CHAPTER IV

PROFILE OF LIBRARIES IN INDIA AND IRAN
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4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the profile of selected libraries with their heritage collections, and also the ongoing digitization and digital preservation activities are presented. The investigator has personally visited all the selected libraries in both the countries, and made a study of the process of digitization being affected by these libraries. She has also studied many sources and visited the websites of libraries that have original records and have also brought out detailed annual reports and publications.

4.2 Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (1987), New Delhi

4.2.1 Establishment

The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) which is established in 1987 in New Delhi, in the memory of Smt. Indira Gandhi was created as a centre for studying of all art forms each as a separate entity, but with a correlation and interdependence with other art forms. IGNCA is a leading institution in the research and development of Indian art and culture.

The Kala Nidhi division of IGNCA, is a national information system and data bank for the arts, culture etc., It has an exhaustive reference library of multimedia composition and a data bank for research in humanities, archaeology, anthropology, philosophy, literature, arts etc., and all this is at the disposal of researchers in India and abroad, for their respective fields of study.

4.2.2 Objectives

- To serve as a major resource centre for the arts, especially for written, oral or visual source materials;
- To establish a tribal and folk arts division, with a core collection for conducting systematic scientific studies, and for live presentations.
- To provide a forum for a creative and critical dialogue through performances, exhibitions, multi-media projections and workshops, between the diverse arts, traditional and contemporary;
- To foster dialogue between arts and current ideas in philosophy, science and technology,
- To evolve models of research programmes and arts administration, more pertinent to the Indian ethos;
- To elucidate the formative and dynamic factors in the complex web of interactions between diverse social strata, communities and regions;
- To promote a network with national and international institutions; and
- To conduct related research in the arts, humanities and culture.

4.2.3 Collection

There are collections of cultural archival material and rare books in the Kala Nidhi division, 2.5 lakhs of manuscripts in microfilm format, a lakh of visuals, more than 1000 hours of audio visual recording, 9 personal collections of eminent scholars and artists, photographic collections of famous photographers and many more unique documents are available.

At present the microfiche collection of the reference library consist of a large number of volumes of research journals. Some of the important ones are the British Burma Gazetteer, Bulletin de l’ecole Françoise de Extreme Orient, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Britain, the New India Antiquary and the Tamil Culture. Almost half of the available material has already been digitized.

The slide unit of the reference library, started in 1989 has over the years acquired and created slides from 17 centres in India and 15 centres from abroad. It produces about 3000 slides per year and is aiming to improve its growth rate. The slide unit has the most extensive collection of slides on Indian art i.e. painting, sculpture, architecture, illustrated manuscripts, performing arts etc and is the only library in India with complete up-to-date and proper infrastructure for storage, data computerization, duplication and scanning of slides. All the collections have been digitized and added to the digital library of IGNCA (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 2009).
4.2.4 Services/Facilities

The Government of India nominated IGNCA as the Nodal Agency for all matters in regard to creating a national data bank on art, humanities and culture. The national data bank provides computerized storage, retrieval and complete propagation of information on all aspects of art and cultural heritage. This division also supports the computerization efforts of other divisions of IGNCA and will network institutions in India and abroad. It also undertakes research and development projects. Some of its current projects are:

*Union catalogue of catalogues* provides extensive information on thousands of catalogues of published/unpublished manuscripts. Computerization has been carried out on over 700 catalogues.

The complete graphic information on 3000 manuscripts of Gita – Govinda, Meghaduta and Natyasastra has been computerized on an experimental basis. This reveals the uniform character of the texts in diverse scripts and also the variations in commentaries.

*Databases on Sangita collections of cultural archives* have been developed, namely Natarajan Collection on Carnatic Music and S. Krishnaswami collection on musical instruments.

*The Kala Kosa Terms Database (KKTERMS) for Kalatattvakosa project* has been developed. Under this project, terms have been identified for the glossary (Kalatattvakosa). In the initial phase, data relating to 12 selected terms is being computerized.

*Cultural Informatics Lab (CIL)* was established in 1994 in collaboration with the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) which is providing assistance for a multimedia documentation project titled “Strengthening National Facility for Interactive Multimedia Documentation of Cultural Resources”.

The project has opened new fields of activity in the creation of synergies in art and information technology, which in turn has lead to operation, development and a demonstration of new technology for cultural documentation.
In collaboration with CIL at IGNCA, the Kala Nidhi division is digitizing all its print and non print material. Over 50 percent of non print material has been digitized. D-space, an open source digital library system has been established and CIL has already developed digital software of its own.

4.2.5 Digitization Activities

The main digitization scheme in IGNCA includes digitization of manuscripts, post digitization editing, ensuring high capacity storage and a reliable backup system for safety. The technology used for this programme is based on open standards using Unicode, a multi lingual open type standard for fonts, which is accepted worldwide.

Both English and Hindi (Devanagiri) can be used for search and the users have the options to select their desire materials from a specific type of collection, be it from books, manuscripts, slides, audio / video or if required from the entire collections. The standards for digitization by IGNCA are as per UNESCO and IFLA.

Another important aspect of the Kala Nidhi Division is the creation of a digital library of manuscripts jointly with the National Mission for Manuscripts. An online catalogue of about 8 lakh cultural resources in MARC – 21 is under finalization (Chaubey, 2011).

In order to consolidate and secure the wide- spread documents of Indian art and culture, and also become a major centre, the IGNCA, in association with the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology started a project, KALASAMPADA (Digital Library: Resources of Indian Cultural Heritage) for the development of a central source for the same. Kalasampada permits scholars to use all the materials under its preview including thousands of manuscripts, lakhs of slides, rare books, photographs, audio visual material and also the research publication of IGNCA under a single window. For the development of the software package, multimedia computer technology was used, which integrates a variety of information under one roof. The Digital Library has over 50 lakh folio’s of manuscripts, a lakh of slides, thousands of photographs, books by IGNCA the KALAKALP (IGNCA’s Journal), VIHANGAMA (IGNCA’s News letter), over 400 hours of audio and video tapes and above 50 walkthroughs.
The process of digitization, post digitized editing and integration are continuing for all the material in the IGNCA. Retrieval of material is possible by a specially developed method, and most of the materials are available on the IGNCA Intranet. The user interface of the application is quite simple and is commonly used by many institutions.

4.2.5.1 Digitization Projects

- **Oriental Research Library, Srinagar**

  The IGNCA, under its manuscripts acquisition program has digitized all the manuscripts at the Oriental Research Library, Srinagar, Shri Pratap Singh library, Srinagar and the Allama Iqbal library, Srinagar. The collection includes some rare manuscripts on Yogavashistha, Mahabharata etc.

- **National Museum, New Delhi**

  More than 2700 manuscripts of the National Museum collection having over 9 lakh pages were digitized by the IGNCA till 2007.

- **Visva- Bharati, Shantiniketan**

  The digitization of some antiques, which contain about 870 rare manuscripts of Rabindranath Tagore, his paintings, photographs etc., was started at the Visva-Bharati centre, Shantiniketan.

