

DEPARTMENT OF SANSKRIT STUDIES
University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, India

**Samsādhani – Praveśikā: Learning Sanskrit using Computational Tools
(Online Certificate Course)**

Credits: 4

Mode: Online

Medium: English

Discussion/Interactive Sessions: Saturday or Sunday

Duration: 17.1.2024 - 14.6.2024

Background

Sanskrit, the ancient Indian classical language, has a huge repository of texts covering wide-ranging genres including philosophy, linguistics, religion and ritual, law, polity, health science, astronomy, mathematics to very high-quality literary masterworks such as the works of Kālidāsa, Daṇḍin, Bāṇa, the great epics Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata.

During the past few years, there is an emerging trend among Indians to learn Sanskrit so as to read and understand the original Sanskrit texts. Taking into account the complexity involved in the word-formation in Sanskrit, the euphonic changes due to the influence of oral tradition, and the tendency to use long compound expressions, it is found that the pedagogical teaching methods in the school and colleges do not provide enough training to read and understand Sanskrit literature dealing with scientific texts or those of high literary value unless one undergoes rigorous learning of Sanskrit grammar. Hence there is a huge demand, especially from the professionals at all stages of their career, to study Sanskrit so that they can access the original Sanskrit texts.

Aim and Methodology

The main goal of this course is to teach how to access Sanskrit literature using online computational tools. The focus would be on understanding the Sanskrit texts rather than just learning the grammar or the vocabulary.

In this course, we introduce a novel method of learning Sanskrit, with the help of online computational tools developed by the Department of Sanskrit Studies of the University of Hyderabad and Inria, France.

This method, while minimizing the memorisation component, revives the traditional old methods of Khaṇḍānvaya and Daṇḍānvaya of learning Sanskrit verses practised in the Gurukulas. The computational tools include the word level analyser and generator, segmenter and sandhi joiner and a sentence level analyser. These tools are linked with the online bilingual and monolingual dictionaries. These dictionaries provide easy access to the word meanings in three different languages: Hindi, English and French. A small component of project work at the end gives a hands-on practice to read and understand the original Sanskrit texts with the help of computational tools.

All the video lectures are pre-recorded and available to the students to watch at their own pace. The students would be encouraged to use the online computational tools. There will be discussion and doubt clearing sessions almost every week-end.

Objectives

- Provide the basic knowledge of Sanskrit grammar related to word formation, Sandhi, Samāsa and Kāraka.
- Introduce the basic concepts useful for textual understanding viz. Ākāṅkṣā, Yogyatā and Sannidhi.
- Generate confidence in students that they can access the original Sanskrit texts with some effort.

Course Outline

- Module 0
 - General introduction
- Module 1
 - Pada and an inflectional morphology (subanta and tiṅanta)
 - Grammatical features: vibhakti, gender, number, person, lakāra, padī, gaṇa, prayoga.
 - Introduction to the online morphological generator and analyser, demo and practice.
 - The problem of ambiguity during the analysis process
 - Introduction to Derivational morphology - kṛdanta (primary derivatives) and taddhitānta (secondary derivatives).
 - Demo and practice of derivational morphological analyser and generator.
 - Understanding the meaning of words from their stem and suffix(es).

- Module 2
 - Introduction to the sandhi phenomenon in Sanskrit.
 - Sandhi
 - Vowel and consonant sandhi, sandhi due to visarga.
 - Demo and practice of sandhi
- Module 3
 - Introduction to Kāraḱas.
 - Kāraḱa to Vibhakti mapping (Vibhakti prakaraṇa of Aṣṭādhyāyī)
 - Meanings of various morphemes, and the process of information decoding.
 - Role of Ākāṃkṣā, Yogyatā and Sannidhi in the process of understanding a text.
 - Introduction to Non-Kāraḱa relations.
 - Use of Parser to understand a verse / a sentence.
 - Traditional methods of Khaṇḁānvaya and Daṇḁānvaya for understanding a linguistic expression.
- Module 4
 - Introduction to Samāsa.
 - A semantic classification of Samāsa.
 - Understanding compounds with more than two components.
 - Segmentation
 - Ambiguity in segmentation
 - Demo and reading practice with Segmenter
- Project Work
 - Analysis of a few select verses/sentences from a chosen text.

Evaluation

There would be 4 minor examinations of 20 marks each after the completion of each module. 20 marks would be reserved for the final project work.

Faculty

- Prof. Amba Kulkarni, University of Hyderabad.
- Prof. Gérard Huet, Inria, France
- Dr Pavankumar Satuluri, IIT Roorkee
- Dr Arjuna S. R., Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE)

Salient Features

This course is unique in many respects.

- It introduces a novel method of teaching a language, with the proper blending of synchronous and asynchronous teaching, discussions and doubt clearing sessions, and practicals.
- It revives the ancient teaching methods, in a modern way.
- The students would be analysing a few verses/sentences from some classical Sanskrit texts as a part of the course work.

Nature of the Course

- Open Elective (UoH Students)
- Certificate Course (Non-UoH students)