

PESHAWAR UNIVERSITY CAMPUS LIBRARIES, TREASURY OF CENTRAL ASIAN MANUSCRIPTS

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Introduction

The cultural and literary heritage of a nation can be found in their writings.¹ Moreover, the development of art, science and literature can be assessed historically through the use of these writing available in manuscript form.² They throw enough light on the times in which they were written. It is a record of the knowledge, aesthetic literary and creative skill of the period in which they were written. Manuscripts are therefore essentially thought to be the most important element in tracing on the human heritage.³

Since earlier knowledge along with religion came to this part of the world through Central Asia, therefore most rather all such records are available in the prevailing languages of the time like Arabic, Persian, Turkish or Pashto.⁴

The University Campus⁵ at Peshawar is a conglomeration center of knowledge. Emerging with Islamia College in the early part of the last century, it had by now grown into four universities with couple of dozen institutions. The manuscript repositories amongst them are mainly Islamia

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¹ Anwar Khan, Central Asian Manuscripts in Pakistan. *The Times*, 15th February 1976

² Abdul Haseeb, *A Case Study of Islamia College Library*, Unpublished M.A Thesis. (Peshawar: Department of Library and Information Science, University of Peshawar, 2001-02): 64

³ Muhammad Fida., *Central Asian Manuscripts in Peshawar*, Unpublished Ph.D. research dissertation, p 14

⁴ S. Munawar, *History of Writings*. (Karachi: Unique Publishing, 1986): 25-28

⁵ University Campus includes Peshawar University, Islamia College University, Engineering University, Agricultural University and Khyber Medical College

College (now university) and the University of Peshawar⁶. They contain, to my assessment, some of the rarest collections on socio-scientific knowledge besides religion and ethics. The total number of manuscripts in the Islamia College Library is twelve hundred and seventy⁷. This rare collection has been donated by Ghulam Jillani and his family soon after the establishment of the college library⁸. Center Library University of Peshawar also contains some of the rare manuscripts on different subjects⁹. Maximum number of manuscripts among these has been donated by Ghulam Samdani. The total number of this collection is seven hundred and twelve. Pashto Academy library is another place of manuscripts collection on the campus having more than nine hundred manuscript collection mostly donated by Ghulam Samdani¹⁰.

Literature Review

A comprehensive review of the relevant literature has been made in order to understand the research problem in the first phase of this research. Manuscripts related studies were comprehensively reviewed to understand different aspects of manuscripts. To meet the scope of the study, different literatures were searched in published and unpublished form.

1 Abdur Rahim Kulachvi, former-Librarian, Islamia College Peshawar, prepared a three column descriptive list of manuscripts in two volumes, entitled “*Lubab-al-Maarif al-Ilmiyah*”, in a book form, highlighting importance of manuscripts in Islamia College Peshawars Library in 1917, containing 452 total number of manuscripts were 1261, it is in Urdu language.¹¹

2 Abdul Hamid another former-Librarian, Islamia College Peshawar, prepared a eight column descriptive list of manuscripts in two volumes, entitled “*Al-Musami Ba-Lubab-ul-Marif-ul-Ilmia-Fe-Maktabah Darul Uloom Al Islamia Peshawar*” in 1998, containing 1321, highlighting the Importance of those manuscripts which are related to religion, in Urdu language.¹²

⁶ Khan, A., Central Asian Manuscripts in Pakistan. *The Times*, (15th February 1976)

⁷ Abdur Rahim Kulachvi, *Lubab-al-Maarif al-Ilmiyah*, (Peshawar, 1971): 9

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ An Interview with late Dr. Arif Naseem, writer / Historian, on 4th January, 2013

¹⁰ An Interview with Mr. Farooq, son of Sayed Fazal Samdani, donor of manuscripts to University of Peshawar and Pashto Academy, university of Peshawar, on 19th May, 2013

¹¹ Abdur Rahim Kulachvi, *Lubab-al-Maarif al-Ilmiyah*. (Peshawar, 1971): 9

¹² Abdul Hamid, *Al-Musami Ba-Lubab-ul-Marif-ul-Ilmia-Fe-Maktabah Dar-ul-Uloom Al Islamia Peshawar*. Unpublished M.Phil. Thesis (Peshawar: University of Peshawar, Peshawar, 1998)

3 Nasim Fatima a well known archivist of Sindh, former chairperson Department of Library & Information Sciences, University of Karachi, now principal Investigator in the Department of Archives conducted her research work entitled “Standardizing & Cataloguing of Urdu Manuscripts” at Karachi university in 1992, having not more than 670 pages, published in 2010. Various cataloguing codes are used, with 14 column description. She also formulated some cataloguing rules to standardize Urdu manuscripts.¹³

