Chapter – 1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Andhra Pradesh is the fourth largest State in India. In terms of population, it occupies 5th place. It has the distinction of exquisite and priceless manuscript heritage of textual and illustrated diction. In Andhra Pradesh, there was a traditional practice of writing the scripts on Palm Leaves which are popularly known as 'Thalapatra Grandhas.' Many of them were destroyed during the period of British Rule in India. However, our predecessors were able to protect some important Thalapatra Grandhas, which have high cultural and social values. The Government of Andhra Pradesh and Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (T.T.D) were instrumental in collecting and preserving these rare Thalapatra Grandhas in different Manuscript Libraries in Andhra Pradesh.

1.2. Definition of Manuscript

In general, the term manuscript refers to hand written materials including ancient inscriptions on clay tablets and stone; medieval and renaissance manuscripts of books and codices (codices are ancient books, which are written by hand, not printed) and modern manuscripts such as literary manuscripts, historical manuscripts and personal papers. Manuscripts of modern period also refer to autographs, correspondences and type written materials. The writing is only to be done by hand; it may be on paper, on leaves of trees, cloth, wood,
stone, animal skin, clay, walls, and other objects. There are also no restrictions for the forms of writing whether it is phonetic, pictorial or ideographic. The writings also include paintings, drawings, sketches and symbols, apart from the usual writing in a language. The manuscripts have a long history of their existence, and quite a good number of definitions that reflect the nature of manuscripts are available. Following are some of the important definitions:

The term manuscript is derived from the Latin Word 'Manu Scriptus', which is a combination of two words that is 'Manu' means by hand and 'Scriptus' means to write. Etymologically manuscript means writing by hand1.

In the context of library science, a manuscript is defined as any hand-written item in the collections of a library or an archive; for example, a library's collection of the letters or a diary that some historical personage wrote2.

In the context of archaeology, the term manuscript is defined as any early writing made on stone, metal, wood, clay, linen, bark, leaves of trees and prepared skins of animals. Before the introduction of printing, all the individual great works were available in manuscripts form. So, manuscripts include all types of early writing, which are not printed and published. In other words, hand writings of any kind whether on paper or any other material in contradiction to printed materials are called manuscripts3.

According to the Chambers Dictionary, Manuscript is a book or document written by hand before the invention of printing4.
According to Everyman's Encyclopedia, Manuscript indicates writings of any kind on any material; although now a days it is mainly used to indicate medieval writings on vellum or modern writings on paper.

Manuscript is also defined as any handwritten item in the collections of a library or an archive; for example a library's collection of the letters or a diary that some historical personage wrote.

World Net Dictionary defines Manuscript as a hand written book or document and also as the form of a literary work submitted for publication.

According to the National Mission for Manuscripts, Government of India, A manuscript is a handwritten composition on paper, bark, cloth, metal, palm leaf or any other material dating back at least seventy-five years that has significant scientific, historical or aesthetic value. Lithographs and printed volumes are not manuscripts. Manuscripts are found in hundreds of different languages and scripts. Often, one language is written in a number of different scripts. For example, Sanskrit is written in Oriya script, Grantha script, Devanagari script and many other scripts. Manuscripts are distinct from historical records such as epigraphs on rocks, firmans, revenue records which provide direct information on events or processes in history. Manuscripts have knowledge content.

According to Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science, Manuscript is defined as a written document that is put down by hand, in contrast to being printed or reproduced some other way.
The Everyman Roget's Thesaurus of English words and Phrases defines manuscript as "any handwritten copy, transcript, rough copy, fair copy, script, autograph, monograph, holograph, etc."\textsuperscript{10}

The Anglo American Cataloguing Rules-2 defines manuscripts as "materials of all kinds including manuscript books, dissertations, letters, speeches, legal papers and collection of such manuscripts".\textsuperscript{11}