- **Allahabad Museum, Allahabad**

  The digitization of over 6000 rare manuscripts, over 1500 sculptures and terracotta, 1000 paintings, coins, photographs etc., has started at the Allahabad Museum (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 2009).
4.3 Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library (1891), Patna, Bihar

Figure 3
Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library

4.3.1 Establishment

The library originated in a private collection of a bibliophile Mohammad Bakhsh and was expanded by his son Khuda Bakhsh, who inherited 1,400 manuscripts, and continued to add to the collection and eventually converted it into a private library by 1880. The library was opened to public in its inauguration by Sir Charles Elliot, Governor of Bengal on 5th October, 1891. In 1969 through a Federal Legislation, an Act of Parliament, namely “Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library Act (1969)”, the Government of India declared Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library a centre of national importance, and the government took over the funding, maintenance and development of the library. The library is now attracting scholars from all over the world (Imtiaz, 2009).

4.3.2 Objectives

- To promote research activates in certain specific areas such as Islamic studies, Arabic, Persian and Urdu literature;
To present the Khuda Bakhsh Award annually to eminent scholars working in these areas;

- To provide scholarships to encourage research in the specified areas;

- It has been recognized by seven Indian universities as a centre for pre-Doctoral and post-Doctoral research and,

- To have exchange programmes for procuring and providing reprographic copies of rare manuscripts with important Indian and international libraries.

### 4.3.3 Collection

The library specializes in Islamic studies, Tibb (Unani Medicine), Tazkira (Biography), Tasawwuf (Islamic Mysticism), Comparative religions, Medieval History, South East Asian History, West Asian History, Central Asian History, Medieval Science, Literature on Freedom Movement and National Integration, as also Urdu, Persian and Arabic Literatures. It is written in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Turkish, Hindi and Sanskrit and some are on Palm-Leaves. It includes splendours of art of Iranian, Mughal, Central Asian, Kashmiri and Rajasthani schools, besides Calligraphic Masterpieces (Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, 2009).

Manuscripts in India have a long tradition that was produced in all parts of the country, in different languages and scripts. These manuscripts were regarded as rare commodities, produced by hard labour and much cost. A sense of religious sanctity and reverence were associated with them, and they were worshipped like holy relics, and are now stored in different temples, museums, universities as well as in personal custody etc (Mazumdar, 2009).

### 4.3.4 Services /Facilities

Air- conditioning of the manuscript premises has been taken up on utmost priority. The Microfilming section is equipped with Hirakawa camera, automatic processor and microfilm reader printer. Photostat machines are used for reprographic services.

For purpose of making copies of rare material available to the scholars at distant places an offset printing machine was used and also new EPABX system with more points was installed to increase the output.
4.3.5 Digitization Activities

The pilot project of digitization of paper manuscripts has been entrusted to National Informatics Centre Services Incorporated (NICSI) and the work was started in October, 2005.

National Information Centre is a leading Govt. of India setup in the field of Information Technology. For the last several years, it has played a crucial role in changing the work culture within the Govt. organisations, by the induction of IT-tools, at almost each level of Govt. administration.

Figure 4
Persian Manuscript in Digitized Form

The manuscripts cover a wide range from plain calligraphy to ornamentation and illustration. The purpose is to access the output involving digital reproduction of different types of manuscripts, such as illustrated, ornamental, calligraphic etc. At present digitized manuscripts can be read in a computer room as in-house facility.

A project of digitization and creating database of these manuscripts has been taken up with a view to conservation, access, publication and preservation of the digital images. The functional objectives for digitization were improving access, preventing damage caused by frequent handling, examining possibilities of preparing e-books, and resource-sharing with other institutions.
The technical objectives of digitization in the library are: “cataloguing the manuscripts” initially and other rare materials, subscription as per Dublin Core standards, to develop an E-reading room, to prepare Web-Based catalogue of digitized manuscripts, to develop an E-library with storage and retrieval facility for the archives and to make available the digitized manuscripts to readers and scholars online.

4.4 National Archives of India (1891), New Delhi

4.4.1 Establishment

The National Archives of India owe its genesis to the Imperial Records Department which came into existence in 1891 in Calcutta. After transfer of the national capital from Calcutta to New Delhi in 1911, it shifted to the present premises in 1926.

The National Archives is the repository of the non-current records of the Government of India, which are being held in trust, for the use of administrators as well as scholars. It is an attached office of the Ministry of Culture. It is an implementing nodal agency of the Government of India for the Public Records Act, 1993, and Public Record Rules, 1997.

4.4.2 Objectives

- To encourage the scientific management, administration and conservation of records, all over the country;
- To foster closer relations between archivists and archival institutions both at the national and international level;
- To encourage greater liberalization of access to archival holdings;
- To help developing professionalism and scientific temper among creators, custodians and users,
- To ensure proper care and use of documentary heritage.

4.4.3 Collection

The records holdings of the National Archives run into 40 Kms. of shelf-space area, and are in a regular series from the year 1748 onwards, though there are stray records of the earlier periods as well. These are in English, Arabic, Hindi, Persian,
Sanskrit, Modi, Urdu etc., Apart from records on paper, they also have records on palm leaf, birch bark, etc. The records are broadly of four categories: public records, oriental records, manuscripts and private papers. These records throw light on the activities of the later Mughals, the East India Company and British Rule, and the emergence and growth of the freedom struggle in India. They also shed valuable light on the social, political, economic and cultural life. In addition, there is a rich collection of private papers and microfilm rolls of records acquired from different countries such as Canada, Germany, Malaysia, Myanmar, United Kingdom, United States, France, and Russia etc.

4.4.4 Services /Facilities

National Archives has developed in house software “Archival Information Management System” (AIMS) for creation of a database for the reference media of records [catalogue of record holdings] in 1998.

The AIMS software has been updated, keeping in pace with the latest technology, i.e. in ‘dot net’ technology by National Informatics Centre (NIC) in 2007 to facilitate data entry of private archives, cartography, oriental records and reprography. National Archives has also created a data base of its library holdings in the “Libsys” Software in 1999.

To facilitate the work of research scholars, the National Archives of India has a well equipped air-conditioned research room, where numerous aids including guides, press-lists, descriptive lists, etc. are available for ready reference. The department also has provided the following facilities:

- Reprographic services on payment basis, conservation techniques, research and guidance, search cases against prescribed fees;
- Professional guidance in restoration and repair of documents and,
- Advice on matters relating to records management (National Archives of India, 2009).
4.4.5 Digitization Activities

National Archives has created a replica of original documents by having them microfilmed and keeping them securely in ambient conditions for posterity, and for effective disaster management.

For preserving the cultural heritage of the country NAI has taken up the mammoth task of creating a back up of the originals by microfilming the entire collection of documents, and keeping them away from the originals, in its regional office at Bhopal, where in the temperature and humidity is controlled. Also in order to keep pace with the changing environment in the field of Information Technology, NAI has taken up the conversion of the analogue microfilm images into digital and has integrated the same with the meta data of the record holdings, ever since 1998.

In July 2000 National Archives of India had initiated a pilot project for digitization of rare manuscripts with the help of Sony digital cameras. This unit was established in collaboration with department of Science and Technology and National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore. Rare manuscripts viz. Bhagwadgita, Ramayana, Mahabharata, etc have been digitized and stored in CD medium (Mani, 2009).

4.5 National Library of India (1948), Kolkata, West Bengal

Figure 5

National Library of India
4.5.1 Establishment

The National Library of India, located in Kolkata (Calcutta) is the largest library in the country. It is an institution of national importance under the Department of Culture, Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India. The National Library came into being in 1948, with the passing of Imperial Library Act 1948. In the same year, it was shifted to Belvedere Estate, its present location, which was the former viceregal palace. It is now housed in three separate buildings with a separate preservation laboratory. It was formally opened to the public on 1st February 1953 by the late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the then Union Education Minister.

