

**"Sanskrit": Reshaping Indian past and culture**

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**Abstract**

Sanskrit is more than just a language; it serves as a window into India's past. Unfortunately, Sanskrit is hardly utilized in Indian workplaces and academic institutions even though most of our texts were written in this ancient language. As a result, Sanskrit is sometimes seen as a dead language in our culture. The current study examines Mattur village in Karnataka's Shivamogga district, where Sanskrit is the primary language of instruction. An illustration of how the classical past has been preserved is Mattur. It categorically debunks the notion that Sanskrit is out of date and obsolete in the current world. It also disproves the notion that only experts in the field and other specialized groups use Sanskrit. The article looks at ways to popularize the language and integrate it into the spoken language of everyone in India. It looks at ways to support the notion that Sanskrit is simple to learn and that Mattur's concept may be applied to other parts of India. Finally, this essay also discusses some of the key concerns surrounding the history of India and how language is essential to the survival of society.

**Keywords:** Sanskrit, language, ancient, society

Our society has undergone significant change as a result of the global knowledge economy's fast transformation brought on by science and technological innovation. India has undoubtedly broken numerous barriers in a variety of fields, including development, technology, and commerce, but at the same time, there has also been a disengagement from our values, and we have seen degradation in our value system. It is crucial in such a situation to rediscover our beautiful heritage, which resonates in the Upanishads' worldview. The Atman (the individual soul) and Brahman (the universal soul) are central ideas in this philosophy. Bhagavad Gita's teachings, on the other hand, explain the principles of the "Karma Yoga" (the path of action), "Bhakti Yoga" (the path of devotion), and the "Gyan Yoga" (the path of knowledge) towards self-realization. Today, we must derive our identity from such a vast belief system that elevates India to the status

of the global hub where people from other countries look up to India and turn to yoga and meditation to unwind and refresh their brains.

The national political scene experienced a cultural and religious fervor of nationalism during the age of Hindutva politics, which was formulated in the early writings of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and that got a national escalation with the ascendancy of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the late 1980s with the Ram Janmabhoomi Movement. Other BJP supporters, including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), gave the issue additional depth.

In independent India, this fear has a long and melancholy history that predates the BJP's ascent. As a recognized language of the new State of India, Sanskrit was included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution (1950), giving it all the privileges granted to the other fourteen (now twenty-two) spoken languages mentioned. This status primarily entailed financial support for institutions of higher learning that specialize in Sanskrit as well as a national group that promotes the study of the language. With few exceptions, however, the quality and standards of these institutions' Sanskrit instruction and scholarship have drastically decreased from those of pre-independence, nearly in direct proportion to the amount of financing they get. Sanskrit literature has not fared much better. Sanskrit is one of the twenty-two legally recognized literary languages, and since the Sahitya Akademi's inception in 1954, it has been recognized as a literary language.

### **Death of Sanskrit**

It is possible to go into depth on how political inputs and cultural results differ in various contexts. It may be too obvious to explain what it all shows: that Sanskrit as a conversational language in modern India is entirely denaturalized. This is shown by the Sanskrit publications and journals, feature films and daily newscasts on All-India Radio, school plays, award poetry, and everything else. For those directly engaged, its nurturing mostly serves as an exercise in nostalgia, while for others on the outside, the mere fact that such communication occurs is amusing.

The government may make efforts to keep the language in a kind of semi-animation, but most observers would concur that Sanskrit is dead in at least one significant respect. Although we frequently refer to languages as becoming extinct, this metaphor is inaccurate because it implies highly erroneous biological or evolutionary notions about how cultures develop. The misinterpretation also has other drawbacks. The belief that Sanskrit was never living, however, has made it difficult to understand its later history. After all, anything that is born dead has no past. Because of this, there are no credible stories or theories on how the cultural order that dominated South, Southeast, Inner, and even East Asia for two millennia came to an end. This power remained unmatched until the development of Americanism and the worldwide English language. We are unsure of whether Sanskrit culture continued to generate history, if so when, why it was unable to maintain the creative energy it is shown in earlier eras, and

what this loss of effectiveness would say about the conditions in the larger world of society and polity that had kept it viable.

The first person to mention the demise of Sanskrit was a Gujarati poet named DalpatramDahyabhai in 1857:

*All the feasts and great donations King Bhoja gave the Brahmans*

*were obsequies he made on finding the language of the gods had died.*

*Seated in state Bajirao performed its after-death rite with great pomp.*

*And today, the best of kings across the land observe its yearly memorial.*

The poet believed that at the start of the second millennium, a significant change had taken place that had rendered the great literary courts of the time, such as Bhoja's, the stuff of legend (which last things frequently become); that the cultivation of Sanskrit by eighteenth-century rulers like the Peshwas of Maharashtra was too little, too late; and that the Sanskrit cultural order of his own time was a purely nostalgic ceremony. Although this intuition for a portion of the plot is extraordinary, it is only a portion.

