CHAPTER 3

ARCHIVES – A STATE-OF-THE-ART REPORT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Archives in the Church have important cultural and pastoral significance which is stressed upon by the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church in its circular letter titled “The Pastoral function of the Church Archives” (1997) and the commentary by the Canon Law Society of Great Britian and Ireland, titled “Archives in Canon Law”. The Code of Canon Law (1983) gives suitable norms on the need for establishment of Archives, diligent conservation and careful management of its sources. The related Canons are: 173 § 4; 428 § 2; 482 § 1; 486-491; 535 § 4; 895; 1053; 1082: 1121 § 3; 1133; 1208: 1283 n.3; 1284 § 2 n.9; 1306 § 3; 1719. (APPENDIX B).

According to Hey and Miedaner (1996), there is a very close relation between Church Administration and Archives and as they are service enterprises they cannot be underrated due to the lack of finances. Klaassen (1986), on the other hand, emphasizes the need for a separate Archives distinct from libraries even though there might be a justifiable administrative linkage.

For those who are contemplating to start a historical record programme in their institution (Church), Yakel (1994) in the book ‘Starting an Archives’, and Cox (1992) ‘Managing Institutional Archives – Fundamental Principles and Practices’ give the necessary steps to be taken. Some of the basic
Archival functions discussed pertain to: Archival Administration, Collection Development, Appraisal, Records Management, Arrangement, Description, Reference, Outreach, Preservation and Facilities Planning. The authors also give the rationale for establishment of an archival programme and discuss the managerial, financial and administrative implications involved. At the same time, they approach the subject of starting an archival programme in a practical manner giving a clear description of archival activities. A similar line of thinking can be seen in the comments of Strachan (1986)⁷ and Turnbaugh (1986)⁸ "......In order to have a successful implementation of the archives, one should take into careful consideration: Planning, Preservation, Analysis and to make effort to include all areas in which archives reflect Governmental and as well as cultural heritage". Thus, in establishing an archives care should be taken to see that archives and records management programmes should follow an uniform set of principles and practices in all the organisations, while emphasising the need to convince the authorities of the value of designing a institutional (Church) archives, Nokes (1988)⁹.

While the Catholic dioceses in USA started to maintain the archival programme only in 1974, Geary (1983)¹⁰, the Catholic church in Australia established its own archives in recent times though it has been incumbent upon the Catholic dioceses since 1917, Bourke and Raphael (1984)¹¹.

Wurster (1985)¹² deals with the code of Canon Law which gives direction regarding the establishment of a diocesan archive in the diocesan headquarters and as well as in the individual churches (parish) level which has been the custom from middle ages. He also further discusses the Canon Law on the secure storage, access and the custody of the keys of the archives.
Macquiban (1995) in his article ‘Historical texts or religious relics: towards a theology of religious archives’, explores the notion of a theology of religious archives. Such a theology must take account of basic archival principles and satisfy the three archival concerns of acquisition and appraisal, conservation, and exploitation. These concerns can be seen in the trinitarian terms of creation, incarnation and inspiration or revelation. Records can thus be seen in terms of a doctrine of creation. Due to the doctrine of incarnation, of the presence of God in humanity, there is a continuing role for the recording of God's acts in history and for interpreting history. The archivist should keep records not to create theology or to force a divine interpretation on history but to open a channel of communication through which God's revelation may be made. Similarly, while Blouin (1998) sees a religious purpose in the establishment of the Vatican Archives, Ferreira (1995), reporting on the theme Churches’ Archives, believes that the preservation of church archives is imperative and any wrong perceptions about archives administration and the absence of archival structure must therefore be eliminated. However, effective administration, cooperation in archival institution and the need for establishing networks in terms of funding and structure going beyond its own specialist boundaries is stressed by Cameron (1983) and Burke (1983).

3.2 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Wilson (1997) states that Information Management aims to improve the effectiveness of organisation by managing the information as a resource providing access to relevant information in a timely and cost-effective manner.
Archives have been created and used in the course of some actual business, and form part of that business. They can never lose their contextual dimension, or if they do, then a significant part of their value is lost. An additional distinctive feature of archives, different from many other aspects of information management, is that, aggregate archival entities have to be treated as units according to context explains Cook (1999)\textsuperscript{19}.

