

Sanskrit- An instrument for promotion of India's soft power.

Text of the Oration delivered by
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Introductory

I consider it a matter of honour and privilege having been called upon to deliver this oration on an auspicious day, the World Cultural Day. I am conscious of challenge in the task which I have been called upon to perform by the ICCR.

May 21 has been declared to be the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development as resolved and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly which aims at providing the world with an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to advance the goals of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

This lecture series is under the aegis of ICCR. The ICCR was founded in 1950 with the objective of fostering and strengthening international cultural relations by enhancing mutual understanding and promoting cultural exchanges. ICCR is playing a significant role in promotion of India's soft power philosophy overseas.

India has a year before celebrated the Birth Centenary of Late Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya. Pt. Deendayal was a political leader with vision and ideology, inspired by Indian ethos, aiming at creation of global society, where there would be no conflict, no misery and no deprivation. The President of ICCR Shri Vinay Sahasrabuddhe has initiated this annual Memorial International Oration in the memory of Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya. The series was inaugurated

last year on this very day by Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Hon'ble Minister for External Affairs who spoke on 'Soft Power Diplomacy: Strength of India'. Being a knowledgeable and gifted orator as she is, her oration continues to echo in this hall. I wish to take a minute or two to recall what she had said, so as to set foundation for today's oration and try to maintain continuity. She had said that hard core diplomacy is G to G, i.e. Government to Government, between two governments; soft power diplomacy is P to P i.e. People to People. She highlighted three dimensions of soft power as shaped by Samskrit in India: *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (The World is one Family), (ii) *Sarva jana Hitaya Sarva jana Sukhaya* (For the welfare/benefit and pleasure of all), and (iii) *Ahimsa Paramo dharmah* (Non-violence is supreme Dharma).

According to her, the culture of India proposes to achieve these objectives by manifesting its power through performing arts, music and dances – preferably classical, Indian cuisine, tourism, yoga, and films. World over, the people feel enchanted, enlightened and attracted to India by these. They silently enhance goodwill and understanding which in turn leads to peace and harmony. To these she added information technology- a field which is by and large internationally occupied by the brilliant IT savvy youth of India.

What is Soft Power?

The term 'Soft Power' has been coined by Prof. Joseph Nye of Harvard University. Through his two books 'Bound to Lead' (1990) and 'Soft Power; the Means of Success in World Politics' (2004), Prof. Nye wrote; "When one country gets other countries to want what it wants – might be called co-optive or soft power in contrast with the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants". He explained that with soft power 'the best propaganda is not propaganda' and during the Information Age

‘credibility is the scarcest source’. Without further quoting from Prof. Nye, it may suffice to say that hard power versus soft power is coercion versus co-operation, dictation versus persuasion, use of force in any form versus appeal to mind by propagation of basic values. The hard power may not hesitate in resorting to destruction; soft power believes in creation, cultivation and generation and would never even look in the direction of destruction. To put it in the least words, soft power is positivity; hard power is negativity. ‘Appeal and attract’ rather than ‘dictate and force’! In the context of foreign policy, I would put it this way: appeal and convince, attract by enhancing your charm, love and live, open your heart and extend your arms!

The applicable tools of soft power in relation to foreign diplomacy would be engaging in respect for each other’s sovereignty, engaging in development by assisting each other enhancing level of educational activities by sponsorship and exchange of students, innovating and creating models of development in Industry, Commerce and Economics and sharing the same, expanding cultural diversity and strengthening communications by freely resorting to digital technology.

It would be interesting to learn that the term ‘Soft Power’ may not be found used as such in the ancient or contemporary Samskrit literature of India; nevertheless, the philosophy of what is called today the soft power has ever existed in Vedic and Pauranic literature of India, in principle as philosophy and as practised. Only two historical illustrations would suffice.

History bears testimony to the fact that India has never attacked anyone although she has been assaulted severally but she has only defended herself, never retaliated. India has never ever made any attempt at expanding its territories though she has firmly tried to preserve her identity. Using hard power has never been the culture of India.

