

A Study of the Importance of Linguistic Diversity in India

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Abstract:

Hinduism, caste and language are among India's most distinctive characteristics. According to Indian law, states are created on the basis of language in order to accommodate different linguistic groups and enable their effective integration into the economic, political, social and cultural mainstream of the country. In spite of this, the growing regional differences in India, caused by the linguistic minority states developing faster than the national average, have created tension between the linguistic communities that make up the various Indian states and provinces. As a result, multiculturalism faces a new set of challenges, since it is based on the premise that conflicts in societies are mostly caused by minorities feeling excluded from the general process of socio-economic progress. Because the minority language groups in India are progressing faster than the majority, there are a number of broader challenges that multiculturalism needs to address.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Regionalism, Majority language community, Minority cultures.

Introduction:

Since its independence, India has had one of the few democratic governments that have lasted continuously. Hinduism, caste and language are among India's most distinctive characteristics. It has 28 states, 9 union territories, 22 national languages, 1162 additional languages and dialects, and adherents to nearly every religion in the globe [4]. Not only does India have a unique blend of cultures and religions, but it is also an excellent example of a multilingual, multicultural state. Because the states wanted to have some autonomy in formulating their own laws and policies, India created a federal system after independence to enable the various linguistic groups conserve, preserve, and promote their respective languages and cultures. According to India's federal structure, the sub-national divisions - the states that make up the union of India - were found mostly on the basis of linguistics.

That's why the need for uniformity in the country's education strategy was so pressing. After the 1956 linguistic rearrangement of India's states, the situation took a dramatic turn, especially in Assam. A state with a diverse population, Assam faces a unique dilemma in terms of the medium of instruction in the state's educational institutions. As a result of this, Assam has been plagued by a variety of strange issues that have plagued the state [9].

When it comes to state-run educational institutions, the standard and norms of a society and its culture are determined solely by the language used. Language is like a mirror that reflects a

nation's culture. Educationists, psychologists and administrators must select which language should be used as a medium of instruction at various stages of education and why? Because it has the biggest influence on a person's temperament and upbringing, the mother tongue of all languages has attracted the most attention. The next most important language is the regional language, which is spoken by everyone in the region [2]. It's useful in the realms of social interaction and commerce as well as in the administrative and political spheres. Because every culture or country has its own cultural language, which may teach us about the country's cultural legacy, it is equally vital to sustain cultural unity and progress in the country.

We have broken it down into the following sections: An initial chapter addresses how cultural variety, particularly linguistic variation, is conceptualized theoretically and investigates diverse, multicultural perspectives on language's role in cultural identity formation [1]. Specifically, for India, Part II assesses the primary mechanisms established to accommodate the different linguistic groups within the overall national development process and ensure their effective integration into the economic and political mainstream and social and cultural mainstreams. Following on from Part II, Part III presents some basic difficulties that emerge from our examination of multiculturalism, which suggest the need for larger analytical approaches to identify the varied situations under which disagreement can occur between groups in a multicultural society.

Causes of Linguism:

Linguism has several key reasons, which are mentioned here.

1. Literature as a passion:

Loyalty to literary works is fostered and strengthened by the love of reading. Linguistic loyalties hamper a common language.

2. Causes due to the geographic location:

Geographical factors also influence linguistics. Language is shared by people who live in the same area. As a result, local identity and distinction are promoted among individuals. A linguistic group's love of its own language is strengthened by geographical proximity.

3. Causes in the past:

As a by-product of India's national liberation war, linguism has developed in India. Our freedom fighters denounced it because the British divided the country linguistically. It was instead proposed to divide India into linguistically distinct regions. It wasn't until 1956 that the states were redistributed in accordance with linguistic homogeneity. Indian sub-nationalism has geographical roots thanks to the linguistic reformation of the States.

4. There are a number of political reasons behind this.

In order to win an election, local political parties inflame local residents' linguistic feelings.

5. Psychiatric factors

When it comes to language, some psychological and emotional aspects give the impression of ethnocentrism to a homogenous group of people. A common interest is what binds India's linguistic communities together. Residents develop a sense of regionalism, sectarianism and separatism as a result.

Consequences of Linguism:

Linguism has the following drawbacks:

1. Regionalism and localism are on the rise:

Concentrated in one state, distinct linguistic groups seem to think primarily of their own states' interests. A national perspective is undermined, and there is an increase in local sentiments.

2. Regional political parties are formed.

Because of linguism, some states have developed regional political parties as a result. There are also local governments found by some of these political parties in certain regions. Centre-State relations are frequently complicated by the presence of such political groups in power.

