User's Attitude towards Digitised Collection of Kerala Sahitya Akademi Library

Dhanya T K
Research scholar
Department of Library and Information Science
University of Calicut
dhanyathayakandy@gmail.com

Dr. Vasudevan T M
Professor & Head
Department of Library and Information Science
University of Calicut
amandev44@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Kerala sahitya akademi library is a haven of heritage collection includes old and rare books, manuscripts, paintings, magazines, journals, micro films etc. in Malayalam literature and Kerala history. Digitization of Akademi library collection will be a milestone in the research and learning activities about Malayalam literature, Kerala culture and tradition. This study is an attempt to identify and understand the user's attitude, awareness, use, perception, satisfaction towards digitization process, digital collection in Kerala Sahitya Akademi, and also the problems faced by the users to access the digitised collection. Questionnaire method was used for data collection and simple percentage, weighted index were used for analysis of data. Findings showed that majority of the respondents were aware about the digital library but there is a need of user orientation and promotional activities.

***Key words:** Digitization, Kerala Sahitya Akademi digital library, User's attitude, Cultural heritage resources*

1. Introduction

In this digital age information and communication technologies are in the advanced level. Cultural heritage collection plays a major role in the socio-economic development of any country. Rich tradition of cultural heritage is in risk, due to some reasons like environmental, biological, political, and human activities. For preserving and to make longer life of traditional resources, digitization of these resources is essential. In all over the world, libraries, archives, museums and cultural institutions have been taking steps to digitize their collection for preservation and make them available for use.

Digitization in the Kerala Sahitya Akademi library is one of such initiative for the preservation of rich culture and tradition of Kerala. Akademi libraries hold a good portion of published works in Malayalam and such a collection is not available elsewhere in the globe.

This unique collection is a good source for education and research in the field of Malayalam Language and Kerala Literature[1].

According to Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam "digital library is where the past meets the present and creates a future". In some of the digital initiatives, their prime motive to digitize their collection is only for preservation not for use. They are not providing facilities for accessing the digitized collection. This study tried to investigate the user's attitude, awareness, use, perception, satisfaction with the digitization and digital collection of Kerala Sahitya Akademi library.

2. Kerala Sahitya Akademi Library

The Kerala sahitya akademi is a haven of cultural heritage collection includes old and rare books, paintings, maps, magazines, newspapers, audio video records, journals, micro film reels, and manuscripts on Ayurveda, religion, and language etc. It is an autonomous institution which is established for the promotion and development of Malayalam language and literature. The main objective of the Akademi is to collect, organise, conserve, preserve, encourage, support and publish the literary works in Malayalam literature and culture. Kerala Sahitya Akademi inaugurated by Raja pramukh late Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma, raja of Travancore at Kanakakunnu palace on 15 October 1956. Now it is shifted to Thrissur. The collections in the Akademi are located in its two libraries, first one is at the main campus holds around 1 lakh books, 10,000 bound volumes of periodicals, hundreds of micro film reels, a number of audio cassettes etc., it is working as a reference library, second library is at Appan Thampuran smarakam consists of large collection of rare old Malayalam journals published from the last Quarter of 19th centuay[1].

Digitization activities in the Akademi is conducted in two phases. The first phase is started from 2008 to 2013 contract with C-DIT with the help of government. The main objectives of the first phase were to establish digital library/ archival lab, Digital Library Information System (DLIS), prepare computerised databases on Malayalam literature and Kerala culture, publish and conserve the digital versions of ancient books, manuscripts and other resources which are commercially viable. In the second phase, major objectives were to convert digital library information system in the Akademi in to a Digital Resource Centre (DRC), modernisation of digital lab to digitization hub, digitization and preservation of media from outside sources, equipping Akademi library with modern digital facilities etc[1].

