

## **“The Access to and the Use of Research Resources in Korean Studies in the Digital Era”**

**By K. G. Tyagi, Ph.D.**

**Abstract:** The Social Science scholarly literature plays an important role in the development and growth of area studies. Korean Studies are no exception. In the present era, the access to and utilization of scholarly information and literature has become a complex process in any academic discipline.

A larger percentage of scholarly literature in Korean Studies is available in printed format but the availability of Korean literature in digital/electronic format is limited. Presently, a substantial percentage of scholarly literature in the West is available in the digital format; and in this format the generation, access, availability and use of literature in the non-Western world is bit imbalanced and difficult to access for common users of information.

In this paper the author has tried to critically examine various issues related to the availability and use of scholarly literature in /on the Korean Studies in English language as well as in Korean language.

There is an urgent need for encouraging production of scholarly literature in digital format in this area. There is also a need for adding to the contents on the Internet the contents of scholarly literature generated in Korean Studies, in digital format, both in Korean language as well as in the English language in a systematic way.

Suggest that adequate provisions need to be made for scholars of Korean Studies for short-term training in the access to and the use of literature, data and documents in this area, in the digital format. Suggestions and various methods for improving access to and the use of scholarly literature and research resources in Korean Studies will be presented.

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## **“The Access to and the Use of Research Resources in Korean Studies in the Digital Era”**

**By K. G. Tyagi, Ph.D.**

### **Introduction**

The Korean wave (hallyu) has swept the world in recent years. The increasing presence of Korean art, culture, dance, music, movies and TV operas etc. is felt ‘world wide’. The presence of Korean multinational companies, with their competitive potentials in automobile, electronic and other products, has given a tough competition to others in business and trade world wide. Korea political reforms and economic and foreign policy have increased its prestige around the world. A keen interest is being developed world wide not only in Korean culture and history but also its economic policy, socioeconomic planning and national developmental efforts. Korea, as an economic power today has made its big impact globally. In addition to close cooperation with academic communities interested in Korean Studiers, Korea has vastly improved its economic and cultural relations, world wide. Korea has vast potential in attracting others with hallyu and with its economic miracle. The Korean Study in the present era may help in globalization of various fields related to Korea.

### **Korea and Korean Studies**

The modern Korea is engaged in modernizing and democratization of its activities .The unprecedented growth and economic development by ROK in recent years has resulted into improving the quality of life of its people to a great extent. With in a short span of three to four decades, this small and beautiful country has rapid progress and today it is one of the major economic powers not only in Asia, but in the world. Understanding complex and critical economic and management issues through the Korean viewpoint can be of great help to the developing nations world wide.

Korea stands out, as a model before the world in this respect. The developing nations, which are engaged in the development and

modernization process, can learn a lot with Korean model of development. But up to now very little information is available in this respect outside Korea on this important aspect of Korean development. Perhaps under Korean Studies others can be helped in understanding this dynamic country in a better way. KS programme provide better understanding of Korean people their culture and history. With KS one can acquire knowledge and experience, language and culture for better understanding of Korean Values, culture and its development models.

### **Korea and India**

India and Korea are two ancient cultures. Both have a long term, historical and cultural relations. In addition, India and Korea both share colonial past, democratic institutions, human rights, free trade, and cooperation at business and academic level. Though there are many meaningful similarities between India and Korea, but the understanding about Korea in India, even about three decades back was not much and Indians at the grassroots were not aware about such similarities. The presence of many Korean international corporations in India, with their quality and competitive products, especially in electronics and automobile sectors have increase the interest of a common man in Korea. Today Korean products are very competitive in Indian market. The direct Korean investments in India are quite impressive. A large number of Indians from business and academia have shown their interests in Korea and its culture and literature, art and music and business matters. In recent years, University of Delhi and JNU have organized many lectures, seminars and conferences on Korea, which have created better awareness about Korea among Indian scholars and others. All this has enhanced interest of Indians in Korea and in Korean Studies, in India. Today, Korea is an academic and business partner of India. Many academic institutions have entered into agreement with Korean academic institutions for collaborative academic programmes on Korean Studies.