The library's responsibility is to collect, disseminate and preserve the printed heritage of the country. It is also one of the oldest institutions of the country focused on the conservation and maintenance of the bibliographic documents in various fields of knowledge.

4.5.2 Objectives

- Acquisition and conservation of all significant production of printed material, excluding ephemera;
- Collecting of printed material concerning the country, no matter where it is published, and as a corollary, the acquisition of photographic records of such material that is not available within the country;
- Acquisition and conservation of foreign material required by the country;
- Rendering of bibliographical and documents services of current and retrospective material, both general and specialized and,
- Acting as a referral centre providing full and accurate knowledge.

4.5.3 Collection

The National Library has an impressive number of rare books and other reading materials. In 1973, a separate rare books division was established. At present the books published prior to 1860 are considered rare books, along with limited and first editions, books distinguished by their design, illustration or history, and a few other criteria. Along with rare books, manuscripts, microfilms, microfiches and monographs of the library are also stacked in this division.
The rare and historically important manuscripts in different languages are preserved separately, along with other important and rare books, in the rare books division. The National Library has in its possession a small holding of manuscripts representing some basic and important branches of knowledge. These manuscript collections are mostly part of some collections belonging to eminent personalities of India, which were donated by their heirs.

The library has an extensive collection of maps from the 17th century onwards. Indian topographical sheets of earlier days (at scale of one inch, half inch and quarter inch to a mile) and maps of natural resources, population, transport and communication systems, agricultural production, soil, vegetation and the geology of India form the major part of the collection.

Figure 6
Old Rare Book in Latin

4.5.4 Services /Facilities

The National Library provide services like Inter library loan, services for children, Internet accessibility and bibliographic services which research scholars, government agencies, universities and national level institutions may make use. The library provides bibliographies and bibliographic statistics to national and international organizations. The library also is provided reprographic services like photocopies, microfilms and microfilms print out to scholars, within the limits of the International Copyright Act. The library also provides training and guidance in conservation of
library materials and in modernization activities of the libraries to different institutions on request.

One of the basic functions of the National Library is to conserve the printed heritage for future generations. For this purpose the library has separate divisions for physical, chemical, reprographic and digital conservation.

### 4.5.5 Digitization Activities

#### 4.5.5.1 Down Memory Lane

The National Library undertook a pilot project, entitled “Down Memory Lane”, to digitize its rare and brittle books in late 90's. The English books that were published prior to 1900 and Indian books, published before 1920 were taken into consideration. A local private agency was given the responsibility to scan and clean the documents. The library professionals were given the task of checking the scanned data, to prepare citation cards for indexing, in order to meet retrieval and reference need.

#### 4.5.5.2 Digitization of Manuscripts

Digitization of manuscripts is the other such initiative the library has taken up responding to the growing use and adaptability of information technology to library-related activities.

A sample project was undertaken by the National Library, with the objective of better understanding on the different issues pertaining to the digitization of manuscripts. The main concern areas of this project were as follows:

- Technology related issue: The process, output and storage of the digital images of the manuscript. The images need to be as close to the original as possible, with removal of worm marks, stain marks. The images need to be clear and the details of illustrations of pages have to be captured to the best possible extent.

- Project economics: Cost-benefit analysis on the project with the long-term view on the scope of project in a large scale.

- Project time frame: The project estimation and determination of the timeframe of completion of digitization of the entire collection of manuscripts was imperative, and the sample project was undertaken to get an idea of time
required for completion which could be extrapolated for the entire scope of project.

- An excellent Persian manuscript - Tutinamah was chosen for the sample project. The project was jointly envisaged and executed by the National Library and Trinetrix technologies, a Calcutta based Information Technology organization.

The project process consisted of the document assessment and set up, image capture and image processing.

4.5.5.2.1 Project Output

The images were obtained in three forms, namely TIFF, PDF and JPEG. All the image files of the individual pages were obtained in uncompressed TIFF, and JPEG, with the objective of archival storage. The composite PDF containing the individual pages were in E-book form, with the objective of viewing and access. The image files of a page of the document, in various intermittent stages of processing were also obtained. The images were stored in CD-ROM and were made resident in hard-disk of the central server.

4.5.5.2.2 Project Experience

Some aspects that would need improvement for projects on a larger scale are as follows:

- The project would need a server administered hard disk storage system with fault tolerance and disaster recovery provision, along with CD-ROM based storage for archival.

- The digital restoration of the images of the manuscript was done using the state-of –art image editing software, Adobe Photoshop Version 6, which is very resource consuming on the processing workstation (National Library of India, 2009).

4.6 Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (1966), New Delhi

4.6.1 Establishment

The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, established in 1966, is a research library on Social Sciences, in New Delhi. Its holdings deal with political, social,
economic, religious and literary history of modern India, starting from Raja Rammohun Roy, to contemporary times, with special emphasis on the Indian nationalist movement and Nehru era. The library has been designed and developed as an advanced research and reference centre on colonial and post-colonial India.

The library is an advanced research and reference institution on social sciences, with an emphasis on modern Indian history. Its relevance is augmented by the archives of rare non-official research materials, an oral history project to record the reminiscences of the makers of modern India and also a centre for contemporary studies, sponsoring fellowships for exploring new areas and issues of research in social science. In the last four decades, scholars on modern and contemporary history have found the institution almost indispensable for carrying out their research. A cursory glance on the acknowledgements appearing in books on modern Indian history is a testimony to this reality. It is the biggest repository in the country for microfilmed newspapers and private paper collections of eminent individuals and at the same time, of non-official social and political organisations. Their manuscript and newspaper collections run into millions of pages.

**4.6.2 Objectives**

- The NMML recollects, preserves and reconstructs the Indian freedom struggle, and the ideas and values of Jawaharlal Nehru;
- To be premier institute of advanced research on modern and contemporary India and,
- It also popularizes Jawaharlal Nehru, and the freedom struggle, amongst all Indians.

**4.6.3 Collection**

The holdings of the library cover a wide range of subjects related to modern and contemporary history. The library holdings roughly cover the period from the eighteenth century to the present times, and deal with various aspects of modern and contemporary history. The collections are massive, with diverse books, journals, photographs, periodicals, newspapers, private papers and oral history records.
The library has grouped its holdings of published works about Jawaharlal Nehru, and issues/subjects related to him under the heading ‘Nehruana’. This is a collection of published books concerning Nehru - his writings; numerous collections of his correspondence and speeches; academic works relating to diverse aspects of his life, thought, politics and leadership.

Similar collections have been prepared for Mahatma Gandhi under the heading ‘Gandhiana’ and for Indira Gandhi under the title ‘Indirana’. In the past few years, the library has also built up a collection of published works on North-East India.

The Library also houses an extensive collection of documents on microfilm rolls and microfiche plates in the microfilm section. The newspapers, periodicals and private papers dating back to 1838, and other rare documents are available in this section. NMML also possesses an impressive collection of photographs of the freedom movement in India, and national leaders of the pre and post independence period.

The manuscripts section collects and preserves, the private papers of distinguished individuals, and records of non-official institutions, associations and societies, which played a significant role in the freedom struggle, and the development of modern India. It also continues to acquire the private papers of institutions and eminent Indians.

