LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT: THE FATE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES (A THEORETICAL APPROACH)

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INTRODUCTION

Language loss has been a reality throughout the history. But the irony is, the loss of language is of no great moment either for science or for human intellectual life. It is very evident that these ideas are very wrong and that language loss is a serious matter or it is a socio-cultural shock. However, it is often heard that many of the native languages which are seriously imperilled across the world.

Language shift is defined as the process by which members of a community, in which more than one language is spoken, abandon their original language in favour of another (Tsunoda 2004). Here is an attempt to understand something about the death of indigenous languages and culture as a historical process and sociolinguistic perceptions of language endangerment in India. Language shift and death have long been a topic of discussion among sociolinguists, linguists, language planners, educators and others. The result has been an extensive literature on the causes, processes, symptoms and results of language loss and death (Denison 1977; Dorian 1977, 1980, 1981, 1987, 1989; Gal 1978; Skutnabb-Kangas 2000).

Primarily, language shift is defined as the switch of L_1 and L_2. After that primary language shift, a dominant second language is used in most domains of life, instead of the mother tongue. The switch from one's mother tongue to another language in most domains is, according to Sasse (1992:10-13), always triggered by some change in the external setting, in the environment of a linguistic community. Part of that change in the external setting is a new or changed contact between the linguistic community that shifts from its traditional mother tongue to the language of other linguistic and cultural community. As a result of new sociolinguistic

contact, there will be a change in the attitudes towards their mother tongue. Their mother tongues are restricted to very few domains i.e. home domain.

The dominant language is predominantly used in all the other functional domains in which the mother tongue was supposed to be used earlier. In this is a process, where languages are at extinction. It can be said that linguistic groups that have become minorities because of their politico-economic and cultural subordination. This condition is a final stage of language death. But it is very interesting, linguistic group that has sprung up in response to the challenges posed by the erosion of the world's linguistic diversity.

This paper goes on to analyze some of the issues and dilemmas confronted by minorities, the crisis in the context of the Indian situation, paying special attention to the challenges are confronting by indigenous languages. These challenges may lead more ethical and more relevant research. Each case raises a different question therefore, Indian case has to situate separately, that can't be generalized based on models that are available outside India. India is extraordinary for its linguistic and cultural diversity. According to official estimates, the country is home to at least 400 distinct tongues, but many experts believe the actual number is probably around 700. But, in a scenario replicated around the globe, many of India's languages are at risk of dying out. The effects could be culturally devastating. Each language is like a key that can unlock local knowledge about medicinal secrets, ecological wisdom, weather and climate patterns, spiritual attitudes, and artistic and mythological histories. Efforts to save minority languages from extinction and foster a deep sense of community may compel to develop a stringent language policy for minorities. It is felt that unless drastic measures are taken to preserve and promote them, all minority languages might be abandoned in favour of dominant languages in the next century. It is already discussed that throughout human history, the languages of powerful groups have spread while the languages of smaller cultures have become extinct. This occurs through official language policies or through the allure that the high prestige of speaking the dominant language can bring.

These trends explain, for instance, why more language diversity exists in India than in the entire world, which has a long history of large states and imperial powers. It is necessary to discuss the relevant theoretical issues regarding language death in terms of the following aspects:

1. What it means to be an endangered (or extinct) language, how

a language becomes endangered and how it can be saved. It is also addressed, what the loss of a language can mean, both for a culture and for the field of linguistics.

2. Can it be said that linguistic groups that have become minorities because of their politico- economic subordination lack a historical context?
3. Is language shifting a language loss?
4. Is language endangerment a politicized discourse?

LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT: HOW? WHERE? WHY?

"A language is endangered when its speakers are using it in fewer and fewer communicative domains and/or are ceasing to pass it on from one generation to the next. Language endangerment may be the result of external developments and policies (whether military, economic, religious, cultural, or educational), or it may be caused by internal factors, such as a community's negative attitude towards its own language" (UNESCO, 2000, p. 9). On the other hand, Michael Cahill has said, "A language is endangered when it is in fairly imminent danger of dying out". He gives two ways to quickly recognize when a language is on its way to death: when the children in the community are not speaking the language of their parents and when there are only a small number of people left in the ethno-linguistic community. David Crystal has written on language death and gives the following common reasons why we should care for language (ibid.: 27-66):

