

## **The Decline of Sanskrit Influence in Regional Indian Literature: A Linguistic and Literary Analysis**

**Ms. Vanshika Deshmukh, Ms. Vaishnavi Badgujar, Ms. Bhagyashri Bari**

R. C. Patel Institute of management Research and Development, Shirpur

### **Abstract :**

The research paper explores the decline of Sanskrit influence in regional Indian literature: A linguistic and literary analysis. Sanskrit was once the main language of literature and culture in India, but over time its importance decreased as regional languages started growing. This study argues that the decline of Sanskrit was integral to the development of diverse linguistic identities in India, laying the groundwork for the rich plurality of Indian literature today. This paper studies this change from two angles: language and literature. From the language side, it looks at how Sanskrit words, grammar, and writing styles were taken into regional languages like Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, and Kannada, but in simpler forms. From the literature side, it explains how movements like Bhakti and Sufism, along with changes in kings' support and oral traditions, helped local languages become popular because they were easier for common people to understand. Sanskrit did not fully disappear—it changed its role. Instead of being the main language, it became a base or foundation that influenced regional literatures. This study shows that the decline of Sanskrit was important for the rise of India's many languages and for creating the rich variety of literature we see today.

**Keywords :** Decline of Sanskrit, Language and Literature, Bhakti and Sufism.

### **Introduction :**

Sanskrit has long held a central place in the cultural, religious, and literary history of India. For centuries, it served not only as the medium of sacred texts like the Vedas, Upanishads, and epics such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana, but also as the preferred language of scholarship, poetry, and philosophy. Its highly refined grammar, codified by Panini, and its prestige as a “language of the learned” gave Sanskrit a unifying character across different regions of the subcontinent. However, as India's social, political, and cultural landscape evolved, Sanskrit gradually lost its dominance and gave way to regional languages that began to flourish in both spoken and written forms.

The decline of Sanskrit influence was neither abrupt nor absolute. It was a gradual process shaped by several factors—shifts in royal patronage, the spread of devotional (Bhakti) and mystical (Sufi) movements, and the growing need for literature that could reach common people in their own languages. Linguistically, Sanskrit elements did not vanish but were

absorbed, simplified, and reshaped within vernaculars such as Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, and Kannada. Literarily, these regional languages developed their own creative traditions while still drawing inspiration from Sanskrit themes, imagery, and vocabulary.

This paper seeks to examine the decline of Sanskrit's dominance through both linguistic and literary analysis. It argues that the diminishing centrality of Sanskrit was not a sign of cultural loss but rather a necessary transformation that laid the foundation for India's plural literary Sanskrit has played a vital role in shaping India's cultural, religious, and literary traditions. For many centuries, it was the language of sacred scriptures, epics, philosophy, and classical poetry, uniting people across regions through a common medium of knowledge and expression. Its precise grammar, vast vocabulary, and literary richness gave it an esteemed position as the language of scholars and the elite. However, over time, the influence of Sanskrit began to decline as regional languages gained strength. Political changes, shifting royal patronage, and the growing need for literature that was accessible to the masses contributed to this transition. identity. By understanding this transition, we gain deeper insight into how regional languages emerged, evolved, and shaped the diverse literary traditions that continue to thrive in India today.

### **Objective :**

1. To analyse decline of Sanskrit influence in regional Indian literature: A linguistic and literary analysis.
2. To study how Sanskrit lost its importance as the main literary language in India.
3. To show that Sanskrit continued to influence regional literature even after its decline.
4. To find out how changes in royal support and oral traditions reduced Sanskrit's influence.
5. To explore how social media platforms influence the use and awareness of Sanskrit and regional languages.
6. To prove that the decline of Sanskrit was a transformation, not a complete loss.
7. To assess the long-term cultural and linguistic legacy of Sanskrit in modern India.

### **Experiment :**

Responses Related To Sanskrit important in folk stories and traditions.

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Very important	151	89.9
Not important	17	10.1
Total	168	100

Responses Related To use of Sanskrit words in festivals or religious ceremonies changed.

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Yes, much less now	199	70.8
No change	27	16.1
A little less	22	13.1
Total	168	100

Responses Related To how do you feel when you hear Sanskrit Shloks or phrases used in literature or speeches.