The other illustration can be the great war of Mahabharata fought for 18 days on Indian soil. The war was fought only when it became inevitable. It was fought as a Dharma Yuddha. Have a look at the rules of game which were followed in Mahabharata. They were¹:

- Fighting must begin no earlier than sunrise and, should end by exact sunset.
- Multiple warriors must not attack a single warrior.
- Two warriors may duel, or engage in prolonged personal combat, only if they carry the same weapons and they are on the same mount (no mount, a horse, an elephant, or a chariot).
- No warrior may kill or injure a warrior who has surrendered.
- One who surrenders becomes a prisoner of war and will then be subject to the protections of a prisoner of war.
- No warrior may kill or injure an unarmed warrior.
- No warrior may kill or injure an unconscious warrior.
- No warrior may kill or injure a person or animal not taking part in the war.
- No warrior may kill or injure a warrior whose back is turned away.
- No warrior may strike an animal not considered a direct threat.
- The rules specific to each weapon must be followed. For example, it is prohibited to strike below the waist in mace warfare
- Warriors must not engage in any 'unfair' warfare whatsoever.
- The lives of women, prisoners of war, and farmers are sacred.
- Land should not be plundered.

¹ Source:

[N.B. The rules have been found to have been broken by some unscrupulous or by way of extreme and essential diplomacy but such breach was by way of exception and not a rule.]

In short, Mahabharat though a war, was yet a ‘soft war’. That is what India is.

The hard power manifests itself in muscles; the soft power manifests itself in mind. In the light of Indian Samskrit literature, soft power would be aiming at civilization, creating culture by recourse to basic human values, both within the country and without.

Having so understood the concept of soft power, in contradistinction with hard power, we come to Samskrit. For a common man, Samskrit is just a language; for the learned and knowledgeable, it is much more beyond, as we will presently see.

Samskrit: As language - The mother of all languages

By choosing the theme of today’s lecture, the ICCR and its President Shri Vinay Sahasrabuddhe are visualizing Samskrit as the most potent instrument of India’s soft power; Samskrit as a language, Samskrit as an unfathomable ocean of knowledge, and these two qualities of Samskrit qualifying for its recognition as an instrument of soft power. While speaking on theme of today’s oration ,my task is rendered easier as almost all great scholars, philosophers and proponent of peace and prosperity have spoken about what place Samskrit occupies in their assessment and evaluation. Let us have a look at some of them.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar as India’s Law Minister had sponsored Samskrit as the official language of the Indian union. He was supported by Dr B.V. Keskar, India’s Deputy Minister for

External Affairs and Mr. Naziruddin Ahmed and many others². Dr Ambedkar also wanted the Executive Committee of All India Schedule Caste Federation to pass a resolution on 10th Sept, 1949 in support of making Samskrit the official language of India. But he had to withdraw the proposal on account of vehement opposition by Shri B.P. Maurya who later regretted his opposition and acknowledged his fact in a letter addressed to Director, NCERT on 14.02.2001³

According to Prof. Bopp⁴, Samskrit was at one time the only language of the world. It is more perfect and copious than Greek and Latin. Mr. Dubois⁵ recognized Samskrit as the origin of modern language of Europe. Will Durant⁶ has unhesitatingly acknowledged – ‘India was the mother land of our race and Samskrit the mother of Europe’s languages... Mother India is in many ways the mother of us all.’ *Frederich Von Schlegel*, (1772-1829) German philosopher and critic, claimed – “*There is no language in the world, even Greek, which has the clarity and the philosophical precision of Samskrit, he has added that “India is not only at the origin of everything; she is superior in everything, intellectually, religiously or politically and even the Greek heritage seems pale in comparison.”*

Pupils of John Scottus (a well-known school in the Republic of Ireland), have said about Samskrit – it makes your mind bright, sharp and clear/it makes you feel peaceful and happy/it makes you

² The Sunday Hindustan Standard, 11th Sept, 1949, as reproduced in ‘Samskrit - For today and tomorrow’, p.37.

³ Sanskrit – For today and tomorrow, pp.38,39.

⁴Franz Bopp (German: 14 September 1791 – 23 October 1867)^[a] was a German linguist known for extensive and pioneering comparative work on Indo-European languages.

