

Digital Library Preserving the Culture of India: A Study on Youth

Pina Bansal¹, Udisha Pareek²

^{1,2}Banasthali Vidyapith, Tonk (Rajasthan) India.

ABSTRACT

“Libraries are more than just a storage place for books, they are treasure troves filled with creativity and knowledge. And that knowledge is empowering.” – R.L. Hemlock

India is undergoing several changes and development, in the context of learning. In recent years, the digital availability of libraries throughout the country has increased immensely. Today, people can access all types of resources, such as Books, Audio Books/Lectures, Video lectures, Lecture Presentations/Notes, Simulations, Research Papers, Articles, Dissertation/Thesis, Question Papers, and Solutions through the official site of the National Digital Library of India (NDLI). Anyone and everyone can access a large amount of educational content published by great authors through these digital libraries. India's youth can easily access a varied number of ancient books and material about the country's history and culture as well. Digital libraries are not only providing resources but also preserving the culture of India. The prime objective of this research is to study the popularity of digital libraries in India. This study also reveals the role of digital libraries in preserving the culture of India. With that, the researchers will also look into the benefits of these libraries in the country as well as their consumption by the youth of India. The researchers will use the case study method to discuss a few governmental digital libraries, university and private digital libraries in India. Along with the case study method, primary data will be collected through the audience survey method which will include a questionnaire focussing on youth aged 18-35 with a sample size of 100.

Keyword:- Digital library, Preserving the Culture, Online Resources, National Digital Library of India, Benefits of Digital Library

I INTRODUCTION

(a) **Digital Library** - A Digital library, also called an online library, is an online repository of digital objects that include text, images, audio, videos, and other resources available in an online format that can be accessible with the help of the internet. The resources available in digital libraries include research papers, thesis/dissertations, books, and articles about ancient history, science, technology, arts, and many more. Unlike traditional/physical libraries, digital libraries do not require much storage space for the collection of materials. Along with that, these libraries do not need to spend large bucks on maintenance, staff salaries, rent, the addition of more books, etc. The open-source software movement has resulted in the creation of software for digital libraries and institutional repositories. The creation of digital libraries has been sped up with the help of software such as Greenstone Digital Library software and DSpace. Libraries are now taking the lead in the development of institutional repositories that support the open access movement. The digital library stores digital objects that represent various types of data. Older collections are digitized through a conversion process that converts paper documents to electronic format, also known as analog to digital conversion. Character sets must be carefully considered when converting texts between languages. Unicode establishes a standard scheme for all languages from all over the world. It is critical to managing the digital library once it has been created. Hardware management, software management, collection management, preservation/archiving, financial

management, and the access system are all issues and strategies involved in digital library management. The creation of digital libraries necessitates extensive planning.

(b) **National Digital Library of India** - The National Digital Library of India (NDLI) is an initiative under the Ministry of Education under the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT). This project is launched by the Union Human Development Minister, Mr. Prakash Javadekar in June 2018 and is developed by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur. This library provides millions of academic texts from around the world, all of which are accessible to the public. It is a virtual repository of learning resources that offers a variety of services to the learning community. The National Digital Library aims to empower, inspire, and encourage learning by making digital educational resources available to all Indian citizens. The National Digital Library was first developed and implemented in 2015 by the Indian Institute of Technology in Kharagpur, using technology provided by the HRD Ministry. The digital library is one of the projects included in Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Digital India initiative. According to Mr. Prakash Javadekar, the National Digital Library will make learning resources available to users. According to a website called OpenGov, The National Digital Library of India has over 17 million source materials from over 160 sources, in over 200 languages, and around 3 million users are registered on NDLI. Along with the website, the NDLI can also be accessed through smartphones in the form of mobile applications. As

of now, the National Digital Library App (NDL India) has crossed 1 million downloads and is available for both Android and iPhone users. Learners can use parameters such as subject matter, source, and content type to find specific information. The app of the National Digital Library of India is available in 11 different languages which include English, Hindi, Bengali, Assamese, Gujarati, Odia, Marathi, etc. Anyone, who uses the digital library at any time and from any location, contributes to the government's Read More India (Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat) plan, which aims to improve the country's youth's language and math skills. To increase efficiency and save time and money, the National Digital Library employs a single-window system. The platform gathers and organizes metadata from India's top educational institutions as well as from around the world. It's a digital library that stores textbooks, articles, videos, audiobooks, lectures, simulations, fiction, and other learning materials. The National Virtual Library of India, which is part of the Ministry of Culture's National Mission on Libraries, contains resources in arts, music, dance, culture, theatre, science, technology, archaeology, literature, e-papers, and manuscripts, among other fields. All of this data has been compiled, organized, and presented on a single online platform: the website. The National Digital Library will revolutionize how education is accessed and presented in India, and it will provide every citizen with the digital tools and resources they need to empower themselves. Through the large database of resources, NDLI proposes knowledge and prospects to everyone across the country. The following points are the salient features of the National Digital Library of India:

