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# Need and Purpose of Manuscript Cataloguing in Ayurved

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## ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, as an ancient system of medicine, possesses a vast repository of textual knowledge encapsulated in manuscripts. However, the scattered nature of this manuscript presents significant challenges for scholars and practitioners alike. This study reviewing the importance, difficulties facing for compiling manuscript catalogues in Ayurved. This paper elucidates the objectives of promoting awareness and emphasizing the importance of manuscript cataloguing as a primary source for Ayurvedic researchers. This paper outlines the methodology employed to compile and analyze literature on manuscript cataloguing in Ayurveda, with a focus on elucidating the need and purpose of this practice. It discusses the challenges in accessing Ayurvedic knowledge and how a well-designed catalogue can bridge this gap.

**Key words:** Ayurved, manuscript, Catalogue design.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda - The science of life encompasses knowledge of both preventive and curative aspects since time immemorial. Those vast treasures of wisdom were transmitted from generation to generation verbally. A similar mechanism prevailed in other branches of knowledge too. Later on, all this knowledge, including philosophy, medicine, history, literature, astronomy etc., culminated in documentation. Of these, the literary productions were written and preserve for the posterity from ancient times in various materials such

as the palm leaf, birch bark, cloth, etc. Manuscript in India have a long tradition. They were produced in all parts of country with the availability of writing material; they are in many languages and scripts with a wide range of religious, philosophical, literature, traditional medicine systems and various parts of subject. These treasures of Indian culture such as the literary output of centuries old sages, poets, epic writers were preserved in the medium of manuscripts and stone structures in numerous temples, monasteries and museums.

The introduction of printing press and the eventual printing of books in paper in the modern period and latest digital environment almost completely put an end to the ancient traditional of writing in palm leaf and the techniques of their preservation. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century some very important institutions were founded at different parts of the country which housed the manuscripts collected from various parts from the Individuals and other ancient religious institutions.

However, these texts exist in manuscript form, scattered across libraries, archives, and private

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collections worldwide. This is where manuscript cataloguing emerges as an essential tool for preserving and disseminating this precious heritage. The present study makes an attempt how importance of manuscripts and there catalogues in Ayurved.

It will be interesting to note that at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century many additions of Puranas, Vedas, Agamas, Sanskrit Vyakranas (Panini), Jyotisha, Indian philosophies, Traditional Medicine System in Sanskrit and in the regional languages of Bharat were able to produce with the type catalogues or hand list of the manuscripts housed in different parts of India.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To create awareness and outline the importance of this primary source for Ayurved Researchers.
2. To highlight the significance of manuscript cataloguing in the preservation and dissemination of Ayurvedic knowledge.

## METHODOLOGY

1. All available literature of manuscript cataloguing in Ayurveda are compiled.
2. This compiled data is well studied and discuss for need and purpose of Manuscript cataloguing in Ayurved.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Etymology and Definition of Manuscript

The word Manuscript is originated from two Latin words, 'Manu' and 'Scriptus', which means written by hand. Here, the word 'Manu' means hand and 'Scriptus' means to write. A handwritten document which has scientific, historical, literary or aesthetic value can be considered as a Manuscript.<sup>[1]</sup> The term 'manuscript' in a broader sense means any document written or incised by hand such as documents or texts written on materials like *Tala Patra* (palm-leaf), *Bhurja Patra* (birch-bark), *Kumbhi* - bark, *Sacipat* (Agarutvak), Leather (animal skin), Cloth, Tulapat (a type of paper made out of cotton), paper and inscriptions on rocks, pillars, potteries, copper plates etc.<sup>[2]</sup>

### Definition and Types of Cataloguing

The systematic arrangement of texts of a library or a manuscripts repository is known as cataloguing.<sup>[3]</sup> It is also the first stage of research in manuscript studies. It is interesting to note that while for books the colon classification and Dewey decimal classification system are used in libraries, custodians often adopt their own system for manuscripts. In printed/electronic form, manuscript can be arranged in alphabetical order according to subject, title, author, place, language and script. On the shelf, it can be organized by subject and place. The *Anukramanikas* (indices) and *Nighantus* (etymology) give some idea of indexing and classifications. The *Kosas* (Metrical Dictionaries) have a system of classification of word in alphabetical order. The anthologies in Sanskrit literature provide different methods of subject wise classification. The catalogues can be provided to the scholars in printed form and/or in electronic format through the intranet and / or the internet.

