



*Revisiting*  
*Language and Literature*

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**REVISITING LANGUAGE  
AND LITERATURE**

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# **The Development of Language Education Policy: An Indian Perspective, a View from Maharashtra.**

**Sandeep Sanap  
B G Sawaishikre**

## **Introduction**

Multi-ethnic and multi-lingual 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. Education, however, is considered a state responsibility, and while national policies exist, individual states play a primary role in the execution of language decisions. The relationship between India's language and education policies further complicate the tension between cultural preservation and economic growth. India's constitutional policies concerning the use of language reflect the economic and cultural evolution within this diverse and multilingual country. The Republic of India has hundreds of languages. According to the Census of 2001, there are 1,635 mother tongues and 122 languages with more than 10,000 speakers. Language planners and policy makers have to grapple with the complex problems of multilingualism and of keeping the Indian languages center stage by giving them their due place in the educational process and national development. Owing to the defective planning by the policy makers both at the state level and the federal levels, the English language has emerged as the favored language in education. Sanskrit was the link language of India for many centuries, Later Persian also coupled with Sanskrit and both were the link languages of India until the arrival of English to the nation. Not only English rulers, but English also ruled India for many centuries. English rulers went out but not English. Education policy debates in India provide an additional lens for understanding the tensions of India's language policy.

## **1. Language Education Policy in Colonial Period**

The first language education policy of India was made for the promotion of English language that is on February 2nd in 1835, Thomas Babington Macaulay's minute on Indian Language policy was introduced. It says, we must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between

us and the millions whom we govern... We need a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. This implies that English was introduced in the Indian educational system for the purpose of getting servants of English language knowledge. During the freedom struggle periods Gandhi vehemently opposed and wanted to throw out English from Indian nation, but he failed in his attempt. After independence, he proposed some suggestions to the government for the promotion of regional language for the state affairs, Hindustani for national affairs, and English for world affairs.

## **2. Language Education Policy after Independence**

National Language Policy of Indian constitution assembly was established on 9 December 1946, for drafting a constitution when India became independent. The Constituent Assembly witnessed fierce debates on the language issue. The adoption of a "National Language", the language in which the constitution was to be written in and the language in which the proceedings of the assembly were to be conducted were the main linguistic questions debated by the framers of the Constitution. On one side were the members from the Hindi speaking provinces moved a large number of pro-Hindi amendments and argued for adopting Hindi as the sole National Language. On 10 December 1946, Dhulekar declared "People who do not know Hindustani have no right to stay in India. People who are present in the House to fashion a constitution for India and do not know Hindustani are not worthy to be members of this assembly. Part 17th of the Indian Constitution was drafted according to this compromise. It did not have any mention of a "National Language". Instead, it defined only the "Official Languages" of the Union. Hindi in Devanagari script would be the official language of the Indian Union. For fifteen years, English would also be used for all official purposes. A language commission could be convened after five years to recommend ways to promote Hindi as the sole official language and to phase out the use of English. Official communication between states and between states and the Union would be in the official language of the union. English would be used for all legal purposes - in court proceedings, bills, laws, rules and other regulations. The Union was duty bound to promote the spread and usage of Hindi.

## **3. Language Policy in Indian Constitution**

When developing its Constitution, Indian leaders enacted language policy that placed emphasis on both language development and language-survival.

The language policy contained within Part III of the Constitution defines language rights as fundamental rights – linking these language rights to education as well. The text acknowledges the innate challenges of educating a multilingual society with the legacy of a caste system by stating: All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. This policy and subsequent documents have produced a school system that encourages tri-lingual education, with students learning their mother tongue, Hindi, and English. However, while the Constitution highlights the importance of mother tongues, in practice it has proven unfeasible to protect the 22 scheduled languages it lists, let alone the hundreds of additional languages spoken by significant numbers of people. In 1950 the Indian constitution was established. Gandhi emphasized on Hindustani, and wanted it to be the official language of India. Later the concept of Hindustani was given up by the rulers. Gandhi achieved politically a lot but linguistically a little. In 1952, 15 major languages of India were recognized and placed in Eighth schedule. Indian states were established in 1956 on the basis of the regional languages of the majority people. Thus English was introduced in the Indian education system and rooted in all the lines of education. During the freedom struggle periods, Mahatma Gandhi vehemently opposed English and wanted “Hindustani? to be the prime language of our nation. Later in 1992 three more languages were added, and during 2002-2006 again four languages were added to the schedule. Now 22 languages are placed in the eighth schedule. They are Assami, Bangla, Boda, Dogri, Gujarathi, Hindi, Kashmiri, Kannada, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Santali, Sindi, Sanskrit and Urdu.

#### **4. Regional Language Policy**

chronological changes in Maharashtra government policy in 1956, Indian states were established on the basis of majority regional languages and states were allowed to make their own official language for state affairs. According to the 345 section of the Indian constitution, in 1957, Maharashtra was made as the official language of the Maharashtra state by the official language act of the state number 39/1956 on 19th January 1957. President of India formed a committee for the promotion of Hindi to the status of official language of the nation. In 1965, Hindi was made as the official language of the nation and English was given the status of Associate official language. In 1963, three language formula was introduced in the nation. According to this formula a student who has completed the high school education, must have command



on two languages besides English. That is first is his state language, second is Hindi, third is English. This three language formula was sincerely adopted by Tamil Nadu government during 1963-65 and Hindi was introduced as a school subject. Insertion of Hindi in Tamil Nadu, created different attitudes in the mind of C.N. Annadurai which lead to the Hindi agitation movement. His language power and presence of mind attracted the student community and many students joined in Hindi agitation movement under the leadership of Anna. Periyar, E.V.Ramaswamy also supported Arignar Anna in opposing Hindi and supporting English.

### **Conclusion**

- a) Two language formulae seem to be purely political, because medium of instruction in Maharashtra was accepted in three language formula also.
- b) For politicians, language is not for communication but for power. Hindi played a major role in the Maharashtra politics, and the political power was generated upon this language. So Hindi is a powerful language so far Tamil Nadu politics is concerned.
- c) Language agitations were held for the betterment of Maharashtra on three different phases. First it was against Hindi in 1960s and 70s, second it was against Sinhalese in 1980s and third is running now against English.
- d) Two language formula now getting turned towards one language formula. If it is turned so, our younger generation may find difficulties in getting job in the globalized world, because globalization is nothing but Englishization.
- e) The hatred that the people developed upon each other's language does not allow any Indian language to be the lingua franca of India instead of English. With over 1,600 mother tongues from five different language families, the attempt to determine a single language as the "authentic" voice of India is ongoing but it is unlikely to be resolved. Given India's increasingly prominent role on the world's stage, the tension between supporting myriad cultures and economic forces put increasing pressure on the pragmatism of India's language policies. India's language policies demonstrate this duality. They waver between preserving the country's rich language diversity and supporting economic objectives that increasingly depend on English, the widespread use of which is one of India's greatest economic advantages.

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