⁵William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (February 23, 1868 – August 27, 1963) was an American sociologist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist, author, writer and editor.

⁶William James "Will" Durant (November 5, 1885 – November 7, 1981) was an American writer, historian, and philosopher. He became best known for his work *The Story of Civilization*, 11 volumes.

feel BIG./It cleans and loosens your tongue so you can pronounce any language easily...⁷

In late 80s a dispute arose in India as to whether Samskrit was required to be included in the syllabus of the Board as an elective subject for teaching in secondary schools, the matter was decided on 4th October, 1994⁸ by the Supreme Court of India. The Court allowed the writ petition. During the course of the judgment, the Supreme Court of India observed, by reference to evidence produced before the Court, that great mental and spiritual link was embedded in Samskrit and she was the elder sister of Greek and Latin and cousin of English, French and Russian. The Court also recognized the importance of Samskrit for nurturing our cultural heritage. In the judgment, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of the Country, has been quoted as having said – *‘If I were asked what is the greatest treasure which India possesses and what is her finest heritage, I would answer unhesitatingly – it is the Samskrit 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’*. The Supreme Court also held that Samskrit had an essential place in our educational ethos and that teaching of Samskrit was not at all against secularism.

Sir Mirza Ismail, who was Dewan of the kingdoms of Mysore, Jaipur and Hyderabad, and also considered to be the cleverest man of India had so said about Samskrit- *‘If Samskrit would be divorced from the everyday life of the masses of this country, a light would be gone from the life of the people and the distinctive features of Hindu culture which have won for it an honoured place*

⁷ Sanskrit – For today and tomorrow, p. 36.

⁸ Shri Santosh Kumar &Ors. v. The Secretary, Ministry of Human Resources Development and Anr. (1994) 6 SCC 579.

in world-thought would soon be affected to the great disadvantage and loss, both of India and of the world⁹’.

Lata Mangeskar, the legendary singer, also known as *Swarkokila*, ‘Queen of Melody’, ‘Voice of Millennium’ when she was decorated with Padma Award, was asked by a Press Reporter, to whom would she give credit for her melodious voice? Her answer was - Samskrit.

Sanskrit is root of many languages of the world and therefore, the mother of all languages. It has longevity, stability and is considered sacred by many. Language is defined as a system of communication consisting of sounds, words and grammar. It is an essential method of human communication, spoken or written. Language enables germination and propagation of thoughts and ideas and then persuading and convincing the people thereby. If dialogue has to substitute the bullets, a common language is a must.

An indication of what is soft power is to be found in the Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO. It declares- “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”. The opening lines of UNESCO’s Constitution are engraved in ten languages in the Tolerance Square Wall, UNESCO, Paris. The UNESCO declaration signifies the power of language in propagating soft power. Language is the only medium of germinating seed of peace in the human mind.

Sanskrit: Treasure of knowledge and wisdom

So much about Sanskrit as language!. Now a little about Sanskrit as treasure of knowledge and wisdom.

There are as many as 10 million Sanskrit manuscripts of which 7 million are preserved in India itself.

⁹Sanskrit, the Voice of India’s Soul and Wisdom, p.1

Sanskrit finds its presence across the wide geography beyond Indian subcontinent. There are inscriptions and literary evidences suggesting that this language was adopted in Southeast Asia and Central Asia as early as in the 1st millennium CE [Common Era = Anno Domini (AD)]. Sanskrit manuscripts and inscriptions have been found in China, Myanmar, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Nepal, Tibet, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. Ancient "*Mitanni Treaty*" between the ancient Hittite and Mitanni people, carved on a rock, in a region that are now parts of Syria and Turkey, is a historical evidence of the influence that the pre-classical Sanskrit, the Vedic Sanskrit, had even when it did not have its own script.

Sri Aurobindo has observed that Sanskrit is "one of the most magnificent, the most perfect and wonderfully sufficient literary instrument developed by human mind...at once majestic and sweet and flexible, strong and clearly formed and full and vibrant and subtle..."It's a language so vast and versatile, scientific and systematic that it's capable of expressing every subtlety of human thought, every nuance of human feeling. It can also create any number of new words for a new situation, concept or thing.

