

CURRENT STATUS OF SANSKRITAS A STUDY IN EDUCATION SYSTEMS OF GERMANY AND INDIA: A COMPARATIVE EVALUATION

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Abstract

India and Germany are two far distant countries with more dissimilarities than similarities in respect of culture, tradition and economic status. But both the countries are gradually emerging as biggest economic power in the present world. Both the countries have pride ancient and prestigious educational background. In the development of modern education and science these two countries have remarkable contributions. Regarding Sanskrit education Germany has notable stand other than that of India. Effort is given here to make a comparative study on status of Sanskrit Education between India and Germany. The chief objectives of this paper are to investigate the historical background of Sanskrit education in Germany, to elucidate the historical background of Sanskrit education in India and to make a comparison between India and Germany regarding status of Sanskrit education. It is largely a qualitative research and the present study is historical in nature. This study finds that regarding status of Sanskrit education India is far ahead of Germany, but Germany's stand in this point is exceptional as Sanskrit is a foreign language in Germany. Not only that its practice is gradually faded even in India.

Key words: Sanskrit education, Intellectual resources, Sanskrit research.

1. Introduction

Sanskrit is the most important cultural force that contributes to the unity and integrity of diverse featured India. As a cultural language Sanskrit influences and even regulates the life of not only Indians but also other various parts of the globe in different ways as well. In India the unique system of education which was informal in the *Rig Vedic* age and became formal in later Vedic age and continued till the reign of Buddhism is the *Gurukul* system. From then Sanskrit education has shaped in various forms. The Europeans were interested in Sanskrit Research and publication of books in Sanskrit which made the Indians aware of the great literary and cultural heritage of India. From the end of the 17th century the interest of Sanskrit language among the Europeans has been gradually increased and this flow is still present in some of the States in Europe and America. The main task of this work is to focus the importance of Sanskrit language to analyse the World civilization, the chronological order of the different era, the evolution of the education system of the different ages, the comparison of present status of Sanskrit education in India and other parts of the world with special reference to Germany. As Sanskrit represents the past records, without the knowledge of Sanskrit overall discussion of the human evolution is not possible, that idea is now very much

relevant is felt everywhere for which the Western countries are trying to devote their efforts for the development of the Sanskrit language. On the other hand this emergency is not felt in India for which Sanskrit is gradually lost its pride. Hence it is very much relevant to examine the causes of decline and barriers of the development of Sanskrit.

2. Objectives

1. To analyse the historical background of the development of Sanskrit language and literature in India as well as in Germany;
2. To investigate the characteristic features and effectiveness of Sanskrit as a separate discipline
3. To evaluate the present status of Sanskrit as a study in India in comparison to that of Germany where Sanskrit has been gained popularity.

3. Methodology

Here the researcher has followed the document-based analysis based methodology, by incorporating the method of content analysis and curriculum evaluation which has provided a method of investigation including comparative analysis and interpretation from the concerned documents what exist in India and abroad in order to reach a clear perspective of the present and enlighten the future.

4. Delimitation

This investigation is restricted to the study of the Sanskrit education and its status only in two countries, India and Germany in the 21st century.

5. Historical Background of Sanskrit Education

The education in ancient India has unique characteristics and qualities which were not found in the ancient education system of any other country in the World. Students were generally learnt in 'Gurukul system' of education and Sanskrit was the main medium of instruction. It is said that Sanskrit is the primary liturgical language of Hinduism; a philosophical language of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and a literary language and a 'lingua-franka' for the educated of ancient and medieval India & Nepal. As a result of transmission of Hindu and Buddhist culture to South-East Asia and parts of Central Asia, it was also a language of high culture in some of these regions during the early medieval era.

