

Workshop on ***Modern Library Management System and Reforms: Targeting Kanika***

Established in 1922 and named after Sri Rajendra Narayan Bhanjadeo, Raja of Kanika, a feudatory estate of Colonial Odisha, Kanika Library of Ravenshaw College/ University, is the oldest and largest library of Odisha. Since its inception as a university in 2006, the library has undergone significant transformations in sync with the shifting needs of the times specifically to cater to the needs of an upcoming university students population as well as the civil society in general.

The dominant thrust in this regard has been to initiate an integrated library management system based on an automation process by use of computer technology to augment the resource planning system, namely cataloguing and circulation of resource base of the library through an online mode. The other component of this initiative has been a concerted plan and effort to develop a digital library with a focused collection of digital objects like texts, visual materials, audio/ video materials stored and retrieved through electronic media formats.

The other major focus has been to focus on aspect of digitalization of the old and rare texts of the library and other printed resources including century old institutional documents of Ravenshaw. This drive entails an elaborate process of preservation, selection and digitalization of the old and brittle printed resources of rare category, bundled up and dumped in gunny bags.

In this context, what needs to be specifically stressed is the alarming conditions in which a large chunk of old files and official records and documents of Ravenshaw College have been lying stacked in an utterly brittle state in two full rooms. This inescapably merits a moral responsibility and a top priority attention on the issue of repair and preservation of such resources for posterity based on the best possible state of art technique as available today.

It needs no reiteration of the fact that the history of Ravenshaw, both as a colonial and post-colonial institution of higher learning, in multiple ways reflects the fragmentary histories of modern Odisha and India. It may not also be out of place to suggest here that these archival records and documents of a premier institution of Ravenshaw's stature could be a reliable source base for scholars, alumni and lay citizens who wish to study and understand Ravenshaw as part of history of modern and institutional education in the context of Odisha. More critically too, these rare resources to a considerable degree can also be a mine of information for historians and social scientists who seek to explore multiple aspects of society and culture of colonial and post colonial times.

A modest beginning to revamp the structure of the library has been put into place over the last six years. This includes setting up of Ravenshaw Knowledge Center (RKC) providing innovative services like Ravenshaw Knowledge Portal, Internet-cum-Digital Library, On-line Reading Room, UGC INFLIB Network, National

Knowledge Network, subscription to subject databases, online journals and e resources. Besides, a music library named after the noted Oriya singer and lyricist, Akshaya Mohanty and a Braille reading system equipped with sophisticated scanner and printer facilities, exclusively devoted to enhance the reading experience of the visually impaired students, have also been set up.

However, the drive for refurbishing the overall library set up including preservation of such valuable resources, however, has somewhat remained slow, hesitant and faltering in view of some major structural limitations as well as financial constraints.

In due recognition of the need for the required drive for revamping this premier library of the state, I am glad to inform you that, a workshop is being organized to reflect on the various aspects, techniques, planning and budgetary provisions in relation to a modern library management system.

It is against this backdrop, I am glad to inform you that, an initiative is being undertaken as part of the sesquicentennial celebration of Ravenshaw with the objective of transforming it into a state-of-art library at par with libraries of global repute.

In pursuance of this initiative, a workshop is being organised on 16 October 2017 at (10 AM to 5 PM) to highlight the problems and issues facing Kanika Library at present and scope for its remedy and up gradation to make it fit for adaptation of international standard of library management. The proceedings emerging out of this workshop will be processed into a status report on the library while charting out a possible road map.

Several experts on library management/ preservation of documentary heritage associated with various libraries and archives of the state have been invited to participate in the workshop as resource persons.

It is in this connection, we deem it a privilege to invite scholars, students, faculty members, members of Library Committee, alumni, and members of civil society to kindly attend the workshop and share your expertise and views on the aforesaid subject.

We would also be happy to take note of ideas/suggestions/feedback in connection with Kanika library and its possible areas of reforms from among above said stakeholders. The suggestions in this regard may be mailed at kanikalibrary@gmail.com with copies to vc@ravenshawuniversity.ac.in; lalatendu05@hotmail.com