



Review Article

A REVIEW ON MANUSCRIPTOLOGY – RETRIEVAL OF ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE

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ABSTRACT

Manuscriptology/Palaeography/Codicology is the scientific and structural study of hand written document credited with fair antiquity. They are sources of cultural heritage and history. The treasure of wisdom has come down to people in the form of manuscripts. Written in different Indian languages they are spread all over the country in different institutions, libraries, monasteries and temples and in several private collections. Classification of manuscripts are based on the materials used for writing like palm leaf manuscript, paper manuscripts, birch bark manuscript, wood manuscript, *Hansipatra* manuscript, *Talpatra* manuscript etc and also the subject matter of the manuscripts like Vedas, *Dharmasastra*, *Itihasa*, *Purana*, *Mahatmya*, *Darsana*, *Tantra*, *mantra*, Ayurveda etc. Surveys for manuscripts in the past years identified many collections and newer collections must be identified and preserved. Conservation of manuscripts is carried out through 33 Manuscript Conservation Centres (MCCs), besides organizing preventive and curative conservation workshops at different locations of the country as per priorities. The National Database of Manuscripts, *Kriti Sampada* is available on the internet through the Mission's website. Manuscriptology is the process of conserving the future for the past. It keeps the pulse of the past. It preserves the literary, linguistic, artistic and cultural heritage. It is very essential to conserve the manuscripts. By conserving these manuscripts and using information contained in it will open a new horizon in fields of knowledge. So manuscript preservation and conservation is essential. Steps for these and types of manuscripts are detailed in this article.

KEYWORDS: Manuscriptology, Palaeography, Codicology, *Hansipatra*, *Talpatra*, *stylus*, *Kriti Sampada*, *Lipikara*.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is essential for human existences; it can be conducted by oral and written tradition. Ayurveda being an ancient science has got both oral and written tradition for dissemination of knowledge. Manuscriptology/Palaeography/Codicology is the scientific and structural study of hand written document credited with fair antiquity. Treasures of the wisdom has passed from generation to next generation by oral tradition and then written on different plant leaves and other materials. Paper usage came popular by the end of 13th century AD. Till then various other materials are used for transferring knowledge. Manuscripts are one of the types of written tradition and are valuable treasures of knowledge. They are sources of cultural heritage and history. Their proper preservation is mandatory. Rich collections of manuscript are found in temples, religious institutions, libraries, monasteries, wealthy households, brahmin families and palaces.

Meaning

Manus means hands.^[1]

Script means written.

Any hand written document is called manuscript.

That means any book or document or piece of any intellectual work written by hand rather than typed or printed or authors handwritten or typed that has not yet been published.

Synonyms of Manuscript

Codex, Document, Text, Script, Handwriting.

Definition

Manuscriptology is the scientific or structural study of hand written document credited with fair antiquity. The Antiquities and art treasures act 1972 lay down the legal framework for custody of manuscripts in India. This act defines the manuscript as "Any manuscript, record or other document which is of scientific, historical, literary or aesthetic value

and which has been in existence for not less than seventy five years.^[2]

Manuscript wealth of India

As per one of the surveys made by Dr. S.C. Biswas and Mr M.k. Prajapathi on behalf of INTACH during 1988-1990 the following estimates were made.

Total no of Manuscripts in India: 50,00000

Sanskrit manuscripts: 67%

Other Indian language: 25 %

Arabic/Persian/ Tibetan: 8%

Many of these manuscripts are catalogued but still many yet to be published or catalogued.

Historical review

In India from ancient times knowledge systems were passed down to the succeeding generations through a rich oral tradition. With the gradual deterioration of oral transmission and development of script and writing material these knowledge were converted to written form such as stone, papyrus, parchment, birch bark, palm leaves and paper. The art of writing was known to Indians for the last four thousand years. The treasure of wisdom has come down to people in the form of manuscripts. Written in different Indian languages they are spread all over the country in different institutions, libraries, monasteries and temples and in several private collections. Manuscripts were copied widely without any restriction in the script that was used to avoid them, being lost over time. Manuscripts were also copied in local scripts and those evolved in time and different geographical areas.

