Preservation and digitization in modern and heritage libraries of Jammu Province (J&K): an analytical study

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Twenty-two heritage and modern libraries in the Jammu province of Jammu & Kashmir were studied to understand the digitization status and types of services offered to users. Much of the data were collected from the respective institutes/library websites wherever these were available. For libraries that did not have websites or where the websites were not updated, the librarians of the institutes were interviewed to gather data. The findings show that most of these libraries maintain a unique collection of manuscripts and rare documents of historical importance that need to be preserved for future generations. A few of the libraries have initiated digitization projects to preserve the rare collection of documents. We recommend that the information scientists in Jammu province should continuously make efforts to take up the process of digitization in libraries to serve their users in an effective manner and preserve the knowledge for future generations.

Introduction

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir represents a unique blend of various socio-religious cultures. Most of the libraries located in the area have a rich collection of handwritten and rare manuscripts that contain lots of valuable, historical, and rare information. This includes - rare books, manuscripts, paintings, reference documents etc. Identification of such culturally important material and their preservation through digitization in libraries is important to ensure the information contents are well organized and accessible for present and future generations.

In an era of internet and mobile technologies, everyone wants barrier-free access to information. Libraries and librarians are continuously striving hard to serve their users efficiently. Some have even started using social media platforms for providing their services, as such libraries are transforming from traditional to modern libraries.

The J&K Union Territory is prone to both natural calamities (like floods, earthquakes, etc.) and human-made destructive activities (like terrorism, fire, etc.). No institute or organization can remain unaffected under such circumstances, and library & information centres are no exception. Such turbulences not only destroy the valuable resources of a library but also can severely affect their routine functioning. Thus, it is important for libraries to remain ever prepared to cope-up with such adversities, and function to provide the best of services to their users and to society. Hence, it is essential to understand the status of the libraries in the area to plan and act to keep pace with the technological developments taking place. The present research study is an attempt to do so.

Heritage vs modern libraries

Heritage institutions – libraries, archives, and museums have traditionally borne the responsibility of preserving the intellectual and cultural heritage resources from generation to generation.

According to the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, any monument, tumulus, rock sculpture, monolith, or inscription that are of historical, artistic, or archaeological interest and more than 100 years of existence has been considered as heritage. Also, the University Grants Commission (UGC) confers 'heritage status' to the institutes, which were established a hundred years ago or more.

In J&K, there are several prestigious institutional libraries, including research, academic, special, and public. These have been established either by the central government, J&K government, autonomous bodies, or private institutions. In the present study, much effort has been made to survey, list, document, or notify all the cultural and heritage libraries of Jammu province.

The paper covers both the heritage and modern libraries to analyse and understand various aspects, like - their historical importance, uniqueness of the collection, various tools & technologies being used, digitization of rare documents, and the wide range of library services being provided by them.

Review of literature

Globally, libraries strive to electronically record the significant heritage manuscript collections in the state, special, and even local public libraries, and museums. For this paper, some significant studies in the field that focus on different aspects of manuscript digitization in the Indian context also have been reviewed.

Palm leaves like that of *Borassus flabellifer* (palmyra palm), *Corypha taliera* and *Corypha umbraculifera* (talipot, fan palm) were used in India for manuscript writing. To preserve these today, fumigation with thymol vapours is done to prevent the document from fungus. Fading ink is restored by applying carbon black mixed with oil to the leaf. For long term posterity, such preserved materials should be digitized as well in Indian libraries[1].

In Kashmir, the handmade paper was introduced in the late 14th century by "Sultan Zain-ul-Abideen (referred to as Badshah: meaning the great emperor), who sent local artisans of Kashmir to Samarkand, where the art of papermaking had reached 1300 years ago. The art of papermaking and the establishment of the paper industry in Kashmir made its demand from India for manuscript writing material. The material during such period was processed at Dachigam Nalla (stream), the present wildlife sanctuary from where it was taken to the city, the present Nowshera for final processing. In addition to this art, the calligraphists of Kashmir also invented an ink that could not be washed with water[2].

 In J&K, the library movement gained momentum during Maharaja Ranbir Singh's reign, who was a great visionary and a man of learning. He established Shri Ranbir Singh (SRS) Public Library in 1879 and Sanskrit Library in the premises of Raghunath Temple, Jammu, which at that time was a great centre of learning. In 1898, the Shri Pratap Singh Museum (SPS Museum) was established by Maharaja Pratap Singh at Lal Mandi, Srinagar. In 1919, Sri Pratap Singh Public Library (SPS) was established and later renamed as Sri Pratap Singh Central Public Library. Besides these, an Oriental Research Library was established to place valuable manuscripts and documents of the state[3].