- (i) Educational materials are available for students at all levels of education, from elementary to post-secondary.
- (ii) Students, teachers, researchers, librarians, professionals, differently-abled users, and all lifelong learners will benefit from the NDLI's usability.
- (iii) Different criteria, such as education level, language, level of difficulty, content medium, and other factors, can be used to filter the information needed.
- (iv) It's a personalized service that's available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so students can find the right resources with minimal effort and time.
- (v) Content from various domains such as Technology, Humanities, Science, Agriculture, and others can be found in the repository.

- (vi) The content is available in over 60 different formats, including books, manuscripts, articles, theses, video lectures, and more.
- (vii) More than 70 languages are supported by the content.
- (viii) Content from various Indian institutional repositories is combined in this repository.

II LITERATURE REVIEW

For better and quality research, the researchers read a few previously written and uploaded research papers through various great authors. One of the research papers, the researchers found relevant to this study is by Dr. Anil Singh. Dr. Anil Singh is currently employed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi, in the Library and Documentation Division. He has more than 45 publications to his name so far. He has also received the Indian Library Association's 'ILA Promoter Award 2009' and the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation's 'RRRLF Best Paper Award 2001.' He studied about digital libraries and how they are helping in preserving the cultural heritage of India in his research paper titled, "Digital preservation of cultural heritage resources and manuscripts: An Indian government initiative". He discussed the role of digitization in preserving the cultural heritage of India. Along with that, he mentioned a few initiatives launched by the Government of India in order to spread awareness about digital libraries and their role in the preservation of the history, culture, and manuscripts of India.

In his abstract, he mentioned that "**Cultural heritage is the symbolic presence that integrates the history, traditions, and culture of a country, and while it is an irreplaceable source of pride for that country's people, it also possesses a universal value that can touch all people around the world**", which is quite captivating. His paper "Digital preservation of cultural heritage resources and manuscripts: An Indian government initiative" also appraises the UNESCO's charter 2003 for the preservation of digital heritage. Plus, he mentioned the need of preserving these cultures and manuscripts digitally.

(a) Hypothesis

- (i) The researchers believe that today's youth is highly influenced by the fact that everything is available online. And because of this reason, the researchers created a hypothesis that digital libraries, whether government, university, or private whatsoever, are contributing to the preservation of the culture of India.
- (ii) Also, this study may prove in the end that youth are immensely using digital libraries and they think it's beneficial in varied ways.

- (iii) The research paper that Dr. Anil Singh authored focus on the Indian Government Initiatives like National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) and Kalasampada ((Digital Library – Resource for Indian Cultural Heritage Project) and about a few centres and agencies like Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and Ministry of Culture.
- (iv) Whereas this research discusses National Digital Libraries of India (NDLI) as well as case studies regarding different categories of digital libraries - university, government-funded, and private digital libraries.
- (v) Along with that, a detailed study has been conducted on the youth of India aged between 18 to 35 years.

III DIGITAL PRESERVATION OF INDIA'S CULTURE

According to Times of India, **“Preserving the books, providing information and space for reading has been the very purpose of libraries for ages. But today, at a time when information is at the disposal of the users around the clock through digital modes – are libraries still relevant and should resource be spent on libraries. One cannot debate the fact that a visit to the library is on a decline.”**

Many libraries in India have begun to transform traditional print resources into digital resources. Many schools, colleges, and universities have already established digital libraries where users can access information and resources in a variety of digital formats, including e-books, PDF papers, static images, infographics, audiobooks, videos, journals, quizzes, and simulations.

