

Occasional Paper 7

# The Supreme Court on Sanskrit

**It is our bounden duty to strengthen and promote Sanskrit,  
which has the potential to be a Global Language.**

विद्या ददाति विनयं विनयाद् याति पात्रतामा।  
पात्रत्वाद्धनमाप्नोति धनाद्धर्मं ततः सुखमा।।

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**Sir William Jones** (1746–1794) was an English philologist, Orientalist, and jurist. While serving as a judge of the high court at Calcutta, he became a student of ancient India and founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He is best known for his famous proposition that many languages sprang from a common source. His scholarship helped to generate widespread interest in Eastern history, language and culture, and it led to new directions in linguistic research.

## **Foreword**

Civilizations appear and vanish. Humanity as witnessed the history of the decline and death of many civilisations. Their histories though, have bequeathed to us their architecture, life and cultures of their people and also intellectual contributions. These help us to know the people and cultures of the past.

But there are few civilizations which demonstrate no signs of ending. They may endure the phase of slow march but do not fall or decline. Our civilization is replete with vast intellectual treasures, whose content is universalistic and transcends time and space. That is why Hindu civilization has endured even during the worst phase of its history, during the organized onslaught by forces intolerant of any intellectual and cultural freedom. Nalanda and Takshashila were burnt, lakhs of books were reduced to ashes, and intellectual traditions were brutally suppressed. Yet, the spirit of civilization has remained immortal. To contest the anti-intellectualism of our aggressors, we strengthened our tradition of oral dissemination of knowledge and its preservation.

For Eurocentric intellectuals, India is not even a century old. Their hide-bound vision can never be true for life. Our history can be measured only by the intellectual–philosophical contributions of our ancestors. That is what gives us the place of pride among the civilisations of the world. It is the Vedas, Puranas and countless texts of replete with the highest human values, cultural, scientific and spiritual content define dimensions of time, space, and universal forces.

And it is Sanskrit that is the language of our vast intellectual treasure, which presents infinite opportunity for interpretations and progressive unfolding of our culture, philosophies and values of life in the changed context and time. The language has also scientifically proved its worth and is counted as the one best suited for the syntaxes of computers of the modern age. Can there be a bigger travesty than to connect this language with caste, region and a certain period of time? Sanskrit has the potential; potential to be a truly global language. This is possible only when we first recognize its potentiality and worth.

The India Policy Foundation is republishing a historic judgment on Sanskrit by the Honourable Supreme Court of India. We hope this judgment will dispel all motivated notions and calumny about the teaching and learning of Sanskrit militating against secularism, as is being sought to be portrayed in some quarters. The Foundation is thankful to Dr. Rahul Singh, Mamta Tripathi and Ankit Raj for their valuable contributions in materializing the content of this work. The foundation is also thankful to Sudhir Kumar Singh and Shiv Kumar for providing their technical support.

Prof. Rakesh Sinha  
Honorary Director,  
India Policy Foundation

8-12-2014

**Writ petition No. — 299 of 1989, Date of Judgment — 4/10/1994,  
Petitioners — Shri Santosh Kumar & Others, Respondents — The  
Secretary, Ministry of Human Resources Development, Bench —  
Hon'ble Justice B L Hansaria and Hon'ble Justice Kuldip Singh**

## **Brief Profile of Hon'ble Judges**

### **Hon'ble Sh. Justice B.L. Hansaria**



#### **Hon'ble Sh. Justice B.L. Hansaria**

Hansaria, Banwari Lal was admitted Advocate to the Bar Council of Assam on 1962 and Lecturer in J.B. Law College, Guwahati from August, 1969 to April, 1971. He was appointed as District and Sessions Judge from 1971. He became Secretary to the Government of Assam Judicial Department from 1976 to 1979 and member of Assam Administrative Tribunal since its constitution on 1979 till 1997. He wrote number of books and articles on Law. He was appointed as permanent Judge in Guwahati High Court 1969 and later appointed as Chief Justice of Orissa High Court on 1990. Finally, in 1993 he became a Judge of the Supreme Court of India.

### **Hon'ble Sh. Justice Kuldip Singh**



Justice Kuldip Singh was enrolled as advocate in the Punjab High Court in November, 1959 and served as a part-time lecturer in the Punjab University Law College from 1960-1971. He became Senior Standing Counsel for the Central Government in the Punjab and Haryana High Court at Chandigarh from 1971 to 1982 and Advocate General, Punjab in 1987. Additional Solicitor General of India from August, 1987. He also became the President of Punjab and Haryana High Court Bar Association in 1976. Justice Kuldeep Singh was appointed as Judge, Supreme Court of India in 1988 and retired in 1996.

