



Role of Libraries in Disseminating Ancient Indian Sanskrit Literature in the Digital Era

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Abstract:

The Sanskrit literature produced in ancient India is one of the world's most extensive and ancient knowledge traditions, encompassing epics, philosophy, religion, science, medicine, mathematics, aesthetics, and many other important subjects relevant to life. Libraries have played a significant role in preserving manuscripts and making them available to scholars and other users through their systematic organization, and this work will continue in an even more advanced manner. Important and noteworthy efforts are also underway at the government level in the process of preserving manuscripts.

Libraries are playing the role of important disseminators and protectors of ancient and diverse knowledge. With the development of cutting-edge technology, digitization, digital repositories, and advanced information systems have given libraries a golden opportunity to play an even greater role. This research paper attempts to explore the traditional and modern roles of libraries in the dissemination of ancient Sanskrit literature and to make recommendations for improving the methods of disseminating Sanskrit literature.

Keywords: Sanskrit Literature, Digitization, Modern Technology, Apps.

Introduction:

The core of India's social, cultural, and intellectual heritage lies in ancient Sanskrit literature, with the Vedas, Upanishads, epics, Puranas, and classical texts on grammar, medicine, astronomy, and philosophy effectively demonstrating the vastness of ancient Indian scholarship and the brilliance of its literature.

Sanskrit knowledge was traditionally transmitted orally through the guru-shishya (teacher-disciple) tradition. Later, this oral knowledge began to be recorded on birch bark, palm leaves, and other manuscripts to guide future generations.

Due to the fragile nature of the manuscript materials, institutional methods were needed for

their preservation, and libraries emerged as organized repositories and guardians of knowledge.

In the current modern digital age, libraries are transforming into institutions that create and distribute digital resources alongside physical resources. This radical transformation has led to the widespread dissemination of ancient Sanskrit literature domestically and internationally, with libraries playing a significant role in this process.

The Significance of Ancient Indian Sanskrit Literature:

Sanskrit literature, including the Vedas, Upanishads, epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, and the Puranas, is a cornerstone of

India's cultural identity, shaping rituals, festivals, and social values for thousands of years. Texts like the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, and Yoga Sutras have provided a profound spiritual framework. This ancient Indian literature has influenced Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and global spiritual movements. Even today, Sanskrit poetry, drama, and prose continue to inspire modern writers and artists, establishing enduring literary standards of beauty.

Scientific texts like Sushruta Samhita (medicine), Aryabhata's Aryabhatiya (astronomy) and Panini's Ashtadhyayi (grammar) showcase early scientific achievements that predate many Western discoveries. Sanskrit, the mother language of many Indian tongues (Hindi, Telugu,

Tamil, etc.), has also contributed words and concepts such as "yoga" and "karma" to global vocabularies.

Ancient Sanskrit literature has always served as a guide for other literatures in India. Sanskrit literature has influenced Indian culture and global intellectual traditions. Ancient Sanskrit literature is a treasure trove of philosophical, scientific, and literary knowledge. "Advanced linguistic theories" provide guidance on excellent grammar through texts like Panini's Ashtadhyayi. The advanced state of ancient Indian medicine is evident from medical texts such as the Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita. Preserving these texts is essential for interdisciplinary research.

Ancient Indian Sanskrit literature (Table no. 1)

(This graphic has only been placed here as an example due to the research paper's word limit.)

Sr. No.	Literature Type	Text No.	Literature Name	Author
1	Epic	1	Ramayana	Valmiki
		2	Mahabharata	Veda Vyasa
2	Philosophy	3	Vedas	
		4	Upanishads	
		5	Bhagavad Gita	
		6	Brahma Sutras	Badarayana
		7	Yoga Sutras	Patanjali
		8	Nyaya Sutras	Gautama
		9	Arthashastra	Vishnugupta
3	Grammar	10	Ashtadhyayi	Panini
		11	Mahabhasya	Patanjali
		12	Brhaddevata & Rgeda-Pratisakhya	Shaunaka
		13	Vakyapadiya	Bhartrihari
4	Plays	14	Abhijnanasakuntalam	Kalidasa
		15	Vikramorvasiyam	
		16	Malavikagnimitram	
		17	Svapnavasavadattam	Bhaasa
		18	Mṛcchakaṭika	Shudraka
		19	Malatimadhava	Bhavabhuti
		20	Mahaviracharita	
		21	Mudra Rakshasa	Visakha Datta
22	Svapnavasavadattam	Bhaasa		

Sr. No.	Literature Type	Text No.	Literature Name	Author
5	Poetry	23	Raghuvamsha	Kalidasa
		24	Kumarasambhava	
		25	Geet Govinda	Jayadeva
6	Political Science and Economics	26	Arthashastra	Vishnugupta
		27	Shukra Niti	Shukracharya
7	Fables	28	Panchatantra	Vishnu Sharma
		29	Hitopadesha	Narayana
		30	Jataka Tales	
		31	Kathasaritsagara	
8	Medicine	32	Charaka Samhita (Kayachikitsa)	Charaka
		33	Sushruta Samhita (Shalya-shastra)	Sushruta
		34	Ashtanga Hridaya	Vagbhata
		35	Ashtanga Sangraha	
9	Science (Mathematics & Astronomy)	36	Aryabhatiya	Aryabhata
		37	Surya Siddhanta	
		38	Siddhanta Shiromani	Bhaskara II
		39	Brihat Samhita	Varahamihira
10	History & Biography	40	Rajatarangini	Kalhana
		41	Harshacharita	Bnabhata
		42	Buddha Charita	Ashvaghosha
		43	Mudra Rakshasa	Vishakhadatta
11	Other	44	Natya Sastra	Bharata Muni
		45	Kavyadarsa	Dandin