Anderson (1997),\textsuperscript{20} argues that in the world of information management, the organisation of information is the organisation of documented messages in which information is contained. Cook (1999)\textsuperscript{21}, also stresses that the organisation of archival information refers to the way in which archivally documented messages are managed. Archives are a subset of records, and the two categories share a quality of ‘recordness’.

However, the Archives seek to build up banks of information which will cover their chosen fields of operation and, ideally, that field will have some sort of link with a national or regional plans. Archives organise the representations into finding aids system. These finding aids perform a function similar to that of indexing, cataloguing and classification in library systems, use some of the same procedures and technologies, and can be considered in the same general context. Archival description can be regarded, like cataloguing, as a specialised case of indexing, and that archival description can be sorted into an order or orders, dictated by classification.
He points out that the aim of any archives service, within its own agreed field of operation, should be to build up holdings which contain a balanced documentation of the chosen subject area. To achieve a final adequacy these holdings may have to be supplemented by information derived from holdings of other services, including library and documentation services: this may be achieved by the transfer of materials, but more commonly by producing joint aids and coordinating access facilities. Many archival projects are aimed at discovering and listing materials arising from a defined set of sources, but not at acquiring them. Such surveys can build up a data bank of information about the materials they find, and can perhaps do something to encourage their deposit in appropriate repositories. The main purpose of these projects remain distinct from question of custody and access.

At the same time, explains that the Archives by the survey programme serve as the basis for a file of creator agencies or persons that fall within the terms of reference. This file can be used to store information concerning the provenance and context of any archival materials that come to hand as a result of the acquisition programme. The arrangement of archives is an essential operation in the process of managing the information contained in them. Arrangement is an important step in the conservation of the materials, governing their disposition, housing in the repository and eventually exploitation of the archival reference and research. The arrangement of an assembly of archives perpetuates and demonstrates relationships between its components, explaining and authenticating the significance of the information
in them. The activities which support this have traditionally been known as the moral defense of archives, and are central to the professional ethics of archivists. Moral defense is concerned with managing information, even though it may depend on an examination and ordering of physical materials to do so.

3.3 MANAGEMENT OF ARCHIVES

The archives should follow principles and techniques of professional practice in the establishment of archives says Cook (1993)\textsuperscript{22}, in ‘Information Management and archival data’. In another of his book titled ‘The management of Information from Archives’ (1999)\textsuperscript{23}, he traces the history, definition and function of archives and archival services, international service models and discusses staffing and financial resource issues. He explains how to set up and run a records management programme, manage the interface with archival management, conduct a records survey, set up retention schedules and organise appraisal, acquisition and disposal in a way which ensures that the service meets organisational and individual needs. He also covers the arrangement, coding and description of archival material, and the administration of its physical storage, demonstrate how efficient management facilitates the accessibility of archival information.

Fleming (2000)\textsuperscript{24} ‘Archive Principles and Practice’, on the other hand gives guidelines to those who are put in-charge of the archives of their religious Order, Congregations, house or diocese but who have no formal training in archive keeping.
While the 'Administration of Cathedral Archives' by Dorrington (1990)\(^5\) explains the wide range of approaches to the archival administration, Society of American Archivists (1982)\(^2\) in its 'Archives forms manual' gives a large selection of forms used for different types of archives which could be useful for records management and other functions of the archives. Levine (1984)\(^1\) explains the appraisal policy which is based on asking specific questions about the legal, evidential and historical value of records. 'A Manual of archival description' by Cook and Procter (1989)\(^2\) aims to provide standards which will control the production of finding aids and finding aid systems in archival repositories and archives services. It is expected that Manual of archival description (MAD2), and the General International standard archival description (ISAD(G)) produced in 1992 by the International Council on Archives (ICA) would help the archivists to create catalogue, efficiently and effectively.

3.3.1 Preservation of Archival Materials

Preservation is a central management function for archives, whose purpose is to acquire and make available cultural resources of long-term value. Conway (1989)\(^3\) traces the emergence of a consensus on what constitutes archival preservation and offers a three part definition of the concept, and discusses the major opinions on the nature of education for archival preservation. He further states that preservation of historical materials, in a variety of forms and formats, is both a cultural necessity and a central responsibility for professional archivists. Archivists need to define for
themselves just what archival preservation entails and assess the capacity of the
thousands of archives, large and small, scattered and isolated from each other.
to develop and administer sophisticated preservation programmes. Kaplan and
Banks (1990)\textsuperscript{10} explains preservation as the core archival mission. The
application of its tenets has, however, frequently been carried out in the most
passive ways. As a result, tremendous remedial problems face today's
archivists. Correcting the problems of neglect will require new strategies,
techniques, and renewed relationships with preservation personnel. Fostering
lines of communication with preservation educators will lead archivists to a
better understanding of what will be required to address their needs. The
authors advocate assessing archival needs while carefully considering
implications for the future in an information environment.