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# **The Historical Judgments**

## **Judgment Summary**

### **The Bench had observed:**

1. We entertain no doubt in our mind that teaching of Sanskrit alone as an elective subject can in no way be regarded as against secularism. Indeed, our Constitution requires giving of fillip to Sanskrit because of what has been stated in Article 351, in which while dealing with the duty of the Union to promote the spread of Hindi it has been provided that it would draw, whenever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit. (para 19)

2. Encouragement to Sanskrit is also necessary because of it being one of the languages included in the Eighth Schedule. (para 19). The bench had also mentioned the words by the then Prime Minister of the country, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru with regards to Sanskrit:

"If I was asked what the greatest treasure which India possesses is and what is her finest heritage, I would answer unhesitatingly — it is the Sanskrit language and literature, and all that it contains. This is a magnificent inheritance, and so long as this endures and influences the life of our people, so long the basic genius of India will continue." (para 13)

3. It is well known that Sanskrit is a mother of all Indo-Aryan languages and it is this language in which our Vedas, Puranas and Upanishadas have been written and in which Kalidas, Bhavbuti, Banbhatta and Dandi wrote their classics. Teachings of Shankracharya, Ramanuj, Madhwacharya, Nimbark and Vallabhacharya would not have been woven into the fabric of Indian culture if Sanskrit would not have been available to them as a medium of expressing their thoughts. (Para 11)

4. Thereby, the bench concluded by saying that in view of importance of Sanskrit for nurturing our cultural heritage, because of which even the official education policy has highlighted the need of study of Sanskrit, making of Sanskrit alone as an elective subject, would not in any way militate against the basic tenet of secularism. (Para 20)

**5. Hence, the Bench directed the Central Board of Secondary Education to include Sanskrit as an elective subject in the syllabus under consideration. (Para 21)**

**The Order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court**  
**Mother Language with Unique History**  
**Horizon and Impact<sup>1</sup>**

"A professor of Cambridge University is deeply engrossed in his studies in his calm chamber. An agitated English soldier enters the study room and accuses the professor of not sharing the trauma of war which he and many others like him are facing while fighting Germans. The professor calmly asks the young soldier for whom he is fighting. Quick comes the reply that it is to defend the country. The wise man wants to know what that country is to defend which he is prepared to shed his blood. The soldier replies it is the territory and its people. On further questioning the soldier says it is not only this but the culture of the country which he wants to defend. The professor quietly states that he is contributing to that culture. The soldier calms down and bows in respect to the professor and vows to defend with more vigour the cultural heritage of his country.

"This is what is said to have happened during the Second World War when England was fighting almost a last ditch battle of survival and all Englishmen contributed in their own way to the ultimate victory of England.

"The above shows the concern for Culture evinced even by the Westerners. So far as "We, the people of India" are concerned, they have always held in high esteem the cultural heritage of this ancient land. And to foretell our views, learning of Sanskrit is undoubtedly necessary for protection of this heritage. The stream of our culture would get dried if we were to discourage the study of Sanskrit, and that too on the most

<sup>1</sup>Title given by the editors



untenable ground that if the Central Board of Secondary Education (for short 'the Board') were to do so, it would have to make facilities available for learning of Arabic and Persian - these being also classical languages, which is the ground advanced by Additional Solicitor General, Shri Tulsi, appearing for the Board, in it not being in a position to accept the prima facie view expressed by us on 19-7-1994, when these cases had come up for hearing, that Sanskrit should be included by the Board as one of the elective subjects in the syllabus along with Assamese, Bengali, etc., which are the languages specified in the Eighth Schedule of our Constitution, mentioning about Sanskrit being also an Eighth Schedule language. The desire to keep Sanskrit out does not stop here, as the submission also is that if Sanskrit comes, the Board shall have to bring in languages like French and German. This is not all, as it is contended by the Additional Solicitor General that the Board feels that arrangement may have then to be made for imparting education even in Lepcha, a language whose name many of the Indians might not have even heard.

