

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

Bhasha Sangam App

22 March 2022

REMARKS

Ambassador Tanmaya Lal

Namaskar,

A warm welcome to all of you,

Thank you for joining us this evening as we celebrate the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat campaign in India that is taking so many wonderful forms in this the 75th year of our independence.

Today we focus specially on the linguistic diversity in India.

Friends,

India represents one-sixth of humanity. Diversity is, therefore, natural and one of the major strengths of India.

All of you represent not only India but also its linguistic diversity here in Sweden.

I understand today we have speakers of at least 11 Indian languages among us.

Experiencing such a diversity is a recent phenomenon for most countries unlike India.

As you may know, the languages spoken in India are categorized into at least four major linguistic families. There are more than 120 mother tongues in India that are spoken by more than 10,000 people each. Around 25 languages have more than a million speakers each.

Around 70 languages are taught in schools in some capacity. Radio programmes are broadcast in around 150 languages and dialects. Newspapers and weekly journals are published in around 100 different languages. There are TV channels in several regional languages.

Poetry, music, theatre and cinema have a long tradition in all major Indian languages. Many successful movies made in various languages are also dubbed or remade in Bollywood and vice versa. This helps greater exposure and mutual appreciation of arts and culture.

There are around 25 different writing systems in India and around 50 Indian languages in which substantial writing and publishing is done.

There is a very rich tradition of classical works in all major languages that have guided and inspired communities through centuries. Outstanding work continues to be produced in various languages.

Given such diversity and the close linkages between language and identity, cultural heritage and traditional knowledge systems, the Indian constitution recognizes 22 major languages and provides for protection of linguistic minorities.

The abiding strength of our civilization draws upon many different sources and traditions that provides dynamism and creativity.

Diversity defines us and unites us.

Friends,

Today, we sometimes see the younger generation being less conversant in their mother tongue.

At the same time, there is keenness to transmit values and cultural heritage to the next generation, including in Indian communities abroad. This is becoming easier as their number has grown. Avenues of learning Indian music or dance are increasing.

Here in Sweden, thanks to progressive policies, it is relatively easier to be able to pursue a wide range of languages in schools.

Many changes are underway.

Digital technology is also transforming how we work or play or learn.

The Indian Government has also come out with innovative smartphone apps, for example, the Fit India app or the Sanskrit Little Guru app. These are becoming popular.

One such app is about language skills. The app is called Bhasha Sangam app.

This interesting app facilitates online language learning, allowing user to learn several languages simultaneously. Not only basic everyday conversation sentences. It also opens doors to explore the vast and rich culture, uninhibited by language barriers.

The Bhasha Sangam app can help start learning to speak one's mother tongue. It can also help bring us closer.

Friends,

The multiplicity of languages across the world tells us about the huge range of geographies, habitats and histories of societies where these languages developed. The vocabulary and other aspects of any language evolve in a specific context and place and its history.

Languages carry our collective cultural memories and history in the form of stories, songs, legends and sayings. They allow transmission of shared traditional knowledge, ideas, values and faiths through generations, overcoming the distance of time and geographies. They remind us of our collective struggles, challenges and achievements and also provide us guidance.

While the rapid globalization is leading to predominance of certain languages, there is also ever-growing requirement for translation and interpretation, for instance here in Europe.

Multi-lingual skills will continue to grow in importance for workplace opportunities across the world.

Friends,

Today's event is an effort to introduce this Bhasha Sangam app initiative that can be of interest to any context or age group. It is a unique and much needed technology driven effort in the context of India to open windows to different regions.

We hope that you would find it interesting to introduce this user-friendly app to your family and friends, especially the younger generation. We would welcome your feedback.

Thank you.