



सत्यमेव जयते

# 17<sup>th</sup> World Sanskrit Conference

## Vancouver, Canada



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Hon'ble Human Resource Minister, Gov. of India

**Speech by, Hon'ble Human Resource Minister, Government of India, at the Inaugural Function of 17<sup>th</sup> World Sanskrit Conference, Vancouver, Canada**



**Speech by Sri Prakash Javadekar, Hon'ble Human Resource Minister,  
Government of India, at the Inaugural Function of 17<sup>th</sup> World Samskrit  
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सम्माननीयाः मञ्चस्थाः! पुरतः विराजमानाः संस्कृतबान्धवाः! संस्कृतभाषायां विद्यमानस्य ज्ञान-विज्ञाननिधेः प्रकाशनाय विश्वस्य विभिन्नेभ्यः देशेभ्यः समागताः विद्वांसः! भवतः सर्वान् दृष्ट्वा अधिकम् सन्तोषम् अनुभवामि।

Prof. Kutumba Shastri, President of the World Samskrit Conference, -----

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I am glad to address this august body of Scholars, assembled from all corners of globe to open the treasure trove of knowledge, wisdom and human welfare.

विश्वस्य अतिप्राचीनं साहित्यम् ऋग्वेदः संस्कृतभाषया रचितः अस्ति। अत्यन्तप्राचीनया, संस्कृतभाषया आपञ्चसहस्रवर्षेभ्यः जनाः निरन्तरं भाषन्ते लिखन्ति च। शास्त्रम्, विज्ञानम्, धर्मः आध्यात्मिकम्, दर्शनम् इत्यादीनां ग्रन्थाः, लेखनरूपेण काव्यानि, गद्यानि, नाटकानि, इत्यादिसाहित्यिक-रचनानि, चित्रकला, न्यायशास्त्रसंबद्धाः ग्रन्थाः, आचारणविधिः, वैद्यकीयविधिः, प्रशासनम्, सौगन्धिकशास्त्रम्, स्थापत्यकला, इत्यादिमानवकौशलानि संस्कृतभाषायां विद्यमानाः विषयाः सर्वदा मानवाय लाभं ददति।

In all these fields and many other branches of knowledge, enormous development took place at an unconceivable scale over the centuries. It is very difficult to narrate the achievements of humanity and state where it stands today. Yet, I hope this august body agrees with me if I say that the basic ideas, thought, logic and reasoning available in Samskrit texts have been well vindicated. It is a scientific language. While there is little that could excel the Samskrit thought in fields such as



spiritualism and yoga, its flexibility to cope with the variations of poetic meters, diction of prose writing and use of most expressive grammatical usages, even in the areas which are commonly held to be debatable, the logic, reasoning and analysis available in Samskrit texts appear to be sound and formidable.

Ever since this priceless corpus of knowledge is known to be in existence by the western scholars, Samskrit gained new dimensions and at once became global in its appeal. Solid foundations of logic and reasoning of Samskrit provided strong basis for western critical minds to analyze, compare and criticize from an entirely new perspective and approach. This has resulted in inventing several new branches of knowledge thus expanding the horizons of human inquiry. This east-west interaction of intellectual traditions is bridging the gaps between humanity and laying the road towards the goal of “वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्”. In turn, Samskrit's appeal crossed all the boundaries and became universal.

Right from Vedic age, Samskrit literature is full of universal ideas. “आनोभद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः”। “शंनो अस्तु द्विपदे शं चतुष्पदे”। “सङ्गच्छध्वं संवदध्वम्”। “यत्र विश्वं भवत्येकनीडम्”। A majority of prayers addressed to in the Vedas are towards Natural Gods which are, as we are aware, Universal. In most of the cases the mythological details provided are also universal, since they are either related to natural phenomenon or description of the nature. Seldom do we come across any sectarian benedictory prayers, as they too are, by far, inclusive and universal. Assertions such as “**sarvam khalvidam brahma**” (सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म) go a long way in strengthening universal brotherhood.

I felicitate each of the scholars of this august body who is engaged in investigating into the past of five thousand years of human civilization with the help of Samskrit Language and Literature as the prime instruments of investigation. I wish to stress here that the more we succeed in presenting a truthful picture of human civilization, more the good it is to the humanity at large.