1.3. Materials used to write Manuscripts

The urge of man to express his power of speech in some form of written record led him to discover various kinds of writing materials to suit his purpose. As the writing on these materials was essentially done with hand, these are termed as Manuscripts. Man naturally makes use of those writing materials, which can be most readily procured and most suitable to write on. However, all these writing materials may be divided into two categories. Firstly, there are some materials, which are durable and used as more or less permanent writing materials like stone, copper, gold, iron and silver that are less prone to deterioration. Secondly, there are some materials like ivory, clay tablets, bamboo sticks, wood, bark, linen, wax, cotton, silk, parchment, vellum, papyrus, sanchipat, birch bark and palm leaf which are perishable in nature. A brief historical account of all these writing materials is as follows:

1.3.1. Stone based Materials

Stone is a hard solid substance found in the ground and Rock is the hard substance which the earth is made of. Stones and Rocks were shaped to make
things such as Bricks, Pillars and Tablets. A pillar is a tall solid structure, which is usually used to support part of a building. Writing on Pillars (Stambhas) was very common in olden days. Stone tablets are the flat pieces of Stone which people used to write on before paper was invented. Stones and rocks were the earliest durable materials used for writing. The writing was incised on rocks, pillars of stone and the walls of caves and temples.

1.3.2. Clay based materials

Clay is a kind of earth that is soft when it is wet and that is hard when it is dry. Clay is shaped and baked to make things such as Bricks, Pots and Tablets. Brick is a rectangular block of baked clay, which is usually red or brown. Inscribed bricks of varied sizes were discovered in India, which served as a medium of writing of religious texts. Clay tablets are the flat pieces of clay which people used to write on before paper was invented. Writing on Clay-tablets was created by our ancestors. Terracotta is a brownish red-clay that has been baked and used for making things such as flower pots, small statues and tiles, which were used to describe things and, Terracotta Boards were used for writing.

1.3.3. Metal based materials

Metal is a hard substance such as iron, steel, gold or lead. A plate is a small, flat piece of metal with someone's name or some thing written on it. Use of metal plates for writing purpose was introduced at a later date in comparison to stone and rock. Copper is reddish brown metal that is used to make things such as coins and electrical wires. Copper plates were also widely used as writing materials on which various kinds of documents were inscribed. Gold is a
valuable, yellow coloured metal that is used for making jewellery and ornaments and as an international currency. Gold was used only for very important documents like moral maxims, royal letters and law grants. Iron is an element which usually takes the form of a hard, dark gray metal. Iron tablets are the flat pieces of iron which people used to write on before paper was invented. Iron was also used as a writing material but due to rusting its use was not so common. Silver is a valuable pale-gray material that is used for making jewellery and ornaments. A plaque is a flat piece of metal or stone with writing on it, which fixed to a wall or the other structure to remind people of an important person or event. Writing on silver was very rare.  

1.3.4. Wooden based materials

Wood is the material which forms the trunks and branches of trees. Wooden tablets are the flat pieces of wood which people used to write on before paper was invented. Wooden boards were used for writing manuscripts. Bamboo is a tall tropical plant with hard, hollow stems. Sandalwood is the sweet smelling wood of tree that is found in south Asia and Australia and it is also the name of the tree itself. Bamboo and wooden slips were one of the main media for literacy in the olden period.  

1.3.5. Cloth Based Materials

Cotton Cloth leaves were generally made by pasting two thick khadi cloth pieces together. It was called “Pata” or “Patika”. Cotton cloths were used for official and private documents. Silk is a substance which is made into smooth
fine Cloth and sewing thread. Silk cloth also served as a medium for writing but being costly it was rarely used.\textsuperscript{18}

1.3.6. Skin Based Materials

Vellum is strong skin based material of good quality for writing on. Vellum is mammal skin prepared for writing or printing on, to produce single pages, scrolls, codices or books. It is generally smooth and durable.\textsuperscript{19} Parchment was the skin of a sheep or goat that was used for writing on. Parchment is the generic term representing animal skins used for writing purposes. Usually it is prepared from the inner side of the split skins of animals such as sheep, goat and deer. Parchment with writings on two surfaces in the form of a book called codex.\textsuperscript{20}

1.3.7. Materials based on Bark

Bark is the tough material that covers the outside of a tree. A birch is a type of tall tree with thin branches. Birch bark document is a document written on pieces of birch bark. Such documents existed in several cultures.\textsuperscript{21} Sanchi Pat was the writing material used in ancient times and made from the bark of the Agar Tree, a tree found in upper and middle Assam. The manuscripts in Assam were written on this particular material which is now very rare to find.\textsuperscript{22}

