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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Diversity of Oriental Manuscripts in Shri Partap Singh (SPS) Library Srinagar, Kashmir

Dr. Kamran Khan

Library Assistant, Islamic University of Science & Technology Awantipora, Pulwama Kashmir.

Abstract:

The paper attempts to survey the manuscript treasures of Sri Pratap Singh (SPS) library deciphering the cultural and heritage wealth of Jammu & Kashmir state in oriental languages. It provides a general introduction and present condition of these rare collections. The paper is useful for researchers related to oriental disciplines, students of Library and Information Science, library professionals and all those who have interest in rare and valuable manuscripts available in Kashmir.

Key words: Oriental Libraries; Oriental Wealth-Kashmir; Manuscript; Manuscripts of Kashmir

Introduction

Manuscripts play a key role in deciphering the literary development of a nation and in preserving the culture and tradition of a nation or a civilization through ages. Thus, the heritage, history and culture of a country are aptly depicted by the manuscripts it possesses. Manuscript, literally and more technically means a hand written document. In a broader sense a recording of information manually created by someone, such as hand written letters as opposed to being printed or reproduced by some other way. The term may also be used for information that is hand recorded in other way than writing e.g. inscriptions that are chiseled upon hard material or scratches as with a knife point in plaster or with a stylus on a waxed tablet, or in cuneiform writing, impressed with a pointed stylus in flat tabled unbaked clay.

Manuscripts are the linking mechanism of past with the present civilization. Oriental manuscripts hold a prominent position among the manuscripts about literature pertaining to Near-East.

SPS LIBRARY: Oriental Manuscript Collection

It was in the year 1899 that Raja Amar Singh proposed a public library in Srinagar to collect, preserve and disseminate information and it met with magnificent response from Maharaja Pratap. For this purpose the palatinate building, summer resort of Maharaja was temporarily selected for the library, built in 1872 C.E on the left bank of river Jehlum at Lal Mandi which still stands there. The library was opened in the middle of 1898 C.E under the title of “*Shri Pratap Library*” Srinagar. Presently the library holds 60,000 documents which also include manuscripts in oriental languages. These manuscripts are available in different languages and scripts and had been received by the library through donations and gifts apart from purchasing them. The manuscripts available in the SPS library have an affluent history and have always been a source of admiration not for its own land but for the rest of the world.

The Oriental Manuscripts section in the library is radically a distinctive one, consisting of a rich heritage of manuscript works on Religion, Literature, History, Ethics, Philosophy and Science etc, written in different oriental Languages, a distinguished literary genre found in the library belonging to different periods of history.

The journey from birch bark to the hand made paper in Kashmir can be traced by having an overview on the oriental manuscript collection in the SPS Library. These hand written manuscripts are penned on a host of writing material ranging from the bark of birch tree (Bhoj Patra or Burza) and cloth to fine kashmiri hand made paper, known as ‘*koshur kagaz*’

. The oriental manuscripts are available at various places in Kashmir like, SPS museum and SPS library (Lal Mandi, Srinagar), Archives Department of Civil Secretariat, Oriental and Research Library, J&K Government, Alama Iqbal Library (university of Kashmir) and also at various Hindu and Muslim shrines holding the age old cultural and heritage wealth of Kashmir.

Problem

The collection of manuscripts available in the SPS library are treated in the same manner as other printed documents of the library. The modern means of preserving techniques for the rare manuscripts is not operational in these libraries.

Objectives

The main objectives of the study are to reveal

- 1 Quantitative wealth of oriental manuscripts
- 2 Languages and script diversity
- 3 Materials used and age of manuscripts
- 4 Subject Richness
- 5 Preservation methods.

Scope

The scope of the study is limited to the manuscript wealth available in the Shri Pratap library of Kashmir

Methodology

The methodology of the study is based on Survey method accompanied by personal visits to the SPS library helped in gathering the relevant information about the manuscript wealth at SPS Library. All the 74 manuscripts were keenly studied to ascertain the relevant information needed as per the laid down objectives

Result and Discussion

➤ Language and Script Diversity

The SPS library possess 74 out of which 37 (50%) are in Sanskrit, 33 (44 %) in Persian, 2 (2.70 %) in Arabic and one (1.35 %) each in Urdu and Kashmiri. The manuscripts are written in four different scripts viz. *Sharda*, *Devnagri*, *Nastaliq* and *Nasikh*. The script of all the Persian documents is *Nastaliq*. About 35 manuscripts of Sanskrit are written in *Sharda* script where as one has *Devnagri* script. The Arabic manuscripts are written in *Nastaliq* as well as in *Nasikh* script. Both Kashmiri and Urdu manuscript have *Nastaliq* script.

