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Preserving Literary Heritage in the Digital Age

(This presentation explores the challenges and opportunities of preserving literary heritage in the digital age, focusing on the Kerala Sahitya Academy Library, Thrissur)

Presented By

Sr Jisna Jose, UGC Librarian
Vimala College (Autonomous)
Thrissur, Kerala





Kerala's Rich Cultural Heritage

Kerala boasts a rich cultural heritage deeply intertwined with its vibrant literary tradition. Books and libraries have long played a pivotal role in preserving and disseminating this legacy.

Performing Arts: Captivating Rhythms and Movements

1 Kathakali

This ancient dance-drama form is a captivating blend of storytelling, music, and elaborate costumes. Its expressive movements and intricate makeup create a mesmerizing spectacle.

2 Mohiniyattam

This graceful dance form, performed by women, is known for its fluid movements, elegant costumes, and mesmerizing expressions. Mohiniyattam is a celebration of feminine grace and beauty.

3 Koodiyattam

This ancient Sanskrit drama form is characterized by its intricate costumes, elaborate makeup, and complex narratives. It is a testament to Kerala's rich theatrical tradition.



Festivals: Celebrations of Unity and Joy

1

Onam

This harvest festival is a vibrant celebration of Kerala's culture. The ten-day festival features elaborate flower arrangements, traditional boat races, and delicious feasts.

2

Vishu

Vishu marks the beginning of the Malayalam New Year. It is celebrated with a special feast, the sight of auspicious yellow-colored items, and the exchange of gifts.

3

Thrissur Pooram

This colorful and spectacular festival is a dazzling display of elephants, music, and dance. It is held at the Vadakkunnathan Temple in Thrissur and draws huge crowds.





Kerala Lifestyle: Embracing Sustainable Living



Ayurveda

Ayurveda, a traditional Indian system of medicine, has deep roots in Kerala. The state is known for its Ayurvedic resorts and treatments, which focus on natural healing and holistic well-being.



Organic Farming

Kerala is a pioneer in organic farming, with a focus on sustainable agricultural practices. The state's lush landscapes produce a variety of organic spices, fruits, and vegetables, contributing to a healthy and eco-friendly lifestyle.



Eco-Tourism

Kerala promotes eco-tourism, emphasizing responsible travel that minimizes environmental impact. This includes supporting local communities, preserving natural resources, and fostering sustainable practices.

The Importance of Libraries in Kerala

Centers of Learning

Libraries have served as centers of learning and knowledge for centuries, providing access to a vast collection of books and manuscripts.

Preservation of Tradition

These institutions play a crucial role in preserving Kerala's literary heritage, safeguarding ancient manuscripts and traditional texts.

Community Hubs

Libraries are also important community hubs, fostering intellectual exchange and cultural enrichment.

Traditional Kerala Books and Manuscripts



Palm-leaf Manuscripts

Kerala's traditional manuscripts were written on palm leaves, showcasing intricate calligraphy and illustrations.



Printed Books

Over time, printed books became popular, reflecting the rich literary traditions of the region.



Preserving Kerala's Literary Treasures

1

Conservation Efforts

Efforts are underway to preserve these fragile manuscripts, ensuring their survival for future generations.

2

Digitization Projects

Digitization projects aim to make these treasures accessible to a wider audience, both within Kerala and internationally.

3

Digital Preservation

Digital preservation methods are employed to safeguard these literary treasures for posterity, ensuring their longevity.



Digitizing Kerala's Cultural Knowledge

Scanning and Cataloging

Manuscripts and books are carefully scanned, creating digital copies for preservation and access.

1

2

Metadata Creation

Detailed metadata is created for each item, providing information about its content, author, and historical context.

Online Platforms

These digital resources are made available through online platforms, expanding access to Kerala's literary treasures.

3



Challenges in Digitizing Kerala's Library Resources

Fragile Materials

Many manuscripts are fragile and require careful handling to prevent damage during digitization.

Funding Constraints

Digitization projects require significant funding to cover costs such as equipment, staff, and preservation efforts.

Technical Expertise

Specialized technical expertise is needed to manage the digitization process, ensuring accuracy and quality.



Innovative Approaches to Digitization

1

Crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing initiatives can engage volunteers in transcribing and cataloging digital resources.

2

Artificial Intelligence

AI technologies can assist in automated image processing, text recognition, and metadata creation.

