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Digital Library Initiatives in India: A Comprehensive Study

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Abstract

This study is a survey of digital library initiatives in India. The survey is based on the secondary information of about fifty digital libraries from their respective websites. The findings show that in most cases the actual conception of digital library in India is still in nascent stage. The online subscriptions and linked to the third-party websites are also considered as a digital library. However, many digital libraries have not any proper search interface in their respective website due to improper arrangement of metadata. In some cases, they do not have their own digitized collection and provide some other's collections or referred to their users to some third-party website. Moreover, there are many digital libraries which cannot be accessed outside (remote access) the organization. Moreover, the so-called digital libraries in India have not developed their own standards or are not following any global standards. However, the usage statistics for the government digital libraries are far better than the usage statistics of academic or public libraries. That is perhaps a positive sign of 'digital governance' and reaching the public. The regular website maintenance, remote access facility and proper training of information professionals are required for digital libraries in India. There are several important observations and policy suggestions that may be helpful for students, scholars, library professionals and the decision makers in the government.

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Introduction

A specialized library that focuses primarily on the collection, storage, and retrieval of digital objects may be called as a

digital library. Digital libraries have special collection for example, text, audio-video material, photograph and so on. The size and scope of a digital library are mainly varies depended on its usage and the circumstances where it is stored. It can be stored and maintained by institution of various nature. The contents of a digital library can be accessed from the respective institution in the stand-alone machine through intranet or can be accessed remotely over the internet (Jeevan, 2004).

The concept of Digital Library was first discussed in India in 1996 in a conference held by Society of Information Science, Bangalore (Gurram, 2008). However, the matter was not much discussed further, at least until about the beginning of last decade (Jain & Babbar; Kaur & Singh, 2005). Recently, Government of India has taken several initiatives for digitization of materials. As a result, the digital library repositories in India have somehow gained a momentum (Sreekumar & Sreejaya 2005).

The digital library collection and maintenance for a developing country like India is not an easy task (Bhattacharya 2004; Saracevic 2000). Its value depends on the users and their usage for that library (Xie, 2008). If the users get satisfactory services from that particular digital library, then the library is perhaps useful. However, in Indian scenario, there are many serious issues in the digital libraries regarding the storage, access of content and services (Mukherjee & Patra 2022). To solve the fundamental problem of digital library evolution, the first thing to do is to find the history of digital library (Castelli & Pagano 2012). The growth of Library and Information Science literature in India and the facilities for LIS education and research (Patra & Chand 2006) it can be assumed that the digital library could have been a difficult task. So, the way to give momentum to the initiation to the digital library development in India, requires two-pronged strategy, including both the digitization of local content in one hand and access to external resources on the other hand.

In this context, this study is a brief survey of various digital library initiatives taken all over India. This study use the following parameters to examine the digital library initiatives in India, type and nature of the library, year of establishment, location, access statistics, software used, copyright policy,

Brief Literature Review

This is a survey covering all major digital libraries in India. During the study of this topic, we observed that research articles in this area mainly focused on the digitization process and digitization effort of single institutions (Arora & Agrawal, 2003; Deb 2006; Das, 2022). The scholarly articles in this area mainly focus on the case study (Gaur 2003; Mujoo-Munshi 2003; Joshi 2006). Some of the case studies deal with the digitization problems and copyright issues (Naga, Pradhan, Arora & Chand 2008). However, there was no significant study on the digital library initiative covering the whole of India. In this context this study is going to fill the gap in the contemporary scenario of Indian digital library initiatives.

Objectives

The study aims to survey the major digital library initiatives in India from their respective website. The study is going to

observe the digital library initiatives by using the following parameters: geographical locations, digital collections, software used for retrieval by that institution, usage statistics, copyright issues, remote access facility, social media presence etc. From above mentioned parameters, this study will examine the present status and the progress of digital library initiative all over India.

Methods

This study is a survey of digital library initiatives in India collecting secondary information from about fifty digital libraries from their respective websites. The detail sample are provided in the appendix. The sample includes major digital libraries including academic, government and other types of libraries. The websites were accessed in the month of November 2022 to February 2023. This study considered a total of fifty digital libraries from different zones of India. In the sample, there are eight digital libraries from the east zone, eleven from west zone, thirteen from south zone, sixteen from north zone and three from central zone. The libraries are also differentiated in the following four types, academic digital library, government digital library, public digital library, and digital library initiatives of autonomous bodies. There are twenty-four academic, two autonomous, twelve government and twelve public libraries are considered in this study.