It is not surprising that the 21st century scientists find Sanskrit ideally suited for state-of-the-art software. Dr Rick Briggs, a researcher for NASA, says in an article that "Sanskrit grammarians had already found a way of solving what is perhaps the most important problem in computer science - natural language understanding and machine translation¹⁰". In fact, several concepts which are fundamental to today's theoretical computer science have their origin in the works of Panini (520 -

¹⁰Rick Briggs: Scientist, Roacs, NASA Ames Research Center, Moffet Field, California. (Dr. Rick Briggs, *Knowledge Representation in Sanskrit and Artificial Intelligence*, *AI Magazine*, Vol. 6, 1985, p.32-39)

460 BCE)¹¹a Samskrit grammarian who gave a comprehensive and scientific theory of phonetics, phonology, and morphology.

In Samskrit, sound and sense are inseparable; the harmonious relationship between these two is based on eternal principles. Every one of its vowels and consonants has particular and inalienable force which exists by the nature of things and not by development or human choice. Interestingly, according to a research recently completed by Dr Fred Travis¹², Director of the ERG / psychophysiology lab of Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, Iowa, USA, the physiological effects of reading Samskrit are similar to those experienced during the Transcendental Meditation technique.

A prestigious publication ‘Pride of India, a Glimpse into India’s Scientific Heritage’ brought out by Samskrita Bharati has listed at least 8 modern courses of study which find mention in Samskrit literature of Indian origin. They are in the field of Mathematics, Astronomy, Chemistry, Life Sciences, Medicine, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, and Metallurgy referred to as *Bharatiya Bauddhika Sampada* (Indian Intellectual Wealth).

I may mention an interesting fact. Stephen Hawking, the renowned physicist and cosmologist, published ‘Brief History of Time’ in the year 1988. Undoubtedly, it is his original work. However, in the year 1985, an Indian Scholar Dr Basudeo Poddar, had finalised his work entitled ‘*Vishwa Ki Kaal Yatra*’ (The Cosmic Passage of Time) in Hindi and Samskrit and has profusely illustrated by Samskrit quotations extracted and reproduced from ancient Indian Samskrit literature. Dr Poddar has referred to various most modern theories and discoveries of science and in juxtaposition quoted several verses/passages from Samskrit

¹¹Before Common Era = Before Christ (BC)

¹²Dr. Fred Travis, one of the leading American neuroscientists specializing on the impact of meditation on brain activity.

literature, millennia and centuries old, convincingly demonstrating that these modern theories and discoveries are found mentioned in the ancient Samskrit writings. The greats Rishis of India had by their research and intuition discovered and solved the cosmic secrets and puzzles including Big Bang Theory, the Theory of particles and electrons, gravity, theories of expanding universe and contracting universe, the cosmic egg, the black hole, the explosion of atom and so on. All these are found dealt with in details in Samskrit literature of centuries old BC!

The four Vedas, the oldest available scriptures, were written in Samskrit. The essence of Vedas was drawn in Upanishads, all written in Samskrit. The number of Upanishads, according to scholars, fluctuates from 108 to 235, most of which are not available now. At least 10 or 12, considered to be the principal Upanishads are fortunately available. Upanishads have been described by Max Muller as ‘humanity’s earliest philosophical compositions’.

The Vedas mention the theory of evolution. They have traced and predicted the total time for which the Sun, the Moon, the Earth and the Galaxy have lived and would live. They also record how and when the Universe would be reborn after a total destruction. Difficult to believe! but then that is what has been recorded along with the basis for the findings. Astrology, a unique science which is based on astronomy and evolution of life belongs only to Samskrit. It is unique because it establishes impact of planetary movements on the activities of individual human beings by reference to position of planets at the time of birth of an individual. This science has lost its credibility in western world because they do not know Samskrit. But in India it is still prevalent with credibility attached to it because we have those who have studied this science though they are not many.