The process of transferring print and other non-print documents into digital format for simple access by users is known as digitization. Print and non-print media both have a shelf life. So, in order to keep these materials beyond their useful life, we must use long-term preservation techniques. Digital preservation is the process of storing both digitized and born-digital content in a viable state for future access by users. It entails a collection of methodical rules, processes, strategies, technology, and methods. India, as one of the world's oldest cultural civilizations, has a tremendous cultural history, both material and invisible. According to a website called Digital Preservation Coalition, India is the world's greatest repository of manuscripts, with an estimated 5 million ancient manuscripts. Religion, astrology, astronomy, mathematics, and ancient medicine are all included in these writings. Over 4 lakh Indian ancient manuscripts have been digitized by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) www.ignca.gov.in and later by the National Mission for

Manuscripts (NMM) nmm.gov.in. The majority of these digitized manuscripts are kept on DVDs or File Savers. The importance of both access and digital preservation cannot be overstated. A huge number of other cultural resources are also available in India's archives and museums. Some new initiatives like the National Digital Library of India <https://ndl.iitkgp.ac.in/> and a project like the National Virtual Library of India are a few initiatives working in order to preserve maximum books and e-material. Some of the content available on the official website of the National Digital Library of India include -

- (a) books, video lectures, magazines related to **Architecture, Aerospace engineering, Textile engineering, Mechanical engineering** field in the “engineering” section,
- (b) material related to the field of **history, geography, psychology, constitutional law, mass communication, film studies, music** under the “humanities” section,
- (c) content under the “literature” section includes books and video lectures relevant to **English, Hindi, Urdu, and Sanskrit literature,**
- (d) the “science” section includes material for **agriculture, atmospheric sciences, biology, chemistry, EVS, mathematics,** and almost all other fields of science,
- (e) lastly, the “law & management” section includes maximum content that is required to understand **law and management.**

IV CASE STUDY

Since, this research is all about the easy availability of e-books, articles, research content through the digital library in India, the researchers did a detailed case study on a few digital libraries that are government-funded, private and institutional/university. Each section discusses at least two examples of the Indian Digital Library.

V GOVERNMENT-FUNDED DIGITAL LIBRARY

The Government of India launched several Digital Libraries, keeping in mind the fact that every book and/or material should be easily accessible to the public especially the youth of the country. Two famous digital libraries launched and funded by the government are mentioned further:

- (a) **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) Digital Library** - The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts is envisioned as a place where all forms of art can be studied and enjoyed, each with its own integrity but interconnected with nature, social structure, and cosmology. The visual arts, ranging from architecture, sculpture, painting, and graphics to general material culture,

photography, and film' the performing arts of music, dance, fairs, festivals, and lifestyle that has an aesthetic dimension' are all included in this definition of the arts. There are various divisions under the IGNCA. One of them is Kalanidhi which is a national information system and a data bank for the arts, humanities, and cultural heritage, complete with a multimedia reference library. The numerous branches of Kalanidhi include a reference library, reprography unit, cultural archive, media production unit, conservation unit, slide unit, and photography unit. The IGNCA reference library has a huge collection of books in the humanities and arts. It consists of books, microfilm, and microfiche reproductions of multiple folios of unpublished Sanskrit, Pali, Persian, and Arabic manuscripts, pictures, and slides. Many rare collections of prominent scholars who have made ground-breaking contributions in the spheres of arts and sciences have been added to the library. The reprographic compilation of unpublished manuscripts in Indian and foreign collections from private and public libraries is a distinctive feature of Kalanidhi's Reprography unit. A ground breaking attempt has been made to bring together fundamental sources of Indian tradition that were previously scattered, fragmented, unavailable, or worse, in danger of extinction, under one roof. Other digital resources that can be accessed via IGNCA Digital Library are IGNCA Journal and newsletters, bibliographies, microfiches, microfilm, research papers and essays, rare books, animations, digital images, and IGNCA publications.

- (b) **Vidyanidhi Digital Library** - Vidyanidhi began as a pilot initiative in the year 2000, with funding from the Indian government as well as National Information System for Science and Technology (NISSAT) India, to establish the viability of an e-Thesis program in India. Vidyanidhi is becoming a national initiative with the help of the Ford Foundation and Microsoft India. The Ford Foundation is focusing its support on a doctoral thesis in the Social and Human Sciences. And Microsoft is assisting with Unicode implementation for Indian languages. Vidyanidhi's objective is to become a national repository as well as a collaborative coalition of universities and academic institutions. This program also aspires to become an online resource and technical method for creating, submitting, archiving, and accessing Indian theses. The mission of Vidyanidhi Digital Library is to create a repository for doctoral thesis from India. And to digitize, archive, and improve access to doctorate thesis in the country. This program aims to make thesis available online and contribute to increasing the visibility of Indian doctoral research. It provides tools and services to help doctorate students and universities improve their research capabilities. Vidyanidhi wants

to develop and use standard formats and templates to improve the quality of doctoral research in India. And instil "best practices" in scholarly writing and scholarship among pupils.

