Preservation & Security of Historical & Cultural Heritage in Libraries and Museums

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ABSTRACT

It is very vital to preserve and maintain the history and culture safeguarded in libraries and museums and also makes them accessible to the public. Libraries and museums protect, preserve, manage and maintain the historical& cultural heritage for future generation. Libraries and museums are the mirrors to the past that has witnessed glories, victories, defeats, calamities, revolutions, movements and all kinds of socio-political upheavals that have many times threatened the ruling kings or governments. It would not be wrong to say that libraries and museums help us to create a link between the past, present and the future. These storehouses, rich in collection, provide sources for research activities and reference purposes. It is very unfortunate that sometimes the moral responsibility is ignored and the libraries and museums are found in damaged conditions. The National Museum of Natural History in New Delhi, a famous spot for school visit, was damaged and its entire collection was destroyed due to fire in 2016. This was just an accident but some examples of intentional destructions of libraries and museums are also registered.

It is in this light, the present study highlights the importance of preservation and security of cultural collection in libraries and museums.

KEY WORDS: Libraries, preservation, Cultural & Historical collection, Digitization

INTRODUCTION

India is a vast country with a rich cultural heritage. Arts and cultural heritage institutions libraries have a unique role to play in the overall development of the country. Culture is represented by values, society, ethics, thinking, arts, games, songs, music, dance etc…Heritage is the record of the living style of people of past and present generations. Culture heritage is the materials found in libraries and museums having evidence of living manners of past generations. Preservation of cultural heritage is also greatly affected with the help of Information and Communication Technology. A great number of people and organizations see cultural resources as critical to the nation's economic development through tourism. Cultural heritage is based on the aspects of our past that we cherish, want to keep and pass on to future generations and outside world. Libraries and Museum security is a difficult matter and it has to be taken up right from the planning stage of the building onwards. Henceforth security does not only mean safety about collection but also theft and mutilation of heritage. If we are thinking about security for collection we can never ignored visitors from fire, natural disasters and attack by terrorists.

I.   **Destructions of Libraries: A historic perspective:**

The University of Vallabhi established by the Maitraka Kings during the year 475-775 A.D. had a library with many eastern literatures. The University and its Libraries entirely destroyed by Arab Attackers. Mohammad BakhtiyarKhilji destroyed Odantapuri University with its library which was founded by king Gopala in 660 -705 A.D. Very rich in Brahmanical and Buddhist work also destroyed from library. University of Nalanda was known by Dharmaganja, which was damaged and destroyed by Mohammad BakhtiyarKhilji in 606-648 A.D. After the downfall of the Mughals, the literary wealth of the Indian Libraries was looted in 1857, after the sepoy munity, thousands of books were destroyed and thousands of important and rare books were carried away to England.

All major libraries in the downstream area in Assam were completely flooded and damaged in 2014. A Major Earthquake in 2001 damaged numbers of libraries in kutch Dist. of Gujarat. Because of sudden released of Dam Waters in Surat city of Gujarat many libraries destroyed in 2006. Recently the National Museum of Natural History in New Delhi functions under the Ministry of Environment and Forests. This museum was established in 1972 and opened in 1978. The mission of the museum was to promote environmental education in regional museum of Natural History in the country, to provide

resources, coordinate natural history projects with other agencies. The fire broke out in the museum around the 1.45 am on 26 April, 2016. The fire began from the top floor of the building and spread to four floor below. The causes of the fire are still unknown though the fire spread because of museum specimens and the wood work holding them. However the fire fighter were reached and controlled after few hours but museum building and its entire collection was damaged. It was a very big loss of Cultural and Historical heritage.

II.   **Importance of Preserve Cultural and Heritage Collection:**

Libraries and Museums are meant to inspire lifelong learning, advance knowledge, and strengthen our communities. First and foremost, if do not document cultural heritage it will be lost and this means the national identity is lost. Libraries are to preserve culture in order to show support for the cultural identity of the community. As libraries collect and document cultural artifacts they are helping their communities to archive their past to be used in the future. Libraries must document cultural heritage so that researchers may access it as they conduct their studies. These studies are mostly imperative because they can be read by the future generation. Bolt (2014) Just like archival centers, libraries keep societal participation in them because they come to access their cultural sources. On the other hand if libraries are store houses for cultural materials they will at the same time be attracting their communities to the library; this will mean that cultural sources in the library will call for usage by all including the elderly.