➤ Subjective Distribution

The Persian manuscripts include various subjects like History (11), Literature (13), Chemistry (1), Religion (1), Geography (1), Philosophy (1), Music (1), Ethics (2), Mysticism (1) Biography (1) where as the Sanskrit manuscript include Hinduism-Religion (30), Literature (3), Health (1), Psychology (1) and Numerology (1). The manuscripts available in Kashmiri and Urdu language are on History. The manuscripts in Arabic reflect Physics and Geometry disciplines. The subject information regarding 1 manuscript in Sanskrit is not known to its care takers yet.

➤ Age of the manuscripts

Among 33 manuscripts in Persian language only 20 display the information about their age. All 20 manuscripts belong to 17th and 18th and 19th century. Amid the Sanskrit manuscripts the age of only 3 is known, one document belongs to 19th century and the other two are of 12th century. The Kashmiri and Urdu manuscripts belong to the 19th century. The Arabic manuscript does not provide any information about its age.

➤ Material of manuscripts

Among 37 Sanskrit manuscripts, 12 are penned on birch bark (*Bhoj Patra or Burza*) and one on cloth while as rest of Sanskrit and all the Persian, Arabic and Kashmiri manuscripts are penned on hand made paper.

➤ Size of folios and Colour

The Persian manuscript with maximum area is in *Maftab-ul-Alam (vol 5)* with dimensions , 30.7x 21.5 cms and the lowest in *Jehangir Nama* with dimensions, 15.1 x 10.4 cms. The rest of the Persian manuscripts are in the range of 17.5 x10.6 to 30.5 x 19.5 cms. The size of Sanskrit manuscripts ranges between 36 x 33.5 cms in *Yoga Wasista* and the lowest, 14.1x 8.5 cms in *Gita* in seven poems. In addition to this one of the Sanskrit manuscript in cloth has an area of 155.5x 136 cms.

All the manuscripts show different folios number. The highest folios number are found in Persian manuscript, *Nifat*

–i- *Shareef* (585 folios) where as the lowest number of 20 is found in *Pargana Bindi Kashmir*. The folios in the rest of manuscripts in Persian language ranges between 25 -557 folios .

Among the Sanskrit manuscripts the highest folios number are found in *Karma Kunda* (456) where as lowest of 10 folios is found in *Vyachana Prakriya*. The rest of manuscripts ranges between 17-441 folios. Out of the 33 Persian manuscripts, 11 are in yellow colour ,17 in creamish, one of the manuscript is creamish- yellow and one more is light green with light brown and yellow colour. Among the Sanskrit manuscripts, 18 are in yellow, 16 in creamish, 2 creamish yellow and one creamish brown. Both Arabic and Kashmiri manuscripts are creamish in colour. Only Urdu manuscript is white in colour.

➤ **Present condition of the manuscripts**

It was found that most of the manuscripts in the library are complete (without missing pages), furthermore, it is also found that out of the 74 manuscripts 39 are affected by worms which consists of 21 Persian, 16 Sanskrit and 2 Arabic.

Title of the manuscript	language	author	script	subject	Age of manuscript	Condition	Material used	Size of manuscript in cms	colour	pages	manuscript Complete /incomplete
Maharaja nama H.H Gulab Singh	Persian	Sahaj Ram Koul	Nast aliq	History	Not known (x)	Good	Paper	22 x 14	Yellow	54 8	Complete
Maftab-ul -alam vol 1	Persian	x	Nast aliq	dictionary	1845 A.D	Worm eaten	Paper	30.7 x 21	Yellow	91 8	Complete
Maftab-ul -alam vol 2	Persian	x	Nast aliq	dictionary	1845 A.D	Worm eaten, stuck	Paper	30.3 x 20.7	Yellow	29 2	incomplete
Maftab-ul -alam vol 3	Persian	x	Nast aliq	dictionary	1845 A.D	Worm eaten, stuck	Paper	29.3x 21	Yellow	69 6	Complete
Maftab-ul -alam vol 4	Persian	x	Nast aliq	dictionary	1845 A.D	Worm eaten	Paper	29.5x 21	Cream	66 8	Complete
Maftab-ul -alam vol 5	Persian	x	Nast aliq	dictionary	1845 A.D	Worm eaten	Paper	30.7x 21.5	Cream	77 8	Complete
Maftab-ul -ajam vol 6	Persian	x	Nast aliq	dictionary	1845 A.D	Worm eaten	Paper	29.3x 21	Cream	94 6	Complete
Behar-i-ajam	Persian	Munshi tek chand	Nast aliq	dictionary	1814 A.D	Worm eaten	Paper	26.4x 17	Brown/ Cream	78 4	Complete
Kanj-tul-logat	Persian	Mohd bin abdul khaliq bin maroo f	Nast aliq	dictionary	x	Worm eaten	Paper	28.1x 17.3	Cream	95 4	Complete

