



UNIT 2 INDIAN LANGUAGES

STRUCTURE

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

You must have heard this song:

agrezi mein kehte hein- I love you

gujrati mein bole- tane prem karu chhuun



bangali mein kehte he- amii tumaake bhaalo baastiu

aur punjabi me kehte he- tere bin mar jaavaan, me tenuu pyar karna, tere jaiyo naiyo labnaa

Songs of this kind is only one manifestation of the diversity and fluidity of languages in India. We are sure you can think of many more instances where you notice a multiplicity of languages being used at the same place at the same time. Imagine a wedding in Delhi in a Telugu family where Hindi, Urdu, Dakkhini, Telugu, English and Sanskrit may all be used in the same event.

How many languages, do you think are spoken in India? At least 15-20 names must have come to your mind. However, this is a very small number. The list is very long and also contains within it many smaller lists. In fact, it is believed that of about 5000 languages spoken in the world, about one-third are spoken in India. Thus, about 1600 languages are spoken in India. We will learn more about our multilingual heritage in this unit.

Till about the 20th century linguistic diversity was considered to be a problem and various efforts were made to deal with this problem. However, for the past few years this linguistic diversity is being considered a heritage and efforts are being made to use this heritage for the development of society and language itself. We will also discuss this issue in greater detail. Along with this we will also talk about the language education policy of India and about the various constitutional provisions about language.

India is a multilingual country. However, two languages - Hindi and English occupy a prominent position in this region. Thus, it is important to understand the position of these languages from a historical and current perspective.

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the linguistic diversity and richness in India.
- Be able to analyse India's linguistic diversity
- Look at India as a linguistic area.
- Familiarize with various categories of languages like - scheduled languages, mother tongues, classical languages, dialects etc.
- Understand the stands taken by various educational policies on language.
- Understand English and Hindi's historical and present status.



2.2 LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

2.2.1 A PICTURE OF INDIA'S LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

You must have heard the phrase 'unity in diversity' many a times. This sentiment is very true for India. We see various types of diversity in India, for example those in eating habits, dresses and costumes, religion, customs etc. Such types of diversity are also commonly seen in many parts of the world. However, the linguistic diversity as seen in India is not seen anywhere else in the world.

More than 1600 languages are spoken in India and these languages belong to four different language families. India is called a multilingual country because of this linguistic diversity. In fact, multilinguality is an integral part of the Indian temperament. We get a composite picture of India's multilinguality from the 1961 Language Census of India. 1652 mother tongues were identified during this census and they were in turn classified into 193 languages. Multilinguality in India also has many dimensions. One dimension of this multilinguality is that the 8th schedule of our constitution names 22 languages; these are indeed some of the major languages of India. At the time of our independence this schedule contained 14 languages only; going from 14 to 22 is an evidence of our multilinguality and of the importance people attach to their languages. Another evidence of our multilinguality is that our newspapers, movies, books, TV, radio, schools, offices, courts etc, function using various languages. Similarly, there are many other dimensions of Indian multilinguality.

Monolingualism is a kind of artifact some people believe in and regard multilingualism as a problem and a marker of being backward. However, multilinguality is not a problem in India, both at an individual and a societal level. In fact, it is a resource for us and an expression of our cultural richness. Multilinguality is also a resource because people who know more than one language are not just proficient users of the languages but their views on society are also more sensitive and tolerant. "Multilinguality has very close relationship with language proficiency, scholastic achievement, cognitive flexibility and social tolerance." (Agnihotri, 2007, p. 4)

Multilinguality is not a problem but a source of strength for India. "It is natural for the Indian person and community to accept many languages and also allow for a free give and take policy with various national and international languages. It would not be surprising if you find a boy speaking to his parents in Bhojpuri, his old friends in Bhojpuri or Hindi, his college friends in Hindi or English and doing all his office work in English. In fact, in many situations we also find two or more languages mixing with each other. Languages become richer due to such processes." (Agnihotri, 2000, p. 36)

On this issue Subbarao says, "Even though Indian languages seem to *prima face* differ from each other, they share various similarities. Western countries are predominantly monolingual. Various western linguists feel that when so many languages are spoken in



the same region, it leads to problems of intelligibility (i.e. people find it difficult to understand each other). However, in reality, no such problem arises. Every educated person in India knows at least one or two languages other than his/her mother tongue. He/she is able to easily carry on his/her day-to-day work using all these languages. You will not find such linguistic barriers even in cities like Mumbai, Delhi and Calcutta. Be it a labourer, businessman, clerk or an officer, nobody's work stops because of language." (Subbarao, 2000, p. 41)

It is clear from both these quotes that our linguistic diversity is not a problem for us; neither is it a marker of our backwardness; in fact it is evidence of our linguistic richness.