### **Korean Studies in India**

Korean Studies was introduced in India as an academic discipline, as back as in the year 1970'S. However, before the year, 1995 Korean Studies as a subject of teaching and research did not attract much attention in Indian universities. But presently Indian interests in Korean Studies are increasing rapidly.

At JNU (Jawaharlal Nehru University) presently, three years B.A. course (1995) and two years M.A. course (15 Years) (1998) were started in Korean Studies. In May 2000 first batch of 8 graduates (M.A.) passed out from JNU. The existing facilities of Korean Studies in India are available only in few selected places. In addition to Delhi, the Korean Studies teaching facilities are available in Madhya Pradesh specially in one of the college ( Lakshmi Bai College, ) affiliated to the Gwalior University. In the capital city of Delhi, Korean Studies center is a part of Center for Japanese and Northeast Asian Studies, in the School of Languages, Literature and Cultural Studies, JNU, New Delhi. Though, the University of Delhi started first teaching of Korean language in India, but the Jawaharlal Nehru University (J.N.U.) is the first University in India to impart advance level teaching and research studies in India. Presently, Ph.D. programmes are also available in few Indian Universities on Korean Studies. All this is a testimony to the importance, the Govt. of India and its people attach to Korea and Korean Studies.

The role of Korean Foundation in India is commendable in promoting K.S. in India, but still there is a lot of scope to strengthened Korean Studies in India. Better funding, more academic programmes like for research resources for the libraries and centers of Korean Studies; for organizing seminars and conferences, joint research projects , exchange of persons , both at academic and at business level are needed.

It may be pointed our here that India is a big country. Presently facilities about Korean Studies teaching and research are available only in the capital city of Delhi. There are many scholars and students, located out side Delhi and who are interested in Korea and its culture, but they could not pursue their efforts further because of inadequate or absence of facilities for research and teaching about Korean Studies in their areas. Adequate teaching and research and library facilities may be provided in India in Korean Studies at places other than capital city of Delhi. The potential of Korean Studies in India are great. Many universities in India would love to add a new programme of Korean Studies to their teaching and research programmes. The Korean Government, and other funding agencies in India and Korea should pay attention in this area by chalking out effective strategy and by providing financial support in this area.

### **Korean Studies Research Resources**

Research resources and the teaching and research material is one of the very important component of any academic discipline. To promote Korean Studies, the Korean Studies collection has to be strengthened at Korean Studies research centers and academic institutions. Developing world has to learn a lot about Korean efforts in business, commerce and trade and Korea's nation building efforts. Researches on Korean Studies are done only in about a dozen traditional social science disciplines. However a greater emphasis is only in areas like history and culture; art and literature etcetera. There is an urgent need that proper use may be made of latest research methods and other research techniques in social sciences to undertake many new areas of research interests in Korean Studies. In comparison with Korean Studies in USA, like in California (L.A.) and Harvard University, Korean Studies facilities in India stand no where?

### **Korean publications**

According to the Korean Publication Year Book issued by the Ministry of Culture Govt. of Korea, Korea published 720 titles in the year 1989; 1600 titles in the year 1998, 2680 in the year 1992 and 4697 in the year 1997. The annual growth rate of Korean publications per annum is quite impressive. More Korean publications are produced in social sciences, especially in economics and allied disciplines. This may be because of tremendous economic growth which Korea has made in recent years, has resulted into generating more publications, data and documents in economics and allied subjects. It seems that the growth of Korean economy has resulted into increase in the production of social science literature more than in other disciplines. One can see a correlation between economic development, and growth of SS literature in Korea.

The availability of Korean publications in institutions and countries, where Korean Studies has been started only recently or is in its embryo stage should be ensured. Lists of core books on Korean Studies, for different levels may be prepared and made available to users and new centers of Korean studies.