1.3.8. Materials based on Leaves

A Palm tree is a tree that grows in hot countries. It has long leaves growing at the top and no branches. A large number of palm leaf manuscripts are available in the custody of various organizations and individuals throughout the country. Palm leaf manuscripts are manuscripts made out of dried palm leaves. They served as the paper of the ancient world in parts of Asia as far back as the
fifteenth century BC and possibly much earlier. They were used to record actual and mythical narratives.23

1.3.9. Paper Based Materials

Paper is a material that you write on or wrap things with. Papyrus is a tall water plant that grows in Africa. Papyrus is a type of paper made from papyrus stems that was used in ancient Egypt, Rome and Greece and a papyrus is an ancient document that is written on papyrus.24 Vellum is strong paper of good quality for writing on. Modern "paper vellum" (vegetable vellum) is used for a variety of purposes, especially for plans, technical drawings, and blueprints. In the present day vellum paper has a wide variety of uses which include postcards, certificates, manuscripts, scrap booking and tracing.25

1.4. National Mission for Manuscripts

The National Mission for Manuscripts, set up by the Department of Culture, Government of India, seeks to develop a holistic approach in locating, documenting, protecting and making accessible the significant information of the Manuscript heritage of India. Some of the objectives of the Mission are to survey, document, preserve and disseminate the existing information of Indian Manuscripts. This challenging task will be carried out through wide networking with Institutions and Scholars across the country and abroad who have manuscript holdings and who have an active interest in their preservation. The manuscripts are preserved on materials such as Birch Bark, Palm Leaf, Cloth,
Wood, Stone and Paper. The following general assertions can be made about the manuscript wealth of India:

- India has one of the oldest and largest collections of manuscripts in the world.
- These manuscripts are in different languages and in different scripts.
- These are written on different kinds of material like birch bark, palm leaf, cloth and paper.
- These are in the custody of different institutions like libraries, museums, monasteries, mutts and individuals.
- Only a small percentage of these manuscripts have been surveyed and catalogued.
- Catalogues are perhaps available for not more than 20-25% of the manuscript collections in the country.
- The catalogues do not follow a standard format.
- A significant proportion of manuscripts are not preserved scientifically. Experts estimate that almost all palm leaf manuscripts may perish due to wear and tear over the next 50 to 100 years.

The National Mission for Manuscripts has located more than a thousand partner Institutions in the Country with Manuscript collections.

1.5. Manuscript Tradition in Andhra Pradesh

The use of palm leaf manuscripts for writing has a long tradition in Andhra Pradesh. Among different forms of manuscripts available in Andhra Pradesh, it
is found that manuscripts on palm-leaves have been more widely used as a writing material (before the invention of paper) due to the growth of palm trees in large numbers throughout the state. In Andhra Pradesh, most of the writings were done on thalapatras (palm-leaves) till about the end of 19th century and the state thus possessed a large number of palm leaf manuscripts both in institutions and in private collections. Apart from this, important collections of manuscripts have been found in religious places (like Tirupati) and in the capital towns of kings (like Hyderabad). It is interesting to note that apart from being used for recording literary works, the art of palm-leaf inscription was used for recording the horoscope of newborn babies. Invitation to marriages and birth ceremonies were issued on palm-leaf cards. Similarly, the invitation sent to the Deities as well as the invitation to the bridegroom from the bride's family was generally written on palm-leaves in Andhra Pradesh.

The massive quantity of manuscripts preserved in different institutions of State speaks of the efflorescence of this great tradition from about 10th century A.D. These manuscripts constitute the treasure house of wisdom and knowledge on different aspects of Andhra Pradesh history, culture, artistic and architectural legacy. As the manuscripts are organic in nature, it is quite natural that after some time these manuscripts get deteriorated, aggravated by physical and climatic conditions. Hence proper preservation of these written heritages of mankind is quite inevitable.