1. Linguicide – when a ruling group forbids the subjugated group to use their own language
2. Genocide – when a dominant ethnic group deliberately tries to annihilate another ethnic group
3. Natural disaster – tidal wave, severe earthquake, disastrous famine, or a measles epidemic could wipe out a group of people
4. Displacement – breaking up of the language community
5. Socioeconomic – simply being overwhelmed by the encroaching industrialized world. The main reasons for language death today seem to be as much economic as anything.
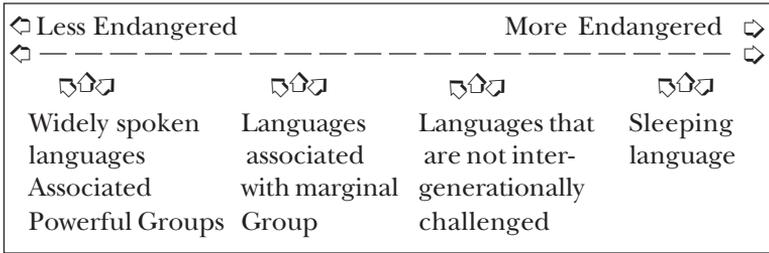
Language vitality has been evaluated from different angles. It could be defined as a measure of the lifespan of using a language or it

could also be defined as the ability a language to meet the societal needs of language users. When language vitality is less, it could lead to language shift or language death. Home and community domains are considered as the strongholds of the traditional language. Fasold (1984: 240) points out that one of the earliest signs of language shifts is the advance of one language into domains that used to be retained in the old. Language vitality refers to the overall strength of a language and the possibility of continuing it through the coming generations.

Why does a particular language pose a threat to the maintenance of another language? It is a very important question in order to evaluate the Indian linguistic situation. But the cases of language endangerment and loss are probably as old as the contact between human communities. This occurs because of unequal socioeconomic, political and technological status. However, the real issues are the confrontation between majority and minority languages. The role of language in education and other functional domains is decided by the privileged class/community. The dogmatic rigidity in claiming privileges and parity of their (different) language selection is also responsible factor in language shift/death (Khubchandani 1984a: 42-68). In fact, language shift among these societies occurs more often due to social and political compulsions (Burdhan 1973). It is often argued that language shift is a sociocultural integration/ diversity. On the other hand, Doshi (1972: 462-63) described it in a different way, "It rejects the claim that language shift indicates the process of integration; rather than it shows the process of assimilation of people into majority cultural group". Many linguists have developed the different hypothesis in order to understand the various levels of language endangerment process. For example, Krauss categorizes in the following ways:

1. Moribund – This refers to languages that are not being taught to children as their L_1. Unless something changes, moribund languages will cease to be spoken within a generation.
2. Endangered – languages are those that are currently still being learned by children, but that will no longer be taught to children within the century.
3. Safe – languages are those that are neither moribund nor endangered — they are currently being learned by children and are safe from extinction, for the time being at least.

Many a times, the term 'endangerment' is perceived in both terms of endangered and moribund. Contrary to Krauss, Leonard uses the concept "extinct", which is commonly referred to understand that language is no longer used by its speakers. His intention is to understand this linguistic situation in terms of organism, because an extinct species will never have a chance to resurrect themselves. Whereas, languages can be revitalized, if not all, few can be done. However, further, Leonard explains it schematically:

⟲ Less Endangered		More Endangered ⟳	
⟲ ————————————————————————— ⟳			
⇄⟳⟲	⇄⟳⟲	⇄⟳⟲	⇄⟳⟲
Widely spoken languages Associated Powerful Groups	Languages associated with marginal Group	Languages that are not inter-generationally challenged	Sleeping language

THE DEATH OF SANSKRIT: A CONTINUATION OF SOCIOLINGUISTIC HEGEMONY

From a global perspective, the trend is the same, many smaller languages are dying out due to the spread of a few world languages such as English, French, Chinese, etc. (Romaine 1989: 39) There are many pitfalls in trying to generalize on a global scale about what causes for language attrition. As it is discussed above, there are many reasons for language shift and language death. Most studies of language shift have looked at a community's transition to the new language. But, in the case of Indian context, dealing with language endangerment is a problematic one. It is very subtle and complex phenomenon. It can't be analyzed based on western modals alone. However, it can be argued differently. The language of Cosmopolis, i.e. Sanskrit (Sheldon Pollock), plays a very important role in India in the process of language shift/loss. We have always been aware of the ambience of many languages in our environment. Many languages are alive in our environment and we have always perhaps switched from one language into another unconsciously (Ananthamurthy 2009). The 'ecologist' perspective — is a useful focus for linguists who call for measures to reverse this trend of language shift. If we value biological diversity and strive to protect it, surely it is equally important to take moral responsibility for the conservation and development of linguistic diversity.

