

National Digitization Drive Workshop Strengthens India's Manuscript Preservation Framework; Union Minister of Culture Calls for Sustained National Effort in Digitization

Ministry of Culture organizes the National Digitization Drive Workshop in New Delhi under the Gyan Bharatam Mission

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India's manuscript heritage spanning philosophy, Ayurveda, literature, mathematics, yoga, and diverse knowledge systems reflects the civilizational ethos of "*jñānam paramam dhyeyam*." To advance this legacy, the Ministry of Culture convened the National Digitization Drive Workshop at The Ashok, New Delhi, under the Gyan Bharatam Mission, with participation from over 200 representatives of States/UTs, Centres, custodians, scholars, experts, and technology partners.



Appreciating the coordinated national effort, the Union Minister of Culture Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, said that, with the proactive support from all States, UTs, Ministry officials, Centres and custodians, over 1.2 crore manuscripts have been reported, marking a remarkable national milestone. The Union Minister added that the workshop is a coordinated national effort to safeguard centuries-old

knowledge, our sañkalpa to respect the past, guide the present, and protect the future. Our Puravajas and Rishi-munis created manuscripts across all disciplines, and it is our responsibility to categorize, codify, and publish them for future generations.

The Union Minister called for sustaining the national momentum and emphasized the need to maintain the current pace of work. He also said that digitization demands precision, discipline, and collaboration and stressed that preserving India's knowledge systems with accuracy and integrity is a national responsibility.

Shri Vivek Aggarwal, Secretary Culture, stressed the need for a time-bound, systematic, and coordinated work with all stakeholders to ensure uniformity, quality assurance, and seamless integration across the country. Shri Samar Nanda, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture welcomed all participants and reaffirmed the mission's national goals, reminding everyone of the core framework of Gyan Bharatam and the collective responsibility to advance India's manuscript preservation efforts.



Thereafter, Shri Inderjeet Singh, Director, Gyan Bharatam, Ministry of Culture presented an overview of the Gyan Bharatam Mission, outlining national objectives, digital infrastructure, and coordinated implementation. Further, Prof. Anirban Dash, Project Director, Gyan Bharatam, Ministry of Culture explained the mission's two-phased functional pattern - technical and scholastic understanding to ensuring high-quality digitization and rigorous knowledge validation.

The workshop, structured around five core themes, reviewed national digitization targets, standardized imaging and metadata practices, refined implementation strategies, showcased best performing States, addressed operational challenges, and developed a coordinated roadmap for a unified, standards driven national digitization framework. Presentations were made by Rajasthan, BORI Pune, Jammu & Kashmir, Asiatic Society Kolkata, a few Gyan Bharatam Centres - KOBA, Gujrat; Vrindavan Research Institute, Vrindavan; Sevadhi, Kerala; and Jamia Hamdard, Delhi; along with technology partners, highlighting field experiences, innovations, and scalable models.



The Ministry also showcased India's emerging National Digital Manuscript Ecosystem, supported by AI platforms and a structured access policy framework. Recognizing the fragility of many manuscripts, the Ministry emphasized that conservation and digitization will proceed simultaneously, with States and Centres receiving funding to strengthen infrastructure, equipment, and trained manpower.

The workshop concluded with a shared commitment to accelerating national efforts. The National Digitization Drive marks a significant step toward building a unified, AI-enabled manuscript ecosystem, ensuring that India's civilizational knowledge is preserved, digitized, and made accessible for future generations.

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