ABSTRACT


An interesting language contact situation is found in the newly created state of Jharkhand where a number of languages coexist side by side. Jharkhand happens to be numerically the third tribal state of India. A total number of thirty tribal languages have been identified in the state in addition to some non-scheduled and scheduled languages, which are in use there. This work is an attempt to make a sociolinguistic investigation of the ‘minority languages’ in language contact situation in order to find out the actual position of their use preferences and attitudes along with other languages specially Hindi and English.

The present work is an attempt to investigate into the language use, language preferences and language attitudes of minority speakers of Jharkhand purely on the basis of the field survey conducted by the investigator herself. As Sociolinguistics
is the study of language with reference to society, its methodology of research or investigation is similar to that of the other social science subject. It approaches the problem from the societal angle. Unlike natural sciences, it observes the issue generally from inside and not from outside the society.

The entire study is based on the date collected through field survey covering 250 respondents belonging twenty-two districts, but most of them are from the east Singbhum district of Jharkhand state. All the 250 respondents were selected keeping in view a number of variables viz., Sex, Age, Occupation and Education. The main tool for the collection of date has been the questionnaire. In order to determine the actual position of three languages such as participant observation method was also used. The date was processed and main findings were presented in Chapters 3,4 and 5, whereas the Chapters 1 and 2 deal with introduction and methodology respectively. The summary and conclusions have been presented in Chapter 6.
Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter is purely introductory. It takes into account the sociolinguistic situation of the Minority languages in Jharkhand State. It deals with the sociolinguistic functions of minority languages in a close contact situation where numerically speaking no language is the majority language. This chapter also throws light on the origin of the state. It also gives information regarding the sociolinguistic perspectives of the state as well as its 22 districts. Functions of these languages have been shortly highlighted, but only the numerically important languages have been taking into consideration.

Chapter 2: Research Methodology

This chapter deals with the methods used in the work. It takes into account the main objectives of the study, the hypotheses formulated before conducting the survey, tools used for data collection, sample selected for the final investigation, analysis of data and finally the presentation of findings.
Chapter 3: Language Use by the Minority Speakers

This chapter deals with the use of the minority languages in various domains. This study covers nineteen different domains covering oral and written communication.

The percentage-wise distribution of responses under various domains has been presented through frequency tables in respect of four different social variables. The frequency distribution has also been shown through frequency figures for females and males in general.

The use of M.T. have been found very frequent in informal domains. For religious practices, M.Ts. are most frequently used. For written communication the Devanagri script enjoys the dominating position. Besides Devnagri, perso-Arabic, Roman, Gurumukhi, Oriya and Bengali script are also used minimally.

Chapter 4: Language Preference by Minority Speakers

In such a contact situation where the incidence of bilingualism or multilingualism is a common phenomenon, the
speakers prefer one language to the other to cope with a situation. In this chapter, therefore, we have discussed the preferences given to the languages like M.Ts of minority speakers such as, Hindi and English by their speakers in Jharkhand in respect of eighteen different situations.

It has been commonly found that there is the highest percentage of preference for English specially in education domain. On the other hand M.T. is preferred in informal domains mainly in religious practices. A substantial number of female and male respondents i.e. 52% and 68% respectively find their M.Ts easy to talk in and express themselves more clearly in it. For oral communication, as expected, M.Ts have always been preferred. The male respondents of occupation class 3 have showed the maximum preference for M.T. in oral communication. In other formal domains, Hindi becomes the most preferred language as far as the language preference is concerned, the minority speakers strongly favour their M.Ts. Mother tongues have been preferred by almost all the respondents of all four variables.
Chapter 5: Attitudes of the Minority Speakers

The analysis of attitudes of the minority speakers towards their M.Ts. Hindi and English have been presented in Chapter-5. It has been found that the minority speakers have positive attitudes towards their M.Ts. as well to other languages. Though the percentage differs according to situations and attributes, they hardly consider any language as harsh. The analysis shows that the respondents strongly favour English in respect of the domain of science and technology while for business purposes their choice fluctuates between their M.Ts and Hindi. English has also been favoured as a prestigious language by the minority speakers.

Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusions

This is the final chapter of the thesis and presents, in brief, the summary and conclusions drawn from this survey. This chapter presents the chapter-wise summary, besides giving the conclusions and finding of the summary. It may be pointed out that in the language contact situation of Jharkhand, minority
languages suffer the most because they are exclusively used in informal domains. Though in case of preference Hindi and English some formal domains are also touched. So far as attitudes are concerned, we find responses in favour of M.Ts. as well as other languages.