"The status of Sanskrit is an instance of this — for close to a

thousand years, this prestigious language was the chief vehicle of the (exclusionary and undemocratic) transmission of knowledge; however, today it is this language, rather than the less prestigious Prakrits, that is dead. As Sanskrit-speaking ruling classes could only capture the public domain, the centuries of its dominance had no permanently crippling effect on the less prestigious Indo-Aryan, Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian languages that flourished alongside it" (Ayesha Kidwai: 2008). This Sanskrit is still alive implicitly spreading across India into the languages and cultures. So Sanskrit did not die. It grew, it developed and it gradually split into Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, and the other Indo-Aryan languages, to some extent, Dravidian languages too, and it is still with us under those guises. There's something a bit odd about lamenting the death of Sanskrit language when it has in fact taken off like this. Given the existence of modern Indo-Aryan, why be upset that Indians don't speak Sanskrit? Speaking Indo-Aryan pays homage to their Hindu-Vedic heritage, without requiring them to have frozen their culture as it was in one place and time. Thus, language shift involves bilingualism (often with diglossia) as a stage on the way to monolingualism in a new language. For example, Hindi has got several dialects, Bhojpuri, Maithili, Awadhi so on and so forth. The fact is, these varieties of Hindi have never been used in the domains like education, administration, massmedia, literature (there may be some exceptions) and other public domains. The Sanskritized Hindi, i.e. Khariboli took over their place. This new avatar of Sanskrit is the revitalization of old Sanskrit. It also rejects the claim that Sanskrit is the dead language. Standardization is nothing but Sanskritization of the Indian languages, it is not a new practice, and it has been there throughout the history i.e. sanskritizing the nation. In my opinion, when Mahatma Gandhiji suggested, making Hindustani as an official link language, instead of Hindi, there was a lot of resistance to it. Hindustani is a combination of Hindi and Urdu, in which Sanskrit had no place. If Hindustani were in the place of Hindi in contemporary situation,it would have been a definite shift for dehegemonizing the hegemonic structures of Sanskrit.

Sanskrit established a clear-cut dichotomy among Indian languages like *marga* (the world of Sanskrit) and *deshi* (indigenous languages). This can be dealt with reference to Kannada. Unfortunately these dichotomies are used as the qualifying characteristics of a standardized variety of languages, which results in the creation of vernaculars (i.e. Native Languages) and Cosmopolis

(i.e. Sanskrit). U.R. Ananthamurthy (2009) describes it in an optimistic way, vernacular has always had its advantage and use despite the power of the language of Cosmopolis – Sanskrit in the past and English in our times. It is very evident that it is a kind of prevailing sociolinguistic hegemony on Kannada language and culture. It can't be considered as an advantage.

There has been a strong resistance throughout the history of Kannada language and culture in order to dehegemonize Sanskrit. As a result, the sociolinguistic hybridity has been developed by our various poets through their work. For example great Kannada poets like Pampa, Andayya, Nayashena, Kumaravyasa and Vachanakaras (mystic poets), by combining, *marga* and *deshi*, is also a kind of resistance to the Sanskritized Kannada. The concept of 'hybridity' is important in understanding the multiplicity of language practice. "This concept is inspired by the work of Bakhtin (1981) on the hybridity of the dialogue of languages, by Anzaldu'a (1987) on the hybridity of being the 'borderlands' and by Bhabha (1994) on the hybridity of the postcoloniality" (Ofelia Garcia 2009: 33). As in views of Mohanty, "it is precisely this hybridity of language practices that is responsible for the maintenance of the many languages of the Indian subcontinent" (2009: 34). This fluidity in multilingual interaction demonstrates that different cultures have different ideas about the integrity of their own group in relation to outsiders. If speakers of minority language manage to find an ecological niche in the majority community which is conducive to language maintenance, they may have a better chance of survival.