Paper is the most important writing material of the present society. Literary world without paper would have been the world of cave dwellers. Since
early morning till late at night we use paper in many forms and even our day starts with a newspaper in the morning. One of the basic parameters for assessing the level of progress of a country is still accepted to be the level of consumption of paper. But the fact, based on various surveys, indicate that at present at least 25% of the world's great collections are progressively turning to dust because of the inherent fragility of paper and lack of serious concern for its preservation. Unless serious attention to this problem is paid without further loss of time, these collections will progressively deteriorate beyond salvage and will eventually turn to dust. As paper is the basic constituent of the library materials, the study also aims to highlight the preservation aspect of this essential component especially the paper based manuscripts.

1.6. Collection of Palm Leaf Manuscripts in Andhra Pradesh

At first the great hoard of manuscripts (thalapatras) came to the notice of the English scholars almost immediately after the British occupation of Andhra Pradesh in 1803. Systematic attempts were made for collection of these manuscripts with the establishment of the Andhra Pradesh Research Society. After the creation of the separate province of Andhra Pradesh, a number of Pundits were engaged for search of manuscripts in different parts of Andhra Pradesh and the adjoining feudatory States. As a result, different manuscript repositories have come up with the passage of time.
1.7. Review of Literature

Preservation and organization of manuscripts are the thrust areas of research and as a result, a good number of publications are seen in this area of study. But digitization has brought other problems such as standardization of bibliographic description, choice of appropriate subject headings and its limitation in long term access to information. Simultaneously, proper care and preservation are to be adopted for the original documents. However, a review of literature of manuscripts shows that maximum emphasis has been given on the following:

- Types of manuscripts;
- Processing of manuscripts;
- Organisation of manuscripts;
- Preservation and conservation of manuscripts; and
- Digitization of manuscripts.

The literature reviewed in this study indicates that not many studies cover the organization part of manuscripts and hence the present study on “Preservation and Organisation of manuscripts in the libraries of Andhra Pradesh” assumes importance.

1.8. Statement of the Present Problem

The existing literature shows that the maintenance of the manuscripts in the libraries is not satisfactory and most of them are in dire need of conservation. For conservation of all these rare manuscripts, constant efforts are required and these efforts should be in the shape of conservation treatment. Nevertheless,
before contemplating any action, it is necessary to analyse and to understand what really the situation is, what is the magnitude of the problem and what are the likely solutions. But so far no worthwhile attempt has been made to study this problem.

Andhra Pradesh State possessed a large number of palm-leaf manuscripts. The large quantity of manuscripts preserved in different Oriental Institutions and University Libraries of the State speaks of the efflorescence of the great tradition of Andhra Pradesh. These manuscripts constitute the treasure house of wisdom and knowledge on different aspects of history, culture, artistic and architectural legacy of Andhra Pradesh. As the manuscripts are organic in nature, it is quite natural that after some time these manuscripts get deteriorated, due to physical and climatic conditions. Hence, proper preservation and organization of these written heritages of mankind is quite unavoidable.

It is enriching to note that interest in old manuscripts and their aesthetic and scientific value is growing day by day and it is also worth stressing that public access to old manuscripts and archive holdings causes a substantially quicker disintegration of these originals. Hence, the solution is to limit or discontinue public access to the originals and offer an alternative way of accessing them. One of the tried and tested ways of doing this is through the use of computer technology that enables the digitization of manuscripts. In this context, the need to increase accessibility and prevent the disintegration of manuscripts clearly makes for the digitization of manuscripts an urgent case,
because digitization is a process that tries to replace the original manuscript with a facsimile.

**Proper preservation of this cultural heritage is vital for their durability, but it is possible only if proper survey on the state of preservation including digitization and organisation of such materials is made. In this context, the present study entitled "Preservation and Organisation of Manuscripts in the Libraries of Andhra Pradesh: A Study" has been chosen as the problem of the study.**

The following operational definitions are used for the key concepts in the study:

i. **Preservation:** Preservation means the process of keeping an object safe from harm or loss, damage, destruction or decay, and maintaining it in a reasonable sound condition for present and future use. In this study preservation means the practices and procedures, which are being followed by the manuscript libraries. It also deals with the maintenance aspect of the manuscripts.