4.6.4 Services /Facilities

Over the past few years, NMML has widened its visibility and public interface, by engaging with civil society through multifarious activities. Though NMML still maintains its pre-eminent position, as a leading centre of research in social sciences, in India, NMML has set itself a definite trajectory to reposition the institution as an important landmark in the capital.

It has set up a Multi-media library and children resource centre, carried out facelift and conservation of its gardens and Estate, civil works, and upgradation/refurbishment of the Nehru Planetarium, which plays a seminal role in disseminating knowledge about space and astronomy.
4.6.5 Digitization Activities

The NMML has undertaken a project to digitize its collection of manuscripts, and other related documents, as the existing methods of preservation and accessibility of research resources are outdated, in the context of rapid growth of information technology. The broad proposals in this regard are digitization of archival documents, digitization of newspapers on microfilms and the setting up a digital archive management system.

A digital archival management system is proposed to be setup, which will store data digitized for posterity. The system will also have a copy of the same data, which could be retrieved for use by scholars. Storage devices, other hardware and necessary software support will be in place in the library (43rd Annual Report, 2008).

4.7 Oriental Research Institute (1891), Mysore, Karnataka

4.7.1 Establishment

The Oriental Research Institute was established in Mysore by His Highness Sri Chamaraja Wodeyar, the then Maharaja of the erstwhile State of Mysore, in the Year 1891. Then the name of the Institute was” Government Oriental Library”. The purpose of establishing the institute was collection and preservation of important manuscripts and publication of rare valuable works. ORI considers the amalgamation of ancient wisdom and the modern technology, as a key to success in sharing knowledge worldwide. Hence, ORI is experimenting in digitization, image enhancement, computerization and archival database, of its huge collection of manuscripts.

In 1916, the University of Mysore was established and the institute became an integral part of the University. Later, the name of the Institute was changed to” The Oriental Research Institute” in 1946. Since 1966, Kannada manuscripts and books in the Institute were transferred to the Institute of Kannada studies, in the Manasangangothri campus.

4.7.2 Objectives

- Preserve and foster rare manuscripts and other forms of literature;
- Disseminate knowledge available in the Institute through exhibitions, workshops, seminars, demonstrations and, award suitable scholarships.
- Organize short term courses in Manuscript logy and such other areas.
4.7.3 Collection

The Institute has collection more than 60,000 manuscripts, from various parts of Karnataka, and also from outside the State. It has a library of more than 30,000 printed books related to Sanskrit studies, catering to the needs of teachers, students and scholars. The Institute has published a descriptive catalogue, in 18 publications, that were brought out before 1966. Some of the most important works in the Oriental Research Institute Sanskrit series are- Kautilya’s Arthashastra edited by Dr. R. Shamashastry(1908), Sankaracharyalahari with Laksmidhara’s commentary, and the latest publications Shaktinidhi and Vishnunidhi, the first and second volumes among the 9 volumes of Sritattvanidhi of Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar, the 19th century Maharaja of Mysore.

Figure 7
Palm Leaves Manuscripts

4.7.4 Services/Facilities

The library provides access to the valuable paper and palm leaf manuscripts. Scholars from all over of the country can come to the library and access the manuscripts. Recently the library digitized the manuscripts, for providing easy access to the scholars.
4.7.5 Digitization Activities

ORI is experimenting in digitization, image enhancement, computerization and archival database of its huge collection of manuscripts. At present, with its limited digital laboratory, ORI has successfully done some experiments and has got some fruitful results, which will be implemented on a large scale, after the establishment of a well-equipped laboratory, in the proposed National Centre for History of Science (NCSH) building.

4.8 Rampur Raza Library (1975), Rampur, Uttar Pradesh

4.8.1 Establishment

The Rampur Raza Library is one of the World's most magnificent, unparalleled repositories of cultural heritage, and a treasure-house of knowledge built up by successive Nawabs of Rampur State. It contains very rare and valuable collections of manuscripts, historical documents, specimens of Islamic calligraphy, miniature paintings, astronomical instruments and rare illustrated works in Arabic and Persian languages, besides 80,000 printed books.

Conceived and with a personal collection of manuscripts, miniatures specimens of Islamic calligraphy in the last decades of the 18th century, the founder of Rampur State, Nawab Faizullah Khan, who ruled the state from 1774 to 1794, established the library with his personal modest collection, kept in the Tosha Khana of his Palace. As all the Nawabs were great patrons of scholars, poets, painters, calligraphers and musicians, the library occupied the pivotal place of all literary and publication activities. With this humble beginning, the library grew by leaps and bounds, and notable additions were made to the collection during the rule of Nawab Ahmad Ali Khan (1794-1840).

4.8.2 Objectives

- To extend all facilities to the scholars in their endeavor for research;
- To ensure preservation and protection of valuable collections of manuscripts, paintings and rare books;
- To publish texts of Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Hindi manuscripts and Catalogues, journals etc and;
The library has undertaken a project of publication of books on history, art and culture of medieval India and,

The library also organizes workshops, seminars and holds special lectures for promotion of learning and creating awareness among young scholars.

4.8.3 Collection

The library is famous for its varied collection of manuscripts; it has 17000 such specimens of artistic creation, which include 150 illustrated ones, with 4413 paintings in them. The manuscripts are mostly in Arabic, Sanskrit and Hindi, Persian, Urdu, Turkish and Pushto. The subjects of the manuscripts are related to history, philosophy, religions, sciences, art, literature, medicine, astronomy, astrology, mathematics, geology, fine arts etc.

In addition to them, there are 205 hand-written palm-leaves, 5000 miniature paintings, nearly 3000 specimens of Islamic Calligraphy. The miniature paintings represent the Turko-Mongol, Mughal, Persian, Rajput, Pahari, and Awadh, and also Indo-European schools of art, which are of great value for the researchers. The rich collection also includes art objects and astronomical instruments.

The library has a collection of about 75,000 printed books. The printed book section has a unique importance, as thousands of rare Arabic, Persian, Hindi, Urdu and English books, which are now out of print, may be utilised as important material for research work. Such books have been carefully preserved and are being regularly treated in the Conservation Laboratory for safer and longer life.

4.8.4 Services /Facilities

The Rampur Raza library has developed computer infrastructure for working in different aspects of computer applications. The library's computer section has four systems, with laptop hardware and software to serve library purposes. The library is also connected with internet and DELNET, New Delhi. The library is a member of Delhi Library Network (DELNET), New Delhi. 10,000 records have been computerized in MARC (Machine Readable Catalogue Format) for communication of bibliographic information, with Anglo American Cataloguing Rules II.
4.8.5 Digitization Activities

The library started digitization and preparing CD's of rare paintings, specimens of Islamic calligraphy, precious illustrated manuscripts, art objects and coins. More than 50,000 images from 40 albums of paintings and 84 albums of Islamic calligraphy were scanned with detailed information. Besides scanning, CD's of these images have also been prepared (Rampur Raza Library, 2009).

