CHAPTER –I

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HINDI AND ASSAMESE LANGUAGE

INTRODUCTION

Different languages and dialects are spoken by the people in different parts of the world. According to a popular saying in Hindi - “चार कोस पर पानी बदले, आठ कोस पर बानी” i.e. taste of water changes in the radius of every four miles and dialects change in every eight miles. Language flows like a river in its natural course and tendency and so is mentioned in the History of evolution of each and every country of the world. India is an ancient country and in different ages and periods, people used to speak and write different languages. “Sanskrit” is the oldest Indian Language and was mainly used by ancient sages, seers, scholars and poets. It is about 3500 years old and also known as Aryabhasha or Devbhasha. Hindi is a successor of Aryabhasha, i.e. Sanskrit. History of Indian Aryabhasha is about 3500 years old. Its origin can be indicated as under into three importance period of phases.

1. Ancient Indian Aryabhasha period (1500 B.C. to 500 B.C.)
2. Middle era of Indian Aryabhasha period (500 B.C. to 1000 A.D.)
3. Modern Indian Aryabhasha period (1000A.D. to 20th Century)

The linguistic synopsis introductions of these three periods are as follows:
During the first and foremost period, four Vedas, Brahmans and Upanishads were composed in Vedic Sanskrit. The oldest form of language is found in Rigveda Sanhita. Vedic language developed gradually. It was not the language which was commonly spoken rather it was a language of literatures of scholars and of saints.

Gradually, Vedic Sanskrit and common form of Sanskrit came into existence. Along with philosophical and mythological books like Ramayana, Mahabharata, Plays, and Grammar etc were composed in common form of Sanskrit Language.

During 500 B.C to 1000 B.C the Indian Aryabhasha entered into a new era, as a result, a new language “Pali” came into existence. Since the beginning of 500 A.D. to the end of this period many innate languages developed. Among them (a) Shourseni (b) Paishachi (c) Maharastri (d) Ardha Magadhi and (e) Magadhi are remarkable. From 500 A.D. to 1000 A.D. Apabhransh (debased form of language) was evaluated.

In 1000 A.D., a new revolutionary change occurred in Indian Arya language. In the middle age, Indian Aryabhasha was in its developed form and was called Apabhransha. Hence, in the history of Indian languages, period from 500 A.D. to 1000 A.D. is called Apabhransha period. The modern Indian languages i.e. Hindi, Bengali, Gujrati, Marathi, Panjabi, Urdu, Oria etc. originated from Apabhransha language and was the link between the Prakrit and modern languages.

Both Hindi and Assamese languages had been originated because of closed conformity with Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhransha. The under mentioned table, clearly explains that all the North Indian modern languages have been originated from seven kinds of popular Apabhransha languages:
It is observed that both Hindi and Assamese languages originated from the same source, i.e. Magadhi. Source of Hindi language was Ardha Magadhi Apabhransha whereas Assamese language developed from Magadhi Apabhransha.

1.1 A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF HINDI LANGUAGE

Hindi is the prime language amongst all the fifteen Indian Languages mentioned in the Indian Constitution\(^3\). It is national as well as official language of the Indian Union. Hindi is the administrative official language of the states of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. But in these states also, Hindi is being used in three different levels\(^4\). Firstly, it is used by the Hindi speaking persons and is well understood by a large number of populations. Secondly, being a Hindi speaking belt, it is the medium of communication which is extended from Rajasthan to Bihar and Himachal Pradesh to Madhya Pradesh. And thirdly, Hindi exists in its standard form and is written in Devnagari script.
The present form is the medium of modern Hindi prose literature and is used by the educated persons to communicate their views. It is the language of administration, News Papers and as a public broadcaster, it has been accepted by All India Radio for promotion and popularizations of Hindi. This has also been accepted as a medium of instruction by the educational institutions. In this level, Hindi has been affiliated nationally as well as internationally. With the empowerment of central Government, Hindi achieves more prosperity and sanctity. It has been protected by the people of our country through politics and could never loss its identity.

1.2 A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF ASSAMESE LANGUAGE

Among all the Indian languages, as mentioned in the eighth schedule of Indian Constitution, Assamese is one of the languages. It is a regional language of Assam state which is mainly spoken in the districts of Goalpara, Kamrup, Darang, Nagaon, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. Assamese language has its own glorious history. In 13\textsuperscript{th} century it was adopted as Lingua Francs, now in the border areas of Bihar and Odissa\textsuperscript{5} and since 16\textsuperscript{th} century it became a media of Assamese prose literature.\textsuperscript{6}