Title of the manuscript	language	author	script	subject	Age of manuscript	Condition	Material used	Size of manuscript in cms	colour	pages	manuscript Complete /incomplete
Munta-khib-ul logat	Persian	Abdul rasid al hasni al madni	Nast aliq	dictionary	x	good	Paper	25.1x13.5	Cream	786	Complete
Za-khara-h-i-nizami shahi	Persian	x	Nast aliq	chemistry	x	good	Paper	28.6x19.3	Cream	1144	Complete
Sirah-ul-logat	Persian	Mohammad bin umar khalid	Nast aliq	dictionary	x	Worm eaten	Paper	24.4x17.2	Yellow	712	Complete
Tawreek i-shah jehan	Persian	Mohd zahid lahori	Nast aliq	History	1666 A.D	Worm eaten	Paper	27.9 x 16	Yellow	578	Complete
Behar- i -ajam	Persian	Munsh i tek chand	Nast aliq	dictionary	1814 A.D	Worm eaten	Paper	27.17 x 17.3	Cream/ Yellow	660	Complete
Kitab ul shifa	Arabic	Qazi ayaz	Nast aliq/ Nasi kh	Physics	x	Worm eaten,	Paper	27x17.5	Cream	772	incomplete
Talkhees asool al hindustawal hisaabla qaldees ul suri	Arabic	x	Nast aliq /Nasikh	Geometry	x	Worm eaten,	Paper	27.5x14	Cream	494	Complete
Gulistaan	Persian	Sheikh sadi	Nast aliq	Ethics/morality	x	good	Paper	23x13	Cream	208	Complete* *s
Boostan	Persian	Sheikh sadi	Nast aliq	Ethics/morality	x	good	Paper	23x13	Cream	300	Complete
Sikandar nama	Persian	Kh.nizami	Nast aliq	History	x	good	Paper	26x16	Cream	412	Complete
Nifaat ul shareef	Persian	Abdul rehman ibn e ahmad al hajnie	Nast aliq	Mysticism	1775	Worm eaten	Paper	20.2x11.5	Cream	1170	Complete
Zakhiaira h-shareef	Persian	Syed ali hamdani	Nast aliq	History	1699	Worm eaten	Paper	19.4x10	Cream	592	Complete

Title of the manuscript	language	author	script	subject	Age of manuscript	Condition	Material used	Size of manuscript in cms	colour	pages	manuscript Complete /incomplete
Tawareek I Kashmir	Persian	Khassan malik	Nastaliq	History	1884	good	Paper	33.1x20.5	Cream	630	Complete
Jung ranbir nama	Persian	Major kamal khan	Nastaliq	War History	19 th century	good	Paper	26.7x15.5	Cream	406	inComplete
Jehangir nama	Persian	x	Nastaliq	History	1808	good	Paper	15.1x10.4	Yellow	580	Complete
Waqt I Kashmir majmo a kalam munshi moul rai shouquie	Persian	Ed.jout prakas h	Nastaliq	History	x	Worm eaten	Paper	20.5x12	Yellow	230	Complete
Masnawi mohammad wa ayaz	Persian	zulali	Nastaliq	Ethics /morality	x	Worm eaten	Paper	20x11.5	Cream/ Yellow	486	Complete
Dewani qasim	arabic	qasim	Nastaliq	Poetry	x	Worm eaten,	Paper	20x11.5	Cream	50	incomplete
Zain ul din wali	kashmiri	Malik sargami	Nastaliq	Biography	1887	Worm eaten,	Paper	24.5x15.5	Cream	114	Complete
Tawareek I Kashmir	Persian	Hyder malik chadorora	Nastaliq	History	1675	Worm eaten	Paper	29.3x17.4	Cream	132	Complete
Tawareek I Kashmir	Persian	Narayan koul	Nastaliq	History	1700	Worm eaten	Paper	26.7x16	Cream	188	Complete
Mukhtasar tawareek	Persian	Beerbal kachroo	Nastaliq	History	1852	Worm eaten	Paper	31.7x18	Cream	564	Complete
Tarjamah I bhagwat gita	Persian	Bawani das	Nastaliq	Religion(Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten	Paper	29.8x17.8	Brown/ Cream	196	
Ajaib ul makhluat	Persian	Imad ud din zakaria bin mehmood	Nastaliq	Encyclopedia	x	Worm eaten	Paper	30.5x19.5	Cream	390	Complete
Pargana bindi kasmir	Persian	x	Nastaliq	Geography	1895	good	Paper	22.5x19.5	Cream	40	Complete

