



Understanding & conceptualizing the heritage of manuscripts

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Abstract

India has the largest collection of manuscripts in the world .It has innumerable number of manuscripts across country , temples contributing fundamentally.. India Manuscripts were written in a variety of languages such as Sanskrit , Tamil , Telugu , Kannada , Marathi , Persian , Arab etc The manuscripts found so far are in Grantha, Devanagari ,Nandi Nagari & Nagari scripts. This of the hour promotes access & scholarship through research & publications. It has established a national network of institutions & manuscript repositories. There is a need to consolidate a comprehensive policy towards manuscript conservation . Empirical scholarship has to be promoted based on these primary sources researching. All students have to be brought in to study manuscripts & methods of conservation along with a regular degree course. This would add to making each student learn about the inheritance of Indian knowledge bases & Indian heritage would be conserved through this.

Key words: collection of manuscripts, Empirical scholarship, inheritance of Indian knowledge bases

Introduction- Manuscripts have been considered as India's store house of Indian knowledge system. They represent the traditional legacy of academic brilliance & maturity of writing procedure. Indian scholastic achievements are reflections of Indian pedagogic superiority . Indian antiquity is replete with eventful written methodologies. The ancient Indian wrote down precious documents besides they preserved it as well. There are manuscripts written on Paper, Gold, Silver, Palm leaf, Birch leaf,

The beginning through east India company

-The officials of East India Company acknowledged the importance of

written documents & started its collected Royal Asiatic society did pioneering work in this regard. The work of the oriental scholars is also noteworthy,

1. William Jones
2. Colebrook
3. C. P. Brown
4. Col. Mackenzie
5. H.H.Wilson

The National Mission for Manuscripts-The National Mission for Manuscripts was established in 2003 by the government of India as a motivated project of the Tourism & culture Ministry It was hailed as a premier Institution determined to conserve great Indian historical



heritage. It was institutionalized with two mottoes of

1. Unearthing manuscripts
2. Preserving manuscripts

the work of cataloguing was started

1. In 1803, there was a pioneering effort to catalogue all the available manuscripts, with an intention to "catalogue of all most useful Indian works now in existence with an abstract of their contents" . This idea was put up to the Asiatic Society (M. L. Saini "Manuscript Literature in Indian Languages" in *ILA Bulletin* , 5.1, Jan-Mar 1969, pp 6-21).
2. Four years later, H. T. Colebrook as the Society's fourth president appealed to the Government to set aside an additional grant of five or six thousand rupees per annum to undertake such a catalogue (Ibid
3. This early phase of cataloguing by the Orientalists took place amidst a fervent phase of institution building (the establishment of the Benarus Sanskrit College, the universities in the three Presidencies and Oriental Research Institutes among others) and the rise of Western education in India.
4. As colonial policy began to veer away from any veneration of aspects of their

subjects' culture and languages, an interest in regional languages such as Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil and Telugu among others began to emerge among the socio-religious reformers whose rhetoric is dotted with many references to the greatness of India's traditional learning and literature as found in manuscripts.

5. Many of their personal collections are deposited at the India Office Library and elsewhere in Britain as well as in institutions in India.

The First Steps

1. Max Muller's translations of the Rig-Veda in 1849 was a scientific work based on manuscripts
2. Theodore Utrecht's released his personal "Catalogue Catalog rum" in 1891 which consisted of Sanskrit manuscript catalogues
3. After Indian Independence this work was revived on a new scale.
4. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, took a personal interest in ensuring that the Gilgit manuscripts, to date India's oldest manuscripts from the sixth century A.D., were brought from Kashmir to the National Archives of India to be preserved for posterity.
5. Some private & religious institutions had started



- preserving of very rare & unpublished manuscripts
6. The setting up of the Sanskrit Commission in 1952 was a pioneering work
 7. Central Manuscript Survey which should undertake the "search, survey, collection, cataloguing and publication of manuscripts...and that, for this purpose it should have in its Central and Regional Branches qualified personnel experienced in Manuscript and editorial work and conversant with the local scripts and conditions".
 8. No legislation was put in place to safeguard manuscripts. Manuscripts, therefore, were neglected and largely in very poor condition in various institutions and homes around the country even as scholarship that could use them continued to dwindle.
 9. Indira Gandhi center for arts National Foundation took in 1960 some steps towards carefully catalogued and micro-filmed about 100,000 important manuscripts around the country
 10. During the 10th plan period The Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India, established the National Mission for Manuscripts in February 2003 as an ambitious five year project with the specific objectives of locating, documenting,

- conserving and disseminating the knowledge content of India's manuscripts.
11. MRCs were established as a key move towards conservation. All temple libraries religious institutions were given opportunity to give their collected manuscripts.

The mission is informed through National Survey Manuscripts private organization & transferred data form other such organization. Manuscripts are now preserved through this Mission & there have been several important documents saved with their conservations work. Nearly 22,00,000 scripts are available in digital data form.

Furthering the data source the mission conducts several outreach programs

1. Arranges Manuscript exhibition in Schools & colleges
2. Arranges for special lectures
3. Arranges workshops
4. Arranges Seminars
5. Arranges Joint programs in schools
6. Arranges Digital web sites
7. Provides trainings in preservation of manuscripts
8. Strengthens support services in other branch centers

Conclusion- Thus this organization works in the field of restoration & conservation of Indian Manuscripts& their



digitalization. This promotes access & scholarship through research & publications. It has established a national network of institutions & manuscript repositories. The need of the hour is that India still holds numerous manuscripts in private institutions & organizations which has to be brought inside the purview of digitalization. Countless number of religious institutions in India contains manuscripts which they don't want to publish for sectarian views & intentions. Historical scholarship has to be promoted based on these primary sources. History students have to be brought in to study manuscripts & conservations & preservation of these manuscripts should be introduced as a regular degree course. But the concept of understanding the significance of rare manuscripts should be made known to the future generations & a motivation towards preserving ancient Indian

antiquity & heritage will gather momentum only when the conceptualization draws further sustenance from all quarters of Indian learning system.

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