



International Seminar on September 16th, 2024
“Exploring the Frontiers of Interdisciplinary Research (ICEFIR-2024)”
Organized By: Nagpal Charitable Trust, Sri Ganganagar
Venue: Maharaja Agrasen Vidya Mandir School, Sri Ganganagar

The Role of Libraries in Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Abstract

Libraries have traditionally been regarded as repositories of books and written records, but their role has increasingly expanded to include the preservation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). Intangible cultural heritage encompasses the traditions, oral expressions, folklore, performing arts, rituals, traditional knowledge, craftsmanship, languages, and cultural practices transmitted from one generation to another. In the contemporary digital era, libraries serve as important institutions for documenting, organizing, digitizing, and providing access to these diverse forms of cultural knowledge. Through oral history projects, community archives, digital repositories, audiovisual documentation, and preservation of rare manuscripts and local records, libraries help safeguard cultural expressions that may otherwise be lost due to globalization, modernization, migration, and changing social practices. Libraries also facilitate community participation by collaborating with local artists, scholars, indigenous communities, and cultural organizations to collect and interpret heritage materials in culturally appropriate ways. Digital technologies further enable libraries to make intangible cultural resources accessible to researchers, students, and future generations while supporting cultural awareness and identity. This paper examines the significant role of libraries in preserving intangible cultural heritage, with particular emphasis on documentation, digitization, community engagement, accessibility, and long-term preservation. It also highlights the challenges faced by libraries, including limited resources, technological barriers, copyright concerns, and the need for community consent. Strengthening library initiatives can contribute substantially to the sustainable preservation and transmission of cultural heritage.

Keywords: Libraries, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Cultural Preservation, Digitization, Oral Traditions, Community Archives, Traditional Knowledge, Digital Repositories.

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