

VICE PRESIDENT STRESSES THE NEED TO PRESERVE AND PROMOTE CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

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Vice President's Secretariat

Vice President stresses the need to preserve and promote classical languages

Says the classical languages provide the window to our civilizational values and the wisdom of our ancient thinkers

VP interacts with the Telugu scholars during a luncheon meeting

Holds discussions on the promotion of classical Telugu language and development of the 'Center of Excellence for Studies in Classical Telugu'

Will address the Valedictory Session of a two-day workshop on 'Development of Center of Excellence for Studies in Classical Telugu' on Tuesday

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The Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu today called for preservation and promotion of classical languages saying that they provide the window to our past and the civilizational values of ancient India.

Shri Naidu, who arrived at Venkatachalam, in Nellore district by a special train, interacted with the Telugu scholars, litterateurs and experts in Telugu language during a luncheon meeting, in Nellore today.

During the interaction, the Vice President said that our classical languages represent the knowledge and wisdom of our ancient thinkers, scientists, poets, sages, doctors, philosophers and rulers.

"If we don't preserve and sustain this link, we lose a very precious key to the treasure house we have all inherited", he added.

Referring to reports, he expressed concern over the fact that more than 40 languages or dialects in India are considered to be endangered and are believed to be heading towards extinction as only a few thousand people speak them.

Shri Naidu's discussions with scholars centered around the promotion of classical Telugu language and the development of the 'Center of Excellence for Studies in Classical Telugu' (CESCT).

The Center of Excellence for Studies in Classical Telugu (CESCT) was set up under the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore after Telugu was recognized as a Classical Language in 2008. Telugu was declared as a classical languages as it fulfilled the following criteria set by the Government –

- i. High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over period of 1500-2000 years;
- ii. A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers;
- iii. The literary tradition be original and not borrowed from another speech community;
- iv. The classical language and literature being distinct from modern, there may also be a discontinuity between the classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.

It may be recalled that Tamil was the first language in India to be accorded the classical language status in 2004. Subsequently, Centre for Excellence of Classical Tamil which was functioning in the campus of the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore was shifted to Chennai on request from Tamil Nadu government in 2008. The institute is now known as the Central Institute of Classical Tamil (CICT).

The Vice President visited CICT, Chennai yesterday (on 19 January, 2020) to acquaint himself with the functioning and various projects undertaken by the institute for preservation and promotion of Tamil language.

Sanskrit, Kannada, Malayalam and Odia are the other languages that have been declared as classical languages in India by the government.

Following a demand to shift the Center of Excellence for Studies in Classical Telugu from Mysuru, the Vice President had suggested to shift the CESCT to then unified Andhra Pradesh, some years ago.

Subsequently the Central government wrote to the combined Andhra Pradesh government in this regard.

Following the bifurcation of the state of Andhra Pradesh, Shri Naidu again took the initiative and urged the Central government to shift CESCT to either of the Telugu speaking states.

Later the Union government decided to locate CESCT in Nellore. Even as the modalities are being worked out for a new campus for the institute in Nellore, Smt. Deepa Venkat, daughter of the Vice President and Managing Trustee of Swarna Bharat Trust has offered to house the institute – for 3-4 years- free of cost in the premises of Swarna Bharat Trust, in Nellore.

On the suggestions of the Vice President, Union HRD Ministry has organised a two-day workshop on 'Development of Center of Excellence for Studies in Classical Telugu' at Swarna Bharat Trust, Nellore. Various scholars and experts of Telugu classical language are participating in the workshop.

The Workshop among other things will discuss about the preparation of a roadmap on the preservation, propagation and promotion of classical Telugu so that the richness of the language

could be taken to greater height.

The Center of Excellence for Studies in Classical Telugu, among others, propagates and preserves the classical language inside and outside of its speech territories. It undertakes and encourages research and documentation in India and abroad and also makes documentaries on scholars of eminence who are well versed in classical texts and explores linkages of classical language with classical music and dance forms. The Center also translates classical texts into other Indian languages, English and selected European languages.

Later on the Vice President witnessed 'BhuvanaVijayam', a unique artistic rendering showcasing the best of Telugu classical poetry, at Swarna Bharat Trust.

The Vice President who is on a two -day tour to Nellore on January 20th and 21st will attend a host of programs in the city.

This includes the Valadictory Session of the two-day workshop on Classical Telugu. The Union HRD Minister, Shri Ramesh Pokhariyal 'Nishank' will also grace the occasion.

On Tuesday (21 January, 2020), the Vice President accompanied by the Union HRD Minister, would visit Akshara Vidyalaya and Skill Development Center and in the afternoon, Shri Naidu will attend the Convocation of VikramaSimhapuri University at Sri Venkateshwara Kasturbha Kala Kshetram, Nellore.

VRRK/MS/MSY/RK

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