Public libraries in J & K are functioning under the Directorate of Research and Libraries while Community Information Centres (CICs) are functioning under the Department of Information and Technology, J&K. Public libraries in the Jammu division are still working manually, whereas the process of automation has started in Shri Ranbir Singh (SRS) public library. There is no internet facility in any other public library of the state. Hence, no web-based service is being provided by any of the libraries to its users[4].

Ancient manuscripts of Indian culture represent the glorious past with basic historical evidence and have great research value. India possesses the largest repository of manuscripts in the world, as it is estimated that India has more than five million manuscripts. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) in 1989 initiated the most important manuscript microfilming programme to preserve the knowledge resources of Indian cultural heritage and make it accessible to scholars [5].

Digitization of manuscripts in India is a bigger challenge than it appears. However, the Department of Culture, Government of India constituted the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) for preservation and digitization of culturally significant works like the history of literary and artistic heritage and recorded knowledge of India in the form of manuscripts available on palm leaves, cotton, silk, bamboo, slates, clay, and copper plates[6].

The digitization project of UNESCO, 'The Memory of the World,' was initiated in 1993. Manuscript digitization pilot project 'Down Memory Lane' for digitizing the rare collection of Indian Libraries was also started in the National Library of India[7].

Under the 'Endangered Archives Programme' (EAP), British Library seeks to preserve cultural heritage and make it available to the public. In India, the project has started in many states, including Jammu and Kashmir. EAP covers the scripts in Devanagari and Sharada. This project intends to digitize manuscripts and books. Under the EAP886 project, digitization has been carried out in the Raghunath Temple Library, Jammu and the Kashmir Research Institute, Srinagar (Mansour Daikoo collection). The purpose is to digitize material relating to Sanskritism, Kashmir Shaivism, Hinduism, Tantra,

and Mysticism. In J&K, 33 rare Sanskrit manuscripts and books have already been digitized under the EAP886 project[8].

The digitization for preservation was carried out with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and other grant programs. A huge number of brittle books and newspapers were microfilmed in the 1990s. The reason for digital preservation was to make that content accessible without additional damage to fragile original documents. During the transitional period, practice included microfilming for the preservation of documents and was becoming an accepted approach for all preservation reformatting—the Association of Research Libraries in July 2004 developed a policy of digitization for preservation[9].

The main objective of the 'National Databank on Indian Art and Culture' project is to enhance the accessibility of Indian cultural resources using digital technology through a single window. The contents included in the databank of Indian Art and Culture are over 100,000 visuals, 1,000 hours of audio & video, and 25,000 rare books on art & culture. It is the major source of information on Indian art and culture, which can be accessed by archaeologists, scholars or researchers, students, art historians, etc. This project was sponsored by the Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communication, and Information Technology[10].

The study of Wani (2006) reveals certain facts about the prevailing public library system of Jammu and Kashmir. The Public Library System needs complete revamping in all aspects. This can be achieved in two phases with proper planning. One short term plan and the second is long term plan. Short term plan follows ICT training of library staff, releasing sufficient funds and 24*7 Internet facilities. Long term plan follows a master plan, and that may be laid down to be achieved during the 5 to I0 year period. Under this plan following targets need to be achieved like construction of new public libraries, enactment of library legislation, recruitment of professional staff, manuscript digitization, networking of libraries and Integration of catalogues into a WEB OPAC, collection development policy to suit different regions of the state[11].

The J&K library system has recently gained some attention from the state government. Many new strategies have been adopted and implemented to strengthen and streamline the network of Public Libraries in J&K. The present set up of the Public Library System has evolved as a four-tier system as under: State Central Libraries; District Libraries; Tehsil Libraries; and Block Libraries[12].

Knowledge is created through conversation, and the libraries are in the knowledge business. So, the libraries serve a vital role as a community memory keeper. Conversation leads to the development of nascent thoughts, and all these nascent thoughts in explicit format should be preserved for present and future use. Preservation of rare explicit knowledge resources using the latest tools and techniques in libraries is important for the further development of society[13].

It is the responsibility of libraries and other organizations to communicate heritage collections' value and ensure their survival for future use through various processes. Heritage collections are displayed through numerous exhibitions, archives, and catalogues across all library sectors. The museum sector has always been involved in connecting heritage book collections with the user community[14].

