



Implication of the Sanskrit Language in the 21st Century: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

Introduction: Sanskrit is a classical language that belongs to the Indo-Aryan group of the Indo-European language family. It is an ancient language and started being used in South Asia about 3,500 years ago. It is a classical and sacred language used in Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. **Objectives:** The main goals of this paper are to look into how practical and applicable the Sanskrit language is in the 21st century; to explore the difficulties that the Sanskrit language is facing in the 21st century; and to find out the different government policies that aim to bring back the use of Sanskrit in the 21st century. **Methodology:** The research used secondary data, which was gathered from government reports, international publications, research papers, published articles, and online resources. A variety of qualitative analysis methods were applied to understand the different ways Sanskrit is being used and its importance in specific contexts.

Findings: Sanskrit is important for several reasons, such as its role in Indian culture, the way it has influenced other languages, and its use in science and philosophy. It is the main language for Indian classical art, music, dance, literature, and religion. It helps us understand India's rich history and gives a special view into the country's intellectual past. It is the sacred language of Hinduism and is also used in Buddhism and Jainism. Sanskrit has had a big effect on languages in South, Southeast, and East Asia, especially in official and academic settings. It is famous for its grammar and sentence structure, which make it great for building intellectual and language skills. Even though Sanskrit is called a dead language because no one speaks it as their main language, it was once crucial in ancient India, where knowing it showed someone's social class and level of education. **Conclusion:** Sanskrit is important in Indian culture because it is used a lot in religious texts, especially in Hinduism, and most of the modern Indian languages come from Sanskrit. Some of the challenges in teaching Sanskrit include not enough teaching materials, a shortage of teachers, and a lack of digital resources.

Introduction

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Sanskrit is a classical language that belongs to the Indo-Aryan group of the Indo-European language family. It is referred to as "Deva-Vani" in Sanskrit, meaning the language of the gods, because it is believed to have been created by Lord Brahma and passed down to the rishis, or sages, in heaven. These sages then taught it to their disciples on Earth. The thirty-six consonants and sixteen vowels of Sanskrit are fixed and clearly defined from the start (Sanikop & Nayak, 38-39). Sanskrit is divided into two main periods based on its literary developments: The Vedic period and the Classical period. Vedic Sanskrit appears in the sacred texts of the Vedas, especially the Rig Veda, the Puranas, and the Upanishads, where it is used in its most basic form (Majhi, 103-104). Classical Sanskrit began during the late Vedic period, when the Upanishads were the last sacred texts written, followed by the works of Panini. The Guru Granth Sahib is the most important Sikh text and was written in several languages, one of which is Sanskrit (Wadekar et al., 56-57).

Sanskrit is an ancient language that comes from the Indo-European family and started being used in South Asia about 3,500 years ago. It is a classical and sacred language used in Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. It is written in the Devanagari script and is the base for many modern Indian languages. Even today, Sanskrit is used in religious rituals and is studied in traditional institutions, though it is not commonly spoken in everyday life. It is one of the oldest languages with written records, and its earliest form, Vedic Sanskrit, dates back to around 1700 to 1200 BCE. In Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism, Sanskrit is considered the language of the Gods and is used in sacred texts such as the Vedas, Ramayana, and Mahabharata. Most of the time, Sanskrit is written in Devanagari, but other Brahmic scripts were used in the past. Sanskrit has greatly influenced many modern Indian and even some Southeast Asian languages, affecting their vocabulary and grammar. It is still used in hymns and mantras during Hindu and Buddhist ceremonies. Sanskrit continues to be taught in traditional schools in India, and there are ongoing efforts to revive and study it. Although only a small number of people speak it, it is not widely used as a primary language in daily conversation.

Sanskrit is the sacred language of Hinduism and is used in classical Hindu philosophy, Buddhist, and Jain literature. Its position, role, and significance in India's cultural heritage have been recognised by its inclusion in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. In the latest census of India, thousands of people reported Sanskrit as their mother tongue (Shukla & Shukla, 1253-1254). Sanskrit has been taught in traditional Gurukulas since ancient times and is now widely taught in secondary schools. It is still commonly used in drama, Hindu dance, hymns, and chants. Sanskrit is also the language of some of the earliest, most influential, and philosophical works of Jainism (Vaswani & Mehta, 94-95).



