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Review Article

PROBLEMS IN EDITING A MANUSCRIPT AND THEIR SOLUTION

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ABSTRACT

The fundamental text of Ayurveda are housed in different types of manuscripts like palm leaf, birch bark etc. The primary text of this system are available in printed form today which is derived from the manuscripts. However there are more than a lakh of such manuscripts that have not been identified, deciphered, edited or published. If they are collected too the principal reason for the manuscripts not being deciphered is that they are in different ancient scripts that are unknown to the current scholars. Constraints like the manuscript not being maintained in good condition might have been moth eaten or damaged due to ignorance of the people. One has to be preserve the Indian heritage and necessary to bring out the literature that throws more light on the methodology to accomplish the tasks. It is mandatory to us to do the decipher, catalogue, edit, publish and translate the manuscripts which are there in the different manuscript libraries of India. The problems in edition of the manuscript starts with the searching of the manuscript in the catalogues of the library, preservation related problems, digitization, collection, script related problem in multiple manuscript, single manuscript problem, type of the text (like prakrit text) related problems, usage of peculiar words etc. This paper will deal with the problems and the solutions in these aspects while editing a manuscript. These aspects will help in finalising the copy by critical edition.

Keywords: Manuscript, Critical Edition, Collection, Script, Prakrit text.

INTRODUCTION

Critical edition is an ancient concept which is followed in *Vedas*, *Puranas*, and *Upanishads* etc. An ancient epic like Mahabharata, Ramayana commentators have mentioned the variant readings thus preparing the critical editions before a text is studied has been a practice in the India. Critical editing is a process of finding the most correct reading which the author could have written or the one nearest to it from among or on the basis of the various readings available in the manuscript copies. The textual critic's ultimate objective is the production of a "critical edition". This contains a text most closely approximating the original, which is accompanied by a critical apparatus.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Essential features of a critical edition:

Collect all extent of copies of the text in original or mechanized form

Decide the mutual relationship and trustworthiness of copies

Collate the copies

Constitute critical recension
↓
Accept one out of many readings as original
↓
Present to the world critical recension,
↓
Description of facts and features and criticism

DISCUSSION

Collection:

Manuscripts are the storehouses of the ancient knowledge. The manuscripts also provide valuable information on the culture, practices, ethical development, artistic expression etc. So they should be safeguarded so that the knowledge is imparted and available for the future generations. Public libraries and private collections are done to collect and preserve the manuscripts. Some of the libraries that will collect the manuscripts are Saraswati bhavan library (Banaras), Maharaja Serfoji library (Tanjore), Government oriental library (Mysore) etc. The libraries possess the catalogues in which the collected manuscripts information is given. Cataloguing is the process of classifying and arranging objects in a particular order eg:

alphabetical order etc. Catalogues can be prepared in card form or book form or sheath form. The catalogues will provide information regarding the manuscripts which a researcher wants. There is also a New Catalogus Catalogorum (NCC) which is consolidating the catalogues of various public and private organisations.

Problems:

The Researcher should collect the copies of manuscript from the libraries / from personal collections in which they are preserved by seeing the catalogues of the particular library. There will still areas in India that were rich in manuscripts and yet not brought to the notice of the libraries.

Solutions:

Catalogues should be updated every year. The catalogues are provided in the internet for easy search (many of such online catalogues are available but still not all). The researcher should see the simple and descriptive catalogues for the information regarding manuscript. These catalogues will give information about the author, title of the work, collection year, collection place, details of author, synonyms used for the text etc.

Problem of collection:

The names of the manuscript will be vary in the catalogues of the libraries eg: *Charaka panjika* of Swamikumara which is a commentary of *Charaka samhita* having a different name like *Vyakhyapanjika* in another catalogues of the library.

Solution:

Researcher should see the Descriptive catalogues in which the information about the author of the work, any other title in use etc.

