

Manuscriptology

written by iasexam.com | 18/08/2023



Context- The UGC will constitute a panel to prepare a model syllabus for manuscript courses which may be offered as specialization or elective subjects.

Key Highlights

- The University Grants Commission formed a special committee to develop model curricula for courses in manuscript and paleography in various colleges and universities throughout the country.
- For this, the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) submitted a report to the same as per the National Education Policy 2020.
- The committee was set up to “link postgraduate courses in manuscript writing and palaeography in various colleges and universities”.
- Universities can use the curriculum to offer various courses as part of promoting the Indian knowledge system recommended in the NEP.

What is a script?

- It is the study of history and literature through handwritten documents.
- Paleography is the study of ancient writing systems, mostly classical and medieval writing systems.
- The script tells about the past, opens history, opens perspectives and reflects the socio-cultural scenes of the time.
- Its content is literally, scientifically and historically important.
- It forms a calligraphically and technically fascinating paleography. Manuscripts are

therefore concrete examples of past humanistic and artistic activity.

- According to the National Mission of Manuscript (NMM), India has about 10 million manuscripts in 80 ancient scripts written on materials such as palm leaves, paper, cloth and bark.
- While 75% of the surviving manuscripts are in Sanskrit, 25% are in regional languages.
- India has about 10 million manuscripts in 80 ancient scripts such as Brahmi, Kushan, Gaudi, Lepcha and Maithili.
- The Bakhshal Manuscript, an ancient Indian mathematical text written on birch bark, is considered the earliest written example of the use of zero.

Objectives

- **Preservation of heritage**
 - Preservation of Indian manuscripts preserves and enhances the diversity of the country and contributes to a deeper understanding of its heritage.
 - The various states of India are repositories of centuries of knowledge that reflect the thoughts, beliefs and practices of the past.
 - Available in various Indian languages and scripts, the manuscripts cover a wide range of topics such as philosophy, science, literature, religion and more.
 - These manuscripts provide invaluable insights into India's history, intellectual contributions and traditions that can protect cultural values, advance academic research and inspire future generations.

Laws by the Government to protect Indian manuscripts

- The government plans to introduce the National Manuscripts Bill, 2023, which aims to document and catalog Indian heritage anywhere in India or abroad, maintain accurate and up-to-date information about them and specify the conditions under which they can be consulted.
- It provides for the creation of a 10-member National Manuscripts Authority (NMA).
- The minister of culture would be the chairman and the secretaries for culture, finance and education, vice-chancellor of Central Sanskrit University, special conveners representing states and private institutions would be the other members.

About NMA

- It would be the foremost decision-making body for digitization, preservation, conservation, editing and publication of manuscripts.
- It would have the powers of a civil court to regulate the granting of access to manuscripts, as well as an investigative wing tasked with investigating theft and desecration of texts.
- It would also ensure that the manuscripts are not lost due to damage or theft.
- It may cooperate with universities and other educational institutions or institutions to provide scholarships and grants for manuscript research.