

Joint Research Group
Manuscriptology and Digital Humanities

Towards Imagining Universal Access to Textual Knowledge
SAMHiTA: Building an Open-access Digital Repository
of South Asian Manuscripts



09:15-10:45 Hrs
(CET Germany)

= 13:45-15:15 (IST India)
= 17:15-18:45 (JST Japan)



Friday 28.11.2025



Meeting's Link:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81265977257?
pwd=XsdtHxz90bU6ajtszykmFEoJkZAU9b.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81265977257?pwd=XsdtHxz90bU6ajtszykmFEoJkZAU9b.1)



SAMHiTA: South Asian Manuscript Histories and Textual Archive is an initiative of the India International Centre (Delhi) to develop a comprehensive digital database of manuscripts of South Asian provenance, especially those held in international collections such as libraries, archives, and private repositories. Supported primarily by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, SAMHiTA was conceived at a 2021 expert meeting to make the subcontinent's manuscript heritage accessible to scholars across borders, while fostering collaboration with institutions in Bhutan, Cambodia, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Drawing on experience from the National Mission for Manuscripts, which established resource networks for cataloguing and training in traditional scripts, SAMHiTA integrates and standardizes data from diverse and globally dispersed manuscript collections.

The project addresses the challenges posed by varied policies on digitisation and access across institutions, but remains committed to documentation, digitisation, online publication, and outreach through lectures and exhibitions. The lecture will outline the evolution of SAMHiTA's vision, highlighting its partnership with the PANDiT (Prosopographical Database of Indic Texts) database, the adoption of IIF (International Image Interoperability Framework) for collaborative manuscript description, and the involvement of new funding partners strengthening research and publication in this domain.

Speaker: Sudha Gopalakrishnan,
Project Director, SAMHiTA
and Executive Director, IIC-
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