ii. **Organization:** By organization, it is meant the physical arrangement of manuscripts in the libraries. In the present study, organization of manuscripts include the process of sorting, arranging, accessioning, classification, cataloguing, indexing, intacting and labeling work of manuscripts.

iii. **Manuscripts:** The word manuscript is derived from the Latin word "Manuscriptus" which means writing by hand and it is on any written document i.e., put down by hand, in contrast to being printed or reproduced some
other way. Here in the present study the term manuscript refers to both palm-leaf and paper manuscripts.

iv. Library: A library is regarded as a public institution which houses documents of different types such as printed, handwritten, and engraved materials including books, periodicals, manuscripts, microfilms, photographs, gramophone records and tape-records for the sake of the users. In this study, the concept of library is confined only to the manuscript libraries of Andhra Pradesh where considerable quantities of manuscripts are available for the study and use by the scholars.

1.9. Objectives of the Study

The present study is primarily intended to trace out an overall picture of the preservation and organization of manuscript collections in the libraries of Andhra Pradesh. The main objectives of the present study are to:

i. ascertain the number and nature of manuscript collections and find out the relation of the number and nature of manuscripts with the type of libraries;

ii. study the language and scripts used in the manuscripts available in the libraries;

iii. determine the subjects of the manuscripts;

iv. study the procurement policy adopted for the manuscripts in different libraries;

v. examine the system of processing, scheme of classification followed and catalogue code adopted for the organization of manuscript collections;
vi. examine the current status of staff position, extent of expertise available and
to study their impact on the nature of preservation and organization of
manuscripts;

vii. investigate the extent of care and techniques of preservation provided for
the manuscripts collections;

viii. study the steps taken by different institutions for the process of digitisation
of manuscripts; and

ix. find out the steps taken for the publication of manuscripts.

1.10. Hypotheses of the Study

The present study tested the following hypotheses by using appropriate
statistical tests:

i. There is no uniform relation of the number and nature of manuscripts with
the type of libraries.

ii. There is no uniformity in the language and script used in the manuscripts
available in the libraries.

iii. There is no difference in the subjects of the manuscripts in the libraries.

iv. There is no difference in the procurement policy adopted for the
manuscripts in different libraries.

v. There is no standardisation in the system of processing, scheme of
classification followed and catalogue code adopted for the organization of
manuscript collections.
vi. The current status of staff position and the extent of expertise available in the libraries do not have any impact on the nature of preservation and organization of manuscripts.

vii. There is no consistency in the extent of care and techniques of preservation provided for the manuscripts collections in the libraries.

viii. The steps taken by different institutions for the process of digitization of manuscripts are not homogeneous.

ix. The steps taken for the publication of manuscripts in different libraries are not consistent.

1.11. Methodology of the Study

The study is based on both secondary and primary data. The secondary data were collected from the official records of the sample libraries and from their websites. The primary data were collected by the researcher through personal interviews with the authorities of sample libraries with the help of a well designed and pre-tested questionnaire.

The sample frame of the study is the number of existing manuscript libraries in Andhra Pradesh (i.e., 29 manuscript libraries) and the sample size is one-third of the existing manuscript libraries (i.e., 10 manuscript libraries). The sample selection was random and the distribution of sample libraries in different regions of Andhra Pradesh is provided in Table – 1.1.
Table – 1.1: Sample Frame and Sample size of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars of the Sample</th>
<th>Rayalaseema Region</th>
<th>Telangana Region</th>
<th>Coastal Andhra Region</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample Frame (Number)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Size (Number)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Sample Size</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study used simple statistical tools like percentages, descriptive statistics and graphs for the statistical data analysis and chi-square tests for testing the hypotheses of the study.

