Recent Efforts In Popularizing Manuscriptology

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ABSTRACT

Manuscripts are the basic historical evidence and have great research value. Collection, conservation, digitization & critical editions are the steps in the study of Manuscripts. The science of studying manuscripts is known as manuscriptology. Manuscripts are the hand written or manually written original documents which are 65 years old or even more. Study of manuscripts helps in attaining the hidden knowledge through various steps told above. The different steps in manuscriptology e.g. collection, conservation, cataloguing, digitization, critical edition and publication of manuscripts will help in popularizing manuscriptology.

These include even seminars, workshops, courses related to manuscriptology. As these are historical evidence and also hidden form of ancient medical knowledge, several treatment methods and medical formulations are yet to be discovered from the manuscripts. So manuscriptology helps in attaining the important aspects of research in Ayurveda. A large number of manuscripts are scattered all over India and these are available in personal collections and are unaware of their value & knowledge. So, it is our duty to preserve the knowledge and make it available to the future generation.

Keywords: Manuscriptology, critical-edition, manuscripts, conservation, digitization, popularize etc.

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Introduction:

The transmission of knowledge from the Sanskrit scholars descended through media of Guru shishya parampara, in that guru teaches and shishya listens. This tradition came from ancient time- As the days progressed the knowledge transmitted started storing in the written form. They wrote on palm leaves, on stone, on metals etc. The matter which are written by hand and...
having thought in them, with more than 65 years are called as manuscript. Material preserved in manuscript form is the primary source databank of written material from the ancient days. Manuscripts provide not only the most authentic witnesses to life, but also a record of what aspects of life were led by ancestors in rational manner/unique manner. In an era of only partial literacy, when the transmission of written knowledge was laborious, the value of that knowledge to society can be evaluated by the care and elegance of its recording or even by the fact that it was recorded at all.

Research defines as systematic investigation into and study of materials and source in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions. In the same way manuscriptology is being one among the research which can be studied based on the systematic investigation of the manuscripts and their sources with conclusion as in the publishable form which can reach to society and the knowledge hidden in the manuscripts can spread everywhere.

Manuscriptology means the science that deals with the study of manuscript. It also specializes in procurement, preservation and documentation of various kinds of manuscripts. The word manuscript derived from Latin word 'manuscriptus', manu means 'hand' and scriptus means 'written'. This Latin word has been used for 'A document written with a person's own hand'. Manuscripts are considered as one of the knowledge and cultural resource of humankind. Various efforts are carried out to represent the research in the area of manuscriptology which can reflect all over the world in present scenario.

The knowledge of ancient tradition is hidden in the form of manuscripts which is practiced by many seers since long time which has led down by our ancestors. Manuscripts are available throughout the world and those are in many languages and scripts which cover religious, philosophical, historical, literary and scientific subjects. India possesses a rich cultural heritage of manuscripts since ancient period and these manuscripts scattered at various places of India, many of them are misplaced, lost or not recognized or ignored by unknown peoples and improper preservation techniques etc. These all are must needed at present day to search through conducting survey and unlock their inherited knowledge to every human kind and keep the knowledge alive by conserving and preserving them properly.

Efforts of survey, is to creating awareness about manuscripts and to collect the manuscripts which are stored by various academicians, research institutes, libraries, temples, maths and personal collections. After collection, preserving them with at most care and protection is must. Conservative techniques are needed and to be incorporated to repair the damaged manuscripts to protect the ancient knowledge. After preservation and conservation of manuscripts another effort is the process of digitization, it helps us to reach original knowledge of a manuscript through digitized copy and it minimizes the mishandling/handling of manuscripts. Next part is critical edition of manuscript and it plays an important role in popularization of manuscriptology as science or knowledge which is hidden in the text being edited. The text can be uncovered by this process and publication of such critically edited manuscripts are going to give great contribution to the world which can reveal various form of science that has come through the seers. It is the duty of each scholar and student to take care of manuscripts asthey are a source of knowledge. Constitution of India states, under Fundamental Duties in Article 51 A suggests that, "It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture".

One of the efforts done as 'The introduction to the critical edition of the Mahabharata' by V. S.Suktankar published by Bhandarkar oriental research institute, Poona was a pioneer work in this direction. The editors of Vedic and Sanskrit texts of the first generation worked hard for establishing the manuscriptology as an important subject of indology. The various efforts are done for the popularizing manuscriptology through seminars, workshops, courses related manuscriptology, critical edition of manuscripts and publishing them for the benefit of mankind. These efforts are needed to protect and spread the precious knowledge which is
contributed by the ancient people. So this effort is being made to highlight the various efforts that can be done in popularizing the manuscriptology in recent scenario.

