

Indian Model of Language Management

Prof. B. Mallikarjun, Ph.D.

Abstract

Today multilingualism is the order. Monolingualism is an exception. India is not only multilingual but also a multicultural, multiethnic and multi-religious nation. With its 121 languages and 1369 mother tongues (Census of India 2011), India is an excellent ground for testing language policies and their implementation in a pluralistic context. Since her independence it is managing multilingualism through policies of language use in administration, judiciary, education, mass media, literature and other domains in an effective manner as a role model for other multilingual countries in language policy and planning. The fluid and volatile linguistic situation that existed at the time independence in 1947, and framing of the Constitution has become calm and stable to a large extent. Once, multiple languages were considered as problems to be tackled. Now, they are considered as resources to be utilized effectively. This paper has two parts, the first part details the multilingual landscape of the country and the second part elucidates the 'inclusive model' of language management adopted by India.

Introduction

India is an abode of languages belonging to 5 language families: (1) Indo-European (a) Indo-Aryan: 21-78.05% (b) Iranian: 1-1677speakers only (c) Germanic: 1-0.02% (2) Dravidian: 17-19.64% (3) Austro-Asiatic: 14-1.11% (4) Tibeto-Burmese: 66-1.01% (5) Semito-Hamitic: 1-with 54,947 speakers only. This linguistic landscape of India is often described as melting pot or salad bowl to somehow explain the coexistence and correlation of 1369 rationalized mother tongues grouped in to into 121 languages in the subcontinent. In addition to this, 1474 names are grouped under 'other mother tongues'.¹ Yet none of these terms capture the real texture of Indian multilingualism since it is unique and dynamic without a parallel anywhere in the world. Here is the nation in which a language is written in many scripts and many languages are written in one script. Though they belong to different language families they share many linguistic features.

Understanding the existence and pattern of use of languages in a country helps to infer its sociolinguistic position. Multilingualism may be defined as 'in or using several languages' or 'as the use of two or more languages, either by an individual speaker or by a community of speakers'². As a matter of fact, "multilingual speakers outnumber monolingual speakers in the world's population". Today multilingualism is considered to be a norm and monolingualism as an exception.³

The multilingual nature of the continent and the value of information on multilingualism was recognized even before Indian independence in 1947. Since 1931 the information on 'other language in common use' by the people is collected by the Census of India in its decennial operation. There is certainly some significant growth in multilingual patterns in India since independence. Formal education, entertainment media, and growing migration of population across the states for various reasons continue to make the multilingual patterns more dynamic than ever. Here it is intended to provide a picture of the linguistic landscape of India and the people's choice of language/s for 'other

language’, its inductive and intuitive multilingual mosaic in terms of bi/trilingualism and its sweep across age, gender, urban and rural population etc. The information offered by the decennial census from 1931 till 2001 forms major source to understand the linguistic landscape of India.

The reorganization of the geographical boundaries within the country as linguistic states was a major empowering step in the management of multilingualism. Managing Indian multilingualism formally got underway with the country’s acceptance of its Constitution. The Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution includes select languages, recognizes some as official language/s of the Union and provides for the States to have their official language/s. Further, it accepts languages for different levels of judiciary, use in parliament and state legislatures. It does not specify any particular language/s as medium of instruction for education but recognizes the rights of different kinds of linguistic minorities. In the past decades, the judiciary too has played an important role of language manager through interventions necessitated by the legislation. In India, seven decades ago multiplicity of languages was regarded as a problem to be solved or resolved and now due to its language management initiatives, languages are considered as a resource to be effectively utilized.

Indian Multilingualism

Modern Languages

Important concepts that are to be understood in the Indian multilingual context are ‘mother tongue’ and ‘language’. Both are officially not same though sometimes they are used as synonyms. The official way of identifying mother tongue in the 1881 Census was ‘... the language ordinarily spoken in the parental home of each person’; in 1891 it was ‘...parent tongue’; in 1901 it was ‘language which each person ordinarily uses in his own house’; in the year 1971 little elaboration of the concept was done, ‘... the language spoken in the individual’s home during his childhood or a near equivalent such as the language which individual’s parents spoke or which he first learnt to speak’; since 1991 and subsequent census in 2001 and 2011 have continuously used the definition:

“The language spoken in childhood by the person’s mother to the person. If the mother died in infancy, the language mainly spoken in the person’s home in childhood will be the mother tongue. In case of infants and deaf mutes the language usually spoken by the mother should be recorded. In case of doubt, the language mainly spoken in the household may be recorded”.⁵

According to the latest 2011 Census of India data, India has more than 1369 mother tongues spread over a vast geographic space. All these are spoken by 10,000 or more speakers. So, what is language in India? It is a composite entity, a bundle of mother tongues. The Census of India enumerates the mother tongues and before releasing the population tables relating to language, rationalizes or groups ‘mother tongues’ into groups called ‘language’. For instance, in the Census data of 2011, Hindi language is a bundle of 56+ different mother tongues wherein Hindi is one among them. To illustrate this phenomenon further, Hindi language speakers amount to 43.63% of the population. Out of these only 60.99% speak Hindi as their mother tongue. The rest 39.01% of them speak a mother tongue subsumed under the language called Hindi. That is to say that Hindi is the mother tongue of 60.99 % of Hindi language speakers and the rest 38.88% speak some other mother tongue. In addition to this 1474 unclassified mother tongues are grouped under ‘other mother tongue’ category.

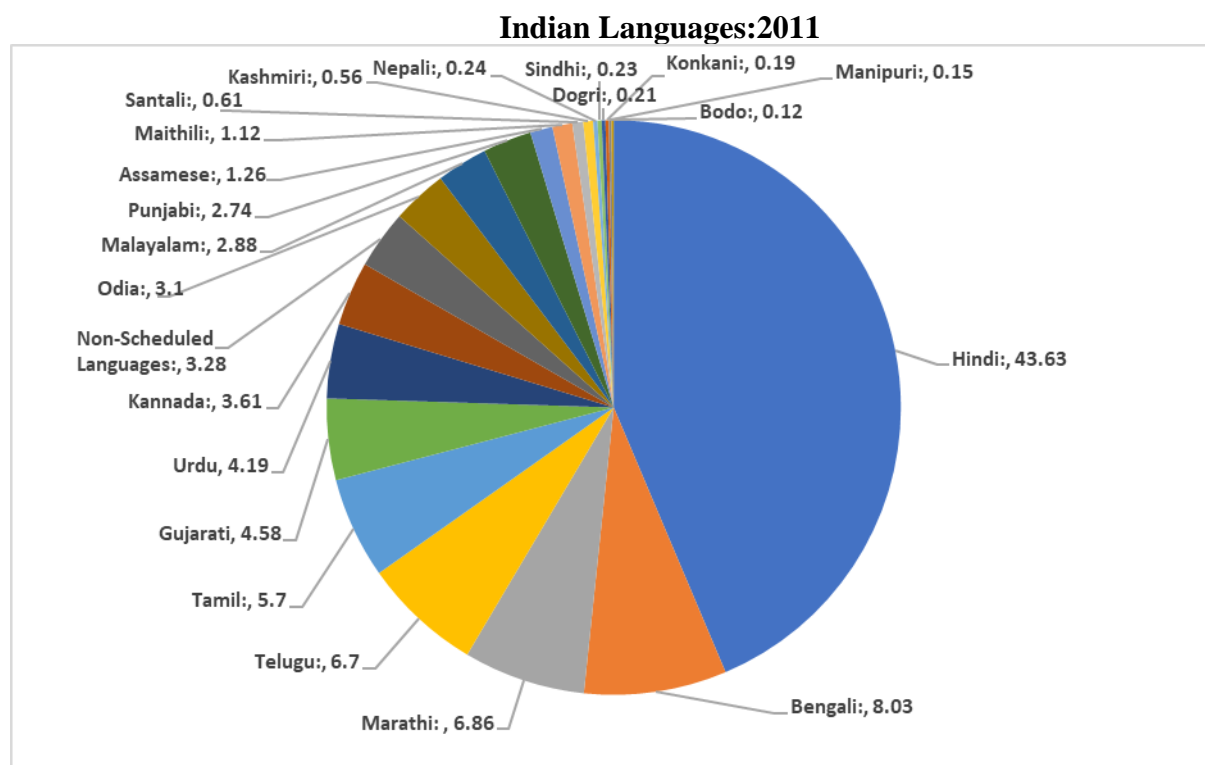
The rationalized mother tongues result in 121 languages. The Constitution of India includes 22 languages in its Eighth Schedule. They are known as Scheduled languages which constitute 93 mother tongues. The rest 99 languages which are not in the Schedule are given the nomenclature, Non-scheduled languages. This Schedule of the Constitution of India is treated as an open-ended list which

