Multilingual Sources and Services: A Study of Sahitya Akademi Libraries in India

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Abstract - **Sahitya Akademi is the National Academy of Letters in India meant to promote the cause of Indian literature through publications, translations, seminars, workshops, cultural exchange programmes and literary meets. It maintains a unique multilingual library in New Delhi, Bengaluru, Kolkata, and Mumbai having books in over 24 languages. This paper focuses primarily on the multilingual resources of Indian literature, shows how changes in technology are impacting such libraries. Subsequently, this paper describes the various services offered for multi-lingual system.**
Keywords: **Multilingual library, Library sources, Library services, Sahitya Akademi Library, Special libraries**

I. INTRODUCTION

National Academy of Letters to be called "Sahitya Akademi", established by its resolution No. F.6-4/51-G. 2. (A) Dated 15 December 1952. Akademi was formally inaugurated on 12th March, 1954 in the Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi and as per the Akademi's General Council recommendations it was registered as Societies Registration Act of 1860, on 7th January 1956. The functioning of an organisation is largely moulded by its officers. The officers of Sahitya Akademi, mentioned in its Constitution, are President, Vice-President, Fininacial Adviser and Secretary.

S. Radhakrishnan, philosopher-statesman and the then Vice-President of India delivered the inaugural address. He Said: "The phrase, Sahitya Akademi, combines two words. 'Sahitya' is Sanskrit and 'Academy' is Greek. This name suggests our universal outlook and aspiration. Sahitya is a literary composition; Academy is an assembly of men who are interested in the subject. So Sahitya Akademi will be an assembly of all those who are interested in creative and critical literature. It is the purpose of this Akademi to recognise men of achievement in letters, to encourage men of promise in letters, to educate public taste, and to improve standards of literature and literary criticism…"

Sadana (2012) writes in her book Sahitya Akademi as one for "literary nationality." In terms of literary production, to be literate is to know the literatures of each regional language and accord them equal status to the extent possible.

II. AKADEMI'S REGIONAL OFFICES IN INDIA

In 1956, a small production office was set up at Calcutta in the National Library premises, to look after the work of the National Bibliography of Indian Literature. In course of time this small production office grew into a Regional Office, Kolkata. This Regional Office looks after the publication and programme work in Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Manipuri and Oriya, besides a part of publication work in English and Tibetan. It also handles programmes in the other north-eastern languages.

In 1959, another Regional Office was set up in Madras to look after the Akademi's work in the Southern languages. In 1990, Regional office Madras was shifted to Bangalore, though a small unit was retained in Madras. It looks after the publication and programme work in Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu, besides a part of publication in English. It is located in Central College Campus, Bengaluru.

To implement more effectively the akademi's programmes in the Western languages another Regional Office was set up in Bombay in 1972. It looks after the publication and programme work in Gujarati, Konkani, Marathi and Sindhi, besides a part of publication work in English and Hindi.

North-East Centre for Oral Literature: A project office for the promotion of Tribal and Oral literature has also been set up in Agartala, to look after unrecognised languages of North-East.

III. LIBRARY SOURCES AND SERVICES

As we are all aware that Sahitya Akademi Library which functions under aegis of Sahitya Akademi, the National Akademi of letters, occupies an important place not only in library map of the capital, truly this library is the premier library of letters in the cultural map of the Nation. It has an enriched collection of 24 languages in literature, literary theory and criticism, philosophy, history and cultural studies, which enjoys an active and appreciative readership. Apart from this apex body, other reputed multilingual libraries that deserve mention here are National Library,

Tulsi Sadan Library, Delhi Public Library, and Central Institute of Indian Languages etc.

Sahitya Akademi Library is one of the most important multi-lingual libraries in India with a rich collection of books (approx. 2 Lacs) on literature and allied subjects in 24 languages recognised by the Sahitya Akademi. It is being with highest attention to the building up of a good library of books in all the languages it has anything to do so essential for its working. These libraries are devoted to literature, literary theories, History of Indian literature, and criticism, women's studies, cultural histories and translation studies came into being the needs of clienteles with specialised interest. So these libraries are special libraries which cater to the entire needs of entire fraternity.

Its specialized collections include publications on and by Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi. It also includes enriched reference books focusing mainly on Indian and World literature, philosophy, religion, art and culture.

During the first year of the Aakdemi 700 selected books were acquired for the Library. It was only in the end of November 1961 that the Library was shifted to its new premises in Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi. It is made that the Sahitya Akademi library developed as a centre of study of Indian literature. Now the number of literary journals in various languages received regularly more than two hundred literary journal / periodicals in several languages are available in the Akademi libraries.