3. Literature review

A good number of earlier studies on use and user's attitude, their satisfaction towards the digital collection and services in various libraries have appeared in the last few years. Biswas and Sharma (2015)[2] discussed the effect of digital collection and their use by users in university libraries. Kaur (2015)[3] examined the user's attitude towards the print and digital information resources in Guru Nanak Dev University library. Bawden and Vilar (2006)[4] investigated about the user expectations to meet and mange in the digital library setting. Rogani (2007)[5] carried out a study about user's satisfaction related to the quality and usefulness of the consortium based digital library services at the University of Calabria. Liu (2006)[6] explore the ways in which urban and suburban residents interact with and benefit from free access to digital resources in the public libraries of Connecticut. Tammaro (2008)[7] presented the findings of a

survey about users' perceptions of digital libraries in Italy. Kani-zabihi (2006)[8] conducted a study to find out the user suggestions for digital libraries' functionality and features.

4. Objectives

The basic objective of the study are:

- To find out the use and awareness of digital collection provided by the Kerala Sahitya Akademi library.
- To identify frequency of use by the users.
- To know the purpose to visit the digital library by the users.
- To know the preference and relevance of user community towards print and digital collection.
- To elicit opinions regarding digitization and digital collection.
- To collect opinions about the adequacy of information resources provided by the digital library.
- To measure the satisfaction level of users on digital collection of the library.
- Examine the problems encountered by the users ineffectively using the digital library.

5. Methodology

The study is limited to the research scholars, students, faculty and non-academic users present at the Sahitya Akademi library on the period of the study conducted. Random sampling method was used for selecting the sample population. Questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was distributed to the users during their physical visits to the library. Questionnaire is distributed to 60 users, among 60 users 58 of them responded and returned filled questionnaire. Data was analysed by using simple percentage and weighted index.

6. Data analysis

6.1 Distribution of respondents

The major objective of the study was to understand user's attitude towards digitization process, and digital collection in Kerala Sahitya Akademi library. Table 1 shows that, out of the total 58 respondents 37.9% were research scholar, 36.2% students, 18.9% faculty /teaching staff and 6.89% were non-academic users.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents

No.	Designation	No. of respondents (%)
1.	Research Scholar	22 (37.9%)
2.	Student	21 (36.2%)
3.	Faculty/teaching staff	11 (18.9%)
4.	Non-academic user	4 (6.89%)
	Total	58 (100%)

6.2 Awareness about digital library

According to Table 2, 79 % of the respondents were well aware about the digital library in the Akademi, and 20.68% of the respondents were specified that they were not aware about the digital library. At the same time, user category wise analysis, showed that researchers and faculty members were aware about the digital library but a good number of the student respondents were not aware about the digital library.

Table 2: Awareness about digital library

No.	Designation	Awareness about digital library	
		Aware	Not aware
1.	Research Scholar	22	0
2.	Student	12	9
3.	Faculty/teaching staff	10	1
4.	Non-academic user	2	2
	Total	46(79%)	12(20.68%)

6.3 Use of digital library

Table 3: Use of digital library

No.	Designation	Use of digital library	
		Use	Not Use
1.	Research Scholar	22	0
2.	Student	5	16
3.	Faculty/teaching staff	8	3
4.	Non-academic user	2	2
	Total	37(63.79%)	21(36.2%)

Table 3 reveals that, 63.79% respondents were using the digital library for their information requirements. 36.2% respondents were not using the digital library in the Kerala Sahitya Akademi. The most interesting fact obtained from the Table 3 is that, usage of digital library by researchers and faculty members were very high but students were respondents is very low.

6.4 Reasons for not using digital library

Table 4: Reasons for not use of digital library

Reasons	Number
Not aware of digital library	6(28.5 %)
Not aware to use digital library	10 (47.6%)
Print resources are most preferred reference source	10 (47.6%)
Lack of infrastructure for access	7 (33.33%)

There are 21 respondents are not using digital library. Table 4 indicated the major reasons for not using the digital library by the respondents. Unawareness to use digital library and preference for printed resources are the major reasons (47.6%). Lack of infrastructure for access (33.33%) and unawareness about the digital library system (28.5%) are also the constraints for not using digital library system by the respondents indicated.