- (c) **Institutional Digital Library/University Digital Library** - Various institutes and universities in India have opened their Digital Library system, where the student, as well as the teacher, can access any material related to their course or any other course as well. Some of the big universities who have their own digital library are discussed by the authors below –
- (d) **Delhi University Library System** - The University Grants Commission provides a substantial portion of the funding for the DULS. There are more than 37 libraries in the Delhi University Library System. It is succeeding in reaching out to a larger academic community. DULS has increased its web activities by subscribing to as many as 64 high-quality electronic databases, which are now available to professors, students, and research scientists via the campus network. In addition, the UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium provides access to 21 other databases. Open Access e-resources are also promoted by DULS. Their success is based on the fact that it is used by the Delhi University academic community. DULS routinely hosts innovative Information Literacy Programs (ILP) for students, researchers, and faculty members, as well as providing tutorials to help the community become more knowledgeable.
- (e) **Nalanda Digital Library** - The Nalanda Digital Library is launched by the National Institute of Technology, Calicut Library's ongoing Digital Library program. The Nalanda Project intends to establish a full-fledged Digital Library at NITC to meet the growing demand for information resources from both campus users and remote users across the country. Some resources are available to everyone, while others are restricted to the NITC campus and its authorized users. NIT Calicut Library has 90,000 books, 16,500 journal back volumes, and 260 journal subscriptions, 201 of which have an online component. The Nalanda Digital Library, which is part of the NIT Calicut Library, provides free eBooks in PDF and HTML formats in subjects such as Engineering, Classic Fiction, History, Biography, Psychology, Philosophy, and Homeopathy. It also maintains the Nalanda Digital Library, which is a searchable and comprehensive Internet RFC Collection.
- (f) **Private Digital Libraries** - Apart from institutional digital libraries and governmental digital libraries, the third type of digital libraries available in India are the private digital libraries. These are neither funded by the Government of India nor any university or institution. These are created by private companies or

individuals and are for-profit proposes. Some of the popular private digital libraries the author has discussed are Knimbus and Mintbook.

(g) **Knimbus mLibrary** - Knimbus mLibrary is a cloud-based platform that allows any academic, corporate, or government institution's library to undergo a complete digital makeover. Users may access thousands of e-Resources from anywhere, at any time, and on any device thanks to the platform's single sign-on, modern UI, and simple navigation. It provides libraries with tools such as Universal Search, Off-Campus Access, Analytics, and a Librarian Dashboard on a unified Cloud Platform. Knimbus is the most widely utilized digital library platform, with 500+ reputable institutions using it. With the Knimbus mLibrary platform, institutions are changing their libraries for a digital future. Knimbus mLibrary is a feature-rich one-stop solution for creating a powerful and user-friendly digital library that allows users to access digital content anytime, anywhere, and on any device. Through deep integrations with MS Teams, Koha, OPAC, and software like Copyleaks Anti-Plagiarism, the mLibrary provides a unified experience. Users can use their desktop or mobile app to access the entire collection of subscribed e-Resources, open access content, and institutional documents. Knimbus is now genuinely a one-stop-shop for all library needs. It provides libraries all around the world with inexpensive, cutting-edge digital technology that allows users to access e-Resources in a personalized and accessible way. Across the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East, and South America, Knimbus has over 500 leading academic, government, and corporate institutions, as well as over 1 million users. NITI Aayog, IIT Roorkee, IIT Jammu, IIT Goa, NIT Calicut, NIT Surathkal, University of Hyderabad, Manipal University, BITS Pilani-Dubai, Renault Nissan, and others are just a few of their famous clientele.

(h) **Mintbook** - Mintbook curates the information that is solely focused on education and training. Mintbook's content is offered in a variety of media, including eBooks, videos, courses, quizzes, journals, and simulations (among others). This private digital library contains prepared content that is specifically matched to particular curricula and syllabi, as well as generic stuff. It contains digital rights for over 100+ publishers in 10 Indian regional languages and currently enables easy access to over 1 million+ e-resources. This private digital library was created in India with the Indian educational system in mind. Mintbook is a simple-to-use platform that is designed to make learning fun. It also includes a learning management system (LMS) and virtual classroom software. The digital library of Mintbook strives to bridge the gap between online learning and simple courses. An online library filled with international videos and eBooks gives learners a global perspective of the subjects at hand and allows users to understand how to apply their training to real-world scenarios, rather than monotonous, generic course materials that train learners on only "theoretical aspects" of subjects. Mintbook's digital library has a wide range of eBooks and 5 million+ e-resources from trusted certified publishers covering a wide range of topics and streams. Whether it's science, arts, or commerce, the digital library has a wealth of informational eBooks to help students learn more about each subject and prepare for competitive tests. Students can choose from a variety of eBooks on any subject they like.