Sanskrit is a standardised dialect of old Indo-Aryan, having originated in the third millennium B.C. as Vedic Sanskrit and tracing its linguistic ancestry back to Proto-Indo-Iranian and Proto-Indo-European. As the oldest Indo-European language for which substantial written documentation exists, Sanskrit holds a prominent Indo-European studies. The body of Sanskrit literature encompasses a rich tradition of poetry and drama as well as scientific, technical, philosophical and religious texts. Eminent scholars testifying to the

glory of Sanskrit language and pointing out the way in which it has permeated our national life down the Centuries have written several books, monographs and essays. The *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, Epics, Law-texts, *Puranas*, literary works, Works on medicine, Astronomy, Astrology and Mathematics are all written in Sanskrit. The high thought and enriched ideas of Sanskrit literature always claim a unique and incredible stand in the scenario of World literature, education and culture.

In the medieval period, the pride of Sanskrit gradually started to decline. In the British period, the exercise and practice of Sanskrit was limited to a particular section of the society mainly the *Purohitas* used it for the sake of the worship. Just after independence our national leaders gave their attention for the development of Sanskrit language. In India, Sanskrit is among the 22 languages of the eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution, but this effort was not sufficient, Sanskrit is still considered as a neglected language.

The picture is quite different in the Western World. The curiosity and interest of Sanskrit culture and education started to develop to the Western World in the late 17th Century. The first English edition of the *Vagbad Gita* was in 1785 A.D. by Charles Wilkins in London. This translation of the *Gita* was itself soon translated into French (1787) and German (1802). In 1840, Max Mullar started branding Sanskrit as Indo-European and he conveys that Indians are none other than Germans. Now in Germany, fourteen of the top Universities teach Sanskrit, classical and modern Indology. In U.K, Sanskrit is gradually gaining popularity. In USA also the popularity and importance of Sanskrit is increasing. Harvard University, Brown University, Naropa University and so many institutions have started courses in Sanskrit. Now it is a vital question why Indian effort is not up to the mark for the arrangements of remedial to develop Sanskrit language.

So this study is an attempt to find out a clear-cut picture of Sanskrit education in India and Germany and make a comparative study between them.

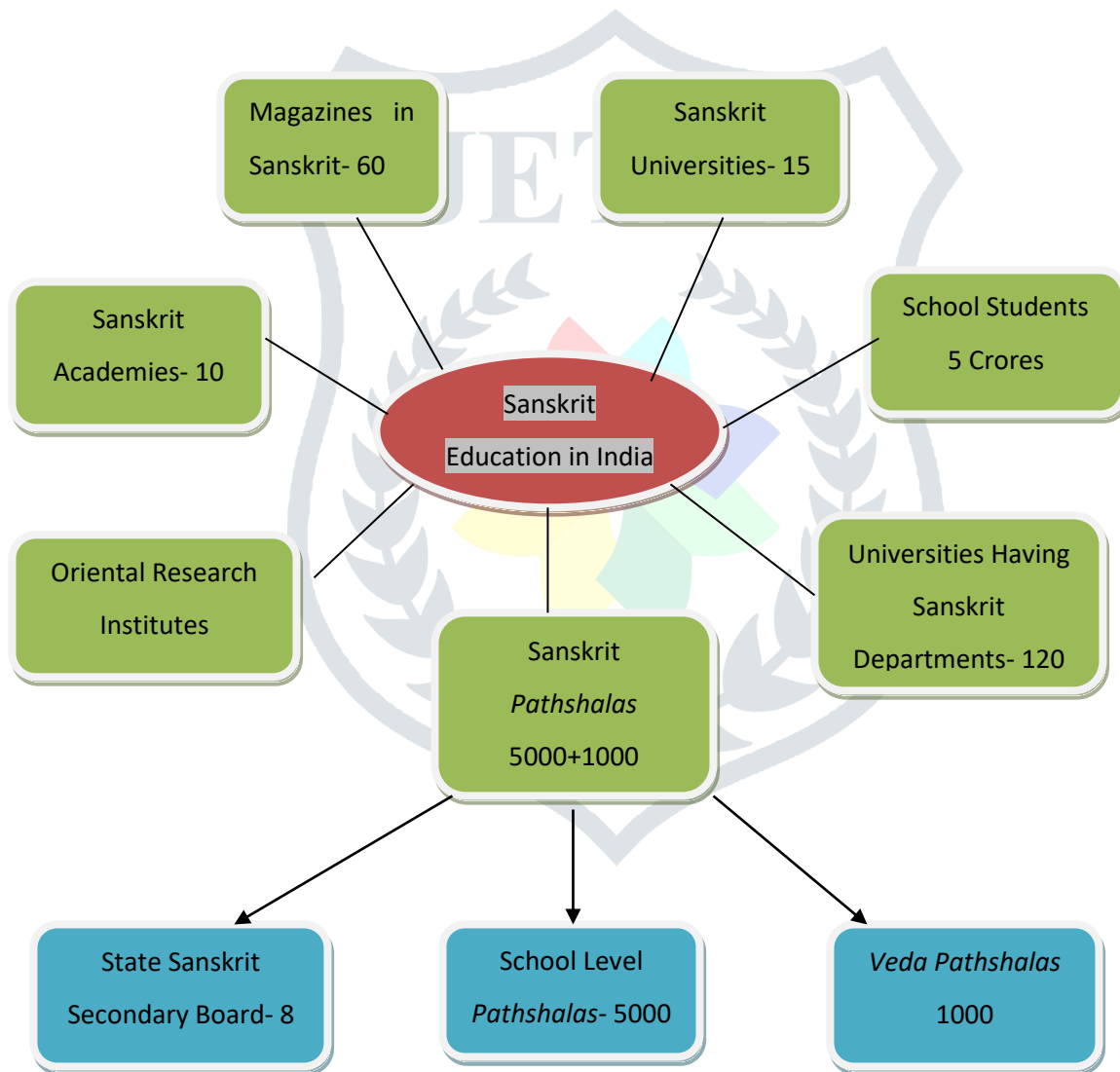
6. Sanskrit Education in India at Present