4 Muhammad Ismail, Assistant Professor, Department of Library and Information Sciences, University of Peshawar in his M.Phil. work entitled “Archival Material on Central Asia in the Directorate of Archives, Peshawar” in one volume at Area Study Center Peshawar in 2006, having 221 number of pages, it is a descriptive Subject catalogue with 8 column description, restricted only to concerned files of the Archives Department covering the period from 1849 to 1947, some of the files were summarized and compiled, while without any specific reason most of the files has been left.¹⁴

5 “Research Studies of Libraries & Archival Record in Directorate of Sindh Archives” PhD research work by Shamshad Ahmad, currently assistant professor in Islamia University Bahawalpur in 2008, having 474 pages, supervised by Nasim Fatima. It is a descriptive catalogue in one volume having 15 column descriptions, arranged chronologically; an index is also given at the end. He also tried to trace out the path of manuscripts, and pointed different problems faced during the preparation of catalogue.¹⁵

6 Unpublished PhD research work at Department of Library and Information Sciences, University of Sindh by Nisar Ahmad Subhputo entitled, “A Comparative Studies of Provincial Archivist in Pakistan, their Impact on History, Culture and Research Activities in 2005 contains not more than 424 pages. It is a subject catalogue, in one volume, with 12 column description. It is an attempt made to establish Archives as the state property and to provide them legislative protection. It is a comparative study

¹³Naseem Fatima, *Standardizing & Cataloguing of Urdu Manuscript*. (Karachi: University of Karachi, 1992)

¹⁴Mohammad Ismail, *Archival Material on Central Asia in the Directorate of Archives, Peshawar*, Unpublished M.Phil. Thesis, Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar, Peshawar 2006

¹⁵Shamshad Ahmad, *Research Studies of Libraries & Archival Record in Directorate of Sindh Archives*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, (Jamshoro: University of Sindh, 2008)

of four Provincial Directorates of Archives, including building, staff, preservation system, budget and readers.¹⁶

Justification

The study will not only enable the library professionals to use it as a source of reference and a tool for access but will also generate a new sense in the future investigation in the related field of manuscripts. The study will explore the descriptive information about the manuscripts, which will be further use for the preparation of subject catalogue.

Objectives of the Study

1. To provide data for preparing subject catalogue of rarest the manuscripts.
2. To create descriptive metadata of the manuscripts.
3. To trace out new areas of research on manuscripts.

Limitation of the Study

The research study shall be limited to the manuscripts related to Central Asia or manuscripts written by Central Asian scholars available in the libraries of University of Peshawar, Islamia college university Peshawar Furthermore, manuscripts which are related to Pure Sciences, Applied Sciences and Social Sciences written in four different languages those are Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Pashtu.

Research Methodology

To proceed with the problem, demarcated lines are required to tackle the problem. In this connection, historical (documentary) and survey research methods are mostly applicable. However, other methods will also be used to strengthen the techniques of data collection for more accurate results. The study will also be based on descriptive research method.

Findings

After the collection of data related to 117 manuscripts from the sample libraries it was properly organized, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted. Percentage and frequency were concluded through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

¹⁶Nisar Ahmad Subhputo, *A Comparative Study of Provincial Archivist in Pakistan, their Impact on History, Culture and Research Activities*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, (Jamshoro: University of Sindh, 2005)

Institute Name	Frequency	Percent
Islamia College University Peshawar	65	55.6
Central Library, University of Peshawar	41	35.0
Library, Pashto Academy	11	9.4
Total	117	100.0

Table 1

Ownership of Manuscripts

The research results show the ownership of the manuscripts available within the sample libraries of public sector universities in Peshawar on the campus. The collected data confirm that among the total 117 manuscripts 65 (55.6 %) manuscripts are available in Islamia College, University, Peshawar followed by Central Library, University of Peshawar in 41 (35.0 %). The Library of Pashto Academy, University of Peshawar, is having least number that is 11 (9.4 %) of the existing manuscripts within the libraries. Table 1 highlights the summary of this data.

Subject	Frequency	Percent
Medical Sc	54	46.2
Philosophy	34	29.1
Veterinary Sciences	6	5.1
Astronomy	12	10.3
Mathematics	8	6.8
Physics	2	1.7
Chemistry	1	.9
Total	117	100.0

Table 2

Subject of Manuscript

It has been analyzed that that among the total 117 manuscripts available in the libraries on university campus 54 (46.2 %) of the manuscripts are on the subject of Medical sciences, followed by the subject of Philosophy with 34 (29.1 %), while 12 (10.3 %) of the manuscripts on the subject of Astronomy, however 08 (6.8 %) on the subject of Mathematics and 06 (5.1 %) of the manuscripts on Veterinary Sciences. The study further evaluated that 02 (1.7 %) of the manuscripts on the subject of Physics, and 1 (0.9 %) had the least manuscripts on the subject of Chemistry. Summary of the subject-wise analysis are given in table 2.