Content related Problem:

The manuscript possessing with the same names will not have the same content in it .eg: *Haramekhala* manuscript (4th pariccheda) collected from the oriental research institute, Trivandrum did not have the same content as other copies of the *Haramekhala* manuscript

Solutions:

The content of the manuscript should be given in brief in the catalogues of the Manuscript libraries. Before starting the edition, the researcher should read the content of the manuscript and this will help the researcher to exclude the manuscript from study.

Preservation:

The manuscripts which are collected by the libraries are preserved in good condition. These are links to our past and it forms base for our future generations. The writing materials used for writing manuscripts like paper, palm etc are prone for destruction by natural causes such as heat, pest, dust, humidity, fire and humans.

Problems of preservation:

If the manuscript is not protected properly the edition of that particular manuscript is not possible. Poor handling will cause damage to the manuscripts. The factors like dust, atmospheric pollution, temperature, relative humidity, light, pests will deteriorate the manuscripts. This will cause the manuscript incomplete and it will create the problems in editing.

It's Solutions:

Manuscripts should be stored in a place with sufficient light and air circulation. The shelves should be dusted regularly and pests could be controlled with chemicals such as DDT spray,

5%mercuric chloride solution for cockroaches, Ammonium thiocyanate for silver fish, thymol solution for moulds. Fumigation should be done regularly to get rid of insects. The manuscripts are placed in a chamber and exposed to chemicals such as thymol, ethylene oxide mixed with carbon dioxide. Naphthalene balls kept in between the manuscripts serves as insect repellents. These measures will help the manuscript to stay for a long time.If the manuscript is having the broken leaves the repair of the manuscript is done by using the tissue paper. The pieces of manuscript are cleaned; rubbed with rubber powder for dry cleaning and laced close together. Tissue paper is cut by hand to about 1 cm in breadth and of required length and placed over and along the joint. It is then hot pressed. Lamination is another way of protecting the manuscripts but not used much now. The leaf or sheet is enclosed in a cellulose acetate or polythene foil. Mechanical reproduction is another method to preserve the manuscripts such as microfilming, photocopying and digitizing them. Scanning the manuscripts with a 1200 dpi and storing them in a CD-DVD ROM¹.

Digitizing the manuscripts: This method will help in limiting the use of original manuscripts document and the researchers will use the digitized copies for the studies. The digitized copies of the manuscript are easily preserved for long time and it is shared worldwide without visiting the repository. A digital copy is an electronic photograph of the original document. Most of the manuscript are procured in non readable form some softwares are useful to convert the non readable form into readable form. The digitization can be done through computer, camera, scanner, HTML editor, OCR software etc.

Script related Problems

Most of the manuscripts were written in the Sanskrit and in scripts that were used to write manuscripts. Manuscripts were copied in local scripts and in those that evolved over time.

Manuscripts are in different scripts and it is difficult to decipher the old scripts like *Bramhi* and *Kharoshthi*, *Nandinagari* etc. The scripts of Indo-aryan languages originated from the Northern Brahmi while the Dravidian languages evolved from the Southern Brahmi. The style of a scribe who will write the manuscript in one region will vary from other .When it comes to a scribe hailing from a region like *Gujarat*, where in the local writing the headline is not used and the scribe is prone to use his script even to write *Devanagari* the confusion is confounded. The old Kannada script is one of the early scripts that originated from the Kadamba, a script that evolved from Brahmi around 3rd century AD. As the time passes the script will change like Telugu and Kannada. Eg: Many manuscripts printed in Karnataka in particular time period seem to use the Telugu script over the Kannada. It is hard to differentiate between the two.

Solution:

The scripts should be learnt by the researcher to overcome across these problems while critically editing the text. The researcher should know the script and its change in region to region. The researcher should take the help of the libraries and other sources. Seek the help from the persons who worked on that script previously for editing a text.

Editing Single manuscript and its related Problem:

If the manuscript is only one (*Unicus Codicum*) it is difficult for critical editing. E.g.: *Sukhananda Rasayana*

As the manuscript being Uni-codex lots of problems faced in identifying the syllables in critical edition. Verse 62 to 68 are found missing. In other places because of non proficiency in Sanskrit language by the scribe, many mistakes are identified in the grammatical aspect of the text and emendations are mentioned with at most caution.