Figure 8
Persian Illustrated Manuscript in Digitized Form

4.9 The Asiatic Society Library (1784), Kolkata, West Bengal

4.9.1 Establishment

The library of the Asiatic Society is the grand stay, glory and honour of the Society. Its importance lies not in numerical strength, but in its rich and unique contents. The collection has been built up mainly with gifts received from its members, dating back to 25 March 1784, when the Society received with thanks seven Persian manuscripts from Henri Richardson. The next gift came from William Marsden, F.R.S., his book, “History of Island of Sumatra” (1783) on 10 November, 1784. Since the foundation of the Society, books, manuscripts, drawings, coins, antiquarian and other objects of historical importance were exhibited to the Society’s meetings, and kept in the custody of the secretary. As the Society had no habitat of its
own, the risk of loss was serious. After the demise of the founder, the question of a permanent house for the Society was strongly felt, for transacting its academic activities, and for keeping and preserving for posterity books, records, and art, antiquarian and museum objects. The Society moved into its own building in the early part of 1808, and the library was thrown open to the members and the public in the same year. Thus the Society laid the foundation of the first academic, as well as public library in India.

4.9.2 Objectives

- Extensive research programmes, focussing on the pluralistic yet integrated character and richness of Indian history and culture;
- Search for, and collection of important manuscripts, and archival records in India and abroad;
- Laying greater emphasis on cataloguing hitherto un catalogued manuscripts and editing them and,
- Modernising and further strengthening of the restoration unit and the stepping up of activates of the conservation and preservation sections, and extending the services to institutions in West Bengal, for the preservation of materials of national importance.

4.9.3 Collection

The collection has been grouped into printed books department, manuscripts and archives department and the museum department. The printed book department has four sections such as European languages, Sanskritic and other Modern Indian Languages, Perso-Arabic and Urdu and Sino-Tibetan and South-Asian Languages.

Printed books are particularly rich in works on Ideology and Asiatic Lore, and in standard philological and scientific serials. The printed books in this department range in date from the latter half of the fifteenth century A.D. and one of its special features consists in the many items of rare works, otherwise unavailable, or scarcely available, including books printed in India in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Manuscript collection of the Society is varied and rich, and covers most of the Indian languages and scripts, and even several Asian ones, e.g., Assamese, Bengali,
Gujarati, Gurumukhi, Kanarese, Urdu, Marathi, Modi, and Nagari etc. The materials used for the manuscripts are also varied: palm and palmyra leaves, barks of different trees, papers of various grades. The manuscript collection is in Sanskritic, Islamic, Sino-Tibetan, South-East Asian and English.

Also the library has a rare book division which was opened in 1978, by the Council.

4.9.4 Services /Facilities

To serve the needs of the members and scholars, in identifying the required materials, the Society’s library has already begun building a computerized database of its catalogue.

The in-house computer system of the Society's library employs electronic data processing gadgets, and it has already prepared a computerized database in areas of research in Anthropology. The Society has also prepared computerized database on the History of Science and other rare books in the Society’s collection.

As a first step, towards resource sharing at various levels, through library co-operation, as conceived by the UNESCO, the Society library has already joined the regional metropolitan computerized library network, the CALIBNET (Calcutta Library Network), formulated by the Government of India.

The Society library has also been included in the SIRNET, the computerized on-line national information network on science and allied disciplines, sponsored by the INSDOC, a scientific documentation body of the Government of India. Both the networks are provided access to information in libraries and research organizations in other countries, through international hook-up facilities.

The Society has been identified by the UNESCO as the only significant repository of cultural heritage. The UNESCO has requested the Society to build image bases of important treasures that may depict the cultural heritage of mankind, under the scheme, “Memory of the World Programme”.

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4.9.5 Digitization Activities

The library is doing the work of microfilming, microfiche and digitization, from old and rare manuscripts and books, in the collection of the Society, to prevent these invaluable treasures from frequent handling by the users. For consultation of the scholars coming from India and abroad, the prepared microfilm/microfiche and Compact Disc are supplied to the scholars from the rare manuscripts and books section, for their requirement, on payment.

The Centre for Development of Advance Computing (C-DAC), Kolkata, a scientific society of Government of India has been entrusted the responsibilities of Regional Centre of the project of digital library of India. Accordingly, C-DAC also is taking up digitization projects of manuscripts and old documents, including books and journals of the library. Research scholars can have a copy from the DVD of the scanned documents (Annual Report, 2008).

4.10 Central Library and Documentation Centre University of Tehran (1950), Tehran

4.10.1 Establishment

The Central Library and Documentation Centre of the University of Tehran is the largest academic library in Iran. It includes rich and broad resources in different fields of science, and literature. It collects works related to Islamic studies, Iranian studies and Oriental studies.

The main core of the Central Library and Documentation Centre of the University of Tehran was formed in 1950 with the donation of a collection by Seyed Mohammad Meshkat, a professor at the University of Tehran, which included 1329 volumes of manuscripts. The present building of the library was opened on 23 September 1972.

4.10.2 Objectives

To collect, maintain and organize the non-book form publications, which were being donated to the central library by organizations, ministries, universities, cultural associations, local and foreign centres and institutions.
4.10.3 Collection

The collection of the Central Library and Documentation Centre holds over one million copies, including printed books, periodicals, manuscripts, microfilms, pictorial copies, documents and historical photos, lithography books, academic dissertations(theses), scientific documents, maps, textbooks, electronic references and other resources.

At present, the collection of Persian and Arabic printed books has over 200,000 volumes, which include more than 110,000 titles, and it is added to day by day. This collection is very diverse in subjects of different scientific, literary and artistic fields. The collection of Latin printed books is mostly in English, and also in French, German, Russian, Italian and some other languages. This collection includes mostly subjects related to Oriental studies, Iranian studies, Islamic studies, manuscript studies, and reference books.

The manuscript collection includes about 17,000 volumes of manuscripts in Persian, Arabic and Turkish. There are many valuable old copies and copies in the original handwriting of the scholars and celebrities, in this collection.

The collection of historical documents includes commands, decrees, letters, deed, pious endowment, marriage deeds, and financial documents and so on.

The map collection includes the old and new maps of Iran, different provinces and cities, world maps and different countries. These maps are mostly in Persian, English and French.

4.10.4 Services/Facilities

The Digital Library of Tehran University was established in 2005, in order to integrate all library services, which have been offered through the Web. In-house library software was designed and produced by Informatics Centre, University of Tehran. The digital library provides the following services to the users:

- Access to information of all libraries of The University of Tehran;
- Access to the University of Tehran Journals and for search of the database and downloading articles;
- Access to students’ electronic theses and dissertations, of the University of Tehran;
- Access to electronic version of some books which have been published by Tehran University Press Institute and,
- Access to scientific databases and electronic journals subscribed by Tehran University such as ACM, ACS, APS, ASCE and etc (Central Library and Documentation Centre, The University of Tehran, 2009).

Figure 9
Digital Library

4.10.5 Digitization Activities

One of the advantages of digitization of materials is providing access to valuable resources such as manuscripts. These manuscripts depict our cultural works and through them we can research and develop our literary past. Therefore, with the advance of electronic information, digitization of manuscripts is necessary for access and study.

The digitization process at Tehran University Central Library was started in 2008. The library deals mainly in scanning of manuscripts. It is nothing more than a picture of a printed page in digital form. Digital imaging technology converts manuscripts into digital images and can be made available over DVDs. The text is retrieved,
printed and modified using appropriate software. The digital images are captured at varied density or bits pixel.

The library has digitized around 4500 manuscripts from the total 16000 manuscripts. They store the digitized manuscript on DVDs and in the central server of university. For accessing information they use JPEG format (Central Library and Documentation Centre, The University of Tehran, 2010).