The Catalogues can be mainly of four types: (1) Simple Index (2) Alphabetical Index (3) Subject-wise Index (4) Descriptive Catalogue. In the preparation of all types of cataloguing the first task is to enter the details of the work in cards. For Simple Index the first entry in the card is the title of the work. In the case of Simple Index the author's name, subject of the work and the source from where it is obtained will be entered in the card. For Alphabetical Index, information regarding serial number, title of the work, name of the author, subject, number of *Granthas*, script, material, extent of the work and remarks if any are entered in the card. Extent remarks the condition of the manuscript, the date of the manuscript and the availability in other centers are noted. the number (accession number) should also be given. For preparation of Descriptive Catalogue, printed proforma is used in which all details regarding the manuscript Bre entered. The Subject-wise Index is intended for knowing the works in each subject

#### 1. Simple Index

The simple index is useful in knowing the title of a work, its author and the source from which it is obtained. It does not provide further details and as such its scope

limited. This index arranged in alphabetical order is useful for the preparation of other types of indices and catalogues.

## 2. Alphabetical Index

The filled-up cards are arranged in the alphabetical order. In the Alphabetical Index of Sanskrit Manuscripts of ORI & Mss. Library, the arrangement is as follows:

The serial number in the first column shows the arrangement of the manuscripts in cataloguing and enables one to see the total number of manuscripts in the collection. In the next two columns the titles of the works with marks of identification in brackets such as Vyākhyopeta, Kerala - bhāṣṭopeta etc. are given in the Sanskrit alphabetical order both in Devanagari and Roman Scripts. The name of the author of the work or of the commentary or both are noted in the next column. Where the author or the commentator is not known, mere dots are given in the respective rows. The Subject of the work is given in the fifth column. For clarity the works have been classified under different subjects such as Veda, Vedalakṣaṇa, Āgama, Mantra, Upaniṣad, Tantra, Purāṇa, etc., In the next column the number of *Granthas* in each manuscript is given. The script, material and extent of the work are noted in the seventh column. This library has Sanskrit manuscripts in various scripts like Devanagari, Nandināgari, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Grantha, Kannada and Bengali. The material of the manuscripts is either palm-leaf or paper. The remarks column gives details connected with the manuscript such as the condition of the codex (whether old, worm-eaten or damaged), availability in other South Indian libraries, date of copying the manuscript as found in the colophons, number of commentaries on the work in the collection and the number of the work in the Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts of ORI & Mss. Library. In the last column the manuscript number affixed to each manuscript in the collection is given so as to have an easy retrieval of manuscripts from the library shelves. So far seven volumes of Alphabetical Index of Sanskrit Manuscripts are published from ORI & Mss. Library. Similarly Alphabetical Index of the

Malayalam manuscripts is published in a single volume. In the ORI & Mss. Library, Thiruvananthapuram, the first classification of the manuscripts is done based on language. The manuscripts are classified into Sanskrit, Malayalam and Tamil, then separate cataloguing is done for the manuscripts in each language.

## 3. Subject-wise Index

For the preparation of subject-wise Indices, the index cards of the manuscripts are prepared for different subjects. The cards are sorted subject-wise and then the arrangement is done alphabetically for each subject. The classification subjects is not too narrow. Manuscripts in different topics are brought under some major subjects. A few manuscripts in which the subjects dealt with may not come under the specified major subject classification. In such cases they are grouped under miscellaneous (*Vividha*). The details entered and their order are almost similar to that of an Alphabetical Index. From the ORI & Mss. Library a subject-wise Index of Malayalam Manuscripts is published in the above pattern in two volumes.

## 4. Descriptive Catalogue

In Descriptive Catalogues all possible details are shown in an abridged way. In addition to the details such as the title of the work, author, language, subject, script, material of the manuscript, condition of the manuscript, date, list of other libraries where it is available etc., in a Descriptive Catalogue a brief summary of the contents of the manuscript is also given. A few lines both from the beginning and end of the work are also given so as to facilitate a reader to ascertain whether a work under the same title is different or same. Colophons found in the manuscripts and relevant remarks on manuscripts will also form part of a Descriptive Catalogue. From Thiruvananthapuram 18 volumes of Descriptive Catalogues of Sanskrit Manuscripts were published of which 8 volumes were published under the Maharaja's Palace Library and 10 volumes were published under the Curator's Office. Similarly 7 volumes of Descriptive Catalogues of Malayalam Manuscripts were published of which 2 volumes were from Maharaja's Palace Library, 3 volumes were from Curator's Office and 2

volumes were from Oriental Research Institute & Manuscripts Library.

### 5. Catalogus Catalogorum

A Catalogus Catalogorum is a catalogue of the existing catalogues of manuscripts published from various manuscript libraries. For getting details of a manuscript, if a perfect Catalogus Catalogorum is available, there is no need to go through the laborious process of referring the catalogues of different manuscript libraries. The work of this sort was first brought out by Theodor Aufrecht in three volumes. He named these volumes as Catalogus Catalogorum. The first was published in 1891 at Heidelberg. Both second and third volumes were published from Bonn in 1896 and 1903 respectively. These volumes brought out by the compilation of manuscript catalogues of different institutions available during that period are of immense value. But it may be noted that they are not error-free. Some omissions and mistakes had crept in. The Madras University is publishing a 'New Catalogus Catalogorum Series'. The first volume of which was published in 1949. So far fourteen volumes of New Catalogus Catalogorum have been brought out.