Findings

The findings show that in most cases the actual conception of digital library is still in nascent stage. Many of the so-called digital libraries do not have their own digitized collection. The libraries have subscribed materials from different sources including the commercial publishers and consider it as a digital library. Moreover, many digital libraries do not have any proper search interface. Digital libraries also do not maintain their metadata. There are many digital libraries which cannot be accessed outside (remote access) the organization. Some of the digital libraries could not be accessed because of their website was down. The regular website maintenance, remote access facility and proper training of information professionals are lacking. Moreover, the so-called digital libraries in India have not developed their own standards or are not following any global standards. In contrast, the digital libraries of developed countries, are complying with some specific well established digital library standards. During our study, we observed that the usage statistics for the government libraries are far better than the usage statistics of academic and public libraries. Users are perhaps more interested to know the government's rules, laws, orders etc. That is perhaps a positive sign of digital governance and reaching the public.

Conclusion

The digital library initiatives in India requires focused approach. It requires proper maintenance, regular updating, and standardization. The study recommends that a national policy should be adopted to keep a uniformity to benefit all stakeholders. There are several important observations and policy suggestions that may be helpful for students, scholars, library professionals and the decision makers in the government.

Appendix

Sl no	Name of the library
1	Digital Library: Raj Bhavan, Assam
2	Calcutta University Digital Library
3	Digital Library of the West Bengal Secretariat, Government of West Bengal
4	National Library, Kolkata
5	National Digital Library of India
6	Biju Patnaik Central Library
7	Parija Library – Knowledge Resource Centre, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar
8	DEFCC Digital Library, Government of Bihar
9	Karnataka Digital Public Library
10	Tumakuru Digital Library
11	C H Mohammed Koya Library, University of Calicut
12	All Saints' Collage Remote Access Digital Library, Trivandrum
13	Central Library of Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Thiruvananthapuram
14	Library and Information Centre, Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode
15	Tamilnaiyam - Digital Library (A division of Tamil Virtual Academy)
16	Digital Library, The Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University
17	Service Tamil Nadu Government Portal
18	Tamil University Digital Library
19	Directorate of Public Libraries – School Education Department, Government of Tamil Nadu
20	Inclusive Digital Library, Karna Vidya Foundation
21	Anna University Library
22	Digital Library- Education Gujarat
23	Ahmedabad Smart City Digital Library
24	Digital Library, Sardar Vallabhbhai National Institute of Technology, Surat :
25	Smt. Hansa Mehta Library, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda :
26	Digital Library, K.E. Society's Rajarambapu Institute of Technology, Rajramnagar
27	Digital Library of Maharashtra
28	Directorate of Libraries, State of Maharashtra, Department of Higher and technical Education, Government of Maharashtra
29	Sir Dorabji Tata Memorial Library, Tata Institute of Social Sciences
30	Panjab Digital Library
31	DELNET, Developing Library Network
32	Delhi Public Library, Ministry of Culture, Government of India
33	Central Secretariat Library, Ministry of Culture, Government of India
34	Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Central Library, Jawaharlal Nehru University
35	Haryana Digital Public Library

36	Digital Library eVidhan- Himachal Pradesh - HP Vidhan Sabha
37	E-KitabKosh - Jammu and Kashmir
38	Mahatma Gandhi Central Library; IIT, Roorkee
39	Library and Documentation Centre, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun
40	Uttar Pradesh Sarvajanic Pustakalaya
41	Amir- ud- Doula Public Library
42	Digital Library, National Institute of Open Schooling
43	Digital Library, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak
44	Learning Resource Center, Indian Institute of Technology, Indore
45	Learning Resource centre (Library), Regional Institute of Education, Bhopal
46	Digital Library, Lok Sabha, Parliament of India
47	National Mission for Manuscripts
48	Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)
49	INFLIBNET (Shodh Ganga: Indian ETD Repository)
50	Muktabodha Indological Research Institute (MIRI)
51	Archives of Indian Labour, V.V. Giri National Labour Institute

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