

STATUS OF SANSKRIT IN THE MODERN WORLD

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ABSTRACT

The Sanskrit language has made two great contributions to the development and progress of science in ancient India. The great grammarian Panini created classical Sanskrit, which enabled scientific ideas to be expressed with great precision, logic and elegance. Science requires precision and logic. In fact Sanskrit is not just one language there are several Sanskrits, what we call today is a panini's Sanskrit also known as classical Sanskrit also known as laukik Sanskrit and this is what is taught in our schools and universities, and it is in this language that all our scientists wrote their great works.

A written language like classical Sanskrit in which scholars could express and communicate ideas to other scholars living far away with great precision and clarify as thus absolutely necessary for the development of science and this is the great achievement of Panini.

Keywords: Sanskrit, Classical language, Literary, Prakrit, Varnas, Scholars.

1. INTRODUCTION

From first century onwards through Buddhism, it spread into Central Asia and the Far East and from about the second century onwards, it was like a vehicle of the Hindu culture which spread over the countries of South East Asia, the Sanskrit epics, dramas and poems giving these countries a script and literature and the arts of dance, drama, music and sculpture. Thus not only did Sanskrit Consolidate the entire sub-continent of India, but it has brought also the whole of the Far East and South East Asia under a cultural homogeneity.

Rather people found it very easy to learn or to get knowledge in other languages than in Sanskrit and the other reason that the Sanskrit scholars never like to teach it to the common people. They restricted them by learning. The four varnas only Brahmanas and Kshatriyas were allowed to learn and use the language in conversation. The other two varnas like Vysyas and Sudras were not allowed. This we can see even in the Dramas of great dramatist Bhasa where the conversation between the low characters like servant and soldier will be in Prakrita language and also the women characters were also not allowed to speak in Sanskrit. Though Sanskrit was a communicative language, people didn't allow the people to learn. Because of the Sanskrit grammar is very vast and pronunciation is little difficult. Hence it is breathing through other languages.

With the rise of Buddhism and Jainism Lord Buddha and Mahaveera found Sanskrit as difficult language and taught their ideas and thoughts in the local language which made the people to follow easily.

When the Persians invaded India in 6 century BC, Persian Scribes introduced in India Scholars have even traded Persian influences in Chandragupta Maurya's court. Later with the invention of great king Alexander India experienced and influenced Greek language, but still importance was given to the study of Sanskrit. But however Brahman's were given importance and through which Sanskrit also given importance. During period of King Ashoka Sanskrit saw a

great position. But however it appears very strange that, though Satavahanas were Brahmins neglected Sanskrit in favor of prakrit literature.

But side by side with the renovation of Brahmanism during the Gupta period the use and influence of Sanskrit grew apace. During the rule of Pallavas there was considerable literary activity and Sanskrit enjoyed royal patronage. Even after Pallavas, Cholas, Devas, Mauryans also paid importance to Sanskrit.

With this background we can understand that Sanskrit never got extinct. Every time in India it has enjoyed a great position. People were educated in Sanskrit medium and have composed many works in the language. The kings were also great patrons of the language, even they supported and uplifted the culture of Sanskrit in those days.

Sanskrit scholars kept them always updated with contemporary events and utilized them always in fresh with which they came into contact. During the Moghul times Sanskrit writers learnt Persian and compiled Perso Sanskrit lexicons and translated from Persian and Arabic. Our Sanskrit scholars never lived in isolation but they assimilated in such a way that while retaining their individuality, they integrated the elements they took organically into their own patterns. Later on with the Islamic contact medicine and mathematics in the Sanskrit works were translated and transmitted to the west, the European contacts in the modern times may be said to be the resumption of the intellectual contacts of ancient India with Athens, Alexandria and Rome.

The Indo European contact in modern times has been of equal significance in the two continents; the discovery of Sanskrit by the west had been the most significant event in European thought since the Renaissance. So far as India is concerned, this discovery of Sanskrit had a twofold effect; firstly, Indians who received modern education woke into a new realization of the values of their cultural heritage, and the work of the western orientalist produced a literary and cultural revival in India; secondly the impact of Western modes of thought and ways of life led to a process of change in the traditional institutions and learning. The pursuit of Sanskrit itself bifurcated into the modern and the traditional methods, the former being pursued in the new English schools, colleges and universities and the latter in traditional patashalas and colleges started especially for fostering that type of study. The influence of the west, its literature as well as notions brought to bear through education and administration, produced its reactions in both the types of Sanskrit scholars. Consequently, Sanskrit literature entered into a new phase with the rise of modern European influence.