3. Linguistic minorities are being persecuted. The state reorganization commission protected language minorities in states. A number of states have mistreated the country's linguistic minority. This has led to a number of issues and troubling tendencies which endanger the unity of the country.

4. Separate states are being demanded.

As a result of politicians' selfish motives, linguistic clashes occur. This group of politicians incites the linguistic minority to call for a linguistic division of the United States. Problems arise when a separate state is demanded.

5. The loss of national pride:

This is because linguistic and regional affiliations are eroding the sense of nationality. Deflation of national pride harms the country's sovereignty.

6. Conflicts near the state border

Problems with language have led to tensions in the bilingual borderlands. For example, the Goans are separated into two groups based on Konkani and Marathi's spoken languages.

Linguistic Diversity: A Multicultural Perspective

Linguistic diversity is a form of diversity that is important. To some degree, one's native language serves as a window through which one views the world. People can feel, understand, and locate themselves through language. It also plays a key role in such basic mental functions as thinking and understanding.

Culture has its core in language, which is defined as "the collection of words, as well as the rules of syntax and grammar that regulate how the words are put together to communicate a certain meaning". A person's thoughts, feelings, appearances, and behaviour are all shaped by language. Through language, all human thoughts are theorized, and all human values are expressed and understood; it's also through language that we discover who are we? Many scholars have studied this subject from different perspectives, but the importance of language is undisputed. However, linguistic diversity has received very little attention in cultural diversity literature. For example, the recognition of one language by the state to foster unity within the liberal state is opposed by those who support policies that promote diversity in languages [3]. The liberal theory has taken a normative approach to language, and some political scientists and linguists have developed specific language policies that are at odds with one another. Some of those who advocate for the preservation and promotion of languages have offered various arguments in support of their cause. There are three basic sorts of arguments: identity-based, justice-based, and diversity-based.

- a) Identity-based: If one's identity is built on the use of language, then that language must be preserved. Appreciating one's culture means respecting their language as it is a vital aspect of culture, as multiculturalism recognizes the value of cultural identification and asserts that it is the foundation of individual identity. According to Kant, all humans are rational beings capable of determining their life. In addition, equal dignity implies that humans have the capacity to develop and define their own identities. Linguistics isn't just a tool for

communication; it's a key, defining aspect of one's identity. According to Taylor, recognizing diversity is not enough because most people are comfortable with variety as articulated in the constitution or UN(United Nations) Charter. We need to recognize that all members of the state's population, regardless of ethnicity, are citizens deserving of respect. People not only want access to social production tools, but they also want to be seen as important and equally important.

- b) Justice based: Just as truth is the first virtue of mental systems, fairness is the first virtue of social institutions, according to Rawls's theory. Regardless of how effective a law or institution is, it must be amended or removed if it is inherently unfair. Most liberal political thinkers agree that the goal of a liberal democratic state should be to secure justice for all of its citizens, regardless of party affiliation. Libertarian democracies face the biggest problem of formulating policies that fulfil the liberal commitment to equality and secure justice in a way that recognizes the social disparities. This means treating all residents equally, whether in employment, criminal justice, education, or public services. According to Parekh, the state should be impartial in its treatment of diverse communities. A person who does not speak the language spoken in any of the locations mentioned by Parekh will be denied the right to equal treatment.
- c) Diversity based: There's one more reason to keep languages diverse: they're valuable, and they provide us options: different cultures have varied meanings and visions for a decent life, and no one can claim to have achieved this in its whole. Because civilizations express themselves through language, it's important to conserve and protect that language to understand oneself better. They should be open to everyone because languages are carriers for cultures, and cultures produce new kinds of social existence. According to some, each language is an expression of human ingenuity that has intrinsic value independent from its usage. It is also a human accomplishment with an inherent goal. There are many benefits to being bilingual, both personally and professionally [5].

Managing Linguistic Diversity in India:

- The Constitutional Mechanism

India has 22 officially recognized national languages listed in the Constitution's VIIIth Schedule and more than 1162 unlisted languages and dialects. After India gained independence, Article 343 of its Constitution declared Hindi to be the official language. Article 351 stated that India's government was responsible for spreading and developing it to serve as a vehicle of expression for all of India's diverse cultures [7]. The Eighth schedule of the constitution lists 14 important Indian languages in addition to Hindi. It was judged vital to adopt concerted steps for the full development of these languages for the sake of the country's educational and cultural advancement.