Writing Material

Manuscripts may be written on rocks, clay tables, metal plates, papyrus leaves, animal skin, birch bark (used in Kashmir), bark, leather, palm leaves, cotton cloth wooden board, *Agaru* bark (used in Assam), *Sachi* (*Agaru* bark like used in some places of Assam) Palm leaves (*Tala* and *Sritala* were used in South India) and *Kadata* or cotton cloth (used in some places of Karnataka).

Inks, vegetables, dyes of painting, scribbling with metallic stylus, brushes, reeds, pencils and wooden pens were all used for writing information.^[2]

Paper was invented in China in 105 AD. There is a claim that paper making is referred to India by Niorchus 327 BC. In 8th cent AD Arabs learnt technique from Chinese. Machines for making paper was started in Italy in 1283 AD and in England in 1490 AD

Scribes

Lipikara: story writing, normal writers

Lekhaka: *Pusthakalekhaka*- Manuscript writers

Kayasthalekhaka- Account

Shasnalekhaka- Royal scribes

Divirapata: official scribe copier

Writing Materials

Patra: written surface

Dora: cord

Granthi: knot

Chadana: Covering cloth

Mashi: Ink

Lekhani: Pen

Akshara: Characters

Kambi: ruler to keep the letters straight

Lipyasana: writing desk

Shringhala: chain on ink pot

Surface for writing

From palm leaves to paper: Palm leaves, birch bark, aloe tree bark, paper.

From clay to copper: Clay, stone, bricks, leather, ivory, shells, cotton, and wooden blocks.

Script

The oldest scripts found in manuscripts are Brahmi and Kharoshti. Brahmi is the mother of all the latter scripts. Brahmi is again divided into the following,

1. Brahmi – Northern and southern oldest lipi.
2. Nagari

Northern Brahmi

Devanagari

Gujarati

Southern Brahmi

Kannada

Tamil

Telugu

Malayalam

Nagari

Purvanagari

Ardhanagari

Nandi nagari

Devanagari

A manuscript has certain anatomy. The chief portion comprises the main body text. *Prasasti* or *Mangalacarana* means the ornamental beginning of the manuscript. In most of the manuscripts margins are on the left side and special markings are written on the left side.

Writing Instruments:

Stylus

Pen

Brush

Ink

Writing technique

While text and its commentaries are copied the text is written first continuously followed by the commentary or one of the verses of text is followed by its commentary or the text is written in the middle of the page and commentaries are written all around it.

Pagination – number of pages

Individual pages are not numbered but the folios are given numbers. They are in the middle, at right or left side of the folios.

Punctuations

Single line (|) - denotes the end of the line.

Double stark mark(||) – denotes the end of the section.

Abbreviations

Bindu(.) – Repetition of a letter.

Colophons

The beginning colophon is followed by salutation to *Ishtadaiva*, *Ganesh* and *Sharada* etc. End of the work contains the end colophon that contain information such as Title of the book, Name of the author/percentage/titles of the author and written period, for whom it is written etc. Sometimes the number of the verses, *Granthasankhya* is also mentioned at the end.

Illustrations and decorations Corrections

Religious symbols, floral, geometrical figures and other decorative designs are also found in some manuscripts.

Colours used in manuscripts

Yellow: indicates corrections

Red: Chapter ending. The indication of the end of the chapter or work is made by these is known as *Puspika*. *Bhonita* or preamble which mentions the name of the book and the writer is a variant of *Puspika*.^[3]

Scribal errors

Deletion, unintentional addition, interpolation (adding text), mische codex (mixing of stanza), substitution (when word is not clear), orthographic confusion (mixing of different scripts) and transposition (unintentional transposition of phonemes and words).

Corrections

Omission

They are marked with dots or small horizontal strokes placed above or below them. They are enclosed with in curved brackets or scored off. Yellow pigment or turmeric may be smeared over them.

Additions

Place of insertion is indicated symbols like (+ or -). If it is a simple letter insertion it is written above the line.

Substitutions/Replacement

It is written above the portion to be corrected or in the nearest margin against the line. Correction along with the line number may be given at the top or bottom margin.

Marginalia

Writing in margins typically contains page/ folio numbers, titles of sections, additions, substitutions, corrections.

Kinds of texts

Autograph, immediate copy, transmitted copy and single manuscript.

