

FUNDAMENTAL STUDY ON MANUSCRIPTOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

The word “manuscript” is evolved from Latin word *manuscriptus* means written by hand. *Manu* is hand and *scriptus* is to write. It refers to old documents written by hand before book were made. So, manuscripts are the original texts or scripts which are manually written. Manuscriptology is also considered as encyclopedia of all sciences as manuscripts are the basis of learning of science and technology today. Manuscriptology is the branch of study in archeology about history and literature by means of very old palm leaf manuscripts, rare paper manuscripts, epigraphy and under water archeology. Manuscripts are the proofs of our well-developed ancient sciences. Manuscripts contain knowledge about different subjects like history, culture, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, and medicine etc.

KEYWORDS: Manuscript, Manuscriptology, Preservation of Manuscripts.

INTRODUCTION

Manuscriptology is the science of study of manuscripts. Studying handwritten works of literature is the subject matter of manuscriptology. Manuscriptology means science of manuscripts in which editing of work is given supreme importance. Editing of the work means reconstruction of the texts nearest to the authors autograph work on the basis of evidences. So, manuscripts are the original texts or scripts which are manually written. Manuscripts may be in book form scrolls or in codex format.

WRITING TOOLS

Lekhya Samagri

Palm leaves, Tala patra, Bhurja Patra, Paper, Stones, Metal surfaces, Wooden sheets, Hansi pata (bark of Aguru).

Lekhana Samagri

Kanta, Peacock feather, Brush, Paint etc (earth + mineral pigments + plant gum).

SCRIPTS USED IN MANUSCRIPTS

A script is a set of visual symbols representing language depending upon the public convention.

Most common language used in vedic period was Sanskrit.

Bramhi and **Kharostri** were most ancient Indian scripts used by ancient scholars.

Most of the Manuscripts were translated into local scripts to preserve the ancient knowledge. All the local scripts are developed from **Bramhi** and **Kharostri**. Since 500 BC various writing skills were used in India.

SCOPE

1. Based on these manuscripts, the ancient knowledge is preserved hence it is the need of time to preserve these manuscripts for future generation and researchers.
2. Critical analysis and preservation of manuscripts play a significant role in literary research especially in the field of Ayurveda.
3. Manuscripts contain knowledge about different subjects like history, culture, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, and medicine etc. Exploring and preservation of these manuscripts will add a value knowledge in these respective fields which is the need of the hour today.

IMPORTANCE OF MANUSCRIPTS

1. Manuscripts are the proofs of our well-developed ancient sciences. The literature about various subjects like philosophical, medicinal, etc. is scattered all over. they deserve the value and importance in the field of literary research.
2. There are different various versions of the same text at different places and accordingly different reading about the same topic are seen. Ayurveda being present in Sanskrit, slight difference in reading makes a lot of difference in the interpretation of the meaning.

Example

Guduchyadi varga-vatike (da ni) by vd. Purandare.

Guduchyadi varga-kaphaj ware (sho ni) by Shodal.

It means that manuscript Dhanvantri Nighantu By Shodala was more correct and was different than manuscript used by Vd Purandare.

Thus, correction or critical study of all the old Ayurvedic texts with different manuscript is necessary. This shows the importance of collection of the maximum number of manuscripts.

II. Collection, conservation and Catalogues of Manuscripts

Collection

Since a long time, many of manuscripts were preserved by various rulers, kingdoms, or ancient universities like Nalanda, Takshashila, etc in India and many are preserved by libraries of foreign countries by various visitors also.

- 24,000 books were collected and preserved by Akbar's imperial library.
- In Kashmir, Varanasi and South India various manuscripts are preserved privately.
- In 1784 'the Asiatic Society' of Bengal.
- in 1978 Tipusultan's Library had collected and preserved many manuscripts.

Based on these published catalogues a check list of Sanskrit medical manuscripts was published by CCRAS (Central Council of Research in Indian Medicine) in 1972 with the efforts of Dr. B Ramarao. He had referred about 25 catalogues published at different libraries.

Sources of Ayurvedic manuscripts

1. Old and local libraries

1. The Saraswati Bhawan Library of Govt. Sanskrit college, Banaras in 1971 is the oldest manuscript library in India.
2. Catalogues-A check list of medical manuscripts by CCRAS.
3. Oriental Research Institute Mysore-66,000 Manuscripts.
4. Adyar Library and Research Institute, Madras-18,600 manuscripts.
5. Bhandarkar oriental Research Institute Pune.
6. Saraswati Mahal Library, Thanjavur- 50,000 manuscripts.
7. The Govt. Oriental Manuscript Library, Madras in 18th century
8. Tanjore Palace library- 1918.
9. Oriental Manuscript library of Kerala.
10. Asiatic Society of Calcutta.
11. National Library Calcutta.
12. Various Pathashalas and Old Ashram.
13. Famous Traditional physicians.
14. Temples.
15. Museums.
16. Raghunath temple Library of The Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir.
17. About 22 institutions outside India like British Library, Dept of oriental Manuscripts London, Statsbliothek – Marburg, Germany, etc.