"We fail to appreciate at all the stand taken by a responsible body like the Board, which has been entrusted with the onerous duty of educating the youth of this country "in whose hands quiver the destinies of the future", as the same is wholly untenable. Without the learning of Sanskrit it is not possible to decipher the Indian philosophy on which our culture and heritage are based.

"The question raised being important requires us, to answer it appropriately, to first know what our policy-makers have said about the importance of Sanskrit. We shall then apprise ourselves about the place of Sanskrit in our educational ethos and shall finally see whether teaching of Sanskrit is against secularism?

**Our education policy qua Sanskrit**

"Being called upon to decide whether Sanskrit is required to be included in the syllabus of the Board as an elective subject so far as teaching in secondary school is concerned, may we say at the threshold

a few words on the importance of education as such. This point is not required to be laboured by us in view of the Constitution Bench decision of this Court in Unni Krishnan case in which the majority Judges well brought home the importance of education. It would be enough to mention what Mohan, J. (as a majority Judge) stated in that judgment. According to the learned Judge, education is a preparation of living and for life here and hereafter and education is at once a social and political necessity. It was also observed that victories are gained, peace is preserved, progress is achieved, civilisation is built up and history is made, not in the battlefields but in educational institutions which are seed-beds of culture. Education was, therefore, regarded as enlightenment and one that lends dignity to a man. Unni Krishnan, J. P. v. State of A. P., (1993) 1 SCC 645.

"As we are concerned in these cases with the teaching in the secondary schools, we may say something about the importance of education in its early stages. It has been well recognised that it is this education which lays the foundation for a full and intense life and so this education must carefully keep alive the spark of curiosity and fan it into a beautiful, bright flame whenever it comes. It has been stated that it is the education received in early stages which widens the contacts of child or youth with the surroundings of the world; and with every new and fruitful contact with the world of things, the world of men and the world of ideas, life of the young becomes richer and broader. It is early education which seeks to broaden the mind by exposing the learner to the world of thought and reflection, which can inspire him with lofty idealism by giving him the glimpses of a good life which a worthy education is capable of bringing.

"We may now advert to the broad framework of our education policy as accepted by the Central Government. For our purpose it would be enough if we refer to the policies as formulated in 1968 and 1986. Here again, we would confine our attention to what was stated in these policies regarding Sanskrit. In the 1968 policy the following found place qua this language:

"Considering the special importance of Sanskrit to the growth and development of Indian languages and its unique contribution to the cultural unity of the country, facilities for its teaching at the school and university stages should be offered on more liberal basis. Development of new methods of teaching the language should be encouraged, and the possibility explored of including the study of Sanskrit in those courses (such as modern Indian philosophy) at the first and second degree stages, where such knowledge is useful."

**The 1986 policy has to say as below in this regard in para 5.33:**

"Research in Indology, the Humanities and Social Sciences will receive adequate support. To fulfil the need for the synthesis of knowledge, inter-disciplinary research will be encouraged. Efforts will be made to delve into India's ancient fund of knowledge and to relate it to contemporary reality. This effort will imply the development of facilities for the intensive study of Sanskrit." (Emphasis supplied)

"It would be of some interest to note that when Sir William Jones, one of the most brilliant men of 18th century, came to India in 1783 as a Judge of the then Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort Williams in Bengal, he got interested to learn Sanskrit and it grew so strong that within six years he not only became the master of the language but translated Kalidas's Shakuntala. After about two hundred years it has fallen to the Judges of the present Supreme Court to highlight the importance of Sanskrit and to see that it finds its due place in the niche of our national life.

**Place of Sanskrit in our educational ethos**

"It is well known that Sanskrit is a mother of all Indo-Aryan languages and it is this language in which our Vedas, Puranas and Upanishads have been written and in which Kalidas, Bhavbuti, Banabhatta and Dandi wrote their classics. Teachings of Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, Madhawacharya, Nimbark and Vallabhacharya would not have been woven into the fabric of Indian culture if Sanskrit would not have been available to them as a medium of expressing their thoughts.

"The report of the Sanskrit Commission (set up by the Government of India) which was submitted in 1957 speaks eloquently about the importance of Sanskrit. We do not propose to burden this judgment with all that was said by the Commission in this regard. It would be enough for our purpose if we take note of some passages finding place in the report which highlight the quality, substance, content and strength of Sanskrit. At page 71 of the report it has been mentioned that Sanskrit is one of the greatest languages of the world and it is a classical language par excellence not only of India but of a good part of Asia as well. At page 73 the report states that the Indian people and the Indian civilisation were born, so to say, in the lap of Sanskrit and it went "hand in hand with the historical development of the Indian people, and gave the noblest expression to their mind and culture which has come down to our day as an inheritance of priceless order for India, nay, for the entire world". The report further speaks at page 74 about the "great mental and spiritual link" of Sanskrit and of it being the elder sister of Greek and Latin, and cousin of English, French and Russian.