1.12. Relevance of the Study

The issue related to the preservation of manuscripts, particularly in the state of Andhra Pradesh, poses some problems. The extremely fragile nature of the material, aggravated by physical and climatic conditions and lack of facilities for proper storage and preservation of manuscripts against heat, humidity, and insects have been responsible for the loss of the early manuscripts of Andhra Pradesh. Added to this was a strange custom under which old manuscripts, which reach the irreparable condition, had to be written on new leaves and the
old ones were consigned to the river. The religious taboos also disallow the Pundits to hand over the manuscripts to the places of safe custody. They hardly like the idea of parting with their manuscript treasure at any cost, even if it is granted to be of no use to them; rather, they are pleased to float them in river. In some cases, the contents of manuscripts are considered to be confidential; hence, no knowledge is allowed to leak out. The next problem related to the manuscript preservation is on economic plane; this involves the paucity of funds, lack of equipment, materials and skilled personnel in the manuscript repositories, which hamper the proper up-keep of these documents. However, some institutions have been scrupulously endeavoring to take into its possession these rare manuscripts from private individuals. The establishment of Indian Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage has brought remarkable developments in the state of art of manuscript preservation and in creating awareness among the manuscript keepers. This Institute holds seminars, workshops and training courses on a regular basis on various vital issues especially concerned with conservation of paper and palm leaf manuscripts in order to impart basic knowledge to the manuscript custodians for the safe upkeep and in careful handling of manuscripts.

The launching of National Mission for Manuscripts is another milestone in the field of conservation of documentary heritage. This Mission was launched on 7th February 2003 under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture by the then Prime Minister Shri A.B. Bajpai with the objective of identifying, documenting and sharing the intellectual wealth of India contained in manuscripts. The Mission
has identified some of the most prominent institutions across the country with considerable manuscript holdings and designated them as Manuscript Resource Centers (MRCs). These are some efforts taken during the new millennium. But if we look into the actual condition of the manuscripts, the picture on the whole about the proper upkeep of such objects is not satisfactory and most of them are in dire need of conservation. For conservation of all these rare manuscripts, constant efforts are required and these efforts should be in the shape of conservation treatment. Nevertheless, before contemplating any action, it is necessary to analyse and to understand what really the situation is, what is the magnitude of the problem and what are the likely solutions. But so far no worthwhile attempt has been made to study this problem. Proper preservation of this cultural heritage is vital for their durability, but it is possible only if proper survey of the state of conservation of such materials is made.

In this context, the present study is an attempt to know the state of the art as practiced in the manuscript librarianship in Andhra Pradesh. The investigator has taken the empirical study of ten libraries having significant manuscript collections of these libraries, their policies, procedures, practices in respect of procurement, classification, cataloguing, care, maintenance, preservation, restoration, staffing pattern, use and service, publication programme and future planning for any developmental work of these manuscript repositories.

The present research study entitled “Preservation and Organisation of Manuscripts in the Libraries of Andhra Pradesh: A Study” has been undertaken
with the objective of finding out the state of the art of preservation and organization of manuscripts in different libraries of Andhra Pradesh.

The literature referred for the research work are cited here as per the American Psychological Association’s style of documentation. At the end, appendices are given. Lastly, it is expected that in spite of limitations of the present work, it may be helpful in adopting various indigenous as well as modern methods of preservation depending upon the type, nature and extent of deterioration of manuscripts. Many preventive methods of preservation could be followed for better upkeeping of manuscripts. It would also be helpful in developing a standard pattern for bibliographic description of manuscripts for retrieval of information from these valuable documents.

1.13. Conspectus

The entire work has been divided into the following five chapters. 

Chapter – 1 is an introductory chapter that deals with materials and methodology of the study that explains the choice of the sample and methodology followed for carrying out the research work. This chapter also highlights the objectives and hypotheses of the study along with its relevance. 

Chapter – 2 is devoted to review of the existing literature available on different aspects of manuscripts. 

Chapter – 3 is a theoretical chapter that deals with the history and development of manuscripts from time to time, the language, script and subject matter of
manuscripts, the procurement policy, the need and importance of organization, preservation and digitization of manuscripts in the libraries of Andhra Pradesh.

Chapter – 4 describes the data analysis and interpretation of the study. This is the most important part where maximum efforts have been given to ascertain with different characteristics of manuscripts as well as to aware with the system of organization, and techniques of conservation as practiced in the manuscript libraries of Andhra Pradesh.

Chapter – 5 deals with the summary of research findings and suggestions.

The thesis concludes with a list of bibliographic references and appendices.
References