Nature of manuscript collections in India

The manuscript collections are of various types, differing in terms of type of collections, nature of ownership, administration etc.

1. Large collections more than 10,000 manuscript bundle.
2. Medium collections-2000- 10,000.
3. Small collections-0-2000.
4. Mixed collections - various types.
5. Exclusive collections - particular type.
6. Sacred collections in religious institutions, monasteries.
7. Academic collections-universities, libraries, museums.
8. Ritual worship collections, Private collections, Trusts, Museums, Libraries, Research Institutes.

Deteriorating Factors

1. Human Factors

- Professional apathy and carelessness and Public apathy and carelessness.

2. Natural factors

- Fire, Water, Dust, Natural calamities, Environmental pollution, Light.
- Fluctuation in temperature and relative humidity, Microbiological attack.
- Insect attack e g cockroaches, termites, bookworms etc

3. Inherent factors

The nature in which the manuscript material is prepared, and the ink or paint is applied also be a danger to manuscripts. The conservation of manuscript is an activity dedicated to the preservation of these manuscripts.

Methods for Preservation of Manuscripts

Traditional preservation methods:

1. Before writing a leaf, it is buried in mud or boiled in water to protect it against germs.
2. Holes are made in the leaves and cord passed through them. The wooden board are put in between the leaves to prevent curling at the edges and chipping by abrasions.
3. Ancient Acharyas used techniques like Using a nimba patra, peacock feather, sarpa nirmuka etc. in between the papers, keeping in air tightened wooden boxes, Vacha and karpooa tied in a small piece of cloth and kept in the boxes etc. This was done to protect manuscripts from dust, insects and from variation in atmospheric humidity and absorption of acidic fumes.
4. Use of silk cloth for wrapping as it gives protection from book worms.
5. Exposure of leaves to tender rays of the rising and setting sun. It gives protection against germs and destroys growth of insects.
6. Dried and powdered leaves of ashwagandha in small packets are kept with manuscripts covered in clothes to repel insects similarly vasambu and dried ginger are used.
7. Use of insect repellents like oils of these.

- Lemon grass, Pandri grass, Snake bark, Margosa, Birch bark.
- 8. Oil extracts of black pepper, sandal wood or clove facilitate in the restoration of flexibility to the palm leaf manuscript.
- 9. Mint leaves and Black cumin (kala zeera) are also used as insect repellents.
- 10. The mixture of neem leaves, karanja, nirgundi and citronella is used for its insecticidal properties.
- 11. Besides such preservation techniques leaf or bark material is damaged after 400-700 years, for that reason by every 200 years manuscripts were copied by ancient Acharya.

Latest Methods

- 1 Air conditioned or rooms where there is fresh air, adequate light and low moisture content.
- 2 The place should be pest controlled Regular DDT spray, Fumigation, Neptaline balls 5% Mamo chloride solution, Ammonium or Potassium thiocyanate solutions should be in use.
- 3 For paper manuscript-clean the paper with soft brush and apply pesticides to sides of paper Use tress paper (Japanese tissue paper) and transparent cloth (Irani cloth) for lamination "Leaf caster machine" and banana tissue culture pins are modern techniques used preservation of paper manuscripts.
- 4 Cut pieces of manuscripts can be repaired with the help of tissue paper and glue.
- 5 Using butter paper between the old pages to prevent the sticking of two papers.
- 6 To avoid insect attack, use of glass racks or aluminum shelves for storage
- 7 Lamination of manuscripts in cellulose acetate or polythene foil.
- 8 According to National Archives.
Manuscript sheet should be laminated with cellulose acetate foil piece and tissue paper and binding of both materials with acetone, and letters can be darkened with inks.
- 9 Latest modern techniques like
 - By Xeroxing/photocopying.
 - By scanning (with 600 dpi scanner).
 - By micro filming.
 - Digitalization of manuscript transliteration.
- 10 Digital images are electronic photographs of original material with digital camera stored and transferred worldwide in reduced format or SGML & HTML compression techniques. HTML editor & OCR software's and image editor is helpful to edit the text. PDF software are useful for easy downloading files.
- 11 Optoelectronic equipment is useful for cold digitization.

Published Manuscripts

Ayurveda sutrani., Paryaya pada manjari, Vaidhya samhita saarnava, Amarakosha.

Advice on family planning in old Tamil Medical Manuscript etc.

Un-published Manuscripts.

Ashvinikumar samhita-Chikitsasara, Ayurvedagama, Madhavachikitsa-Madhava.
Nadi shastra sanghraha, Rasavatara etc.

CONCLUSION

Manuscripts contain knowledge about different subjects like history, culture, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, and medicine etc. Exploring and preservation of these manuscripts will add a value knowledge in these respective fields which is the need of the hour today. Manuscripts are the proofs of our well-developed ancient sciences. The literature about various subjects like philosophical, medicinal, etc. is scattered all over. they deserve the value and importance in the field of Fundamental research.

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