One of the Vedas has chapters on architecture, specially the architecture of Indian temples. Recent incidents support the truth that Samskrit had the knowledge of such most modern sciences for which the scientists are still struggling to discover. Take the recent cases of the temple of Somnath, the temple of Jagannath Puri and the temple of Kedarnath. Storms and air flowing at an abnormal speed of even 200 miles per hour have completely blown off and shattered the cement-concrete buildings and habitation. But the structure of Temples has remained unaffected. They have emerged intact even though hit by deadly storm and having remained immersed for some time in Ocean.

The culture of India which owes its existence to Samskrit continues to survive and stand erect while other ancient civilizations have almost disappeared.

Why one should learn Samskrit?

It may be argued, why learn Samskrit? The Samskrit scriptures can be translated into other languages of the world to the benefit of the global humanity. Sorry, it will not work. The reasons are more than one.

There are certain words which if translated cannot convey the sense and meaning which the original in Samskrit carries and conveys. Then there are words for which there is no equivalent in English or other languages. To illustrate Dharma is translated in English as 'Religion'; but 'Religion' does not convey what Dharma does. Dharma has been defined in Mahabharat (Karna Parva, Ch. 69, verse-58) as:-

धारणाद्धर्म इत्याहुः धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः।

यत् स्यात् धारणसंयुक्तं स धर्म इति निश्चयः॥

*Dharma sustains the society/
Dharma maintains the social order/
Dharma ensures well-being and
Progress of Humanity/
Dharma is surely that which
Fulfils these objectives*

Similar are the words Aatma, Paramaatma, Punya, Paapa, Tirtha, Naivedya, Prasaadam, etc. The words can be understood only in their original form, through etymology, and the cultural context in which used. Some of the sciences of Indian origin have lost their popularity and relevance or are in the process of losing for want of knowledge of Samskrit. For example in Ayurveda (Indian system of Medicine) to understand the medical terms and the text of Ayurveda, one must know Samskrit; no translation can convey the meaning of the terms and science of Ayurveda as enunciated in Samskrit books of Ayurveda unless one knows Samskrit.

Interestingly just see your invitation card for today's function. Words '*Saumya Shakti*' have been used as Hindi version of "soft power". The word '*Saumya*' has its origin in Samskrit. '*Saumya*' suggests the qualities belonging to the Moon. An authentic Hindi Dictionary would define it to mean *Sundar, Komal, Snigdh, Vinamra, Shaant*. Translated into English, '*Soumya*' would be - amiable, serene, placid, tranquil. The word '*Saumya*' though very appropriately used, yet it would not convey the meaning which Prof. Nye would like to be conveyed by 'soft power'. So also the word '*Saumya*' is incapable of being so translated into English as to convey to the reader all its characteristics. Hence, the need to understand a thought by reading it in its original language.

Another interesting story is to be found mentioned by Max Muller in the Golden Book of Upanishads. Prince Darashikoh, the brother of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, was a great scholar. He came across Upanishads and convinced by the great store of knowledge

they contained, got them translated into Persian in the 17th century. The Persian translation was re-translated into French and Latin. Therefrom, it reached the English speaking countries. The English Scholars were aghast to learn about such store of knowledge and wisdom as Upanishads not yet accessible to them in its original form. What came to their hands was third or fourth translated version in English. The European scholars came to India to learn Samskrit so that the Upanishad and other Indian scriptures in Samskrit could at least be translated directly into English.

Schopenhauer, the great philosopher having read Upanishads acknowledged that his own philosophy was powerfully impregnated by the fundamental doctrines of the Upanishads. He said (in 1818)– “*I anticipate that the influence of Samskrit literature will not be less profound than the revival of Greek in the 14th century.*” He went on to say –“*In the whole world there is no study except that of the originals, so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Oupnekhat. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death.*” Again he said –“*Indian wisdom will flow back upon Europe, and produce a thorough change in our knowing and thinking*”.

Samskrit as soft power

How Samskrit and the human values leading to creation of culture handed down by Samskrit to India through her great Rishis, philosophers and scholars is in itself a soft power can be understood by peeping into a few fundamentals.

