

Sanskrit in Post Colonial India: A Study from 2014-2023

Dr. Mithila Bagai¹

ABSTRACT

The revival of Sanskrit in India is a post-colonial endeavor to bring in epistemic equality and shed the colonial baggage of Western supremacy from discourses. It's an attempt to reject "native essentialism" that portrays native knowledge as superstitious, inferior and outdated. The paper analyzes how colonialism and neo colonialism disrupted the growth of Sanskrit in India to further its political ends. The methodology adopted for the pursual of the above stated objective is interpretative analysis. The period taken for analysis is 2014-2023. The paper critically looks at decolonizing attempts by post-colonial India to break the power knowledge nexus and present heterogenous and plural model of language and knowledge systems. It also highlights that resting nationalism on the ancient legacy of Sanskrit has ended up more as a vote bank politics rather than a genuine attempt to put forth diverse systems of knowledge and values at international and domestic fora.

Keywords: Sanskrit, Post Colonialism, De-Colonization, nationalism, Knowledge systems, Eurocentrism

INTRODUCTION

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, a Sanskrit phrase found in Maha Upanishad which is an ancient philosophical and religious text, that means World is One Family and all the plants, animals, micro-organisms and human beings form One Future. The aforementioned phrase has been announced as the theme of the elite club of G20 where India is chairing the Rotating Presidency from December 1, 2022 to November 30, 2023. Conspicuous in the theme is the use of a Sanskrit phrase and an affirmation of the Sanskritic values that has adorned India's ancient legacy.

India's G20 Presidency also coincides with its Shanghai Cooperation Organization's(SCO) rotating presidency that has bestowed Varanasi with the rotating title of 'Cultural and Tourism capital' for the SCO region.

1 Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, Email: mithilabagai@gmail.com

Varanasi, well known for being a centre of learning, is also celebrated for its mysticism, spiritualism, Sanskrit and yoga. The list is long where India is unhesitatingly projecting its culture, beliefs, traditions and language on the global platform amidst the global dominance of Western knowledge and values. This postcolonial endeavour underlines the unshackling of colonial baggages and putting forth its renewed confidence in native knowledge constituted in Sanskrit language. It rejects “native essentialism” (Grovoqui, 2013) that emphasises native knowledge as superstitious, inferior, barbaric and uncivilised. It rather highlights native’s heterogeneity and its potential in giving world various perspectives for emancipation from pressing global issues. The legacy of Sanskrit, the ancient language of India was quelled by colonisers to replace it with the dominant language of English and also to create hegemony of the Western values and ideas. In the colonising process, Sanskrit was belittled and degraded with the aim to impose the dominance of the colonial language. This created a binary between English, a “vehicular language”(Grovoqui, 1998) that was categorised as far superior and a language of educated and civilized class and on the other, Sanskrit and other native languages were termed as vernaculars, a language of inferiors, uncivilised and uneducated. The aim of this paper is to look at the postcolonial approach to understand the impact of colonisation on the ancient language of Sanskrit, it’s degradation from the status of the language of elite and learned and the decolonising attempts to look at Sanskrit and the treasure in Sanskrit texts with a renewed vigour from 2014-2023. The methodology adopted for the pursual of the above stated objective is interpretative analysis.

THE POST BY THE POSTCOLONIAL : AN INSIDE VIEW INTO THE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

“We are at a point in our work when we can no longer ignore our empires and the imperial context in our studies” (Said, 1994).

The significant aim of the postcolonial is to unravel the role and impact of colonialism in our studies. They highlight how race and racialised identities form an important part of text determination. Text Determination means how the text, ideas, beliefs and culture forms the basis of any society, economy and polity. Normative and ideational structures are as important as material structures (Smit,2005). But the Right over Text Determination is usurped by colonizers only, depriving the plural and diverse societies of the Right to Explain Their Worlds to The World. It means that every society has its own text and context of knowledge and understanding that has been run over by

the universal understanding of the colonizers. Post Colonials assert that the colonizers decide and determine how should a text be written to perpetuate and advance their Western political and ideological interests. Knowledge is Power (Foucault, 1980). And the power is asserted by the juxtaposition of the domination of colonial knowledge with the subordination and suppression of the indigenous knowledge. Edward Said therefore underlines “We cannot fight for our rights and our history as well as future until we are armed with weapons of criticism and dedicated consciousness” (Said, 2001).

