

Best Practice 2022-23

Title of the Practice :Digitisation of Manuscripts

Objectives of Practice:

1. Documentation : Systematic classification and preparation of catalogs for academic requirements.
2. Research : Preparation of critical edition of manuscripts.
3. Linguistic and cultural studies: This project will help to fill the gaps in the socio-cultural and linguistic domains of the nation.
4. Preservation: Establishing a foothold for the future generation to understand the ancient writings.

The Context: The state of Kerala is considered to be a treasure trove of Palm leaf manuscripts. Most of these are still under private possessions of individuals or families. Some of these invaluable articles are believed to be more than 500 years old and in the current condition these could be wiped out in near future. The digitization initiative led by SSUS represents a commendable effort to preserve Kerala's rich cultural heritage embodied in palm leaf manuscripts.

The Practice: SSUS has launched the digitisation programme of such manuscripts in private possessions. Based on a survey SSUS has identified 8 private houses in various parts of Kerala. After entering into an agreement with the custodians of these manuscripts, SSUS has ventured into this transformation project.

Evidence of Success: The University has almost completed the digitalisation process of manuscripts in Amarambalam Kovilakam in Nilambur. Now the team is working at Nenmara in Palakkad district.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required: Gaining access to private collections of manuscripts, poor condition due to neglect, aging, or improper storage. Fragile palm leaves, fading ink, and physical damage.