

ABSTRACT

Indian textiles produced since antiquity conveys the history, the culture and tradition of the past. A number of people in our society own an immense wealth of rare textile artifacts, collected or inherited over a period of time, not accessible to all interested in this field. Textiles are among the world's most fragile artifacts difficult to preserve even under the best of conditions. There is a dire need that these surviving and rare pieces of textile artifacts be preserved. Hence, in the present study an attempt was made by the investigator to document, digitize and analyze the rich textile artifacts of selected individuals of Gujarat with focus on preservation and conservation. Intensive efforts were made to develop a digital database for greater access as well as workshops were organized to raise awareness about preventive conservation amongst textile possessors at household level. The results pertaining to the adopted preservation and conservation practices revealed that preventive conservation can be practiced with the limited available resources by all, be it a museum or personal textile collector. Of the total 95 documented textiles, the maximum 47 were woven silk textiles from the states of Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, followed by 40 embroidered, five resist dyed and three printed textiles. On analysis of the data pertaining to the category and type of damage reflected that 68 of the 95 had suffered various types of damages. Physical damage was noticed in 37 artifacts specifically creases, cuts, tears on folds, breakage of yarns and abraded areas attributed to various reasons; unstable climatic conditions, inadequate storage space, incorrect method of storage and faulty human interventions. Chemical damages was evident in six as an outcome of intrinsic qualities of the material, at times unstable and inherently harmful triggered by the impact of external factors and biological damages such as holes, brown stains were noted in seven. Data on condition rating code reflected that 32 textile artifacts were in Good, 27 in Excellent and 25 in Fair and 11 in poor condition. Hence, treatment priority of the majority artifacts was found to be Low which indicated the need of only preventive conservation treatment to stabilize them in its present condition. The treatment with 10 per cent Polyvinyl Acetate by cold method was found to be the most appropriate conservation treatment on the selected artifact that preserved as well as retained the authentic properties of the traditional silk textiles. Workshops on preventive conservation provided excellent information on basic household preventive care practices that enabled the respondents to maintain their precious heirlooms thereby contributing to the society at large.