e-Pothi: Online Manuscripts Cataloguing System of Odisha State Museum

Odisha is known for its rich cultural heritage, monuments and palm & bamboo leaf manuscripts. The State Museum is unique in the Country, having rare & other forms of manuscripts. e-Cataloguing system (e-Pothi) has its genesis in fulfilling intellectual requirements of research scholars all over the world from Pali Text Society, University of Bristol, Colombia, Cambridge, Oxford, Heidelberg and British Museum, International Association of Sanskrit Studies, South Asia Institute, French School of Asian Studies, Buddhist Forum of Sri Lanka etc.

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Palm leaf manuscripts are rare, ancient and are difficult to access and acquire. There is demand from researchers across various universities, libraries to access them online. Students, researchers & scholars around the globe can now access these manuscripts online through the portal - www.odishamuseum.nic.in – which intends to fulfil the main objective of the project of spreading awareness among the people about rich Indian culture and heritage.

e-CATALOGUE FOR PALM LEAF MANUSCRIPTS

An online catalogue, where visitors can access the digitized manuscripts via search based on author, subject, category etc., has been developed. There are around 37,000 manuscripts under 27 categories like Veda, Ganita, Ayurveda, Jyotisha, Sanskrit Purana, Tantra etc. A visitor can get access to the first and last page of the individual manuscripts and if he/she wants to see/read the complete set for research purpose, then it can be purchased either through e-Payment using Credit/Debit/ATM Card or through Internet Banking.

VIRTUAL WALK THROUGH FACILITY

The system facilitates virtual walkthrough of the museum. It's like a virtual museum where a visitor can select an area he/she wants to visit - either the halls or various sections of the museum. On selecting a particular section/hall by clicking on the link, the

Dr. Arbind Padhi, Commissioner-cum-Secretary & Director Culture visiting the manuscripts section of the museum

visitor will find the digital museum. The visitors can move forward/backward or left/right by moving the mouse cursor to get the 360° panoramic view. This virtual walkthrough brings a realistic feel to the visitors and they can see the museum from anywhere with this module. There is also a facility to make the walkthrough truly dynamic by creating links on the images, monuments etc. Whenever the visitor places mouse over the objects, it shows the description of that particular object. This is an exciting and knowledge sharing facility between the department and the visitors.

TECHNOLOGY USED

The project is based on Open Source Technology using the following tools -

• **CMS :** Drupal

• **RDBMS:** Postgre SQL ,

• **Web Technology:** HTML, DHTML, PHP, CSS, Jquery & Ajax

• **Web Server:** Apache Tomcat 6.0

ACCESSIBILITY

The portal is developed following Government of India Web Guidelines (GIGW) and Web Accessible Guidelines so that persons with disabilities can easily access this site including the visually challenged persons. The portal is regularly audited for cyber security.

BENEFICIARIES OF THE PROJECT

• Odisha State Museum

• Researchers, students, scholars across the globe

• Common citizen

PRE-DEPLOYMENT SCENARIO

• Common citizens were either ignorant of the availability of rare books and palm leaf manuscripts at Odisha State Museum or they can't access these manuscripts easily.

• There was lack of awareness among researchers and students on how to acquire information related to rare manuscripts.

• Gathering information manually is a time consuming process.

DEPLOYMENT SCENARIO

• The website is accessible to the masses including those with disabilities. Research Scholars, professors, students etc are getting benefited through the project.

• The rare manuscripts have helped in disseminating knowledge about ancient Aayurveda, dance, heritage, Vedas, Puranas etc.

• The facility of virtual walkthrough is exciting and promotes knowledge sharing facility between the government departments and visitors. It is interesting for a visitor to discover Odisha State Museum virtually through the cyber space.

AWARDS

The web based portal is selected for EDGE Award 2014- an initiative of Information Week Magazine. e-Pothi has also been shortlisted for presentation in SKOCH Digital Inclusion Award, 2014.

TEAM

The development team for e-Pothi project comprises of Dr. R. N. Behera, STD along with members- Shri Ajit Kr. Pattanayak, PSA and Ms. Namita Senapati, PSA, who worked under the able guidance and valuable support from Shri S.K.Panda, DDG & SIO, Odisha.