"There is no need to dilate on the importance of Sanskrit further in our national ethos in view of what was stated by no less a person than the first Prime Minister of the country, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in this regard, which is as below:

"If I was asked what the greatest treasure which India possesses is and what is her finest heritage, I would answer unhesitatingly - it is the Sanskrit language and literature, and all that it contains. This is a magnificent inheritance, and so long as this endures and influences the life of our people, so long the basic genius of India will continue."

**Is teaching of Sanskrit against secularism?**

"Of the three objections mentioned by the Additional Solicitor General regarding the inability of the Board in acting in accordance with the prima facie views expressed by us in our order dated 19-7-1994, the only objection which merits our close look is that if Sanskrit were to

be included as an elective subject, Arabic and Persian shall also have to be so done. The two other objections, namely inclusion of French and German also in the syllabus and of language like Lepcha do not deserve any consideration for obvious reasons.

"The first objection needs our consideration because in some quarter there may be a feeling that by conceding to Sanskrit alone as an elective subject, we would act against secularism, which has been accepted by a nine-Judge Bench of this Court in S.R. Bommai v. Union of India as a basic structure of our Constitution. It is apparent that we cannot give any direction 2 (1994) 3 SCC 1 about which it can be said that it is against the secularist requirement of our Constitution.

"For the disposal of the cases at hand it is not necessary to elaborately discuss what are the basic requirements of secularism inasmuch as in Bommai case this exercise has been well done by the learned Judges. It would be enough for our purpose to note what some of the learned Judges said in this regard. Sawant, J., with whom one of us (Kuldip Singh, J.) agreed, quoted in para 147 of the report what Shri M.C. Setalvad had stated on secularism in his Patel Memorial Lectures, 1965. One of the observations made by Setalvad was that a secular State is not hostile to religion but holds itself neutral in matters of religion. The further observation in para 148 is that the State's tolerance of religion does not make it either a religious or a theocratic State. Ramaswami, J. stated in para 179 that secularism represents faiths born out of the exercise of rational faculties and it enables to see the imperative requirements for human progress in all aspects and cultural and social advancement and indeed for human survival itself.

"It would be profitable to note that according to Justice H.R. Khanna secularism is neither anti-God nor pro-God; it treats alike the devout, the agnostic and the atheist. According to him, secularism is not antithesis of religious devoutness. He would like to dispel the impression that if a person is devout Hindu or devout Muslim he ceases to be secular. This is illustrated by saying that Vivekananda and

Gandhiji were the greatest Hindus yet their entire life and teachings embodied the essence of secularism. (See his article "The Spirit of Secularism" as printed in Secularism and India: Dilemmas and Challenges edited by Shri M.M. Sanklidhar.)

"We also propose to refer to what was said by the Sanskrit Commission on the subject of "Sanskrit and National Solidarity" in Chapter IV of its report. The Commission has, in this context first stated that Sanskrit is the "embodiment of Indian culture and civilisation". It then observes that the Indian people look upon Sanskrit as the binding force for the different peoples of this great country, which was described as the greatest discovery which the Commission made as it travelled from Kerala to Kashmir and from Kamarupa to Saurashtra. The Commission, while so travelling, found that though the people of this country differed in a number of ways, they all were proud to regard themselves as participants in a common heritage; and that heritage emphatically is the heritage of Sanskrit. According to the Commission one of the witnesses who appeared before it went to the length of suggesting that if the Sanskrit Commission had come before the States Reorganisation Commission, many of the recent bickering in our national life could have been avoided. (Pages 80 and 81)

"From what has been stated above, we entertain no doubt in our mind that teaching of Sanskrit alone as an elective subject can in no way be regarded as against secularism. Indeed, our Constitution requires giving of fillip to Sanskrit because of what has been stated in Article 351, in which while dealing with the duty of the Union to promote the spread of Hindi, it has been provided that it would draw, whenever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit. Encouragement to Sanskrit is also necessary because of it being one of the languages included in the Eighth Schedule.

