

## SHRĪMAT PĀṆḌURĀṄĀSHRAM VAIDIKA PĀTHASHĀLĀ AT SHRĪ CHITRĀPUR MATH, SHIRĀLĪ

Through the ages, Vaidika-s, Purohita-s, and Bhaṭṭu-s have guided our community in performing kriyā-s, sevā-s, and daily pūjā-s at Shrī Chitrāpur Math and its affiliated institutions. Vaidika-s are therefore an essential part of our samāja, playing an important role in performing rituals which are a necessary part of our lives.

However, in recent years the number of sādḥaka-s from our community taking up this profession had been on the decline, which finally resulted in the closure of the Shrīmat Pāṇḍuraṅgāshram Vaidika Pāthashālā at Shrī Chitrāpur Math. The main reason for declining interest in the profession was the remuneration and other benefits, which were perceived to be unattractive when compared to other professions and avenues of employment.

Under the guidance of H.H. Shrīmat Sadyojāt Shaṅkarāshram Swāmījī, the Pāthashālā has now been reopened and enhanced benefits are being provided to the vidyārthī-s. Increased remuneration and associated benefits for vaidika-s have been implemented. Additionally, all vaidika-s under the different affiliated Trusts and Temples have now been brought on the payroll of Shrī Chitrāpur Math.

At the Vaidika Pāthashālā, training for the vidyārthī-s is provided in all the required Vidhi-s, Vidhāna-s, Rituals, Sanskrit, aspects of Ṛg-Veda and other Veda-s, relevant religious texts, and many other related subjects. The full course is for 5 years. On completion, the vidyārthī would have become a full-fledged Purohita with knowledge of all vidhi-s like Upanayana, Vivāha prayoga, etc with required practical exposure. However, early exit from the course is permitted at the end of three years where the vidyārthī, as an Archaka, would have learnt to perform Devatā Pūjā and basic Homa-s like Gaṇahoma, Navagraha Homa, etc. If the vidyārthī undergoing training to become an Archaka is found to be weak in Aksharajñāna or Uchchāraṇa, his training may be extended for some more time. Similarly, if a vidyārthī training to be a Purohita, is unable to complete the course, will be required to stay longer.

Vidyārthī-s are provided free accommodation, food and a stipend:

- During the entire period of study at the Vaidika Pāthashālā, the Math takes care of all the needs / requirements of the vidyārthī-s ensuring there is no financial outgo for them.
- Vidyārthī-s are expected to follow a disciplined lifestyle. Keeping this in view, a monthly stipend of Rs 1500/- per month is earmarked, to be deposited as a lump sum in the vidyārthī's bank account on completion of the training. This monthly stipend will not be paid for the extended period after 3 or 5 years that the vidyārthī will be required to stay if he has not gained the necessary proficiency.
- In case the vidyārthī discontinues the course before its completion, the lump sum will not be paid.

- In addition to this, incentivization of the parents of vidyārthī-s is as follows: A lump sum payment of Rs 10,000 at the time of admission, and an annual lump sum payment of Rs 10,000/- at the end of each year till the completion of the course.
- On successful completion of the Vaidika Training Course, the vidyārthī will be absorbed in the service of Shrī Chitrāpur Math and will be eligible for salary and benefits, as applicable to vaidika-s.
- Per vidyārthī, the expenses borne/incurred by Shrī Chitrāpur Math towards stipend and incentives to parents, over a period of 5 years amounts to Rs 1,50,000/-
- Interested persons wishing to contribute any amount towards vidyārthī expenses, or sponsor a vidyārthī for a year or more (at Rs 30,000 per year), are welcome to contact the Donor Facilitation Cell on email scm.donor.cell@gmail.com

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