Language	Frequency	Percent
Arabic	77	65.8
Persian	31	26.5
Others	9	7.7
Total	117	100.0

Table 3

Language of the Manuscript

The languages of the manuscripts are Arabic, Persian and others languages. Others include manuscripts on the languages of Pashto, Hindko and Turkic.

The result shows that the majority of the 77 (65.8 %) of the manuscripts are written in Arabic language and 31 (26.5 %) manuscripts inscribed in the language of the Persian. It is pertinent to mention that only 9 (7.7 %) of the manuscripts are written in other languages. Detailed summary is shown in table 3.

Ink used	Frequency	Percent
Black Color	72	61.5
Red & Black	36	30.8
Others	9	7.7
Total	117	100.0

Table 4

Ink Used

It has been examined that different colors of ink are used while writing the understudy manuscripts. Which are Black Color, Red & Black and other colors, i.e. mix colors like Black, Blue, Red and Golden.

The result shows that in most of the manuscripts 72 (61.5 %) Black color ink is used, followed by 36 (30.8 %) manuscripts in Red & Black color ink. Manuscripts in another color ink are 9 (7.7 %). The Details of this analysis are given in the table 4.

Types of Binding	Frequency	Percent
Leather binding	67	57.3
Hard binding	37	31.6
Others	13	11.1
Total	117	100.0

Table 5

Binding of Manuscripts

The binding of the manuscripts has been examined and the results show that three different kinds of binding which are Leather, Hard binding and others. Others include manuscripts without binding that is without binding.

The result demonstrates that more than half of manuscripts, i.e., 67 (57.3 %) are in leather binding while 37 (40.2 %) manuscripts have hard binding. However, a very least number 13 (11.1 %) of manuscripts has another type of binding these includes manuscripts without any proper bindings.

Color of Leather Binding	Frequency	Percent
Red Color Leather	34	29.1
Black Color Leather	18	15.4
Others	15	12.8
Total	67	57.3
Total	117	100.0

Table 6

Color of Leather Binding

Different colors of leather bindings have been used in those binding which are bound with leather, these colors include Red, Black, and others. Other includes a mixture of, red and black, red, black and blue, red black blue and golden bindings. The majority of the leather bindings is in red color 34 (29.1 %) black color is for 18 (15.4%) while 15 (12.8 %) for others among the total 67 leather binding manuscripts. Tables 6 shows 50 (42.7%) missing numbers which are for those manuscripts which are not leather binding manuscripts.

Style of Writing	Frequency	Percent
Nastaleeq	68	58.1
Naskh	39	33.3
Other	10	8.5
Total	117	100.0

Table 7

Style of Writing

The writing style of the manuscripts was also examined. These manuscripts are written in different styles like Nastaleeq, Naskh and other styles that include the combination of Nastaleeq and Naskh.

The result shows that 68 (58.1%) manuscripts were written in Nastaleeq followed by 39 (33.3 %) manuscripts, writing style was Naskh while 10 (8.5 %) were in other styles. Table 7 shows the frequency and percentage of these styles.

Condition	Frequency	Percent
Good	72	61.5
Fair	32	27.4
Poor	13	11.1
Total	117	100.0

Table 8

Condition of Manuscript

The manuscripts available in the public sector universities on the campus are very old and precious. Through evaluation of the manuscripts, it has been examined the physical condition of these manuscripts. The condition of the manuscripts was divided into three different options like good, fair and poor.

The calculated result shows that the majority of the manuscripts, i.e., 72 (61.5 %) is in good condition, while 32 (27.4 %) manuscripts were in fair condition. However 13 (11.1 %) manuscripts were in poor condition. The detail is given in table 8.

Paper Color	Frequency	Percent
Light Brown	72	61.5
Half White	45	38.5
Total	117	100.0

Table 9

Manuscript Paper Color

Different colors of paper have been used for writing these manuscripts a large number of half brown\ brown 72(61.5%) paper was used while 45(38.5%) manuscripts are written on half white\white color papers. Table 9 shows the results regarding the color of the papers.

Status	Frequency	Percent
Complete	91	77.8
Incomplete	26	22.2
Total	117	100.0

Table 10

Status of Manuscript

This study also investigated the status of manuscripts available in the University libraries on the campus. The researcher had set two options, complete and other is incomplete manuscripts.

