CHAPTER – 6

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The findings of the present study reveal the fact that the Kashmiri language plays the significant role in the socio-cultural life of its speakers. It is also emerging as a functional language in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, besides Urdu and English that are already in use in various domains such as education, administration and mass media in this state.

The Kashmiri language does not enjoy the official status in the state. It is also not used as medium of instruction at the educational levels. Urdu on the other hand enjoys the status of the official language in the state. English is used for some special purposes such as medium of instruction. The present study provides data as to the speakers of this language use these three languages in different domains for specific purposes. This study also shows the attitudes of the Kashmiri speakers towards these three languages.

The study was subdivided into three main parts:
1) Language use 2) Language preferences and 3) Language attitudes. Besides, there is separate chapter on the sociolinguistic perspectives of the Kashmiri language.

Language Use

It was expected that all the respondents (males and females) would be using Kashmiri in all those domains and situations where the oral communication is involved. But it is found that only female respondents constituting 100% have been using only Kashmiri orally in the family domain. It is also revealed that this speech community uses other two languages, viz., Urdu and English along with Kashmiri in other than family domain. It has also been found that Urdu plays a pivotal role in written communication. Students and professionals have been
found making the maximum use of English for this purpose. Office-goers have reported equal use of both Urdu and English for writing purposes. Although Kashmiri is not taught formally in the state but still a considerable number (12.5%) of respondents use Kashmiri either writing letters or in their creative writings. A good number of respondents from each variable, selected for analysis, are using Kashmiri for printing invitations. Females on the other hand, do not listen to radio programmes in any considered language. Since the script for Kashmiri is very much similar to the Urdu script as both are based on Perso-Arabic script, the Kashmiri speakers who are well versed in Urdu have greater capability in reading Kashmiri (28%) than to writing it (12.5%).

Language Preferences

English was preferred most by an overwhelming majority of respondents as medium of instruction at all levels of curriculum, through it may be mentioned that a good number of respondents have also preferred Kashmiri as medium of instruction up to graduation. It is felt that due to the presence of Urdu and English in the state and their active roles indifferent domains, the responses were not fully in favour of Kashmiri. We found that half of the total respondents have preferred Kashmiri for administration and half of them have preferred Urdu and English. A decrease in responses in favour of Kashmiri was found when we move from educational class 1 to educational class 3 for written as well as spoken aspects, whereas, reverse results were experienced in case of Urdu and English, with Urdu playing a leading role. The results do not show any significant difference with respect to other variables.

Language Attitudes

The attitude results presented in chapter five shows that most of the respondents in general have favourable attitudes towards Kashmiri except for a few exceptions: a substantial number (42%) of respondents do not feel that
Kashmiri is adequate and useful for business. English has been favoured most for business purposes.

Other two languages, viz., Urdu and English also have got favourable responses, however, Urdu seems to be favoured most than English. English was found to have been responded less in general, by professional class 2, all the three age group and educational class 1 (illiterate) in particular. A noticeable difference was also found in the attitudes of males and females of educational class 2 (literate) towards Kashmiri, we have found that males were having totally negative attitudes towards Kashmiri, whereas, females were very positive in their attitudes towards Kashmiri. Urdu has found running parallel to Kashmiri in the positive attitudes by educational class 2 (literate).

The results obtained from different social groups give an insight that the people of the Kashmiri speech community are not conscious about their mother tongue. Especially the educated class has shown less interest towards the preservation of their mother tongue. This is indicated by the present situation that these people prefer to talk to their children in Urdu and feel prestigious and happy while doing so, even some of them are ready to give up their mother tongue.

The actual use of three languages that were under consideration and preferences given to them in a particular situation was also observed by investigator herself which she may call sociolinguistically as Participant Observation. We found that people whether they are highly educated, participating in official meetings and settings use Kashmiri frequently which indicates that not only common man even prestigious people do prefer using their mother tongue.