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Egypt's Audio-Visual Heritage: Current Status and Future Prospects

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Abstract

This study portrays the current status of preserving moving images in Egypt. It investigates different moving images archives, with emphasis on the National Film Archives and the Egyptian Television Archives. Five major obstacles were identified; fragile application of the deposit law, lack of qualified personnel, poor preservation conditions, and ineffective information retrieval systems. Recommendations to overcome these problems as well as a proposal to establish a new national film and television archives to assume the responsibility of the management of the moving image heritage in Egypt were put forward.

Introduction

Egypt has always had a great media impact in the Arabian region. Within the Arab world, the Egyptian cinema has always dominated the screen with its prolific production of mass audience films on the same lines as those of Hollywood. By 1917 there were 80 cinemas in Egypt. The first Egyptian film "Leila" was produced in 1927.

Egyptian television system, started in 1960, is the oldest in the region and is considered one of the most extensive and effective among all developing countries of Asia and Africa, partially due to a well-financed radio service and film industry already in existence.

In the mid-fifties, a growing awareness of the problem of film preservation, organisation, and access, led to the creation of the Egyptian Film Archive by the Office of Arts. In the same year Egypt participated for the first time, as an observer, in the work of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAP). However, the odds seemed to be stacked against the archive as it was subject a big fire caused by the spontaneous combustion of nitrate film, destroying part of the collection which had been patiently assembled from gifts of Egyptian and foreign films and from films seized by the Customs.

After the fire, the Archive continued to be supplied in this way, with the addition of a more important source in 1968, when the Ministry of Culture was persuaded to establish a mandatory deposit obligation. However, the 1968 decree was not backed up by sufficiently dissuasive sanctions; the authorities banked on the hope, which proved vain, that private producers would co-operate with them, following the example of the Egyptian General Cinema Organization.

The lack of proper application of the law, and poor preservation conditions for the current holdings, together with the lack of descriptive and analytical information about this valuable collection have led to a worrisome situation, where the country's moving image heritage is in total jeopardy.

Television archives also suffer tremendously. Very poor preservation conditions, insufficient and inaccurate manual access tools, and the lack of qualified personnel are serious obstacles that face these archives, just to name a few. Another issue of concern as regards to holdings in radio and television archives is public access. There has never been any kind of cooperation and/or coordination concerning the accessibility of these materials through the National Library.

Aim and Purpose

This study will shed light on the current status of the visual heritage of Egypt. It examines the current legislations concerning legal deposit of film and T.V materials in Egypt outlining its pitfalls. Also, it will highlight the major obstacles facing film and television archives, especially those related to preservation and access. Finally, it will offer recommendations for improvement.

Research questions

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What are major problems associated with the preservation, organisation, and access of visual heritage in Egypt?
- How sufficient are the current legislations concerning legal deposit of film and T.V materials?
- Are new laws required to regulate public access to materials owned by film and television archives?
- Is it feasible to establish an independent authority on the national level to undertake the responsibility of the acquiring, organising, preserving, and providing access to Egypt's visual heritage?

Methodology:

A descriptive analytical method was applied, aiming at describing the current status of archiving the moving image in Egypt, highlighting its pitfalls and obstacles in order to make recommendations.

Data was collected from various resources:

- Literature concerning moving image archiving in general and in Egypt in particular
- A checklist was used to gather data from the Egyptian Television Archives
- A telephone interview was conducted with the director of the TV Library Administration (April 2008).

Archiving Moving Images Heritage in Egypt

Moving images heritage is typically part of the larger AV heritage in any country. AV heritage has been defined by Edmondson (**Edmondson, 1997**) as follows:

The AV heritage includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) Recorded sound, radio, film, television, video or other productions comprising moving images and/or recorded sounds, whether or not primarily intended for public release
- (b) Objects, materials, works and intangibles relating to the AV media, whether seen from a technical industrial, cultural, historical or other viewpoint; this could include material relating to the film, broadcasting and recording industries, such as literature, scripts, stills, posters, advertising materials, manuscripts, and artefacts such as technical equipment or costumes.
- (c) Concepts such as the perpetuation of obsolescent skills and environments associated with the reproduction and presentation of these media.

Typically, moving image media includes any series of images recorded on a support (irrespective of the method of recording or of the nature of the support, such as film, tape, disc used in their initial or subsequent form of recording), with or without accompanying sound, which when projected impart an impression of motion and which are intended for communication or distribution to the public or are made for documentation purposes.