Modern Assamese language is being used in four levels. In the first level, it is used by the Assamese speaking people to communicate with each other without any hurdle. In the second stage, one of its patterns is spoken by the tribes of Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. It is known as Nagamese in Nagaland and is popular as Bhanga Asamia in Arunachal Pradesh. In both these states, about 40 ethnic groups of tribal communities reside associated with Tibbatan- China families\textsuperscript{7}. Though each and every tribe has its own dialect but Assamese language plays a vital role to make contact with each other. In the third stage, Assamese is the medium of communication to exchange their views between
upper and lower divisions of Assam. In the context of pronunciation and use of words, it is observed that the Assamese language, as prevailed in upper division of Assam (Sibsagar etc.) is influenced by the Tibbetan-Barmese, Tai and Sanskrit (Tadbhav) and the language prevailed in lower division of Assam(Kamrup etc.), the influence of Kachari, Arabi, Pharasi, Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali languages has been observed. In the fourth stage, is its standard form, written in Assamese script. It is the medium of modern Assamese prose literature and used by educated persons as a means of communication. It has been accepted by News Papers, All India Radio, Schools, and Government offices.

Hence, Assamese is the common language of Assam and is a language of integrity & harmony, a language of saints and seers and central strength of the state. Its prosperity is the prosperity of the state.

1.3. CONCLUSION

India is a multilingual country with diverse castes and creeds. From the religious point of view, we don’t find much diversity but, it is a fact that different regions of India have peculiar traditions and customs. Since 1828, Though North Eastern Region was regarded as a remote area, still people from different parts of India used to come across this part with their diverse culture and traditions. Like other parts of India, it was neither invaded by the Kings nor did they establish their rule. Whatever may be the reason, in spite of its isolation and remoteness; this region cannot be diversified from rest of India in respect of culture and customs. Social reformers like Srimant Shankardev and Madhavdev, by their relentless these efforts, strengthened its culture and literature and brought this part closer to rest of India.
Before independence, Assamese was the common link language among Garo, Naga, Khasi, Jayantia, Mikir, North Eastern Frontier Region and hilly areas. During the British rule relation between the plains and the hills were totally disrupted for about 150 years with their divide and rule policies, seeds of discord were sowed in the hearts of the people. Provocating the malicious sentiments between plains and hills, they not only propagated Christianity but also affected a lot in respect of lifestyle for living in harmony, language, culture and tradition.

Since 1972, states of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh were tagged within single state boundary known as Assam. In view of the political perspective very often, India had been divided into many parts but from the cultural viewpoint, similarity appears throughout India. With our holy and mythological books like, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Epics etc. our saints, seers and scholars also played a pivot role to maintain Indian ideology and traditions.

For promotion of Hindi and Assamese languages, the names of Srimant Shakardev and Madhavdev may be taken as foremost pioneer and their followers. Srimant Shakardev travelled from Dwaraka to Badrinath on foot. During his visit, he came into contact with the literature, culture, tradition and the people of different regions. To strengthen the emotional solidarity, a new language had been formulated which may be called as the link language amongst the saints, scholars etc. of that period.

Assam is situated in the eastern border of India, surrounded by China, Myanmar, Bangladesh, etc. It is the region of harmony between tribal communities like Asur, Koch, Kachari, Chutia, Ahom, Soot, Naga, Khasia, Mizo, Garo, Lalung. The language of this
region ie. Assamese belongs to the Indo-Aryan family. Since the age of Mahabharata, India has been a land of unity in the midst of diversities.

Due to historical, political and religious reasons, Shourseni and Magadhi languages acclaimed importance. Shouseni assured maximum popularity and pervasiveness. During 12-14th century, leaving aside the Dravidian language, Shourseni was the only language which was prevailed for the composition of literature (and link language too) throughout India. It was mainly spoken vicinity of Kannauj. If fact, Assamese language was originated from Magadhi. It was originated from Magadh Videha and flowed across the North Bangle and transformed in its original form in Western Assam, as classified by the famous Chinese traveller Huwensang, who visited India in 7th century. He pointed out that Assamese language and its script is as similar as Magadhi language which was popular in middle parts of India. This language was familiar from 10th to 12th century. Hindi has been popularized and promoted as national language by the philosophers, scholars, leading personalities and forecasters, most of whom were from the non Hindi speaking belts. A language can achieve status of national language only when it is understood and spoken by a large number of population and found contributions from all the regional languages in the prosperity and development.

Among all the Indian languages, Hindi consist a specific position. At present, Hindi is not bounded within boundaries of certain geographical region or places but it is a powerful chain for national integration and unity. It was evaluated and developed at the time when people of India were in the process of awaking and it was the only language which was capable of protecting identity with moral values. In comparison to other
regional languages, Hindi is competent to represent the whole country, irrespective of class, creed or religion and has been accepted as a national language.

At present, it is not a language of any particular community rather it is the language of the whole nation and everyone has equal right on it. Composite culture of the country can be expressed in better way only in Hindi language than any other Indian languages. The constitution of India recommended it as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India.

Hence, in spite of differences, in respect of script and language, we find an eternal relation between Hindi and Assamese languages in the spheres of culture and literature.
References:

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6. Kakoty Banikanta - Assamese its formation and development, page-15
7. Janjatiya Bhashaein auie Hindi Shikshan- Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra, page-8
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