The library is open to public for reference and library started issuing books to those who have been registered has members. Initially, library has not charged any for membership. Now Akademi libraries offer refundable security deposits for membership. It is having different types of membership categories for all types of readers, for example Research Scholars, General Membership, Senior Citizens, Consultation etc., daily scholars, faculty, students of literature, Research scholars, editors, journalists, writers and general public consult the library. Table 1 shows the total Registered Members and total number of books.

TABLE 1 SAHITYA AKADEMI LIBRARIES: BASIC FACTS

S.No.	Name of the Library	No. of Books	No. of users
1	Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi	1,23,854	14,836
2	Sahitya Akademi, Southern Regional Office, Bengaluru	29,500	350
3	Sahitya Akademi, Southern Regional Office, Kolkatta	-	210
4	Sahitya Akademi, Southern Regional Office, Mumbai	9500	175

In 2001-2002, Akademi switched over to the commercial software ie., Libsys and updated computerized circulation activities apporx. 2000 members enrolled. Retro-conversion of English and Hindi sections was completed and made available on online on LAN.

In 2008 Sahitya Akademi took the decision to combine all its libraries in an Internet-based catalogue (WEBOPAC) that complies with international standards for cataloguing and data exchange which has now been accomplished by employing an Integrated Library Management Software (VTLS, Virtua).

Reference queries received by the Sahitya Akademi Library from all corners of India as well as abroad, readers in person, by email, letter and telephone and now the library is on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other social media networks. Every professional staff does the reference work because of multilingual nature of the collection.

Certified that average 105 reference queries per month are entertained by the library staff as per 2012 library categorization report. Now this may be increased up to 200 as per the membership and Regional office libraries function.

Sahitya Akademi Library is bringing three publications every month since 2011, i.e Book Review, Current contents and News clippings.

2014-2015, the Akademi library staff edited prestigious project of *Who's who of Indian writers* and it was made available on website, www.sahitya-akademi.gov.in , also compiled and edited Critical *inventory of Nort-Eastern Tribal literature* by the library staff. All most all the languages centralized catalogue made available through Web-OPAC including Regional office Libraries.

Special libraries came into being to serve the needs of clientele with specialised interest. So, these libraries are special libraries which cater to the entire needs of entire literature fraternity. Detailed basic facts few are as follows:-

Table 2 shows that Sahitya Akademi Libraries are open all week days and also open library on Saturday at New Delhi.

TABLE 2- WORKING HOURS OF SAHITYA AKADEMI LIBRARIES

S.No.	Library hours	Sahitya Akademi Libraries			
		New Delhi	Bengaluru	Kolkatta	Mumbai
1	Week days (Mon-Fri)	09.30AM – 06.00PM	09.30AM – 06.00PM	09.30AM – 06.00PM	09.30AM – 06.00PM
2	Saturday	09.30AM – 06.00PM	closed	closed	closed
3	Sunday & Holidays	closed	closed	closed	closed

Table 3 shows that a detailed list of services offered by these Akademi libraries has been given. These Akademi libraries offer a range of services including reference and Web-based On-Line Public Access Catalogue (WebOPAC), different types of memberships, Consultation and Circulation, Inter Library Loan (ILO), Resource sharing among Akademi regional centers, Information Alert Services (CAS), Books reservations/renewals, User orientation, Reprography and Printing. In addition to these Akademi libraries place greater emphasis on user education to inform, alert, educate and train users about various resources and services. Also train users on 'How to Use' various multilingual databases of OPAC in Roman script as well as source language.

TABLE 3   SERVICES OFFERED BY SAHITYA AKADEMI LIBRARIES

S. No.	Library Service	Sahitya Akademi Libraries			
		New Delhi	Bengaluru	Kolkatta	Mumbai
1	Reference Services	√	√	√	√
2	Online catalogue	√	√	√	√
3	Bibliographic Services	√	√	√	-
4	Indexing/Abstracting Services	√	-	√	-
5	Information Alert Services (CAS)	√	√	√	-
6	Book Reviews	√	√	√	-
7	Current Contents of Journals	√	-	√	-
8	Newspaper Clippings	√	√	√	-
9	Reprography	√	√	√	√
10	Printing	√	√	√	-
11	Internet	√	√	√	-
12	Books lending	√	√	√	-
13	Inter Library loan	√	√	√	√
14	Books reservations/renewals	√	√	√	-
15	User orientation	√	√	√	√
16	WebOpac	√	√	√	√
17	Digital Scanning facility	√	√	√	-
18	Digital photos printing facility	√	-	-	-

The Sahitya Akademi Library is a rich collection of books on literature and allied subjects it cover 24 languages (Appendix 1) recognized by the Sahitya Akademi. Akademi libraries have some of the most modernised WebOPAC and pioneers in adopting latest tools and techniques of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to provide quality services to their member users. They have been providing e-Resources of 'Who's Who of Indian Writers' (Online Directory of Living Writers), Citations of Eminent Writers and awards. Table 4 shows that Akademi libraries having separate Library building, Good public transport, Internet facility, CCTV surveillance and Natural ventilation. Table 5 shows that all Akademi libraries having rich collection of books, monographs, Reference Books, periodicals and good number of news clippings and table 6 shows Non-print sources such as Film and Videos, Audio/Visual materials, CDs/DVDs, e-books, online databases, Portraits, and Still photographs are mostly available in New Delhi.

