



A REVIEW STUDY OF MANUSCRIPTOLOGY IN AYURVEDA

Dr. Manoj Mathuriya*¹, Dr Devendra Singh Chahar², Dr. Rameshwar Lal³ and Dr. Sankalp Sharma⁴¹PG Scholar, Department of Rachana Sharir, PGIA, DSRRAU, Jodhpur.²Associate Professor and HOD, Department of Maulik Siddhant, PGIA, DSRRAU, Jodhpur.^{3,4}Assistant Professor, Department of Maulik Siddhant, PGIA, DSRRAU, Jodhpur.

*Corresponding Author: Dr. Manoj Mathuriya

PG Scholar, Department of Rachana Sharir, PGIA, DSRRAU, Jodhpur.

Article Received on 30/01/2024

Article Revised on 21/02/2024

Article Accepted on 11/03/2024

ABSTRACT

The Literary research is the backbone and base of all types of research. Manuscriptology is a main branch of literary research. To understand Ayurveda as a holistic life science manuscriptology can play a very important role. Manuscriptology is defined as that branch of science which imparts training in reading and understanding of ancient manuscripts credited with fair antiquity. Manuscripts are the hand written or manually written records of original documents. These are the basic historical evidence and have great research value. It is estimated that India possesses more than five million manuscripts, making the largest repository of manuscript wealth in the world. Before invention of modern science most famous way to communication & exchange of thoughts was speech & oral transmission. All early literature that is now available in printed form originally hand written i.e. in form of manuscripts is the basis for the learning of science and technology today. AYUSH department, under the government of India consider the different steps in manuscriptology e.g. collection, conservation, cataloguing, translation, critical edition and publication of manuscripts as important aspects of literary research in Ayurveda. To perform this work there is need of collaboration of various scholars of Ayurveda and languages like Sanskrit along with many trained people and experts in this field. Several treatment methods and medical formulations are yet to be discovered from the manuscripts. This article is about manuscript, manuscriptology and its importance in Ayurveda.

KEYWORDS: Manuscript, Ayurveda, Manuscriptology, conservation, critical edition.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is essential for human existences; it can be conducted by oral and written tradition. In ancient times, *Acharyas* and scholars records ideas and observations in specially preserved leaves, clothes, bark of trees, papers etc. and even today are considered as storehouse of age old knowledge and wisdom. Ayurveda being an ancient science has got both oral and written tradition for dissemination 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.

The term Manuscript is originated from a Latin word Manu -scriptus, which means written by hand. Here 'Manu' means 'hand' and 'scriptus' means 'to write'^[1]. [According to Antiquities and Art Treasures Act manuscript is a "Hand written document of Scientific, historical, literary or of aesthetic value which is at least

75 years old.^[2]»

Manuscriptology: The science of collecting, classifying, preserving and editing of manuscripts is termed as manuscriptology. The science of Manuscriptology is the inspection of the past within the purview of present knowledge for the future research.

NEED OF STUDY OF MANUSCRIPTS

The need for manuscript study is to preserve the ancient knowledge and to revive the past.^[3] Addition of ancient knowledge to the current science is possible i.e. to contribute to the literary resources of various branches of science.

It also helps for the better understanding of the principles and also contributes to the literary richness of the science. Most of the Ayurveda manuscripts are written in Sanskrit language so slight difference in reading will make a lot of difference in interpretation.

SOURCES FOR COLLECTION OF MANUSCRIPTS

1. Department of Ayurved Manuscriptology, National Institute Of Ayurveda, Jaipur
2. Various educational centers, patasalas and ashrams & Old - local libraries.
3. Catalogues of Sanskrit medical manuscripts by CCRAS.
4. Famous traditional physicians and individuals.
5. Temples, museums and Jain collection.
6. Famous Ayurvedic physicians, university libraries and institutes.
7. Govt. Oriental manuscript libraries.
8. Asiatic society Calcutta and Bombay.
9. Catalogue of Bharat Itihas Samshodhaka Mandal, Pune.
10. Old & local libraries- Saraswati Bhavan library of government Sanskrit college, Banaras in 1791. It is the oldest manuscripts library in India
11. The government oriental manuscripts library – Madras
12. Adyar Library & Research center
13. Government oriented library –Mysore (1891)

SCRIPTS USED IN MANUSCRIPTS

Most common language- Sanskrit

Ancient scripts-Brahmi, Kharoshti

Other scripts- Manipuri, Modi, Nevari, Devnagari, Kannada, Telugu, Tigalari, Nandi nagari, Sharadha.

Brahmi later developed into 2 main streams-

1. In north- Devnagari

Regional languages-Guajarati, Bengali

2. In South-Grantha

Regional languages-Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES OF A MANUSCRIPT^[4]

–Manuscript has got two components.

1. **Adheya (Scripts)** - The olden scripts are found in Brahmi lipi and Kharoshti lipi. Brahmi lipi later developed into two streams, Devnagari in north and Grantha in south.
2. **Adhara (Writing apparatus)** – There are three components related to writing apparatus.