Sanskrit is the most important classical language in Indian subcontinent. In India and in Southeast Asia, Sanskrit is considered a similar status to that of Latin and Greek in the Western world. According to the 2001 Census Report that Sanskrit is used as a first language by 14,100 in India and by 15,770 Worldwide, as well as by 1,94000 as a second language in India.

In Indian School system, Sanskrit is being taught from 1st Standard to 12th Standard as one of the optional languages. Most of the Indian State Secondary Education Boards offer Sanskrit as part of the 'Three Language Formula' from 6th to 10th and as second optional language in 11th & 12th Class. It is estimated that all together about five crores students study Sanskrit at school level.

There is also a separate system of Sanskrit education in India through traditional '*Pathshala*'. In India, near about 5000 Sanskrit *Pathshalas* at school level and about 1000 Veda *Pathshalas*,¹ are guided and regulated by State Sanskrit Secondary Education Board. Eight States in India have State Sanskrit Secondary Education Board.

Most of the Indian Universities have separate department of Sanskrit. Students have the scope to learn Sanskrit in both UG & PG level. With this there are 15 separate Sanskrit Universities in India.² At present about 10, 00000 students study in higher level. Now in India, 10 Sanskrit Academies, 16 Oriental Research Institutes, about 60 periodicals and magazines in Sanskrit and about a hundred NGOs working for the development of Sanskrit Language and Literature.



Present Scenario of Sanskrit Education In India

¹ Vision and Road Map for the Development of Sanskrit Ten Years Perspective Plan, (2015, November), Government of India, MHRD, Department of Higher Education, Languages Division, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi

² Vision and Road Map for the Development of Sanskrit Ten Years Perspective Plan, (2015, November), Government of India, MHRD, Department of Higher Education, Languages Division, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi

7. Sanskrit Education in Germany

Federal Republic of Germany, popularly known as Germany is a powerful nation in Europe and one of the most developed countries in the Western world. This country includes 16 Constituent States of total area 137, 988 Sq Miles and bears 83 Million inhabitants.

