

LIBRARIES' ROLE IN ADVANCEMENT AND GROWTH OF THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

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Abstract :

The large and varied Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is the result of several scientific breakthroughs, cultural legacies, and historical knowledge accumulated over thousands of years. Since libraries are custodians of knowledge, they are vital to the creation, advancement, and maintenance of this system. This study looks into how libraries support research, encourage educational initiatives, and house traditional manuscripts—all of which add to the Indian Knowledge System. The study also examines the challenges libraries face in this endeavor and offers solutions to raise their profile in the digital age. Through a review of the literature and case studies, this study highlights the vital role libraries play in protecting India's intellectual heritage and promoting its development in the present era.

Keywords : Indian Knowledge System (IKS), Ancient wisdom, Cultural heritage, Scientific advancements, Libraries, Knowledge preservation, educational initiatives, Digital age, Intellectual heritage, Challenges

Introduction :

Philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and the arts are just a few of the many disciplines covered by the Indian Knowledge System, which reflects the country's rich intellectual heritage. Libraries have long been at the forefront of preserving this knowledge through the collection and preservation of books, manuscripts, and digital resources. Using new methods and technology, libraries today are constantly evolving to support the expansion and dissemination of both traditional and contemporary information.

The preservation of ancient manuscripts and literature, many of which were written in Sanskrit, Pali, Tamil, or another classical language, has long been a priority for India's libraries. The Asiatic Society Library, the National Library of India, and libraries from several universities have painstakingly collected, indexed, and digitally saved these manuscripts to ensure that they will be available to future generations. The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, for instance, has digitized thousands of manuscripts and made them accessible online in an effort to close the gap between traditional knowledge and contemporary technology (IGNCA, 2023).

India's intellectual traditions and rich cultural past are embodied in the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). Astronomy, music, architecture, philosophy, yoga, Ayurveda,

Sanskrit literature, and mathematics are just a few of the many academic disciplines that fall under this category. In addition to significantly advancing global knowledge, these systems have shaped India's social and cultural landscape. Libraries are essential to the preservation, development, and expansion of this vast repository of knowledge because they act as bridges between traditional knowledge and modern research

Preservation of Traditional Knowledge :

● **Preservation of Textual Records :**

One of the primary roles that libraries play in promoting IKS is the preservation of old manuscripts and writings. Libraries like the Asiatic Society Library and the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, as well as organizations like the National Mission for Manuscripts, have played a significant role in the preservation of important manuscripts. According to Singh (2020), these libraries house thousands of manuscripts in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and other regional languages that are crucial to understanding India's historical wisdom and knowledge systems.

● **Attempts at Digitization :**

Nowadays, digitization is crucial to the preservation of knowledge. Libraries have been using digital technology more and more to make historical texts accessible to people all around the world. The Digital Library of India initiative was started by the Indian government with the intention of digitizing significant literary and scientific works.

According to Sharma et al. (2021), these efforts have made it easier for scholars worldwide to acquire Indian traditional knowledge.

● **Promoting Scholarship and Research :**

In several areas of Indian knowledge, libraries offer vital resources and assistance for scholarly inquiry. Large collections on topics like Ayurveda, Vedic studies, and traditional Indian philosophy are available at university libraries like those at Jawaharlal Nehru University and Banaras Hindu University. With the use of these tools, academics can carry out in-depth research and promote the Indian Knowledge System.

Libraries' Function in Maintaining IKS :

1. Preservation of Textual Records :

Large collections of ancient manuscripts written on paper, birch bark, and palm leaves may be found in several Indian institutions, including the National Library in Kolkata and the Sarasvati Mahal Library in Thanjavur. Scholars and researchers studying the Indian Knowledge System can gain a lot of knowledge from these works.

2. Digital Preservation :

In the digital age, knowledge storage and accessibility have undergone substantial shift. To ensure preservation and greater accessibility, libraries are increasingly digitizing their collections. The National Mission for Manuscripts, which aims to scan and conserve manuscripts across India, is one notable initiative in this field.

3. Combining Traditional and Modern Knowledge :

In order to close the gap between conventional knowledge and current scientific research, libraries are crucial. By providing users with access to both new and old scientific material, libraries enable trans-disciplinary study, which can lead to the development of new concepts and knowledge. For example, combining Ayurvedic expertise with modern medicine can lead to new therapeutic methods.

Conclusion :

Without libraries, the Indian Knowledge System cannot be created, disseminated, or maintained. By adapting to technological advancements and addressing contemporary concerns, libraries can maintain their crucial role in conserving India's intellectual heritage. Through deliberate initiatives and partnerships, libraries can significantly contribute to making the Indian Knowledge System available and necessary part of global knowledge.

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