Dissemination of relevant and updated information is very essential in any area studies programme. Government agencies and other such organizations are working in isolation, in dissemination of information data and documents generated by them about Korea. There is lot of scope for better coordination between government agencies, academic centers and commercial / private sectors in this area. In this task, besides other channels, the role of librarians and information intermediaries may be very helpful and effective. To develop and strengthen special collection on Korean Studies special grants and support should be provided to various institutions and organizations.

### **Exchange of Publications**

There is a need of liberal exchange of Korean literature with publications of other research organizations and universities etc. from various countries whether in English or in other languages. This will help in wide spreading information and literature about Korean Studies and ensure that copies Korean publications are available in research organizations, in different countries. Such a programme will not only improve Korean Studies programme world wide, but will also help Korean research organizations and libraries in acquisition of research resources published from other countries, for the students and other users in Korea. Exchange of literature, data and documents in this area, at international level is needed, A lot of Korean literature has been translated into English. Such literature should be made available to users through exchange.

### **Digital Literature:**

In the present era, Internet and digital literature have made a great impact on the speed, access, and use of information. The digital literature in Korean Studies is also increasing. Many universities and research institutions and other organizations in Korea and out side are producing and maintaining digital literature related to Korean Studies. Many libraries and information centers in Korea and other Western countries are converting their collections of dissertations and theses, back files of journals and other Korean classical literature and historical sources in digital format, but enough need to be done in this matter.

## **Contents Creation in digital format**

Content creation is one of the major problems that require urgent attention of policy makers. How to develop the right contents for the users from non English speaking countries is a major challenge before the advocates of digital literature.

The digital literature has made exchange of information, data and documents among the users much faster and more efficient. But presently the total scholarly literature originally created in digital format [born digital], world wide, may not be even 2% of the total available recorded knowledge available in different format world wide. There are few other crucial issues about digital literature. Who will preserve the literature in digital format? The private sector cannot afford to perform this no profit making thankless job, unless their proprietary rights are at stake. They will also preserve it so long in such a venture, they can make profit. No other organization except an institution like a non profit making agency may do this job to preserve our knowledge for the future in any format, whether published or digital.

While allocating money for the information Technology, policy makers and finance division, seldom provide funding for 'contents creation' part in a project, which is very crucial. Coordination in developing contents in digital format and its preservation for the future is one of the major tasks before any nation. However this issue has received little attention in professional literature and by the policy makers in developing countries. We are more concerned about the copyright and high fee to be paid for accessing digital literature controlled by International/ big publishers. We care more for the problems raised in the interests of developed world and less concerned about the other major problems concerning access to scholarly literature by the scholars and users in the developing countries.

## **Preservation of digital literature**

The preservation experts have voiced concern about the preservation of a portion of their cultural heritage in electronic format. The major challenges, rapid obsolescence of the hardware and software used in this have been widely discussed world wide. Ensuring continued access to digital information necessarily involves copying or transforming digital documents to run on current media and operating system.

The work of digitalization of published literature was started in early 1990's in U.K. , U.S.A and few other countries, but the speed of this work was very slow, quite expensive and under funded. United States Library of Congress has an ambitious plan to digitalize some of its collection. Recently 'Google Print' service was started by Google for converting millions of book into search able web pages. It has already signed up with few prestigious libraries like Oxford , Harvard, Stanford ,Univ. of Michigan and New York Public library and others .Yahoo is also active in this area. If a profit making agency like Google and Yahoo will mediate access to library books in the name of digitalization, it will be the first step toward privatization of human wisdom and world's literary heritage. Some academicians and librarians are very concerned about the issue that commercial firms will control over the materials that libraries have over the centuries.

