Abstract

Topic: Linguistic Heterogeneity and Multilinguality in India: A Linguistic Assessment of Indian Language Policies.

‘Multilingualism’ can be defined as an occurrence regarding an individual speaker who uses two or more languages, a community of speakers where two or more languages are used, or between speakers of two languages. Indian multilingualism can be understood better in terms of heterogeneity. Linguistic heterogeneity in India is marked by the presence of five language families in India. Indian multilingualism is multi layered and complex. Every single language has many variations, which are based on caste, region, gender, occupation, age etc. An individual may use particular language at home, another in the office, and still another in various formal and informal domains. It is omnipresent in the life of its citizen. The dynamics of the relationship of the languages present in India is so unique that it makes Indian multilingualism unique in itself.

The present work is an attempt to investigate into the nature of multilingualism in India. It also aims at evaluating the language policy of India, with a view to exploring the role of language policy in the maintenance and sustenance of multilingualism in India. The study will
look into the different aspects of Indian multilingualism arising due to high diversity of Indian societies. The purpose of this study is to provide a descriptive and analytical analysis of Indian multilingualism. The study also takes into account a pilot survey for finding out the statistical support for attitude towards linguistic heterogeneity and multilinguality. The survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was made seeking the knowledge of number of languages they know, about the medium of education and their views regarding the language policy of India. A total number of sixty students from the university campus were taken as respondents. The selection of the respondents was done on random basis. It does not make any explicit attempt for providing a critical account of power dynamics and politics behind language planning and policy. Nor it makes an attempt towards describing different language movements and language riots that happened in the Indian history. The thesis consists of six chapters excluding introduction.

**Chapter One: Social, Cultural and Linguistic Landscape of India**

This chapter gives an account of the social, cultural and linguistic landscape of India. It describes about the language families present in India which is an outcome of different races which came to India many years back. An individual’s language is groomed by many social variations. So the relationship of language with the diversities present in
Indian societies makes the linguistic scenario completely unique. It also talks about language variation on the basis of caste, tribe, races, region, script etc. So this diversity and heterogeneity makes the people of India multilingual.

**Chapter Two: Multilingualism in India**

This chapter talks about multilingualism in general and then Indian multilingualism in particular. It describes multilingualism, its advantages, various views regarding multilingualism, for instance the dominant monolingual countries consider two languages a nuisance, three languages as uneconomic and many languages as absurd, but for the supporters many languages is boon and a “resource” for linguistic, social and cognitive development. The chapter also discusses about the different types of multilingualism based on different criteria such as function, degree of acquisition, etc. The work also describes societal multilingualism, individual multilingualism and receptive multilingualism. Then coming on to Indian multilingualism, it has been divided into two phases: pre-independence and post-independence. In the ancient and medieval period it talks about the foreign invasions and how the inscriptions give proof of the presence of multilingualism since then. In the post-independence period the census records and different surveys
done on languages have been analyzed in order to testify the nature of multilingualism.

**Chapter Three: Language Policy of India**

This chapter gives a detailed account of the language policy of India like the language provisions provided in the Constitution, the status of Hindi in India, the Linguistic State Reorganization (LSR), the inclusion of languages in the Eighth Schedule, the Official Language Act and shows how they have affected the Indian multilingualism. This chapter also discusses different types of planning and policy and the setting up of language commission immediately after independence to consider to have a language policy for promoting effective administration and it also looks at how various deliberations finally agreed to converge at adopting ‘the Soviet Model’ of language policy. Hence, the chapter also discusses the soviet model and explores the reasons that allowed the model to lose its ground in the Indian situation.

**Chapter Four: Education Policy of India**

This chapter describes about the educational policy of India. Education is a good means of maintaining multilingualism and maintaining national integration. So in order to have a clear picture of the nature of multilingualism in India it is important to study the educational strategies and facilities that the government has adopted to maintain
multilingualism. Education in India can be traced back to 3rd century B.C. So it discusses Macaulay’s minute and appointment & setting up of various commissions, since 1882, to look into the development of education in India. It also discusses the role of the National Policy of Education in promoting the use of languages, the three language formula and the role of mother tongue in education and the emergence of mother tongue based multilingual education.

Chapter Five: Linguistic Heterogeneity and Multilinguality in India: A Statistical and Attitudinal Study

This chapter focuses on the statistical and attitudinal study regarding multilingualism and heterogeneity in India based on a pilot survey. The survey gives an approximation of the rate of multilingualism among university students and their views regarding the language policy of India. It also discusses in brief the problems regarding the implementation of language policies in India.

Chapter Six: Summary and Conclusion

This is the final chapter of the thesis and presents, in brief, the summary and conclusions drawn from the study. This chapter presents the chapter-wise summary, besides giving the conclusion. It also gives recommendations and suggestions.