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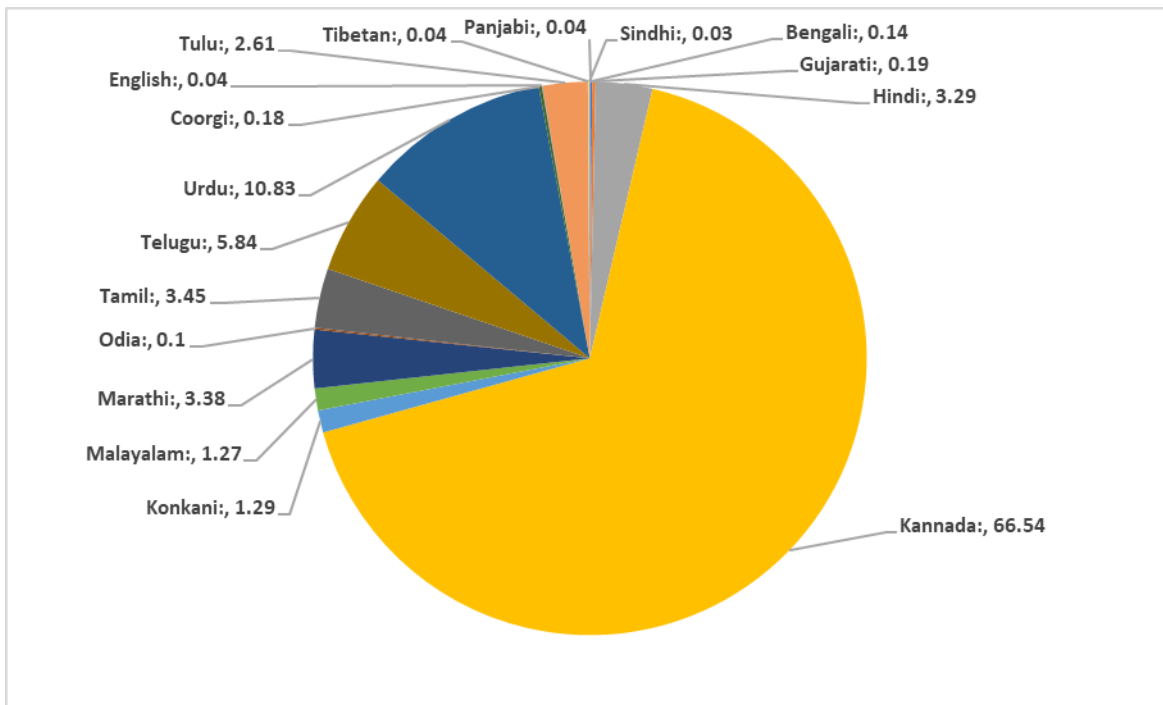
has got additions whenever the socio-political conditions favored inclusion of a specific language. When the Constitution came into existence, it had 14 languages: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. Subsequently, in 1969 Sindhi was included, in 1992 Nepali, Manipuri and Konkani and in 2003 four languages Bodo, Dogri, Maithili and Santali were added through the constitutional amendments. Demands for inclusion from several other languages like Coorgi (Kodava), Tulu etc., are before the government for appropriate decision. The original intention of the Eighth Schedule was to have a list of languages in the Constitution to be developed for administration, for expression of science and technology. But the use of this list of languages is expanded beyond the original intention and used as a select list of languages to grant various benefits to languages and their users. Have many statutory privileges, and are the preferred languages for educational and administrative purposes. They are not ignored or left out in most of the language- related decision-making process. The list of languages prepared for the development and spread of Hindi is functioning as a list of languages used for formulating and implementing language related decisions.⁶ The following is the graphical representation of the linguistic landscape of India.



The Census of India reports in 2011 that 96.71% of the population speaks Scheduled languages and the rest 3.29% speak the Non-scheduled languages.

Not only the country, but each state and union territory within it is multilingual. The chart given below illustrates the linguistic landscape of one of the states, Karnataka.

Karnataka Languages:2011



During the freedom struggle, the term ‘National Language’ was very widely used to refer to some language/s. But in 2011 Gujarat High Court said that ‘...officially there is no national language in India’.⁷

Sharing of Languages

The uniqueness of Indian multilingualism is in sharing various aspects of languages. This could be discussed in three parts of sharing of languages, scripts and linguistic features.

The nomenclature ‘multilingualism’ better used to refer to number of people speaking more than one language/s is very important and not the number of languages spoken in a landscape. In India there are many bilinguals and multilinguals. The census has been enumerating and registering information on bilingualism since 1901. Till the 1921 Census, information was collected only to know about the ‘knowledge of English’, since British India wanted to know about the spread of English in India for governance and education. Administration was mainly in English and it was essential to plan English language education at that time. Other languages were not so important. In 1931 and 1941 the information about ‘other language in common use’ was also collected by census. The census tried to know the name of language that a person knew in addition to his or her mother tongue. In the subsequent census in 1941 and 1951 the question was restricted to ‘only Indian language’ and in 1961 Census it was expanded to ‘any language’ and ‘number of such languages’ was also expanded to two languages. The 1971 Census information on ‘other languages’ was again collected from each individual.