3

Collaborative Partnerships

Partnerships between institutions can leverage resources and expertise for more comprehensive digitization efforts.



The Future of Kerala's Digital Library Ecosystem



Enhanced Access

Digital libraries will continue to provide greater access to Kerala's literary treasures to a wider audience.



Global Reach

Digital platforms will facilitate global access to Kerala's cultural heritage, promoting intercultural exchange.



Innovation in Delivery

New technologies will enhance the delivery of digital resources, creating immersive and engaging experiences.

Kerala Sahitya Academy Library: A Treasure Trove of Kerala's Literary History

Founding and History

- Established in 1956
- By Sree Chithira Thirunnaal Balarama Varma former King of Travancore (TVM)
- Autonomous Body promotes Malayalam Language and Literature

Collection Scope

The library collection encompasses various genres, from fiction and poetry to non-fiction and scholarly works. It includes rare and out-of-print books that are essential for research and preservation.

The Kerala Sahitya Academy Library houses a vast collection of books by renowned Malayalam writers. The library serves as a vital repository of Kerala's literary heritage. It serves as a hub for cultural exchange and intellectual discourse.





Significance of the Library's Collection

1

Historical Significance

The library's collection reflects the evolution of Malayalam literature, capturing the cultural and social changes in Kerala throughout history.

2

Cultural Heritage

The library preserves the voices and perspectives of generations of writers, showcasing the rich literary tradition of Kerala.

3

Preservation of Knowledge

The library's collection ensures the accessibility of valuable information and knowledge for future generations.

4

Literary Research

The collection is a vital resource for literary scholars and researchers, facilitating in-depth studies and analyses.

Challenges in Preserving Physical Books in the Digital Era

Environmental Factors

Humidity, temperature fluctuations, and exposure to light can damage books, leading to deterioration of the paper, bindings, and ink.

Physical Wear and Tear

Repeated handling, improper storage, and pest infestations can contribute to the physical degradation of books.

Lack of Resources

Limited funding, staffing, and technical expertise can hinder effective preservation efforts, leaving valuable books vulnerable to damage.



Digitization Efforts: Opportunities and Limitations

1

Preservation of Content

Digitization allows for the preservation of the content of books in a digital format, safeguarding them against physical damage and deterioration.

2

Accessibility and Outreach

Digital copies make the library's collection accessible to a wider audience, promoting research and dissemination of Kerala's literary heritage.

3

Limitations of Digitization

Digitization cannot fully replicate the tactile experience of reading a physical book, including the feel of the paper and the smell of aged ink.

4

Cost and Expertise

Digitization projects require significant financial investment and technical expertise, which can be a challenge for libraries with limited resources.



Storage and Environmental Conditions Management

1

Temperature and Humidity Control

Maintaining optimal temperature and humidity levels is crucial for preventing mold growth, paper degradation, and insect infestation.

2

Air Filtration Systems

Air filtration systems remove dust, pollutants, and allergens, minimizing the risk of damage to books and preserving their quality.

3

Lighting Management

Using proper lighting to illuminate the library while minimizing exposure to harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays prevents fading of ink and paper.

4

Pest Control Measures

Regular pest control measures, including fumigation and monitoring, are essential for preventing insect damage to the collection.

BEST PRACTICES

1 — Kerala Sahitya Academy Library is the repository of Malayalam books. This library has an invaluable collection of books which is not available anywhere else.

2 — Accredited as a research center for Malayalam literature and cultural studies by all universities in Kerala

3 — Academy Library conducted Book Exhibitions in different occasions and conducted seminars, workshops & cultural events for promoting reading and writing.

4 — The Academy library has more than 1.5 lakh books.
Out of this, over 1,28,000 books were purchased and received free in the general category.

5 — Palm-leaves, microfilm rolls, audio-video cassettes, photo CDs etc. are also available in the library. Have a collection of ancient rare books and manuscripts

6 — Reprographic Service: Readers visiting the library are provided with the facility to take copies of the required books and periodicals. Also, facility is provided the print of scanned books on demand.

7 — Reference Service: All kinds of reference facilities are provided in the library for the readers coming to the library.

8 — Having Periodicals like Sahitya Chakravalam magazine, Literary world, Malayalam Literary Survey.