Post colonials give a critical insight into the epistemological terrain traversed by the colonizers to manufacture knowledge that is then classified as “universal” and scientific knowledge. It is accepted as “natural” knowledge which cannot be challenged under any circumstances. The knowledge which challenges colonial knowledge is then condemned as inferior, superstitious, illogical and “The Other”. Post Colonial asserts that this classification of knowledge into Western and Non Western, Us and Others has caused oversimplification and homogenization of understanding of the world that is otherwise heterogenous, plural and diverse. The diversity in the societies has been translated into the depravity in our studies by categorising them into limited paradigms. Post Colonial analysis of the study of impact of colonization goes much beyond the material and resource exploitation. It gives an insider’s view into the machinations of knowledge. It explains how and why a particular form of knowledge is manufactured and then universally supplied for the consumption of the global community. They indeed study how the colonizers have occupied not the territory but the minds, texts and discourses of colonial people that the latter has voluntarily consented to accept the enslavement and supremacy of the colonizers. They have also consented that the knowledge of their world and society is outdated, illiberal and out of sync with contemporary modernity. Gramsci explains this in his concept that he calls as hegemony. Hegemony, Gramsci explains as the ideological, “moral and intellectual leadership” over the allied and subaltern groups (Gramsci, 1971). Post Colonial explains how the colonizers have created the hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) of their ideas, beliefs and institutions, denigrating the native knowledge as superficial, incompetent and redundant. Edward Said in his book *Culture and Imperialism* said that “the history of other cultures is non-existent” (Said, 1993). Post Colonials refuse the hierarchies of knowledge. They are not chauvinistic and do not believe that indigenous knowledge is superior or is above Western Knowledge. Post Colonials are saying that there are many forms of knowledge and Western knowledge is one amongst it. They refuse to accept Western knowledge as universal form of knowledge.

They emphasise on the alternative perspectives. They say there is not One Singular Truth but various Truths, not One History but various narratives and versions of history, not One Reality but many competing realities. They say there exists no hierarchy of ideas rather hermeneutics of ideas to present the multiple Truths of the colonized. They say colonial people have their own truth and history that has been silenced for the vested interests of colonizers. Heterogeneity, pluralism and diversity are the adornments of the post colonials. Post Colonial scholars says that post colonialism is not redundant or outdated concept just because colonialism does not exist now. Rather Post Colonial is not limited to the colonial period. It extends to the distortion and destruction of indigenous knowledge that has been done by colonizers and which is still very much relevant and continuing even after colonialism in the form of “universal” and scientific knowledge. They question this knowledge mafia or the “network of knowledge based experts” that gives fixity and rigidity to knowledge. They seek “epistemic justice” (Sajed, 2022) where they endeavour to put colonized’s knowledge equal to colonizers. They highlight the epistemic violence carried by the colonizers that has deprived the native’s knowledge of their validity, logic, rationale and put forth as superstitious, irrational and illogical. Post Colonials study the genealogy of a text. They underline the linkages between the power and knowledge. They problematize the universalization of knowledge by the Westerners that is passed on as common-sense and normal. They call for inclusion and legitimacy of non-western and indigenous forms of knowledge and diverse epistemic communities to make a salad bowl.

EXPLOITS OF THE COLONIAL: PUSHING SANSKRIT TO THE BRINK

The colonial history of Sanskrit has been tumultuous. Therefore, the need to study the colonial impact on Sanskrit and its fall from prominence is very much required. Sanskrit has become a dead language (Pollock, 2021). This section will deal with the ramifications of the intrusion of colonial British empire into the Indian education system and the deliberate degradation of native languages, our focus will be on Sanskrit in this article, and knowledge as “vernaculars” that etymologically means the language of slaves.

The colonial onslaught on the Indian education system dislodged Sanskrit from its prominent place. Sanskrit has been hailed as language of elite. But this elitism was not at all related with the moneyed class. Rather this elitism was associated with learning, knowledge and enquiry of The Absolute and The Truth. Though the malaise of casteism did exacerbate this true cause. But

that's not the area of focus of this paper.

