

**Role of Libraries in the Conservation and Management of Indigenous Knowledge: a study based on Palm Leaf Manuscript Study and Research library**

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**Abstract**

*Palm leaf manuscript is one of the oldest medium of writing in Sri Lanka it is also the major source for writing and painting in South and Southeast Asian countries including Nepal, Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia and Cambodia Though palm leaf writing was practiced since the ancient times its precise origin is still unclear The diversified areas related to the indigenous knowledge called traditional knowledge are the Agriculture, Medicine and Health practices, Astrology, Architecture, Education, Language, Religion, Art and Culture and Literature. The set of people's knowledge of the attitudes, merit, creativity, ethics, customs, beliefs, technology, technique, art and literature pertaining to particular native culture and society is commonly referred to as the fundamental aspect of the indigenous knowledge. There are large collections of palm-leaf manuscripts available in libraries, museums and temples in Sri Lanka and it is a traditional practice to keep the enshrine books, manuscripts and other precious materials in temples, which are the centers of Buddhism in ancient Ceylon Comparison with the process of producing writing materials in other ancient civilizations, Sri Lankan palm leaf manuscript producing method can be highly appreciated as our ancestors have used an excellent method to produce them by using two types of palms: Palmyra and talipot. Mainly two techniques are used to write on leaves: writing with a pen or brush and incising with a pointed metal stylus. Most palm leaf manuscripts are incised not written. When comparing with present works of art, it is shown that the ancient authors have referred Buddha's life or Buddhism to narrate even their literary creations.*

**Keywords:** *Palm leaf manuscripts, Indigenous knowledge, Traditional knowledge, Record management, Digitization*

**Introduction**

Palm-leaf manuscripts are one of the earliest forms of written media that bears a prominent place among the historical sources on Sri Lankan national cultural heritage. Until the advent of the printed papers, Palm-leaf manuscripts served primary function on the Buddhist doctrine and canonical literature. The history of ancient Sri Lankan chirographic belongs to the arrival of Arahath Mahinda Thero. But Mahavansa proves that there was a writing method in Sri Lanka even before 300 BC with the incidents of king Vijaya's letter to his brother, 'Sumiththa' and King Abhaya's letter to prince Pandu Abha. Earlier palm leaf manuscripts used to write commentaries. During the era of king Walagamba (89-77 BC), canonical commentaries were