Apart from this, the Indian constitution assures the preservation of minorities' interests by granting cultural and educational rights in part III (the section on Fundamental Rights) (Article 29) [8]. There is a right to preserve a separate language, script, or culture for any section of Indian nationals dwelling on Indian soil. Religion, race, caste, language, or any combination thereof, must not be grounds for denial of entrance to any educational institution maintained by the state or

receiving aid from state funds [6]. According to Article 30, minorities have the right to construct and run educational institutions in order to conserve, promote, and safeguard their language and culture.

There is, however, no explicit criterion in the Indian constitution for identifying minority languages. Minority languages are those spoken by a minority community, as determined by the Supreme Court in 1958. However, this is only applicable at the regional level since no linguistic group can claim majority status on a national level – Hindi, the official language of the union of India, is the language of only about two-fifths of India's population. Because of this decision, minorities are only allowed to set up and operate educational institutions within their own state and not across the entire country, according to the Supreme court of India in 2002. The prevalence of various nonscheduled languages in India contributes to the lack of definitional clarity between what constitutes majority and minority language in India.

Indian constitution part XVII chapter IV Special directives Articles 350 (A), 350 (B) and 351. Every person has the right to submit a grievance to any officer or authority of the union or a state in the language of their choice, according to article 350. Language minorities are entitled to teaching in their native tongue at the primary level of education. The President must appoint a special officer for linguistic minorities in accordance with Article 350(B) in order to investigate all concerns relating to linguistic minorities under the constitution and report to the President. National Commissioner Linguistic Minorities (NCLM) was established in 1957, with its headquarters at Allahabad (now Prayagraj) and regional offices in Belgaum, Karnataka, Chennai, and Kolkata (West Bengal). The commissioner investigated every aspect of linguistic minority protections, and since its formation the NCLM has been delivering annual reports to President Obama via Minority Affairs minister. NCLM's 43rd report was delivered to the Lok Sabha on November 23, 2006, and the Rajya Sabha on November 27, 2006, and was the last report presented by NCLM.

- Language and the Federal Structure

In a multicultural, multilingual, and multireligious state, the federal form of government is one political option to accommodate variety. Constitutional provisions allow India's parliament (the Rajya Sabha) to form new states if necessary to fulfil the genuine aspirations of local peoples for their own state so that they can grow and develop in accordance with their own ethnic or linguistic identity. Major state-level restructuring in India in 1956 (and succeeding years) was based on the idea that minorities should have appropriate political and economic possibilities to guarantee that they do not feel discriminated against or neglected.

- Evolution of the Linguistic Principle

The linguistic basis originally appeared in a letter from Sir Herbert Risely, home secretary to the government of India, to the government of Bengal on December 3rd, 1903, proposing the division of Bengal. As with the Partition Resolution of 1905, the language had a key role in Lord Hardinge's government's 1911 letter to the Secretary of State recommending the annulment of the partition. Bengal was divided on religious reasons, but in reality, it violated the notion of linguistic affinity. Also, in 1918, after studying the viability of creating linguistic and racial sub-provinces, the Montague-Chelmsford report concluded that homogenous units would simplify government work while attracting personnel familiar with the local languages into the public arena.

Early on, the Indian National Congress (INC) backed the linguistic concept by opposing the partition of Bengal, which was based on religious rather than linguistic

considerations. During the all-parties conference in 1928, the Nehru Committee issued a report proposing a proposed new dominion status for India, which further supported the notion of linguistic reorganization of provinces.

The INC reaffirmed its commitment to the linguistic principle at least three more times before the year of independence (1947). In October 1937, it was recommended that Andhra Pradesh be formed. A year later, the working committee promised that linguistic reorganization would take place as soon as congress could do so, which was not until 1938. According to INC's election manifesto of 1945-46, provinces should be organized in accordance with local languages and cultures to the greatest extent possible.

Yet, some opposed language as a basis for state formation. The Dar Commission, which the Indian government set up in 1947 to examine this issue, was adamantly opposed to establishing states based on linguistics. For the commission, "administrative conveniences" were the primary priority in forming provinces, and linguistic homogeneity should only be considered as a matter of administrative convenience. For example, geographical proximity, financial self-sufficiency, administrative convenience, future development potential and a high degree of agreement within its borders and among the people speaking the same language were all criteria that the commission listed for a linguistic area before becoming a province. In addition, a new province should not be foisted upon a sizable minority by the majority.

Shortly thereafter, in 1948, the JVP Committee (JVP Committee) was created by Congress to study linguistic regions. It was recommended against by the JVP Committee as well. (a) India's security, unity, and economic well-being must come first; (b) Language is also a dividing force, and (c) The policy of linguistic provinces can only be implemented after careful deliberation and without causing significant administrative disruption.