4.11 Central Library of Tabriz (1956), Tabriz

4.11.1 Establishment

The Central Library of Tabriz, formerly Tabriz National Library, was founded in 1956 by Nakhjavani, with help from the people of Tabriz, Iran. It contains several handwritten books. The library is called National because of its non-benefit and non-governmental structure. Initially the library started with books gathered by people, especially by Nakhjavani, the building was also constructed without any government investment (Wikipedia, 2011).

4.11.2 Objectives

- To create a suitable ground for persons who are interested in education;
- To promote science and culture of society and,
- To concentrate on information facilities and access to that information.

4.11.3 Collection

The library as one of the oldest libraries of the country, established by the donation of a unique personal library collection of two intellectuals, named Haj Hossaini and Haj Mohammad Nakhjavani. The library is mostly from donated books and has other resources e.g. stone inscriptions, manuscripts and Latin periodicals. The manuscripts are in different subjects such as: history, religion, philosophy, mathematics etc. Kamal Court Khujand is one rare book which Haj Mohammad Nakhjavni had written. It is belongs to the 9 century Hejri. The Meraat Osmani is a very old inscription on stone that is kept in the library.
The availability of valuable manuscript collections, which are a credit to the library, caused the UNESCO to accept the National library of Tabriz on a list of international organizations.

**Figure 10**

_Holy Quran in the Library_

### 4.11.4 Services /Facilities

Central Library of Tabriz, in order to present services to researchers, scholars, students and other people interested in publications, is equipped with articles and publications related to Iran. It has software that has indexed these articles in full text. This software has more than 6000 articles, reports, criticism, study and dialogue in the form of about 25000 pages. It has a Search Engine through which it is possible to locate Persian journals and magazines published in the country and which can be easily accessed.

### 4.11.5 Digitization Activities

Manuscripts and rare books are the most useable resources among scholars in the library, so easy access to them would increase the quality of research. And preservation of these valuable materials should be considered. For preservation purposes, the library started digitizing them. The digitized manuscripts are available through CDs and DVDs that already have been saved. So, scholars can access the digital form, without referring to the originals (Central Library of Tabriz, 2009).
4.12 Library, Museum and Documentation Centre Parliament (1924), Tehran

4.12.1 Establishment

Parliament Library, with a history of one hundred years, is one of the fundamental institutions of Iranian contemporary civilization. With the establishment of Constitution in Iran (1906), some of the intellectual Parliament representatives suggested dedication of a building, for a library, in order to gather essential sources of knowledge for Parliament members. It was the first Asian Parliamentary Library.

At the beginning, a number of elite representatives used the library facilities, but gradually it welcomed a huge number of researchers and students from all over of Iran. Recognising this fact, the librarians intended to allocate a more appropriate place for the public also and for a specialized library. In the fifth term of the National Consultative Assembly (1923), the Aziz ol- Soltani Buildings on the east side of Baharestan Garden were purchased in order to make historic library. With the appointment of Joseph Etesam ol- Molk Ashtiani, the library head in 1924, Parliament library was inaugurated as the first modern formal library in Iran.

In 1996, based on a letter approved by the parliament, the library was titled “Library, Museum and Document Centre of the Islamic Consultative Assembly” under the supervision of the Head of Iranian Parliament. The Parliament Library includes two libraries. In Library one, printed books are kept. It should be taken into account, that library one, the oldest part of the Parliament Library was basically constructed for the National Assembly representatives, to provide them with important documents and other sources of knowledge. Library two includes precious collections and valuable resources of Persian, Arabic, English, French books and so on. Furthermore, periodicals also are kept in this library.

4.12.2 Objectives

- To collect and keep resources related to political, legal, social, and ecumenical subjects with focus on Iranian studies, Islamic studies;

- To preserve the cultural heritage of the country, like its manuscripts and rare materials, and to disseminate information regarding them.
4.12.3 Collection

Printed books in which are included lithography and lead books as well, are in different languages such as Persian, Arabic, English, German, French, Japanese, Russian, Turkish etc. They are in the fields of philosophy, law, medicine, mathematics, social sciences, history, literature, art etc. However, they are mainly about human sciences of Iran and Islam.

The library has unique manuscripts in specific subjects like Islam, Iran and Eastern studies, as well as some extremely rare and privileged geographical maps related to Iran, the Islamic world and Eastern territories. Therefore, they all provide the researchers with very credible sources of information.

The Parliament Library possesses a large number of papers, from a priceless collection of documents, related to 24 terms of National Assembly, and seven terms of Senate. These documents represent the history of legislation including letters, commands, contracts, marriage contracts, bills, maps, commissions, historical photographs and so on, which can be a unique source of information for Iranian contemporary studies. Furthermore, there are documents of governmental organizations, ministries and agencies, including seminars and conference reports.

4.12.4 Services/Facilities

The Parliament Library has been providing images of more than 7,000 lithography and lead books. For Iranian researchers, being aware of Iran’s written heritage is an effective way to maintain their glorious national identity among other nations. The research centre has been established with copies of manuscripts and studies conducted to gain knowledge of grey areas of Iranian culture and history.

Rasan digital library provides the users with the digital images of more than half of Parliament Library manuscripts.

4.12.5 Digitization Activities

In 1960’s it was founded with no advanced equipment to protect the manuscripts against various damages, and to facilitate services for researchers. Parliament Library equipment, with modern facilities has accelerated recently, providing microfilms and digital images. The new equipment not only makes the least impact on resources, but
also the images produced are so fine that the original copies are not required. The digital unit has provided a large number of digital images to date.

**Figure 11**

*Digitization Section of the Library*

The digital library of Rasan, with more than 14,000 manuscripts has been provided for use to researchers. It is worth mentioning that Rasan has achieved the first rank among the Islamic libraries, regarding the number of online manuscripts. The objectives of Rasan are providing access to scholars from all over freely, and also preserving precious cultural heritage resources.

The Metadata formats used in Rasan are Dublin Core, as a descriptive metadata standard, Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard (METS), as a structural metadata standard, Reference Model for Open Archival Information System (OAIS) for storing, and the circulation of information, and Metadata standards for resources including: MARC, Z39.50 (Library, Museum and Documentation Centre Parliament, 2010).
4.13 Malek National Library and Museum (1944), Tehran

Figure 12
Malek National Library and Museum

4.13.1 Establishment

The late Hajj Hussein Agha Malek was from one of the important families in late Qajar period. His father was a merchant and politician. The founder of the collection, studied in traditional schools, and was fascinated by collecting rare books from an early age. His interest in old books and relics was the main reason for the gradual establishment of the library and museum. He was quite interested in collecting books, but many people brought other objects such as coins, stamps and paintings to sell, and he bought them, till it became a large collection of rare objects. This is one of the biggest private collections in Iran.

Hajj Hussein Agha Malek donated all his collection and a great amount of land in Mashhad and Tehran, in order to support the costs of administration, and also the expansion of his collection. The property donated by Malek to the Imam Reza holy shrine is the biggest donation in the last 1000 years. The library and museum, and farmlands, shops, gardens and a hospital were donated between 1937 and 1961. In 1996 after 12 years of work, a new building was constructed with 6 floors and 2 basements, totaling 9000 square meters, in traditional and Islamic architecture.
4.13.2 Objectives

- Revitalizing and observing Iran's national heritage, as the fundamental indication of Iranian identity;
- Case study research projects to standardize Malek museum and library, and obtain gifts of cultural value from the public,
- Index establishment of cultural items and artworks, being kept at Malek museum and library.