**Aims & Objectives:**

1. To list out the efforts that helps in popularize the manuscriptology
2. To understand the efforts with their stages

**Materials & Methods:**

Manuscripts are available throughout the world among them India has rich number of manuscripts available in different languages and scripts, there are about 50 lakh manuscripts scattered over the country, in them 67% are Sanskrit manuscripts, 25% manuscripts are of other languages such as Kannada, Telugu, Hindi, Oriya, etc. Various organizations like National mission for manuscripts (NMM), New Delhi has did huge survey studies for availability of manuscripts all over India (categories language wise and script wise).[6]

Various efforts that are contributes in popularizing manuscriptology are

1. Collection of the manuscripts
2. Preservation of manuscripts
3. Conservation of manuscripts
4. Digitization of manuscripts
5. Cataloguing of manuscripts
6. Critical edition of manuscripts
7. Publication of critically edited manuscripts
8. Workshops, seminars, short and long time courses related to manuscript studies can help in serving the fulfillment of popularizing the manuscripts.[7]

**Results & Discussion:**

1. **Collection of manuscripts:** Manuscripts are as hand written, are in several languages, scattered and lost with time. 1/10 of available manuscripts are being collected and stored by various old libraries, colleges, museums, palace, temples and personal collection from generation to generation. Collection of manuscripts and taking their care is not a simple job; it needs trained people as well as trained hands. Collection can be of several ways as

   a. Sacred collection- religious institutes, monasteries, homes of people considered as sacred.[8]
   b. Academic collection- research institutes, libraries, archives, museums.[9] So creating awareness about the manuscripts and their importance by various methods such as workshops, seminars, related surveys are needed. This can help in extracting the scattered science at one place and will help in reaching to the society by applying further efforts.

Collection of the manuscripts needs certain steps such as

- Primarily finding of places where the manuscripts are available
- Their status. After searching the availability of manuscripts, approaching those places and collection is done under rules and regulations. In this area, Government of India has established a mission called as national mission for manuscripts in 2003, [10] having the primary objective as collection of scattered manuscripts all over India by survey method. Collection of manuscripts is not a process of one day and one hand; it needs many hands and lots of time in joining and discovering the lost knowledge.

1. **Preservation of manuscripts:** preservation means not only storing the manuscripts, it indicates taking care and protecting them at most by various distracting agents such as external as well as internal factors & environment where they are being stored. Manuscripts are channel of knowledge which carry thoughts and ideas of our ancestors and their precious discoveries. They should be protected at most care after collecting them because ancient scholar’s contribution should not go in vain.

Some of the factors which can cause destruction of manuscripts and preservation Techniques are explained as follows-

- According to passage of time changes are inevitable
in the manuscripts materials such as paper or palm leaf or any other, they will lose their potency to withstand against environment factors such as humidity, water, fire, air etc and other external causes as dust, pollution. So there is need to take care of this by arranging the artificial suitable environment to store and protect them.

- As the materials which is used to write manuscripts are very much distracted by insects, worms and pests etc, so care need to be taken by various methods such as use of chemicals, insect repellants, fumigation etc to avoid destruction.

- As the manuscripts are handled carefully because mishandling of these may lead to missing of certain part of mss that leads to loss of manuscript, so every movement and placing mss need to be taken care.

2. Conservation of manuscripts: After collection and preservation, the stage comes where conservation need to take up. Conservation has two steps preventive conservation and curative conservation (repair of manuscripts etc).

- **Preventive conservation**
  - Periodic dusting,
  - fumigation and
  - inking etc care preventive conservation, which has to be done at regular interval

- **Curative conservation**

When the manuscripts are in critical condition such as the written matter has become illegible, torn manuscripts etc need to be taken care and are to be repair accordingly using various methods.

- Palm leaves became breakable after some time; they need to repair by using glue to join together with tissue papers (Japanese tissue paper, banana fiber tissue).

- Lamination of the manuscripts comes under preventive conservation; this has been done by various organizations and seems old at present scenario.

- Mechanical reproduction of the manuscripts is the method where the manuscripts are reproduced by microfilming, photocopying and digitized method.\[^{[1]}\]

4. Digitization of manuscripts: It is also one of the preservation methods. Digitization as it leads to easy accessibility of content of manuscripts without touching the original manuscripts and will avoid destruction of manuscripts by repeated handling. This includes scanning of manuscripts with more than 600 dpi scanner and restoring them in CD/DVD-ROM and accession will be in easy mode.

A digitized image is an electronic photograph of the original manuscript document,\[^{[2]}\] which can be changeable to various forms and size as pdf or document etc so the documents can be carried to anywhere and stored in very less data store.

This digitization includes various steps and needs various tools as computers, scanners, digital cameras with required resolution, software, advanced scanners etc.

5. Cataloguing of manuscripts: After collecting the manuscripts from various places, they need to arrange according to the languages, scripts, subjects and various sciences. So cataloguing is being done to fulfill these all aspects. Cataloguing means process of classifying and arranging objects in particular order\[^{[3]}\]

This method help in easy accession of manuscripts in short time.