Binding of the manuscripts

A manuscript contains a number of rectangular pages, threaded at each end on a string. A palm leaf book is held together with a pin through one end so that the leaves can be fanned for reading. Sometimes holes are bored through each end and the strings are passed through them so that the leaflets can be turned over and read in sequence. Since palm leaves could not be bound by stitching these are generally placed in between two wooden boards or leather pieces or protective covers. All leaves are arranged according to the serial numbers known as folio numbers. The writing on the palm leaves is very small. Most of the information is in poetic form simple and in colloquial style. It is difficult to decide the writing is in prose or poetic form. There are other difficulties in deciphering the manuscripts. The consonants are written without the dots. In addition, manuscripts face the problems of international inaccuracy, misrepresentation of facts or defaced, replaced and deleted words. The name of the author can appear in the beginning, end or middle. In copied manuscripts the scribe's presents the author as very problematic. Some of the manuscripts do not gives the names of the authors.

Classification of manuscripts

1. According to the materials are classified as Palm leaf manuscript, paper manuscripts, birch bark manuscript, wood manuscript, *Hansipatra* manuscript, *Talpatra* manuscript, *Tripadaka* manuscript, *aloe* manuscript and *Sanchipat* manuscript.
2. The manuscript can be again classified into 2 categories
 - a) Illustrated manuscripts- if the manuscripts have pictures or illustrations.

b) Non illustration manuscripts- when there is no picture or diagrams.^[5]

3. According to the subject matter the manuscripts can be grouped as Veda, *Vedantha*, *Dharmasastra*, *Itihasa*, *Purana*, *Mahatmya*, *Darsana*, *Tantra*, *Mantra*, *Ayurveda*, *Vyakrana*, *Ganita*, *Jyotisa*, *Kosa*, *Stotra*, *Vamsavalikavya*, *Alankara*, *Nataka*, *Sangita*, *Kata*, *Yoga* etc.^[5]

Types of Manuscript

Tal-patra manuscripts are usually seen in the form of bundles of 50 to 100 neatly shaped leaves of even size strung together with a cord and pressed between two wooden boards. Some collections also have metre-long cut leaves, with midribs intact, rolled like a carpet. *Tal-patra* manuscripts are found mainly in the coastal states of India, where the palmyra palm tree generally grew in almost all parts can be identified though collections of these manuscripts are dispersed all over India. The leaves of the palmyra or talipot palm are dried in a controlled manner and then prepared for writing on by submerging in ponds, boiling in water and rubbing spices like turmeric on them. The midrib is often removed and the leaves are cut to make a bundle of folios of even size.

Writing and Illustration techniques Surface writing

The text was written with ink on the leaf using a pen or brush.

Incised writing: The text was incised in the leaf using a sharp iron stylus. The incised writing was rendered visible by rubbing green leaves or soot into the incisions.

Illustrations

Exquisite images have been painted on palm leaves using paint made of earth and mineral pigments with plant gum as a binder.

Bhoja-patra manuscripts are usually seen in the form of a sheaf of paper (thin 'folios') cut to an even size. These are sometimes bound together with cord on the sides, though usually they are kept piled up together between two wooden boards and then wrapped in cloth.

Bhoja-patra trees and manuscripts are found mainly in the temperate and alpine climatic zone in the Himalayan belt, but their collections are dispersed all over India.

Brief note on preparation of support

The inner bark of the birch tree is gently rolled off the tree trunk and dried in a controlled manner. Sometimes it is boiled in water, burnished and cut to size, while other times oil is applied on it before it is burnished. The bark itself is multi-layered,

at times several layers of bark are seen to be pasted together.

Writing techniques

Surface writing: The text was written with ink on the leaf using a pen or brush

Hansi-pata Manuscripts

Hansi-pata manuscripts, also made from bark of the *Agaru* tree, are usually seen in the form of a sheaf of folios cut to an even size. These are rarely bound together and are usually kept piled up together between wooden boards and covered with cloth.

Dispersion

Hansi-pata manuscripts are found mainly in the North-Eastern State of Assam. Other than in that region, dispersion of *Hansipata* manuscripts in other parts of India is very limited

Preparation of support

The bark of the *Agaru* tree is gently rolled off the trunk and dried in a controlled manner. It is boiled, burnished, cut to size and coated with orpiment.

