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## Sanskrit Grams Programme: Uttarakhand

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### Why in News

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The Uttarakhand Government has decided to develop 'Sanskrit Grams' across the state.

The decision was taken **after noting significant progress in a pilot programme** to teach Sanskrit to residents of two villages in Uttarakhand.

### Key Points

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- **Sanskrit Grams Programme:**
  - **Aim:** To teach people to use **Sanskrit regularly**.
  - **Villages Selected:**
    - Several villages were **selected according to the availability of Sanskrit schools** so that teachers may visit the villages often and motivate residents to learn and use Sanskrit.
    - Villages were selected at the meeting of the **Uttarakhand Sanskrit Academy, chaired by the Uttarakhand Chief Minister**.
      - It has also been decided to **rename the academy as Uttaranchal Sanskrit Sansthanam** Haridwar, Uttarakhand.
      - The academy was **established in 2002**.
  - **Implementation Strategy:**
    - The **focus will be on the school-going children** so that they can learn the language from a young age.
    - The programme will start by teaching people smaller sentences which are used most commonly.
    - The programme will **run first at the district level** and then at the **block level** for promotion of the Sanskrit language.

- **About the Pilot Programme:**
  - Earlier, **villages of Kimotha in Chamoli district** and **Bhantola in Bageshwar district** were developed as Sanskrit villages.
  - Residents have started using the **language in their daily communication** and they also sing folk songs in Sanskrit.
- **Usage of Sanskrit in Uttarakhand:**
  - Sanskrit is the **second official language** in Uttarakhand after Hindi (**Article 345 of the Constitution: Official language or languages of a State**).
  - The state government currently **runs 97 Sanskrit schools**, where an average of **2,100 students** study each year.

## Sanskrit

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- It is an **old Indo-Aryan language** in which the **most ancient documents, Vedas** are composed in what is called **Vedic Sanskrit**.
- **Classical Sanskrit**, a language close to late Vedic as then used in the northwest of the subcontinent, was elegantly described in one of the **finest grammars** ever produced, the **Aṣṭādhyāyī** (“Eight Chapters”) composed by **Pāṇini** (c. 6<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> century BCE).
- Sanskrit has been written both in **Devanāgarī script** and in various regional scripts, such as Śāradā from the north (Kashmir), Bāṅglā (Bengali) in the east, Gujarātī in the west, and various southern scripts, including the **Grantha alphabet**, which was especially devised for Sanskrit texts.
- There are also **major works of drama and poetry**, although the exact dates of many of these works and their creators have not been definitively established. Important authors and works include:
  - **Bhāsa** (for example, his **Svapnavāsavadatta** - Vāsavadatta in a Dream), who is assigned widely varying dates but definitely worked prior to Kālidāsa, who mentions him.
  - **Kālidāsa**, dated anywhere from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE to the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, whose works include **Śakuntalā, Vikramorvaśīya, Kumārasambhava** and **Raghuvamśa**.
  - **Śūdraka** and his **Mṛcchakatika** (“Little Clay Cart”), possibly dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE.
  - **Bhāravi** and his **Kirātārjunīya** (“Arjuna and the Kirāta”), from approximately the 7<sup>th</sup> century.
  - **Māgha**, whose **Śīsupālavadha** (“The Slaying of Śīsupāla”) dates to the late 7<sup>th</sup> century.
  - The two epics **Rāmāyaṇa** (“Life of Rāma”) and **Mahābhārata** (“Great Tale of the Bhāratas”) were also composed in Sanskrit, and the former is esteemed as the first poetic work (ādikāvya) of India.
- Sanskrit is a **classical** and an **eighth schedule language**.

## Promotion of Sanskrit by the Central Government

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- The government has established the **Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan** in Delhi as a nodal authority to promote Sanskrit. The Sansthan has been allocated Rs 643.84 crore in the last three years.
- Providing **financial assistance to Adarsh Sanskrit Mahavidyalayas/Shodha Sansthans**.
- Award of **merit scholarships** to students of Sanskrit Pathasala to College level.
- **Financial assistance to NGOs/Higher Educational Institutions** of Sanskrit for various Research Projects/Programmes.
- Retired eminent Sanskrit scholars are engaged under the **Shastra Chudamani scheme** for teaching.
- Sanskrit is also taught through **Non-formal Sanskrit Education (NFSE)** programme, by setting up Non-Formal Sanskrit learning centres, in reputed institutions like Indian Institutes Technology, Ayurveda institutions, Modern Colleges and Universities.
- **Presidential awards for Sanskrit Language** are awarded annually to 16 senior scholars and to 5 young scholars.
- Financial Assistance for **Publication, Reprint of rare Sanskrit books**.
- **Ashtaadashi** containing eighteen Projects for sustaining the growth of Sanskrit has been implemented.

**Source: IE**