VI DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher has conducted the audience research survey with the help of a questionnaire tool to know the viewpoint of the users of social media. The questionnaire has been conducted between the youth (18 to 35 years) and the sample size was 100. The questions and result of the survey are given below.

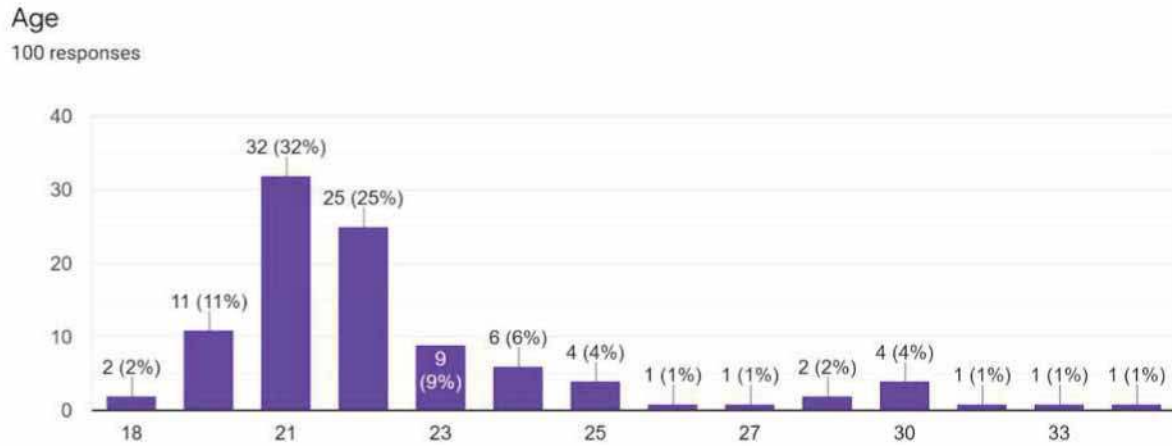


Fig.1

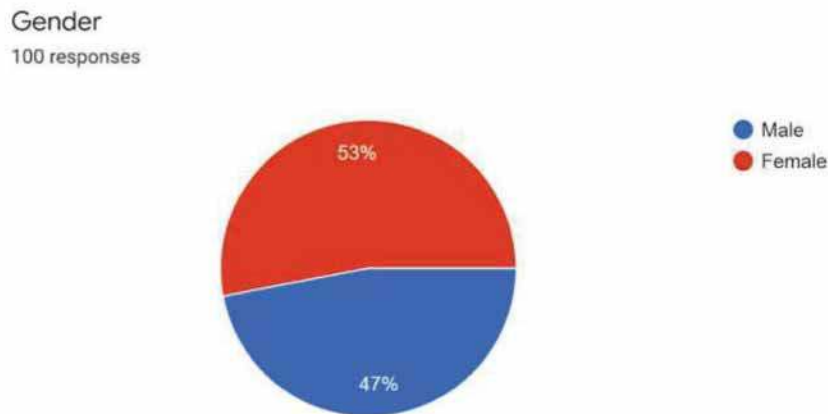


Fig. 2

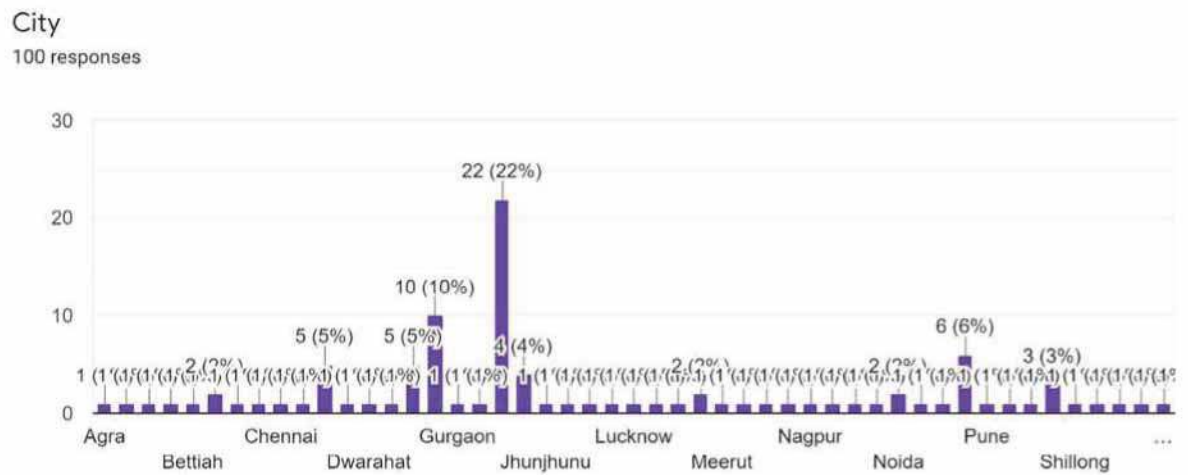


Fig. 3

Have you ever used a Digital Library?

100 responses

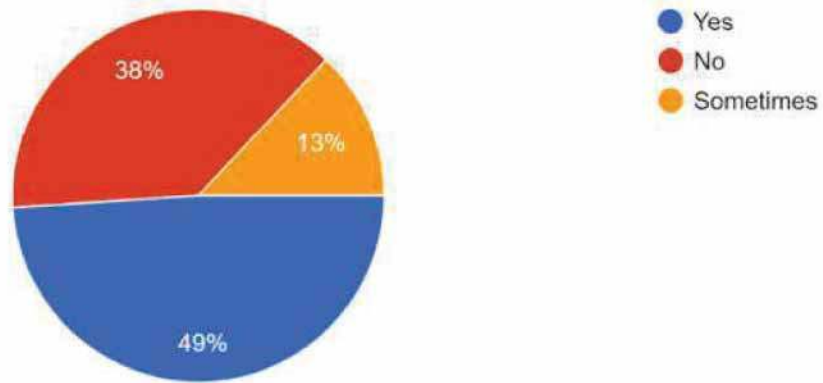


Fig. 4

How many times have you used a Digital Library?