"We, therefore, conclude by saying that in view of importance of Sanskrit for nurturing our cultural heritage, because of which even the official education policy has highlighted the need of study of

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Sanskrit, making of Sanskrit alone as an elective subject, while not conceding this status to Arabic and/or Persian, would not in any way militate against the basic tenet of secularism. There is thus no merit in the first objection raised by the Board. In the aforesaid premises, we direct the Board to include Sanskrit as an elective subject in the syllabus under consideration. Necessary amendment in the syllabus shall be made within a period of three months from today.

**"The writ petitions are allowed accordingly. No order as to costs."**

## Appendix I

### **Decolonize Indian Minds with Sanskrit<sup>2</sup>**

The HRD ministry's decision to replace German with Sanskrit has been showered with unique 'logic' by the same forces and people who have a unique contempt for the soul of India. They see India only through the prism of the West. Their colonized minds find teaching of Sanskrit anti-global, and they are quick to categorize it as an RSS agenda of 'saffronisation'. Is it so? The question is not new. The hybrid progeny of Macaulayites, Marxists and Nehruvians have left no stone unturned to denigrate Sanskrit to a 'Brahminical', 'priestly' language and of no face value.

For the first time in the 18th century, William Jones, a judge of the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort Williams in Bengal, resurrected the prestige of Sanskrit. Three centuries later, the same task has fallen on the judges of the Supreme Court of independent India. In 1994, when the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) opposed the inclusion of Sanskrit as an elective subject, the Bench of Justices B L Hansaria and Kuldeep Singh assertively told the nation of the importance of Sanskrit. The judgment began with a story of World War II: A professor of Cambridge University is deeply engrossed in his studies in his calm chamber. An agitated English soldier enters the study room and accuses the professor in not sharing the trauma of war which he and many others like him are facing while fighting the Germans. The professor calmly asks the young soldier whom he is fighting for. Quick comes the reply that it is to defend the country. The wise man wants to know what is that country to defend which he is prepared to shed his

<sup>2</sup>Rakesh Sinha, The New Indian Express, 30th November 2014



blood. The soldier replies it is the territory and its people. On further questioning the soldier says it is not only this but the culture of the country which he wants to defend. The professor quietly states that he is contributing to that culture. The soldier calms down and bows in respect to the professor and vows to defend with more vigour the cultural heritage of his country.

This is what is said to have happened during the Second World War when Britain was fighting almost a last-ditch battle of survival and all Englishmen contributed in their own way to the ultimate victory of England.

The judges observed: “The above shows the concern for culture evinced even by the Westerners. So far 'We, the people of India' are concerned, they have always held in high esteem the cultural heritage of this ancient land. And to foretell our views, the learning of Sanskrit is undoubtedly necessary for protection of this heritage. The stream of our culture would get dried if we were to discourage the study of Sanskrit, and that too on the most untenable ground that if the CBSE were to do so it would have to make facilities available for learning of Arabic and Persian.”

The UPA regime held Arabic and Persian to be no less important than Sanskrit, a social philosophy that is meant to obliterate our identity from the cultural map of the world. The court further questioned the stand taken by the CBSE, which felt teaching of German and French was at par with Sanskrit. The judges said, “We fail to appreciate the stand taken by a responsible body like the Board, which has been entrusted with the onerous duty of educating the youth of the country 'in which hands quiver destinies of the future' as the same is wholly untenable. Without the learning of Sanskrit, it is not possible to decipher the Indian philosophy on which our culture and heritage are based.” Besides, Sanskrit being the mother of all Indo-Aryan languages; it is this language in which our Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads have been written and in which Kalidas, Bhavbhuti, Banbhatt and

Dandi wrote their classics.

The teachings of Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, Nimbarkacharya and Vallabhacharya would not have been woven into the fabric of Indian culture had Sanskrit not been available as medium of expressing their thoughts.

Arabic or German may be useful for other purposes, but equating them with Sanskrit is the folly of the extreme nature. The judgment quoted the Sanskrit Commission Report (1957) which says the Indian people and Indian civilization were born in the lap of Sanskrit and it went “hand in hand with the historical development of the Indian people and gave the noblest expression of their mind and culture which has come down to our day as an inheritance of priceless order for India, nay, for the entire world”.

It is a part of the larger project of decolonization of Indian mind and has no aversion for any other language. Interestingly, decolonization and saffronization are synonyms due to common objectives and intentions.