A paradigm shift brought by the colonial rule completely changed the structure and nature of the Indian education system. The British education policy institutionalised the teaching of Sanskrit and confined it to classroom teaching. This deprived Sanskrit of its agency and its normative and cultural life. It was made into an academic discipline, disconnecting it from culture and society. This was done with the narrow aim of transforming the employees of the Company from tradesmen and merchants into India's ruling elite (Tull, 2015). Second, colonisers wanted to introduce and inculcate the European ideas and philosophy in Sanskrit that they consider as supreme. Another aim was to disseminate Christianity among the people. Therefore, language was not only a medium of communication. But it was constitutive of knowledge, ideas and customs that colonisers wanted to disseminate among the colonial people. Thirdly, Colonial government wanted to have the knowledge of the "Hindoo law". So Sanskrit was taught so as to have a class of 'able magistrates, wise and honest judges, and skilful statesmen properly qualified to conduct the ordinary movements of the great machine of government' (Tull, 2015). Lord Wellesley, the Governor General of India devised the curriculum by restricting it to two areas, the study of Indian languages and of Indian laws and customs. Learning Sanskrit remained fundamental to the higher class curriculum as this language (like Latin in Europe) was the source of various prominent dialects and languages and also the provider of knowledge of Hindu laws, customs, manners, usages and religion, whether to facilitate colonial rule in India or to ground sophisticated specialist debates (Fleming, 2020). Fourthly, Britishers had a malicious aim of bringing Sanskrit scholars and city's pundits under their control by establishing relationships with them. This was purposely done to displace the relationships that kings shared with pandit and scholars. To achieve their aims, the Sanskrit curriculum was systematised and made consistent. The measurement of the achievements and progress of students, introduction of examinations and mandatory attendance, transparency, regularity and predictability in the management of the pedagogy of Sanskrit was started. Organising the learning of Sanskrit in a classroom setting caused the downfall of the language, to an extent that Sanskrit neither remained a subject nor a course in graduation after few years (Tull, 2015). This colonial legacy of rote learning and classroom pedagogy still very much forms part of Indian curriculum system and has reduced the significance of Sanskrit from culture formation to a mere academic course, whose worth is merely analysed on the basis of enrolments or by its speakers. During the Indian freedom struggle in the nineteenth century, the nationalists did fight to reclaim the lost

sheen of Sanskrit and make it the pride of anti-colonial movement but the status of Sanskrit further deteriorated when Left and secular wings started associating Sanskrit with vulgar elitism (Vajpeyi, 2016).

Sanskrit's status and usage also declined due to the 'Grammar Translation Method' introduced by Britishers and that is still followed while teaching in institutions of India. It is surprising to note that the question papers of Sanskrit course in undergraduate and post graduate level in the top ranked University of Delhi are still in English language. Should not the questions in the examination of Sanskrit course be asked in Sanskrit?

It is a telling reminder that remnants of colonialism are still very much entrenched in the minds of society who have long ago got freedom from the political and territorial occupation of the colonials. (India got independence in 1947 and it's been 75 years since India's independence)

Grammar Translation Method was introduced by Britishers to translate Sanskrit literature into other 'less difficult' and easy languages namely English so that the colonisers can be well acquainted with the laws and philosophy governing the Indian society. This colonial legacy has continued till date in imparting Sanskrit education in India. The grave consequence of this method has been that Indians read only translation and are incapable of reading and writing Sanskrit. Normally, a student of Sanskrit can translate Sanskrit to other languages but faces lot of difficulties in translating other languages to Sanskrit. They can understand Sanskrit but cannot converse in Sanskrit. There are Sanskrit departments and classes but there's no favourable environment for Sanskrit. They know about Sanskrit but do not know Sanskrit. Since the Grammar Translation Method actually never taught Sanskrit but only translations, Sanskrit started appearing difficult for students. And to counter this "difficult" subject, rote learning and memorization of Sanskrit started. The better the student is able to memorise, the more marks will be allotted. Therefore, Sanskrit is now termed as a 'scoring' subject. Its life is dependent on scores. The energy, dynamism and life from Sanskrit language and literature have been sapped confining it to an academic subject that has to be scored. Due to this lingering colonial impact, interdisciplinary studies in Sanskrit institutions have become difficult. Grammar Translation Method has been discarded across the world but it's still very much prevalent in India for the Sanskrit learning and teaching in academic institutions. And this is one of the prominent reasons that Sanskrit has not been able to prosper and only 0.00198 per cent of India's population speak Sanskrit language amongst 121 crore (Press Trust of India, 2018).