Writing and illustration techniques

Surface writing:

The text was written on the prepared bark with ink prepared with soot, bovine urine and *chebulic myrobalan*, using a pen or brush. Illustrations were painted using earth and mineral pigments with plant gum binders

Aloe manuscripts: Available in northern eastern area, written mantras mainly.

Paper Manuscript: After the invasion of Mughal rulers.

Tripidaka (Buddha): written on mainly blocks.

Sources of Ayurvedic Manuscripts

The information of the Ayurveda manuscripts can be collected from various sources.

1. Old and local libraries.
2. Government oriental library.
3. Asiatic society Calcutta.
4. University libraries like Pune, BHU etc.
5. Various *Padasala*.
6. Famous traditional physicians.
7. Individuals having personal collections.
8. Temples.
9. Museums.
10. Ayurveda colleges.

Significance of manuscript study

Manuscripts are the proof of our well-developed ancient science. There are many copies of same texts available at different places. Ayurveda being an ancient science it has many valuable information on manuscripts. Slight difference in each

copy makes different opinion of each concept of Ayurveda. Thus the critical study of all the available copies will open a new horizon in the Ayurvedic field. There are many topics covered under Ayurveda including its eight branches and other branches like *Vruksha* Ayurveda and *Pashu* Ayurveda and so on which are still in the form of manuscripts.

Large number of commentaries of different Ayurvedic books like *Charaka* and *Sushruta* have not seen light of the day. Such unpublished literature should be published because they contain practical implication dealing with human life.

Surveys for manuscripts in the past years identified many collections and newer collections must be identified and preserved.^[4] Surveys require large labour, manpower and time. They should conduct with proper steps and criteria. Survey officers must be properly trained and technical support to withstand the trouble. Trouble may be Social and technical.

Social trouble

Owners of the manuscripts are not ready to reveal the collections and they claim for monetary benefits. This problem can be solved by giving proper knowledge to the people. Also some people doubt about the officials, this can be addressed by giving them official tags and documentation. The manuscripts can be digitalized in situ using appropriate cameras or scanners and copy can be issued to the owner instantly.

Technical Trouble

Incompetency of survey officers in local languages, script and proper handling of the manuscripts. They must be trained to understand the languages. Digital technology must be used to gather information that will help in locating the repository in the future.

Survey Data entry Sheet

The data entry sheet is very useful in gathering the information and condition of the manuscript. A data sheet must contain all possible information about the manuscript that will help in the future for assessing the manuscripts. The most important points of the survey sheet are

1. Name, address, phone number, email id of the owner
2. Manuscript number and title
3. Materials – Palm leaves/Paper/other materials.
4. Author
5. Method of inscription- Incised/Painted/ Written with ink
6. Languages
7. Script

8. Number of folios, length and breadth of folios, number of lines in each folios.
9. Complete/ incomplete
10. Intact/ damage
11. Colophons
12. Date
13. Scribes name
14. Opening verses
15. Closing verses
16. Remarks

Steps of Manuscriptology

The science of study of manuscript is known as manuscriptology. Two steps are involved in it.

1. Primary Steps
2. Secondary Steps

Primary steps

Collection

There are millions of manuscripts dispersed in different parts of India. These manuscript collections are of various types differing in terms of type of collections, nature of ownership, administration etc. It could prove useful to acquaint oneself with the nature of these collections. There are millions of manuscripts dispersed in different parts of India. These manuscript collections are of various types differing in terms of type of collections, nature of ownership, administration etc. It could prove useful to acquaint oneself with the nature of these collections

Academic collections

Manuscripts in many research institutions, university basic minimum standards for conservation of manuscripts, basic minimum standards for conservation of manuscripts libraries, archives and museums can be included in this category.

Ritual worship collections

In various homes and religious institutions, there are a number of manuscripts that are hardly ever read at all, instead, they are placed at the alter and are worshipped. Such manuscripts usually relate to sacred texts of that particular sect or religion, and the worshippers are often well- versed with the contents of the manuscript.

Private collections

This possibly forms the biggest decentralised repository of manuscripts in India. Almost every house and private institution in certain regions of India has its collection of manuscripts.