### 6. Script-wise Index

Script-wise indices of manuscripts are also brought out by some institutions. For example, Sarasvati Mahal Library, Thanjavoor has published the index of Nandinagal librascripts. Similarly, a catalogue of palm-leaf manuscripts in Tigua script is published by K. Gunda Jois of Keladi Tigalath Centre, Karnataka. An index in a single script may Rese manuscripts in different languages. For example, an Index of manuscripts in Malayalam script may have works in both Malayalam and Sanskrit languages. If large number of manuscripts are found in different scripts like Grantha, Nandināgari, Devanagari, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil etc., then separate script-wise indices can be brought out comprising the details of all the manuscripts in each script.<sup>[4]</sup>

### The Need for Manuscript Cataloguing

Cataloguing serves as the foundation for the systematic organization and accessibility of Ayurvedic manuscripts. Here's why it's crucial:

- **Preservation:** Cataloguing provides a detailed record of each manuscript, including its physical condition, date of creation, author, and content. This information is vital for implementing appropriate conservation measures and prioritizing restoration efforts.
- **Accessibility:** A well-organized catalogue allows researchers and practitioners to locate relevant manuscripts efficiently. This facilitates in-depth study of specific topics, fostering a deeper understanding of Ayurvedic principles and practices.
- **Standardization:** Cataloguing establishes a standardized approach to describing and classifying Ayurvedic manuscripts. This consistency enables researchers to compare and contrast information across different texts, leading to a more comprehensive picture of Ayurvedic knowledge.
- **Digital Preservation:** Catalogues can be digitized, enabling online access to manuscript information. This not only broadens accessibility but also safeguards the intellectual heritage of Ayurveda in a more permanent and widely available format.

### The Purpose of Manuscript Cataloguing

Cataloguing serves several key purposes in the context of Ayurvedic manuscripts:

- **Identification and Authentication:** Cataloguing helps identify and authenticate manuscripts. Detailed descriptions, including script, language, and illustrations, allow experts to verify their authenticity and historical significance.
- **Content Analysis:** Catalogues often include summaries of the manuscript's content. This enables researchers to quickly grasp the subject matter and identify manuscripts relevant to their specific areas of interest.
- **Comparative Studies:** Catalogues facilitate comparative studies by allowing scholars to track the evolution of Ayurvedic knowledge across different texts and historical periods.



- **Knowledge Dissemination:** Catalogues promote the dissemination of Ayurvedic knowledge by making researchers and practitioners aware of the available resources. This can stimulate further research and clinical applications of Ayurvedic principles.

One of the most crucial things for Ayurvedic researchers is the meticulous and thorough cataloging of texts, known as descriptive cataloging. The catalogues should have detailed information of:-

- Alphabetical inventory of Works name,
- Author name,
- Collaborator name,
- Commentary name,
- Language and script,
- The number of the leaves, the average number of the lines on each page, and the number of *Slokas* to be calculated in the native fashion.
- Age of the Manuscripts
- Measurement of the actual leaves, number of columns and lines of a page.
- Complete or incomplete
- Substance on which written, and character
- Remarks - condition of the manuscript
- Provenance, or source of collection
- Name of the scribe
- Beginning and ending *Shlokas* /passages or words
- Colophon
- Contents

## DISCUSSION

The vast knowledge of Ayurveda is embedded within ancient manuscripts, many of which remain hidden in libraries and private collections. Without a comprehensive catalogue of these manuscripts, this treasure trove of medical wisdom remains largely inaccessible. Estimates suggest that only a tiny fraction of Ayurvedic manuscripts have been brought to light. A well-organized cataloguing system would be a game-

changer. It would allow scholars to locate relevant texts, assess their content, and integrate this knowledge into modern Ayurvedic practice. Cataloguing goes beyond simply knowing where a manuscript is stored. It involves detailed descriptions, including the text's date, author, subject matter, and unique features. This allows researchers to identify specific areas of interest and prioritize which manuscripts require further study.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of manuscript catalogues released by Indian and international institutions is to raise awareness of the availability of manuscripts in different formats. However, it remains the foremost primary source for Ayurvedic academics, ranging from postgraduate students to researchers, for comparing various editions, writing styles, commentaries, and other materials. Since the manuscript catalogue is the primary source for Ayurvedic research, its compilers ought to create a common method to facilitate resource sharing and save users' time.

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