Kofler (**Kofler, 1991**) points out that moving image should include items in the following categories:

- (a) cinematographic productions (such as feature films, short films, popular science films, newsreels and documentaries, animated and educational films),
- (b) television productions made by or for broadcasting organizations,
- (c) video graphic productions contained in video grams other those than referred to above.

Despite the relatively long history of film industry and TV production in Egypt, the acquisition, organisation, preservation, and access of moving image is in a very primitive state, to say the least. In the absence of a national level entity which coordinates the efforts and responsibilities concerning the country's visual heritage, the picture looks very dim. This could be attributed, to great extent, to the lack of appreciation of the audiovisual heritage.

The issue of appraising AV in general and moving images in particular has been thoroughly discussed by archivists and experts. It has always been felt that there is a lack of appreciation of the audiovisual heritage, this has been best summarised by Klaue (**Klaue, 1989**), he states

"If audiovisual materials are to be safeguarded, the first and most important task is to establish everywhere the recognition that photographs, films, video and sound recordings represent archival material worthy of preservation. All administrative, legal, material and financial consequences for the existence and development of audiovisual archives begin with the realization that audiovisual

materials are part of the national culture of every people and belong to the testimony of the twentieth century as proof of cultural identity".

Also, It has been pointed out that in many countries of the world, the question as of whether or not an audiovisual archive is integrated into a state archive or exists as an independent institution, its function must have a legal basis, has not been solved.

In fact, this holds good to the situation in Egypt where there is a considerable lack of coordination among various parties involved. There is no functioning system to ensure the deposit of audiovisual materials both from official sources and from the private sector

Moving Images Archives in Egypt

A classification of moving image archives has been proposed by Kosh (**Kosh, 1997**). This classification suggested the following five-part topology:

- Broadcasting archives
- National archives
- Research archives, usually but not always part of other institutions
- Audiovisual collections within libraries
- Commercial production archives

If one is to apply the previous classification to archiving the moving image in Egypt, it will be apparent that the number of moving image archives is relatively small. Archiving the moving image is limited to the National Film Archive and the Egyptian Television Archives. The objectives, collections, and functions will be discussed thoroughly later in the study.

However, the following paragraphs shed some light on other types of Archives and libraries in the country, highlighting their connection with the moving image collections.

Research and Academic Libraries

This type of libraries would typically embrace archival collections of AV materials and related activities operating within the administrative framework of a university, scientific or similar academic institution. Some are substantial and have collections and preservation programs of national significance: others are small and specialised. These are distinct from AV resource collections, a common feature of universities, often related to campus schools or libraries. These collections have a lending or access function but little or no preservation role. (**Edmondson, 1997**)

Egypt has 14 governmental universalities and 6 private ones. The interest in film and video collection in these libraries is minimal. Large moving research collection such as the UCLA Film and Television Archives simply don't exist. The videotape collections held by these libraries, if any, would basically be utilised to support courses offered by various academic programs in these institutions.

Commercial TV Production Archives

These are typically small archives attached to TV networks owned by Egyptian businessmen, or Arabian TV networks operating in Egypt. Examples of the first category

are Dream TV and Al- Mehwar TV. Arab Radio and Television (ART) Network and Orbit Network are examples of the second.

Most of the programs produced by these stations fall under the talk shows genre. Nevertheless, some of them, especially in the case of multi-specialised channels such as ART and Orbit, some other program materials including serials, sports programs, and films. In the case of the two networks, the archives hold a mixture of Egyptian and Arabian productions.

National Libraries

The National Library of Egypt:

The National Library of Egypt (Dar Al Kotob) was founded in 1870, The National Library, the oldest government library, houses several million volumes on a wide range of topics. It is one of the largest in the world with thousands of ancient collections. It also contains a vast variety of Arabic-language and other Eastern manuscripts. The main premise is a seven storey building in Ramlet Boulac, a district of Cairo. The Egyptian National Archives are contained in an annex beside the building. It is considered the oldest national library in the Arab world. The library houses huge and valuable collections of rare books and manuscripts, about 53.000 of the world most valuable manuscripts as well as a wealth of papyri collection totalling at 3000. In addition, the library holds a good collection of official documents representing endowments deeds and records of different ministries.