In many (minority) languages there are competing pressures towards (re)vernacularization and (re) standardization, which have their origin in the competition between the school and home varieties. There has always been tension between standard dialect and other regional/caste dialects. The standardization and modernization, these two tendencies which are greatly affected indigenous languages in terms of their structural and functional loss. Bernadett Biro and Katalin Sipocz, are identifying language shift in two types of linguistic processes such as; functional loss and structural loss. When a language shift takes place in any speech community in India that obviously affects the functional loss of a language and structural loss as well; the former means there is a decrease in functional use of a language in thevarious domains, whereas later one refers to the changes that are occurring in the structure of a given language in the process of a language shift. Due to the linguistic hegemony and cultural dominance of Sanskrit

on Indian languages, all our indigenous languages are suffering from both functional loss and structural loss. The attitudes of Sanskrit towards the other Indian majority/minority languages can also play a decisive role in a language shift. As far as functional aspect is concerned, a necessary condition for the survival of the indigenous languages, but language shift would bediminishing of its functions. As far as the structural side of language shift is concerned, we can only sketch tendencies based on data provided by some case studies (e.g. B.P. Pandit, Sourashtrasi in Tamil Nadu, D.N.S. Bhat's on Kannada).

As if the provincial languages are conspiring against the India unity (U.N. Singh: 1992), Suniti Kumar Chatterji (1943: 3) made a statement such as, "we feel that we ought to have a common language for the whole of India as symbol of common Indian Nationality". A similar opinion was held by the language planning commission in 1957, which is discussed by Sumathi Ramaswamy (2007: 344) in her paper: "It is clear, however, from the report submitted by the Commission a year later, in November 1957, that it saw its task as being more than just pedagogical, for at stake was the very survival of the emerging nation. The Commission was fiercely anxious about 'the growing fissiparous tendencies and linguistic parochialism which are jeopardizing the political unity of the country and are rocking the very foundations of our freedom'." A decade of linguistic jealousy and bitterness had marred the joys of independence; there had been much squabbling within the nation over state boundaries and territories; and Hindi, the proposed official language of India, had been found unacceptable by large numbers of its people. Everywhere, 'regionalism' and 'linguism' were on the rise. The Commission's solution to these problems was clear-cut: to put Indians on a good and steady diet of Sanskrit by making its study compulsory in schools, and by instituting it as the official language of the nation. Sanskrit was ideally suited for this role, for it was the "Supreme Unifier" (ibid.: 201) and the "Great Unifying Force" (ibid.: p. 81). "The Indian people and the Indian civilization were born ... in the lap of Sanskrit" (ibid.: 85). It is "in our blood" (ibid.: 81). It is "the breath of our nostrils and the light of our eyes" (ibid.: 87). Mixing its metaphors, the Commission also variously described Sanskrit as "the bedrock" of Indian existence, the "main thread which runs through the entire fabric of the cultural life of an Indian" (ibid.: 102), and the anchor that keeps the youth of India from losing their "cultural moorings" (ibid.: 51). "If the binding force of Sanskrit (is) taken away, the people of India would

cease to feel that they were part of a single culture and a single nation" (ibid.: 70). So, by restoring Sanskrit back to its citizens, the nation, too, would be restored, and its troubled waters calmed. In Sanskrit, it was declared, brings a "symphony to our life" (ibid.: 84). These views signify the linguistic chauvinism and fanatical attitudes towards Sanskrit and its religion. In my opinion, they are merely slogans and emotional bursts. It is quite true; they are also conspiring to establish the hegemony of Sanskrit with the sanction of India Constitution. Even otherwise, the continuity of Sanskrit is spread across the other Indian languages and cultures in terms linguistic structure, functional usages and imbibed in cultural practices. This is to be considered a greater damage to all the indigenous languages of the Indian subcontinent.

LANGUAGE POLICY: THE FATE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Language policy plays a very vital role in the building of a nation. A nation is not a single entity. Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism are the qualifying characters of a nation like India. Languages are equal, yet language hierarchies prevail. The fact is that not all languages have equal access of having their languages/varieties in education (Ofelia Garcia, 2009, Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009). However, it is often felt, managing multilingualism in India has become a big task. Though there are constitutional privileges are extended for sustaining linguistic multiplicities, many a timesthey are only in principle. But in reality, these safeguards are not implemented properly in order to achieve their goals. There is also accumulating evidence that language policy and language education can serve as vehicles for promoting the vitality, versatility, and stability of these languages (Phillipson, 1992). Thus, this paper considers the role of language policy and language rights in education and revitalization efforts, taking up cases of indigenous languages and their vitality into consideration. However, the Indian Constitution provides many guarantees and safeguards for linguistic and religious minorities, besides overall promoting a multilingual India:

I.   Article 29 enshrines a commitment to the maintenance of India's linguistic diversity: "Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same."