Lekhya Samagri-(writing surface)-shila lekha (rock edits) Tamra patra (inscriptions in copper plates) Taali patra grantha (palm leaf) Bhurja patra (birch bark) Sanchapat (aloe wood bark) Copper plate Brick plates.

Clothes & Paper manuscripts

Bhurja patra were commonly used in Kashmir. Sanchpat were used in Assam. Paper manuscripts were introduced to India by Mughal rulers. The earliest paper manuscripts that are available are the Hafiz manuscripts.

Lekhana Samagri (writing instruments)-Stylus (hard and sharp instruments), pens (soft and smooth tipped

instruments), brushes (for painting).

After using stylus carbon powder with gum and sugar is smeared over the manuscripts.

Rules for using colours- Black ink- for book writing

Yellow ink- for corrections

Red ink – to mark chapters, and sections Gold & silver – to draw borders

Lipikara/ Lekhaka- they were of 3 types

1. Pustaka lekhaka- copied manuscripts
2. Kayastha lekhaka-writers of accounts
3. Shasana lekhaka-royal scribes

Rakshan Samagri- The material used for binding the manuscripts.

Scribal Errors

1. **Deletion/omission-**the scribe accidentally leave material between two occurrences of the word.
2. **Addition-**when the scribe cannot differentiate the synonymous words and adds it as a part of main text.
3. **Substitution-** it's an intentional error.it occurs when the scribe thinks that the original text is wrong and substitute it with his own text.
4. **Orthographic confusion-** when a scribe conversant with two different scripts copies from one script to another, certain errors are introduced due to confusion of letters.
5. **Transposition-** it's an involuntary positional variation of script.

STANDARD PRESERVATION TECHNIQUES OF MANUSCRIPTS

- **Physical methods** 1. Preservation in glass racks and wooden boards. 2. Exposure to sufficient sunlight and air circulation. 3. by using butter paper in between pages which are very old to prevent sticking of papers.
- **Chemical methods** 1. Chemical treatment by fumigation chambers. 2. by thymol acid chloromate solution. 3. Pest control by DDT spray, 5% mercuric chloride solution.
- **Lamination**
- **Microfilming**
- **Digitalization**
 1. By xeroxing.
 2. By scanning with 600 dpi scanner
- **SGML & HTML & compression techniques**
- **Optoelectronic equipment**

FACTORS THAT CAUSE DETERIORATION OF MANUSCRIPTS

1. Climatic condition –low humidity with heat destroys manuscripts. 2. Dust and atmospheric pollution. 3. Human carelessness. 4. Poor storage condition. 5. Pests like fungus, termites, ants, rats etc.

ORDER OF DEVELOPMENT⁷

1. Oral transmission.
2. Writing on clay and rocks.
3. Palm leaves and tree barks.
4. Started to use paper.
5. Latest modern edition by computer.

Types of medical manuscripts⁵

Ayurveda- spread all over India since antiquity and world

Siddha- confined to South India

Gso -rig-pa- confined to Tibetan plateau

Unani-Tibb-Greeco- Arabian system of medicine came to India along with Muslim rulers and become the integral part of Indian system of Medicine.

Arrangement of manuscripts

The collected manuscript codices are to be carefully scrutinized read carefully and should arrange in the following manner-

1. Content of the folio
2. Colophon if any
3. Size of the folio
4. Folio number
5. Number of lines in a folio
6. Scripts used to write the manuscripts
7. Style of language
8. Size
9. Characteristic of writing
10. Language

DIMENSION OF KNOWLEDGE IN MANUSCRIPT⁶

- **Siddhanta** (principles)
- **Shastra** (the science)
- **Vyavahara** (the application)

STEPS FOR COLLECTION OF DATA, DIGITAL EDITION, TRANSLATION AND CRITICAL EDITION OF MANUSCRIPT

1. Check the extent of availability of selected manuscripts in catalogues
2. Carry out portal and electronic correspondence to libraries.
3. By follow up, the data i.e. photocopy of manuscript or in digital form along with consent can be obtained.
4. Digital edition of manuscript can be done using photo manipulation software like Adobe Photoshop in which Colour, background etc. needs to be done.
5. The collected manuscripts may be in different languages. Editing of manuscripts is impossible when it is in different languages. So translation should be done to a more understandable language so that more people can understand it.
6. Critical edition is done in two main ways namely lower criticism and higher criticism.
7. After critical edition, comes the publication of edited manuscript. Publishing is a kind of documentation to be used for further advancement in research.

EXECUTION- steps in manuscriptology-**PRIMARY STEPS**

1. Collection – From various sources manuscripts are to be collected. After that Collection of catalogues, Letter correspondence Visitation, Manual duplication/photocopying, digital photography/imaging, & digital online collection is done.

2. Cataloguing- It is done to classify and arrange the data serially. It helps the researchers and viewers for easy search in short period. By this we can search all available manuscripts. In cataloguing -regional/state survey is necessary.

