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RESEARCH ARTICLE

INDIAN STATE'S LANGUAGE POLICIES: GENESIS OF CHALLENGES FACED BY HINDI AND ITS FUTURISTIC IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

The paper starts with defining what language is and what 'linguistic consciousness' means in the context of the theoretical work done by Edmund Husserl in understanding the intentionality of a language. The issue of mother tongue language is also elucidated, especially in the context of the Westphalian nation-states that emerged in the Western European countries. This Westphalian Treaty played a pivotal role in creating 'one nation, one official language' discourse' which has been thoroughly defunct in multi-lingual, socio-politically complex realities of the Indian State. While explaining how English was made the official language and the reasons behind it during the British Empire's reign in India, the paper excavates the conflicts that took place in the narrow social base of English, Hindi and Hindustani. While explaining the historical genesis of the Hindi language, both in terms of negotiation and mutual co-dependence, the emergence of 'Vernacular language of Hindustan' is discussed in detail. As the paper describes the presence of various kinds of Hindi in the socio-political complex realm of India's national identity, it also elucidates why Hindi continues to survive, in spite of the anti-Hindi agitations. The contribution of organisations in this process are also debated. Towards the end, the paper tries to frame the genesis of Hindi and the natural conflict that it entails in the domination of minority languages, by tracing the language policies of the Indian constitution and thus, explaining why these challenges would continue, thereby marking key futuristic projections.

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Introduction:-

To embark on the study of the impact of a language and how it creates inter-subjective understanding between the speaker and the audience, it is necessary to investigate the meaning of 'linguistic consciousness' and then derive the meaning of language, in itself. The understanding of 'linguistic consciousness' is necessary to define the boundaries of the language, if it has any. The important questions to ask here are, 'Does language have any inherent connotation' or 'is the connotation endowed from the outside.'

As the term 'linguistic consciousness' emerges, both in phenomenology and cognitive sciences, it is necessary to excavate its first usage by Edmund Husserl, the Czecho-German philosopher who established the school of phenomenology. His study of intentionality, often called as the study of the mind, adopted an internal study of the mind. Before him, study of the mind was constituted through dominant philosophical theories which were

physicalist, casual or behaviourist, thereby studying the mind from the outside. Husserl's theory, which was a first-person view of the mind, constitutes both meaning and language in the realm of linguistic consciousness.¹ As expected, the concept of language, as explained by Husserl, as a representative system in itself has been a controversial one. Elucidating his work further, McIntyre & Smith (1989) have stated, "words, in themselves and apart from the meanings and interpretations given them by persons or other creatures possessing mentality, are only so many marks on paper." Thus, the intentionality of the words and language is not their intrinsic character, as they merely as 'physical objects', but instead they are a derivative of their dependence of the mental states in the representative system. Thus, the meanings of these linguistic expressions comes from the outside.²

Thus, it is then necessary to explain what language is. Several theorists such as Chomsky (1975), Sapir (1928), Jackendoff (1994) and Pinker (1994) have called language as 'mental organ', 'hidden code', 'computational device' and instinct. As these descriptions are often normative and clinical, they essentially avoid the very social nature of language. Later, scholars like Zlatve (2008) have described language as conventional-normative semiotic system for communication and thought. He also states that 'language (as a social, public phenomenon) and knowledge of language are co-dependent concepts: each one implies the other.'³

In this co-dependence, scholars like Johanna Laakso (2018) have termed language as closed entities or systems with clear-cut boundaries. Amongst the various ethno-differentiating factors such as appearance, attires, cultures and religions, language is one of the most important factors that create geographic borders, differentiating people into 'us' and 'them' paradigm and binaries. In the definition of modern nations as 'imagined communities' by Benedict Anderson, linguistic study since the 19th century has utilised language as sustaining the historical genesis of a nation. In this process, historical linguists have often ignored the multicultural dimension of language and multilingualism, thereby focusing primarily on monolingual identities.⁴

This paradigm of looking at languages as autonomous entities, complete in itself, faces several criticisms from scholars like Halliday (1977) who believe that languages are descriptive-ethnographic entities, and includes interaction, culture, variation and functionalism.⁵ Several linguistic anthropologists have defined language as a cultural resource and speaking as a cultural practice.⁶ Thus, the inter-connection between language and borders has played a pivotal role in creating the nation and sustaining its discourse. The reality of 'having a language' means 'belonging.' Though, language and identity are not often isomorphic, as borders are not always drawn on language alone, language mapping has significant role in cultural and national identity, which thereby creates borders. Thus, 'accents', 'words', 'vocabularies' and 'mixing' of languages are shaped by the politics of nationalism, ethnicity and race.⁷