Title of the manuscript	language	author	script	subject	Age of manuscript	Condition	Material used	Size of manuscript in cms	colour	pages	manuscript Complete /incomplete
Upanishad (translated)	Persian	Hajar baid	Nast aliq	Philosophy	x	good	Paper	17.5x10.6	Cream	108	inComplete
Musiqai	Persian	Ashraf danish	Nast aliq	Music	x	Worm eaten	Paper	22.7x13	Yellow	288	Complete
Bhagvat(tranlated)	Persian	Shankar koul (tr)	Nast aliq	Religion(Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten	Paper	24.7x17	Yellow	544	Complete
Naishat chintra	sanskrit	Kalidas	sharda	(Religion) Hinduism	x	Worm eaten	Paper	33x21	Cream/ Yellow	134	Complete
Pancistavi (shiva stuti)	sanskrit	Kalidas	sharda	Panchistav (Shiv Parvati) Hinduism	x	Worm eaten,	Brick bark	18.2x13.5	Cream	34	
Sundaraya lahri	sanskrit	Shankaracharya	sharda	Hinduism((shiv parvati)	x	Worm eaten,	Paper	18.7x13	Cream	78	
Bhairawa stutr	sanskrit	Abinav gupta	sharda	Bhairawa stutr (shiv parvati) Hinduism	x	Worm eaten	Paper	14x8.6	Cream	38	Complete
Chandra loka	sanskrit	Pravataloka	sharda	Chandra loka Krishna (Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten	Paper	29.2x17	Cream	28	Complete
Karaka khandana mandan	sanskrit	Bemasain	sharda	(Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten	Paper	17x11.7	Cream	52	Complete
Vyachana prakriya	sanskrit	Pratisajeet	sharda	(Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten	Paper	16.5x11.5	Brown/ Cream	20	
Nirnayamitra	sanskrit	Gopinath	sharda	(Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten	Paper	22x14.7	Cream	262	Complete
Shaishahita viriti	sanskrit	Batugraham buti	sharda	(Hinduism)	x	good	Paper	22.8x14.2	Cream	210	Complete
Balabudani	sanskrit	Jagdarbhatta	sharda	x	x	good	Paper	25x17.2	Cream	568	Complete
alamkar	Sanskrit	jaianta	sharda	(Hinduism) Shiv,Parvati, Ram	x	Worm eaten	Brick bark	23.3x18	Yellow	652	Complete
Jotish ratnamala	Sanskrit	Sripati	sharda	(Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten	Brick bark	16.5x13	Yellow	140	Complete
Isharapritibigna	Sanskrit	Aninavagupta	sharda	(Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten	Paper	22.5x16.5	Cream/ Yellow	402	Complete

