

## **International Seminar on 'Paradigm Shift in Indian Linguistics and its Implications for Applied Disciplines' (30 October– 01 November 2017)**

### **Concept Note:**

India can be legitimately proud of its rich heritage in linguistics and language related knowledge systems. All over the world, interdisciplinary research in language studies is spanning out in different directions, and creating remarkable networks of connections among diverse fields. However, in India we very rarely come across traditional linguists working in the interdisciplinary areas, barring in a few fields such as computational linguistics. Against this backdrop, the proposed three-day National Seminar on 'Paradigm Shift in Indian Linguistics and its Implications for Applied Disciplines' is an attempt provide a common platform to the traditional grammarians, theoretical linguists, academicians in the areas of computational linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive linguistics and clinical linguistics, and also practitioners in the field of language pedagogy, in order to initiate a meaningful dialogue between them. It will not only aim at building consciousness about the urgent need to delve into Indian grammatical theories, and explain their relationship to society regarding their applicability in the broadest sense but will also seek to lay down a set of concrete procedures, as well as create experimental tools for accomplishing these ends.

The knowledge of language and its use have been at the centre of Indian thought for centuries. The investigations in this regard have raised several issues which continue to engage the attention of the academics. The major issues are: language as a discipline, language and mind, language and reality, the relation between language and knowledge, development of language, and universal features of language. The grammarians and philologists were the standard-bearers of this great multi-cultural, literary tradition.

The extent of this wide-ranging 50 scholarship can be discerned in the texts produced not only in Sanskrit and Tamil, but also in Bangla, Oriya, Kannada, Malayalam, Telugu, and Gujarati. Texts in Pali and Prakrit are also valuable sources of knowledge, in need of rehabilitation. It is worth noting that traditional Indian grammars, particularly of Sanskrit and Tamil, buttressed by solid theoretical frameworks, shed light on enduring questions in ontology and epistemology. Later, when the western theories came in, naturally, they influenced the thinking of scholars, resulting in a re-conceptualization of the central tenets of the Indian Linguistic tradition. The potential applications in the modern era, of linguistic insights of the past, could be quite significant in the cognitive, computational and clinical aspects of language. These moves could be viewed as ushering in a paradigm shift in the Indian linguistic thought, especially in the applied fields. The gulf between the knowledge base on the one hand and its potential applications on the other might have arisen because of the deliberate denigration of indigenous knowledge, masterminded by the colonial regime. In the post-independent era, the problem is manifest in a different form: while there is a positive reassessment of the values of traditional knowledge systems, the project of rehabilitation suffers from a lack of expert know-how.

In recent times, Indian grammatical theories have been successfully applied in the field of computational linguistics. This could be replicated, in principle, in other inter-disciplinary areas such as cognitive linguistics, clinical linguistics and psycholinguistics, and language pedagogy. There is

visible enthusiasm among the traditional scholars of the present generation to showcase the relevance of their theories in the modern context.

An International Seminar on 'Paradigm Shift in Indian Linguistics and its Implications for Applied Disciplines' was organised at IAS during 30 October-01 November 2017. Dr. Amba Kulkarni and Dr. P. Madhavan, Fellow, IAS were the Conveners of the seminar. The welcome address was given by Professor Vijay Shankar Varma, National Fellow, IAS. The Keynote address was given by Professor Kapil Kapoor.

#### PARTICIPANTS:

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