It must be stressed that the discourse of official monolingualism, in which a 'neutral' language unifies the diversity of a post-colonial state is conceptualised by the European idea of a nation-state. As western social sciences have monopolised the political discourses, there has been the emergence of a hegemonic nation on linguistic imperialism.⁸

After the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in between May and October 1648, the Western European nations were established on the idea of 'one nation, one language.' Thus, the tendency to emulate this nation-state model has

¹ Smith, David Woodruff and McIntyre, Ronald, (1982), 'Husserl and Intentionality: A Study of Mind, Meaning and Language,' Reidel Publishing Company, Holland

²Smith, David Woodruff and McIntyre, (1989), in J. N. Mohanty and William R. McKenna, eds., Husserl's Phenomenology: A Textbook (Washington, D. C.: Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology and University Press of America, 1989),147-79.

³Zlatev J. (2008). The Dependence of Language on Consciousness, *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 15(6), 36–62.

⁴Language Borders and Cultural Encounters: A Linguistic View on Interdisciplinary in the Research of Intercultural Contacts (2018), *On the Border of Language and Dialect*, Edited by Marjatta Palander, Helka Riionheimo and Vesa Koivisto, Finish Literature Society, Helsinki

⁵Halliday, M. A. K. (1977). "Ideas About Language." In *Ideas and Perspectives in Linguistics*, edited by M. A. K. Halliday, 32–49. Occasional Papers 1. Applied Linguistics Association of Australia.

⁶Duranti, A., 1997. *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

⁷Urciuoli, Bonnie. (1995), *Language and Borders*, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 24 (1995), pp. 525-54

⁸Wolff, Ekkehard, H, (2017), *Language ideologies and the politics of language in postcolonial Africa*, *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics Plus*, Vol. 51, 2017: 1-22

led to massive alienation, agitations and controversies in a multi-lingual country like India, where such a rationalisation is impossible.⁹ Thus, in this chaos, what constitutes a majority of influence is linguistic imperialism, which continues in the post-colonial states.

The very subtle emergence of this linguistic imperialism takes place through the origin, perception and understanding of the 'mother-tongue' language. Ashworth (1992) states how 'mother-tongue' also called as the first language or the language a child acquires in the early years, plays a significant role in creating identities and nationalities.¹⁰ Though, the 1957 UNESCO Declaration accepted that mother-tongue learning is essential in education, it failed to cater to the complexities of minority languages, especially in third-world countries. Several researchers have stated that minority languages are rendered obsolete and invisible under the dominance of one language, both politically and economically.

Furthermore, it is essential to understand the demarcations in the identities of languages itself. Annamalai (1979) explains these definitions quite clearly:¹¹

1. Official language: It is used for legislative, executive and judicial purposes within the state's set-up.
2. Lingua Franca: language used by people, whose mother tongue is originally different, in order to foster communication.
3. Regional language: It is the language used in a particular geographic region within the nation-state, while conversing with different people having different mother tongue, ethnicities, religions, etc.
4. Vernacular language: the language which is the mother tongue of a particular group/groups which is/are dominated by another group/groups.
5. National language: Language of the political, social and cultural reality of the country/ nation-state.

It is necessary to keep these definitions in mind so that they are not confused or rendered controversial while understanding the historical genesis of Hindi language.

Sridhar (1994) in his case-studies of language preservation and shift reveals that weaker minority languages are often gobbled up by the dominant and market-driven language of the country.¹² Also, the assimilative nature of the dominant languages pose a hindrance to the development of the minority languages. For example, minority tribal languages in various states of India, if taught, use English or the dominant state-language for pedagogy. Often, the undeveloped scripts of these minority languages are blamed. The accent of a minority language speaker, using the dominant language or even English, is ridiculed. This dismal regard is also spread through Hindi cinema, where speakers of minority languages are laughed upon.¹³

But in the cases of third-world countries like India, that had been colonised by the British, the mother-tongue in itself suffered in the case of linguistic imperialism, orientalism and economic incentives. Léglise and Miggie (2007) explain how colonial discourse around English language had been used to rationalise and justify the colonial discourse. The usage of English language succeeds the formal termination of colonialism, thereby endowing a façade of political independence to the post-colonial societies. As most literary and post-colonial studies in this regard take place in a socio-political vacuum, the colonial status-quo remains as it was. This linguistic colonialization, as Calvet (1987) describes happened in two distinct ways. Firstly, the 'vertical step' led to the social and cultural spreading of the language. Secondly, the 'horizontal step' happened through the diffusion of the language, geographically, i.e. from cities to villages.¹⁴