100 responses

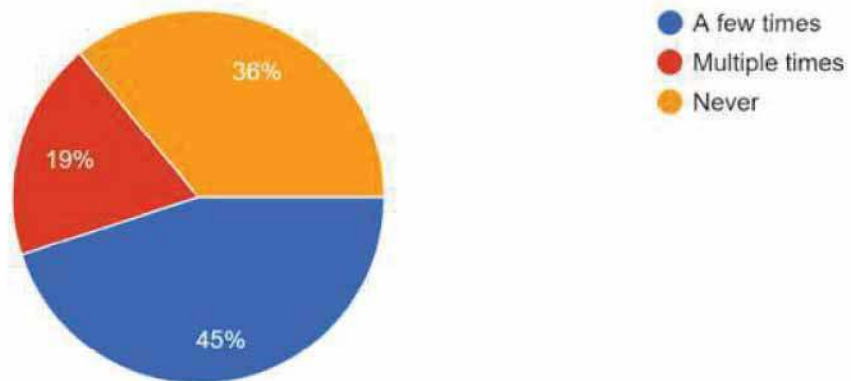


Fig. 5

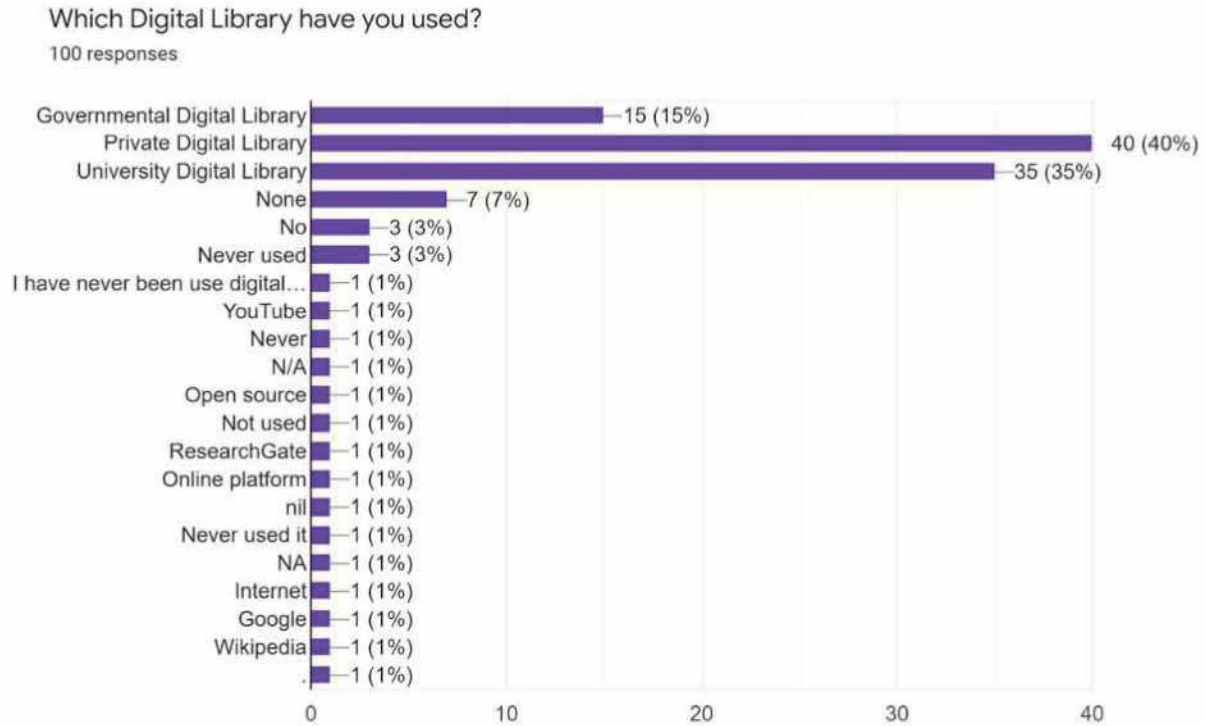


Fig. 6

What kind of resources have you accessed from a digital library?

