

Hello learners. Welcome to the module on Indian languages.

In this chapter, we'll introduce Indian Languages and Literature, the role of Sanskrit, and the significance of scriptures to current society.

Introduction to Indian Languages

Indian languages are languages spoken in India that are classed as Indo-European particularly the Indo-Iranian branch, Dravidian, Austroasiatic particularly Munda, and Sino-Tibetan Tibeto-Burman in particular.

Assamese, Bengali or Bangla, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, and Urdu are all members of the Indo-Aryan group of Indo-Iranian languages.

The Dravidian language family includes Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, and Telugu.

The Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family includes Manipuri or Meitei spoken in Manipur and Bodo spoken in northeastern India. The Munda language family includes Santali.

Except for the Khasian languages spoken in Meghalaya, northeastern India, and the Nicobarese languages spoken in the Nicobar Islands in the Andaman Sea, just to the northwest of the Indonesian island of Sumatra—both of which are classified as part of the Mon-Khmer subfamily of Austroasiatic—the other Austronesian languages are spoken in Southeast Asia.

The Indo-Aryan languages, which are spoken by 78.05 percent of Indians, belong to multiple linguistic families.

Dravidian languages are spoken by 19.64% of Indians, and both groups are frequently referred to as Indic languages.

The remaining 2.31 percent of the population speaks Austroasiatic, Sino-Tibetan, and Tai-Kadai languages.

According to the Census of India of 2001, India has 122 major languages and 1599 other languages.

India has 22 major languages with approximately 720 dialects written in 13 distinct scripts.

The official languages of India are Hindi which has 420 million speakers and English which is also widely spoken.

The census of 2011 acknowledges 1369 rationalised mother tongues and 1474 names that were handled as 'unclassified' and consigned to the 'other' mother tongue category out of 19,569 raw linguistic connections.

Introduction to Literature

Literature is a broad term that refers to any collection of written material, but it is also used to refer to writings that are considered to be art forms, such as prose fiction, drama, and poetry.

The term has broadened in recent decades to include oral literature, most of which has been transcribed.

Literature can have a social, psychological, spiritual, or political purpose in addition to recording, preserving, and transferring knowledge and amusement.

Nonfiction genres such as biography, diaries, memoir, correspondence, and the essay can all be considered part of literature as an art form.

Nonfictional books, articles, and other printed information on a particular subject are included in the broad definition of literature.

The name comes from the Latin *literatura/litteratura*, which means "learning, writing, grammar," and was originally "writing produced with letters," from *litera/littera*, which means "letter."

In spite of this, the term has also been applied to spoken or sung texts.

Print technological advancements have enabled an ever-increasing diffusion and proliferation of written works, which now includes electronic literature.

Literature helps us to travel through time and learn about life on the planet from those who came before us.

It can have a deeper understanding of and appreciation for different cultures. It can help us to learn about history through the ways it is documented, such as manuscripts and oral history.

Literature serves as an enormous information base.

Great inventors' research papers and literary works by famous scientists frequently tell anecdotes about their significant discoveries and inferences.

Current scientific and technological developments are chronicled so that the rest of the world is aware of them.

Several ancient scriptures presenting accounts of human evolution and narratives of human life in those times have proven to be extremely beneficial to humanity.

As a result, literature has always been a reliable source of information.

Sanskrit

Sanskrit is considered the oldest language in Hinduism, having been used by the Hindu Celestial Gods for communication and dialogue, and then by the Indo-Aryans.

In Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, Sanskrit is commonly used. The title 'Sanskrit' comes from the combination of the prefix 'Sam' meaning 'samyak,' which means 'completely,' and 'krit,' which means 'done.'

Thus, the name denotes communicating, reading, listening, and the use of vocabulary to transcend and communicate an emotion that is totally or entirely done.

Despite being an extremely complicated language with a large vocabulary, it is still frequently used in the reading of sacred books and hymns today

In Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, the Sanskrit language has long been the primary medium of communication.

Sanskrit literature has a long history of use in ancient poetry, drama, science, and religious and philosophical books.

Let's now look at the role of Sanskrit.

Many Indian languages have their roots in Sanskrit. Sanskrit is used to write the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, and Dharmasutras.

A wide range of secular and regional literature is also available. We will be able to better comprehend our civilization and appreciate the diversity and complexity of our culture by reading about the languages and literature developed in the past.

Our country's most ancient language is Sanskrit. It is one of the Indian Constitution's twenty-two official languages.

Sanskrit is maybe the only language that has crossed geographical and cultural boundaries.

There is no portion of India that has not contributed to or been touched by this language, from north to south and east to west.

Kalidasa's writings have added to the treasury of Sanskrit writings' beauty.

Significance of Scriptures to the Current Society

Scriptures from the Latin Scriptura, which means "writing" are sacred texts that serve a range of roles in a religious tradition's individual and collective existence.

Scriptures can be utilised to generate a deeper relationship with the divine, communicate spiritual truths, foster collective identity, and guide individual and communal spiritual practice.

The study of Scripture has become an intellectual pursuit in modern times.

Sacred texts from different civilizations are increasingly being studied in academic settings, mostly to improve understanding of other cultures, whether ancient or modern.

Even for casual readers, the easy accessibility to scriptures from all faith traditions has aided mutual understanding and appreciation for the importance of all religions.

Spiritual searchers of all faiths can discover guidance throughout the world's scriptures to help them on their way.

Scripture plays a range of aspects in a religious community's spiritual life.

In a religion, scripture serves three purposes: personal direction and inspiration, collective

worship and instruction, and bibliomancy using scripture for magical purposes.

For many years, restricted literacy and crude copying methods impeded the general circulation of religious books, but scripture has always had a personal dimension—at least for those who have access to it.

With the advancement of literacy and the invention of printing and telecommunications, many people can now personally encounter the scriptures from their own faiths.

The Internet, television, and computers have altered the way and frequency with which information, especially scriptures, is shared.

Most religious books and masterpieces from throughout the world have been archived electronically on the Internet and are available to read in a variety of languages.

Conclusion

Language is what allows people to express things, thoughts, and attitudes in a comprehensible manner and to communicate the results to others.

India has always been a country with many different countries and languages. India, being a civilisation state, has a vast linguistic diversity, with hundreds of languages spoken even today.

Modern India gives the right representation in the constitution, respecting the opinions of people of different languages.

With this, we come to the end of our session. In today's session, we discussed Indian Languages and Literature, the role of Sanskrit, and the significance of scriptures to current society.

I hope you would have got a fair understanding of Indian Languages.

Thank you and Happy Learning!