The earliest adoption of English as the official language in colonised India can be traced from Macaulay's famous Minute on February 2, 1835. These minutes' reveal how British wanted a class of interpreters and mediators to ease their governance over the Indians. This class of interpreters had to be Indian in their colour and blood, but English in

⁹ Oommen, T.K. (2003). Language and Nation: For a Cultural Renewal of India. Asian Journal of Social Science, SPECIAL FOCUS: Asian Development and Welfare in Crisis, 31(2) 286-303

¹⁰ Ashworth, M. (1992). Beyond Methodology. Malta: Cambridge University Press.

¹¹ Annamalai, E. (1979) Language Movements in India. Central Institute of Indian Languages

¹² Sridhar, Kamal, K. (1994), Mother Tongue Maintenance: The Debate. Mother Tongue Maintenance and Multiculturalism, TESOL Quarterly, 28(3): 628-663

¹³ Mishra, Salil (2005): 'The Urdu that was Hindi', The Times of India, New Delhi, July 14, Editorial Opinion Page.

¹⁴ Calvet, Louis-Jean 1987 La guerre des Langues. Paris : Payot.

their tastes. Phillipson (1992) calls this phenomenon as 'English linguistic imperialism', which describes the hegemonic domination of the Empire by constitution of the structural and cultural inequalities in the dominated colony, through the utility of language.¹⁵

Therefore, after the political independence of India, as English could not have been completely replaced, its impact and utility continued to have a palpable presence in the country. At the same time, it was also essential for India's independence to create its own language that followed the basic principles of post-colonial countries' empowerment. Firstly, the language had to be spoken, understood and archived in the political, social and economic discourses of the country. At the same time, this language through its policies, had to be representative of the ethnicities in India, creating a national identity. After the partition, this language had to also represented the sustenance of the border and Indian geography to further carry out the 'us' and 'them' discourse.

Historical Genesis of Hindi

The 2011 census of India revealed that around 528 million Indians, comprising of 44% of the population stated Hindi as their mother-tongue language. The dynamics of Hindi language, which has emerged as a noticeable phenomenon in the 21st century has roots in the past, both in terms of its functioning and structure. The socio-historic forces of the past have endowed it contemporary necessity along with the futuristic projections. As any language dynamics is a two-way affair, as it is both negotiable and mutual, the historical genesis of Hindi language needs to be scrutinised in detail.¹⁶

This scrutiny can start with the reading of the Part XVII of Indian Constitution in the Article 343 (1) states "The official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script."¹⁷ This has to be understood in the historical genesis of perception and acceptance of Hindi in the Indian discourse. Meanwhile, scholars like Anirudh Deshpande (2000) question the national character of Hindi, by stating "The knowledge of philosophy of a society cannot be developed in a language which 90 per cent of the masses do not understand."¹⁸

Scholars like Aneesh (2010) Believe that Hindi was adopted as the language spoken by the vast majority of the people, even before it actually did. He explains this cognitive choice on the basis of prospective (based on the future) and retrospective (based on the past, which might not exist).¹⁹

Jaswal (2006) states that towards nineteenth and early twentieth century, the emergence of the idea of the 'vernacular language of Hindustan' emerged, shifting the discourse from the colonial circles to the nascent Indian public sphere.²⁰ In fact, the Hindi Resolution of April 18, 1960, exposed two dominant patterns in the discourse. Firstly, the demand of the activists from North India to use Devnagiri script in the administrative processes, thereby giving Hindi the noted necessity for such use. Secondly, it also aimed to further broaden the gulf between the Hindi and Urdu speaking population. Urdu, the successor of Persian language, was spoken by the elite in the North Indian belt and was another aspiring vernacular language of India. In fact, by the patronising attempts of the Nawabs of Rampur and Avadh as well as the Mughal Court, Urdu had developed as the uniform, cultured and sophisticated language.

It was later in 1803, that East India Company had issued the district magistrates and lower courts to use Devnagiri script for administrative purposes. In fact, James Thomason, the British Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces in India, had ensured that Hindi continued in the education system of India, along with Urdu from 1843-1853

¹⁵ Phillipson, R. (1992) Linguistic imperialism, Oxford: Oxford University Press

¹⁶ Kumar, Suresh, (2003), Hindi Language Dynamics: A Perspective on the Issues, Bulletin of the Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute, 62(1), 11-14

¹⁷ Constitution of India. Part XVII. —Official Language. —Arts. 344—348.