Changes in information elicitation reflect the linguistic concerns of the nation at that point of time. This is an official recognition of India as a multilingual nation. Hence, in 1981 census, information on the number and names of languages known to the person other than his/her mother tongue was collected. It is recorded in

“... the order in which he/she speaks and understands them best and can use with understanding in communicating with others. He/she need not be able to read and write those languages. It is enough if

he/she has a working knowledge of those subsidiary languages to enable him/her to converse in that language with understanding.”⁸

During the year 1981 it is reported as ‘persons speaking a language additional to the mother tongue’, in 1991 as ‘persons knowing three languages’ and in 2001 ‘first subsidiary language, second subsidiary language’. Whatever be the terminology used, the information on spread of languages across the speakers of another language/s is available. It has to be carefully noted that Indian multilingualism is ‘self-declared’ by the language users and not a result of any evaluation of language competence against any set parameters. The present estimate is an under estimation of the ground reality. A large number of Indians know more than one language. Many times, they know two languages in addition to their mother tongue. Bilingualism is often taken as a given fact. The other language is acquired from the environment from childhood. There is no need to go to school to learn to use two or more languages.

So far, the multilingualism data for the 2011 Census are not available in the public domain, hence we have to rely on the Census of 2001 data only for this purpose. It includes information on ‘first subsidiary language’ and ‘second subsidiary language’ known to the speakers which has to be understood as bilingualism and trilingualism. The following table gives the details of percentage of bilinguals and trilinguals to the total population speaking a particular scheduled language.⁹

SL. No.	Languages	% of Bilinguals	% of Trilinguals	SL. No.	Languages	% of Bilinguals	% of Trilinguals
1	Assamese	32.35	14.47	12	Manipuri	41.67	20.81
2	Bengali	20.40	6.52	13	Marathi	41.37	15.45
3	Bodo	57.38	18.64	14	Nepali	52.81	22.54
4	Dogri	59.44	26.49	15	Oriya	25.63	12.88
5	Gujarati	36.25	14.25	16	Punjabi	52.01	31.30
6	Hindi	11.25	2.13	17	Santali	51.43	7.35
7	Kannada	28.44	12.15	18	Sanskrit	73.60	30.80
8	Kashmiri	39.21	15.55	19	Sindhi	73.19	35.58
9	Konkani	74.38	47.18	20	Tamil	21.51	3.19
10	Maithili	33.03	9.25	21	Telugu	25.02	10.69
11	Malayalam	28.75	16.60	22	Urdu	51.03	18.37

It is important to note which language or languages other than their mother tongue people have reported that they know. Many speakers of the Scheduled languages report that they know Hindi and English. More bilinguals (74.38%) and trilinguals (47.18%) are from Konkani mother tongue and least bilinguals (11.25%) and trilinguals (2.13%) are from Hindi language. Similarly, Urdu speakers are more bilingual (51.03%) and trilingual (18.37%) since they are spread all over the country. Same is the case of another language Sindhi, which has 73.19% and 35.58% of bilinguals and trilinguals respectively. In the Indian context, English is learnt as second or third language at school, whereas Hindi is mainly learnt and partially acquired contextually since it is widely used in the media, as part of entertainment. Most of the other languages are learnt due to their coexistence. Speakers of Bengali, Kannada, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Oriya, Tamil and Telugu prefer English as the first subsidiary language. And speakers of Dogri, Gujarati, Maithili, Marathi, Nepali, Punjabi, Santali, Sindhi and Urdu prefer Hindi as the first subsidiary language. As second subsidiary language, Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Kannada, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Oriya, Telugu speakers prefer

Hindi where as the speakers of Dogri, Gujarati, Kashmiri, Maithili, Marathi, Punjabi, Sindhi speakers prefer English as the second subsidiary language.

Apart from the need based, essential, compulsory multilingualism, it is very important to note that other than Hindi and English, it is the neighborhood languages that are learnt by different mother tongue speakers as their second and third languages. Languages in the neighborhood and the details of percentage of bilingual and trilingual are given below to illustrate this point.¹⁰

SL.No.	Languages	Multi-Languages	% of Bilingualism	% of Trilingualism
1	Assamese	Bengali	9.54	0.99
		Nepali	0.19	0.10
2	Bengali	Assamese	2.49	0.21
3	Bodo	Assamese	46.44	2.41
		Bengali	3.92	2.33
		Nepali	0.21	0.42
4	Dogri	Urdu	3.33	0.68
5	Gujarati	Marathi	0.7	0.91
6	Hindi	Bengali	0.5	0.09
		Gujarati	0.24	0.03
		Marathi	0.93	0.09
		Urdu	0.9	0.11
7	Kannada	Konkani	0.15	0.04
		Tamil	2.4	0.57
		Telugu	6.66	0.69
		Malayalam	0.13	0.07
		Marathi	2.62	0.61
8	Kashmiri	Urdu	31.76	3.07
9	Konkani	Gujarati	3.89	0.14
		Kannada	20.78	3.29
		Malayalam	1.26	0.3
		Marathi	16.79	5.83
10	Maithili	Urdu	0.22	0.09
11	Malayalam	Kannada	1.45	0.29
		Tamil	1.59	0.56
12	Manipuri	Bengali	4.44	0.89
13	Marathi	Gujarati	0.36	0.28
		Kannada	1.67	0.27
		Telugu	0.56	0.14
14	Nepali	Assamese	11.35	2.07
		Bengali	2.01	1.98
15	Oriya	Bengali	0.53	0.26
		Telugu	0.85	0.07
16	Punjabi	Urdu	0.45	0.17
17	Santali	Assamese	1.22	0.09
		Bengali	26.92	1.86
18	Sindhi	Gujarati	19.1	3.28

		Marathi	1.6	3.43
19	Tamil	Kannada	2.11	0.39
		Malayalam	0.54	0.13
		Telugu	2.51	0.46
20	Telugu	Kannada	3.83	0.33
		Tamil	3.53	0.47
21	Urdu	Bengali	0.5	0.27
		Gujarati	0.47	0.31
		Kannada	5.52	0.73
		Marathi	1.94	1.78
		Tamil	1.24	0.22
		Telugu	5.64	0.85

Multilingualism is not specific to some geographic area but a pan Indian phenomenon. Correlation of multilingualism with age, gender, urban and rural spread shows its depth. The following facts illustrate the same:

Age: Multilinguals are found in all age groups. Maximum number of multilingual persons in both the categories of bilingual and trilingual are found in the age group of 30-49 years. They are born in independent India after 1947 and are products of the new education system.

Urban-Rural-Gender: More bilinguals are in rural areas with 53.59% than in urban areas with 46.40%. However, in the case of trilingual, it is reverse. More trilingual are in urban areas with 53.79% and less trilingual are in rural areas with 46.20%. When it comes to gender wise distribution of bilingual and trilingual speakers, it is found that, in general, men outnumber women in being multilingual. Among bilinguals, men amount to 59.40% and women to 40.60%. In trilingualism also, it is men who are 62.43% who outnumber women who are 37.56%.

Indian multilingualism demands redefining what bilingualism is. Actual use of two or more languages should come to guide us in defining such concepts. Mere knowledge or temporary and tentative seeking to learn and speak additional languages may not really reveal the underlying currents in a nation. As for India, one notices a continuing effort to cover more aspects of language identity for more than a century. There is some dynamism in this sense in understanding and appreciating the processes of bilingualism. There is certainly some significant growth in multilingual patterns in India since independence in 1947. Formal education, media entertainment explosion, and growing population dispersal across the states continue to make the multilingual patterns more dynamic than ever. Bilingualism is also used as a denominator of movement of various populations from one region to another. Naturally evolved multilingualism coupled with the multilingualism evolving through schooling has become a rich language resource and it is exploited mainly by the mass media for enhancing its reach across the population. Patterns of Indian multilingualism have been analyzed in a detailed fashion by Mallikarjun.¹¹

Sharing of Scripts

Scripts do not have language borders. Only languages have geographical boundaries due to creation of states on the basis of languages. Indian languages are written in more than 14 scripts. Normal convention regarding any script is that a language uses a single and specific script to render itself in the visual medium wherever it is spoken. However, the pluralistic tradition of India has broken this kind of tradition for many centuries, and introduced the practice of using different scripts to write

the same language and also using the same script to write different languages. This practice is not frowned upon, and it continues unabated.