**Pandita Ramabai** (23 April 1858 – 5 April 1922) was an Indian social reformer, a champion for the emancipation of women, and a pioneer in education. She acquired a reputation as a Sanskrit scholar. "Pandit" and "Saraswati" at Bengal (before going to Britain), recognizing her skills in Sanskrit. Kaisar-i-Hind medal for community service in 1919, awarded by the British Government. She is honored with a feast day on the liturgical calendar of the Episcopal Church (USA) on April 5. On 26 October 1989, in recognition of her contribution to the advancement of Indian women, the Government of India issued a commemorative stamp.

## **Appendix II**

### **A Case for Sanskrit as Computer Programming Language<sup>3</sup>**

This paper briefly enlists the features of Sanskrit Language and suggests the use of the same for Natural Language Processing Studies and applications. Certain advantages of Sanskrit mentioned may find use in some of the frontier areas of Computer Engineering Research, notably in AL and Knowledge-based systems.

The view-point expressed here is that a Sanskrit-based compiler or interpreter may have to be developed to unearth the hidden treasures in Sanskrit technical literature. Other countries in the West also, of late, have undertaken similar studies and it would only be appropriate if Sanskrit gets the type of recognition that it so richly deserves in its own land even in areas of advanced technological research, for which it is undoubtedly suited intrinsically.

Be it knowledge representation or speech synthesis, natural language processing or machine translation, intelligent tutoring systems or unambiguous semantic extraction, study of complex mathematical problems or linguistics, in virtually any field, one can think of utilizing the richness, strength, accuracy, efficiency, structure, flexibility and the extant works available in the Sanskrit language.

One of the significant advantages of Sanskrit is that the grammar ensures total precision and guards against ambiguity; mis-spelling and mispronunciations the meanings are bound to get altered otherwise. The real advantage is that since the correlation between written spoken

<sup>3</sup>Aircraft Design Bureau, ADA (Systems) C.V. Raman Nagar, Bangalore

forms are one is to one, the two forms of input can be exchangeably used. The analysis of alphabets is based on sound production from well-defined places of utterance and hence, comprehensively and clearly covers all possible cases.

Panini's structure of Sanskrit grammar has won the admiration of linguists of all ages and regions. The Grammar is sound based in that as explained earlier, throat, tongue, head, teeth, lips, nose etc. are identified as origins of various literals and in dealing with such analytically formed sounds, other parameters enumerated earlier are used effectively.

All technical literature in Sanskrit has a fundamental set of "Aphorism", which are short, pithy, versatile sentences that capture the concepts thoroughly. These are termed as 'Sutras'. Grammar rules are also in this 'Sutra' style which greatly condenses the amount of instructions or information to be given to precisely convey a particular aspect. Hierarchy, sequence, precedence, priority, Normal an exception rules, grouping, use of Designators or operators (control character), explicit instructions for interpretation in particular cases, generalization, Chaining, Restriction, Extension, convention etc. impart the needed flexibility while maintaining the control on validity of word-formation.

The absence of syntax in Sanskrit, is a definite plus point in its favor. The semantics also can be extracted by well laid out procedures. Here, apart from Grammar, the rules of Syllogism (a branch dealing with logic) and Mimamsa (study of scriptural texts) are utilized.

The extent of technical literature available as of today also is by no means small and one should impartially analyse them for what they are worth with an open mind. When the same language is used for such a study also, it would be very appropriate and original, as the ideas can be captured precisely.

Technical literature in Sanskrit comprises of 14 branches of learning.

These are four Vedas: Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atarvana Veda; the six vedic auxiliaries, namely, Phonology, Grammar, Prosody (Metrics), Etymology, Astronomy and Ceremonial Directory (Ritualry), study of Vedic Texts, Syllogism, Epics, Codes of Moral Rectitude. There is a great treasure of knowledge contained in these in an efficient and streamlined manner. Discounting controversial claims and exaggerations, it needs to be dispassionately studied and take what is worth.



**Kumud Pawade**, writer, feminist and social activist, was born in Nagpur, India in 1938 as a member of Dalit community. Her autobiographical work *Antasphot* consists of episodes taken from her life that weave the story of a Dalit girl who aspires not only to learn Sanskrit but also to master it to be able to impart the knowledge through teaching assignments.