¹⁸ Deshpande, A. (2000), Hindustani in India, Economic and Political Weekly, 35 (15): 1240-1242

¹⁹ Aneesh, A. (2010), Bloody Language: Clashes and Constructions of Linguistic Nationalism in India, Sociological Forum, 25 (1): 86-109

²⁰ Jaswal, G.M, (2006), Hindi Resolution: A reflection of the British policy of Divide and Rule, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 66(1): 1140-1151.

Though, after the revolt of 1857, the importance and domination of Urdu language ceased and slowly, Hindi language gained prominence. Bharatendu Harishchandra, the leader of the Hindi movement had played a pivotal role in the introduction of Hindi in the civil courts by the British in 1881. Later in 1882, the Hunter Commission structured the idea of Indian languages and state employment, which further developed the assimilation of Hindi.²¹

In 1894, the first Linguistic Survey of India was done under the supervision of George Grierson, an Irish administrator from the Indian Civil Services. It was published over a 25-year-period from 1903-1928 in 11 volumes comprising of 8,000 pages. The survey had listed 179 languages and 544 dialects. The survey revealed two important patterns in the language use in India. Firstly, the strong presence of bilingual traditions in different geographies in India. Secondly, the organic fluidity of language due to the inter-section of different scripts for one language in itself.²² Internally, the reason for appointing Grierson for the linguistic survey was to identify the racial division within Indians and language was used as a structural strategy for it.²³

In 1897, Madam Mohan Malviya had fought for the introduction of Hindi in the civil and criminal courts as well. Along with the birth of the Indian National Congress and the growing challenge faced by the British Empire by the Muslim population, the political currency employed by Urdu started to wane.²⁴

Hindi scholars also started using the terms ‘rashtra’ and ‘jati’ to create a national consciousness and identity in the colonised India. Francesca Orsini (2009) states:

“In nationalist terms, language and literature were means to define and communicate the agenda for progress, and were themselves metaphors for the jati/nation: and strength of literature showed the strength of the nation, the life of the language was the life of the nation.”²⁵

In this struggle of independence, Gandhi describes five necessary components needed for a national language. Firstly, it should be easy to learn for the government officials. Secondly, it should be capable of serving as a medium for economic, political and social discourse in the country. Thirdly, it should be the speech used by majority of the inhabitants. Fourthly, it should be easy to learn by the whole country. Fifthly, the temporary interests should not be adhered to while choosing the national language.²⁶ Thus, the Karachi session of Congress in 1925 adopted Hindustani (mixture of Hindi and Urdu) as the lingua franca of the nation. Gandhi had also established the Hindi Prachar Sabha in 1942, adopting Hindustani as the language. In 1928, the Nehru Committee Report had also stressed on creation of state-boundaries on the basis of regional languages for the smooth functioning of the state administration.

It must be understood that this very idea of lingua franca is a European discourse. The idea of language playing a role in nation-building efforts is a foreign domination. The British had primarily imposed this idea in all their colonies to rupture the linguistic diversity of the colonised and also to impose their own domination.²⁷ Thus, this historical dimension is necessary to understand the pressure of evolving a national language in India, before and after independence.

The interesting pattern here is to envisage the competition tendencies of three languages as the lingua franca: Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani. Nevertheless, Hindustani remained the official language of India under the British Empire,

²¹ Srivastava, S. (2000), The Farce that is Hindi, Economic and Political Weekly, 35(43): 3898-3899

²² Venkatesh, Karthik (2019), The many voices of the subcontinent, Live Mint, <https://www.livemint.com/mint-lounge/features/the-many-voices-of-the-subcontinent-1552642478102.html>

²³ Srivastava, S. (2000), The Farce that is Hindi, Economic and Political Weekly,

²⁴ Chandra, Bipan, (1984) Communalism in Modern India, p. 255, New Delhi, 1984. 35(43): 3898-3899

²⁵ Francesca, O. (2009), The Hindi Public Sphere 1920–1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism, Oxford Scholarship, London

²⁶ Gusain, L. (2012), The Effectiveness of Establishing Hindi as a National Language, Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, 13(1): 43-50

²⁷ Rao, S. S. (2008). India's Language Debates and Education of Linguistic Minorities. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 43(36): 63-69

until the independence and partition in 1947.²⁸ While dealing with what is today termed as Hindustani, scholar Sushil Srivastava (2000) reveals that the British, who were unaware about the language spoken in India, tried to label it in a geographic manner and called it 'Hindustani.' In fact, the scholar claims that the same 'Hindustani' was spoken as Urdu during the reign of Shah Jehan. Though, he mentions clearly that Hindustani had words from Arabic and Persian while Hindi had words from Sanskrit, the first indigenous language of India.