6.5 Frequency of use of digital library

Frequency of use of digital library is an important variable to understand the use digital library by the users. It can be noted that, 29.7% of the total respondents use the digital library occasionally, 24.3% use whenever they needed, followed by 21.6% use weekly, 18.9% use daily and least number 5.4% use monthly.

6.6 Purpose of using digital library

Respondents were asked to indicate their purpose for using digital library. On the basis of the data collected 81% were using for research and reference, while 13.5% for teaching and enrichment, 16.2% used for decision making and professional needs and 5.4% used for leisure and entertainment.

6.7 Attitude towards digitizing rare and old collection in the library

Table 5: Attitude towards digitization

Digitization	Number (%)
Highly useful	43 (74 %)
Moderately useful	14 (24 %)
Not at all useful	1 (1.7 %)

Respondents were asked to point out their attitude regarding digitization of rare and old collection in the library. From the Table 5, 74% of the respondents were indicated that digitization is highly useful, 24% of the respondents were indicated that digitization process is moderately useful and small number 1.7% indicated not useful.

6.8 Opinions regarding digital collection and print collection

Table 6: Opinions regarding digital collection and print collection

No.	Statements	Yes	No
1.	Digitization of collection will increase the preservation and access of the same	35	2

2.	Digital collection will provide same effect& environment of print collection	23	14
3.	Digital collection provides active reading like print collection	25	33

Out of 58 respondents, 37 are using both digital and print collection. From these 37 respondents, Table 6 shows that 35 respondents opined that digitization of collection will increase preservation and access. According to 23 respondent's opinion, digital collection will provide same effect and environment of print collection and 14 respondents indicated that digital collection will not provide same effect and environment of print collection. 33 respondents indicated that digital collection will not provide active reading like print collection.

6.9 User's preference toward digitised and print collection

The respondents were asked to specify their preference toward print and digitized collection. Majority of the respondents 31(53.4%) preferred both digitized and print collection, followed by 24(41.3%) who preferred print collection only, on the other hand least number of respondents 3(5.1%) preferred for digitised collection only.

6.10 Adequacy of digital collection

Respondents were asked to indicate their assessment of the adequacy of digitized collection in the Akademi for fulfilling their information need. It was found that 51.3% respondents were agree with the statement that digital collection in the Kerala Sahitya Akademi library is adequate for their information needs at the same time, 48.6% respondents were opined that the digital collection is inadequate for fulfilling their information needs. There is a slight difference between adequacy and inadequacy.

6.11 Satisfaction level with the digital collection

The major motive of digitization of cultural heritage collection is preservation of the original document from human handling and deterioration. Unlike print collection, digital collection can access multiple users at a time. So the people behind the digitization initiatives should give importance to the maximum usage of digitised collection otherwise all the efforts have no use. The success of any initiative is depend upon the satisfaction of its users. The Table 7, presents the satisfaction level of respondents with the digital collection of Kerala Sahitya Akademi library. Weighted index is used for the identification of the satisfaction level. From the Table 7, highest rank, rank 1 was obtained by help from the staff (weighted index-2.40), rank 2 by quality of the digital collection (weighted index- 2.27) and rank 3 (weighted index-2.189)by timely access. The last rank, rank 12 received by search and browse facilities of digitised collection (Weighted index-1.78).

Table 7: Satisfaction level with the digital collection and services

Factor	Highly satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Not satisfied	No response	Weighted index	Rank
Quality of the digitized collection	12	23	1	1	2.27	2

Digital Library website	11	16	8	2	1.97	7
Scan quality of the collection	13	21	0	2	2.18	4
Format of the digitized collection	12	19	1	5	2.02	5
Timely access	15	17	2	3	2.189	3
Help from the staff	21	12	1	3	2.40	1
Digital Library catalogue	11	15	4	7	1.81	11
Infrastructure facilities for accessing digital collection in the library itself	10	19	4	5	1.94	8
Easy to use digital collection	11	17	4	5	1.918	9
Search and browse facilities	10	15	6	6	1.78	12
Digital collection save the time of user & staff	13	17	1	6	2.00	6
Classification and arrangement of digital collection	10	18	2	7	1.83	10