India, instructed by its Samskrit scriptures and scholars, believes that there is a God and God is only one. Every human being is the child of God. We all being descendants of one God, we are all brothers and sisters and therefore any human being, a male or a female, living anywhere in the World, is each related to the other

as brother and sister. The concept of **वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्** *Vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (The World is one Family) is founded on this principle. Brothers and sisters cannot harm each other. They must co-exist, in peace and harmony and think of the welfare of each other. Samskrit propagates the idea of inclusiveness. **छान्दोग्योपनिषद्** *Chhandogyopanishad* says **एकं सत् विप्राः बहुधा वदन्ति** *Ekam Sat Vipraah Bahudhaa Vadanti* (He, the God, is one, the learned call him by different names).

Pancha tantram says:

**अयं निजः परो वेति गणना लघुचेतसाम् ।
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैवकुटुम्बकम् ॥**

(This is mine or this is of others, is a mean mentality.

For noble men the whole world is a family).

As a necessary corollary of the above there is one prayer that all the Indians have been chanting from times immemorial:

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे संतु निरामयाः ।

सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु, मा कश्चिद् दुःखभाग् भवेत् ॥

(May all be prosperous and happy, May all be free from illness,
May all see good, Let no one suffer).

This Shloka occurs at the end of the *Garuda Purana* where the Lord himself showers his blessings on all creatures of the world in these words.

Let me present some evidence in support of what I say from the portals of Indian Parliament. Under the Constitution of India, the

Supreme Sovereign Power of India as a nation vests in the Parliament of India. Justice Dr Rama Jois, Fr CJ of P&H High Court, later a Member of Rajya Sabha, has brought out a beautiful monograph – “Message from Parliament House, Bharat”¹³. I am quoting therefrom:

The words **धर्मचक्र-प्रवर्तनाय** *Dharmachakra-Pravartanaya*’ (taken from a Bauddh Scripture, Lalit-Vistar:, Ch-26) are inscribed inside the Lok Sabha Chamber, overlooking the Speaker’s Chair. These words mean ‘For the rotation of the Wheel of Righteousness’. The Wheel, symbolic of this path and its dynamic nature, finds a prominent place in the National Flag and the National Emblem of India. This path has been followed by the rulers of India since ancient times.

अहिंसा परमो धर्मः ‘*Ahimsa Parmo Dharmah*’ (Mahabharata Anushasan Parva, Ch-116-28, also Van Parva, 207-74) is inscribed on the top of the entry gates of the Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of the Parliament. It means – “Non-violence is the Highest Dharma”.

On the top of entry gate to Rajya Sabha, the message inscribed is **सत्यं वद धर्मं चर** ‘*Satyam Vada Dharmam Chara*’ (Taittireeyopanishad - Shikshavalli). It means “Speak the truth, Follow the rules of righteous conduct”. **एकं सत् विप्राः बहुधा वदन्ति** *Ekam Sat Vipraah Bahudhaa Vadanti* (Rig Veda, 1-164-46) is also inscribed on the entry gate to Rajya Sabha. It means – “Truth is one, though interpreted in many ways by the wise”.

A quote from Manusmriti (8-13) is inscribed above the lift-2. It reads:

¹³ Published by Vijnaneshwara Research and Training Centre in Polity – Martur, Gulbarga (Karnataka).

सभा वा न प्रवेष्टव्या
वक्तव्यं वा समञ्जसम्।
अब्रुवन् विब्रुवन् वापि
नरो भवति किल्बिषी॥

It means - either one may not enter the Assembly Hall, or having entered, he / she must speak truth in a righteous way. The one who does not speak and the one who speaks falsely, will be a sinner.

The quotations can be multiplied but I would end by referring to **सत्यमेव जयते** 'Satyameva Jayate' ("truth will triumph always"), - a quote from Mundakopanishad. (3-1) is inscribed at every place wherever the Emblem of India is inscribed.