III.   **Digital Preservation:**

According to UNESCO charter for the preservation of digital heritage (2003) digital heritage has been defined as "unique resources of human knowledge and expression. It embraces cultural, educational, scientific and administrative resources as well as technological, legal, medical and other kinds of information created digitally or converted into digital form, from existing analogue resources."

Many countries has accepted digitization for preservation of heritage collection like National Digital Library of China was launched in 2009, to provide access to about 120 million Chinese cultural heritage in digital form. The heritage resources include ancient documents, newspapers, rare books, journals etc. In Japan, PORTA portal was launched in 2007, to provide access to cultural materials in digital form (Lee, 2010). National Library

of New Zealand developed National Digital Heritage Archive for the purpose of collecting and preserving digital content of New Zealand's cultural heritage (Public Act, 2003).

In India Ministry of Culture, under its various establishments, programs and missions work for the preservation of the various heritage of the country. There are various missions like Gandhi heritage sites mission, National mission on libraries, National mission on manuscripts etc. Some non-government organizations are also working voluntarily like Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development (ITRHD). Singh (2012) discussed the initiatives taken by government for the preservation of manuscripts and other heritage resources and found that the major initiatives taken by Ministry of culture and the initiatives by IGNCA. The National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) was established in February 2003, by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) was established in 1987. Vyas, Bhawna and Joshi, Indu (2013)

IV.   **Barriers in Digital Preservation:**

Budget and infrastructure are the main constrains for digital preservation. Conversion the old materials in to new format is too much expensive and digital version requires huge storage space. Lack of untrained IT person and manpower is another problem. Intellectual Property Rights is also a barrier according to Indian copyright Act 1957 and Act 2000 does not cover issues regarding digital preservation of cultural heritage. Because some collection receives in libraries as gift and some are acquired from other sources, so libraries can't be reproduced without permission. Bakhshi, Samar (2016).

V.   **Security of Libraries & Museum:**

Security is a very broad area in the sense of safety of collection to infrastructure and using the equipment for preservation. Damaged and Destruction of libraries by natural disaster, manmade disaster and technical disaster. Natural disaster like flood, earthquake, heavy rain, landslide etc… manmade disaster like theft, mutilation, damage etc… and technical security like fire, digital data crash, hacking computer etc… Gul, S. & Khan, S. (2008). Any kind of threats can occur in the center for that internal staff and outsider staff should be aware and they have to train to tackle the problems. They should have phone number of agencies and offices which will require in emergency for control and recover.

All libraries and museums should have a security policy covering all aspects of security. It should not simply be a sequence of post orders for security officers. These should include access - key control, building security, duties of security officers' point, security screening, training for response in an emergency, CCTC camera policy for observation on visitors, extra-curricular activities, construction, audit of collections and many other factors.

VI.   **Conclusion:**

Digitization is identified as a practical and sustainable solution for long term preservation and access of information resources especially heritage resources and Security is also very important for culture collection. Information technologies exposed new prospects for the heritage libraries and museums to preserve and make inventory for easy search and access across the world. Staff of Museums and libraries have a larger responsibility and accountability for protecting the nation's cultural collection. Library professional needs training as priority base because these librarians serve divergent needs of users in their respective libraries, it is important that these professionals should be conversant with how to preserve and access relevant information. For the library to develop properly they need not only human but also material resources such as infrastructure which will help the library to carry out its operations. The cultural heritage resources should be stored in air-conditioned rooms with moderate the temperature and electric fans to avoid hotness of the environment. The security should be given in well structure and operative behaviors in all centers. There should be a modern practice to create database for digital preservation of all culture collection in classified base and for that they have to require enough budget, storage capacity, technical staff and security for the system. This is responsibility of management authority, library professional or governing bodies to set security from compound wall to entrance of the building, key control of physical collection, emergency plan, and technical equipment are in working condition.

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