This historical terrain traversed by Sanskrit is evident of the vicious interplay of power, knowledge, language that was at work. Antonio Gramsci talked about hegemony. And the colonisers wanted to create an hegemony of European ideas and philosophy and relegate indigenous or local knowledge and language to superstitious or irrelevance. The idea was to employ Sanskrit language and infuse Western ideas into India. Western education was promoted as true, rational, logical, valid and scientific and native learning was debased as decadent, irrational and unscientific. This led to the slow dissipation and endorsement of the Sanskritic ideas that was constituted in Sanskrit language. To an extent, that the natives considered their own knowledge as regressive and irrational. This brought in the racialised hierarchy where the Westerners were considered superior and the natives as inferior. It created a binary of 'Us' versus 'Them'. Therefore, one notices how starkly the intersectionality of power, knowledge, language and race brought in the decline of Sanskrit.

But the colonisers aim was not solely limited to spreading Christianity and Western ideas in colonial countries. They also had a larger aim of building and expanding of what English school terms as international society (Bull & Watson, 1985). This international society is dominated by English speaking, western, powerful and rich countries that lays down the terms and conditions for being a member in it. Firstly, there has to be a 'standard of civilization' (Buzan, 2014). And this standard was based on modernity, rationalism, science and logic that Westerners believed was only in Western knowledge and English language. So acceptance of West and Western language, ideas and knowledge became the important marker for being civilised. They heralded the civilizing mission and took on the mantle of civilising the colonial population of so as to fit them into international society. It became a white man's burden to teach them how to behave in international society. English became the medium of instruction as it's also the repository of Western ideas that will facilitate in civilizing the indigenous population of the colonial. So when the institutionalization of education took place in India, Britishers learned and taught Sanskrit for another reason that they can gain affection of Indian people that will facilitate their civilizing mission.

Particularism was given way to universalism. Rather heterogeneity and diversity amongst the colonial population was problematised by the colonisers. The colonisers portrayed diversity as a problem and a source of constant conflict, complications and a curse. Plurality and diversity were not celebrated. Homogenising in the garb of civilising was the solution. The white race and their knowledge systems were considered superior. English

was considered as a sole unifying and centralising force for the international society. Unity was meant as homogeneity. It was not unity in diversity as implied in the Indian context. English came to be naturally recognised as the language of International Society. Second, was the need to emphasise on the capitalist expansion and free trade for which a common English language will be a facilitator. Western language and knowledge deprived the indigenous epistemic community of their legitimacy and authority. The epistemic violence heaped on by the colonisers lent rigidity and fixity to knowledge. The non-western knowledge systems were not recognised or they were excluded from International Society. This led to the loss of moral, social and political imaginaries and possibilities of global reforms. The alternatives to knowledge or language were excluded. Western knowledge was therefore considered as natural and universal knowledge for International Society. So to include and expand the International Society as explained by English School, the colonial race has to train and shape themselves as modern and Western. Edward Said said that Orient was a mythical space created by the Westerners. Similarly, Third World was a myth and the aim was to dominate and suppress the Other knowledge systems. Alina Sajed rightly said Third World became a project (Sajed, 2022). Therefore, in this colonial project of civilizing mission, Sanskrit lost the sovereignty and sanctity of language to English. English became a sovereign language. To an extent, that even in India if there are attempts to allot a superior status to any regional or local language, conflict and allegations of biasedness and discrimination arises as to why other Indian languages were not given privileged status. These are the seeds of conflict that has been sown by the colonisers and they say only English is the way out of this conflicting pluralism.