- Language and the Reorganization of States:

When the Indian constitution was adopted on January 26, 1950, India became the Sovereign democratic republic with a union of States (replacing provinces) and territories. In reality, even before India's independence, the constituent assembly endorsed the union constitution committee's federal plan. The commission recommended that "the constitution would be federal, and the union government would have residuary powers. The union government would have administrative authority that was coextensive with its legislative authority. According to the Indian constitution, power is divided between the centre and the states. Two parts of the constitution deal with union-state relations. It is discussed in the first chapter of part XI of the constitution, which deals with the division of legislative functions between central and state governments. The union, State, and concurrent lists are found in Schedule VII of the constitution.

The Indian constitution framers established a federal structure of governance with a tilt towards the centre. There is no right of secession in the Indian federation because it is not the outcome of an agreement. All citizens have the same rights; there is no distinct constitution, flag or anything else. Additional administrative services include the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), which is a centralized administrative service. There are no states in India like there are in the U.S.A., that is why it's termed a "union of states".

On the Indian subcontinent, there were three types of states after independence – nine Part A states, which were essentially former governor's states of British India; eight Part B states that included

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former princely and chief commissioner's provinces; and a total of 10 Part C states, which included both. Almost all of India's states were multilingual at this point in time. India's government has outlined some fundamental concepts for the reorganization of the country's state. As they represented a common way of life in that area, language and culture played a significant part. Another aspect that was considered was the preservation and strengthening of India's national unity and security; (b) cultural and linguistic homogeneity; (c) balancing financial, economic and administrative concerns; and (d) ensuring the successful implementation of the National Five-Year Plans.

The government of India established the States Reorganization Commission (SRC) in December 1953 under the state's reorganization act to examine "objectively" and "dispassionately" the issue of reorganizing the Indian states so that "the welfare of the people of each constituent unit as well as the nation at large is promoted."

Table 1: States and union territories of India and their Official Languages

States and union territories	Official languages
Andhra Pradesh	Telegu
Arunachal Pradesh	English
Assam	Assamese
Bihar	Hindi/ Maithili
Chattisgarh	Hindi
Goa	Konkani
Gujarat	Gujarati
Haryana	Hindi
Himachal Pradesh	Hindi
Jammu and Kashmir	Kashmiri/ Dogri
Karnataka	Kannada
Kerala	Malyalam
Jharkhand	Hindi
Madhya Pradesh	Hindi
Maharastra	Marathi
Manipur	Manipuri
Meghalaya	Garo, Khasi and English
Mizoram	Mizo and English
Nagaland	English, Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Khamniungan, Kuki, Konyak
Orissa	Oriya
Punjab	Punjabi
Rajasthan	Hindi
Sikkim	Nepali
Tamil Nadu	Tamil
Tripura	Bangla
Telangana	Telugu
Uttarakhand	Hindi
Uttar Pradesh	Hindi
West Bengal	Bangla

a) Indian states, when linguistically organized, can achieve internal cohesion because language facilitates the exchange of ideas; b) in democracy, political and administrative work must be conducted in the regional language; c) under a democratic government, it is essential that legislatures work in one language to ensure real cohesion;

With the 1956 States Reorganization Act, the state boundaries were reformed and new or dissolved states as well as union territories. As a result, the differentiation between states in Parts A, B, and C has been abolished. Due to this act, 14 states and 9 union territories were created till now. (see Table 1).

Conclusion:

India is a land of many ethnic and tribal communities, as we have seen in this study. Inscriptional identities like caste, language, religion, geography, etc., make up ethnicity. Due to inequity, there is a conflict between two ethnic groups. Ethnicity is socially mobilized and geographically limited. It has a large enough population and a variety of distinctive symbols. An aggregate sense of relative deprivation is calculated in relation to a reference group. After being left out of the development process or perhaps being a victim of unequal development, ethnicity creates ethnic movements. It's not just grassroot dissatisfaction that causes ethnic divisions in Indian politics but also vested political interests. It's not uncommon for racial or ethnic minorities to exploit ethnicity in the political arena to demand changes in their status or economic well-being. Indo-European and Dravidian languages make up the vast majority of Indian languages. Only a few more languages can be classified into one of these two groups. The Indo-European languages spoken in north India and the Dravidian languages spoken in south India belong to the same language family. The Austro-Asiatic tribes include the Khasis, Mundas, and other tribes. The Tibeto-Burmese language family is primarily composed of Mongoloid tribesmen from East and North-East India. In this way, language has shaped the cultural identities of distinct tribes in India.

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