Trusts

A number of mutts, *Granthagaras*, institutions and religious places are governed by trusts, and the manuscripts too are under their custodianship

Religious institutions

A sizeable portion of manuscripts are found in religious institutions in India, of all faiths.

Museums

Museums in India have a wealth of well-selected manuscripts. The manuscripts in these museums are usually under the charge of a curator of the manuscripts section

Major libraries and manuscript repository

A large number of manuscripts are also housed in University libraries in India

Research institutions

The various Societies and Oriental Research Institutions have large collections of manuscripts which are sourced by scholars.

Archives

The various archives of India have a large number of manuscripts that relate essentially to Government records. Most of these records are on paper, though some as in the Kerala State Archives are in the form of Curuna too.

Ownership

The term 'owners' of manuscripts could be employed for private individuals with collections, however small. With regard to Central and State Government institutions as well as Trusts, one might consider the thought that these institutions are not owners of the manuscripts but render the responsible role of custodians.

Custodianship

This term perhaps implies a much greater sense of responsibility towards the manuscripts than ownership. It becomes our duty as custodians of the collections to ensure that the manuscripts are passed down to future generations in as good or better condition than in which they were received. No custodian can have the freedom to allow manuscripts to degrade away for any reason.

Many manuscript conservation centres are established in and out the country. Some of the examples are given below.

Names of Manuscript conservation centres

North

1. Central institute of Buddhist studies.
2. Indra Gandhi National centre for Arts New Delhi.
3. Department of Language and culture Shimla
4. The Himalayan Society for Heritage and arts conservation, Niantal
5. Rampur library Rampur.
6. Nagarjuna Budhist foundation Gorakhpur
7. Indian Conservation Institution.

8. Vrindavan research Institute

9. Central library Banaras

10. Viswesharanada Ishwabandhu institute Hoshiarpur

South

1. Oriental Research institute Tirupadi.

2. Salar Jung museum Hyderabad

3. Intacchitrakala Parishad art conservation centre Bangalore.

4. Tamil Nadu government Museum

5. Thanjavore Library Thanjavore

6. Regional conservation centre Trivandrum

7. Centre for heritage studies hill place museum Thripuntra

East

1. Saraswati Bhadrak

2. Tawang Monastery Tawang

3. Manipur state archive Imphal

4. Khudabhakha Oriental public library Patna

5. Sambalur University Orissa

6. Krishna Kantahandiqui Library Guwahati

7. Aithya Bhuvaneswar

8. Intach Orissa

9. Manuscript library kolkata

10. Sredev Kumar Jain Oriental Arrah

West

1. Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute Jodhpur

2. Mahaveer Digamber Jain Pandulipi Saramkshan Kendra, Rajasthan

3. Lalbhai Dalapathi Institute Ahmedabad.

4. Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Ujjain

Collection of the maximum number of manuscripts scattered all over the world forms the first requisite in manuscriptology. They are huge oceans of knowledge containing innumerable pearls of principles and information. The damages to manuscript are common in today's life. Factors causing damage to the manuscripts are classified as human and natural factors.

Human factors- Carelessness, Ignorance, Public apathy.

Natural factors- fire, water, natural calamities, insect attack, microbiological attack, dust, environmental pollution and light, fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity.

Inherent factors- The ink or paint used to write may cause damage to the manuscripts.

Conservation

The methods used to save manuscripts are called as conservations. Conservation of manuscript in original is done through preventive and curative

methods. For that purpose a standard methodology comprising the positive aspects of both traditional Indian practices and modern scientific methods has been formulated and followed. Conservation of manuscripts is carried out through 33 Manuscript Conservation Centres (MCCs), besides organizing preventive and curative conservation workshops at different locations of the country as per priorities. Manpower development in the field of manuscript conservation, another objective of the NMM is also taken care of during workshops. Conservation workshops aim at fulfilling dual objectives of conservation of manuscripts and generate trained manpower in the field of manuscript conservation. Realising the urgency of conservation, NMM has launched the conservation of manuscripts in a massive scale. Any direct or indirect action on a damaged or undamaged manuscript or collection of manuscripts aimed at enhancing the life of the manuscript(s) can be termed as conservation

Preventive Conservation

Any direct or indirect action on a damaged or undamaged manuscript or collection of manuscripts aimed at enhancing the life of the manuscript(s) by reducing future risks of deterioration can be termed as preventive conservation.