Scale: Highly satisfied-3, Moderately satisfied- 2, Not satisfied-1, No response-0

6.12 Problems faced by the users

Table 8: Problems faced by the users

Problems	Highly favoured	Moderately favoured	Least favoured	No response	Weighted index	Rank
Copyright issue	3	13	4	38	0.672	11
Technical problem	3	14	5	36	0.724	10
Network problem	8	16	5	29	1.051	5
Internet speed	8	19	4	27	1.137	4
Bandwidth problem	2	14	4	38	0.655	
Lack of infrastructure facilities to access	23	12	12	11	1.810	3
Lack of orientation to use digital library	25	20	5	8	2.068	1
Lack of promotional activities from the library authority	25	13	10	10	1.913	2
Staff unable to help	8	5	10	35	0.758	9
Digital library website down	4	15	3	36	0.775	8

Administration	9	6	7	36	0.793	7
Health problems	2	16	9	31	0.810	6

Scale: Highly favoured-3, Moderately favoured- 2, Least favoured-1, No response-0

Table 8 reveals the problems faced by the users of the digital library. According to the weighted index, lack of orientation to use digital library is the greatest problem of users (weighted index-2.068), rank 2 is received by lack of promotional activities from the library authority. Rank 3 obtained by lack of infrastructure facilities to access digital collection.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

- Majority of the respondents participated in this study are research scholars.
- Majority of the respondents were aware and using the digital library in the Kerala Sahitya Akademi. But in the case of student respondents, a good number of respondents were not know about the digital library and their usage is also low. The main reasons for not using of digital collection were found to be, unawareness to use digital library, high preference for print collection and lack of infrastructure. To enhance awareness and maximise the usage, Akademi library should organise user orientation programs and promotional activities for student users also. From the observation, it was found that Akademi library provides facilities for researchers and faculty members to access the digitised collection. One of the demerit of digital collection is, it is available only if internet connection is there. Users have no computer and internet connectivity, how they access digital collection, so Akademi library should offer infrastructure facilities to access for all user community without discrimination.
- Most of the respondents were using the digital library occasionally and main purpose for using digital library is for research and reference.
- 74% of the respondents were indicated that digitization of old and rare collection of Kerala Sahitya Akademi library is highly useful. Majority of the respondents opined that digitisation will increase the preservation and access of the collection and digital collection provides same effect and environment of print collection at same time respondents point out that digital collection will not provide active reading. This is because majority of the users of Akademi library are literature based information seekers, so they need active reading.
- Majority of the respondents choose both digital and print collection for their information needs. Print collection have more preference than digital collection. Digital collection cannot replace the existing print collection, because of the mind set of users of Akademi library, most of them are paper centric.
- 51.3% respondents indicated that digital collection is adequate for their needs.48.6% indicate inadequacy.
- Help from the staff is the most satisfied factor and search and browse facilities are the least satisfied factor. In the digital catalogue of Akademi, collection is classified and arranged in Malayalam and English alphabetical order. For easy access, library should have to arrange in a subject order and provide search and browsing facilities by author, subject, keyword etc.

- Lack of orientation and promotional activities from the library is the highest problem faced by the users.

8. CONCLUSION

In traditional system librarian act as an intermediary between information resource and user/information seeker, but in the case of digital library system there is no intermediary. In a digital library environment user can access the all information easily if internet connection is available. Motive of the digitization initiatives of some institutions is to digitize their collection for the preservation purpose only not for the access. If they were providing access of digitized collection, it only for selected user community through intranet or fee based. This study has clearly indicated that digitization of old and rare collection will increase the preservation and access of the same, but library should provide orientation and promotion to improve the usage of digitised collection. To some degree, these results may be taken in to account in planning the further development of digital library in the Kerala Sahitya Akademi and other institutions also.

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