- Types of catalogue are as simple catalogue and descriptive catalogue, card catalogue, book catalogue, sheaf catalogue.

- This preparation of catalogues needs certain requirements, such as the catalogues are prepared under the heading and subheading of particular manuscripts such author, date, title etc.

- Manuscripts have to be classified in shelves according to the available manuscripts materials such as paper manuscripts in separate shelves and palm manuscripts in other shelves according to their size and content.\[^{[4]}\]

6. Critical edition of manuscripts: Critical edition is not a new word, it has been introduced long
before by ancient Indian scholars through thorough classification of various Veddas, Upanishads etc. As once collection of particular manuscripts, examination of the content and source is done then next step is its analysis and after analyzing them, critical edition has to be carried out.

This can be adopted in two methods,

- **Lower criticism:** Presenting the text as close as possible to original work on the basis of available material.
- **Higher criticism:** Editing the text taking into consideration of question about authorship, date of the author, influence of the works in the field that could influenced the other author in the field etc.\(^{[15]}\)

Critical edition should contain following steps as

- Collection of the all extant of copies of text in original or mechanized form
- Decide the mutual relationship and trustworthy copies of manuscripts by drawing their genealogy and secondary evidences of the particular manuscripts.
- Collation of decided copies
- Constitute the critical recension: Critical recension means editorial revision of as literary work based on critical examination of the text and source used.
- Accept the one, out of the decided copies as original
- Present to the world critical recension, description of contents and criticism.\(^{[16]}\)

7. **Publication of the critically edited manuscripts:** Once the manuscript edited critically has to be publish because knowledge which is hidden in the manuscript should reach the society and become useful.

Publication is a process of publishing the transliteration of the critically edited text which will help in attaining the new knowledge which adds up to the existed science. This may help in taking new researches in the particular science.

**Conclusion:** The efforts are done to achieve target, in the same manner to popularize the manuscriptology needs certain efforts. These efforts will make spread the importance of manuscriptology all over the globe. As popularizing of manuscriptology includes few steps right from collection to the publication of manuscripts.

Each and every step having their own importance in giving their part to spread the manuscript's knowledge everywhere. As these steps are not one day process, they need several days, months, years and dedication of research scholars who decide to work for it. The Government of India taken initiation by establishing a mission called National mission for manuscripts. It is also contributing their part in popularizing the field or area of manuscriptology.

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**Sarasangh:**

हस्ताखित प्रति, वे मूलतः ऐतिहासिक साक्ष्य है और इससे महत्वपूर्ण अनुसंधानिक मूल्य मिलता है। हर सत्य प्रति का संग्रहण, संक्षेपण, गणकीकरण और समालोचना समीक्षात्मक अध्ययन व संपादन, ये सब हस्त भूतियों का अनुक्रम माना जाता है। हस्तृतियों का अध्ययन को हस्त्यृति संसाधन कहा जाता है। मूल प्रति को जो हाथ से लिखा जाता है वे 65 वर्ष पूर्ण या उससे भी पूर्ण हो उन सब को हस्ताखित प्रति कहा जाता है। उपर उल्लेख किया हुआ हस्त प्रतियों का अध्ययन का अनुक्रम के सहायता से निगम ज्ञान प्राप्त होता है। हर सत्य प्रति संसाधन में विकिरण अनुक्रम उल्लेख किये गये हें जसे - संग्रहण, संक्षेपण, नाम सूचिपत्र, गणकीकरण, समालोचना समीक्षात्मक अध्ययन और संपादन, ये सब हस्तृति संसाधन को प्रसिद्ध करने में सहायता करते है। तथा जो हस्तृति संसाधन सम्बन्धित परिसंवाद, कार्यशाला, पाठ्यक्रम भी इसमे सहायता करते हें। जैसे ये हस्ताक्षरित प्रति ऐतिहासिक साक्ष्य है और प्राचीन वैद्य शास्त्र का निगम रूप भी हें। हस्ताखित प्रति से उन्होंने तक नहीं किया गया, अनेक चिकित्सा विज्ञान और चिकित्सा योग्य आधिकारिक कर्मचारी करने का अवसर प्राप्त कर सकते है। इस प्रकार आयुर्वेद में अनुसंधान का समर्थित महत्वपूर्ण विषयों के ज्ञानों के लिए हस्ताखित संसाधन सहायता करता है। सम्पूर्ण भारत देश, सभी तरफ से अधिक संख्या का हस्ताखित प्रति से प्रयास हुआ अनलो खजाना है। ये सब व्यक्तिगत संग्रहण में मिल जाते हैं जहां इनके ज्ञान और मूल्य का पता नहीं रहता है। इससे हस्तविक्षेपित प्रति का ज्ञान का संक्षेप करना और भावी पीढ़ी के लिए इसे उपलब्ध कराना हमारा कर्त्तव्य बनता है।