Title of the manuscript	language	author	script	subject	Age of manuscript	Condition	Material used	Size of manuscript in cms	colour	pages	manuscript Complete /incomplete
Bagavat gita	Sanskrit	Viyasa	sharda	(Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten brittle	Brih bark	28.6x23.7	Cream	398	incomplete
Gita mahatma	Sanskrit	Viyasaram ravi	sharda	(Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten, brittle	Brih bark	18x13.5	Cream	76	Complete
Balabodin	Sanskrit	Jogdar bhatt	sharda	Human nature	x	Worm eaten brittle	Brih bark	19x16.3	Cream	526	Complete
Pati ganat lila vati	Sanskrit	baskarachary	sharda	Numerology	x	Worm eaten. brittle	Brih bark	22x20.3	Cream	172	Complete
Karma kanda	Sanskrit	lagakh	sharda	(Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten	Paper	21.5x17.3	Cream	912	Complete
Shisha hira vrati	Sanskrit	bhatog raut	sharda	Sanskrit Grammer	x	Worm eaten	Paper	22.2x14	Brown/ Cream	102	
Praboodah Chandra	Sanskrit	Krishna mishra	sharda	War of Krishna (Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten	Paper	23.5x16.3	Cream	187	Complete
Verasimha	Sanskrit	Gopinath	sharda	(Hinduism)	x	good	Paper	27.7x18.7	Cream	202	Complete
Khanda Khada	Sanskrit	Araya bhatta	sharda	(Hinduism)	x	good	Brih bark	24x18	Cream	36	Complete
Kalpa varukha	Sanskrit	Sahul kaul	sharda	(Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten	cloth	155.5x136	cream	1 cloth in 6 parts	Complete
Balabudani	Sanskrit	Jagdar bhatt	sharda	(Hinduism) krishna	x	Worm eaten, brittle	Brih bark	22x22	Yellow	662	Complete
Gita in seven poems	Sanskrit	s.krishna	devangiri	Poetry of Bagwat gita in 7 poems(poetry) Hinduism	x	Worm eaten	Paper	14.1x8.5	Cream	60	Complete
Shiva stuti panchistavi	Sanskrit	Gopinath	sharda	(Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten,	Paper	19.2x12.5	Cream	41	incomplete
Bu-dul-lasa	Sanskrit	Araya bhatt	sharda	(Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten,	Paper	20.5x14.5	Cream	202	Complete

Title of the manuscript	language	author	script	subject	Age of manuscript	Condition	Material used	Size of manuscript in cms	colour	pages	manuscript Complete /incomplete
Satantra deepika	Sanskrit	Mansaram	sharda	(Hinduism)	x	Worm eaten	Paper	23.1x15.6	Cream	44	Complete
Yoga wasista(mokshapaya)	Sanskrit	wasista	sharda	Physical fitness	1927	Worm eaten	Paper	36.5x33.5	Cream	882	Complete
Kasikanyasa (v1)	Sanskrit	Jinendra bodhi	sharda	Sanskrit Grammer	12 th century	Worm eaten, brittle	Brih bark	24.2x21	Yellow	412	Complete
Kasikanyasa (v2)	Sanskrit	Jinendra bodhi	sharda	Sanskrit Grammer	12 th century	Worm eaten, brittle	Brih bark	24.2x21.5	Yellow	130	
Hari vanisa	Sanskrit	viyasa	sharda	Hinduism	x	Worm eaten	Brih bark	24x19.5	Yellow	90	Complete
Kala diksha	Sanskrit	Gopinath	sharda	Mahartta ba (Hinduism)	x	Good, brittle	Brih bark	23.2x17	Yellow	284	Complete
Panga-lisur mahatma	Sanskrit	Zayrath ratha	sharda	Hinduism	x	good	Paper	19x12.3	Cream	104	Complete
Mali-niya shaloka vartika	Sanskrit	Abinav gupta	sharda	(Hinduism) about shiv	x	Worm eaten	Paper	16.5x13	Yellow	216	Complete
Wona divriti	Sanskrit	Marikhyacharya	sharda	(Hinduism) About shiv, parvati, Ganesh	x	Good	Paper	18.5x14.2	Cream	164	Complete
Katantra - kaundi	Sanskrit	Govardhana bhatta	sharda	War of Krishna (Hinduism)	x	Good	Paper	18.2x12.5	Yellow	116	Incomplete

Conclusion

The preservation of oriental manuscripts - a rare literary heritage available in SPS library is of utmost importance is not done. These receive the same treatment like other 60,000 printed documents of the library. This had made these valuable resources to reach at the dying stage. In addition to this the lack of manuscript expert in the library keeps the students, scholars, public and foreigners etc away from rich heritage and antique knowledge sources of our state. Steps need to be taken by the authorities to save this heritage. Different techniques should be employed to preserve it from further deterioration by keeping manuscripts in fumigation chambers, use of chemicals like spirit, thymol, naphthalene, silica gel depending upon the nature of manuscript. The injured and damaged paper manuscripts should be mended. Experts should be employed who could provide the exact information hidden in these age old documents. Apart from functioning as a reference library, the library should keep digitized manuscripts open to all

its users and as well as over computer communication network to make remote access possible .This technique could help in saving the original manuscripts from rough handling.

Appendix

Terms used in the study

<i>Sharda, Devnagri, Nastaliq and Nasikh.</i>	Name of different Scripts
<i>Raja</i>	King
<i>koshur kagaz'</i>	Kashmiri handmade paper

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