There is need of joining hands with other organizations and countries to convert existing old and rare collections of books and other documents in to digital format. Many countries and organizations have started many digital projects. Japan for example has started a research project for creating digital archives based on collaboration between informatics and humanities. [ Digital Silk Roads Project (DSR), National Institute of Informatics (NII), The Toyo Bunko, Tokyo, Japan. It will be a Digital Archive of Toyo Bunko Rare Books [about Silk Roads] The purpose of the project is to make 'invisible' books visible from everyone to every interested users. It is hoped that such digital archive of rare books may improve their accessibility to many because presently many such books have restricted access due to their fragility and safety. The project includes many titles like 'Results of a scientific mission to India and high Asia'-Atlas Part I, Part II; 'Buddhist culture in Central Asia' etc.. For further information see [http://web.archive.org/web/\\*/http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/toyobunko/index.html.en](http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/toyobunko/index.html.en)

There are no acceptable international standard for meta data up to now. Without proper processing and attachment of meta data , searching digital material will be extremely difficult and without proper processing it, preservation will be as bad as lost. The life span of each new format and it's chances of keeping that format alive for future is a big problem which is yet to be sorted out properly. It will be very costly too, because of the compatibility of the old and new format has to be maintained. Technical

manpower will be needed to process digital literature so that it can be preserved and accessed easily.

Who will perform the role of a depository library? This requires huge resources and infrastructure to preserve and delivers diverse digital collection for use. The importance of recorded knowledge in the form of traditionally printed books and journals in any organization continue to be one of the most important instrument of preservation and dissemination of information, data and documents. It is hoped that the library will always be a welcome place that will provide information to any one either free or at a almost affordable cost. Libraries will always be willing to preserve even digital literature for use. The only thing is that we have to introduce more technology in libraries to supplement its existing resources in providing information services from digital literature

Even if each country makes efforts to support preservation of the so-called “born digital” content created in their country that may solve the problem to some extents. One agency for preservation and utilization of digital information, data and documents on Korean Studies may be created. Such agency may be made responsible for coordinating the work of updating of information, data, documents and preservation of other research resources in this area on regular basis.

### **Information Gateway on Korean Studies**

There are many portals and digital libraries with rich collection on Korean Studies. Some of these have very specialized collection in digital format. A larger number of scholars on Korean Studies are not aware about such collections which contain very rich research resources. Digital literature on Korean Studies produced by commercial publishers is very costly and sometimes beyond the reach of an average user of Korean Studies. Information about information sources on Korea should be available so that users may know easily the availability of quality information required by him/her without wasting much time. Information gateways are important mediators for providing linkages and help in selection of quality literature online.

Information gateways and guides to internet resources are very useful and helpful in locating right information. There is a need of establishing comprehensive information gateway to Korean Studies which can refer and connect users to other websites and organization where one can find and access all available digital literature on this area. Such an information gateway can be maintained with the joint cooperation of many organizations, libraries and information centers. In the present information age this is essential and may be given top priority.

### **Data and statistical services**

The generation and availability of social science information and data in Korea, is voluminous. A large volume of SS data is being produced in Korea. In fact Korean government , business and industry, and academic community is producing so much data that even a small percentage of which is not analyzed properly for secondary analysis.

It seems that Korea is investing more resources in collection of data but the facilities and resource available for refining, repacking and reuse of this data are not equally strong. Even if Korea could prepare an inventory showing of availability of data, and data services at various locations, it could be a worth attempting task in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase efforts may be made to select few organisations / institutions those can be assigned the responsibility for acquisition, processing and preservation of data in their area of specializations.

### **Accessibility, dissemination and utilization of Korean literature**

One of the major problem of social sciences is the under utilization of data and information sources. Though the information support to social scientists both in terms of information services and information sources are available to some extent ,yet it seems that there is something wrong somewhere with respect to their utilization, for which we have not only to identify the major hindrance, but also provide proper solutions.

Much bigger challenge data, documents and literature is to make such literature available for use, to the needed scholars and at affordable cost. Few reference sources and secondary services especially in the digital format are very costly even to the major libraries. . Out side Korea, the Americans has contributed a lot on Korean Studies, but most of their contributions are in English language. Even otherwise about 50% of literature on Korean Studies produced outside Korea is in English language. Quality wise American contributions on Korean Studies are one of the best produced out side Korea. They mostly cite English literature on Korea, produced in their own country. The access to this literature is little bit costly especially to the scholars from developing nations. There is a need of increasing and facilitating exchange of views and better communication facilities among scholars and other users of Korean Studies For achieving all this appropriate policies may have to be framed, so that all users and information providers should have unrestricted access to information sources and services on a non-discriminatory basis and at a justifiable reasonable cost.