II. Article 30 guarantees minorities the right to develop and

propagate these languages (and their speakers) through education: "All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice."

III. Article 350A provides for instruction in their own mother tongues at the primary stage of education to children belonging to the linguistic minorities: "It shall be the endeavour of every State, and of every local authority within the State, to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups; and the President may issue such directions to any State as he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities."

IV. Articles 345 and 120 seek to promote governance that is multilingual. Article 345 leaves a State free, through its legislature,to adopt Hindi or any language used in its territory as its official language(s). Article 120 permits member(s) to use his/her mother tongue within the Indian Parliament.

These constitutional guarantees are relevant to foster India's linguistic diversity. At the same time, they also ensure that preserving sociolinguistic pluralities of heterogeneous speech communities of India is an assurance of the protection of human rights. These provisions also uphold the socio-cultural values and ethno-linguistic vitalities. Even though this has very serious consequences in education, "as the smaller a language, the more likely it is to be dismissed as 'primitive' and incapable of further development so that it may come to bear the weight of modern human knowledge and intellectual discourse. Responding to this implicit classification, speakers therefore 'choose' not to access education in their mother tongue(s), because that choice will disadvantage them in the not-so-long run" (Kidwai, 2008: 2). This argument proves that people who belong to tribal/minority communities will never have a chance to choose their choice. Language rights may be a necessary condition to spread primary education in India to improve quality of life, to build human capital and ensure rapid economic growth. While supporting the minority languages, it is necessary to consider the way in which and the purposes for which they are used that are crucial for maintenance of minority languages. The laws may ignore or subverted by the state on some administrative, financial or political reasoning, which is made possible by the way laws are formulated so

as to permit administrative laxity and contingencies (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1998). This can be made very clear by looking at three-language formula and its paradoxical stands also. As it is discussed, "Education holds the key to development and progress. Therefore, in multilingual India, language is the defining criterion for the evolution of societal growth. The three-language formula was a strategy to cover all linguistic groups in the country" (Bayer J.M., 2005: 21). The main problems in the implementation of three-language formula are found to be the following:

I. The formula does not provide a place for such mother tongues that are different from regional languages.

II. There is a dissonance between the Constitutional directive to use mother tongue in primary education (Article 350 A) and the languages prescribed in Three Language Formula (TLF) (National Policy on Education: 1968, 1986), particularly as the first language in schools.

III. It does not allow flexibility in the choice of language and gives primacy to the interests of the State ignoring the interests of individuals.

IV. It does not address to the problem of offering classical languages of choice.

V. The motivation assumed in TLF for learning Modern Indian Languages (MIL) by students in the Hindi States is inadequate (quoted from Jennifer Marie Bayer, 2005: 21).

IS MULTILINGUALISM STABLE IN INDIA?

How do we implement the Constitutional Provisions of protecting language rights of the minority and minority language speakers? In what way we match between home language and school language? The home languages are important, as primary education up to the age of 14 is free and compulsory. How the language planning and language policy are to be designed? What are the ways and means we have to find out in order to protect the sociolinguistic plurality of India? In multilingual India, language is the defining criteria for the evolution of societal growth.

In raising these questions, I have in my mind that multilingualism is a fundamental value in today's world. Preserving and maintaining the core values, cultural entities, ethnic identities and linguistic diversities of Indian multilingualism is a very big challenge. The

several reasons are responsible for this crisis. Due to the socio-political developments, Indian multilingualism has changed in its nature. The traditional Indian multilingualism was a combination of mother tongue, (i.e. tribal/ethnic language) regional language (i.e. Kannada in Karnataka, Tamil in Tamil Nadu, etc.) and link language or whatsoever. But what sort of multilingualism, we have in India today? Thus, is multilingualism stable in India? This question remains without an answer. Apart from constitutional provisions, language rights, education and economic benefits, we are still in a dilemma, what is a stable bi/multilingualism? Therefore, we have to give up the slogan that "bi/multilingualism is a norm but monolingualism is an exception in India". Of course, I do agree, almost every Indian is a bi/multilingual in India. My contention is bi/multilingualism is not stable India; it is constantly changing in its nature.

As in the table, it is shown, the 1991 Census concludes that the "Languages" spoken in India number 114, even though the raw data of language names collected by its enumerators totalled 10,400. The 2001 Census, on the other hand, from the much smaller set of 6,661 raw language names returned, arrives at a figure of 122.

