

BOOK REVIEW

# Digital Preservation of Cultural Heritage Collection: Among Libraries of India and Iran: A Comparative Study

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*Digital Preservation of Cultural Heritage Collection: Among Libraries of India and Iran: A Comparative Study*

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*for preservation and finally challenges for digitization and digital preservation [repeated words] are investigated in detail. This book also gives useful suggestions for both libraries of India and Iran. This book can be very interesting to library professionals in the field of digital preservation of cultural heritage worldwide.” (Cover)*

*“Digitization and digital preservation in India and Iran are very vital to preserve cultural heritage collections, and also make them accessible to the scholars and the public. This book attempts to study the digitization and the digital preservation activities in libraries of India and Iran. Different topics included are: main reasons for digitization, type of collections that are being digitized, the availability of infrastructure, the budgeting areas, the storage procedures, the ways of accessibility to digital materials, the traditional and modern methods*

*Digital Preservation of Cultural Heritage* is divided into six sections, viz., introduction, review of literature, objectives, hypotheses and methodology, profile of libraries in India and Iran, summary of findings, recommendations and conclusion, and bibliographical references.

*Digital Preservation of Cultural Heritage Collection* is probably the first publication to that builds a detailed profile of fifteen major digital libraries specializing in cultural heritage in two countries. It offers the basics for those who wish to know the emerging digital preservation strategies in two countries (viz., eight from India and seven from Iran)—in the context

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of comparing similarities and differences, and identifying the distinctness of each.

The eight Indian libraries, included in this book are: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (New Delhi); Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library (Patna); National Archives of India (New Delhi); National Library of India (Kolkata); Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (New Delhi); Oriental Research Institute (Mysore); Rampur Raza Library (Rampur); and The Asiatic Society Library (Kolkata).

The seven Iranian libraries included are: Central Library and Documentation Centre (University of Tehran); Central Library of Tabriz (Tabriz); Library, Museum and Documentation Centre Parliament (Tehran); Malek National Library and Museum (Tehran); National Library and Archives of Islamic Republic of Iran (Tehran); Organization of Libraries, Museums and Documents Centre of Astan Quds (Mashhad); and the Grand Library of Ayatullah al-Uzma Marashi Najafi (Qom)

Discussing 'Infrastructure for Digitization of Heritage Collection' the authors state their findings:

"Considering the tools and equipment used for digitization in India and Iran, it was found that, tools and equipment for Indian libraries adapted were: computer systems 60, servers 14 and scanners 10. As far as Iran libraries were concerned, it was found that they adapted: computer systems numbering 60, scanners 27 and servers 23. Therefore, a large majority of Indian and Iranian libraries adapted good numbers of computer system for digitization. However, it is important to note that, Indian and Iranian libraries used very few scanners and servers. This clearly indicates that, there is a lack of sufficient facilities for digitization" (p. 126).

The outcome of this book is to promote the need for preserving cultural heritage collections across cultures and countries. Thus, in the words of the authors:

"India and Iran are countries with a huge wealth of ancient knowledge, created in different historical periods, going back to thousands of years. Most of them belong to different areas of intellectual activities such as religion, history, culture and tradition, arts and literature, are in several languages and scripts, and are preserved in form of manuscripts, written on different materials and also in rare books. Their heritage collections are spread all over the country, and in some cases also abroad. Today most of them face survival threats. Both the countries have probably lost a large number of manuscripts already. Among the existing collections, only a portion has been surveyed. So, digitization and digital preservation of these heritage collections will be helpful in safeguarding accessibility for the present and future generations" (p. 143).

The price of the book is exorbitant and may be a major constraint for smaller libraries or for an individual purchase.

Those who are interested in replicating this work can easily adapt to suite their respective needs. In today's globalized environment of universal ubiquitous information access to so many bibliographic references, cited in *Digital Preservation of Cultural Heritage Collection*, it is easy for students, librarians and researchers, from the above two countries, as well as from any other country, to refer, cite, and replicate the techniques and strategies in their own milieu.

This is a useful book, and hence strongly recommended for researchers, historians, digital librarians and e-librarians and those with interest in preserving cultural heritage.

*Mohamed Taher is an author of many works in the field of Area Studies Librarianship. His most recent books are Job Search the Canadian Way (Akbari Informatics, 2010) and Cyber Worship in Multifaith Perspectives (Scarecrow Press, 2006). He serves as Information Coordinator, Ontario Multifaith Council, Toronto, ON, Canada.*

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