To promote well balanced growth in Korean Studies special efforts need to be made. Students and Scholars with interest in Korea should be provided with proper information support world wide. This will increase not only the access to and use of information in this area in many ways but would also increase worldwide interests in Korean Studies. As various issues concerning utilization of information and knowledge are increasingly become complex there is urgent needs to further discuss these ideas at different forums and with wide category of users and providers of information services, in which these ideas can be further discussed and refined. The barriers which prevent effective use of information need to be identified and ways should be found to over come such barriers on a regular basis. Only then we shall be able to properly link information, knowledge and its use.

### **Data bases on Korean Studies**

Existing data bases on Korean Studies, outside Korea, are mostly created in the western world. These may not be comprehensive but they contain quality information data and documents, about teaching and research resources in this area. The Western reference sources and information locating and information sharing tools in this area are numerous, but none of these are comprehensive enough to take care of all the information needs of academic and business community in this area. Majority of these sources are not updated on regular bases. There are big gaps in this area for meeting serious

information needs of scholars or of a business community. There is a need of proper coordination and for developing better information locating and resources sharing information tools; information sources, information services and databases in this area in different format.

## **Internet**

The Internet has changed the ways, users use research materials. The literature, data and documents posted at a website in digital formats offer a new form of access that in scale, communication and storage intensity surpass any other format recording knowledge. Users located in different locations, without any restriction, can access it at the same time. Presently more and more scholars are studying off the institutes' campus today than earlier. Such users of information can access information from their home or office with a network connections using variety of devices, equipment and services in a virtual environment. The Internet and search engines like Goggles etc. have done a good job to the researchers by making digital information more visible. It has increased the value of digital information even amongst general users of information. However a user of special and technical information will rarely be, wholly dependent on the use of Google, Yahoo or any other search engines, because the direction provided there might not be very useful in search of information for a specialized research. There are billions of pages and other information resources available on Internet, but a larger percentage of these are not of good quality. Any search engine will provide with thousands of hits, out of which a larger percentage will be just noise. Some one should estimate, how much time and money of the scholars is wasted in searching quality information from the Internet?

## **Internet Guides to Research Resources**

Internet guide to Korean Studies information and literature may be prepared and updated on regular basis. Some efforts have been made by few American and Australian and Korean organisations in this area but comprehensive team efforts are required, for upgrading such information locating tools in this area.

## **Internet Searching**

Some time searching information in the Internet is almost like hunting for a needle in a haystack. Though number of existing browsers, search engines and directories are available for help in

searching information on the Internet, yet they cannot compete with, in providing access to specialized information provided by guide of researchers, information intermediaries or librarians of special libraries.

### **Short -Term Training Programmes**

#### **[to access Internet resources and digital literature]**

Today the information and communication technology (ICT) have drastically affected our methods of doing research and writing. The ICT is playing a very crucial role in the creation and production of knowledge. It has drastically affected various processes in the access to information, its storage and retrieval and even its dissemination and utilization. ICT has created many challenges and opportunities in the information culture and information management.

For this, short term courses/ workshops for the students of Korean Studies have to be organized on regular basis. There is a need of exposing the users of information, the researches, and the students of Korean studies, working in the traditional environment, in the use of information and communication technologies and the new methods of research and teaching, so that they can fully exploit the available research and information resources by using latest technologies. There is a need of training of students and scholars engaged in Korean Studies to learn how to effectively access digital and internet resources on Korean Studies. The use of information and communication technology in accessing information, data and documents may improve the situation of information provisions in Korean Studies world wide.

### **Coordination and Networking in research resources sharing**

The most cost effective and efficient system to access, data, document and literature can be through networking and resources sharing. Only through it a proper information provisions can be made about Korean Studies. With proper use of Information and communication technology and by pooling together their vast resources and tremendous professional and creative skills, we can solve most of the problems in the path of making proper access

Finance is a lesser problem than getting people working together for networking and resources sharing. A common vision; a strong will for co-operation is needed for resources sharing and networking.