Culture and attitudes towards diversity in languages have an important role to play in any nation being multilingual or monolingual. America essentially came into being when people from various continents settled there, however it still considers itself a monolingual nation. The Constitution of America states that only a person who knows English is eligible to become an American citizen. There is also a lack of facilities for children who speak languages other than English in the country. It is because of such reasons that the third generation of American citizens does not know their mother tongues. However, the situation in India is very different from that in America. After the Indian partition, the Sindhi speaking population settled in India and as per the 2001 census there are 2,535,485 Sindhi speakers in India even today. Similarly, 77,305 Indian citizens speak the Tibetan language; 10504 Indians speak Farsi, 1106 speak Pashto and 51,728 speak Arabic. Two thousand five hundred and ninety three Indians living in Pondicherry speak French and there are also people who speak Burmese, Hebrew, Laotian etc. It is also important to note that most of these people speak at least 2 languages. (Sinha, 2000, p. 64)

At the same time, we should not forget that many languages in India are on the verge of becoming extinct and people speaking tribal languages are becoming fewer in number. For example, the number of people speaking a particular tribal language of Pondicherry is less than 100. Speakers of various languages have also gone down in number between the 2001 and 2010 census.

We have seen that our attitude towards diversity in languages influences the existence of linguistic diversity or multilingual quality. If we have a positive attitude to linguistic diversity, we help in the existence and growth of all the languages spoken in the environment. On the contrary, intolerance and narrow thinking towards languages other than one's own may result in discord and disagreement.

Examples of both positive and negative attitudes towards linguistic diversity can be found in India, from its different parts and from different points of time. For example, there are 21 sub-castes in the Naga community and about the same numbers of languages are spoken in the community. People of a particular sub-group speak to the other members of their sub-group in their mother tongue. When people of one sub-group need to talk to



people of the other sub-group they use Nagameez language and when they have to speak to people outside their community (i.e. people outside Nagaland and Manipur) they use Hindi and English. This is an example of the positive attitude that Naga people have towards linguistic diversity and this is what makes them multilingual. On the other hand, residents of Goa keep fighting over the existence of Marathi and Konkani. Similarly, residents of Belgaon in Karnataka are arguing over the existence of Kannada and Marathi (Sinha, 2000, p. 65-66).

To conclude, India is a country with much linguistic diversity and this diversity is not a problem but an important resource for us. An open attitude towards linguistic diversity helps us in maintaining this resource while narrow thinking causes damage. Thus, we must have a healthy and positive attitude towards all languages.

2.2.2 LANGUAGE FAMILIES OF INDIA AND INDIA AS A LINGUISTIC AREA

We have seen that there are a variety of languages in India. Some of these languages have common features and common identities while some do not. Generally, languages which share common features belong to a particular language family.

India is not only unique from the point of view of linguistic diversity but also because of the variety of language families that exist in India. There are four language families in India:

1. Indo Aryan.
2. Dravidian
3. Tibeto-Burman.
4. Austro-Asian/ Munda

Some prominent languages in each of these language families are given below:

Indo Aryan: Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Assamese, Sanskrit, Punjabi, Gujrati, Marathi, Konkani, Nepali, Oriya, Kashmiri etc.

Dravidian: Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Kurukh etc.

Tibeto-Burman: Manipuri, Angami, Bodo, Garo, Tripuri, Tangsa, Mizo

Munda: Munda, Mundari, Ho, Santhali, Savara etc.

