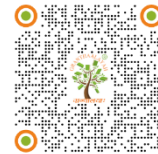


Original Article

DIGITAL PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL INDIAN CHITRAKALA: ROLE OF COLLEGE LIBRARIES

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ABSTRACT

India's cultural heritage is one of the core strengths of the country. There are several Chitrakala including Madhubani, Warli, Pattachitra, Gond, Kalamkari, Phad, and miniature painting styles which represents artistic philosophy, wisdom. Nowadays, many of these creatives and historical traditions are being threatened due to modernization, environmental deterioration, documentations, rights, etc. These all are priceless assets of our country. Its high time to do the digital preservation of such culture / Chitrakala. Preservation doesn't mean the digitization. It should be legacy content, long-term preservation, replica, disaster recovery, documentation, etc.

In the academic context, College libraries play a vital role to preserve the traditional Chitrakala. College Libraries can evolve from traditional information repositories into dynamic digital knowledge centers. College libraries may derive the mature methodology for the preservation and same may be treated as SoPs (set of protocols). There are five steps to execute the preservation

- 1) Identification of chitrakala (paintings, sketches, manuscripts, visual narratives, etc)
- 2) Identification and implementation of Institutional Repository (IR) using open-source platform including Mirroring, backup of IR
- 3) Digitization of Chitrakala
- 4) Metadata of each component including patent / design details, if any
- 5) Add-on documentation for each component and interlinking with relevant chitrakala. Teaching, research, and multidisciplinary studies would assist to execute this step which helps future generations become more culturally conscious.

The development of institutional repositories, digital archives, virtual exhibitions, and open access platforms, college libraries can significantly enhance the visibility, accessibility, and scholarly use of Chitrakala resources at both national and global levels.

There are also several challenges for the libraries to do the preservation work. Some of the major challenges are copyright management, technology identification, technical knowledge, budget constraints, specialized training, and support from departments, etc. Sustainable digital solutions, skills building, and legislative assistance are needed to address these problems. This paper highlights how college libraries may significantly contribute to cultural sustainability and knowledge continuity in the digital age by actively participating in the digital preservation of traditional Indian Chitrakala, thereby reaffirming their growing role as guardians of cultural legacy.

Keywords: Digital Preservation, Indian Chitrakala, Cultural Heritage, College Libraries, Digital Repositories

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INTRODUCTION

India has one of the most vibrant and ancient artistic traditions in the world. Traditional Indian Chitrakala has strong roots in local mythology, customs, daily life, and culture. These artistic mediums function as visual narratives that record social values, beliefs, and historical experiences of communities rather than just being ornamental expressions.

Traditional paintings are becoming more and more endangered despite their cultural relevance because of physical deterioration, shifting lifestyles, commercialization, and dwindling traditional knowledge transfer. Physical works of art are extremely susceptible to environmental elements like light, humidity, insects, and pollution. Additionally, many traditional artists do not have access to institutional venues for preservation and documentation.

By transforming physical artworks into digital representations that can be kept, maintained, and accessible over time, digital preservation provides a sustainable alternative. With their technological infrastructure and knowledge of information management, college libraries can be vital to the preservation of these artistic forms for future generations.

CONCEPT OF DIGITAL PRESERVATION

The term "digital preservation" describes a collection of procedures and actions that guarantee access to digital content for as long as is required. It entails preserving digital content throughout time and technical advancements, according to the Digital Preservation Coalition.

Digital preservation in the context of Chitrakala comprises:

- Digitization of artworks in high quality
- The production of technical and descriptive metadata
- Keeping data in safe online archives
- Backup and migration plans
- Open platforms for online access

Digital preservation improves visibility, accessibility, and research potential in addition to protecting content from physical deterioration.

TRADITIONAL INDIAN CHITRAKALA: AN OVERVIEW

Many regional painting styles are included in traditional Indian Chitrakala, such as:

- **Madhubani (Bihar):** Known for its geometric designs and mythical themes
- **Warli (Maharashtra):** Tribal artwork that portrays nature and everyday life
- **Gond (Madhya Pradesh):** Distinguished by complex symbols and patterns
- **Pattachitra:** narrative scroll paintings from West Bengal and Odisha
- Folk religious scroll paintings from Phad (Rajasthan)
- **Kalamkari (Andhra Pradesh):** Block-printed or hand-painted textiles

These works of art are extremely delicate and prone to deterioration because they are traditionally constructed using handmade materials and natural colors.

COLLEGE LIBRARIES' FUNCTION IN DIGITAL PRESERVATION

College libraries are changing from being book-focused establishments to becoming vibrant centers of information. The following dimensions help to understand their function in Chitrakala's digital preservation

DOCUMENTATION AND DIGITIZATION

Libraries can use scanners, digital cameras, and audiovisual equipment to digitize artworks, manuscripts, artist interviews, and associated data.

DIGITAL REPOSITORIES

Digital collections can be methodically stored in institutional repositories run by college libraries, guaranteeing long-term preservation and retrieval.

STANDARDIZATION AND CREATION OF METADATA

Librarians are skilled in cataloging and metadata standards like Dublin Core, which improve interoperability and discoverability.

DISSEMINATION AND ACCESS

Libraries can give academics, students, and art lovers worldwide access to digital Chitrakala resources through open access platforms.

CULTURAL AND ACADEMIC INVOLVEMENT

Libraries can arrange exhibitions, workshops, and awareness campaigns in partnership with art departments, regional artists, museums, and cultural institutions.

CHALLENGES IN DIGITAL PRESERVATION OF CHITRAKALA

Digital preservation has a number of obstacles despite its potential:

- Insufficient resources and infrastructure
- A lack of qualified experts in digital preservation
- Intellectual property and copyright concerns
- The lack of uniform regulations
- Obsolescence of technology

It will take institutional dedication, policy backing, and ongoing capacity building to overcome these obstacles.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive and analytical methodology used in this study draws from:

- Examining the body of current literature
- Examination of library digital preservation procedures
- Research on cultural heritage preservation policy

Books, journal papers, reports, and internet resources were used as secondary sources.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

College libraries have enormous potential to support the preservation of cultural heritage, according to the report. In addition to safeguarding traditional art forms, digital projects include them into scholarly debate and digital scholarship. Libraries that use digital preservation techniques can support indigenous knowledge systems and act as stewards of cultural memory.

CONCLUSION

In the modern digital era, digital preservation has become crucial to preserving traditional Indian Chitrakala. College libraries are in a good position to take on this duty because of their proficiency in knowledge sharing, technological management, and information organization.

College libraries can guarantee the survival and international acknowledgment of India's traditional painting legacy by creating digital archives, implementing metadata standards, and encouraging open access. A sustainable digital preservation ecosystem requires cooperation between libraries, cultural organizations, legislators, and artist communities. In the end, digital preservation enhances academic engagement and cultural identification in addition to safeguarding cultural heritage.

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