Post Colonials are trying to understand how English colonised and enslaved the minds to an extent that its ramifications are felt even after the colonies have been freed of colonial rule. They are also attempting at understanding how the colonial policies of civilizing or de-civilizing mission work till date (Cesaire, 1972). Aime Cesaire in his 'Discourse on Colonialism' highlighted that colonialism decivilized the colonial societies by exploiting their raw materials, extracting human labour through slavery and destroying their indigenous crafts, knowledge and means of livelihood. He said that colonialism has led to the dehumanization and thingification of the colonised (Cesaire, 1972). Post Colonialism aims at excavating, adding and diversifying the multiple versions of The Truth.

THE POST COLONIAL ENDEAVOUR : RETRIEVING THE LOST LEGACY OF SANSKRIT

Frantz Fanon in his seminal work of 1961 titled 'The Wretched of the Earth', Chapter Four 'On National Culture', begins by talking about the 'colonized intellectuals'. He says that these intellectuals are trained by colonizers but they react against colonialism and colonizers. Fanon says that colonialism has distorted, disfigured and perverted the past of the colonized people to an extent that they have lost faith and confidence in their own values, knowledge and literature. Rather these oppressed people consider their past as "unworthy and evil". (Fanon, 1961). The local culture has been labelled as mythical folklore or as symbolic rituals. So these colonized intellectuals should carve out a strategy to counter the tendency of debasing the local culture and knowledge and explore their own idea of national culture. Antonio Gramsci in his Prison Notebooks also talks about the need to have counter-hegemony so as to arrest the dominance and prevalence of hegemonic western ideas.

And this is what the post colonial nations have done to assert the personality, legacy and glory of their own nation and culture. And here I will take the example of India and Sanskrit. Colonialism for the contemporary generation is a bygone event. The advent of liberalisation, globalization and privatization in India increased the aspirations of Indians to achieve a comfortable standard of living. Consumerism has become the means to attain their goals of improving their living standards. In this case, colonialism and struggle for national independence is a thing of past that happened 75 years ago and that is not related to the young generations. But the enslavement from colonialism still lingers on very evidently. Though this time the colonialism has not violated the territorial integrity of India but has certainly violated the mental, soul and attitudinal integrity of Indians particularly the youth(that forms 65% of the Indian population that is below 35 years age) by westernising and modernising them in Western knowledge and culture. English is considered the language of elite class in comparison to regional or local languages that is considered secondary or irrelevant.

So the post intellectual class and the post knowledgeable class has found a breather in nationalism to form a national culture as Fanon talks about or a counter hegemony as Gramsci highlights. So how does one define a post intellectual class or a post knowledgeable class? Siba N Grovogui, a post colonial scholar talks about the "network of knowledge based experts" that works to further their own political and ideological agendas (Grovogui, 1998). So a post intellectual or post knowledgeable class is one that does not

consider one form of knowledge as superior or The Truth. Rather they believe in epistemic equality and accommodation of myriad knowledge systems, languages, culture by lending dignity to one and all. They seek epistemic justice for all.

This post intellectual class, in order to re-find worth and dignity in their ancient or knowledge systems, evokes a sense of nationalism. They link their indigenous languages and culture to the pride and glory of their nation. Hence, Sanskrit by the post intellectual class has been considered as a unifying influence for the Indian nation. It is instrumental in assertion and shaping the individuality and personality of a nation that stands unique amidst the dominant culture.

In the Chair of G20 Presidency, India announced the theme of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam inspired by the ancient Sanskrit quote in MahaUpanishad. The deep philosophical message stands in complete contrast to the dominant realist culture of International Relations that professes zero sum relations among nations that are at constant war with each other. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam highlights the equality and dignity of all nations that come together to form One Family in the Universe. It nullifies the concept of hierarchy amongst nations.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi can be seen giving a befitting Sanskrit shlokas to make important national or international announcements. He replied the Chinese aggression in June 2020 with a Sanskrit Shloka that upheld the Indian ethos and side-lined the Western hegemonic realist solution for every conflict.

*Vidya vivadaaya dhanam madaaya
Shaktihi pareshaam paripidnaya
Khalsaya sadhu vipritam aetat
Gyanaya Daanaya cha Rakshanaya*

The Sanskrit Shloka means that a deceitful person uses knowledge for arguments, wealth for ego and power to trouble others. On the other hand, a noble person deploys knowledge for wisdom, wealth for helping and power for protecting others. The message signified that the power of the country is in co-existence and empowering one another and not in conflict or in the colonizing tendencies of the Zhongguo or the 'Middle Kingdom' culture. Emergence of post colonialism and rise of multi-polar world have lent power to the discourses, adding to the epistemic hues and shaking the foundations of eurocentrism.