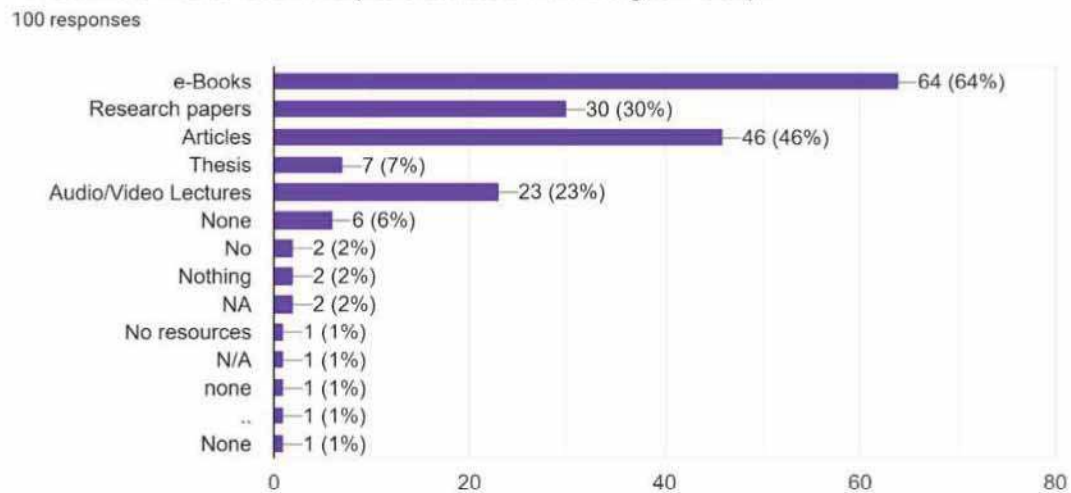


Fig. 7

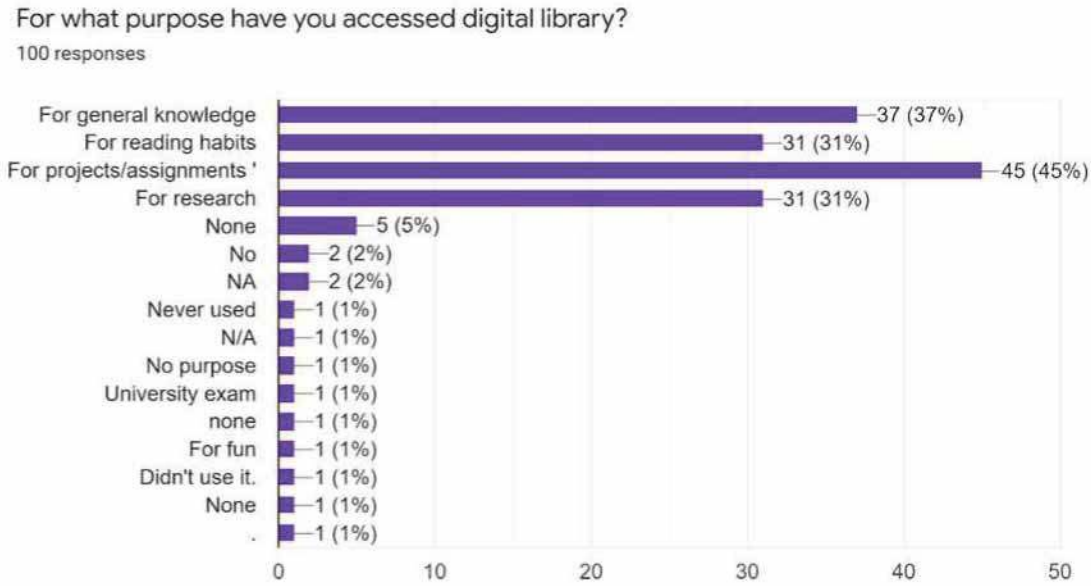


Fig. 8

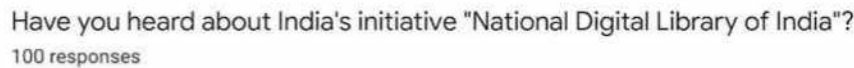


Fig. 9

This survey was conducted with 100 people ranging from 18 to 35 years. There were 47 percent male and 55 percent females. 73% of these 100 people are students, 15 percent are in corporate jobs and the rest are in different occupations like advocate, journalist, artist, teachers. The questionnaire was circulated among people from different cities of India. Among these 100 people, 49 percent of them have used digital libraries, 38 percent haven't used and 13 percent of them have used digital libraries sometimes. Further, they were asked the frequency of the usage of digital libraries where 45 percent of them have used digital libraries a few times and 19% of them have used them multiple times. When asked which digital library the respondent used, 40 percent of them chose a private digital library and 35 percent of them chose

institutional digital libraries. The respondents were asked to mention the name of the digital libraries they have used, a few of the responses were National Digital Library of India and Kindle. Out of these 100, 64 percent have accessed digital libraries for e-books, 46 percent for articles, 30 percent for research papers, and 23 percent for audio/video lectures (according to the choice given to opt for more than one option). The respondents' purpose behind accessing digital libraries was to use them for projects/assignments (45 percent), for general knowledge (37 percent), for reading habits and research (31 percent each) and the rest of them said: "NO" (according to the choice given to opt for more than one option). Further, the researchers questioned the respondents if they have heard about India's initiative "National Digital Library of India"

and 72 percent of them said NO, and the rest have heard about the initiative. 80 percent of our respondents find contents/materials available on digital libraries relevant and useful, whereas 20 percent out of 100 think the content available in these libraries is not relevant. When asked whether digital libraries are preserving the culture of India, 46 percent out of 100 confidently chose "yes", 8 percent certainly chose "no", whereas 46 percent were not sure enough, so they said "maybe". Lastly, the researchers asked if the respondents prefer traditional libraries or digital libraries, the responses were 50-50.