4.13.3 Collection

The National Malek Library has 19000 recorded titles of manuscripts, from early Islamic centuries to the present and many of them are Unique. There are also over 70,000 printed books in Persian-Arabic language, 3400 lithography books, 700 periodicals and about 8000 volumes of printed books in other languages. Malek Library enriches its collection of, unique resources every year.

4.13.4 Services/Facilities

The library provides facilities such as: guiding users to use available journals, assisting in search articles for users, providing Xerox, print and digital form of serials. The library also provides users, analog file of manuscripts (microfilms), spiritual inheritance of Iran and Islam, and recently the library has provided digital form of manuscripts after with scanning them.

4.13.5 Digitization Activities

While using manuscripts was usually by microfilms in the library, a new program has started by scanning manuscripts, which will be done over a period of time. The program provides color images that are much better than black and white microfilms.

This is the latest project initiated for the collection. Hence a committee of librarians, conservators, computer operators and cataloguers were essential to avoid repetition of works, damaging of manuscripts, preparing complete information and to correct old catalogues. New information is collected and international standards are considered. The “scan” staffs ascertain which manuscripts should be scanned first,
and how they can be presented to researchers. This program will facilitate access to researchers, and will be encouraged them to come often to the library.

Another program that will be considered is digitizing the catalogues, (the new and corrected ones). This program will help to find similarities between manuscripts, and make searching easier for transcribers and authors, by identification of manuscripts titles (Malek National Library and Museum, 2010).

4.14 National library and Archives of Islamic Republic of Iran (1937), Tehran

Figure 13
National library of Iran

4.14.1 Establishment

The creation of the National Library of Iran dates from the early 1860s. In 1852, the modern Darol Fonoun School was established in Tehran. 12 years later, a small library was annexed to the school. During the reign of Mozaffareddin Shah, while Iranians started to get better acquainted with western civilization, the Science Society was founded in Tehran in 1897, to promote high culture and speed up the establishment of modern schools in the country.

In 1898, the Society opened the National Sciences Library at its headquarters, next to Darol Fonoun School, making her collection of works available to public
readership, a collection that had come into being, thanks to the endless efforts of its founders.

In 1905, when Ala’ol Molk was Iran’s Minister of Sciences, the National Sciences Library was merged into that of Darolfonoun School. In 1919, when Hakimol Molk was the country’s Minister of Sciences, the Library was called the Library of Sciences and finally in 1937, when Ali Asghar Hekmat served Iran as her Science Minister, the Library changed its name to the Public Library of Sciences.

4.14.2 Objectives

- Acquisition, preservation, organization and dissemination of works (print and manuscript) and oral history in the fields of Iranian and Islamic studies, with special emphasis on the Islamic Revolution of 1979;
- Commissioning research and providing advisory guidelines on the planning and management of library and information services;
- Participation in international research projects which the aim of development of library and information services;
- Developing policies and strategies to facilitate research and studies in relevant areas to promote national cultural values and,
- Provision of consultation and technical and planning services to libraries and information services across Iran.

4.14.3 Collection

The library has a large number of books on different subjects such as humanities, Islamic and Iranian studies, primary sciences and techniques, and so on. It also includes the most comprehensive archive of periodicals in Iran. Apart from newspapers and magazines, other materials such as news bulletins, seminar reports, and yearbooks are also kept in the library. Non-book resources include materials such as microfilms, microfiches, dissertations, posters, reports, slides, photos, maps, etc.

There are priceless collections of manuscripts such as the personal collections of Sheikh Jaafar Shoushtarî’s family which includes including 537 manuscripts, the Molla Mohsen Ghazvini family with 112 manuscripts and 82 stone-prints which were
donated to the Library. The manuscripts include great Iranian men of letters, in fields such as philosophy and mysticism, Islamic jurisprudence and principles, medicine and astronomy, history, literature, geography, in different languages such as Persian, Arabic, English, Urdu, and Turkish.

Figure 14
Rare Handwritten Book

Handwritten documents are the most precious collection of Iran’s manuscripts, there are historic documents, including about 300 decrees, by the Safavid and Qajar kings and princes. The oldest decrees in the collection are those issued by the Safavid Shah Tahmasb. The decorative arts used in Nasereddin Shah’s decrees are amongst the most beautiful examples of document gilding in Iran.
4.14.4 Services/Facilities

In addition to services rendered to the members and referents attending the library in person (membership, reading halls, and reference services), the National Library disseminates information such as:

- **Online information dissemination:** the website of the Organization of National Archives and National Library offers databases of Iran National Bibliography, National Index, and full texts of articles published in the Book Quarterly, the library Journal of NLI.

- **Off-line information dissemination:** databases such as the National Bibliography and National Index are also available on CDs distributed at libraries and information centers.

- **Information service by via telephone:** Consulting and reference librarians are available to answer questions of researchers by telephone. The library also gives services and facilities to uses as well as other libraries, such as: Training courses and workshops, providing microfilm reading, print and Xerox service, and organizing seminars (National library and Archives of Islamic Republic of Iran, 2010).
4.14.5 Digitization Activities

Manuscripts are one of the precious materials of our cultural heritage. They are valuable sources, for the reconstruction of the history and culture of a country. They reveal the aspects of contemporary society and provide a vital link to its culture and knowledge. In order to manage and preserve and provide access to them for use now and for future generations, it is necessary to digitize these valuable resources. In the National Library of Iran most of manuscripts are no longer accessible to research scholars in the original. Therefore, a great deal of digitization work has been undertaken in the library. The digitization project was started in 2006 and has resulted in a ‘Digital Library’, which is a virtual organized library, for the entire collection, management and long-term preservation of its digital resources. It provides a provision for special functions for its users, in a way that the quality of its functions is measurable.

The National Digital Library is a national plan that has the intention of collecting valuable resources of Iran, or related to Islam in digital form and also providing access to them at national and international levels. The Iranian National Digital Library is called ‘HARAM’, using Persian abbreviations, started in 2006.

The National Digital Library project, named HARAM was inaugurated in 2009, with the purpose of utilizing information and communication technologies, collecting and digitization of valuable national resources, preservation and providing access to it, and building a strong infrastructure for maintenance of its cultural heritage.

The generic metadata format used in HARAM is Dublin Core as a descriptive metadata standard, Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard (METS) as a structural metadata standard, Reference Model for Open Archival Information System (OAIS) for storing and the circulation of information, and Metadata standards for resources including: MARC and Protocols for retrieval of information resources, including Z39. 50.

HARAM is one of important project which can preserve the culture of Iran and Islam, in the digital environment, and collecting additional digital material in the content of this project, would enable protection of valuable resources of Iran, and Islam for long term preservation. It will also promote scientific and cultural
development of Iran, and will provide a rich and solid source for national and international researchers, about Islam and Iran, and Islam and Iran’s heritage will be available for the international audience (Ezzati Jivan, Tavakoli and Pasyar, 2011).

4.15 Organization of Libraries, Museums and Documents Centre of Astan Quds (973A.D), Mashhad

4.15.1 Establishment

The Organization of Libraries, Museums and Documents Centre of Astan Quds is one of the most important and largest libraries in the Islamic world, located at Mashhad, Iran. The library was founded in 363A.H/ 973 A.D, 1038 years ago.