TABLE 4 LIBRARY BUILDING & OTHER FACILITIES

S. No.	Library building	Sahitya Akademi Libraries			
		New Delhi	Bengaluru	Kolkatta	Mumbai
1.	Separate Library building	√	√	√	-
2.	Good public transport	√	√	√	√
3.	Separate Reading hall	√	-	√	√
4.	Periodical section	√	√	√	√
5.	Internet facility	√	√	√	-
6.	Assessable to differently abled persons	-	-	√	-
7.	Lockers for users	-	√	√	-
8.	CCTV surveillance	√	√	√	√
9.	Natural ventilation	√	√	√	√
10.	Possibility of Library building expand in future	-	-	-	-
11.	Capacity of the reading hall	45	20	13	12

TABLE 5 SOURCES SUBSCRIBED BY SAHITYA AKADEMI LIBRARIES

S. No.	Library Sources	Sahitya Akademi Libraries			
		New Delhi	Bengaluru	Kolkatta	Mumbai
1.	Books	√	√	√	√
2.	Monographs	√	√	√	√
3.	Reference Books	√	√	√	√
4.	Periodicals	√	√	√	√
5.	Research Reports	√	-	-	-
6.	Patents	-	-	-	-
7.	Standards	-	-	-	-
8.	Dissertations /thesis – pub.	√	√	√	√
9.	Souvenirs	√	-	-	-
10.	Festschrifts	√	-	√	√
11.	Databases and Indexes	√	-	√	-
12.	Indexing periodicals	√	-	-	-
13.	Abstracting Periodicals	√	-	-	-
14.	Book Reviews	√	√	√	-
15.	Newspaper clippings	√	√	√	-
16.	Unpublished Sources (diaries, letters, etc.	√	-	-	-
17.	Bibliography of Bibliographies	√	-	-	√
18.	Others	Citations, Award broachers, photos	Citations, Award broachers, photos	Citations, Award broachers, photos	Citations, Award broachers, photos

TABLE 6 NON-PRINT SOURCES SUBSCRIBED BY SAHITYA AKADEMI LIBRARIES

S. No.	Non-print Sources	Sahitya Akademi Libraries			
		New Delhi	Bengaluru	Kolkatta	Mumbai
1.	Film and Videos	√	-	-	-
2.	Audio/Visual materials	√	-	-	-
3.	CDs/DVDs	√	-	√	-
4.	e-books	√	-	√	-
5.	e-journals	√	-	√	-
6.	Online databases	√	√	√	-
7.	Portraits	√	√	√	√
8.	Still photographs	√	√	√	√
9.	Others				-

IV.CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Akademi libraries are examples of superior coverage of Indian literature and allied subjects, offering efficient services. These libraries have acquired access for their users to a large number of resources in literature, literary theories, History of Indian literature and criticism, women's studies, cultural histories and translation studies. These resources have helped the research scholars and users. However, these libraries need to invest more in order to move to the next level or modernization so that they retain their position of eminence. Some of the areas need attention urgently are given below:

a. Akademi Head Quarters library and its Regional Office Libraries should implement Wi-Fi facilitates and adopt some of the web 2.0 techniques to make their home pages and web OPAC more interactive where users can communicate and contribute to the library.

b. The Web-based On-Line Public Access Catalogue (WebOPAC) is one of the most heavily used databases in Akademi Libraries and is also accessible 24x7. All resources and services are accessible through library home page.

c. Akademi libraries also organize training workshops, seminars and conferences on current topics of interest for library and information professionals to help them upgrade their knowledge and skills.

d. Most of the library buildings are quite old and require major renovation not only to improve the facilities and ambience but also be able to create a variety of spaces for different types of user requirements. Space required fifty years ago and today is not comparable and yet, it remains an extremely insufficient space. Obviously, apart from funds, the actual space available determines the acquisition of books.

In fact, all library users are faculty, scholars, writers, screen and T.V. script writers, artists, etc., Hence, the timings of the library should be made available to cater the needs of the clientele

Circulation works such as renewal of books, overdue notices, online book reservations, and other library activities could also be brought online.

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