The main source of acquisition of the library is through legal deposit. According to the author's copyright law no. 354 issued in 1954, publishers are required to deposit 10 copies of each title they publish on their own expense in the National Library. The law is merely restricted to books. Hence, moving images and other audiovisual materials are not covered by the law. However, the Library does hold some 22000 CDs and 40.000 audiotapes in its Music library.

Bibliotheca Alexandrina:

The new Library of Alexandria is dedicated to recapture the spirit of scholarship of the original Bibliotheca Alexandrina. It is a library on a national level, concerned with the provision of information services to scholars in the Mediterranean. In addition to its print collection, the Arts & Multimedia Library holds a large collection of audiovisual materials in all subject areas covered by the main library. The audio/visual materials are available in a number of different formats such as: audiotapes, videotapes, diskettes, CD-ROMs, DVDs, and LPs. However, most of these materials do represent commercial production, cultural and scientific rather than the intellectual heritage of the country.

Film Archiving:

Legislation:

The UNESCO document on audiovisual legislation has pointed out that most problems associated with the operation of audiovisual archives arise from a lack of comprehensive legislation concerning the creation, operation and financing of those audiovisual archives, copyright and access to their collections. (Kofler, 1997)

In fact, this holds true on the legislation concerning audiovisual archives in Egypt. Although the first audiovisual legislation was issued in 1975, one of the oldest in the region, the implementation of the law is rather fragile.

The first notion for a legal deposit of films in Egypt dates back to 1964 with the establishment of the Centre of Arabic Cinematic Collaboration. The Ministerial Decree to establish the Centre incorporated the formation of the Egyptian Archives in accordance to the guidelines provided by FIAF for its members.

In 1968, another Ministerial Decree was issued that required film producers to provide the Egyptian Archives with a 35mm copy of the film before getting the license for theatre showing. Nevertheless, the enforcement of these decrees was not quite sufficient. Producers tend to play various tactics to evade the law. Hence, many films produced in this period were not deposited in the Archives.

The first deposit legislation for Egyptian films, known as the Artistic Works Law, was issued in 1975. This law was a modification of the Author's Copyright Law issued in 1954. Item no. 48 of the Law stated that:

"Producers and distributors of Egyptian or jointly produced films prepared for commercial showings in Egypt or abroad, are obligated to deposit, jointly and on their own expense, a 35mm positive copy of the film. The copy should be deposited at the General Administration of Artistic Works attached to the Ministry of Culture before the film is being shown or exported. Failure to abide by the law will result to LE200-500 penalty." (Taha, 2008)

Various authorities have been responsible of implementing the deposit law:

1. The Centre of Arabic Cinema Collaboration:

Founded in 1964 by Ministerial Decree 142, the Centre was attached to the Egyptian General Cinema Authority. The establishment of the Egyptian Film Archive was part of this decree as well.

2. The Centre of Moving Images:

The Centre has replaced the CACC, it assumed the responsibility of implementing the 1968 Ministerial Decree noted above. The Centre was attached to the Ministry of Culture.

3. The National Cinema Centre:

Founded in 1968, the centre comprises the National Film Archive to which the holdings of the Centre of Moving Images have been transferred. The Archives became the legal deposit repository for films since 1975 to the present.

The National film Archives was established in 1970 based on the ministerial decree no. 129 in light of the regulations issued by the International Film Archive. The Archive has the following functions:

1. To collect and preserve, for no commercial purpose, cinema and television films produced in the Arab Republic of Egypt and also international works which possess artistic and social value for the purpose of study and research.

2. To collect and preserve photographs, scripts, posters, and other related publications for deposited films and also for valuable films that are not deposited.
3. Use of all documentations mentioned in item 2 to create a museum for the history of Egyptian cinema, it will include all devices, equipment, drawings, decoration models that have been used since the initiation of cinema production in Egypt.
4. A reference library is to be attached to the Archive covering all cinema arts.
5. To organise film shows in its premises and other cinema clubs in order to create cinema awareness. **(Saied, 1994)**

The procedures for the film legal deposit could be summarised as follows:

- Film producers would request the deposit of a copy of the film, and submits a 35mm positive copy, 6 trailers, and some of the film photographs.
- The film is to be viewed and inspected by a technical committee to determine the technical quality of the submitted copy.
- The committee would write a technical report which includes the film title, size, colour, chapters, sound quality, picture quality, and general status of the submitted copy.
- If the copy is accepted, the producer is to be issued a license for public viewing.