The Devanagari script is used to write several languages like Hindi, Sanskrit, Nepali, Dogri, Marathi, Konkani, Rajasthani and many more tribal and minor languages. Kannada script is used to write Kannada, Kodagu, Tulu, Banjari, Konkani, Sanskrit, etc. Sanskrit is written using the Devanagari, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and many other scripts. Similarly, Kashmiri is written using the Perso-Arabic, Sharada and Devanagari scripts. Sindhi in India is written both in the Perso-Arabic and Devanagari scripts. Santali is written in Ol Chiki, Assamese, Bangla, Oriya, Devanagari and Roman. Rabha uses Assamese in Assam and Roman in Meghalaya, Bangla in West Bengal. So, by tradition, script is not a boundary wall between Indian languages.

Sharing of Linguistic Features

One of the major linguistic discoveries of the previous century relating to Indian languages is the identification of common linguistic features across language families. Among others, we may cite Emeneau's monumental essay 'India as a Linguistic Area'.¹² This sharing of linguistic features by the languages across the language families was facilitated by their coexistence for centuries together, and also by the continuing interaction of the people who speak these languages on a day-to-day basis. While in 1786 Sir William Jones' declaration of the genetic relationship between Sanskrit and other Indo-European languages revolutionized philological studies, the fact that Indian languages, those of the Indo-Aryan and the Dravidian families, have some fundamental similarities was known to the Indian grammarians for centuries. A nineteenth century missionary to India, William Campbell formed his ideas on language planning and development for Indian vernaculars on this assumption:

Whatever may be the difference in the languages, they all belong to the same great family; similar laws regulate the idiom, construction, style and various kinds of composition, which prevail in the dialects of the north and the south; when you describe one part of India, you have, in many respects, described the whole; the manners, the customs, and the habits of the people, with trifling variations, correspond from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas; and their superstition, in all its great lineaments, is exactly the same. Whether, therefore, their present literature was originally written in Sanskrit, or in some other languages, the Vedas, the Shastras, the Puranas, and all their classical writings are to be found in all the principal tongues of India and are as well understood in the one as in the other.¹³

Some of the shared linguistic features across language families are as follows:¹⁴

- a. Presence of a series of retroflex consonants that contrast with dentals sounds.
- b. Two to three degrees of 'you' 'inclusive and exclusive' etc.
- c. Widespread lexical borrowing.
- d. Presence of echo word constructions and onomatopoeic forms.
- e. Reduplication process of different grammatical categories such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc.
- f. Compound verb forms.
- g. Conjunctive particle.
- h. Sentence structure - flexibility of word order though finite verb usually comes in the last position.

Another interesting aspect of this scenario is that the people, who live in villages and towns that lie in the political boundaries of two or more linguistically re-organized states, continue to use the same grammar of their own language with different vocabularies drawn from another language of the border to communicate among themselves and with the groups across the border.

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Inclusive Model of Managing Multilingualism

Indian Languages are managed through planning for their use in various domains by ascribing and providing space for each one or many of them appropriately. Language policy is all about choices. If one is bilingual or multilingual, he or she has to choose which language to use and when. Even if one speaks only one language, one faces choices of dialects and styles. Some of these choices are the result of management, reflecting conscious and explicit efforts by language planners to regulate the choices. Language management starts with the individual, while organized language management ranges from the micro (family) to the macro (nation- state) level.

The leaders of the freedom struggle of India were very much aware of the pluralistic nature of the country and of issues that a country has to face in its governance. India's freedom struggle was not merely a struggle for independence, it also laid the groundwork for nation building even when the people were under foreign yoke. The leaders did not postpone nation-building processes until freedom was achieved. The resolutions passed in the various conferences conducted by the Indian National Congress reveal that the national leadership while waging their battle against the British rule thought well ahead of time and prepared the nation with advance steps not only in the fields of administration, education but also of language policies. One such step was the generously agreed upon principle to re-organize the British India provinces that were a product of the British tactics of accession for the administrative convenience of the rulers into somewhat linguistically cohesive states. Another resolution that was passed and partially implemented twenty-five years before independence was the policy on National Education that emphasized the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in schools.

In the post-independence period the nation was reorganized into states on the basis of language that was predominant in a geographical area. Some of the principles that were kept in mind are interesting from the point of language management. They are (a) geographical contiguity (b) linguistic and cultural homogeneity (c) common language to promote the growth of regional consciousness (d) administration in a language which the people can understand (e) administrative convenience (f) preservation and strengthening of the unity and security of India (g) financial, economic and administrative considerations and (h) scope of positive expression of the collective personality of a people in a state or region. The 'limiting factors' because of the multilingual situation are (a) not all the language groups are so placed that they can be grouped into separate states (b) large number of bilingual belts between different linguistic zones and (c) existence of areas with a mixed population even within a unilingual area.

Administration

The official language is the language or languages used for conducting business of the government, legislature and judiciary. In the history of pre-independence India, though there are numerous instances wherein only one language was the official language, it is very difficult to find a point of time where only one language was used as the sole language of administration in any specific region. It seems that the official language was used for the purposes of rule and other interrelated activities and used within the setup of the Government to a large extent. However, languages of the people were used for all the necessary communicative purposes. After independence, terms like official language, language/s used in administration, regional languages attain significance. A distinction between the 'official language' and 'language used in administration' exists. Though the Official Language Act 1966 of Andhra Pradesh, one of the states in India, recognizes Telugu as the official language for use in its territory, it also permits the use of English, Urdu, Kannada, Tamil and Oriya in certain specified situations and regions for administrative activities. Hence, these languages are used

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in administration in Andhra Pradesh though only Telugu is the official language.

The Constitution of India provides for the use of one or two or more languages in the administration of the Union and States, sees that the provisions for use of languages of all sections of people are made depending on the genuineness of the claim. Also, the interests of all the people of all the regions are in principle, accommodated in relevant ways. Thus Article 343 states that (1) the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script. For official purposes of the Union the international form of Indian numerals shall be used. (2) Notwithstanding anything in clause (i), for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, the English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immediately before such commencement. Even now English continues to be used. The duty and responsibility to promote the spread, development and enrichment of Hindi by assimilating the forms, style and expressions in Hindustani and other languages in the Eighth Schedule etc. is bestowed upon the Union government. At the level of the Union, English is serving as a neutral language for multiple language speakers of the country since her independence and may do so for many decades or centuries to come.