The mottoes as adopted by several arms of governance and institutions in India and which guide and thereby softly empower them, are all jewels of Samskrit. Have a look:

Government of India	सत्यमेव जयते	Satyameva Jayate
Lok Sabha	धर्मचक्रप्रवर्तनाय	Dharmachakra Pravartanaaya
Supreme Court of India	यतो धर्मः ततो जयः	Yato Dharmah Tato Jayah
All India Radio (Akashvani)	बहुजनहिताय	Bahujanahitaaya
Doordarshan	सत्यं शिवं सुंदरम्	Satyam Shivam Sundaram

Army	सेवा अस्माकं धर्मः	Sevaa asmaakam Dharmah
Air Force	नभः स्पृशं दीप्तम्	Nabhah sprisham Deeptam
Navy	शं नो वरुणः	Shan no Varunah
Indian National Science Akademi (INSA)	हवयामिर्भगः सवितुर्वरेण्यम्	Hvayaamirbhagah Saviturvarenyam
Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Academy, Mussoorie	योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्	Yogah Karmasu Kaushalam
National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)	विद्यया अमृतमश्नुते	Vidyayaa amritamashnute
National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)	गुरुः गुरुतमो धाम	Guruh Gurutamo Dhaama
Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan	तत्त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु	Tatvam Pushannapaavrunu
Central Board of Secondary Education	असतो मा सद्गमय	Asato maa sadgamaya

University of Delhi	निष्ठा धृतिः सत्यम्	Nishtha Dhritih Satyam
Post and Telegraph Department	अहर्निशं सेवामहे	Aharnisham Sevaamahe
Life Insurance Corporation of India	योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम्	Yogakshkemam Vahaamyaham
Labour Ministry	श्रम एव जयते	Shrama Eva Jayate

Our National Anthem ‘जन गण मन’ is 90% Samskrit and 10% Samskritic.

Dr. Shashibala of Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan says, volumes can be written on the topic ‘Samskrit-as soft power of India’ searching from multiple dimensions of thought and history. At the national level it serves to unite the entire country; at the international level it brings several countries close to India linguistically, culturally, philosophically, artistically and in the literary sphere by creating harmonious international relations.

Samskrit is the soul of India. It is not just a language; it is a *Jeevan Darshan* (philosophy of life). It reminds us of our great traditions and our rich heritage which, in turn, generates enthusiasm and confidence.

There are a certain qualities inherent in Samskrit (and ancient Samskrit literature) which qualify it to be soft power of India.

- (i) Samskrit has been the principal vehicle and fountain-head of our culture since times immemorial. Culture and

language are inseparable. They go together. Hence, promoting Samskrit is promoting our culture.

- (ii) Samskrit is the best tool to engender the cultural renaissance of Bharat. It keeps us stay connected to our roots. It is the ‘Anti-virus software’ to protect our ‘systems’ from external attacks/ soft-threats.
- (iii) Samskrit literature is a phenomenal repository of Knowledge. It contains hundreds and thousands of ancient works pertaining to every branch of Knowledge. A good knowledge of Samskrit will ensure that one gets independent and direct access to the primary sources of that Knowledge.
- (iv) Samskrit language is considered to be the only suitable natural language for computers. Software is being developed for the Machine Translation of Indian languages with Samskrit as the intermediate language.
- (v) The word generating power of Samskrit is unparalleled. It can create / coin an infinite number of words by using about 2000 roots, 22 prefixes and about 200 suffixes. No other language in the world offers such phenomenal versatility.
- (vi) Providing Samskrit to NRI younger generation is like empowering them with the much-wanted self-esteem and pride.
- (vii) Samskrit literature promotes and propagates an all-inclusive ideology – on the lines of “Unity in Diversity”, “Ekam Sat, Vipraah Bahudhaa Vadanti”, “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”, etc. – which are aptly suited to constitute the foundation for global peace and harmony.
- (viii) Samskrit is the torch-bearer of Vishwa Dharma, a concept that represents far more than it’s usually accepted meaning of “Universal Code of Ethics.”

- (ix) Samskrit is an effective instrument of social harmony. As Swami Vivekananda has put it, the knowledge of Samskrit can give the deprived, repressed, and other neglected sections of society the needed power and prestige, and it can elevate them culturally. Samskrit can be a major tool for social transformation, given its ability to eradicate differences of caste, sect, gender and region.
- (x) The knowledge of Samskrit alone can lead to complete an authenticated study of Indology, Indian art, philosophy, culture, sculpture, music, science, history, political science, etc.