Why Hindi Survived?

After India's independence, with the constitution coming into effect in 1950, it was clearly understood that the language provisions were a mere compromise. Also, it had different meaning for different people. In this regard, there were two primary meanings. Firstly, the echelons of power and middle-class who wanted Hindi to replace English as the language of communication at the national level, reflected only the higher elite thoughts of the Indian society. Secondly, those who had compromised and had accepted the status-quo believed that the transition phase would lead to the development of regional languages in India. In fact, the non-Hindi speaking population did not have a problem till they were not placed in an economically or politically weaker position in this new discourse.²⁹

Scholars like Suniti Kumar Chatterji (1952) have crystallised three definitions of what this Hindi actually meant into three different concentric rings.³⁰

1. The Core or the outward ring: loosely spoken Hindi circulated through school text-books, literature and newspapers.
2. Second Circle: Hindi spoken by North Indians and people in the Deccan as inter-provincial speech. Their first allegiance remains to their mother tongue, like Assamese, Marathi, Gujarati, Kashmiri, Punjabi.
3. Third Circle: Hindi used in the Dravidian belt and tribes like Santals, Mundas, Khasis, Nagas and Manipuris who are forced into bilingualism.

This inter-mixing of languages, often from different religions, created a social pyramid of its own. Neera Chandoke (2003) explains how Indians speak both dialects and languages from five linguistic families, which are Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Andamanese, Tibeto-Burman and Austro-Asiatic.³¹ For the promotion of Hindi in the non-Hindi speaking regions, several measures were adopted. Firstly, the Central Directorate of Hindi, established in March 1, 1960 imparted an all India character to Hindi under the Article 351 of the Indian Constitution. Secondly, the Central Hindi Shiksha Mandal was established in March 19, 1960 for the academic promotion of Hindi in teaching at an all India level. In 1964, Akhil Bhartiya Hindi Sansatha Sangh was established to establish uniformity in the promotion and usage of Hindi throughout India along with studying the nature and work of voluntary Hindi organisations in the non-Hindi speaking regions.³²

Along with these organisational establishments, Rao (1970) elucidates the five reasons why Hindi survived and should be the 'national language' of India. Firstly, the Indian military is dominated by North Indian Hindus who speak in the Hindi language and it also continues to be one of the media of instruction in the central universities. Secondly, labour force migrating in West Bengal, Assam and even the Southern states are primarily from the Hindi speaking region of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Thirdly, North Indian sadhus have a strong presence in pilgrim centres such as Tirupati, Kanchipuram, Madurai and Rameshwaram. Fourthly, the spread of Hindi Cinema has played a colossal role in creating Hindi as the link language. Lastly, in terms of the creation of national identity, it is the Hindi songs, broadcasted by both radio and television which garner emotional bonding with even the non-Hindi speaking regions.³³

²⁸Shamsur R, F. (2003). "A Long History of Urdu Literary Culture, Part I: Naming and Placing a Literary Culture," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, Sheldon Pollock, ed., Berkeley: University of California Press

²⁹ Rao, V.K.R.V. (1978), Many Languages, One Nation: Quest for an All-India Language. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 13(25): 1025-1030

³⁰ Chatterji, S.K., (1952), Hindi, the National Language of India, and its Modernization, *Civilisations*, 2(1)19-32

³¹ Chandoke, N., (2003), Holding the Nation Together. *India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol. 29(3): 80-94

³² Laitin, D. (1989). *Language Policy and Political Strategy in India*, *Policy Sciences*, 22(3): 415-436

³³ Rao, V. (1970). *Language Politics in India*. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 31(2): 203-221

After the Official Language Act of 1963 was amended in 1967, Tamil Nadu had rejected the three language formula for Tamil speakers. Anti-Hindi agitations started in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and even West Bengal. In fact, after the death of Nehru, these agitations metamorphosed into violent riots.³⁴

Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri had to ensure the southern Indian population that Jawaharlal Nehru's assurance that English 'shall' continue, both in letter as well as spirit. His four-point policy stated that every state could use its own language in its business transactions, inter-state communication would either be in English or its translation, non-Hindi states could communicate with the Centre in English, along with the usage of English in the Centre.³⁵

The anti-Hindi agitations in the South from the 1930s had led to the emergence of Dravidra Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in 1949. To control the agitation, Articles 29 and 30 of the Fundamental Rights chapter in the Indian Constitution, endow protection to the regional minority languages. The multiple language character of India was further supported by the mention of 22 languages in the Eight Schedule. But this inclusion also revealed the caveats present in the entire nomenclature of including or excluding languages. For example, there is no specific criteria mentioned that would supervise the presence of a language, especially if it is not the root language, official language of the state or even the language used for colloquial communication through media and school text-books. Hindi, once again, had dominated over the inclusion of languages such as Awadi, Rajathani and Braj that are not mentioned in the Eight Schedule in spite of having a strong base.³⁶

The Eight Schedule also denied legitimacy to several spoken languages in India due to politics. In fact, Sanskrit is included, only when 1400 people claim it as their language. In contrast, the Sino-Tibetan and Austro-Asiatic language families have been neglected. The only advantage of a language being included in the Eight Schedule is that it increases the chances of employment of the speakers of that language.³⁷

But the power of Hindi remains undaunted due to three primarily reasons. Firstly, Hindi had a greater geographical extension. Secondly, it had more numerical plurality. Thirdly, the location of the National Capital New Delhi, where Hindi dialects had more colloquial currency.³⁸ Additionally, the geographic restrictions faced by Bengali, Tamil and Marathi rendered them fragile in terms of being a national language.

Simultaneously, very limited academic work is done to understand the 420 languages and dialects spoken in the North-eastern India. Due to the British policies, these areas were alienated. Hence, their plurality and diversity, along with wide-ranging socio-linguistic and ethnic configuration have not been properly documented. Thus, while anti-Hindi agitations continued in the 60s in India, there was very limited understanding of how the North-eastern states were dealing with it. Nevertheless, it does not invalidate the emotional bond and symbolic validity of these minority languages in the tribal areas.³⁹

Meanwhile, this conflict with Hindi by the non-Hindi speaking states should not be seen in isolation. For example, in Goa there is a conflict between Marathi and Konkani, in Belgaum the conflict is between Marathi and Kannada, in few areas of Karnataka there is a fight between Kannada and Tamil, in Bihar there is a conflict between Hindi and Oriya while in Assam the fight is in between Bengali and Assamese. This conflict was felt by Ambedkar during the time of writing the constitution. He had mentioned that "Hindustani should be made the language not only of the union, but also of all the units." He had believed that if all units are liberated in terms of their linguistic diversity, the very question of a national language would be eliminated.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the adoption of Hindi as the official language took place in India with the perception and belief that an independent country must have a national language.⁴¹ Gandhi, strongly believed in the concept of a national language due to two main reasons. Firstly,

³⁴ Rao, S.S. (2008), India's Language Debates and Education of Linguistic Minorities. Economic and Political Weekly, 43 (36): 63-69

³⁵ Ram, M. (1978), Reviving a Controversy, Economic and Political Weekly, 13 (25): 1012-1013

³⁶ Chandoke, N., (2003), Holding the Nation Together. India International Centre Quarterly, 29 (3): 80-94

³⁷ Bhattacharya, S. S. (2002): Languages in India – Their Status and Function, in: Itagi/Singh (eds.), Linguistic Landscape in India, CIIL Mysore

³⁸ Friedrich, P. (1962). Language and Politics in India. Daedalus, 91 (3): 543-559

³⁹ Samuel J., (1993), Language and Nationality in North-East India. Economic and Political Weekly, 28 (3): 91-92

⁴⁰ Siwach, J.R. (1987), Nehru and the Language problem, The Indian Journal of Political Science, 48(2):251-265

⁴¹ Khare, S.K. (2002), Truth about Language in India, Economic and Political Weekly, 37(50): 4993-4994

without a national language or a Pan-Indian language, the disintegration of the country would take place. Secondly, it would then immediately re-establish the chaos that led to the very colonial acquisition by European powers.⁴²

What was grossly ignored in this perception was the fact that India is a linguistic mosaic and no single language can ever have the authority of a national language. The very idea that like the Mughals or the British Empire, one language would suffice domination and control over the entire geography of India is a controversial issue. Scholars like Laitin (1989), who have studied language conflict explain that in such case, the imposition of a language of the ruler is successful only if it is a 'foreign' language. Thus, these rulers then faced little or less opposition.