There have been many significant occasions where Prime Minister Narendra Modi has deployed Sanskrit and highlighted the treasure of Indian civilization in it. The use of Sanskrit vocabulary has become so common that in the daily usage also, many Sanskrit words are commonly used without the knowledge that it's a Sanskrit word. Efforts are being made to mainstream the language and the need to look for knowledge and guidance from indigenous and local sources. For example, the government application for combatting Covid that is *Aarogya Setu* is a Sanskrit word meaning a bridge to great health. Sanskrit and the values embedded in Sanskritic texts have been now welcomed by the top ranked management schools that have endorsed the idea of Karma capitalism, inclusive and humane growth. They are extracting important lessons from Bhagvad Gita to combat their high level stress, pressure and conflicts. IIM Lucknow has a compulsory course on 'Human Values and Responsible Citizenship'. IIM Ahmedabad has included classical texts in its course to train and develop responsible and empathetic leadership (Verma, 2018).

But it will be wrong here to assume that indigenous or local cultures are aggressive in annihilating the western knowledge systems and asserting 'The Others' language and knowledge as supreme. The indigenous epistemology do not breed chauvinism. Sanskrit, a means by post intellectual class or political class to define the character of Indian nation, is not for language chauvinism. Sanskrit also is not in competition with Indian regional languages. In reference to a reply by the Minister of Culture in Lok Sabha on 3 February 2020, Jairam Ramesh pointed out that the Centre has spent Rs.640 crores in the last three years on the popularisation of Sanskrit (Press Trust of India, 2020). Twiterrati also reacted by saying why is the Government of India wasting away taxpayers money on the 'dead' language. They also asked why the government is meting out discriminatory treatment to other classical languages by spending more on Sanskrit. This is a significant example that shows how colonialism still persists in the minds of Indians. Britishers policy of divide and Rule is still very much functional in Indian society. Indians have faith and agree majorly on having English as the common language for communication. But the moment past heritage, glory of the traditional knowledge and language is evoked, the 'who's, why, when and how' questions are raised over the attempts at giving more investment, space to one regional language or the other. And this exactly was the purpose of Britishers 'Divide and Rule' policy where if the moment will arise where India's history and glory will be celebrated or eulogised, rivalries within the same nation/ society will emerge to suppress it. For example, the North South divide in the country becomes vociferous when Sanskrit gets investment or recognition (Press Trust of India, 2020).

The failure to understand the lingering impact of colonialism to keep us in a constant state of division, conflict and barbarism fulfils the main aim of colonizers. By looking at the regional rivalries, the colonial population itself start looking diversity as a problem and look for harmony in homogeneity of Western values.

To counter this, may be for post colonial intellectuals, Sanskrit is the starting point to be followed by the renewed pride of other regional languages. Venkaiah Naidu, the former Vice President of India, has suggested both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to make Telugu as their language of administration and a compulsory subject for getting recruited in government jobs (The News Minute, 2017). The beginning with Sanskrit language is one of the initial attempts to re-search and re-assert the confidence in the traditional knowledge systems. Sanskrit also does not stand in competition with the English language or the Western knowledge systems. Sanskrit stands as a language and as a constituent of knowledge on its own without basing its existence in competition with other languages or knowledge systems. Its resurgence does not announce competition or fear. It's focus is on highlighting the vibrant and dynamic life of Sanskrit. But the continuous epistemic assaults from West have not abated. There have been continuous attempts at disregarding the ontology of the indigenous and local knowledge systems to further their agenda of neo colonialism. Estrada in the recently published journal issue of International Affairs pursues a very reductionist approach to look at the depth of concepts embedded in Sanskrit texts. She says the concept of VishwaGuru professed by India is based on civilizational superiority and the West has agreed covertly on this so as to counter the rise of China (Estrada, 2023).