Like the country, as already illustrated every state and union territory, which is an administrative division of it, is also a multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious entity. The state legislatures were constitutionally empowered to adopt any one or more language/s used in the state or Hindi as the language/s used for official and other purposes in the states. Hence, most of the states have provisions for use of multiple languages in administration though they declare one language which is normally a language of majority of people as the official language in their Official Language Act. A very interesting case is that of the Sikkim state. This state has a unique distinction of having 11 languages in its Official Languages Act. The Sikkim Official Languages Bill, 1977 specifies that Nepali, Bhutia and Lepcha shall be the languages to be used for all official purposes of the state. In 1981 it was amended to include Limbu. In 1995 it was amended to include Newari, Rai, Gurung, Mangar, Sherpa and Tamang. It was further amended in 1996 to include Sunuwar. It has to be noted that it has not declared any one language as official language but identifies 11 languages which can be used for all official purposes true to inclusive multilingual model of language planning.

Parliament/Legislature

The parliament and the legislature are the places where representatives of the people debate and take decisions on the governance of the nation and states respectively. They have different mother tongues and they need not necessarily know or be conversant with the official language of the union or languages of administration. Hence, in parliament though the official business is transacted in Hindi and English, there is a provision under Article 120 that the parliament member shall be permitted by the Chairman / Speaker to address the house in his/her mother tongue. In the similar manner in the state legislature too if a member is unable to express in the official language of the state or Hindi or English, the Speaker will permit him/her to address the house in his or her mother tongue under Article 210.

Interstate Communication

Communication between the union and the states and vice versa and also between the states is a very important factor. The Article 346 makes provision for use of the official language of the union for communication between the union and states and also between two states. At the same time, if there is an agreement between two states, they can use Hindi for inter-state communication.

Redressal of Grievances

There is an inbuilt mechanism for redressing grievances of the citizens. For this purpose, under Article 350 the citizens of India have a provision to submit their representation to the union or the state in any language used in the state or the union.

All this clearly indicates that declaration of one or more languages as official languages and making provision for use of other languages and mother tongues in administration, parliament, legislatures, grievances' redressal are attempts to keep harmony among the population.

Judiciary

The judiciary has three important levels of structure: The lowest at the sub-divisional and/or at district level, the High Court at state level and the Supreme Court at the highest level. English is the language to be used for 'all proceedings in the Supreme Court, High Court, authoritative texts of all Bills to be introduced or amendments moved in either House of Parliament or in either House of the Legislature of a State Article 348(1) (i); all Acts passed by Parliament or the Legislature of a State Article 348(1) (ii); and all Ordinances promulgated by the President or the Governor of a State, and all orders, rules, regulations and bye-laws issued under the Constitution or under any law made by Parliament or the Legislature of a State' Article 348(1) (iii); In the instances where the 'State has prescribed any language other than the English language for use in Bills, Acts, Ordinances a translation of the same in the English language be published under the authority shall be deemed to be the authoritative text in English language. ' Article 348(3); Whereas the 'official language shall be the language of all Courts of Sessions, Judicial Magistrates, Civil Courts subordinate to the High Court in the State'. But English shall also continue to be the language of the said courts. Any presiding officer whose mother tongue is not the official language of the state may continue to record the evidence in English. One may make use of such English words and phrases as he/she may think necessary to exactly bring out the purport and meaning of any expression.

As far as the Judiciary is concerned though the official language of the state and the union have an important role, English text is used as authority since the legal system has heavily borrowed from the English system.

Education

A multiethnic and multilingual pluralistic nation needs to evolve education and language policies in such a way that all the segments that constitute that nation develop a sense of participation in the progress of governance and nation-building. In addition, the specific aspirations of the individual segments of the nation need to be met to the satisfaction of the various ethnic, religious and linguistic communities. It has to be noted that the makers of the Indian Constitution did not lay down elaborately the policy for the domain of education in independent India as they did for administration or judiciary. The constitutional law experts opine the same. "A difficult question arises regarding the medium of education at various levels. The Constitution prescribes no policy or principle, and makes no provision, in this regard. To begin with, the matter was left to the legislative power of the States as 'Education' was a State subject. The States enjoyed full right to prescribe the media of instruction at the primary and the High School levels." ¹⁵ Due to its sensitive nature and fluid language situation at that time, with broad guidelines they allowed the language policy to be evolved in the context of multilingual situation under various rights bestowed in the Constitution through the process of mutual accommodation, adjustment and adjudication.

The National Policy on Education of 1968 spoke about the regional languages and the Three Language Formula (TLF). The 1986 Policy reiterated the earlier stand. The States Reorganization Commission had asked the Union Government to elucidate a policy outline for education in mother

tongue at the Secondary stage. The All India Council for Education recommended the adoption of the Three Language Formula (TLF) in September 1956. The endorsement for this formula came from various directions. It was adopted by the Chief Ministers' conference. The National Policy on Education 1968 recommended the inclusion of the TLF 'which includes the study of a modern Indian language, preferably one of the Southern languages, apart from Hindi and English in the Hindi speaking states, and of Hindi along with the regional language and English in the non-Hindi speaking states' in at the Secondary stage. This was reiterated in the Education Policy 1986 and was adopted as the Programme of Action by the Parliament in 1992. These are major attempts to arrive at a language policy for education. Since education is in the concurrent list of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, the language policy formulation for education and its implementation is left to the State governments under the Constitutional safeguards and broad guidelines cited above.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education: A Discussion Document released on January 1, 2000, while reviewing the Three Language Formula, states that: "In a number of states/organizations/ boards, however, the spirit of the formula has not been followed and the mother tongue of the people has been denied the status of the first language ... because of the changed socio-economic scenario, the difference between the second and the third languages has dwindled. Thus, in reality, there may be two second languages for all purposes and functions. Some states follow only a two-language formula whereas in some others classical languages like Sanskrit and Arabic are being studied in lieu of a modern Indian language. Some boards/institutions permit even European languages like French and German in place of Hindi." In this scenario, the three-language formula exists only in our curriculum documents and other policy statements. According to this document the three languages are: (i) the home language/the regional language, (ii) English, and (iii) Hindi in non-Hindi speaking states and any other modern Indian language in Hindi speaking states.

National Curriculum Framework 2005 records that: Home language(s) of children, should be the medium of instruction in schools. Where "...home language(s) or mother tongues are ... the languages of home, larger kinship group, street and neighborhood, i.e., languages a child naturally acquires from her/ his home and societal environment". If school does not have provisions for teaching in the child's home language(s) at higher levels, the primary school education must still be covered through the home language(s)...Three Language Formula needs to be implemented in its spirit...In non-Hindi states, children learn Hindi. In the case of Hindi states, children learn a language not spoken in their area. Sanskrit may also be studied as a Modern Indian Language (MIL) in addition to these languages. At later stages, study of classical and foreign languages may be introduced. It is to be noted that earlier it was home language/ regional language, but it became home language or mother tongue. In multilingual India, language or language related issue invokes emotional, sentimental and legal responses among the people affected due to policy formulations, implementation, and envisaged minor or major policy changes. Since 1956, after adoption of the Constitution, Indian Courts have faced litigations of various types by the people affected in the natural process of language policy formulation and implementation. These litigations have questioned the abridgement or curtailment of various rights of the citizens. The courts have also examined them at length and delivered judgments. Sometimes, these judgments have made the Governments to look at their language policy afresh taking into consideration the aspirations of the aggrieved people and the ground realities.

