggested is Microfilming. It is an internationally adopted form of preservation of archival records, usually on roll film, is a long-standing method of creating a duplicate copy of papers which are irreplaceable or which must be retained indefinitely in their original format.

7.3.4 Use of Information Technology (IT) Applications

In order to preserve the archival materials, it is recommended that the criteria established by the best archival tradition and applied technology be followed (Computerized catalogue programmes, microfilming, digitization, etc.).

i. Digitization is a representation of the physical image of the document created by means of a scanner preserved in binary form on a electronic medium, and then 'interpreted' by a computer to be read on screen or printed out on paper.

ii. Digitization process: Firstly, all the documents selected should have administrative, fiscal, legal, historical and sacramental value. All the records having these values are to be considered for digitization. The documents should be made free of dirt and stains, folds have to be carefully straightened. The document is scanned and a group of Carged Couple Devices (CCD) covers the image of the document analysing all characters as a combination of black spots (from which derives the use of the word 'raster'), each one identifiable by its
spatial coordinates. For each of these individualised spots, the scanner analyses and measures the density of the spot according to a given greyscale or in case of coloured originals a colourscale.

To convert the image of the text into an ASCII file the text image requires to be further processed through Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software. The ASCII text then may be edited through an html editor. For assigning html tags human intervention is generally necessary. Through the html tags hyperlinks within the document may be established. Wherever required the graphic material has to be incorporated as TIFF (Tag Image File Format) bitmaps. The complete database of full text material accompanied by uncompressed images has to be stored on optical disks as master files.

Fig. 7.1

Digitization chain

For regular use, a second set of full text data with images compressed as JPEG (Joint Photographic Expert Group) files has to be developed. The master file with uncompressed data is for achieving and future migration.

7.3.5 Creation of Bibliographic Records

*Realising the importance of standards and maintenance of uniformity in bibliographic records, it is recommended that efforts to be undertaken to design and develop an appropriate software package for the creation of machine readable bibliographic databases.*

The creation of such machine readable databases would facilitate resource sharing among Church Archives. Further, these databases may be put on the web for wider access and use.

7.3.6 Networking of Church Archives

*Realising and recognising that Church Archives do not have adequate information and financial resources, it is recommended that a Networking Mechanism be established among all Church Archives in India.*

The survey reveals that more than 50% of respondents suggest linking all the Church Archives. Networking the Church Archives would facilitate resource sharing of all materials (catalogues, registers, indexes, etc.) and thereby enhance their access and utilisation.
7.4. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has identified certain avenues for further research. The following are some of the areas.

i. Information needs and Information seeking behaviour of Users of Church Archives.

ii. Design and development of Information Technology (IT) – based Church Archival Information Systems.

iii. Preservation techniques for Church Archival Materials in India.

7.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

From the foregoing account, it is clear that the maintenance of archival materials in Churches in India is conspicuous by its absence and where it exists, is rather poor and unscientific. This has consequently affected access and utilisation of archival materials which contain valuable information pertaining to the cultural traditions, practices and values of the societies. This sad state of affairs has been largely due to poor infrastructural facilities existing in various dioceses. Perhaps, this situation is due to the lack of a well designed and formulated National Church Archival Policy and appropriate mandatory provisions. It is time that the authorities concerned realise this unfortunate situation and take urgent steps to remedy the same. This is the need of the hour.
If, however, this is not done, the entire exercise of creation of these archival materials would have no meaning and significance and would be an exercise in futility. It is in this context, that the findings of this study would be relevant and useful.

Further, it is heartening to note that while the objectives have been achieved, the study has yielded good byproducts especially, the DOCCAM Package, an useful tool for those intending to computerise their archival collections.

Thus, the objective of the study would be fulfilled if it serves as a catalyst to stimulate the people concerned to act in a constructive manner for the creation, maintenance and use of Church Archives.