The emphasis on Sanskrit in a post colonial India is a Straussian endeavour to discover, learn, search and re-search on the wisdom shared by authors in classical texts and add richness to the discourses that can then be applied to find solutions to the pressing global problems. Post Colonialism stands in strong competition to Neo Colonialism.

MYTHS AND MISTAKES OF POST COLONIALISM

The stark reality is that the survival of post colonialism cannot continue by depending on the baton of colonialism. The post colonial nations have evoked nationalism to push their indigenous knowledge and culture out of sense of estrangement and alienation amongst its own people. But this has led to major pitfalls. Here, in this section we will talking in case of Sanskrit language. The authorization of Sanskrit with nationalism by Right wing parties have done more harm to the language. Sanskrit is seen from a narrow view of saffronization that will facilitate in achieving a totalitarian Hindu nationalist

agenda and sustain fascist, majoritarian policies that will be deterrent to minorities (Estrada, 2023). The association with Sanskrit language is also based on vote bank politics. Anthony Downs explains in his Rational Choice Theory that the government in a democracy act or formulates policies that will win maximum number of votes (Downs, 1957). At the international and domestic arena, post colonial scholars or workers have succeeded in highlighting the distinct personality of Sanskrit and making it into a populist agenda to portray itself as the true savior of Hindu religion. But not much genuine effort has been made on ground. Sanskrit has become the vote vending medium where the Right wing parties claim themselves to be the original inheritors of its treasure of knowledge. A distinguished Sanskrit scholar Shastri Kosalendras says “The government under Narendra Modi should have done more for Sanskrit because BJP claims to be the custodian of Hindu traditions” (Goswami, 2019). He complements the unparalleled work done by Congress government for the development of Sanskrit language. RSS backed Samskrita Bharati, a not for profit organization dedicated for the revival of Sanskrit also has serious complaints against the BJP government for not doing enough for the growth and protection of the language. Samskrita Bharati had organized a three days *chintan baithak* from 9-11 November, 2019 where more than 4000 delegates of over 17 countries were invited to promote Sanskrit language globally and also to look at the hurdles impeding the growth of the language in the countries. Even Minister of Akhil Bharatiya Srish Dev Pujari lamented the closure of third of 800 Sanskrit schools in Uttar Pradesh, attributing it to the shortage of teachers and funds (Arnimesh, 2019). He also added that the continuation of the insincere attitude will lead to further closure of Sanskrit schools. He highlighted the dwindling number of students taking exams in Sanskrit at the Sampuranand Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya in Varanasi, a university specializing in Sanskrit language. Over 1.61 lakh students opted for Sanskrit in 2010 that has now reduced to 54,715 in 2019 (Arnimesh, 2019). Srish Dev Pujari lamented that even 10% of the recommendations proposed by the committee headed by Chief Election Commissioner N. Gopaldaswami in 2016 has not been included for the development of Sanskrit. He questions the claimants of Hindu legacy who are in power and have not been able to change the way Sanskrit is taught in schools and colleges. He said, we learnt Hindi through our parent’s communication and not by learning the grammar of Hindi first. Similarly, Sanskrit is to be taught through *sambhashan* (conversation) and not by teaching the rules of grammar first (Arnimesh, 2019). Adding apathy to the state of Sanskrit, is the pitiable treatment meted out to the teachers. About 200 contract teachers organized a sit-in protest at the Delhi headquarters of Rashtriya Sanskrit

Sansthan to demand the regularization of their jobs (Mohanty, 2018). Their complaints were that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a staunch believer in Hindu nationalist agenda, has not revised their salaries even once. And they also have no provision of provident fund that provides a financial backing and have less leaves. The protestors highlighted that during the Congress government, the salaries of the Sanskrit teachers were revised thrice increasing it from 8000 rupees in 2006 to 41,000 rupees in 2012. The status of Sanskrit can be reclaimed once it provides a gainful employment. But it can be noted that not much jobs are available in the field. While looking for jobs on various portals of government and private, it was found that jobs are not available in Sanskrit discipline. Youth4work, a job search engine, affiliated with a government body AICTE that has almost 5 million users, it was found that that there are no job openings available for 519 candidates who are actively seeking Sanskrit related positions. (Youth4work.com, 2020) It was also found on the portal that the top companies globally that offers highest salary packages in Sanskrit does not have any job openings (Youth4work.com, 2020).