If we look at the current efforts of the researchers in the domain of Indology and Samskrit knowledge systems, we notice that some of the western Indologists have resorted to focusing on two major aspects: religious and social dimensions of Samskrit knowledge systems. Using today's research methodologies and



contemporary social standards there is an effort to reinterpret the texts and the ideas contained therein. I am afraid if these efforts will bear fruit since the very essence of social systems is to evolve, adopt and discover newer social practices and interpersonal equilibrium. Reinterpreting 5000+ year-old ideas without a certain level of immersion into the context and culture is bound to make the whole exercise less representative, risky, and, at times, misleading. Such an effort is based on the assumption that a mere ability to read the language, translate the meaning and put together a set of seemingly supportive evidences will be enough to solve the puzzle and make a final interpretation.

Because of the vast diversity of languages in India, the Indian scholars are putting a lot of effort into translation of the original manuscripts into other languages. Also, over several centuries, many commentaries have been produced on many Samskrit knowledge texts. There is also an effort to collect, collate and compare them and put them together in the form of critical editions. These are useful but not enough from the perspective of research. Native scholars in India need to also move forward into other areas of application of knowledge for contextual problem solving. Only such attempts will continue to add to the repository of fresh material for further research and synthesis.

What may be more interesting and useful will be to have a broader canvas of research that goes far beyond social practices and the religious angle. This can bring a whole new dimension to research and open up positive and purposeful dialogues on multiple fronts among several stakeholders.

There is an also an immediate need to bring in the dimension of contextual relevance while research agenda in the domain of Samskrit and Indology are being chalked out. Going forward I would recommend that at least one third of research projects and PhD theses written must be fundamentally focused towards addressing the contextual relevance issue.

Samskrit knowledge systems have sufficient opportunities to explore and provide fresh insights and newer paradigms for the society, business and government. For instance, the issue of sustain ability can benefit from a deep study of very Ancient cultures including that of India. With a dominant theme of nature worship such



cultures may offer certain insights to peaceful co-existence. I suggest we take up Samskrit Knowledge Systems research to take up such topics for serious research.

Other areas for study are broadly Astronomy and Mathematics, where there appears to have been evidence of considerable work. Samskrit Knowledge Systems can be studied from this perspective also.

In order to suggest a long term Vision and Roadmap for next few years for the development of Samskrit, my government has constituted a committee to study and suggest ways and means to bring qualitative change in Samskrit Education both in School Education and Higher Education. Steps are being taken to implement the recommendations of the committee, such as 'Ashtaadashi अष्टादशी Project' i.e. eighteen projects like Knowledge Texts Translation Project, Editing & Publishing of Manuscripts Project, Digital & Online Resources Project, Contemporary Literature Project, Reprinting of Rare Books Project, Integrating Samskrit with Modern Subjects Project, and so on, to name a few. Elective courses of Samskrit are being offered in technical education in institutions like IITs etc. Ancient Indian Knowledge systems are introduced in the text books of respective subjects. Introductory courses in various Shastric disciplines are being prepared to offer through MOOC. I have initiated several schemes to encourage Vedic education also.

Samskrit Pedagogy is the most neglected area of both Samskrit Education and Samskrit research world over. Two questions to be pondered over by every Samskrit Professor are – whether your students can “Do Things” with Samskrit language *inside* your classroom and whether your students really “Do Things” with Samskrit language *outside* your classroom. Is it not a fact that today Samskrit is taught as a grammar ridden classical language and that, students are taught Classical literature of Samskrit in order to understand it, translate it into other languages, and not at all to use it as a language? The students need to experience Samskrit as a real means of communication, both oral and written. Expose Samskrit to your students more and more as the Target Language both inside and outside the classroom. Inspire, empower and enable your students to access primary sources of Yoga, Ayurveda, Vedanta, Bhagavadgita etc. in Samskrit.

Unravelling the 'Knowledge treasure' hidden in Samskrit is a great objective, and all scholars should aim at this. However, now is the time when scholars need to



pay attention to the ways and means of sustaining, promoting and teaching attractively the very language which has nurtured that Knowledge treasure! Unless the language is preserved and popularized as a language by scholars, unless Samskrit is used and taught as a vibrant living language by teachers and Professors, Samskrit will be relegated to libraries.

Love for Samskrit is nurtured in the classroom. Destiny of Samskrit is shaped in the classroom. Samskrit scholars need to be strategic in their approach to Samskrit education. A paradigm shift is needed from content to language.

The scholars who have assembled here are the torch bearers of Samskrit. I wish you all success in your endeavor to promote Samskrit as a '**Vishwa Bhasha**'

I congratulate the office bearers of International Association for Samskrit Studies, the organizers, all members of the University faculty on organizing the conference so meticulously. I greet you all again.