In the linguistic point, German & Sanskrit have several similarities and the grammar of both languages have extreme similarities. According to the opinion of the language experts, that German and Sanskrit have originated from the same language and that is Aryan. In the 17th Century, a new idea was developed by finding the similarities between Sanskrit and German and other European languages, the scholars in this field demanded that Sanskrit literature is European treasure. A renowned German romanticist remarked that Europe's discovery of India as a rediscovery of its own foundation.³ Later, a British administrator, 'William Jones' opined that Sanskrit is the most marvellous product of human mind. Maxmuller the Great translated some of the important Sanskrit text in German language, hence, Sanskrit gradually popular in Europe especially in Germany. Sanskrit and Indology entered in most of the eminent Universities in Germany and other parts of Europe and even USA.

In Germany, 14 Universities have the Indology and Asian language department where Sanskrit has a vital place to study. A brief discussion of these Universities is given here from which a clear picture of Sanskrit education in Germany is possible to draw.

❖ Humboldt University, Berlin

Sanskrit studies started here in 1821 and named after 'Wilhelm Von Humboldt'. In between 1821 & 1945, a large number of Sanskrit scholars has been produced here like 'Albrecht Weber', 'Richard Pischal', 'Henrich' and 'Else Luders', 'Bernhard Breloer' and others. In 1950, famous Sanskrit expert in Europe 'Walter Ruben' was appointed here. The other famous teachers of Sanskrit of this University were 'Frank Richard Hamm', 'Klaus Bruhn', 'Adalbert', and 'Gail' and so many. But unfortunately, this department of this University has been closed in 2012.⁴

❖ Bonn University

Sanskrit education started here from 1818 with the pride presence of famous scholar 'August Wilhelm Von Schlegel'. This University is the birth place of many scholars in Sanskrit like 'Theodor Anfrecht', 'Hermann Jacobi', 'Willibald' 'Kirfel', 'Paul Hacker', 'Frank Richard hamm', 'Claus Vogel' and others. Sanskrit education is still an enriched department of this University.

³ Mahato, R, European Misappropriation of Sanskrit Led to the Aryan Race Theory, [Source: <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/rajiv-malhotra>, Retrieved on 09-03-2019]

⁴ Tripathi, R., (2012), Countries Other Than India, *Sixty Years of Sanskrit Studies, 1950-2010*, Vol. 2, Countries Other Than India, New Delhi, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, DK Print World, pp. 39-40

❖ Freiburg University

Indology Department started here from 1919 with the devotional effort of 'Ernst Leumann'. After 1931, this department was closed and restarted again in 1950. Excellent scholars like 'Vlrich Schneider', 'Oscar von Hinuber' enriched the department. The authority of the University again closed the department in 2010.

❖ Gottingen University

Sanskrit education has been taught here from 1826-27. 'Heinrich Ewald', a well-known Sanskrit scholar in the-then Europe, offered his first lecture here. 'Theodor Benfey', 'Franz Keilhorn', 'Henrich Luders', 'Hermann Oldenberg' were the famous teachers of this University. This department is the birth place of many important research works in Sanskrit. This department is still functioning with high pride.

❖ Halle University

Sanskrit is taught here since 1833. Indian Philosophy and culture and Asian languages are the main area of study in this department. 'Richard Pischel', 'Theodor Zacharie', 'Karl Friedrich Geldner' are well names attached with this department. In 1992, this department was closed down but it is reopened in 1995.

❖ Hamburg University

Indological studies started its journey in this University in the year 1914, with the presence and effort of Mr. Sten Konow, a famous teacher of Vedic Philosophy. His successor 'Walter Schubring' has put his intense devotion for the development of this department and for his enormous effort, the department reached in high status. Later, 'Ludwig Alsdorf', 'Albrecht Wezler', 'Franz Bernherd' and others enriched the department in high esteem.

❖ Heidelberg University

The South Asia Institute of Heidelberg started its journey in the year 1962 as an interdisciplinary centre for research and academic teaching on South-Asia. Sanskrit and Pali are the main area of study here. Great scholar and teacher 'Hermann Berger' was its first departmental Head. 'Salomon Lefmann', 'Max Walleser', 'Willem Bollee' and many renowned scholars were attached with the department. The department is still running with pride.

