



# World Sanskrit Day

## Why in News

World Sanskrit Day (Viswa Samskrita Dinam) was celebrated on **22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021**.

- In India, Sanskrit is a **Classical** and an **Eighth Schedule** language.
- In 2020, the **Uttarakhand Government** decided to develop '**Sanskrit Grams**' across the state to teach use of Sanskrit regularly.

## Key Points

### ▪ About:

- It is **an annual event aimed to promote revival and maintenance of Sanskrit Language**.
- It is **celebrated on Poornima day (Full Moon) of the Shraavana month** in the Hindu calendar.
- The day essentially speaks of the **importance of learning and knowing it, despite it being not as widely spoken as in ancient times**.
- The Day was **celebrated for the first time in the year 1969 after the Union ministry of education issued notifications** to state and central governments.
- The **Sanskrit organisation Samskrita Bharati (NGO)** is involved in promoting the day.

### ▪ Some Important Facts about Sanskrit Language:

- It is considered to be **one of the oldest languages in the world**. It is an **old Indo-Aryan language** in which the most ancient documents, **Vedas, are composed in what is called Vedic Sanskrit**.
- Sanskrit used to be **a pan-Indian language in the Vedic period** and most languages in the country have branched out of Sanskrit.
  - It lost, somehow, to modern derivations and regional dialects.
- Classical Sanskrit, a language close to late Vedic as then used in the northwest of the subcontinent, was elegantly **described in one of the finest grammars ever produced, the Aṣṭādhyāyī** ("Eight Chapters") **composed by Pāṇini** (c. 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century BCE).
- Sanskrit has been written **both in Devanāgarī script and in various regional scripts**, such as **Śāradā from the north (Kashmir), Bāṅglā (Bengali)** in the east, **Gujarātī** in the west, and various **southern scripts, including the Grantha alphabet**, which was especially devised for Sanskrit texts.
- It is considered **a scientific language and is believed to be the most computer-friendly language**.
  - In 1786, English Philologist William Jones suggested in his book '**The Sanscrit Language**' that Greek and Latin were related to Sanskrit.
- The language, however, is **not entirely dead**. **A village in the Shimoga district of Karnataka, called Mattur**, is believed to have preserved the language.
- The **only Sanskrit newspaper in the world is called 'Sudharma'**. The newspaper has been published since 1970 from Mysore in Karnataka and is also available online.

- Some of the eminent **Sanskrit authors are Panini, Patanjali, Adi Shankaracharya, Ved Vyas, Kalidas etc.**

▪ **Important Authors and Works in Sanskrit:**

- **Bhāsa** (for example, his Svapnavāsavadatta - Vāsavadatta in a Dream), who is assigned widely varying dates but definitely worked prior to Kālidāsa, who mentions him.
- **Kālidāsa**, dated anywhere from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE to the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, whose works include **Śakuntalā, Vikramorvaśīya, Kumārasambhava and Raghuvamśa**.
- **Śūdraka and his Mṛcchakatika** ("Little Clay Cart"), possibly dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE.
- **Ashvaghosha's Buddhacarita** is one of the finest examples of Buddhist literature.
- **Bhāravi and his Kirātārjuniya** ("Arjuna and the Kirāta"), from approximately the 7<sup>th</sup> century.
- **Māgha**, whose **Śiśupālavadha** ("The Slaying of Śiśupāla") dates to the late 7<sup>th</sup> century.
- The two epics **Rāmāyaṇa** ("Life of Rāma") and **Mahābhārata** ("Great Tale of the Bhāratas") were also composed in Sanskrit, and the former is esteemed as the first poetic work (ādikāvya) of India.

▪ **Promotion of Sanskrit by the Central Government:**

- The **New Education Policy (NEP)** laid an ambitious path for "mainstreaming" the language. Sanskrit is to be offered in schools, including as one of the language options in the three-language formula, as well as in higher education.
  - NEP also stated that Sanskrit universities will be turned into multi-disciplinary institutions of higher learning.
- The government has established the **Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan in Delhi as a nodal authority to promote Sanskrit**.
- Providing **financial assistance** to Adarsh Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya/Shodha Sansthans.
- Award of **merit scholarships** to students of Sanskrit Pathshala to College level.
- **Financial assistance to NGOs/Higher Educational Institutions of Sanskrit** for various Research Projects/Programmes.
- Retired eminent Sanskrit scholars are engaged under the **Shastra Chudamani scheme** for teaching.
- Sanskrit is also **taught through Non-formal Sanskrit Education (NFSE)** programme, by setting up Non-Formal Sanskrit learning centres, in reputed institutions like Indian Institutes Technology, Ayurveda institutions, Modern Colleges and Universities.
- **Presidential awards** for Sanskrit Language are awarded annually to 16 senior scholars and to 5 young scholars.
- Financial Assistance for **Publication, Reprint of rare Sanskrit books**.
- **Ashtaadashi** containing eighteen Projects for sustaining the growth of Sanskrit has been implemented.

**Source: PIB**

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