Digitization library

The Kerala Sahitya Academy has launched a digital conservation lab to digitize rare Malayalam books to enhancing accessibility. Using advanced technologies, they scan historical texts, including collections from K. Bhaskaran Nair and Vallathol. Located in the golden jubilee building, the lab digitized over 13,738 books, with 2,633 available online for free.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the main reasons for digital preservation of heritage collection in Kerala Sahitya Academy
2. To identify the type of collection that is being digitized Kerala sahitya academy
3. To measure the awareness and satisfaction level of users on digital collection of the library in Kerala sahitya academy.
4. To understand the challenges for digitization and digital preservation of heritage collections in Kerala sahitya academy.

METHODOLOGY

The study's population consists of 586 users from the Kerala Sahitya Academy library, including research scholars, students, faculty, and non-academic users. Due to time constraints, a representative sample was selected using random sampling. A basal sample of 70 was formulated, utilizing a questionnaire survey, interview, and observation methods.

DATA ANALYSIS

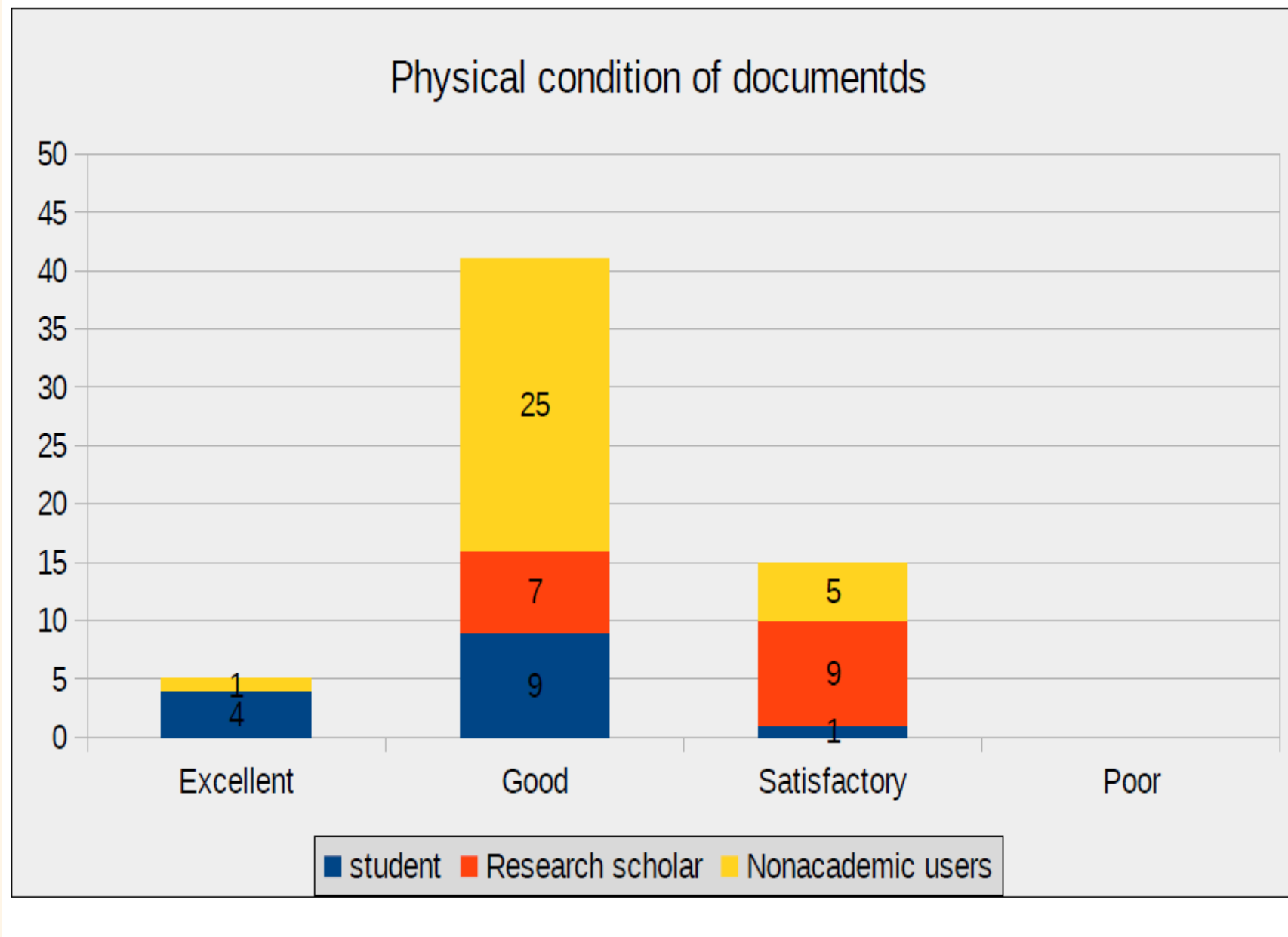
The study examines the preservation of paper documents at Kerala Sahitya Academy and its user impact. Out of 70 distributed questionnaires, 61 responses were received: 16 (26.22%) research scholars, 14 (22.9%) students, and 31 (50.81%) non-academic users. Most visit the library weekly (24), while 18 visit daily.