Archives Departments

- *Technical quality*: the department has 3 staff members. It is responsible of film inspection and determining its quality.
- *Documentation and Classification*: It has 3 staff members. It is responsible of the registration and documentation of films.
- *Film Library*: a staff member. It is concerned with preservation of film material.
- *Film Repair*: one staff member. It is responsible for film repair process.
- *Viewing Hall*: one staff member. Used for film viewing. **(Hasanin, 2008)**

Staffing

The Archive has 16 staff none of whom is qualified in Library and archival sciences. The staff did not get any orientation programs or workshops to qualify them for working in the archive.

Documentation and Information Retrieval:

Very primitive retrieval tools are used for information retrieval. A film file is prepared for each film. The file includes a card, 2 posters, and 4 photographs. The files are arranged alphabetically in special cabin drawers.

Users can access the collection only by film title or date of production; no other access points such as directors, produces, genre, cast are available despite their vital importance to researchers.

In addition to not adhering to any international standards concerning film cataloguing, most importantly those issued by FIAF, available date are inaccurate and/or incomplete.

The main problems associated with deposit legislation and the National Film Archive could be highlighted as follows:

- The National Film Archive doesn't have its own budget, as it has been attached, since its establishment, to National Film Centre.
- The lack of the necessary physical resources, equipment, and facilities required for preservation and access.
- The current deposit legislation does apply only on feature films. Non- feature films such as documentaries, animations are not covered.
- Film scripts, photographs, posters, and all other film related documents are not covered by the legislation.
- Poor maintenance and preservation conditions. The required environment to archive film material with regards to temperature and humidity are not implemented.
- Retrieval and accessibility to the collection is problematic since the available search tools are very primitive, inaccurate and incomplete.
- The lack of qualified personnel to assume various responsibilities in the archives. Most of the staff are graduates of disciplines that are totally irrelevant to the film industry or documentation.
- No collaboration programs have been established with other film archives nationally, regionally, or internationally.
- The archive doesn't provide public access to the collection, which is a serious drawback for researchers in general and researches in film in particular.

Preservation

The films are kept in a very poor preservation environment. Acceptable standards concerning suitable temperature and humidity are not applied leaving film material in very bad status. Air conditioners are not operated all the time either because of technical problems or the lack of funds. **(Hasanin, 2008)**

Bibliographic Control for films

The poor implementation of the legislation has resulted in a serious problem regarding the identification, documentation, and accessibility. Several attempts to enumerate and identify Egyptian films have been undertaken. Some 12 filmographies were published since 1948. However, the vast majority of these tools, prepared by individuals who work in the film industry rather than library and information professionals, do lack consistency and accuracy as regards to the data included.

There were no systematic efforts to prepare filmographies to document Egyptian films its beginnings in 1923. In fact, this role should have been played by the National archives based on the available collection and its relevant data. However, several attempts have been made to document films produced in Egypt. In his study about the Egyptian films, Saber **(Taha, 2008)** has enumerated 16 filmographies for Egyptian films.

The first of these filmographies was published by Jack Pascal in 1948, and the last one "Directory of 20th century films in Egypt and the Arab world" published in 2007. However, the vast majority of these tools, prepared by individuals who work in the film industry rather than library and information professionals, do lack consistency and accuracy as regards to the data included.

Broadcasting Archives

The Egyptian Television Archives:

At the present, the Egyptian television archives comprise various libraries attached to the different sectors under the umbrella of the Egyptian TV and Radio Union (ETRU). The libraries are attached to the following sectors:

- The Television Sector.
- The Specialised Channels Sector.
- The Satellite Channels Sector
- The Production Sector.
- The Mews Sector.

Since the establishment of the Egyptian television on 1960, the television library was the main library in the archives. This holds true till the present time. Libraries attached to the production sector, the Satellite channel, the specialised channel were established in 1989, 1990, and 1998 respectively.

The holdings of these libraries could be shown in table (1). It should be noted, however, that these numbers do represent the number of physical units rather than the number of recorded program titles. This is due to the fact that there is an overlap between the holdings of these libraries. Most of the holdings of libraries attached to the Satellite and Specialised Channels sectors are duplicates of those held by the TV sector archives. Furthermore, multiple programs could be recorded on a single tape. This is typical in the videotape library of the Television sector where 3-5 program items are recorded on the same tape as an average. On the contrary, film materials in both Arabic and foreign libraries can be recorded on multiple gauges according to their length.