Objectives

The main goals of this paper are: (a) to discuss how useful and applicable the Sanskrit language is in the 21st century; (b) to explore the difficulties that the Sanskrit language is facing in the 21st century; and (c) to find out the different government policies that aim to bring back the use of Sanskrit in the 21st century.

Methodology

The study was designed as qualitative in nature. The research used secondary data, which was gathered from government reports, international publications, research papers, published articles, and online resources. A variety of qualitative analysis methods were applied to understand the different ways Sanskrit is being used and its importance in specific contexts.

Results and Discussion

Sanskrit is an ancient Indo-Aryan language with a documented history spanning about 3,500 years. It is considered the first liturgical language of Hindu culture. Sanskrit is vital in Indian culture as it is used widely in religious texts, especially in Hinduism. Most modern Indian languages are either directly or derived mainly from Sanskrit. It served as the link language in ancient and medieval South Asia. It became the official language of religion, culture, and politics after the spread of Hindu and Buddhist cultures to Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Central Asia in the early Middle Ages. Sanskrit is easily accessible across the country and is the best tool for uniting the nation. It is commonly written in the Devanagari script, and it is easy to learn and use (Unnikrishnan, 78-79).

Sanskrit has had a profound and lasting influence on South Indian languages, even though they come from the separate Dravidian language family. Languages like Malayalam, Telugu, and Kannada have a high number of Sanskrit loanwords, whereas Tamil has fewer. This borrowing greatly enriched the vocabulary of these languages, especially in literature and technical areas, but also led to their distinct evolution over centuries of mutual influence. Unlike North Indian languages, which are believed to have developed from Sanskrit, the four major South Indian languages—Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam—belong to the Dravidian language family. Despite their different origins, Sanskrit and South Indian languages have had a long history of cultural and linguistic exchange, resulting in significant mutual influence. Malayalam, Telugu, and Kannada have a high percentage of Sanskrit loanwords, with estimates suggesting that a large part of their vocabulary has roots in Sanskrit. These loanwords enriched the vocabulary of South Indian languages, especially in literature and technical fields, providing terms for new ideas. The deep historical connection between Sanskrit and South Indian cultures has led to extensive linguistic and cultural exchanges.

Sanskrit is the oldest and most advanced language in the world. It holds a vast amount of knowledge, which is unique and invaluable. These words represent the true essence of Indian culture and thought, showing complete freedom in the search for truth



and universal acceptance of truth. The Republic of India has been trying to revive Sanskrit since its independence in 1947. Famous Sanskrit writers include Adikavi Valmiki, Maharishi Veda Vyasa, Kalidasa, Bhasa, Harsha, Panini, Patanjali, Adi Shankaracharya, Kalhana, and Jaideva (Bhoyar et. al., 73-74). Sanskrit is the foundation for later Indian languages and literature: Pali and early spoken languages developed from Sanskrit. Hindi is the language of India and evolved from Shauraseni Apabhramsha (Mishra, 1089-1090).

Sanskrit has been the primary language of communication for Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. Its literature holds great authority in the fields of poetry, drama, science, religion, and literature. Sanskrit has greatly influenced many Indian languages, including Hindi, which is now one of the official languages of India, and Indo-Aryan languages such as Kannada and Malayalam. Telugu is considered a lexically developed form of Sanskrit and uses many words from it. Sanskrit has also influenced the Chinese language, as China has adopted many unique words from it. Similarly, Thai and Sri Lankan have many words that come from Sanskrit and share similar meanings. Javanese is another language that Sanskrit has influenced, as well as the modern languages of Indonesia and traditional Malay spoken in Malaysia. The Philippines has also been influenced by Sanskrit (Joshi, 2016).