MOST PREFERRING TYPE OF DOCUMENT

TYPE OF DOCUMENTS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS
Manuscripts	0	0
Books	59	96%
Periodicals and journals	2	2%
Audio and video	0	0

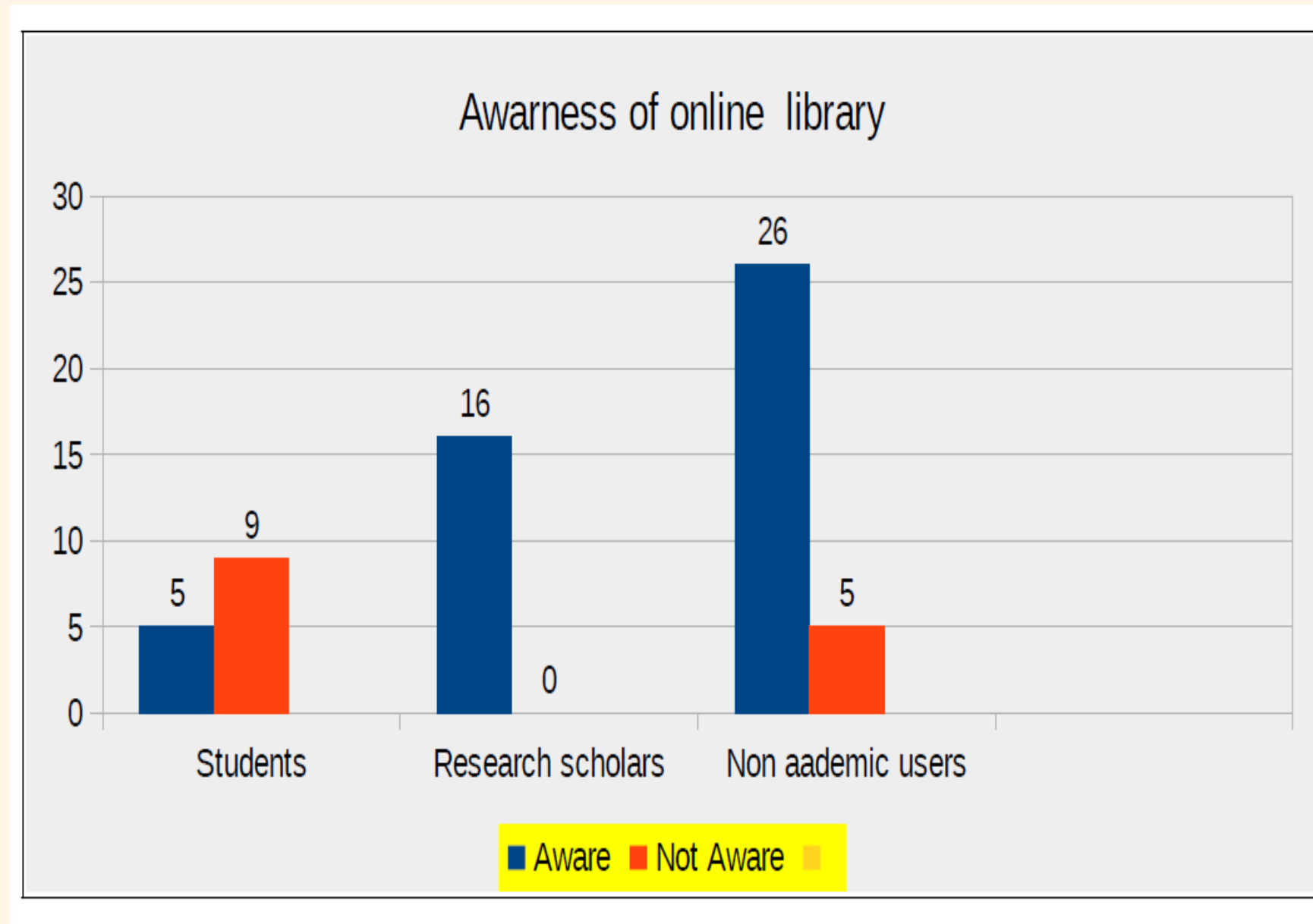
Different type of information sources is available in Kerala Sahitya Academy library. In these Different options most of them preferring books otherwise paper-based documents for their information needs.

