

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2123
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.08.2025.

PROTECTION OF ODIA MANUSCRIPTS AND ARTIFACTS

2123. SHRI MUZIBULLA KHAN:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of inventory of ancient Odia texts, techniques adopted for preservation and efforts for its digitization; and
- (b) the grants to museums and future roadmap?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

- (a) Ancient Odia palm-leaf manuscripts are key to Odisha's cultural and intellectual heritage, covering religion, philosophy, medicine, astronomy, and literature. They are mainly preserved in the Odisha State Museum, traditional mutths, libraries, and private collections.

To protect these delicate manuscripts, traditional methods such as gentle cleaning, application of natural oils, insect repellents, and climate-controlled storage are used, along with archival restoration techniques for damaged leaves.

Significant digitization efforts by the Ministry of Culture under National Mission for Manuscripts (now Gyan Bharatam Mission) have been undertaken, whereby scanning of thousands of manuscripts with high-resolution imaging and creation of metadata have been conducted. Key achievements include documenting over **5.15 lakh manuscripts**, conserving nearly **54.9 lakh folios**, and digitizing over **11,017 manuscripts** at the Odisha State Museum. These efforts ensure the preservation and wider dissemination of Odisha's invaluable manuscript heritage.

- (b) A dedicated allocation of ₹1,34,33,000 has been sanctioned for the conservation and documentation of manuscripts at the Odisha State Museum.

The Government aims to ensure that India's manuscript heritage is not only preserved but also actively utilized for academic, cultural, and historical research. Through the 'Gyan Bharatam Mission', the Government has formulated an expansion plan to enhance public access to India's manuscript heritage. The key measures, inter alia, include working with academic institutions, private collectors, and research organizations to expand the digitization and dissemination of manuscripts, collaborations with universities to promote research and study of manuscripts.