Before circulating the questionnaire, the researchers created a hypothesis that digital libraries, whether government-funded, institutional, or private whatsoever, are contributing to the preservation of the culture of India. Along with that, the researchers believed that this study may prove that the youth of India is immensely using digital libraries and they think it's beneficial in varied ways. But after the audience survey, it was found that the hypothesis created by the researchers is not fulfilled 100 percent.

VII CONCLUSION

Social norms, ethical values, traditional rituals, religious systems, political systems, artifacts, and technology originated in or are associated with the Indian culture. Digital libraries are playing an astounding role in preserving this unique culture of the country. This research found that the initiative "National Digital Library of India" started by the Government of India is a startling way in the preservation of the history, manuscripts, epics from ancient times, and so much more. However, in the survey conducted, it was found that the majority of the youth of this country are not aware of NDLI. In fact, they claim that they haven't used a digital library before. The reason behind this was the fact that the youth don't know what a digital library actually is.

In conclusion, the Government of India should run special programs in order to create awareness about digital libraries as well as their initiative "National Digital Library of India" amongst the youth. Many schools and universities should also include a portal of Digital Libraries on their website and encourage students to read at least one book every month. This will help students understand the importance of digital libraries and also improve reading habits/skills among them. To motivate the youth, the Government or Institutions can provide credit points/scores to the students who achieve a certain target of reading content on these digital libraries. This will also assist them in higher education and later in life.

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