Though there are states and union territories, education is imparted throughout the country where language plays two roles as a subject and as medium of instruction. Instead of going into the policy of every state, the policies adjudicated by the High Court as well as the Supreme Court and their gist are given here so that language education issues are better understood. They are:

- a. The Three Language Formula, which was designated as a strategy with no direct constitutional status, totally dependent on the governmental and institutional support, has been given a legal sanction and status from the Apex court of the country for its implementation.
- b. Teaching a regional language, the official language of the concerned state as a compulsory language in the schools, more specifically at the secondary stage, is recognized as legally acceptable. It may even be considered as a must. Earlier research had claimed that learning more languages is not a load. The same is reinforced by the judgment that teaching more languages as subjects from primary schools is not a burden imposed on the students.
- c. A government need not wait up to 5th standard to introduce a second language. It can be introduced from the 3rd standard itself.
- d. The Constitutional safeguard for the linguistic minorities to have education through their mother tongues in the primary schools is made obligatory for all the mother tongue groups, irrespective of their majority or minority status.
- e. Regional language is recognized by the court as the 'second mother tongue' of the indigenous speakers of the minority languages in the concerned state.
- f. English can be taught as a subject from the primary school itself.
- g. Right to education is a fundamental right. It flows from Article 21, right to life.
- h. Free and compulsory primary education is guaranteed to all the children in the age group of 6 to 14 years under Article 21 A as a fundamental right.
- i. The mother-tongue will be the language declared by the parent or guardian to be the mother-tongue.
- j. The parents have the right to choose the kind of education that will be given to their children.
- k. Right to education is a fundamental right, which also includes the right to choose the medium of instruction, and it can be exercised by the parents on behalf of their children, and they have absolute and exclusive right in this regard.
- l. Citizens shall have the freedom of speech and expression, which would include the right to educate and to be educated.
- m. The policy that mother tongue or regional language shall be the medium of instruction in primary schools is valid and legal for the schools run or aided by the State.
- n. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights- is also applicable in the Indian context since India is a signatory to the document.

One major legal issue relating to medium of instruction recently adjudicated by the Supreme Court needs to be discussed since it has larger implications on education in India. The Supreme Court took up the petitions on the 2008 judgement of the High Court of Karnataka (*State of Karnataka & Anr vs The Associated Management of (Government Recognized Unaided English Medium) Primary and Secondary Schools and Others*) and on July 5, 2013 decided to refer the same to the Constitutional Bench with the five questions to be addressed by it. The bench after due deliberations and listening to both sides on May 6, 2014 passed the order. ¹⁶

The questions and the answers of the apex court for them are as follows:

1. *What does Mother tongue mean? If it referred to as the language in which the child is comfortable with, then who will decide the same?*

“Mother tongue in the context of the Constitution would, therefore, mean the language of the linguistic minority in a State and it is the parent or the guardian of the child who will decide what the mother tongue of child is. The Constitution nowhere provides that mother tongue is the language which the child is comfortable with, and while this meaning of “mother tongue” may be a possible meaning of the ‘expression’, this is not the meaning of mother tongue in Article 350A of the Constitution or in any

other provision of the Constitution and hence we cannot either expand the power of the State or restrict a fundamental right by saying that mother tongue is the language which the child is comfortable with”.

2. *Whether a student or a parent or a citizen has a right to choose a medium of instruction at primary stage?*

“... a child or on his behalf his parent or guardian, has a right to freedom of choice with regard to the medium of instruction in which he would like to be educated at the primary stage in school.”

3. *Does the imposition of mother tongue in any way affects the fundamental rights under Article 14, 19, 29 and 30 of the Constitution?*

“...imposition of mother tongue affects the fundamental rights under Articles 19, 29 and 30 of the Constitution.”

4. *Whether the Government recognized schools are inclusive of both government-aided schools and private and unaided schools?*

“...Government recognized schools will not only include government aided schools but also unaided schools which have been granted recognition.”

5. *Whether the state can by virtue of Article 350-A of the Constitution compel the linguistic minorities to choose their mother tongue only as medium of instruction in primary schools?*

“...State has no power under Article 350 A of the Constitution to compel the linguistic minorities to choose their mother tongue only as a medium of instruction in primary schools.”

The judiciary views mother tongue in the context of the Constitutional provisions and the Census views the same in the societal / cognitive context.

Minorities

The Constitution of India recognizes two kinds of minorities-linguistic and religious and provides certain specific safeguards to them. The religious minorities are products of more than 2000 years of history, culture and society. In the post-independence India, in the historical process of national development, as we already saw the regional languages formed basis for the reorganization of the geographic boundaries of administrative territories. Linguistic minorities are mainly products of this reorganization. Hence in order to protect their interests’ certain rights have been guaranteed to them. The linguistic minorities have the following rights: (1) Citizens residing in the territory of India or any part of it having a distinct language, script or culture has the right to conserve the same. [Article 29] (2) Admission will not be denied into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them. [Article 29] (3) All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. [Article 30] (4) Discrimination will not be made in granting aid to educational institutions, on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language. [Article 30]

While adjudicating, as we already saw the judiciary has said that the Right to freedom of speech and expression includes the right to choose a medium of instruction. Right to establish and administer an educational institution of one’s choice, one’s choice includes choice of medium of instruction and

also, every citizen, every linguistic and religious minority have right to establish and administer educational institution. It also includes right to choose the medium of instruction which is the fundamental right of the management concerned. Article 350A - “It shall be the endeavor of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups; and the President may issue such directions to any State as he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities.”

Mass Media

India has a vibrant print, audio and television mass media. They are very active. Though television and radio are latest entries, the print media got initiated in 1780 CE itself. There is no bar on starting any newspaper in any language, mother tongue or dialect. Also, there is no bar on any script to be used for writing a language. It is left to the choice of the media. In 2017, There are 187 languages and dialects in which newspapers and periodicals are published in India. The list given below speaks for itself.¹⁷

1	Adi	27	Bilingual
2	Afrikan	28	Birhori
3	Ahirani	29	Bishnu priya manipuri
4	Anal	30	Bodo
5	Angami naga	31	Braille
6	Angika	32	Braille marathe
7	Anglo	33	Buksa
8	Ao naga	34	Bundelkhandi
9	Apatani	35	Burmese
10	Arabic	36	Chakma
11	Arebhashe	37	Chambayali
12	Assamese	38	Chhattisgarhi
13	Asur	39	Chin
14	Avadhi	40	Chinese
15	Bahawalpuri	41	Dam
16	Baite	42	Deori
17	Bajjika	43	Dimasa
18	Banda	44	Dogri
19	Banjara	45	English
20	Bathudi	46	Esperanto
21	Beary	47	Finish
22	Bengali	48	French
23	Bhiloni	49	Gangte
24	Bhojpuri	50	Ganje
25	Bhunja	51	Garhwali
26	Bihari	52	Garo
53	Gaundi	82	Kashmiri
54	German	83	Kharia
55	Goani	84	Khasi
56	Gojri	85	Khortha
57	Gorkhali	86	Koch-rajbanshi