Public, community, and society libraries can apply for small Community Heritage Grants. It enables societies to commission heritage studies of their significant book collections[15].

Heritage grants help in preserving the various resources of libraries and help in identifying future collection management strategies. Also, it helps the book historians to study the influence of manuscripts on the development and transmission of culture. Usually, book historians concentrate on authorship, printing, publishing, distribution, and reading of rare documents. A book historian places these activities into technical and cultural contexts for the society. The goal is to understand the role of rare books in the history of a given society[16].

Research in the conservation of manuscripts provides essential information to the conservators. It helps to identify the holding value of the manuscript and to identify its devising conservation solutions, and to take the appropriate treatment for its long term preservation[17].

Initiatives of Government of India

Some key initiatives of the Government of India for the conservation and preservation of a vast collection of rare manuscripts are:

National Manuscript Mission (NMM): It is an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Culture. The aim of NMM is to survey, locate and conserve all the Indian manuscripts. It creates a

national resource base for manuscripts and makes it accessible to connect India's past with its future. It has developed a web-based National Database of Manuscripts with information of 2.7 million manuscripts. NMM works with 57 Manuscript Resource Centres (MRC), 33 Manuscript Partner Centre (MPC) and 50 conservation centres established across the country.

National Archives of India (NAI): It was established on 11 March 1891 in Kolkata. It is a central repository of public records and manuscripts, including private papers and historical documents in possession of individuals, NGO's, churches, mutts, and temples in collaboration with State Archives Departments.

Objectives of the study

- To study the status of both the modern and heritage libraries located in Jammu Province;
- To identify the type of collection in various libraries with special attention on manuscripts and their conversion to digital format;
- To find out as to how many of these libraries have started the digitization of their rare or unique collection;
- To identify the problems and issues being faced by the libraries in taking up the digitization project; and
- To analyse the type of services being provided by modern and heritage libraries.

Scope, Methodology, and Limitations:

The scope of the study has been confined to the libraries of Jammu Province in the Union Territory of J&K. A total of 22 different types of libraries were selected. Criteria for short-listing these libraries are as under:

1. Historical / heritage importance of institutes and their libraries;
2. The uniqueness of collection;
3. Different tools & technologies being used by the libraries and;
4. Services being offered.

For data collection, the observation and interview methods were adopted. Initially, the author collected the data from the respective institutional websites. As all the short-listed libraries are not maintaining their websites, for such libraries, an interview method was adopted to collect the primary data from the librarians.

The research study is limited to those libraries which qualified the above short-listing criteria.

Analysis of data

A total of twenty-two libraries located in Jammu province, covering both modern and heritage categories, were selected for the present research study.

Table 1 shows both types of libraries, i.e., modern and heritage. There are sixteen modern and six heritage libraries. The modern libraries include nine academic, three public and four special libraries. Similarly, the heritage libraries include two academic, three public and one special library. As such, there are eleven academic (50%), six public (27%), and five (23%) special libraries covered in the study. The overall coverage of libraries in the research study is – heritage: 27.27%, and modern: 72.72%.

Table 2 represents the collection size of each of the libraries. Under heritage libraries, Government Gandhi Memorial Science College (GGM) Library has a rich collection of about 70,000 documents, some of which are more than 100 years old and rare.

Shri Ranbir Singh (SRS) library has a collection of about 68,000 books, divided into six sections: Hindi - 8400 books; English - 17,000 books; Urdu - 8700; children section - 5000; Reference section – 8000; and Raja Rammohun Roy section - 19,000 books.

The collection of Raghunath Temple Library is approx. 6000 including many rare and un-catalogued Sanskrit books and manuscripts.

J&K Department of Libraries and Research has two central libraries: a) Shri Ranbir Singh (SRS) Central Library; and b) Shri Pratap Singh Library (SPS) Central Library. It has a collection of approx-60000 documents, including rare books and manuscripts in various languages and scripts.

Library of CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine is the most valuable R&D library in the area. In addition to online access to thousands of e-resources, it has a print collection of more than 46,000 documents (rare as well as the latest), including periodicals, books, databases, and other research material.

Library of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST), Jammu, has a collection of about 35000 documents, including books, journals & dissertations.