It is an international centre for Islamic research, containing numerous manuscripts, and rare works of antiquity of Islamic history. The library has 35 branches which are located in different parts of country and also in India. The branches are as follow: 17 libraries in Mashhad, Iran, 5 libraries in Khorasan province, 12 libraries in other cities of Iran and 1 library in India.

4.15.2 Objectives

- Dissemination of information to the scholars for doing research and education;
- To provide information services in different fields, like guidance of scholars and tutoring programs;
- To provide education and research facilities with access to the existing resources in the library, especially heritage resources and manuscripts for different people in order to research and for education and,
- To preserve and protect heritage resources in the library like manuscripts, historical documents, rare books etc.

4.15.3 Collection

Astan Quds library is a major cultural collection, which contains many historical manuscripts that are centuries old. Astan Quds Archives, which contains many historical books that are centuries old, is a major cultural collection.

The Library is a treasure house of reference materials, especially on Islam in Iran. A large collection of books, manuscripts, documents and letters, about the people and
events that have shaped our Islamic and Iranian heritage, have been collected in this library. The library museum contains archives, which range from a pre-Islam period to date. This archive documents the social, religious and even political history of Iran, with an emphasis on Islamic aspects. This library museum also contains unique historic manuscripts.

4.15.4 Services/Facilities

The Library provides virtual reference services for those who are members of the library. Therefore, users can sign into the library website and get the required information. The Library also provides documentary delivery services, including articles, books and documents. Xerox and print facilities also are available in the Library, and organizing different workshops and seminars to the users is another facility of the library.

4.15.5 Digitization Activities

Digitization has become a practical necessity and reality, with technological methods available to provide improved access to information resources, preservation and dissemination, as required, anywhere and at any time. Ensuring long term access to the digitally stored information poses a significant challenge, and is increasingly recognized as an important part of digital data management.

The library of Astan Quds in Iran is one of the most important and the largest library in the Islamic world that digitizes its manuscripts and provides access to users all over the world.

The main purposes of digital preservation of Astan Quds Library are as follows:

- To provide user-friendly interface to access the news content;
- Accessibility to all or part of the contents of manuscripts and books;
- To search across the different titles and to draw together materials relating to a wide range of research and learning topics,
- To make available the reading of specially rare and fragile materials, and
To maintain the historical value of available information, also preserve and conserve the national and cultural heritage through digitization (Organization of Libraries, Museums and Documents Centre of Astan Quds, 2010).

**Figure 16**

*Digitization Section of the Library*

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**4.16 The Grand Library of Ayatullah al-Uzma Marashi Najafi (1965), Qom**

**4.16.1 Establishment**

The Library has been constructed in three stages; the first step was when the founder of the library “Marashi Najafi” was considering the establishment of an Islamic seminary.

After establishing “Marashiyah Islamic Seminary” in the holy city of Qom in 1965, in the second stage, he reserved some rooms in the seminary for the library. That was the turning point in establishing a grand library. During the same year in the third stages, the library was inaugurated on the third floor of the Islamic seminary. A vast collection of manuscripts and rare books were transferred to the library.

“Marashi Najafi” established the grand library, with the aim of collecting and preserving manuscripts, for the purpose of research and analysis by scholars.
4.16.2 Objectives

- Developing and describing the tremendous scientific achievements of Islamic culture and civilization during the last fourteen centuries;
- Creating discussion groups and research facilities for scholars from all over the world;
- Preserving valuable manuscripts which exhibit and manifest written Islamic culture and heritage, in different fields of sciences and arts;
- Collecting and preserving exquisite and rare manuscripts in this library and,
- Providing microfilms and photocopies of preserved manuscripts, for the libraries of the world.

4.16.3 Collection

The library has a vast collection of books including rare and valuable ones. The books are in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu. Some of the rare printed books, dating back to the last five centuries were preserved in the library. The Grand Library also enjoys the rare distinction of preserving the largest collection of rare manuscripts in Iran, and in this regard, it also stands third in the Islamic world.

Manuscripts are the other important collection of the library; sixty five percent of the manuscripts are in Arabic and the rest of them are in Persian, a few Turkish, Urdu, Abyssinian, and Syriac. Latin manuscripts also available in the library. The Copies of the Holy Quran in Kufic script, belonging to the second century Hijrah, comprises the oldest copies preserved in the library. The manuscript copies of third and fourth century Hijrah are also available, and among them is the illustrated copy of the Holy Quran, by Ali ibn Hilal Baghdadi a calligrapher, in 392 AH/ 1002 AD.

The library has prepared a catalogue of the available manuscripts, and photographs of manuscripts obtained from the different libraries are available. The microfilms of more than 13000 rare manuscripts, and more than one hundred thousand written documents, belonging to the last five centuries are the other collections of the library. The library also has rare petrography and more than 2500 newspapers and periodicals, in different languages are preserved in the library.
4.16.4 Services/Facilities

The library aims at delivering the vast treasure of Islamic heritage preserved in it to future generations, so that they know about their glorious past, their culture, civilization and heritage.

Photocopies, microfilms and slides of all the manuscripts, preserved in the library are made available. All the safety measures and the international standards for book-keeping and preservation are strictly implemented in the library.

The library also provides facilities such as computing services, Telephone exchange, Wireless connections, Electronic Mail (e-mail) Services, publication and distribution, conducting seminars and exhibitions etc.

4.16.5 Digitization Activities

The library has a two part digitization project; one part is digitizing the manuscripts which already have been preserved on microfilms, so the library started converting them on to digital images, to disseminate knowledge to scholars all over world.

The second part is digitizing the original manuscripts and rare books and converting them to digital images. Although it is in the initial stages, the library aims to digitize all manuscripts for easy access and also for preserving them (The Grand Library of Ayatullah al-Uzma Marashi Najafi, 2010).

4.17 Summary

This chapter gives a brief introduction of the profile of select libraries in India and Iran with regards to establishment of the library, objectives, collections, services/facilities and digitization activities.

Among Indian Libraries, IGNCA is a major resource centre for the Arts and the library has undertaken major projects on digitization. Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library specializes in Islamic studies, and comparative religions. The National Archives of India aims to foster closer relations between archivists and archival institutions, both at the national and international level. The National Library of India, is the largest library in the country and has undertaken a pilot project entitled “Down
Memory Lane”, to digitize its rare and brittle books. The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, is a research library on social sciences and Oriental Research Institute, preserves and fosters rare manuscripts and other forms of literature. The Rampur Raza Library is one of the world’s magnificent, unparalleled repository of cultural heritage and a treasure-house of knowledge. The library of the Asiatic Society is the grand stay, glory and honour of the Society.

Among Iranian libraries, the Central Library University of Tehran is the largest academic library in Iran. Tabriz Central library is called National because of its non-benefit and non-governmental structure. Parliament Library with a history of one hundred years is one of the fundamental institutions of Iranian contemporary civilization. It is worth mentioning that Rasan has achieved the first rank among the Islamic libraries regarding the number of online manuscripts. Revitalizing and observing Iran’s national heritage, as the fundamental indication of Iranian identity is main goal of Malek Library. The main objective of National library of Iran is acquisition, preservation, organization and dissemination of works on Iranian and Islamic studies. The Astan Quds Razavi Library is one of the most important and largest libraries in the Islamic world at Mashhad, Iran and the Grand Library Marashi Najafi established, with the aim of collecting and preserving manuscripts, for the purpose of research and analysis by scholars.