Solution:

Emendations: Conjectural emendation is suggested in the critical edition at many places to suit according to the meter and prose. For contextual meaning it was needed, so considered and amended based on *Ashtanga Hridaya* and *Sangraha* because the written Manuscript has followed footsteps of Vagbhata.

Problems & Solution in editing Prakrit text:

The literature available in the Prakrit is immense. So the problems are encountered during the edition. Several dialects comes under the Prakrit such as Souraseni, Maharashtri, Ardhamagadhi, Paischachi are the main dialects recognised. There are enormous list of dialects that comes under the Prakrit. Apabramsha too is considered under this head, which itself is a different world. *Prakrit* grammarian Markandeya records 27 varieties of Apabramsha. *Prakrit* is not studied with same fervour as Sanskrit². Eg: *Haramekhala* is a *Prakrit* text this text is written by Mahuka

Edited part – indicating Apabhramsha, Magadhi, Ardha magadhi and Arya (Apabramsa) dialect are followed in majority. Eg – *kai* is used for *Kavi* in Prakrit text.

पवत्तं गोजलोषितं फलं विशालायानावन्दतम् ।

नाशयति ब्रह्मरक्षसमन्याश्च ब्रह्मन्सुदुर्वारान् ॥२३७॥

The editor should take in account internal & external probabilities concerned with the manuscript they are editing and also grammatical evidences while finalizing the correct copy

Problems & Solution of Usage of the peculiar words:

There are some peculiar words which are difficulty in finding the meaning. *Kosa* of the particular period will help the researcher to know the peculiar words³. The other works of the same author of the particular manuscript will help the researcher.

Eg: *Haramekhala* manuscript possesses some drug names which are not known now. Author used peculiar words for the dravyas. The author clearly quotes that he has not mentioned the synonyms of the things and drugs which are commonly used and also the synonyms of the complicate ones. And he ends *Haramekhala* by saying let's hear about the *Nighantu* for clarification, which indicates about *Haramekhala Nighantu* composed by the same author. In this *Nighantu* the synonyms of drugs and its details told in *Haramekhala* are mentioned by author Mahuka and is told as below -

गृहार्थं वस्तु विवरणं विद्यति संदेहतिमिरं कुरुम्बः ।

हरमेखलानभोङ्गणदिनकरः श्रूयतां निघण्टुः ॥

CONCLUSION

All the established methodologies evolved are made use in editing manuscript in several disciplines.

Collection of the manuscript is done by looking at various catalogues such as NCC, catalogues of the libraries, from private collections etc. Collect all the copies of the manuscript is the first step of editing a text or composed work. Editor should see the title variation in the catalogues of the libraries. After having the same title also the content of the manuscript may differ so before progressing further the researcher should read the content and come to a conclusion whether to include or exclude the manuscript for edition.

The manuscript which is preserved in good condition will help a researcher in its edition. Procedures like digitizing will help the less usage of the original manuscript. Conservation and Preservation of the manuscript plays an important role in editing a manuscript.

Manuscripts are in different scripts, hence the researcher need to acquaint with the script, language and grammar concerned with subject matter present in the manuscripts for better edition.

If it is a single ms, Editor has to struggle a lot for determining the correct reading as near to that of authors view. Editor should seek the help from internal and external probability i.e. utterance of different names, time period and quotations from the work traceable in other published or unpublished works respectively.

On the basis of geographical, chronological and the other consideration works on prakrit grammars and several commentaries written on each of the dialect will help for editing a prakrit ms. In such edition the evidences like inscription, secondary probabilities are to be verified.

Besides the above methodologies the Students of Indian science who endeavor to edit a manuscript have to equip themselves with glossaries of technical terms pertaining to different discipline from the texts themselves as also from the *Nighantu* and *Koshas* relating to the discipline concerned.

Modern scholars have compiled the glossaries with full of effort and such are to be made use of to the fullest, in critical edition of scientific texts. The scientific texts prepared in above said manner will greatly boost among science students.

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