

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF  
TAMIL NADU AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE AUDITORIUM IN THE CENTENARY  
YEAR OF HIS HOLINESS SRI ABHINAVA VIDYATHEERTHA MAHA SANNIDHANAM  
AT MADRAS SANSKRIT COLLEGE, CHENNAI ON 11.07.2018 AT 5.30 P.M**

Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam

Thiru. N. Gopalaswami  
Former, Chief Election Commissioner of India  
President, Sri VK Iyer Trust

Thiru. T.S. Krishnamoorthy,  
Former Chief Election Commissioner of India

Thiru. V. Srikanth  
Secretary, Sri VK Iyer Trust

Dr. S. Narayanan  
Donor of the Auditorium

Tmt. Jalaja Narayanan  
Donor of the Auditorium

Thiru. Ramaswamy  
Director BVB, Chennai Kendra

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to be here at the Sanskrit college for the function organized to mark the centenary celebrations for His Holiness Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha Maha Swamigal on which occasion a mini auditorium is being inaugurated.

The Madras Sanskrit college was established in the year 1906 by the late Shri V. Krishnaswami Iyer, who graduated with a B.A. degree in Sanskrit and philosophy from the Madras Presidency college in the year 1882 and went on to become a lawyer and then a judge of the Madras High Court in the year 1909. Among his many meritorious acts, was the founding of the Indian Bank in the year 1906 and the Venkataramana Ayurveda college and dispensary in the year 1909.

The founder selected the scholar Mahamahopadhyaya Sri Kuppuswamy Sastri as the first Principal of the college. The Kuppuswamy Sastri Research Institute (KSRI) which was named after him and established as a part of this college has upheld the highest standards of research in the areas of mathematics, yoga, botany, legal rights of women, warfare in ancient India based on references made in Sanskrit literature. It has also produced a number of research papers and books in the above various fields. It now hosts one of the best Sanskrit libraries in the country and has digitised and preserved precious palm leaf manuscripts. Many research scholars have obtained their M.Phil., and Ph.D degrees from the Madras University, thanks to the assistance provided by the Institute.

The pre-Classical form of Sanskrit is known as Vedic Sanskrit, with the language of the Rigveda being the oldest and most archaic.

*Classical Sanskrit* is understood to be that, as laid out in the grammar of *Pāṇini*, around the fourth century BCE and it has significantly influenced most modern languages of the Indian subcontinent, particularly in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

The oldest surviving Sanskrit grammar is Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* ("Eight-Chapter Grammar"), written around the 4th centuries BCE. It is essentially a prescriptive grammar, i.e., an authority that defines Sanskrit, although it contains descriptive parts, mostly to account for some Vedic forms that had become rare in *Pāṇini's* time. Classical Sanskrit became fixed with the grammar of Pāṇini (roughly 500 BCE), and remains in use upto the present day.

Many Sanskrit dramas indicate that the Sanskrit speakers were almost always multilingual and well-educated. Centres like Varanasi, Pune and Kanchipuram had a strong presence as teaching and debating institutions, and high classical Sanskrit was maintained until British times.

Institutions such as this Sanskrit College set up during the British times have kept alive the sound traditions and literature of the language intact for

posterity. Interest in studying the Sanskrit language is again becoming widely prevalent and many scholars and writers have brought to the fore the wealth of wisdom available in Sanskrit literature.

More than 3,000 Sanskrit works have been composed since India's independence. The Sahitya Akademi has been giving an award for the best creative work in Sanskrit every year since 1967. Sanskrit is used extensively in the Carnatic and Hindustani branches of classical music and Kirtanas, bhajans, stotras, and shlokas of Sanskrit are popular throughout India.

The state of Haryana has over 24 Sanskrit colleges offering education equivalent to bachelors degree, additionally masters and doctoral level degrees are also offered by the Kurukshetra University and Maharshi Dayanand University.

The Central Board of Secondary Education of India (CBSE), along with several other state education boards, has made Sanskrit an alternative option to the state's own official language as a second or third language choice in the schools it governs.

Many universities throughout the world train and employ Sanskrit scholars, either within a separate Sanskrit department or as part of a broader focus area, such as South Asian studies or Linguistics. For example, Delhi university has about 400 Sanskrit students, about half of which are in post-graduate programmes.

I gather that this college has been following a Gurukula system of education, with the students being given free hostel facilities and food in the premises. This will go a long way in preserving the rich cultural tradition of Sanskrit in its pristine form.

I am also informed that the college offers Sanskrit Shiromani which is recognised by the Madras university as a degree course. The students are trained in traditional sastras like Mimamsa, Advaita Vedanta, Sahitya, Vyakarana, Jyothisha and Nyaya through a traditional way of teaching. There are also courses offered to the general public for certificate and diploma. The response has been very good. Recently the college launched online Sanskrit

courses which have been well received all over the world. Since 1977 the Rashtriya Samskrit Samsthan, New Delhi established by the Govt. of India has been aiding this institution with funding.

Among illustrious personalities who have visited the campus, Mahatma Gandhi came in the year 1915 and Shri Rabindranath Tagore in 1922.

Sanskrit has dominated our ancient past as our spoken language and is the language of all our subjects whether spiritual or practical. All our Shastras, Puranas, Itihasas, Philosophical treatises, Astronomy, Astrology, Mathematics, Science, Ayurveda, our literature, Poetry, Drama and even Surgery have been created only in this language. To deny Sanskrit, is to deny our very heritage and culture. I am sure that the learning of Sanskrit will become more popular particularly since the literature available can help to find solutions for many of our current day problems.

I am very happy to inaugurate this auditorium named “Shri Abhinava Vidyatheertha Kripa”. This has been built on the advice of Shankaracharya, Sri Bharathi Theerthar, the present pontiff of Sringeri to commemorate Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha’s 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary.

Abhinava Vidyatheertha Maha swami was the 35<sup>th</sup> Sankaracharya of the Sringeri Mutt established by the great Adi Sankara.

Having gained sanyasa at the age of 14 Swami Abhinava Vidyatheertha was a great yogi, a Vedantin par excellence, who travelled widely all over India to propagate the message of Adi Sankara.

As a tribute to his love of Sanskrit, which he recognised is the essence of India’s heritage, two of his devotees, Dr. S. Narayanan and Mrs. Jalaja Narayanan have decided to modernize this auditorium.

Dr S.Narayanan and Mrs Jalaja Narayanan deserve appreciation for their contribution in funding this project and for taking a keen personal interest in its renovation.

I thank the Madras Sanskrit College for inviting me today and wish the institution greater success in the preservation and spread of Sanskrit.

Nandri Vanakkam...

Jai Hind...