Even a popular job search engine, Naukri.com had very less to offer to Sanskrit graduates or post graduates barring a few minor openings. Monster.com, another job portal had no job listings for Sanskrit professionals. On one hand, where the current government did not have any job opening for Sanskrit discipline. On the other hand, there was a deliberate callousness on part of government to deprive whatever scarce jobs are available in Sanskrit. Sanskrit scholar Kalale Nadadur Varadaraja Iyengar who operates the world's oldest and only surviving daily in Sanskrit, Sudharma has been compelled to seek donation from its 3000 subscribers to keep its newspaper afloat. This appeal came after receiving no response from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Smriti Irani and Rajnath Singh (Bose, 2016).

The All-India Survey on Higher Education also has a similar story to narrate (aishe.nic.in). Failing to achieve gainful employment in Sanskrit, number of students enrolled for Sanskrit has declined. Enrolment of students has not matched with the opening of 2 more universities. Rather students enrolled in Post graduate and MPhil have declined. There has been a minor increase in PhD students but compared to 2015-16, the outlook appears bleak. This is despite the MHRD guidelines recommending NAAC accreditation to Sanskrit universities so that they can be elevated to the standards of national and international institutions.

<i>Years</i>	<i>Universities</i>	<i>Students in PhD Sanskrit</i>	<i>Students enrolled in MPhil Sanskrit</i>	<i>Students Enrolled in PG Sanskrit</i>
2013-14	11	994	263	23590
2014-15	11	773	400	23951
2015-16	11	1074	620	25228
2016-17	13	939	505	26197
2017-18	13	971	476	26886
2018-19	13	1048	401	21226

Another sorry state of Sanskrit has been attributed to the meagre salaries offered to Sanskrit teachers in many states in comparison to the other subject teachers. Britishers introduced the system of low pay to Sanskrit teachers because the subject was used only for character building and moral education in which they were least interested. They paid higher salaries to teachers who taught Western subjects as they could be employed for administrators to train and teach them in English that was required to sustain British rule. To plug this major loophole, the committee led by the former Chief Election Commissioner, N. Gopalaswami suggested equal pay in schools. Low pay and scarce institutional support cause demotivation to the Sanskrit educators that is then passed onto students and they avoid taking Sanskrit in higher education knowing of its poor prospects. This then impacts the production of Sanskrit teachers and ultimately Sanskrit education. Absence of B.Ed course was also noted and a suggestion for starting a diploma course for the aspirants of Sanskrit teaching was also made.

CONCLUSION

Though Sanskrit has been an endeavour by the post-colonial India to showcase its tradition, knowledge, culture, norms at the domestic and international level. And this endeavour is not to pit with Western knowledge or claim its superior place. Rather the aim of post-colonial Indian State is to have inclusive epistemology and shed the hierarchical character of knowledge systems. It believes in accommodation and diversity rather than arrogance and depravity by relying on one system of knowledge. It believes in new form of colonialism that has been brought in by discourse asymmetries. It underlines epistemic equality and affirms that the Post Colonial India too have the capacity, know-how and the ontological strength to contribute in shaping the global norms.

But this post-colonial attempt is not without pitfalls. The post-colonial endeavour lacks sincerity. It will be a failed project if the aim of the post

colonial India and its revival of Sanskrit stops at gaining political power and status. The misidentification of Sanskrit with Saffron has done more harm to the language. Right wing parties have claimed that the age old knowledge of Sanskrit as its sole inheritor and protector. A sincere attempt at knowing the language and texts of Sanskrit barely exist. Genuine efforts are required for the development of Sanskrit and passing on the treasure of knowledge in Sanskrit texts to the future.

It becomes significant for the post-colonial Indian scholars to shed the colonial baggage of supremacy of Western knowledge and look at more diverse, indigenous and plural perspectives of knowing and understanding the world to address the global issues. Lest, countries will continue being enslaved by new forms of colonialism that will threaten global security, justice and peace. Kwame Nkrumah said,

“A State in the grip of Neo Colonialism is not master of its own destiny. It is this factor which makes neo colonialism such a serious threat to world peace” (Nkrumah, 1966).

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