The first impact was that the creative activity in Sanskrit which is still going on received a fresh impetus but gradually, with English usurping the place of a common all India medium held previously in Sanskrit, and with the replacement by English of the regional language as the medium through which Sanskrit was studied, Sanskrit was taken away more and more from daily life and mother tongue; its study became increasingly archaeological. When we note that the early stage with which the Sanskrit scholar with the influence of English started a Sanskrit journal and translated a foreign work and wrote novels and stories, and compare it with the feeling of helplessness that has come over him today, we can see the course of his demoralization and general insignificance into which Sanskrit as a live medium of expression gradually saw its downfall. Even the Sanskrit lovers, who enthusiastically pleaded for encouragement of Sanskrit studies, looked down systematically on original writing in Sanskrit. But luckily there has been a revival of interest in the literary pursuit of Sanskrit and even among Sanskrit scholars who have received a modern education there has been a growing desire to cultivate the language as a vehicle of their thought and expression.

During the beginning British period, Sanskrit education was in its usual mode and the tradition of erudite pundit was still in force. But during 19 century the Sanskrit scholars or their newly

educated children was still writing in Sanskrit, some of them were more prolific, having authored hundreds of works. When printing became the normal mode of circulating literature and the medium of publication for Sanskrit did not develop adequately, all the literature got buried in the form of manuscripts. A full account of modern Sanskrit literature cannot be given, as the bulk of the material for its survey remains unpublished and is difficult to access. Many contemporary works in Sanskrit the author could not publish for the delectation of the wider public all the over the country. But this lack of publicity should not blind one to the fact that there is a continuity of creative activity in Sanskrit and that in recent times a sufficient volume of modern literature has been produced in that language, and it may not suffer in comparison with the development in other languages of the country.

The Sanskrit language was a perfect medium for memorizing and transmitting essential knowledge at a time when the printing machine had not been invented and literacy was not very widespread. The vowels and consonants and every conceivable sound is arranged in a logical and scientific manner according to the biological nature of the speech organs. Verses could be easily memorized and everything worth knowing was put in verse form. Many distinctive verse forms were recognized as suitable for different purposes. One good example is the Gāyathri mantra form of metre of the famous Rigvedic mantra.

Britishers who came to India they knew about this language. After studying about the richness of our culture and Heritage they wanted to establish the trade with India. With which they found the water ways to enter. After entering India they encouraged their people to learn and study out languages so that their rule in India becomes easy, with which the scholars learnt as many Indian languages as possible. Officers who were in that area learnt the language of that region. Scholars like Maxmuller and many other learnt Sanskrit and translated Vedas and works of Kalidasa in English and in other foreign languages They were attracted by our languages and learnt with dedication. Till that time the people were interested in learning Sanskrit language they learnt to such an extent that where they could translate many books to their own languages. In this way Sanskrit influenced many languages.

Sanskrit was also formed to be a language of Brahmins or of learned people. The other community people found it difficult to follow. Sanskrit language has been a traditional means of communication of Hinduism. Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism, their teachers or Guru's started preaching in their own communicative local languages which attracted the people to follow their instructions very easy. This made the people not to learn Sanskrit.

Secondly Britishers who came to India learnt Sanskrit and translated many books of their interesting into English and Sanskrit Scholars also learnt other languages and translated many books to the local and regional languages. This made the people to have the knowledge about the Sanskrit but not in Sanskrit, this made the language to take the back seat.

Western contact:-

The modern trends in Sanskrit literature are in the main the result of the contact with the western literature the major forms in which the new interest expressed itself are the starting of Sanskrit journals, translation of western classics, the growth of the short story, minor poem and the novel, the development of prose used for narrative, descriptive and critical writing in the form of a short essay or a long thesis and for general discussion and documentation, the cultivation of literary appreciation and historical criticism on western lines and the exposition of modern scientific knowledge. Within the country itself, Sanskrit scholars who read the latest productions in the regional languages or themselves wrote in their mother tongues too, rendered into the classical language the more noteworthy works, old or contemporary, in the regional languages, thus reconstructing the close association of Sanskrit with those western languages. Also the new social and political movements in the public life of the country

produced their repercussions on the Sanskrit writers, and here it is in the their repercussions on the Sanskrit writers, and here it is, in the literature produced by the Sanskrit scholars in the new context, that one sees Sanskrit alive in the full sense of term as medium of expression for contemporary life and thought.

Conclusion :-

Thus the authors of today works blend the idea of western and Indian culture. Elements of artistic is assimilated and made as organic integration and follows the method of Kalidasa, Bharatha and Bamaha. Therefore the matter in volved in it makes the people to study the language. Sanskrit thus reemerges into a creative language, adding itself to the long record of fresh achievements.

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