



TECHNIQUES OF PRESERVATION AND CATALOGUING OF MANUSCRIPTS

Dr. Ranjit D. Patil

M.D. (Rasashastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana)

Ph.D. Scholar (Sanskrit)

Assistant Professor Yashwant Ayurvedic College Kodoli.

Dr. S. K. Jadhav

Associate Professor (Sanskrit),

Chhatrapati Shivaji College, Satara

INTRODUCTION

Manuscripts are the original texts or scripts which are manually written on the material available at that time. Thousands of years ago Sanskrit literature was written manually on papers or leaves of some plants like Bhurja patra (*Betula vtilis*). All Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, Brahman Granthas etc. texts were written manually, so that they all were included in Manuscripts.

It seems that there were different followers of this text prevalent in different traditions. From those different traditions different path bhedas developed. Some manuscripts have been published and some of them are yet unpublished.

DEFINITION

Manus means hand, Script means any written document.

Manuscriptology is the science of studying of manuscripts.

Common languages of manuscripts:

- a) Sanskrit
- b) Brahmi
- c) Kharoshtri.

SOURCES OF MANUSCRIPTS

- 1) Various Pathshalas, old ashrams, temples and museums
- 2) Government or local libraries
- 3) Catalogues i.e. A check list of Sanskrit medical manuscripts of Central Council of Medical Research in Sanskrit
- 4) Government oriented manuscripts library
- 5) Asiatic library Kolkata and Mumbai
- 6) Anandaashram Mudranalaya, Pune
- 7) Bhandarkar Prachyavidya Sanshodhan Kendra, Pune

MATERIALS USED FOR MANUSCRIPTS

- Handmade papers
- Leaves of Bhurja (*Betula vtilis*) and Palm
- Rocks

- Clay tables
- Copper plates (Tamra patra)
- Clothes

EXPERTS REQUIRED FOR STUDY OF MANUSCRIPTS:

- Archeologist
- Forensic scientist
- Historian
- Linguist
- Grammarian
- Preservation expert
- Domain expert

IMPORTANCE OF MANUSCRIPTS

- These are proofs of well developed ancient science and culture of India
- It enlightens hidden knowledge and gives great values in literary review
- It highlights different opinions about the same topic
- It provides clues for further research.

CONSERVATION OF MANUSCRIPTS:

Factors responsible for destruction of manuscripts:

- a) Insects like cockroaches, termites, bookworms and rats
- b) Climate –very hot and humid climate.

METHODS FOR PRESERVATION OF MANUSCRIPTS

1. Room and climate: Manuscripts should be kept in air – conditioned room or other places having fresh air, adequate & direct light and low moisture.
2. Pest control: Regular DDT spray, fumigation, naphthalene balls, 5% mercuric chloride solution, ammonium or potassium thiocyanate solutions may be used.
3. Insect repellent materials to be used: Plant based oils like lemongrass or Margosa, Pandhari grass leaves, birch bark and snake bark.
4. Repair: Cut pieces of manuscripts can be repaired with the help of tissue paper & glue.
5. Racks and boards: Using Aluminium shelves or racks for storage, insects attacks can be prevented.
6. Lamination: By using cellulose acetate or polythene foils.
7. Prevention of sticking of papers: Using butter paper between the old pages, sticking can be prevented.
8. Method suggested by National Archives: Manuscript sheet should be layered with cellulose acetone foil piece & tissue paper. These both materials should be bound with acetone; letters can be darkened with inks.
9. Modern techniques:
 - Microfilming
 - Photocopying

- Digitalization
- Digital or raster images are electronic photographs of original material with digital camera. These images are transferred worldwide in reduced format or in SGML & HTML. PDF software is useful for easy downloading of files
- Cold digitization using optoelectronic equipment

CATALOGUING OF MANUSCRIPTS

- Definition: Cataloguing means to classify and arrange the data serially.
- Need of cataloguing: This helps researcher or viewer to easily search in short period.
 - Nighantus are such type of catalogues for the drugs or formulations mentioned in Ayurveda.
- Types of catalogue:
 - Three types-
- i. *Card type*: Cards are easy for handling, arranging and storing. Separate card is needed for separate manuscript.
- ii. *Book type*: In book form many copies can be placed in small place. But in case of change of information or addition, book is problematic.
- iii. *Sheet form*: Portable, flexible but can be easily damaged.

TYPICAL CATALOGUE FOR MANUSCRIPTS

A typical format should have following information enlisted-

1. Serial number
2. Date
3. Accession number
4. Author
5. Whether work is published?
6. Whether critically edited?
7. Name of commentator
8. Material of manuscript
9. Language
10. Script
11. Size
12. No. of leaves
13. No. of lines per page
14. No. of letters per line
15. Extent (complete/ incomplete)
16. Condition and age of manuscript
17. Evaluation
18. Cost
19. Class no.
20. Source/ place of manuscript
21. Status (Purchased/ donated)
22. Name of script colophon
23. Any other remarks (Imp. Characters, microfilming etc.)