This is an initial attempt to comprehend the historical process of Sanskrit literary culture's demise. According to Sheldon Pollock in his well-known work "The Death of Sanskrit," four incidents are particularly instructive: The disappearance of Sanskrit literature in Kashmir, a premier centre of literary creativity, after the thirteenth century; its diminished power in sixteenth century Vijayanagara, the last great imperial formation of southern India; its short-lived moment of modernity at the Mughal court in mid-seventeenth century Delhi; and its ghostly existence in Bengal on the eve of colonialism. Each situation implores a different question: first, what kind of political institutions and civic ethos is necessary to support Sanskrit literary culture; second, whether and to what extent competition with vernacular cultures ultimately affected it; third, what other elements besides newness of style or even subjectivity would have been essential for integrating a Sanskrit modernity; and fourth, whether the social and spiritual foundations that once supported this literary culture still exist.

#### **A small case study on Sankrit in Mattur**

A community in Karnataka retains the distinction of still speaking Sanskrit at a time when Indian regional languages are fighting for survival. Villagers in Mattur, located in Karnataka's Shivamogga region, may be heard conversing fluently in the ancient Indian language. Sanskar Bharati, a school in the village that teaches Sanskrit to about 5,000 people, deserves credit for disseminating the language's knowledge. They claim that this is an effort to keep the old language alive in the present.

"Here the children start studying the Vedas at the age of 10 and each student of this village speaks Sanskrit fluently," said Subraha, a resident. According to him, Sanskrit expressions like Kaatham Asthi (How are you?), Aaham Gachami (I am going), and Shubham Bhavatu (May all good things happen to me) are frequently heard in the area. Even though the villagers speak their dialect, most of them are fluent in Sanskrit.

"Not everyone speaks Sanskrit all the time, but it is easier for people from around the country to learn Sanskrit. This is because most of the languages in India have originated from Sanskrit itself," said Shashank, a resident of the village who is also an IT professional. The Central Board of Secondary Education now offers Sanskrit as a third language option in addition to German last year to preserve this traditional language (CBSE).

The goal of this essay is to examine the initiatives taken in India throughout the post-independence and post-liberal eras to advance the Sanskrit language and Sanskritic culture. The Sanskrit language, which was formerly renowned, has gradually attained the position of being used in India for mantra chanting and religious ceremonies. Governmental and non-governmental groups, as well as certain individuals working on their own, have launched activities aimed at restoring Sanskrit to its former splendor. It must evaluate the scope of the programme and its effectiveness. This essay looks at the many steps people and the government have done to advance Sanskrit education and culture.

Indian academics are concerned about the progressive decline of Sanskritic culture and Sanskrit instruction nowadays. One of the main causes of the decline in Sanskrit's prestige is the western attack against Indian culture as a result of colonial control and its ongoing effects on Indian society. The only comprehensive written information reservoir in the Indian subcontinent is the Sanskrit knowledge base and Sanskritic culture, which predominated in Ancient India and later times up until the pre-colonial period. In Ideological literary texts, it takes up a significant amount of space. Vernacular languages have become more prevalent, which has decreased their use and appeal. A paradox has emerged within Indian culture as a result of the spread of Brahmanical knowledge on the one hand, and the steady erosion of Sanskritic values as well as the incorrect application and interpretation of Sanskrit knowledge on the other.

Sanskrit is criticized for the progressive decline of Aryan knowledge and worldview since it is seen as only a representational language. In addition, the Middle Eastern Muslim invasion and subsequent British colonial assault have turned this language into a language used only for religious mantra chanting and taking oaths at auspicious times. Furthermore, the post-colonial era's high levels of globalization in the latter decade of the 20th century and the current 21st century have brought about several changes to Indian culture and society. Once more, foreign culture is constantly attacking the Sanskritic culture that Indian civilization has acquired over the years. Sanskrit culture is deteriorating, yet society is becoming more aware of the need to conserve and restore many of these customs and cultures.

Anti-Sanskritic and anti-Brahmanical organizations in India, the DMK movement, and all of India have addressed the issue of Sanskrit as a means of spreading Hindutva ideology and Brahmanical scripture. A political group called the DMK opposes the spread of Brahmanical and Aryan ideologies. But between these extreme positions, the

balance rests in the word of someone like Mahatma Gandhi, "I quite agree that the study of Sanskrit is sadly neglected. I do not believe that such a study is a waste of time and effort; I believe it is an aid to the study of modern languages. This is truer of Sanskrit than any other ancient language. So far as India is concerned and every nationalist should study it because it makes a study of the provincial languages easier than otherwise." Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru rightly suggested, "If I was asked what the greatest treasure which India possesses is and what is her heritage, I would answer unhesitatingly it is the Sanskrit."

Samskaras or sanskaras are psychological imprints, memories, or mental impressions in Indian philosophy and religion. Samskaras serve as the foundation for the formation of karma theory in Hindu philosophies. Samskara, a Sanskrit word, is used in Buddhism to define "formations." Language and culture are inseparably connected. Without initially acquiring the language, it is impossible to comprehend a culture. A certain group of people is typically connected with a particular language. When you talk with someone in their language, you engage with their culture. Languages and linguistic differences contribute to both the unification and diversification of human civilization. Language is a component of culture, but culture is a complex whole with a variety of elements, and the lines dividing these features are not always distinct or parallel.

We need to consider a variety of options for addressing the Indians' daily poor Sanskrit usage. As the town of Mattur demonstrates, there may be other means of negotiating the "Death of Sanskrit" as Sheldon Pollock has dubbed it. This essay might, in a manner, assist us in rethinking such conceptual categories by examining instances from a contemporary culture where Sanskrit, given the right conditions, can once again thrive.

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