Table 1 — Type of libraries selected for the study

Sl. no.	Modern Libraries	Type	Heritage Libraries	Type
1.	Academy of Art Culture and Languages	Public	Amar Mahal Museum's Library	Public
2.	Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Rajouri	Academic	Dogra Art Museum's Library	Public
3.	Central University, Jammu	Academic	Government Gandhi Memorial Science College (GGM), Jammu	Academic
4.	Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM)	Special	Raghunath Temple Library	Special
5.	Dhanvantri Library of University of Jammu	Academic	Shri Ranbir Singh (S.R.S.) Library	Public
6.	Government Medical College, Jammu	Special	Sri Ranbir Higher Secondary School (SRHS)	Academic
7.	High Court, Jammu	Special		
8.	Indian Institute of Management (IIM.)	Academic		
9.	Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Jammu	Academic		
10.	Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development	Academic		
11.	J&K Department of Libraries and Research	Public		
12.	J&K Government Department of Information and Public Relations	Public		
13.	J&K Legislative Assembly	Special		
14.	Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST), Jammu	Academic		
15.	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU), Katra	Academic		
16.	The Central Sanskrit University, Shri Ranbir Campus Library	Academic		

Table 2 — Collection of modern and heritage libraries in Jammu

Sl. no.	Modern Libraries of Jammu Province (J&K)	Collection (approx.)	Heritage Libraries of Jammu Province (J&K)	Collection (approx.)
1.	Academy of Art Culture and Languages	19000	Amar Mahal Museum's Library	25000
2.	Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Rajouri	45000	Dogra Art Museum's Library	7000
3.	Central University, Jammu	24000	Government Gandhi Memorial Science College (GGM), Jammu	70000
4.	Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM)	46000	Raghunath Temple Library	6000
5.	Dhanvantri Library of University of Jammu	466000	Shri Ranbir Singh (S.R.S.) Library	68000
6.	Government Medical College, Jammu	25000	Sri Ranbir Higher Secondary School (SRHS)	5000
7.	High Court, Jammu	30000		
8.	Indian Institute of Management (IIM.)	4000		
9.	Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Jammu	9000		
10.	Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development	13000		
11.	J&K Department of Libraries and Research	60000		
12.	J&K Government Department of Information and Public Relations	NA.		
13.	J&K Legislative Assembly	7000		
14.	Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Jammu	35000		
15.	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU), Katra	46000		
16.	The Central Sanskrit University, Shri Ranbir Campus Library	39000		

Library of Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development has its main campus library in Srinagar and a regional library at Jammu. The total collection in Jammu regional library is 3000 documents, whereas the main campus (Srinagar) has more than 13,000 documents.

Overall, it is seen that 19.04% of libraries have a collection of more than 50,000 documents; 42.85% of libraries have collection in the range of 20,000-50,000 documents; and 38.09% of libraries have collection of less than 20,000 documents.

Table 3 represents the status of the digitization process in various libraries. Among heritage libraries, Raghunath Temple Library has initiated the digitization process whereby under the EAP886 project, digitization of Sanskrit manuscripts and books is being carried out. Presently, around 2000 manuscripts have been digitized.

CSIR-IIIM Jammu library has already initiated the digitization work of its rare book collection. It is also developing its Digital Institutional Repository for archiving institutional grey literature.

In the J&K Department of Libraries and Research, having the richest collection of manuscripts in South Asia, digitization of manuscripts is being carried out in the libraries and so far, approx. six thousand manuscripts have been digitized.

The Central Sanskrit University, Shri Ranbir Campus Library, has also started digitizing documents under the EAP886 Digitization Project.

It is seen that out of 22 selected libraries, total seven (i.e., 31.81%) libraries have started digitization work, out of which 27.27% are heritage and 4.54% are modern.

Table 4 gives an overview of the user services being provided by various libraries. Analysis shows that collectively all the libraries are providing reference service (100%), 63.63% are providing circulation service, 45.45% Current Awareness Service & 22.72% Bulletin Board Services, as shown in (Fig. 1).

Findings of the study

The analysis shows that all the modern and heritage libraries located in Jammu Province are fast adopting to the modern tools and techniques for their transformation from manual to automated and to digital libraries. Most of the libraries in Jammu

Table 3 — Status of digitization in modern and heritage libraries in Jammu

Sl. no.	Modern Libraries of Jammu Province(J&K)	Digitization	Heritage Libraries of Jammu Province(J&K)	Digitization
1.	Academy of Art Culture and Languages	No	Amar Mahal Museum's Library	No
2.	Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Rajouri	Yes	Dogra Art Museum's Library	No
3.	Central University, Jammu	No	Government Gandhi Memorial Science College (GGM), Jammu	No
4.	Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM)	Yes	Raghunath Temple Library	Yes
5.	Dhanvantri Library University of Jammu	Yes	Shri Ranbir Singh (S.R.S.) Library	No
6.	Government Medical College, Jammu	No	Sri Ranbir Higher Secondary School	No
7.	High Court, Jammu	No		
8.	Indian Institute of Management (IIM)	No		
9.	Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Jammu	No		
10.	Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development	No		
11.	J&K Department of Libraries and Research	Yes		
12.	J&K Government Department of Information and Public Relations	No		
13.	J&K Legislative Assembly	No		
14.	Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Jammu	No		
15.	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU)	Yes		
16.	The Central Sanskrit University, Shri Ranbir Campus Library	Yes		