For example: Regular inspection of the condition of the collection

Deputing staff for training in preventive conservation techniques.

Curative Conservation

Any direct action on a damaged manuscript or collection of manuscripts aimed at stopping active deterioration in the manuscript(s) can be termed as curative conservation. For example: Fumigation of a manuscript collection that has live insects in it.

Restoration

Any direct action on a damaged manuscript aimed at improving the visual aspect of the manuscript can be termed as restoration. For example: Removing pencil marks from a manuscript folio, any direct or indirect action on a damaged manuscript or collection of manuscripts for increasing their life. This can be direct or indirect.

Damages to Manuscripts

These dangers to a manuscript collection can be termed as factors of deterioration. These factors can be categorized as human factors and natural factors⁶. The biggest danger to collections is the human factor, as humans can destroy entire collections by their inaction as well as by their wrong actions. Humans if they want can also ignore their power to exercise control over the effects of the natural factors and thus allow the collections to be

destroyed forever.(Alternatively, humans can also be the biggest protectors of manuscripts if they take correct action)

Human Factors

Professional apathy and carelessness

Public apathy and carelessness

Natural Factors

Fire, water, natural calamities, insect attack, microbiological attack dust, environmental pollution and light. Fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity

Inherent factors

The nature in which the manuscript material is prepared, and the ink or paint is applied can also be a danger to manuscript.

Basic Requirements of a Manuscripts Storage Area^[7]

- No danger of fire or water disaster
- Clean and tidy rooms.
- Electric switchboard should be outside the room if possible
- Good lighting
- Good ventilation
- Manuscripts kept in an ordered manner in clean boxes or cupboards
- Shelves should be able to take the load of the manuscripts
- Space for at least one person to move
- Manuscripts should not be on the floor
- The storage area should be inspected regularly
- At least one table and chair near the storage area to prepare inspection reports etc.
- A quarantine room where recently acquired or donated manuscripts should be examined for insect or fungus attack and kept under observation before being documented and brought into the storage area.

Minimum Standards for Preventive Conservation^[7]

The staff of the collection should have been trained to execute the preventive conservation steps on their own.

- The collection storage, display and reference areas should be clean.
- The shelves and other furniture in the collection area should be in order and clean.
- The manuscripts should be arranged neatly on shelves or in cupboards / boxes and not piled up or on the floor anymore.
- The manuscripts should be covered with destarched cotton cloth if possible or placed in boxes.

- The manuscripts and furniture should be free from insects.
- The loose folios in the manuscript sections should have been placed in labelled boxes.
- Direct light should not be falling on the manuscripts.
- The room should be well ventilated, and free from dampness.
- The storage cupboards should be away from walls and the lowest shelf should be a foot high above the floor.
- Storage space in the shelves should have been well utilized.
- The risk from fire or water disaster should have been minimized.
- Process of updating the accession and location registers should have commenced.

Conservation techniques

Coins

Ancient coins brought light the names of many king ruled in Andra namely Gobada, Narana etc. Different types of metals are used to make coins and to preserve it we can use a mixture of HNO₃ – 20% + H₂SO₄ 5 % + H₂O 75 %. Put for half an hour and then clean it. All coins are stored in air tight container with all proper information as weight, size, value, period, metal using etc.

Palm leaf manuscript

Use lemon grass oil, citronella oil for clearing words, we can read it easily. Apply lamp black and it also helpful for easy reading. Holes are punched on the leaves and cords are passed through them. Between two stiff flat wooden boards having the same type of holes for passing the cords the palm leaves are kept. The wooden boards press the leaves from both the sides prevent curling at the edges and chipping by abrasion. The manuscripts were wrapped in yellow or red cotton cloth. AC rooms must be used to preserve the manuscripts.

Paper manuscripts

The word paper is derived from the latin word papyrus invented in 109 A.D. by China. In 18th century handmade paper manuscript are used in India. Herbal Pesticides like turmeric powder, snake slough are used as pesticides. Leaf caster machine and reinforcement of banana culture pins are used to preserve these manuscripts. Digitization of the content also promotes the preservation of the manuscripts.

Cataloguing of manuscripts

Process of classifying and arranging objects in a particular order. Cataloguing help to reader to locate the manuscript easily in less time period.