Meanwhile, as linguistic nationalism played a strong role in the Indian freedom movement, it was quite natural to witness states in India, demanding borders and national identity on the basis of their regional languages. Thus, when David Laitin (1989) calls India as the 'crucible' for the drama of language conflict, it can be rightly accepted.⁴³

Language Policies in India

The language policy refers to the rules which have been set by the authorities to govern both the acquisition and use of languages. Though, language policies can be studied in terms of international organisations, world regions, countries and education institutions, most of the language policy analysts use language policy while studying the formal, government-backed policies at both regional as well as national levels (Lambert, 2005)⁴⁴

The language policies of India have followed four patterns to retain control over the multi-lingual politics of the country. Firstly, all the languages, apart from the dominant language are liquefied. Secondly, the minority tribal languages are not used in education or administration, so they can be slowly marginalised and rendered invisible. Thirdly, languages are legally perceived as 'regional' even in the tribal states or others, depending on the number of people who use them, instead of their territorial community. Thus, the hierarchical structure of the language policy in India is defined into two sections. The first section states Hindi as the 'link', 'official' and 'national' language. While, the second section, constitutes regional languages such as Awadhi, Maithili, Santali, Gondi, etc which face Hindi imperialism.⁴⁵

To further understand the language policies in India, the following key articles of the Indian Constitution have to be understood.

1. Article 29: Protection of the interests of the Minorities, states that every citizen of India has the right to conserve his/her script. No citizen would follow discrimination in admission in any university or reception of funds, on the basis of language, along with religion, race and caste.
2. Article 30: Minorities are allowed to establish educational institutions on the basis of their religion and language. Thus, the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) was established to further strengthen this article.
3. Article 120: It lays down the official language of the Parliament and gives political currency to both Hindi and English for this usage. Under special circumstances, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha can let a minister speak in his/her mother tongue.
4. Article 210: Business in the state legislature would continue in Hindi, state language or English.
5. Article 343: Hindi in Devnagiri script is the official language of the Union.
6. Article 344: The President can constitute a commission to scrutinise the progress made by Hindi after five years.
7. Article 345: The state legislature can adopt one or more languages for usage in that state as the 'official' language of the state.
8. Article 346: The official language of the Union, be it Hindi or English, would be the language in which the centre shall carry out correspondence with the different states.
9. Article 348: The language used in the High Court and the Supreme Court would be English, unless dictated otherwise by the Parliament.

⁴²Rao, V. (1970). Language Politics in India. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 31 (3):203-221

⁴³Laitin, D. (1989): Language Policy and Political Strategy, *Policy Sciences*, 22(1):415-36.

⁴⁴ Lambert, R. (2005). An International Perspective on Language Policies, Practices and Proficiencies. *Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes (FIPLV)*. Romania

⁴⁵Oommen, T.K. (2003). Language and Nation: For a Cultural Renewal of India. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 31(2): 286-303

10. Article 349: No change in the Article 348 can happen for the next 15 years (after the application of the Indian Constitution), and if so, the President should be satisfied by it.
11. Article 350A: The insertion of the 7th amendment allows the local authorities to use the mother tongue language in the primary schools.
12. Article 349A: The insertion of the 56th Amendment Act provides for an authoritative text for the Indian Constitution in Hindi.

The above 12 articles reflect that the Indian Constitution had meticulously understood the necessity of the language policy in India and how it would be dictated in the years to come. Yet, there are several fallacies in the above mentioned articles. Firstly, any amendment done by the Parliament can insert a further clause in the article, therefore rendering it even more controversial. Secondly, the definition of mother tongue, local authorities etc are not clearly defined and hence, in any linguistic survey of India, it would be difficult to clarify these complex political realities. Also, there is no guarantee or basis on which the definition of minorities or citizens can be encapsulated, thereby making it fluid yet undefined. Also, a common thread that binds these articles needs to be created. No special status is conferred to the speakers of the minority languages which hints towards non- discrimination rather than affirmative actions.

Most importantly, as the constitution does not provide a definition of the linguistic minority, Benedikter (2013) defines the 'linguistic minority simply as considered to be each group that has a distinct language in a numerically inferior position at the State level.'⁴⁶ Also, while mentioning, in principle, the protocol of teaching in mother tongue, the articles do not explain if it is mandatory for the state-run educational institutes and schools, or is merely a choice. The State, as these articles subtly suggest, needs to safeguard the minority rights. Also, under what special circumstances can the minorities demand the state and the centre for the establishment of primary schools is ambiguous.