As a consequence of the decision to include only those languages that have more than 10,000 claimants, many tribal languages simply vanish, given that *adivasi* and North-East tribal communities are small (together they constitute a mere 2.1% of India's population). Moreover, disparate languages end up as grouped under one Language. For example, more than 50 languages, including Chhattisgarhi, Bhojpuri and Garhwali, are grouped under the Language Hindi, even though 33,099,497 Bhojpuri speakers, 13,260,186 Chhattisgarhi speakers and 2,267,314 Garhwali speakers told the Census enumerators that they do *not* speak Hindi. Maithili speakers, however, strike it rich: the 2001 Census lists it as a Language for the first time in three decades – but this is only because their

Table: From Raw Language Returns to Languages

Census	Languages Returned	Languages after Rationalization	Mother tongues after classification	Languages
2001	6,661	1635	122	234
1991	10,400	1576	216	114

Sources: Ayesha Kidwai, 'Managing multilingual India', *The Marxist*, Volume XXIV, No. 2: April-June 2008

language was included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution in 2003 (Kidwai, 2008).

Standardization, Modernization and Diglossia: The status of linguistic diversity

Tribal languages and other minority languages do not institutionally support for their communicative functions. And also, they have no written literary tradition and no access to technology and science. In any of these domains, equal potential and access does not extend to them. Language revitalization and maintenance are and have always been politicallysanctioned. Because language policies are always discriminatory, favouring to some privileged class/ communities. It is quite true that constitutional support and rights are extended to them in order to maintain their languages. Practically, they are not in favour of minority languages. The possibility of recasting the communities' interests and perspectives is never taken into consideration in order to achieve their aspirations.

"The processes at work in standardization and hierarchies of styles and genres also give rise to what Bourdieu calls legitimization and authorization. Both these turn on how language is socially evaluated. Legitimacy is accorded to selected ways of speaking or writing in that they are recognized by other producers, by the dominant classes and by mass audiences" (Bourdieu 1991, p. 331; Garnham, 1993). Differences in social and economic position tend to be reproduced in unequal knowledge of legitimate language, which in turn reinforces constraints an access to power. However, censorship, authorization and the reinforcement of the dominant languages are all traceable to the pervasive effects of power (Gal & Irvine, 1997; Lind storm, 1992).

Standardization and modernizationis a politicized discourse. "Standardization of languages can be regarded as a legitimizing activity expanding its institutional order through a 'programmed course' in socialization" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, quoted by U.N. Singh 1992).

According to Fishman (1974), "the social context of language modernization is most commonly discussed in terms of (a) the growing identification with the standard version of the national language on the part of the general public, (b) the increased accessibility of all varieties within the speech community, (c) the more rapid diffusion of linguistic innovations and status markers, resulting in repertoire continuity rather than discontinuity across

classes" (p. 345-46). This linguistic inequality leads to the mismatch between home and school languages. This tendency reinforces to neglect the mother tongues of the tribe and minorities as well. As a consequence, linguistic assimilation takes place, in turn; this forces the tribal/ minority children into subtractive language learning in a form of submersion education in the dominant language. Institutions like education must promote mother tongue education in the multilingual situation.

Fishman (1971) divides all the multilingual developing nations into three clusters: nations with several Great Traditions, nations with one Great Tradition and nations with none (quoted by H.R. Dua: *Hegemony of English*). Sanskrit took over every tradition into its account, considering that there is only one great tradition in India. As a result, Sanskrit is considered the only language of knowledge, philosophy, literature, great tradition and resource of vocabulary. Due to its monistic attitude, it imposed its monistic realities on all other indigenous languages. As a consequence, linguistic homogeneity was developed instead of sociolinguistic heterogeneity. It is another way of levelling the diversities and nullifying them in the domains of socio-cultural milieus. The knowledge systems and intellectual diversity were also integrated into Sanskrit tradition.

Characterizing linguistic codes in terms of 'High' and 'Low' is another way of differentiating sociolinguistic and cultural hierarchy. This dichotomy is linguistically called as Diglossia. It is not only a linguistic reality, but also a sociolinguistic attitude. Primary speech varieties with localized or restricting domains as 'Low' (i.e. colloquial Kannada) and superposed varieties enjoying access wider or enlarging domains as 'High' (i.e. Standard Kannada) has led many investigators to attribute *ad hoc* values to diverse codes available in a community. Such studies focusing on language attitudes generally rate primary speech as conceptually 'deficient' and sociologically as 'deprived'. This raises certain issues of fundamental nature, such as how does language structure reality. How far do the differences in speech behaviour reflect differences in adequacy as opposed to acceptable variation! In what manner does the 'high brow' values of speech — uniformity, precision, elegance, purity of form, allegiance to literary tradition, elaboration of language through coining of new terms — actually meet with the demands of adequacy and effectiveness in everyday life communication in a society? (Khubchandani, 1981)