The following paragraphs shed the light on the Television Sector Libraries, being the main library within the ETRU. All the problems and obstacles associated with these libraries hold good for libraries in other sectors as well.

The Television Sector Libraries

This is the main ETRU archives; it holds the main collection that represents the current production of the Egyptian TV. Moreover, the library holds the television heritage since its establishment in 1960; this is represented by recorded material on 1 and 2 in. tapes.

The television sector archives three main libraries: the videotape library, the Arabic library, and the foreign library. The function of each could be summarized as follows:

- **The videotape library:**

The library holds the bulk of videotapes in the archives. Recorded material includes drama, Arabic serials, plays, Arabic mini series, various types of programs, musical shows, Songs, and sports events.

- **Arabic library:**

This library contains Arabic film material programs. These include Arabic feature films which the Egyptian Television is purchasing the right to broadcast. In addition, the library houses documentaries, mini series, tv films produced by the Egyptian TV.

- **Foreign Library**

The Library contains right to broadcast foreign martial. These include feature films, serials, mini series, various types of programs, soccer matches.

- **The News library**

The library holds local newscasts, news programs, and tapes received by international news agencies.

Table (1) Holdings of the ETRU Archives April 2008

Library		Beta cam	Digital	Video tape		Film	
				1 in.	2 in.	16mm.	35mm.
Television Sector Libraries	Video Tape library	98000	45000	39273	18070	0	0
	Arabic Film Library	0	0	324	0	0	6210
	Foreign Film Library	0	0	3390		1560	1800
Specialised Channels Sector Libraries	Video Tape library	62073	60840	0	0	0	0
	Arabic Film Library	268	1515	0	0	0	0
	Foreign Film Library	1719	662	0	0	0	0
Satellite Channels Sector Library		32253	20125	0	0	0	0
News Library		143000	130000	42978	18070	70113	3000

Staffing:

With the exception of the Specialised Channels Sector libraries, all archives staff don't hold a degree in library or archival sciences. Needless to say, this lack of qualified staff has a very negative impact on their performance and the overall performance of the archives. Moreover, the staff has never been exposed to any training courses to compensate for the lack of their specialised knowledge and skills.

Facilities and Equipment

The Archives lacks adequate viewing equipment necessary for viewing purposes. This has resulted in the following:

- Viewing for material to determine what should be retained
- Returned tapes could not be inspected by library staff in order to check their quality after. Therefore, the responsibility for damaged material could not be determined. The staff will bear the responsibility for any damaged material
- Library users can not view material on the library premises to select insertions.
- There is a great shortage in trolleys to move tapes from various libraries
- Despite having multi level storage area, no elevators to transfer tapes are available.

Selection:

Two selection processes could be identified:

Selection for purchased materials:

This selection process applies on Arabic and foreign programs and films that the station purchase the rights to broadcast. These films are not normally retained permanently by the archives; rather they are kept for an average duration of five years which represent the broad cast utilization period.

There is no written policy for film selection. The decision is taken by a selection committee chaired by the Head of the TV station and includes the heads of the stations as members. The general rule that is applied is the suitability of the film to be broadcasted on the TV screen, and how it fits with the ethics and traditions of the Egyptian society.

Selection for retention

This selection process covers the vast majority of the programs held by the archives, it applies to program material in the videotape library, cultural program section in the Arabic library, and the news programs in the visual information administration.

Similarly, there is no selection policy to be applied. The Regulations and bylaws of the Central Administration for Libraries and Films do not include any explicit or implied guidelines for program selection. Therefore, the selection practices vary considerably from one library to the other based on the type of programs held by these libraries.

Table (2) shows how selection practices are applied to various categories of program material.

From the table the following remarks could be drawn:

- Drama and musical works are kept permanently regardless of their artistic value.
- All types of programs are not retained by the archives unless advised to do so by the program director. The archive has no say in the retention decision.
- The only exception is religious programs which are kept in its entirety
- Sports programs covers wide variety of recorded material, some guidelines concerning their retention were put as follows:

- Local soccer matches: matches are deleted after retaining match goals which are kept on separate tapes. Excluded from this rule are Egyptian cup and league finals, Ahly and Zamalek matches (the 2 super power teams in Egypt).
- International Sports Events:
 - All international soccer match, world cup matches, African cup, the Mediterranean games, All African games, Olympic games, international tennis tournaments, and boxing tournaments are retained by the archives.
- Retention of news programs is guided by the surrounding political conditions. News programs are kept, while the news casts are not.