❖ Kiel University

In the Kiel University, Sanskrit language and literature included as an important area of curriculum in the end part of the 19th Century. 'Hermann Jacobi' was its first departmental Head (1885 – 1889). This University hosted several outstanding Indologist like 'Hermann Oldenberg', 'Otto Schrader', 'Siegfried Lienhard', 'Bernhard Kolver', 'Horst Brinkhans' and many others. Some

outstanding Research works on Bhagbad Geeta, Kavya, Nyaya Shastra and other Sanskrit Texts have been done here.

❖ **Leipzig University:**

Teaching Learning on Sanskrit started here in 1841. Hermann Blockhaus enlighten as first Chair professor. His two famous disciples, Friedrich Max Muller and Ernst Windisch are world famous as Sanskrit experts. The Great composition of Max Muller 'The History of Sanskrit Philosophy and Indian antiquity' is still considered a pioneer source of history of Sanskrit language and literature.

❖ **Mainz University**

The linguistic department of this University has a close connection with the institute of Indology. The department reached top pried on and after 1963 when the Great scholar 'Georg Buddruss', an expert of Hindukush and the Karakorum region languages had been given charge of the department. At present famous scholar of Hindu and Buddhist Philosophy, 'Konrad Meisig' is the Head of the department.

❖ **Marburg University**

The Indo-Germany linguistic department emerged here in 1901. Albert Thumb became its first Head of the department. The department has been enlightened with the presence of some eminent teachers like 'Rudolf Otto', 'Jakob Wilhelm' and many others. The University of Marburg was enriched by the scholarship of 'Bhikkhu Pasadika', actually a German Buddhist scholar monk.

❖ **Munich University**

Sanskrit education started here in the year 1826 by 'Othmar Frank', an author of a Sanskrit Chrestomathy. The department of the University has offered some outstanding scholars like 'Helmat Hoffman', 'Adelheid Mete', 'Gitli Von Mitterwallner' and others.

❖ **Munster University**

Indology and Sanskrit studies started to flourish here with the presence of 'Hermann Jacobi' in 1876. In the later period 'Richard Schmidt', 'Ludwig Alrdorf', 'Paul Hacker' and many other scholars has reached the department in high pride.

❖ **Wurzburg University**

Here Sanskrit education started its journey in the early 19th Century with the devotional effort of 'Othmar Frank', a renowned Philologist. In the later period this department has been enlightened with the presence of some outstanding scholars like 'Julius Jolly', 'Heidrun Bruckner' and others.

❖ **Tubingen University**

With the presence of Great scholar 'Rudalf Von', Sanskrit education started its journey in the year 1845. Sanskrit Philology and the History of Religion both taught here. The department was reached in its highest quality in the period between 1947 & 1959 when 'Helmuth Von Glasenapp' ornamented the post of 'H.O.D.

The other eminent scholars in this regard were ‘Paul Thieme’, ‘Henrich Von Stietencron’ and others. The department is still running with excellence.

8. Comparative Analysis

On the basis of this discussion, the Sanskrit education in India and Germany now is compared with the following domains:

Domains	Sanskrit Education in India	Sanskrit Education in Germany
School Level Education	6000 Pathshalas and Compulsory Sanskrit in School level	Very rare findings of Sanskrit education at school level
Higher Education	15 Sanskrit Universities and 200 Universities having Sanskrit Departments	14 Universities having separate Sanskrit Department
Number of Students	More than 5 Crores Students in School level and 10,00,000 Students in Higher Education	Near about 300 Students in Higher Education
Research Work	Universities offer better scope for Research work but quality Research still found rare	Outstanding Research works have been done, German Universities are pioneer in this regard
International Appeal	Students and Scholars are mostly Indians, few portions come from Tibet, Nepal, Bangladesh mostly neighbour countries	Mostly Foreign Students, large part of the Students come from UK, Switzerland, USA, and other parts of Europe

9. Conclusion

Regarding Sanskrit education both the countries have long tradition, though Sanskrit language and literature originated in India. Scope of its study in India is not comparable with other countries but Germany from the starting period of 19th Century, have performed exceptional research works in this field.

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