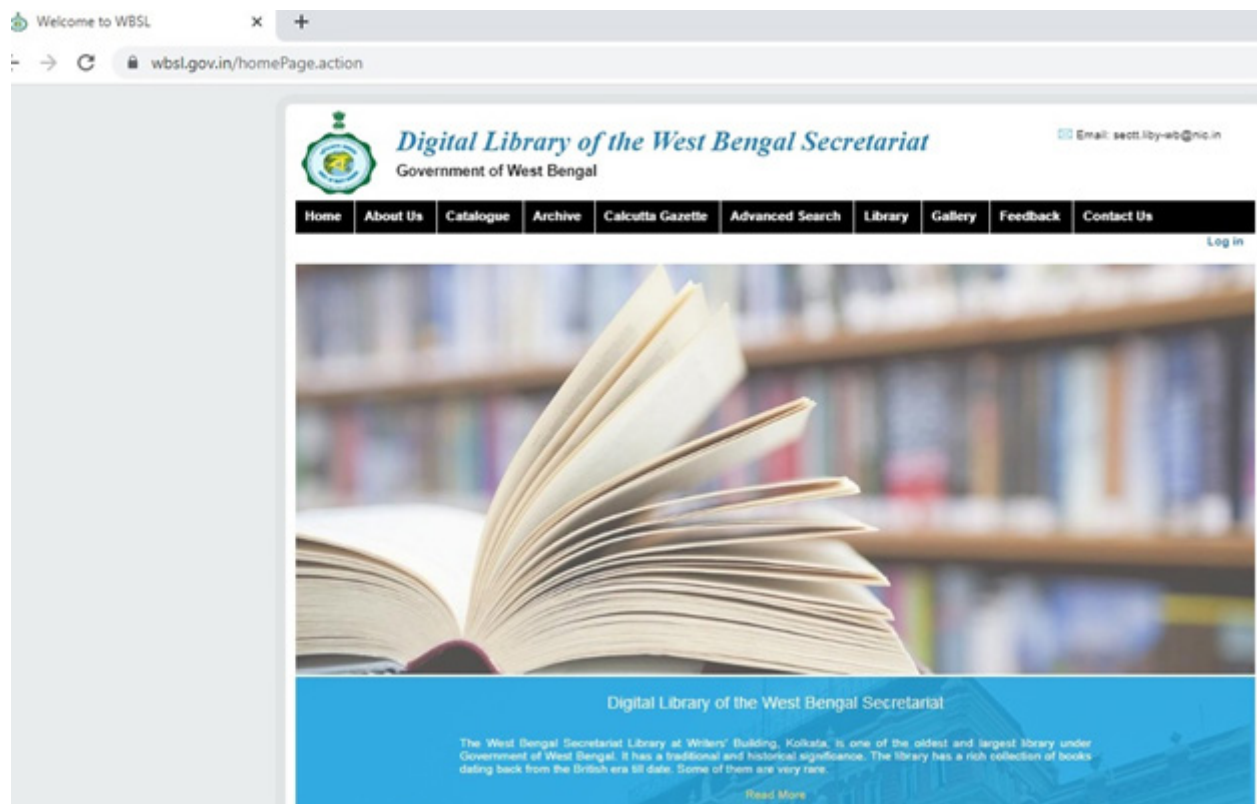


Digital Library of the West Bengal Secretariat Portal: A Review



The Digital Library of the West Bengal Secretariat is an online portal (<https://wbsl.gov.in/homePage.action>) managed by the West Bengal Secretariat Library, under the administrative control of the Home and Hill Affairs Department, Government of West Bengal. The West Bengal Secretariat Library, located at Writers' Building, Kolkata, was established in 1867. It is one of the oldest and largest libraries under the Government of West Bengal and holds significant historical importance due to its rich collection of old and rare documents dating back from the British era to the present.

This library covers a wide range of thematic subjects such as administration, civil service, finance, history, judicial administration, law and legislation, municipal administration, police, revenue administration, trade and commerce and others. Some of the essential resources in the library's holdings include General Administrative Reports, Annual reports of various

government departments, parliamentary debates, Census Reports, Reports on Publications registered in India, reports on famine, Revenue Administration, survey settlement reports from the mid-nineteenth century, unpublished divisional commissioners' reports, Civil lists since 1845, Reports on early education and history, especially of Bengal, selections from Government records, Calcutta Gazette, India Gazette and other State Government Gazettes, as well as some old and rare copies of newspapers.

Common people can access the collections of old and rare documents from the West Bengal Secretariat Library in digital form anywhere, anytime and completely free of cost through this portal. The portal has a simple and user friendly design, making it easy to navigate and access. The homepage is well-organized, with clear tabs for different sections of the website. The portal offers search facilities in four different categories, including Subject-wise Collection Catalogue, Subject Level-wise Catalogue, Calcutta Gazette search interface, and an Advanced Search mechanism.

Under the "Subject-wise Collection Catalogue," search results is available for each subject and its subfields. The "Archive" search option provides first, second, and third-level subjects, along with place and year search mechanisms. The "Calcutta Gazette" search



DOI:10.5530/jcitation.2.2.22

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mechanism allows searching for any year and month, which is very convenient. The fourth option, the “Advanced Search” mechanism, also provides title, author, publisher, keyword, and year-wise search facilities. Common people, students or scholars can access or retrieve these documents using various search facilities provided by the portal. After the search, the retrieved results are divided into two parts: one contains the metadata details of the particular document, and the other offers the option to view or read the book. All the bibliographic information of the documents is represented in the metadata option, such as title, author, description, subject, publisher, total pages, publication year, format, document type, etc. Library users can read the entire book online or save it for later reading with the “add to wishlist” option.

Although this library belongs to the Government of West Bengal, this portal can be considered a treasure trove of information for people and researchers from not only the whole country but also the world. The portal is valuable for academicians, students, common people, policymakers, administrators from different state and central governments, scholars and subject experts in various fields such as history, public administration, social science etc.

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Cite this article: Kirtania DK. Digital Library of the West Bengal Secretariat Portal: A Review. *Journal of Data Science, Informetrics, and Citation Studies*. 2023;2(2):146-7.