Types-1. Book 2. Card 3. Sheet Card index⁷

- Title
- Author
- Collection of Manuscript
- Commentary
- Commentator
- Condition of Manuscript
- Substance & Status
- Script & Language
- No. of Folios

Subject SECONDARY STEPS

1. **Transcription**- it involves writing the text as it is to a plain in same script, later converted to desired script. It helps the person to read in a better way. It includes copying in same language
2. **Translation**- It is the process of converting the words of one language to another. The need for translation in present day life is more emphasized in the country and one should keep in pace with time by keeping the developments in the world around. Due to this step, the person who is from another place and culture can easily understand our ancient systems and knowledge.
3. **Critical edition**- it is the close reading & detail analysis on the basis of evidences.

Methods

(A) **LOWER CRITICISM**- Lower criticism is selection of original reading based on evidences, done by 3 steps Heuristics, Emendation and Recension.

1. **Heuristics**: It means to find or to discover. It allows the students to learn by discovering themselves. It is a process of methodological collection, analysis & study of evidences. it has in 3 steps-
 - a. **Siglum**- it is a special identification marker or symbol, which stands for a word or name especially to denote a particular manuscript or edition of a text. It is based on script, age of copy etc.
 - b. **Collation**: it is the assembly of written information into a standard order. it includes collection of all information concerning the text in one document.
 - c. **Secondary sources of evidences**-Here all works directly related to the text.

2. **Recension:** It is the process of choosing among the variants i.e., process of choosing the best which is original or closer to the author's intension. It can also be described as critical revision of the text, review of the text or edited version.
3. **Emendation:** it is the process of making a revision or correction to a text, suggested by the editor. by which the text presented may be understood properly & easily.

(B) HIGHER CRITICISM- It involves the assessment of author's original work and it involves the following aspects.

- The style in which the writer presents his work.
- The language used.
- Literary aspects involved in the work.
- Source of work.
- Life of the author & his equipment, and
- The circumstances that made the author to compose the work.
- The situation in which the work was composed.
- The equipment used by the writer.
- Influence of other authors in the field.
- Reason for popularity of the work and its role in the society.

Essential features of critical edition

- Collect the extant copies of the text in original or mechanised form.
- Decide the mutual relationship and trustworthiness of copies.
- Collate the copies.
- Constitute the critical recension.^[8]
- Accept any one out of many readings as original.
- Present to the world critical recension, description of facts and criticisms.

4. **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.

DISCUSSION

Manuscripts are the proofs of our well-developed ancient science. It is the cultural wealth of India. The purpose of collection and conservation of manuscripts are served by numerous manuscript libraries in the country.

Ayurveda manuscripts are not in good condition, the critical edition could be difficult, so proper preservation of manuscript is important to protect it from damage. Few years ago Procuring a manuscript copy was really challenging. But now the scenario has changed. The other challenging condition is that the literature about medical or Ayurveda is vast and scattered in all over India.

There are different various versions of same text at

different plates & according to different readings about the same topic are seen. It is huge & tedious work in literary research to find out exact correct manuscript amongst all manuscripts.

Many scholars or experts in Sanskrit or different ancient languages with concern subject have great challenge to do such type of work. Thus the correction /critical study of all the old Ayurvedic text with the different manuscript is necessary. This shows the importance of collection of max. Number of manuscripts. There are considerable Ayurvedic literature which still in the form of manuscripts also good number of commentaries on basic texts like those of *Charaka* & *Sushruta* have not seen the light of day.

Such unpublished literature should be published because they contain practical implications dealing with human life. The main organization for manuscript collection in India is National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) - an autonomous organization under Ministry of Culture, Govt. Of India, which was initiated in February 2003. It creates bibliographic databases and is involved in conservation and preservation of manuscripts. IPGT & RA, Jamnagar provides accessibility of Ayurvedic Manuscripts online in our country and abroad. The Mission in addition, compiling a database of all printed catalogues of Indian manuscripts. So far, more than 2500 catalogues have been documented.^[9]

Dr. D V Subba Reddy, founder director of CCRAS, Hyderabad, in 1958 firstly initiated to catalogue Indian medical literature namely "A check list of Sanskrit Medical Manuscripts in India" published in 1972 with 1082 entries. And in its revised form it named "Sanskrit medical manuscripts in India, with 3375 entries."^[10]

All these organizations and agencies help in identifying, cataloguing and preserving the unidentified manuscripts. Acharya Yadavji Trikamji and Acharya P.V. Sharma are some among the most eminent scholars who worked in the field of Ayurvedic Manuscriptology. They have edited and published a lot of books which are being used by scholars even today. Thus, manuscriptology helps in exposing the hidden knowledge mentioned in the manuscripts and help in strengthening the literary base of Ayurveda.

CONCLUSION

Ancient literary evidences are the true markers of authenticity of a science. These documentations demand revival and promotion for its notability. Similar revival is essential for the science of Ayurveda as well which intends globalization. The manuscript wealth of India is estimated at around 5 million and is perhaps the largest collection in the world. Among the total Ayurveda literature only 2% of manuscripts are published.

So the main aim should be to create a database of Manuscripts, to catalogue, conserve, preserve and

digitalize it. The collection and classification of research data is important to the individual or institution involved in research activity of any area. On the other hand training of personnel in specific area of medical manuscriptology and establishment of organizations will help in spread of the knowledge. General awareness and their importance should be impressed upon public and the research scholars for Ayurveda manuscripts.

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