Table (2) Selection Practices in the Egyptian TV Archives

Type of Program	Retained		Responsibility for Selection
	Yes	No	
Drama			Unwritten policy to retain all drama programs
Serials	√		
Plays	√		
Mini Series	√		
TV Films	√		
Musical Works			Unwritten policy to retain all drama programs
Songs	√		
Music Shows	√		
Programs			Director
Cultural Programs		√	
Religious Programs	√		
Educational Programs		√	
Variety Programs		√	
Sports Programs		√	
Children Programs		√	
Community Programs		√	
News			The political news direction
Newscasts		√	
Satellite		√	
News Agencies	√		
Presidential Activities	√		
Local Activities	√		
News Programs	√		

Problems Associated with Selection in the TV Archives:

- The absence of a clear selection policy for the Egyptian TV Archives is one of the great obstacles that the archive encounters.
- This has led to the loss of an invaluable program material which is part of the country's national heritage. that could not be restored.
- The "keep all" principal which applies to drama works is both unjustifiable and impractical. It leads to the accumulation of huge number of works that don't qualify for retention if a proper selection criteria based on artistic value and quality are applied. Moreover, it creates a very serious problem concerning the availability of storage areas It is more practical to retain samples of drama works that are not of a high artistic value.
- Considering the fact that program directors will be naturally biased to their works, leaving the decision for retaining programs becomes much disputed.
- It should be noted, however, that some economic difficulties play an important role in the current retention practices. Sometimes, the lack of financial resources to purchase new raw tapes would force directors to erase some recorded material for tape reuse.
- The noticeable shortage of viewing equipment puts another burden on the archive's staff. Since any selection decision will be entirely based on viewing, the staff is unable to assess the quality and the value of the program material. This is also combined with the scarcity of program data provided by directors.
- The lack of storage areas poses another problem in this context. The archives can not accommodate the ever proliferating number of productions. It is worth mentioning that the average annual addition in the videotape library alone is 10.000 tapes.
- Most importantly, the archive staff does lack the necessary experience in program assessment and evaluation. The lack of qualified and trained staff is another obstacle that should be dealt with.

Information Retrieval:

Needless to say, the efficiency of the information retrieval system in a TV station is essential to meet the urgent needs of users. The current information retrieval system doesn't seem to meet those needs. The following disadvantages could be outlined:

- Various registers are used to retrieve program materials from the archive. In the videotape library alone, nine registers are used.
- The registers are arranged by program type (Songs, serials, programs, etc.) rather than essential access points such as names, titles, and keywords.
- Lack of consistency. These tools do not follow any cataloging standards. There is no agreement as regards to the minimum data elements to be included even among various tools in the same library.
- There is no standard pattern in organizing these tools. Most of the tools are arranged alphabetically by title. This has led to a very cumbersome situation

where all other retrieval elements are ignored. The most widely ignored retrieval element is subject despite its vital importance to library users.

- Although an automated system has been developed more than 15 years ago, the system is not widely used to by library users as it lacks the retrieval capabilities required from such a system.

Archives Services:

The information services provide by the archives could be categorized under the following:

1. The daily program schedule:

One of the main tasks of the archive is to provide various TV channels with their daily program needs. It has been noted that more than 92% of the daily program channels depend on recorded materials from the archives. (Azmi, 1994)

2. Program directors

The library does offer a circulation services to program directories and compilers who use material basically as stock footages.

3. Public Access:

The Egyptian television archives do not offer any services for the outside community, whether they are media students, researchers, or the general public. Since the archive holdings are not accessible anywhere else in the country, this poses a serious problem that has to be tackled.

Main Obstacles and Recommendations for Improvement

The study has revealed that archiving moving images in Egypt has been influenced by a range of problems which negatively affect the full utilization of the nations' moving image heritage. The main obstacles and recommendations for improvement could be highlighted as follows:

Fragile application of the deposit law

Clearly, the most serious problem facing the preservation of Egyptian films is the poor execution of the deposit law. The implementation of this legislation has always been fragile; certain producers and distributors would like, on grounds of lack of film, to replace the mandatory deposit requirement by payment of a guarantee. The number of films deposited between 1975 and 2007 didn't exceed 1099 films which represent only a small proportion of the films produced in that period. Moreover, many films have been sold to giant Arabian Gulf tycoons who own private satellite channels.