Digital Initiatives for Sanskrit Literature:

Digitization is an important means of preserving manuscripts and making them more effectively available to readers, researchers, and other users. To prevent damage to literature and texts, national and institutional programs are currently focusing on creating digital copies of manuscripts. Digital libraries make it possible to access ancient Sanskrit writings remotely, allowing many people to benefit from them simultaneously. This supports and promotes scholarly research in Sanskrit literature at an international level.

1. National Digital Library of India (NDLI)
2. GRETIL (Gottingen Register of Electronic Texts in Indian Languages)
3. Gyan Bharatam Mission (GBM)

4. BORI (Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute)
5. TKDL (Traditional Knowledge Digital Library)
6. Kalasampada (IGNCA- Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts)
7. Digital Library of India (DLI)
8. Muktabodha Digital Library
9. SARIT (Search and Retrieval of Indic Texts)

Use of Modern Technology in Knowledge Dissemination:

1. Preservation: Digitization helps in preserving ancient texts, manuscripts, and palm-leaf manuscripts, and also makes it possible to make them accessible to a large audience simultaneously.

2. Accessibility: Provides easy and open global access to vast literary resources for researchers and enthusiasts.

3. Revival: It makes Sanskrit education attractive and relevant for new generations, which can lead to its increased use as a spoken language.

4. Research: Research can enable and develop many new methods such as text analysis, translation, concept clarification and the study of the Sanskrit language through computational systems.

5. Cultural Revival: Through modern media, the doors to essential Indian knowledge such as ancient Ayurveda, Yoga and philosophy have been and will continue to be opened to the world.

Challenges in Conservation and Dissemination:

1. Lack of trained manpower
2. Manuscripts not being available in digital format.
3. Human handling
4. Physical deterioration
5. Damage due to climate
6. Insect infestation
7. Limited financial resources
8. Manuscripts not being registered

Popular Apps for Indian Languages:



**Apps for
Indian
Languages**

Indilingo: Teach 15 official languages.

Language Curry: Makes learning engaging through interactive stories

PortalLearn: Interactive stories, videos for writing and flashcards for Bangla, Hindi, Tamil and other languages.

Bhasha Sangam: A Ministry of Education initiative to adoptive unity by learning various Indian languages.

Bharatavani: A dictionary-focused app providing resources for over 120 Indian languages. This app provides us word meanings and transliteration.

Modern Initiatives for Continuity:

1. **Inclusion in National Education Policy 2020:** Contemporary Indian educational policies, such as the National Education Policy 2020, include Sanskrit in the curriculum, helping modern generations reconnect with their cultural roots and historical heritage and contributing to the dissemination of the Sanskrit language.
2. **Dedicated Institutions (Sanskrit Universities):** Various institutions have been established for Sanskrit studies, offering courses in language, literature, and philosophy, and promoting community engagement through cultural programs and workshops.
Example:
Central Sanskrit University (CSU), New Delhi.
National Sanskrit University (NSU), Tirupati.
Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri National Sanskrit University (SLBNSU), New Delhi.
Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit (SSUS), Kalady, Kerala.
Kavikulaguru Kalidas Sanskrit University, Ramtek, Maharashtra.
Jagadguru Ramanandacharya Rajasthan Sanskrit University, Jaipur, Rajasthan.
Shree Jagannath Sanskrit University, Puri, Odisha.
Uttarakhand Sanskrit University, Haridwar, Uttarakhand.
3. **Digital Preservation and Accessibility:** The initiation of digital technology has made it possible to digitize a large number of Sanskrit manuscripts and texts, making them easily accessible to scholars and devotees worldwide.

4. **Translation Efforts:** The systematic translation of ancient Sanskrit manuscripts into English and other languages has played a vital role in shaping global academic discussions and promoting cross-cultural understanding. This effort has made ancient Indian wisdom, philosophy and literature accessible to a broader audience, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps.
5. **Government Support:** The Government of India is working towards the preservation and promotion of the Sanskrit language through various policies, programs, and initiatives.

Recommendations:

1. Increasing library funding for digitization.
2. Putting in place training courses to teach Sanskrit to librarians.
3. Adding Sanskrit literature to libraries when necessary.
4. Promoting the compilation of extensive lists of old Sanskrit literature.
5. Making contracts with groups that support the Sanskrit language.
6. Promoting Sanskrit literature translations into other languages.
7. Seeking government support for institutions that are struggling financially.

Conclusion:

Libraries are still essential to the preservation and distribution of old Indian Sanskrit literature. Libraries are increasingly dynamic knowledge hubs that may connect traditional wisdom with modern study thanks to the application of modern technologies. To preserve this cultural legacy for future generations, innovation, cooperative networks, and ongoing institutional support are crucial.

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