58	Gorkhali nepali	87	Kodava
59	Greek	88	Kokborok
60	Gujarati	89	Konkani
61	Halam	90	Korku
62	Halbi	91	Koshli
63	Haruti	92	Kui
64	Haryanvi	93	Kuki
65	Himachali	94	Kumauni
66	Hindi	95	Kurbi
67	Hindustani-Persian	96	Kurmali
68	Hmar	97	Kurukh
69	Ho	98	Ladakhi
70	Indonesian	99	Lakhar-mara
71	Italian	100	Lamkang
72	Jaintal	101	Lariya
73	Japanese	102	Latin
74	Jaunsari	103	Lepcha
75	Jhadi	104	Limboo
76	Kabur	105	Lushai
77	Kamar	106	Magahi
78	Kanarese	107	Mahal(divehi)
79	Kangri	108	Maithili
80	Kannada	109	Majhi
81	Karbi	110	Malayalam
82	Kashmiri	111	Malto
112	Malvani	143	Prakrit
113	Malwai	144	Punjabi
114	Mandiyali	145	Pushto
115	Manipuri	146	Rabha
116	Marathi	147	Rajasthani
117	Marwari	148	Rajbanshi
118	Mau	149	Roman
119	Meeteilon	150	Rongmei
120	Mikir	151	Russian
121	Mising	152	Sadri
122	Mizo	153	Sanskrit
123	Multilingual	154	Santhali
124	Mundari	155	Saurashtra
125	Muridari	156	Sema
126	Nagamese	157	Shina
127	Nagpuri	158	Sikkimese bhutia
128	Nepali	159	Simte
129	Newari	160	Sindhi
130	Nicobari	161	Sindhi devnagri
131	Odia	162	Sinhali
132	Olchiki	163	Sirayaki
133	Others	164	Sirmouri

134	Pahari	165	Sora
135	Paite	166	Spanish
136	Pali	167	Sumi
137	Panchpargonia	168	Swahili
138	Persian	169	Syrian
139	Piate-pau	170	Tamil
140	Pitalri	171	Telugu
141	Pnar(jaintia)	172	Tenyidie
142	Portuguese	173	Thadoukuki
174	Thandon	181	Vaiphei
175	Thangkhul	182	Warhadi
176	Tibetan	183	Yugoslavian
177	Tiddinchin	184	Zeliangrong
178	Tripuri	185	Zemi
179	Tulu	186	Zokan
180	Urdu	187	Zou

Total registered publications -1,14,820 as on March 31, 2017.

Newspapers: 16,993; Periodicals: 97,827.

Largest number of publications registered in any Indian language is- Hindi: 46,587

Second largest number of newspapers and periodicals registered in any language is-English:
14,365

Total circulation of Hindi publications: 23,89,75,773

Total circulation of English publications: 5,65,77,000

It needs to be noted that though English has only 2,59,678 mother tongue speakers in the country and it has second largest number of newspapers, periodicals and their circulation.

Literature

As I said in the earlier sections, India has a very liberal, pluralistic and inclusive language policy. It is open ended and accommodative of real aspirations of the people speaking different languages. The makers of the Constitution of India and Institutions have kept the door open for entry of languages into a formal status. The field of Indian literature is not an exception. The Sahitya Akademi (The National Academy of Letters) is the premier institution in the country that deals with the Indian literature. The resolution of the Government of India of Dec 15, 1952 had ‘... provided for representation on the Akademi of the languages enumerated in the Constitution of India’¹⁸. It was inaugurated on March 12, 1954 and registered on Jan 7, 1956 under the Societies Registration Act of 1860.

The language policy of the Sahitya Akademi can be summarized in one sentence of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first President of the Akademi. In the parliament debate, on the Report of the States Reorganization Commission, he had said that in the Sahitya Akademi ‘...we deal with all languages of India and try to encourage them.’¹⁹ The General Council of the Akademi in its meeting on March 13, 1954 declared its language policy-‘The Akademi will be concerned not only with the languages mentioned in the Indian Constitution but also with other Indian languages, as well as with literary

productions in English by Indian nationals.’²⁰ Thus the scope of the Akademi literally got expanded and English got included in 1954; in the year 1957 Sindhi too got included.

Due to demands from Maithili and other languages for their inclusion, a committee of experts with Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterji was constituted to ‘examine and recommend the criteria for recognition of languages by the Sahitya Akademi.’²¹ The following are the criteria recommended by the Committee in 1965.

1. Whether structurally a language is an independent language or is part of a system of a given language;
2. Whether it has had a continuous literary tradition and history for at least the last three centuries;
3. Whether a sufficiently large number of people use it today as a vehicle of literary and cultural expression;
4. Whether it is recognized by the State concerned and/or by some Universities as a medium of instruction and/or as a separate subject of study;
5. The number of people using the speech, the current literature that is being produced in it (fiction, essays, other literature, journals, etc.) may also be considered.

Maithili language was recommended by the committee and it was recognized as a ‘major modern literary language, by the Akademi in 1965. During the same year Dogri too was given the same recognition. Later, in 1971, Manipuri and Rajasthani were recognized.

In order to reconsider the language policy in the context of more and more languages seeking recognition, a special meeting of the General Council was held and it recommended to consult the concerned state government to elicit their view and also, to ‘...encourage literary activities and publication of books in languages irrespective of their formal recognition by the Akademi.’²² After much debate, Nepali and Konkani were recognized in 1992. Still, the requests were pending for recognition from Bhojpuri, Maghahi, Khasi, Awadhi, Tripuri, Pahari, Tulu, Lepcha, and Ladakhi languages.

Issues of recognition of a language by the Akademi and development of language were examined by the committee under the chairmanship of Vinayak Krishna Gokak.²³ The guidelines revised in the year 1984 for the recognition of languages are:

I. Socio-linguistic Aspect

Under this, the following should be considered:

1. Whether structurally a language is an independent language or is part of a system of a given language;
2. Whether it has a standardised form, to distinguish it from a dialect;
3. Whether it has had a continuous literary tradition and history;
4. Whether a sufficiently large number of people use it today as a vehicle of literary and cultural expression.

II. Literary Aspect

Under this, the following should be considered:

1. Whether the language has attained the stage of literary development, which entitles it to recognition. The stage of literary development can be ascertained from the literature under various genres such as fiction, poetry, drama, biography, literary criticism, history of literature, journal, etc., which have developed a tradition of their own and in which literature gets

produced currently in an adequate manner. On an average how many books in the language have been produced during the last three years?

2. Literary institutions, if any, working actively in the field of literature for the language concerned.

III. Educational, Administrative and Political Aspect.

Under this, the following should be considered:

1. Whether it is recognised by the State concerned and by some Universities as medium of instruction and as a separate subject of study;
2. The administrative aspects of granting recognition to a new language, including availability of adequate resources.

The focus got shifted from the recognition of languages to development of language and literature, providing fellowships (in the title Bhasha Samman) in the hitherto un-recognised languages. A project office was setup at Boroda in 1996 to deal with Tulu, Magahi, Khasi, Bhojpuri, Lepcha, Pahari (HP), Santhali, Munda, Kurukh, Bodo, Duhan, Bundeli, Sadni, Sara, Kondh, Paite, Mizo and Gondi etc. It was entrusted with the task of documenting oral traditions, translations, bringing out journal etc. This establishment was closed and an office at Guwahati was opened in 2003 ‘to focus on tribal and oral literature in the North-Eastern languages and was not meant for translation of contemporary literature in these languages’ but ‘for preservation of oral through collection and editing, and their introduction into the mainstream through thorough translation into modern languages, especially English. Initially this office was to deal with Bodo, Kokborok, Koch, Rajavanshi, Jaintia, Adi and Tenyidie languages. From the year 1996, the Bhasha Samman are given to un-recognized languages. As far as and so far un-recognized languages are concerned the Akademi helps ‘the languages to grow: as dialects evolve or aspire to be, or consider themselves as good as, languages, it is far more practical to do solid work in these *bhashas* than to be lost in theoretical disputations.’