Anukramanis and *Nighantu* examples of cataloguing in ancient India.

3 forms: Card form^[8]

Book form

Sheaf form

2 types: Normal cataloguing^[9]

Descriptive cataloguing

Descriptive cataloguing - 2 Parts

First Part: Gives physical details of a manuscript such as title, author, materials size and conditions.

Second Part: contains extracts of manuscripts, few lines from the beginning and end of the manuscript and colophons.

Catalogus catalogorum^[10]

New catalogus catalogorum: Published by university of madras

Theodor Aufrecht, a German Orientalist: Catalogus catalogorum

Alphabetical register of names of authors or title of works published as 3 volumes. The master of catalogue comprised of 1195 pages in all with information on manuscripts in and outside the India.^[11]

Secondary Steps

- Transcription. Reading manuscript as such is very difficult. After writing it to a paper makes the work easy. Manuscripts are available in different languages and one can copy it as such. For example if it is in Malayalam, copy it into Malayalam, if it is in Sanskrit copy it into Sanskrit.
- Translation: converting from one language to another. The need of translation is many local languages are not understood by the all for proper transference of knowledge.
- Critical Edition: reconstruction of the text. Close reading and detail analysis of the content. It includes two steps
 - Lower criticism
 - Higher criticism

Lower criticism

Process of selecting the original reading based on evidences. It contains again another 3 process.

1. **Heuristics:** To discover methodological collection, analysis and study of evidences. This comprise of 3 stages.

- **Siglum:** peculiar identification mark given to the manuscripts. This may be based on script, source of codex, age of the copy. For example K12 denote Kashmir belonging 12th century.

- **Collation:** Process of collecting all information about the one book. It is usually done with the

help of collation sheet. Now days it is done with the help of excel spread sheet.

- o **Secondary Sources of evidences:** All works that are directly and closely related to the text are collected and are studies. This may be commentaries, translations.
- 2. **Recension:** means critical study of the text. It is the processing of choosing the reading copy of the matter from various copies. This is by giving preference to author's intension.
- 3. **Emendation:** the process of making revision or correction of texts. Word meaning of emendation is the correction of the text. It is done when the author is not satisfied by the evidences that are available.

Higher criticism

After the lower criticism the higher criticism is done. Editing the text by taking into consideration of question of authorship, date of the author, influence of work in the field, style, languages, literary aspects, sources of the work, circumstance that made author to create this work, influence of other writers, popularity of the work are considered.

Essential features of critical edition

Collect the extant copies of the text in original or mechanised form.

Decide the mutual relationship and trustworthy of copies.

Collate the copies.

Constitute the critical recension.

Accept any one out of many reading as original.

Present to the world critical recension, description of facts and criticisms.

Publication

It is the final step of the manuscriptology. Only a very few manuscripts are published. The fact the publication of manuscript is a herculean task. We must take the pain to do it for the future generation.

NMM: 2003 established

National Mission for Manuscript's biggest and most ambitious project is to create a database of all Indian manuscripts in the country and abroad.^[12] The National Database of Manuscripts, *Kriti Sampada* is available on the internet through the Mission's website

Objectives: Collecting and preserving.

Motto: Conserve the past for future.

The Mission receives data on manuscripts from three different sources

- Excellence as heritage
- Contribution to India's intellectual history
- Vulnerability

- Belonging to ancient or medieval past

Information on manuscripts is collected in three formats

Manus Data- Each Manus data sheet is used to document a single manuscript. It includes details like the title, author, scribe and commentator of the manuscript, the material it is written on, its condition and where it can be found.

Manus Data sheet with instructions

- Questionnaire – Questionnaire form is used to document a collection of manuscripts in an institution/private collection. It provides an overview of the total number of manuscripts available in a collection.

Questionnaire form with instructions

- CAT-CAT – The Mission is also compiling a database of all printed catalogues of Indian manuscripts. So far, more than 2500 catalogues have been documented. At the moment, its format is being updated and the process of documentation will resume shortly.

Total electronic data available till date = 23,40,000.^[12]

Manuscriptology is the process of conserving the future for the past. It keeps the pulse of the past. It preserves the literary, linguistic, artistic and cultural heritage. It is very essential to conserve the manuscripts.

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