### Appendix III

## Knowledge Representation in Sanskrit and Artificial Intelligence

In the past twenty years, much time, effort, and money has been expended on designing an unambiguous representation of natural languages to make them accessible to computer processing. These efforts have centered around creating schemata designed to parallel logical relations with relations expressed by the syntax and semantics of natural languages, which are clearly cumbersome and ambiguous in their function as vehicles for the transmission of logical data. Understandably, there is a widespread belief that natural languages are unsuitable for the transmission of many ideas that artificial languages can render with great precision and mathematical rigor.

But this dichotomy, which has served as a premise underlying much work in the areas of linguistics and artificial intelligence, is a false one. There is at least one language, Sanskrit, which for the duration of almost 1000 years was a living spoken language with a considerable literature of its own. Besides works of literary value, there was a long philosophical and grammatical tradition that has continued to exist with undiminished vigor until the present century. Among the accomplishments of the grammarians can be reckoned a method for paraphrasing Sanskrit in a manner that is identical not only in essence but in form with current work in Artificial Intelligence. This article demonstrates that a natural language can serve as an artificial language also, and that much work in AI has been reinventing a wheel millennia old.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Rick Briggs, RIACS, NASA Ames Research Center, Moffet Field, California 94305, Spring Magazine 1985.



## Appendix IV

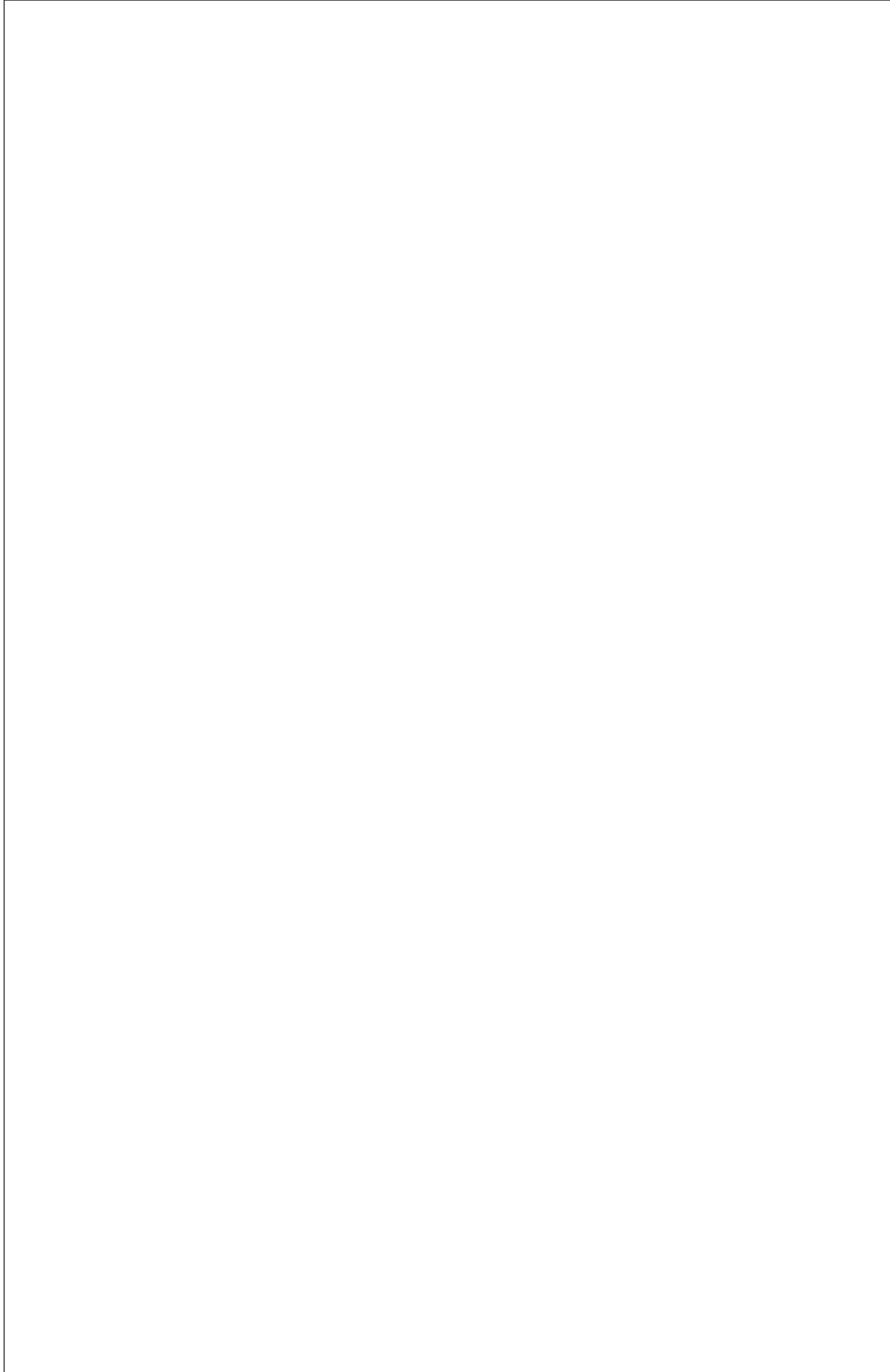
### **Excerpts from Sanskrit Commission Report, 1956**