In summary, the language policy of the Sahitya Akademi is (i) if a language is or becomes part of the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India, it gets automatic recognition like Santhali, Bodo (ii) other languages can get recognized with due process of consideration by the Akademi (iii) none of the Indian language is left out by Akademi for language and literature development activities.

Antiquity of Language

In a country with thousands of years of language history, recognizing, protecting and promoting ancient languages helps in preserving the intangible linguistic heritage. The Government of India created a new class/category of languages called ‘Classical Languages’ in 2004 through the official notification. In the context of Common Minimum Programme of the then UPA Government to accord classical language status to Tamil, the Ministry of Culture, Government of India requested the Central Sahitya Akademi to look into the question of according classical language status to some languages like Tamil. The Central Sahitya Akademi suggested to the government while according classical language status, the following criteria be applied:

- a. High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history (may be 1500-2000 years).
- b. A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers.
- c. The literary tradition be original and not borrowed from another speech community.
- d. 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 (like Latin vs. Romance, Sanskrit-Pali vs. Prakrits and Modern Indo Aryan).

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Indian Model of Language Management

The Government of India issued a Notification to create a new category of languages as classical languages and also notified that Tamil be classified here as classical language because it has (a) High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a thousand years. (b) A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers. (c) The literary tradition is original and not borrowed from another speech community.²⁴ Further the Government of India modified the criteria and added one more parameter²⁵ (d) 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.

A Committee of Language Experts was setup to consider future demands for categorization of languages as classical languages and also the Government codified the criteria to declare a language as one of the classical languages.²⁶ They are (a) High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a thousand years. (b) A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers. (c) The literary tradition has to be original and not borrowed from another speech community. (d) The classical language and literature could be distinct from its current form or could be discontinuous with its later forms or its offshoots (like Latin Vs. Roman, Sanskrit – Pali Vs. Prakrit and Modern Indo Aryan). The Government of India vide its Notification No.IV-14014/7/2004-NI-II of November 25, 2005 decided to amend para 2 of the Notification of October 12, 2004 to be read as “High antiquity of its early texts/record history over a period of 1500-2000 years”.²⁷ Also the same Notification said that “Sanskrit language satisfies the above criteria and will be classified as a classical language”.

Subsequently, Telugu in 2008, Kannada also in 2008, Malayalam in 2013 and Odia in 2014 were declared as classical languages. It is the recognition of the language based on its antiquity of it, where literature was one of the criteria. These languages are both Scheduled and at the same time Classical languages. The benefits that accrue to such classical languages include annual international awards for scholars of eminence, centers for studies in classical languages, Chairs in the Universities etc.

Conclusion

The concerns of the Indian languages during the 21st century is different from those of post-independence 20th century. The analyses of Indian multilingualism during the 19th and 20th centuries looked at it as a ‘problem’ and tried to overcome this ‘problem’. But, in the present century, because of the systematic language policy initiatives of the past half a century that we saw in the previous sections, we have begun to look at multilingualism as an asset, consider it as a ‘resource’ and try to make use of this ‘resource’ for language and social development. This shift in the paradigm is due to a number of inter-connected factors which are socio-political, economic and even psychological not only for language but also for social development. With the above overview one can say that language management in India through policy, implementation and adjudication by the judiciary has made a paradigm shift in looking at the coexistence of multiple languages. During the 1950s multiplicity of languages in India was considered as problem to be resolved. But now multiplicity of languages is considered as resource to be utilized. Management of languages at macro level is upbeat.

But, at the micro level, there are concerns to be looked into. I would like to be cautious on the role of English. It was not in the limelight when the Rights were decided and responsibilities listed. It was envisaged that English would be replaced by other Indian languages. However, English has not gone out of administration as envisaged. It still remains and is going to remain firm in the judiciary. However, today it occupies a major role in decision making regarding language choice in education, a

major domain of language use. In due course it may replace the mother tongue and the regional language.

As we earlier saw, today Hindi language is a composite of more than 50 mother tongues included to make it a statistically majority language among Indian languages. During the 1971 census tabulation of language data Hindi speakers number got reduced to 29.56% which was 30.39% in the Census of 1961. This was genetic classification of Hindi mother tongues. But in order to project Hindi as the majority language, other mother tongues got classified under Hindi and it became 38.04%. So, today Hindi language is a result of functional classification of mother tongues and not a result of genetic classification.²⁸ Among the Indian languages, Hindi is the highly empowered language which constitutionally/legally has multiple status – an official language of the Union; official language of more than 13 states and union territories; the major regional language in more than 9 states where it is a majority language, and an important minority language in 18 states and union territories. It is a language of deliberations of the Parliament of India and state legislatures in the states in which it is recognized as an official language. It is the majority language of the country and also a Scheduled Language since it is in the VIIIth Schedule of the Constitution. It is the only language about whose development the Constitution has given direction, and hence it has the constitutional right for development. The 8th All India Education Survey indicates reduction in the number of schools teaching in mother tongue at primary stage to 86.62% which was 92.07% during the 7th survey²⁹.

English medium schools	8th survey	7th survey
Primary –	15.49%	12.98%
Upper primary-	21.08%	18.25%
Secondary –	28.73%	25.84%
Higher secondary-	33.06%	33.59%
Hindi medium schools	8th survey	7th survey
Primary –	51.50%	46.79%
Upper primary-	54.15%	47.41%
Secondary –	43.18%	41.32%
Higher secondary-	51.45%	48.11%

On one hand Hindi and English medium schools are increasing while other regional language medium schools are enrolling less and a smaller number of students year to year for education in their mother tongue. An example from the State of Karnataka which has Kannada as the major as well as official language has a damaging result. The following statistics of distribution of students by medium of instruction from 1 to 10th standard for some sample of years speak for themselves. In Karnataka Kannada is losing its ground and English is making inroads.³⁰

Medium	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2010-011	2011-12	2012-13
Kannada	82.10	81.02	75.39	74.10	74.67	73.31
English	10.93	10.40	16.17	18.4	18.08	19.91

When language policy was debated in India decades ago, threat to mother tongue was perceived from Hindi or from the regional language. At that time there were violent protests, today we see total submission and acceptance of English and Hindi by everyone. English which entered the Indian scenario as an additional language, slowly became an alternative language. Hindi due to its artificial

statistical majority, empowerment through macro management has become threat to other languages. If caution is not taken, they may become substitute languages - substitutes for mother tongues of India.

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NOTE: I had presented a paper on ‘Managing Indian Multilingualism’ in the Conference on Multilingualism: Concepts and Contexts held from 12th to 15th October 2011 at the University of Mumbai. I have revised and updated the same with additional developments and data. The revised paper is ‘Indian Model of Language Management’.

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