The relationship between Kannada-Sanskrit and Kannada-English is also a Diglossic situation. The former is dealing with

standardization whereas later one is dealing with modernization. The hegemony of both Sanskrit and English is imposed on Kannada. As a consequence, Kannada has to struggle with both Sanskrit and English in order to retain its structural and functional usages. In the formalized communication, and in the domains like literature, criticism and other discursive writings Standard Kannada (i.e. Sanskritized Kannada) is preferred. On the other hand, English is preferred in the domains like Science, Technology and Law. The similar situation can find in Hindi, which interface with Sanskrit alone, "those bilingual speakers belonging to the North-Central region (characterized as the Fluid Zone, cf. Khubchandani 1972a, 1978) who retain their regional or caste dialects either of Western Hindi or of altogether different languages of the region (such as Pahari, Lahnda, Panjabi, Rajasthani, Awadhi, Chhattisgarhi, Bihari) for informal communication within their speech group, but prefer to use Khariboli (standard Hindi) for formalized communication. In this diglossia situation, these speakers think of Khariboli as having a more prestigious role than their native speech, which has a casual use. They regard their native speech habits as mere substandard variations of the all-powerful standard Hindi (Khubchandani, 1981).

The distinctions between Standardized Kannada (i.e. pure, high, powerful, elegant and standard variety) and dialects (i.e. impure, low, powerless, non-standard, corrupted variety, substandard) is a big split. As a result, caste/regional dialects are at the tip of extinction. It leads to not merely ironing-out the dialects alone; it also leads to the cultural loss.

WHY LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE IS NEEDED?

It is always debated across the world: will languages survive in increasing globalization? Do dialects of those languages survive among native speakers? Are the indigenous speech communities of India still surviving today? In what capacities are they surviving? Do these tongues have a future? These are common apprehensions among the Indians.

Economic and social pressures are capital factors in the process that leads a language to fall into disuse. For the economic, political, social and educational benefits, speakers of minority languages assimilate to the local dominant language. However, a number of Indian communities are striving to revive their indigenous languages, or foster its widest possible use, and to preserve it against the perspective of extinction. For example, Kannada dialects have so

far resisted the pressure of Sanskritized Kannada, and succeeded in preserving a wide use. The future of these tongues depends on the will of their speakers to maintain their use. Judging by the strength of their identity feeling, which commands this will, it seems that some, at least, of the languages that coexist with widespread languages might survive for some time.

Languages and dialects spoken in Karnataka are not threatened by globalization. But they are threatened by standardized Kannada itself. Due to the Kannada hegemony, linguistic minorities and minor languages in Karnataka are also suffering and increasingly become disused. It is quite true that in an era of globalization and increasing cross-cultural contact, it is necessary to explore the existential and communicative status of minority and indigenous languages. The fact is, socio-cultural and politico-economic factors are also supporting for language shift.

On the other hand, it is realized that, as far as the Indian linguistic situation is concerned, it is not directly affected by globalization; increasing globalization concerns international commercial relationships rather than private communi-cation. Of course, language has a greater role in the process of globalization. It is unlikely that dialects, which are constantly used in oral exchange, will be ousted by literary languages (e.g. Standard Kannada, Khariboli-Hindi, this is the case with all the major Indian languages), which is not spoken as a common conversation language in any part of the given speech community.

Languages represent vast storehouses of human knowledge. Most languages are not written down, but live only in the memories and cultural practices of human communities/groups of people who over millennia have devised unique systems of survival in difficult circumstances. "Human languages are catalogs of plants, animals, insects, people's stories, weather patterns, diseases, social paradigms, songs, jokes, aphorisms, strategies for war and peace, practices of trade and negotiation" (Sargent, Benjamin B. 2008: 01). A small culture also carries within itself the potential of contributing to the larger ethos. Every culture, irrespective of being big or small, serves as a bridge between others and as an instrument of interaction which is humanly universal (Pogcnik, 1986 quoted by L.M. Khubchandani, 1997).