There is a need of coordination and networking of Korean Area studies research resources at national and international level. This will help in better access and utilization of such resources by interested users.

**Funding Agencies:**

Need for support for Korean Studies vary from region to region? The needs and interests of institutions, mega -cities and developed and developing countries vary. Korean Foundation and other funding agencies and organizations should try to plan for support in Korean Studies appropriate to regional needs and interests. Such efforts are certainly going to increase better understanding of Korea and Korean Studies. Korean Studies support team of Korea foundation is responsible for taking care of Korean Studies programmes overseas. Both these agencies are doing an excellent work to promote Korean Studies world wide.

**Conclusion:**

With the development of Korea as one of the economic powers, and the presence of Korean companies and business in major cities of the world, the interest of scholars and business communities in Korea and Korean Studies in increasing day by day, but still there are many problems which the scholars and business community interested in Korea are facing. The support provided by the, Government of Korea and many other foundations in this area is commendable. The growing number of business and academic community is also taking keen interests in this area, but there is a need of strengthening this area by providing better support in terms of manpower, research resources and other services. There is also a need of coordinating Korean Studies efforts world wide. Korea Research Foundation and other similar organization responsible for the promotion of Korean Studies should play a catalytic role and stimulate aggressive action in this area. Some of the issues worth consideration in this matter are:-

1. Most of the Korean Studies centers, world wide are working as a part or extension of some other departments like East Asian Studies or even Chinese and /or Japanese studies etc. All this hamper the proper growth and development of Korean Studies in such centers. Serious efforts need to be made to separate such Korean Studies departments / centers where Korean Studies programmes are already established This will provide Korean Studies centers more autonomy in functioning and in their teaching and research. Where the KS centers are not strong enough and /or are not established properly such centers may function as a part of other Asian Centers.

2. Because of lack of proper funding and other resources; limited budget and limited job opportunities in this area were mainly responsible for limited interests of academia in Korean Studies world wide. Because of inadequate and insufficient opportunities and resources there was a general lack of overall interests in Korea and Korean Studies. Better resources need to be provided in this area by Korea Foundations and other funding agencies to promote Korean Studies.

3. Today majority of the KS programmes world wide are biased more towards, humanities and allied disciplines. Though humanities have its own importance, yet, there is need of promoting larger number of Socio-economic and policy oriented research studies and teaching in KS. More think tank and policy oriented research institutes should be involved in KS, by providing better support. The KS programme is not just Korean history and culture, art and music . It is an interdisciplinary and interdisciplinary programme , which provide a broad understanding about every think related to Korea. There is also a need of introducing multidisciplinary and intra-disciplinary research programmes in KS. By using latest research methods and other tools of SS research , the quality of present research in KS can be introduced to a great extent.

4. In respect to researches on Korean Studies.

a-More emphasis and attention is required to promote multi disciplinary and interdisciplinary, academic research and teaching than just banking only on study and teaching of history and culture of Korea.

b- Priority areas in KS may be identified and special support may be provided for such programmes.

c-Promote jointly funded research projects with other funding agencies and academic organizations/universities etc. on Korean Studies.

d-The results of research projects on Korean Studies may be widely disseminated, using different methods and media, amongst interested users.

e- There is a need of strengthening existing digital libraries on Korean Studies and opening of more new virtual libraries and information centers providing information support to business and research community in this area.

f- There is a need of creating an agency to help youngsters/new entrants, in this area by making available better resources for research facilities. A proper arrangement should be made in which senior scholars of Korean Studies may provide help and guidance to the young scholars, who have recently developed their interest in Korean Studies.

There is a need of establishing a network of people, business communities and scholars in Korea and Korean Studies. Establishing better web-link to experts, scholars, journalists, government officials and policy makers; business and industry in Korean Studies are needed. An effecting network of such people may be very effective in promoting Korean Studies world wide. A network for this purpose may be developed at national and international level.

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