This has led, in turn, to many problems associated with the enumeration of film produced in Egypt since the early 1920s. This problem was highly exposed during the celebration of the Egyptian cinema anniversary. Lack of accurate information concerning the country's film production was reflected in the disagreement as regards to the accurate figure of Egypt's film production since its beginning until 2007. While some estimate indicated the number to be around 3200, others claimed its well over 4000.

Since the primary role of legal deposit is to create a cultural record of the published ideas, thoughts, and influences of a nation), It is highly recommended that the exiting

legislation should be revisited, taking into account all pitfalls and drawbacks that have been encountered during the implementation process. Most importantly, necessary measures should be taken to secure strict application of the legislation show follow from all parties involved. Severe penalties should be imposed on those who don't abide by the law.

Inefficient Information Retrieval Systems

The lack of efficient retrieval system in moving image archives in the country hinders the full utilization of the collection. Current retrieval tools are both primitive and very time consuming to search. In addition, search is only available through very limited access points. Information retrieval is very much associated with the documentation of film and videotape and the data elements provided. Since no standard cataloging rules are used, the efficiency of any retrieval system remains questionable.

The need for an efficient information retrieval system maybe more apparent in television archives. As Hanford points out television archives do require a comprehensive, professionally designed information system is an essential part of a television programme archive. It should be computer-based and, ideally, related to other computer systems within the organisation. In older organisations, it may be necessary to consider the conversion of earlier manual systems to the currently used computer systems. **(Hanford, 1997)**

It is very much recommended that both the film and television archives reconsider their current retrieval tools. Guidelines offered by FIAF and FIAT concerning the cataloguing rules and the minimum data list required for television archives should be consulted and applied.

Very poor preservation conditions

It has been evident that preservation conditions in both film and television archives. The preservation environment in which film and tape are preserved is essential to secure long term preservation of the material. The problem is more critical when it is associated with tropical countries, where high temperatures and humidity are very common during summer months.

In his study concerning preservation of AV in tropical countries, Schuller **(Schuller, 1997)** has clearly highlighted this problem. It has been pointed out that a considerable input of energy and money is necessary to bring down tropical temperatures and humidity and keep them at the values published in our standards. In practice, very few audiovisual archives in tropical areas can afford to keep to these recommendations. The most frequently applied practices are the following:

1. The archivists are unaware of the recommendations, or - for financial reasons - are unable to do anything. The audiovisual holdings are kept without any air conditioning at all.
2. The archivists are aware of the recommendations but have limited funds for air conditioning. They have cooling equipment running during the day, but they switch it off in the evenings and at weekends in order to save energy.
3. The archivists can afford cooling of the air but, because of lack of awareness and/or because of insufficient funds, do not effectively dehumidify their environment.

It is essential that moving images archives should follow both FIAF and FIAT guidelines for best practices in film and television preservation. It is worth mentioning in this context that FIAF publishes the "*Journal of Film Preservation*", which is the Federation's main periodical publication. It offers a forum for both general and specialized discussion on all theoretical and technical aspects of moving image archival activities. In addition, the Federations' Technical Committee is working on a current project to issue the "Manual of Film Preservation". (FIAF, 2008)

Lack of qualified librarians and archivists

The study revealed that one of the great difficulties facing the archiving of AV in general and moving images in particular is the lack of trained staff to assume various responsibilities in film and television archives. The existing LIS education in Egypt does not cater for preparing specialized AV archivists. Usually one course entitled "AV Materials" is offered in most LIS schools. The contents of this course deal with various formats of AV material and their documentation and use. Needless to say, film and television archives need specially trained staff in various archiving aspects such as selection, appraisal, documentation, preservation, and access among many others.

Harrison (Harrison, 1990) points out that there is widespread recognition that training should be provided for audiovisual archivists in general, that is people dealing with a range of AV materials rather than specialist single media archivists. Several reasons can be found for this attitude: the integration of audiovisual materials in archives; the common functions found in activities such as acquisition, preservation, cataloguing and use of audiovisual materials; and from the point of view of the trainee the greater flexibility of placement after training.