Responses	Frequency	% of Total
Inspired	118	70.2
Interested	38	22.6
Not interested	12	7.1
Total	168	100

Responses Related To digital help would be good to keep Sanskrit alive.

Responses	Frequency	% of Total
Phone apps	87	51.8
Online classes	28	16.7
Social media groups	29	17.3
Digital books	24	14.3
Total	168	100

Responses Related To how modern textbook or media reduced the use of Sanskrit in your language.

Responses	Frequency	% of Total
Yes	151	89.9
No	17	10.1
Total	168	100

Responses Related To Is Sanskrit important for your language's literature.

Responses	Frequency	% of Total
Very Important	122	72.6
Not Important	18	10.7
Little Important	28	16.7
Total	168	100

Responses Related To In your opinion ,why is Sanskrit used less in modern regional literature.

Responses	Frequency	% of Total
Influence of English and other Global language	105	62.5
Lack of Sanskrit education	39	23.2
Changing literary trends	14	8.3
Find it difficult to understand	10	6

Total	168	100
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### Hypothesis :

**Hypothesis 1:** Related To In your opinion, why is Sanskrit used less in modern regional literature.

Thus Applying The Formula  $\chi^2 = \sum (O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$

Here,  $O_i$  = Observed Frequency (Response Collected From Survey),

$E_i$  = Expected Frequency (Expected Response)

Showing Calculation Of  $\sum (O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$

Sr .No		$O_i$	$E_i$	$O_i - E_i$	$(O_i - E_i)^2$	$(O_i - E_i)^2/E_i$
1	Influence of English and other Global Language	105	42	63	3969	94.5
2	Lack of Sanskrit education	39	42	-3	9	0.21
3	Changing literary trends	14	42	-28	784	18.6
4	Find it difficult to understand	10	42	-32	1024	24.3
5	Total	168	168			137.6

$$\sum (O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i = 137.6$$

Degree of Freedom (D.F.) = 3

Tabulated Value of  $\chi^2$  (at 0.05 level) = 7.815

Calculated  $\chi^2 = 137.6$

**Result :-** Since **calculated  $\chi^2$  (137.6) > tabulated  $\chi^2$  (7.815)**,

we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis

**Hypothesis 2:** Related To In your opinion, how modern textbook or media reduced the use of Sanskrit in your language

Thus Applying The Formula  $\chi^2 = \sum (O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$

Here,  $O_i$  = Observed Frequency (Response Collected From Survey),

$E_i$  = Expected Frequency (Expected Response)

Showing Calculation Of  $\sum (O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$

Sr. No	How modern textbook or media reduced the use of Sanskrit in your language.	$O_i$	$E_i$	$O_i - E_i$	$(O_i - E_i)^2$	$(O_i - E_i)^2/E_i$

1	Yes	151	84	67	4489	53.44
2	No	17	84	-67	4489	53.44
3	Total	168				106.8

$$\sum (O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i = 106.8$$

Degree Of Freedom (D.F.) Is 1

Therefore, Tabulated Value Of  $\chi^2$  as 1 Degree Of Freedom Is 3.841\*

Since  $106.8 > 3.841^*$

**Result:** Calculated value of  $\chi^2 = 106.88$  Tabulated value of  $\chi^2$  at 1 D.F. = **3.841**

Since **106.88 > 3.841**, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

**Conclusion:** The decline of Sanskrit in regional Indian literature was a gradual process shaped by political changes, loss of royal patronage, and the growth of Bhakti–Sufi traditions that promoted regional languages. Rather than disappearing, Sanskrit transformed into a foundation that continues to influence vocabulary, style, and cultural practices across India. Though modern education and global languages have reduced its everyday use, Sanskrit is still valued for its cultural and literary importance. Survey responses show that people remain inspired by Sanskrit and see digital platforms and social media as potential tools for its revival. Thus, the decline of Sanskrit was not an end, but a restructuring of India’s literary identity, ensuring its legacy endures in modern times. The decline of Sanskrit in regional Indian literature was not a loss but a **transformation**. While political shifts, Bhakti–Sufi movements, and modern education reduced its dominance, Sanskrit still survives through rituals, culture, and vocabulary. It laid the foundation for regional languages and continues to shape India’s **rich literary and cultural legacy**, with digital platforms offering scope for its revival today.

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