Sanskrit for Foreign Policy

Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Tibetans, has said, “India’s long tradition of religious tolerance can be a role model for rest of the world”. He further added, “major religions of the world like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism originated in India and it provided shelter to followers of religions like Zoroastrianism. These can be a model for rest of the world” (DNA, 2008)

Dr Chand Kiran Saluja, a great Sanskrit scholar and an authority in Education, Bharatiya Darshan etc., Director-Academic of Sanskrit Promotion Foundation, says that Sanskrit can play an important role in diffusion of soft power through education, culture, science and information’. In 1996 in one of the report of committee on Education for 21st century (Delores’s Committee) ***Four Basic Pillars of Education*** are basically based on the idea enshrined in Sanskrit literature:

Learning to KNOW (ज्ञानं तृतीयं नेत्रम्)

Learning to DO (ज्ञानं भारः क्रियां विना /
कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते)

Learning to LIVE TOGETHER (सङ्गच्छध्वं संवदध्वम्)

Learning to BE (मनुर्भव)

The five pillars of this soft power, used in a strategic sense are :

- सम्मान (Dignity)
- संवाद (Dialogue)
- समृद्धि (Shared Prosperity),
- सुरक्षा (Regional and Global Security), and
- संस्कृति एवं सभ्यता (Cultural and civilizational links).

Cultural bonding can be one of the ways to prevent conflict and promote peace. Samskrit, with its inherited civilizational experience, is fully capable of assuming the role of a mission to create the conditions for dialogue among cultures, civilizations and peoples, based upon respect for commonly shared values.

Think of the opportunities for India with Samskrit as its greatest asset. Yoga is a few billions' business in USA now. Yoga accessories business alone accounts for a few billion in Europe. But as far as marketing of Yoga is concerned, only two, *Aasana* and *Pranayama*, out of *Ashtanga*, are marketed till now. Yoga Shastra as such is yet to be marketed. Likewise, Ayurveda and many other Shastras which are purely secular and scientific, Samskrit Knowledge Systems to be called precisely, are yet to be explored, researched, experimented and marketed.

In Samskrit Pedagogy, a new dimension has emerged called 'Samskrit for Specific Purpose (SSP)'. Samskrit Promotion Foundation has developed many SSP courses, both books and

online courses, like Samskrit for Yoga, Samskrit for Ayurveda, Samskrit for Vedanta, Samskrit for Bhagavadgita, Samskrit for Buddhism, Samskrit for Naatyashaastram, Samskrit for Music & Arts, Samskrit for Arthashastra, Samskrit for Management etc. It would be a novel and unique idea for ICCR to tie up with Samskrit Promotion Foundation and promote these courses all over the world as the soft power of India. Samskrit is the password to the wonderful world of Indian knowledge heritage. Samskrit for Specific Purpose could directly connect millions of people with India. Now Yoga, Ayurveda, Vedanta, Bhagavadgita, etc. are already being taught there through English or other languages of respective countries. But offering those subjects through Samskrit, its language of origin, and supplemented with bilingual instruction, will be a ‘game changer’.

Epilogue

Samskrit is not difficult to learn. Samskrit Promotion Foundation, Samskrita Bharti and several such institutions have come up who are imparting regular instructions in Samskrit. There are regular classes, Correspondence Courses, On-line Courses and web-sites available. Samskrit is now only at an arms-length. The purpose of today’s oration would be complete and all the efforts of ICCR would stand rewarded if we take two resolutions today: (i) we shall see that our children learn Samskrit; (ii) such of us who have missed learning Samskrit, shall now learn it. It is never late to learn. Our this much resolution, not less than a determination, I am confident, shall go a long way in establishing peace and harmony, goodwill and understanding, internationally and within the Nation.

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2. **Basudeo Poddar, *Vishwa Ki Kaal Yatra***(The Cosmic Passage Of Time)
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Suggested Readings

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4. **<https://sanskritpromotion.in>** or
info@sanskritpromotion.in for any kind of Sanskrit
related information, online courses, books and tutorials.