Sanskrit is important for many reasons, including its cultural value, its role in science and technology, and its ability to develop knowledge and understanding of words. It serves as a window into the rich heritage of India and is a key source of information about ancient Indian philosophy, religion, literature, and science. Sanskrit has been widely used in the development of science and technology, including the explanation of the Pythagorean theorem in the Sulba Sutra and the explanation of trigonometry in the Aryabhatiya (Chaudhari & Chaudhari, 279-280). Knowledge of Sanskrit is essential for studying Ayurveda, which originated from the Atharva Veda. With the popularity of yoga, Sanskrit became the language of yoga and gained global recognition. Sanskrit is important for the study of Indology, which involves the study of South Asian history, language, religion, and culture. It is essential for the study of Hinduism and should be taught in all Hindu schools and temples. Using Sanskrit in daily life can enhance creativity and imagination. Sanskrit culture includes art, architecture, scientific disciplines, and other social aspects such as politics and philosophy (Mallick, 57-58).

Sanskrit is a treasure of knowledge that remains relevant today and could be the future of science and technology. Sanskrit culture is a culture of synthesis and assimilation, presenting the message of human faith, peace, understanding, personal health, and development. Sanskrit was the first language to explain the concepts of zero, arithmetic, the Pythagorean theorem, and trigonometry. It also has grammar and phonetics based on human anatomy. Sanskrit texts record the knowledge and practices of ancient Indian scientists and physicians who were experts in these areas. Sanskrit also helps preserve and present the cultural heritage of India through rituals, traditions, games, folk tales, and ballads (Mukherjee, 477-478).



Sanskrit has a long history in the field of science, stretching back thousands of years. It also has a rich tradition in healing and medicine. The Charaka Samhita is a classic Sanskrit medical text that offers a detailed understanding of the human body, various diseases, and methods for diagnosing and treating illnesses. This text is still studied by Ayurvedic doctors today and has had a significant influence on the development of modern culture. In recent times, Sanskrit is regarded as one of the languages of science globally. Its script, known as Devanagari, is also widely supported on computers, making it more accessible to scholars, students, and readers. This availability has made it easier for people to engage in Sanskrit education, which is becoming more accessible because of technological advancements. Sanskrit opens a window into India's rich heritage of knowledge and wisdom, passed down through generations (Jha et. al. 57-58). The language is a key source of information about ancient Indian philosophy, religion, literature, and science, offering unique insights into the country's cultural and intellectual history. Learning Sanskrit offers benefits that go beyond cultural understanding, as it enhances intellectual and linguistic abilities. Through Sanskrit, people can gain a deeper insight into the cultural heritage and values that have shaped India for thousands of years. It also helps develop analytical and problem-solving skills, allowing individuals to better understand and communicate complex ideas. Integrating Sanskrit into educational curricula fosters discipline, cultivates learning skills, and supports intellectual growth. The language's grammar and structure have influenced numerous languages around the world, making it a valuable resource for linguistic research. Its adaptability is also seen in various fields such as government, education, and even computer programming (Narayanrao, 57-58).

Today, Sanskrit is still spoken in the Indian subcontinent. Although it has an ancient history, it remains a living language, with many people worldwide continuing to learn and use it. With the arrival of European colonisers in India during the 18th century, Sanskrit's role as the language of wisdom and knowledge began to decline. English, introduced by British colonisers, soon took over as the language of administration, education, and science. Sanskrit now faces several challenges, including a decline in speakers and poor conditions. It is not the native language of anyone globally and is often considered a "dead" language. Despite being the second language of India, it is not the official language of any Indian state. There are very few Sanskrit speakers in India, and the number of professional Sanskrit speakers is also limited. This lack of expertise has made it challenging to develop a Sanskrit text-to-speech system. Another major issue is the decreasing use of Sanskrit in daily life (Ray, 793-794).