National Archives of India has brought out a few publications on
Record Management, Preservation and Conservation viz., "Repair and
Preservation of Records" (1988)\textsuperscript{11}; "Guide to Restoration of
Documents"(1991)\textsuperscript{12}; Guidelines for control and preservation of Termite
infestation in Archives and Libraries" (1991)\textsuperscript{13} and "Elements of Records
Management and Conservation" (1993)\textsuperscript{14}. All these give sufficient guidelines
to preserve and conserve the records for posterity.

The conservation of paper related materials in the archives, in the form
of manuscripts, books and documents are very delicate and prone to different
forms of deterioration. The biological, chemical and physical deterioration are
discussed below:
Biological and Chemical Deterioration: In tropical countries, biological agents cause great damage to paper materials. The most important biological organisms are fungi, bacteria, algae, yeast and protozoa. Insects such as cockroaches, silverfish, book-worms and termites damage the paper materials and other agents are rodents like rats. Foot (1996) argues that while taking into account, the standard for storage and maintenance of the archival materials one must consider the climatic conditions, social and financial circumstances, nature of existing buildings, purpose of collection, security, fire risk, chemical and physical deterioration. Emphasizing on the discoveries pertaining to paper deterioration due to acidic reactions occurring in cheap paper, Vine and Hollinger (1993) provides a new model of correcting the above defects through conservation housing, micro chamber and introducing activated carbons and / or alkaline buffers specially modified with miniature interconnecting, multidimensional passageways leading to tiny molecular cages where damaging molecules are captured and neutralised.

Another approach by Neevel (1995) explains the degradation of paper by iron gall inks can be attributed to both acid hydrolysis and iron(II)-catalysed oxidation of cellulose. The latter process is blocked by phytic acid, a natural antioxidant. Investigates the action of phytic acid by simulating ink corrosion with accelerated aging tests at 90 degrees centigrade and cycling the relative humidity each 3 hours between 35 and 80 percent. Assesses mechanical strength with a bursting tester. Deacidification with an aqueous solution of magnesium bicarbonate increased the half life of the bursting strength from 6 to
15 days. In combination with a treatment by an aqueous solution of sodium phytate, the half life increased to 23 days. Increased stability results from the antioxidant function of phytate.

Agrawal and Barkeshli (1997)\textsuperscript{15} describe in their document, the nature of paper, its properties, how and why does it deteriorate and what action can be taken to prevent its deterioration. Various techniques of conservation/restoration like deacidification, cleaning, stain removal, resizing, bleaching, lining, minor repairs, and so on are given in detail.

\textit{Repair and Restoration:} Thus, the principle of archival repair emphasises that archival conservator should make minimum intervention to the integrity of an archival document and to preserve wholly the evidence it contains. should possess moral qualities and ethical principles along with knowledge and skill, according to Baynes (1994)\textsuperscript{19}. But, to repair local damages heat set tissues can be used, Fairbrass (1994)\textsuperscript{40}. Sterlini (1995)\textsuperscript{41}. on the other hand describes the mechanics of dirt removal and also how the residue affects by subsequent humidification and immersion.

\textit{Fumigation:} Fumigation is another important factor to be considered in the preservation of archival material. However, Bateman and Smith (1994)\textsuperscript{52} presents as to how the special gas proof, strong plastic chamber fitted with gas tight zip and a new method of dispensing fumigants replaces the traditional fumigation methods. Using Gamma radiation for the disinfection of authentic papers contaminated by fungi and bacteria is more efficient way of treatment says Tomazello and Wiendi (1995)\textsuperscript{43}.\textsuperscript{43}
Reprography and Micrography: The other forms of preservation of archival materials is photocopying and microfilming. Norris (1987)\textsuperscript{14} examines the different direct copying processes and emphasises their quality. Gertz (1990)\textsuperscript{15} speaks of microfilming of archival materials that need preservation. This requires planning the filming, staff, space, time, and equipments needed for the same and its services.