Table 4 — Types of library services

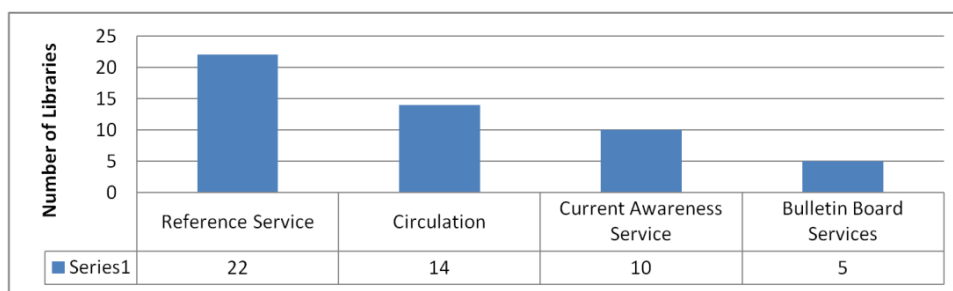| Sl. no.	Name of the Library	Library Services being offered			
		Reference service	Circulation	Current Awareness Service (CAS)	Bulletin Board Service (BBS)
1	Academy of Art Culture and Languages	Yes	No	No	No
2	Amar Mahal Museum's Library	Yes	No	No	No
3	Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Rajouri	Yes	Yes	No	No
4	Central University, Jammu	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Dhanvantri Library of University of Jammu	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
6	Dogra Art Museum's Library	Yes	No	No	No
7	Government Gandhi Memorial Science College (GGM), Jammu	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Government Medical College (GMC), Jammu	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	High Court, Jammu	Yes	Yes	No	No
10	Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
11	Indian Institute of Management (IIM.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
12	Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Jammu	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
13	Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development	Yes	No	No	No
14	J&K Department of Libraries and Research	Yes	No	No	No
15	J&K Government Department of Information and Public Relations	Yes	No	No	No
16	J&K Legislative Assembly	Yes	No	No	No
17	Raghunath Temple Library	Yes	No	No	No
18	Sher-e-Kashmir Univ. of Agricultural Science and Technology, Jammu	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
19	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU), Katra	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
20	Shri Ranbir Singh (S.R.S.) Library	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
21	Sri Ranbir Higher Secondary School (SRHS)	Yes	Yes	No	No
22	The Central Sanskrit University, Shri Ranbir Campus Library	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Fig. 1 — Services provided by modern and heritage libraries.

Province have a unique collection of manuscripts that need to be digitized and preserved for present and future use. Presently, the libraries are providing the services like current awareness service, bulletin board services, circulation service and reference service. It is found that in Jammu Province, 31.81% of libraries have started digitizing their rare documents. However, due to a lack of proper IT infrastructure, funds, and skilled human resources, these libraries are facing problems in their digitization work.

Conclusion and recommendations

Efforts should be made to manage heritage collections with the identification of culturally important

material, focusing on their digitization, preservation, and storage. With the help of a skilled workforce and supporting resources, digitization in these libraries is possible. Every organization has its policy for rare, special and heritage collections. But now it's time to implement the standardized approach and establish standard guidelines with input from all sectors for the preservation of heritage collections. All the libraries in the Jammu province may consider creating a common platform. They should conduct a survey within their respective organizations / Institutes to assess the status of library services being provided by them, analyse the user's feedback, and assess their present & future expectations. After the survey, librarians should collectively come up with their future action plan and policies for library automation, digitization & measures to be adopted for improving their library services. Support in the form of sufficient fund allocations from the local UT Administration is required to take up the automation & digitization projects in libraries. Resource sharing in the form of - skilled manpower, computer hardware/software, and other technical know-how amongst these libraries needs to be encouraged for initiating the digitization process. In this regard, the modern libraries of the area can take the lead. The modern libraries of the area need to initiate and create their institutional repositories, encourage the development of e-content and remote access services for their tech-savvy users. They should also start using social media platforms for providing effective library services.

Acknowledgment

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