Despite these challenges, efforts are being made to preserve and promote the language. Many organisations are working to encourage the study and use of Sanskrit. In India, Sanskrit is the official language and is taught in numerous schools and colleges. Currently, Sanskrit is recognised as a living language, spoken by over 15,000 people in the country, with many groups dedicated to its preservation and promotion (Dhande, 1-2). Internationally, the language is also valued, with many universities around the world offering Sanskrit courses. Even with its growing recognition, Sanskrit still encounters



several challenges. One major problem is the lack of knowledge and interest in learning the language. As a result, many young Indians do not speak or understand Sanskrit. Another issue is that many Sanskrit texts have not yet been translated into English, making them harder to access for those who do not read Sanskrit (Ramprasad, 843-844).

The revival of Sanskrit depends on the efforts of teachers, scholars, and language enthusiasts. This revival signifies a renewed interest and usage of Sanskrit in India, as well as in Western nations such as Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, and other European countries (Bhatia, 48-49). By integrating Sanskrit into mainstream educational systems and encouraging its use in schools, a new generation of students can gain a better understanding of the language. In the Republic of India, Sanskrit is recognised as one of the 14 primary languages under the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Various organisations, such as Samskrita Bharati, are conducting Sanskrit speaking workshops to raise awareness and popularity of the language. The Indian government has implemented a range of initiatives to encourage the use of Sanskrit, which include the National Education Act 2020, scholarships and grants, digital tools, educational programs, new schools, festivals, competitions, and community gatherings (Pancholi, 284-285).

The National Education Act (2020) allows students at all educational levels to choose Sanskrit as an optional subject, including as a third language. This development is significant for the future of Sanskrit and will likely lead to notable changes in its status. New technologies have become crucial in this process. The government provides financial support for Adarsh Sanskrit Mahavidhyalayas, Shodh Sansthaan, and Asthaadashi programs. It has also created e-content and digital tools to support the learning of Sanskrit. Teachers and principals of Sanskrit Medium Schools have been trained, and new Sanskrit medium schools have been established, increasing the total number of schools offering Sanskrit. The government has introduced Sanskrit Week and Sanskrit Day to celebrate the language through various cultural activities such as speech, poetry, drama, and oratory. Examinations, Shloka antakshari competitions, and singing contests are held at the district, state, and provincial levels. Additionally, specialized forums have been set up to promote the language (Mallikarjun, 580-581).

Conclusion

Sanskrit is one of the oldest and most advanced languages in the world. It remains the classical language of India and has a long heritage and civilisation that spans thousands of years. Despite its historical significance and importance, Sanskrit is often neglected and overlooked by many Indians today. The widespread appeal of Sanskrit is due to its ability to contribute to modern education, communication, and even computer programming. Sanskrit is the legacy of our ancestors. Although some people believe it is difficult to learn, it has a connection to our native languages, which makes it easier to understand. However, the number of Sanskrit speakers is decreasing rapidly, making the revival of the language very challenging. Despite its rich heritage and complex linguistic structure, Sanskrit is at risk of being forgotten and lost in India today. Many



young Indians have not learned the language, and it is not widely taught in educational institutions.

Sanskrit is critical because it is the base of many Indian languages and plays a significant role in Indian culture, literature, and the way people speak. It has a long history of sharing wisdom in areas like philosophy, religion, and science. Today, it also helps with brain power and is useful for computers. It is called the mother language of many Indian languages and is used in ancient texts like the Vedas and Upanishads, which are about religion and spirituality. It is also used in scientific and medical writing. Learning Sanskrit can help improve memory, focus, thinking, and creativity. It makes speaking clearer and helps with understanding logic.

Sanskrit is a philosophical language that plays a significant role in Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Hinduism. When promoting the language, it is essential to address the challenges people face, such as the perception of difficulty and the shortage of qualified teachers. Innovative teaching methods, online resources, and collaborative efforts can help overcome these obstacles and make Sanskrit more accessible to a broader audience. Sanskrit can be beneficial for both the government and the education systems. Including it in the curriculum can foster a deeper appreciation for cultural heritage and promote linguistic diversity. Government policies that support the preservation and promotion of Sanskrit can strengthen its role in national development. The language has played a vital role in the development of Indian culture and thought, and is also an essential part of the spiritual culture of the world. The preservation and promotion of Sanskrit will ensure that it continues to inspire and motivate future generations.

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