The results regarding the status of manuscripts show that 91 (77.8%) of the manuscripts were completed in all respects, whereas 26 (22.2%) were incomplete (some pages are missing while in some volume 1 is available but the other is not available etc.). A detail summary regarding the status of manuscripts can be viewed in table 10.

Number of Pages	Frequency	Percent
More than 200	59	50.4
101-200	31	26.5
1-100	27	23.1
Total	117	100.0

Table 11

Number of Pages in Manuscript:

Table 11 presents that the total number of pages available in the manuscripts which exist in the public sector universities on campus. It has been divided into three groups of pagination. These groups are: 1-100, 101-200 and more than 200 pages.

The result illustrates that the majority of 58 (49.6%) of the manuscripts having more than 200 pages. It is pertinent to mention that 31 (26.5 %) of the manuscripts have found in the pagination of 101-200. It was found that 28 (23.9 %) of the manuscripts having 1-100 pages.

Manuscripts' Languages Institution Wise

Institutions	Languages			Total
	Arabic	Persian	Others	
Islamia college Peshawar	48	16	01	65
Central library ,University of Peshawar	29	12	0	41
Pashto Academy ,University of Peshawar	0	03	08	11

Table 12

Manuscripts' Languages Institution Wise:

As per the calculated data, a large number of Arabic manuscripts 77 are present in the sample libraries. Islamia college, university library poses the largest number 48 followed by Central Library, University of Peshawar having 29 manuscripts in Arabic language. Persian language comes second after Arabic language with a total number of 31 manuscripts. The Islamia College, University has the largest number in Persian language by having 16 manuscripts while 12 manuscripts in the said language are at Central library university of Peshawar. Three (3) manuscripts in Persian language are recorded in Pashto Academy, University of Peshawar library. Apart from Arabic and Persian language manuscripts 09 manuscripts are in other languages such as Pashto, Hindko and Turkic. Table 12 indicates the calculated figures.

Manuscripts' Color of Paper Institutions Wise

Institutions	Colors		Total
	Light Brown/ Brown	Half White/White	
Islamia college Peshawar	46	19	65
Central library ,University of Peshawar	21	20	41
Pashto Academy, University of Peshawar	05	06	11

Table 13

Manuscripts' Color of Paper Institutions Wise

Different colors of paper have been used while writing these 117 manuscripts such as light brown\brown half white \white. A large number of manuscripts in total 72 manuscripts are written on light brown\ brown paper followed by half white \white 45 manuscripts.

The Islamia College, University library is having 46 manuscripts in light brown \ brown color paper while Central Library, University of Peshawar library 21 and 05 manuscripts in the said color paper in Pashto Academy university of Peshawar.

Nineteen (19) manuscripts in half white \ white color are present in Islamia College, University Library. Central Library, University of Peshawar 20 and Pashto Academy, University of Peshawar Library is having 06 manuscripts in half white \ white color.

Conclusion

Muslim scientists contributed a great deal in various branches of sciences, such as mathematics, astronomy, medicine, animal sciences and others; all made gigantic strides during the glorious period of Muslim civilization. A large number of manuscripts on these subjects are available on the campus, written both in Arabic and Persian though a large number of them have been later printed particularly in India. Many important manuscripts are in versified form. Equally important are commentaries and glosses on them. Some of these manuscripts of the 12th / 13th century A.D are pieces of work of art.

Islamia College Peshawar, Central Library, University of Peshawar and Pashto Academy, University of Peshawar, possess perhaps the finest collection of manuscripts in the country. These works are of great historical importance in terms of their topics, calligraphic handwriting and can rightly be called treasure of knowledge.¹⁷

The Islamia college library is in possession of one of the finest and richest collection of manuscripts in the country. Some of the manuscripts and books are so rare that these are not available anywhere. Hakim Ajmal Khan during his visit to the Islamia College termed this collection as DURR-E-NAYAB. As per the results of the data collected it has been analyzed that the manuscripts available within the three sampled libraries (Islamia

¹⁷ Abdul Haseeb, *A Case Study of Islamia College Library*, Unpublished M.A Thesis. (Peshawar: Department of Library and Information Science, University of Peshawar, 2001-02): 63

College, university, Library, Central Library, University, of Peshawar and Pashto Academy Library, University of Peshawar) are having some of the valuable manuscripts available throughout the world on the basis of their rareness. Another finding is that some of the manuscripts are so rare that they may not be found anywhere else. The importance of these manuscripts can also be judged on the basis of their subjects and the information they contain.

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