Thus, it is argued, India has several Great Traditions, but Sanskrit is only considered as the Great Tradition. Other indigenous languages and their socio-cultural values, beliefs, ethos and ideals constituting the world-view are not considered relevant to the

characterization of tradition. It is another way of devaluing the local and small traditions. Non-linearity formation of Indian history is a strong witness to the process of levelling of sociolinguistic diversities and differences of India. Though, it is often felt, India is a country of long survivals (Kosambi, 2008: 8). The importance of small languages/cultures is also being discussed by various linguists, fore.g. Fishman (1982) elaborates on treating ethno-linguistic diversity as a worldwide societal asset. Profiles of small cultures can provide a lot of insights into the probing of such questions as how to channel the concerns of ethnic identity in a positive and sublime manner to enrich the nation's heritage, instead of provoking linguistic and religious conflicts between majority and minority cultures and languages, or accepting the assimilation of small cultures into the dominant cultures (L.M. Khubchandani, 1997: 108).

The importance of language diversity can also be remarked from a historical point of view. Today's languages consist in huge parts of remnants of old, dead languages, such as Latin (Sanskrit in case of India). Those dead languages survive in modern languages in the form of borrowings, or leave us some structural or morphological features. This fact not only contributes to a lexical variety, but also allows us to investigate the exact processes of a language that is undergoing from its beginnings until today. The history of a language is closely linked to the history of its speakers. The knowledge of when a certain feature first appeared in a language and from which foreign language it was taken makes it possible to re-establish the genealogy of a nation (Horak, 2008). This is another reason why the maintenance of language diversity is important. When speaking of languages, we should not only focus on so-called official (standard) languages. Moreover, dialects can also have the function of identification and are, therefore, to be treated the same way as languages. "The boundary between dialect and language is arbitrary, dependent on sociopolitical considerations (...). Dialect death is language death (...)" (Crystal 2000: 38). Although the argument that language helps to keep one's identity is evident, the consequence of dialect death is remarkable and can be noticed in the fact that people have always tried to collect and compile old words and regional tales (often in dialect) containing rural expressions (Horak, 2008).

Varying between the boundaries of languages, dialects, cultures, or speech varieties in Indian subcontinent can only be explained in pluralistic point of view. The success of linguistic minorities in retaining their language, therefore, frequently depends on their

ability to mobilize super-national, or informal, sources of support (Thomas Hylland Eriksen, 1992: 1). Efforts to save minority Languages from extinction and foster a deep sense of community may compel to develop a stringent language policy for minorities. It is felt that unless drastic measures are taken to preserve and promote them, all minority languages might be abandoned in favour of dominant languages in the next century.

The reasons for language shift are complex, and Fishman (1964) has stated that "it is currently impossible to specify in advance an invariant list of psychological, social, and cultural processes or variables that might be of universal importance for an understanding of language maintenance or language shift" (p. 49). According to Crawford (1996), there seems to be no established and comprehensive theory of language shift, especially in terms of causes and varying conditions that might prevent them. As big languages spread, children whose parents speak a small language often grow up learning the dominant language. Depending on attitudes toward the ancestral language, those children or their children may never learn the smaller language, or they may forget it as it falls out of use. This has occurred throughout human history, but the rate of language disappearance has accelerated dramatically in recent years.

CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES

The kind of relationship is always found between the contexts of multilingualism and social justice depending upon the sustainability of linguistic ecology in India. It is not just about the needs of a particular speech community's benefit, but also the entire country is going to benefit from the multilingualism. Education is one of the vital factors for fostering and sustaining multilingualism. Simultaneously, education can be used as a weapon by dominant language speakers to eliminate the multilingualism. For example, the government of Karnataka dictates that Kannada is compulsory in all the functional domains. Consequently, the minor languages like Tulu, Kodava, Lambani, etc., are confronting the threat of endangerment. But the irony is 'Kannada is compulsory' in Karnataka never affects the domination of Sanskrit and English as well. Therefore, this paper strongly believes in multilingual education that sustains linguistic ecology and rights of all the Indian languages. The very concept of multilingual education itself justifies linguistic liberalism and social justice. This linguistic liberalism can contribute to greater social justice, by protecting and promoting

linguistic human rights, it is possible to accomplish the needs, aspirations of every speech communities of this country.

Maintaining languages in a few private domains will never accomplish the intended social justice which equips both to maintain and develop their languages and cultures in the wider society. The accessibility of social, political, economic rights and the democratic participation is directly connected to the language. This argument is not merely justifying how language can play a decisive role in socio-political and democratic contexts,it is also proving the significance and paramount of importance of a language.

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