Physical condition of documents



- shows the category wise opinion of the respondents to wars the physical condition of documents in library. 5 people agree that the physical condition of documents are excellent in these 4 students and 1 academic user are including.
- 41 people ranked that condition is good. 15 of respondents just ranked the condition of documents as just satisfactory. But important thing is even one person not ranked as poor.

AWARENESS AND USE OF ONLINE LIBRARY



- Out of three categories Non academic users and Research scholars are more aware and use this online resources.
- More general books for general reading than subject books available online for free.

OPINION ABOUT DIGITIZING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Respondents were asked to point out their attitude regarding digitization of rare and old collection in the library. 46 of the respondents were indicated that digitization is highly useful, 13 of the respondents were indicated that digitization process is moderately useful and small number 2 in indicated not useful.

USER'S PREFERENCE TOWARD DIGITISED AND PRINT COLLECTION

The respondents were asked to specify their preference toward print and digitized collection. Majority of the respondents 37(60.65%) preferred both digitized and print collection, followed by 21(34.42%) who preferred print collection only, on the other hand least number of respondents 3(4.91%) preferred for digitised collection only.

BARRIERS TO USE ONLINE LIBRARY

Users opinioned that copy right issue is the biggest barrier while using online library. 62.29 % of respondents opinioned that copy right issue is the biggest barrier to them. According to 26.22 % of respondent's due technical problems like lack of clarity of documents prevent them from the use online library. Finally, 11.47% of opinion that staffs were not supporting them to use online library. May be they are book lovers.

SATISFACTION LEVEL WITH THE AVAILABLE DIGITAL COLLECTION

When the users were asked their opinion about the digital collection, most of them gave the that is 36 of them (59%) answer of 'No' More than half of the respondents are not satisfied with digital collection. 25 (40.9%) of the respondents. Because of copyright issues most of the books not freely available in the online, but accessible inside the Library.

FINDINGS

- Repeated use of same books causes to the deterioration of that books. Because of this, preservation of documents especially preservation of paper based documents is very important in sahitya academy library.
- Only 8% people agreeing that the physical condition of the books excellent
- A good number of respondents were not known about the digital library. Most of the respondents who do not aware about online library were students.
- Majority of the respondents choose both digital and print collection for their information needs. Print collection have more preference than digital collection.
- Digital collection cannot replace the existing print collection, because of the mind set of users of Academy library.

FINDINGS

- Most people have a positive attitude towards the preservation of heritage collections. Kerala Sahithya Academy library is a reference library ,So in this case respondents agreeing that digital availability of documents helped them lot to meet their information needs easily.
- At the same time Majority of them were not satisfied with the available collection in the online because lack of proper orientation and also turn back the user from the use of online library.
- Most of them are paper centric this cause to the reduce in usage of digital contents or preserved contents.
- More than 134319 books digitized till now, But due to copyright issue Only 2633 available in online library. Non availability of needed information deferring users from the use of online library.

SUGGESTIONS

- Key initiatives focus on creating educational materials
- enhancing digital platform accessibility
- improving digitization quality
- offering hybrid options
- implementing user feedback
- promoting awareness and providing training for effective use of digital resources.

Conclusion: Safeguarding Kerala's Literary Legacy for Future Generations

The Kerala Sahitya Academy Library plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting Kerala's literary heritage. Through strategic digitization efforts, comprehensive cataloging, and robust preservation strategies, the library ensures that this invaluable collection is safeguarded for future generations.

Digital materials are vital for research and education. Digitization transforms how libraries access and preserve information. Best practices vary, emphasizing access or preservation. The Kerala Sahitya Academy highlights that digitization protects original documents from deterioration while enhancing accessibility.



Thank
you!