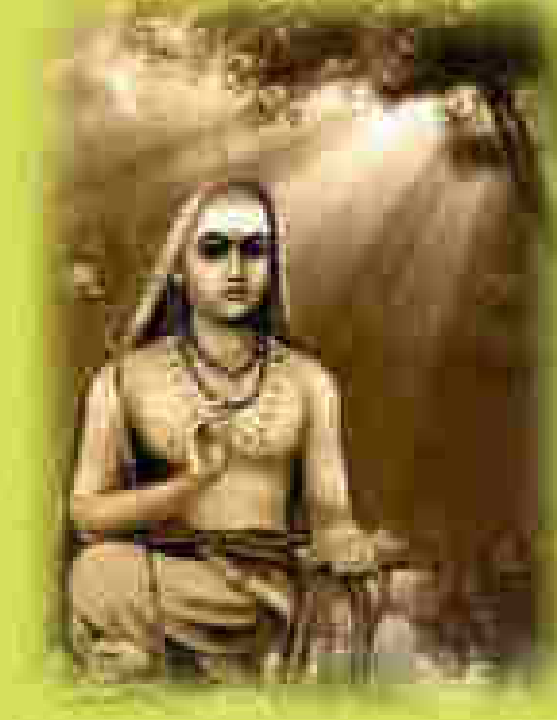
The long and unbroken continuity of Sanskrit in the life and tradition of India is something unique, and accepting China with her system of writing keeping up this historical continuity no other country in the world can show this unbroken line of development. The Greek and the Roman world suffered from a violent break when Christianity came and snapped the chain. Similarly, Egypt and Babylon also sustained the double break of both language and religion. In India religion and language have both maintained this unbroken continuity through the ages. (Chapter IV — Sanskrit and the Aspirations of India, Section 9)

Sanskrit by its origin and its basic character links us to the West. But it has been no less a potent bond of union for India with the lands of Asia—with Serindia or Central Asia of ancient and mediaeval times where the cultures of China and India had a common meeting place; with Tibet; with China and the lands within the orbit of Chinese civilization — Korea and Japan and Vietnam and above all with the lands of Farther India—Burma and Siam, Pathet Lao and Cambodia, and Cochin China or Champa and the area of Malaya and Indonesia. Ceylon is of course a historical and cultural projection of India. In all these lands, Sanskrit found a home for itself as the vehicle of Indian thought and civilization which flowed out into them as a peaceful cultural extension, from the closing centuries of the first thousand years before Christ. (Chapter IV — Sanskrit and the Aspirations of India, Section 18)

The possession of Sanskrit by India thus makes India's position unique, as a sort of a link and synthesis of the various ramifications of the human race and society. It is thus easy to see that Sanskrit preserves the entire culture of India in the past — a culture which went on developing for at least 4,000 years — with all its pre-historic and historic associations and connections as with the worlds of Europe and Asia. The Sanskrit tradition is still a living one, and the line of development has come down unbroken to our day.

**(Chapter IV — Sanskrit and the Aspirations of India, Section 19)**





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विद्या बन्धुजनो विदेशगमने विद्या परं देवतम्  
विद्या राजसु पूज्यते न हि धनं विद्याविहिनः पशुः॥



भारत नीति प्रतिष्ठान  
**India Policy Foundation**

D-51, 1st Floor, Hauz Khas, New Delhi - 110016  
Phone: 011-26524018, Fax: 011-46089365  
E-mail: [indiapolicy@gmail.com](mailto:indiapolicy@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.indiapolicyfoundation.org](http://www.indiapolicyfoundation.org)

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