Conclusion:-

While contextualising the genesis of Hindi in the realm of 'linguistic consciousness' by Edmund Husserl, it can be stated that the boundaries of language, both as clear-cut paradigms and representative systems in itself, is difficult to describe in the case of multi-lingual states such as India. Yet, as the very connotation of a language is endowed from the outside, the same process can be witnessed in the genesis of Hindi, and thereby creating a political paradigm around it in the quest of national identity in India. As words and language are defined by the mental states of the units in the representative system, Hindi in itself has become a political vehicle for nationalism, instead of a social or cultural one.

Connecting this understanding with Benedict Anderson's 'Imagined Communities', the paper highlighted how historical linguists, sociologists and ethnographers have often neglected the hard-hitting realities of multi-lingual societies, and quite often, the third-world post-colonial states. As the concept of borders and states was subtly infused by the British in the colonies they dominated, language became pivotal yet ambiguous. Also, the emergence of language mapping with the national identities of different states with clear-cut borders, often not geographically determined, further exacerbated the problem. Thus, the paper explains how the very idea of a 'neutral language' in the official capacity, imposed by the British, was a controversial idea.

While mother tongue languages were slowly being recognised, the underdevelopment of their script or their numerical capacity often rendered them invisible. The various kinds of languages, such as official, lingua franca, regional, vernacular and national are discussed in the paper, throwing light on the current state of confusion and conjecture that exists around them. Though, the paper does not discuss in detail about the role of language in educational instructions, it does shed light, quite slightly, on that reality, too.

The socio-cultural vacuum which is often used to study Hindi in isolation is discussed here. The paper explains the reasons why Hindi survived. Several reasons such as organisational framework are explained. These are also linked to the reasons why Hindi emerged as the official language during the Freedom Struggle of India, the role of Congress in popularising it. The confusion between what is meant by Hindustani and Hindi is described. The paper

⁴⁶Benedikter, T. (2013), Linguistic minorities in India: An appraisal of the linguistic rights of minorities in India, EURASIA NET

also explains the rise of anti-Hindi agitations that emerged in the country in the 1960s. These agitations challenge the socio-cultural reality of India in several ways.

Firstly, the visibility of the minority languages is rendered ineffective as the dialects become a part of Hindi in itself. Secondly, the continuous dependence of Indian State on English, even after the political independence, explains why this is compromise is an ever-continuing phenomena which would not be easily eliminated. The acceptance of English as the language of official administration in the non-Hindi speaking regions of India creates a further challenge even if it is a means to justify the current status-quo. The alienation of the North-Eastern states in terms of both their minority languages and politics is discussed, explaining why their stand towards the acceptance or neglect of Hindi was never academically scrutinised in detail.

Towards the end, the paper explains the language policies in India emerging from 12 Articles of the Indian Constitution. The futuristic projections of how Hindi would remain being challenged in the years to come is not debatable after understanding the context of its genesis and its implications. The neglected terms such as 'local authorities', 'minorities', 'mother tongue' in the Indian Constitution have rendered clear-cut definitions meaningless, even when the makers of the Indian Constitution had clear idea about the challenges that would surround the existence of an official language.

Thus, while dealing with the futuristic implications of the challenges faced by Hindi, the paper suggests few new ways of perception and application. First of all, the colonial idea of official language, which is inter-changeably becoming 'national language', depending on the political capital of the country, needs to be abandoned. This is because, such an ideation or even the need for having it, makes the end of colonialism meaningless. The clear-cut demarcation of 'one nation, one official language' in the case of post-colonial countries like India should be abandoned for diversity and equality to all the languages in the country.

Secondly, it is necessary to introduce amendments in the Indian Constitution after long, meticulous debates to endow definitions of terms like local authorities, mother tongue, minorities and even citizens. Such definitions, if exemplified by the very Constitution would then contain the anti-Hindi agitations. They would then help through affirmative action instead of positive discrimination. Both organisational establishments and development of mother tongue scripts should be supported by the Indian State to endow legitimacy to its diversity and do justice to the identities of several unites within this unit.

Until this inter-subjective clarity is gained, both legally and socio-politically in the instance of India, the futuristic implications of the usage of Hindi would continue to face challenges. It is only through these steps that India can carve its own nature and synthesis of 'linguistic consciousness' without depending on a colonial or first world model of emancipation.

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