Various level of training could offered to AV librarians and archivists based on the responsibilities undertaken by the archivist. These could be outlined as follows:

- 2 year course for senior staff (top management) of audiovisual archives
- 1 year course for specialist workers (middle management) of audiovisual archives
- 2-year course for technicians/engineers (middle management) of audiovisual archives

Top management posts include: heads of archives, and heads of departments, while middle management posts include: division heads, specialist workers

The Curriculum Development Working party for training of AV librarians has identified ten subject areas that AV archivists should acquire:

1. Introduction
2. History of the media
3. Standards and techniques
4. Organisation and structure
5. Access
6. Acquisition and appraisal
7. Arrangement and Description
8. Public relations
9. Related materials
10. Technical expertise

The question as to where the training of AV should take place has been also discussed. Harrison points out that there have been many discussions about the best way to handle training in audiovisual archivism and some experiments from which to draw tentative conclusions. **(Harrison, 1990)**

Obviously LIS schools could play an important role in offering such training; also some film schools could do the same. However, and considering the interdisciplinary nature of the subject areas covered it is recommended that a joint program could be initiated between both schools.

An excellent model that is worth mentioning in this context is the UCLA's Moving Image Archive Studies Program (MIAS). The Moving Image Archive Studies program - the first university-based program of its kind in North America - responds to a national priority within the moving image community to educate and train new generations of archival professionals. This innovative Master of Arts degree program has been developed in collaboration with UCLA's Department of Film and Television and the Department of Information Studies. The goal of the Moving Image Archive Studies program is to provide not only hands-on training, but also to place this training in the context of a broader education and curriculum combining aesthetic judgment, historical knowledge, awareness of social and cultural relevance, and familiarity with new technologies. **(UCLA, 2008)**

The Proposed National Film and Television Archives (ENFTA)

In light of the above mentioned obstacles, and in an attempt to rescue the nation's moving heritage which is currently put to great threat, A new archival agency entitled "*The Egyptian National Film and Television Archive*" ENFTA is to be established under the affiliation of the Ministry of Culture. The new Archives will gather film and TV programs scattered over different libraries in the country. The Archives should have its own budget and located in an accessible area in Cairo.

The Egyptian National Film and Television Archives would assume the following responsibilities and activities:

- The ENFTA will house the country's moving image heritage regardless of the physical format. It will collect, restore and preserve visual materials of national or international importance, and visual documentation of artistic, historic and documentary interest;
- The ENFTA will act the repository for film material under the modified legal deposit act noted earlier.
- Voluntary deposit should also be considered within ENFTA. In the absence of legal deposit for some material, this could be a successful method of creating national collections. A good model is the UK National Film Archive which built a very good national collection over the year using this method. **(Pinion, 1997)**
- With the growing interest of broadcast materials as being part of the national moving image heritage, the ENFTA should house copies of TV programs that represent the output of various Egyptian TV Networks. This could be done via special agreements between ENFTA and the ETRU concerning off-air recording

of selected material of national interest. This will cater for various public access needs that are very difficult to met from with broadcasting archives.

- The ENFTA will offer public access to the Egyptian academic community including academics, researchers, students, as well as the general public.
- The ENFTA will acquire all film and television related material such as scripts, posters, photographs, customs, and art crafts
- To assume this responsibility, the Archives should be sufficiently equipped with viewing carrels, viewing equipment
- The ENFTA would acquire films form other Arab and foreign countries through purchase, gifts, and exchange programs with other archives all over the world. Cinema classics are important for all film students, researchers, and critics.
- The proposed ENFTA would publish an annual filmography of Egyptian films. Considering the film data available, this filmography should be the most comprehensive, accurate, and scientific tool for documenting the country's film production.
- The ENFTA should be a full member of the international Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) and the International Federation of Television Archives (FIAT). This membership will allow the archives to benefit from all members' privileges such as publications, seminars, workshops, and annual conferences.
- ENFTA will take all the necessary measures to cater for a good preservation and conservation conditions for the collections according to the guidelines of FIAF and IFTA.
- ENFTA will act as a cultural center for film and television, seminars, workshops, conferences dealing with all aspects of film and television should be organized for the benefit of film and television students, lovers, and critics. It should also undertake scientific research in the field of audiovisual materials and audiovisual creation;
- ENFTA should have a library of books, periodicals, journals, dissertations covering all aspects of film and television nationally, regionally and internationally.
- The Archives would organize in-house training programs and workshops to film and TV librarians and archivists to qualify them to work in those archives.

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