3.3.2 Application of Computers in Archives

Analysing the complexities of records systems by typewritten list, hand written notes, etc., Reed (1981)\textsuperscript{16} sees computer as an essential tool of archival operation. The application of automation to records retrieval gained importance from early 1970’s.

Kesner and Hurst (1981)\textsuperscript{17} explains the use of microcomputers in archival work. Increasingly, the computer is used as an administrative tool and as an assistant in the management of information. Steps have been taken in establishing automatic data processing of archives, and there are developments in the area of automated archival management systems, although this field presents even greater challenges and deficiencies. O’Toole (1975)\textsuperscript{18} outlines how computers may be used in archival institutions for various tasks, e.g., cataloguing, indexing, and the production of union lists of materials.

Olivier (1983)\textsuperscript{19} considers the need to computerise archives, types of software, printing and hardware network. The softwares, such as VIDEO, STAIRS and ATMS, are used for various purposes. Frusciano (1983)\textsuperscript{20} refers to
the development of SPINDEX II, a program which provides content analysis to archival records and manuscripts. Other systems developed are SELGEM, PARADIGM and ARCHON. Machovec (1986)\textsuperscript{51} discusses the factors in choosing an appropriate automated system such as standardised formats (MARC); bibliographic control and indexing and in-house software; and optical disc technology. Bohanan (1987)\textsuperscript{52} explains the MARC Archives and Manuscript Control (AMC) format which has revolutionised the archival world.

Garcia (1994)\textsuperscript{53} and International Council on Archives, through its Commission on Preservation and Access (1997)\textsuperscript{54} explains that digitisation as a means of Preservation and the digitization of images is still a new technique but already it is clearly the technology of the future. It 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. The advantages of digitization are:

- the image integrated into electronic systems speeds access to information;
- the image being composed of digits can be processed with mathematical algorithms to improve quality and legibility;
- with this process one can make up enormous databases with huge quantities of images;
- one can make copies from copies without any loss of information or of quality;
- one can disseminate information with help of any electronic network and include it in any publication in electronic format;
- one may translate the original text into a machine readable format with help of OCR;
- compact storage – saves space;
- added security.

3.4 RELEVANT WEB SITES

The following are web sites relevant to Archival Management:

http://www.acarm.org

- Association of Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA)
  International. Gives information for Archivists and Record Managers.

http://www.acarm.org

- Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers. It also deals with Archivists / and Record Managers.

http://www.bcars.gs.gov.bc.ca

- British Columbia Archives and Records Service. It deals with collection summaries including audiovisual records.
- Catholic Archives Society. Offers information for Archivists and information on holdings. Its publication is 'Church Archives'.

- International Council on Archives. It is an International body under UNESCO which deals with efficiency of maintaining Archives.

- International Records Management Trust. Provides information for Good Governance of Archives.

- Jerusalem Archives which deals with historical documents of the Christian era.

- Jesuit Historical Institute. It specialises in the history of the Jesuit missions around the world.

- National Archives and Record Administration. Offers information for Archivists, On-line exhibits.
- National Archives of Australia. Provides information about national, state and territory archives and exhibits.

- National archives of Canada. It deals with National issues on archives and collection summaries.

- New York state Archives and Records Administration. Provides information about holdings; searchable online catalogue and databases.

- Public Record Office (UK). It maintains the Public records of the UK Government and information about holdings.

- Society of American Archivists. It is a National Body dealing the issues on Archives and Archivists. Its publication is 'American Archivist'.

- Society of Archivists (UK). It provides information for Archivists and its publication 'Journal of the Society of Archivists' addresses various issues on Archives.
Vatican Archives. It holds the ancient documents and church missionary activities around the world.

Vatican Secret Archives.

3.5 CONCLUSION

The review of relevant literature has revealed that there have been several studies on various aspects of Archival Management all over the world. Specific studies have been taken up in vital areas such as Management, Preservation and Automation of Archives. However there is no study in the field of Church Archives in India, though the Church Archival movement in India had its roots in the Portuguese and British regime as early as 16th century. In the modern times, the church has made significant contribution to the development of India and its people. Hence, it was felt necessary to pursue a study on Church Archival Information Management -- the records stored in the church archives gives detailed history of missionary activities, socio-economic, educational and cultural heritage of India -- as with a view to improve the archives’ maintenance, and to catalogue the records and disseminate information to the church administrators, historians and researchers.
REFERENCES