It would be important to note that despite the linguistic diversity and variety of language families available in India, India is one linguistic area. For understanding this it is important to appreciate that people speaking languages of all four families have been living together here for thousands of years and thus languages have borrowed greatly



from each other. As a result, various types of structural similarities have developed in these languages over time. While talking about Indian languages K. V. Subbarao has said, “When speakers of different language families have been living together for thousands of years, they affect each others languages and languages borrow from each other. This exchange gives rise to new linguistic characteristics.” Some examples are given below:

1. Echo words: Such words can be found in all Indian languages. The second word is an ‘extra’ word and has no meaning if used on its own and sound similar to the first one. For example, the Hindi word *caay-vaay* (काय-वाय) The second word *vaay* (वाय) has no meaning on its own in Hindi but in this context refers to any other things like eatables that may accompany tea.

<i>Hindi</i>	<i>Oriya</i>	<i>Telugu</i>
khaanaa - vaanaa	baagho-faago	duulii - gilli
paanii-vaanii	cobulai-faabulai	baagh-vaagh
caay-vaay	caaval-vaaval	any - giny

2. Reduplicated words: Nouns, adjectives, adverbs etc. can be repeated to create new words in all Indian languages. When nouns are repeated then ‘every’ is added to the meaning of the word. For example, the word *ghar-ghar* in Hindi means ‘every house’.

Nouns

<i>Hindi</i>	<i>Telugu</i>	<i>Oriya</i>
ghar-ghar	dhaure-dhaure	ishTi-ishTi
pannaa-pannaa	prishThaa-prishThaa	peji-peji

Adjectives

dhiire -dhiire	dhiire-dhire	nemdi-nemdi ga
aahiste-aahiste	aaste-aaste	mella-mellaga

Pronouns

apnaa-apnaa	nijau-nijau	tanaa-tanaa
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3. All Indian languages have post positions i.e. the prepositional words are placed after the noun. Thus instead of saying ‘on the table’ where ‘on’ comes before the ‘table’, in Hindi one says ‘mez par’. More examples follow:

Hindi: raam kaa,

ghar meN

Tamil: raamod (raam kaa)

raamkku (raam ko)

Mundari: HoRaa re (ghar me)



Notes

4. At the level of sounds: Most Indian languages have retroflex sounds such as those of the T-varg i.e. T, Th, D, Dh etc. Again a word would never begin with a velar nasal like the one we notice at the end of ‘king’.

In the list of languages we gave above, although Hindi and Urdu are mentioned separately and are of course regarded as two separately languages. They are written in different scripts; Hindi in the Devanagari and Urdu in the Perso-Arabic script. However, they have the same structure and both were subsumed under the name of Hindustani before the partition of India.

Check Your Progress-1

1. How many language families are there in India?

(a) three	(b) four
(c) five	(d) six
2. Give examples of some linguistic characteristics that arose in Indian languages due to the exchange between languages of different language families.

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3. Some time back, the workers of a political party beat up non-Marathi speakers in Maharashtra. What kind of attitude towards linguistic diversity does this incident signify? Is such an attitude a threat to our linguistic wealth? Give your views.

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4. What are your views on Hindustani, Hindi and Urdu?

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2.3 WHAT DOES THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION SAY ABOUT LANGUAGES?

Considering, ‘language’ an important area of concern for the country, the constitution



makers of India laid down the following provisions for language in Part 17 of the constitution after due discussion and deliberation.

Keeping in mind the multilingual picture of India, the constitution makers did not give place to only one or two languages but many languages of India. According to Article 343 of the constitution, Hindi written in Devnagari script is the official language of India and English is the associate official language. Initially, English was given this status for 15 years but in 1963 it was permanently made the associate official language under the Official Language Act. Article 345 asked each state to legally adopt one or more languages spoken in their state along with Hindi as their official languages. Hindi was declared to be the official language of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi. Punjabi was declared the official language in Punjab, Marathi in Maharashtra and Gujarati and Hindi in Gujarat. Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Assamese and Bengali were declared official languages in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa, Assam and West Bengal respectively. Sikkim declared Nepali, Lepcha, and Bhutia as their official languages. Nagaland declared English as their official language. Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Meghalaya did not adopt any official language and for purposes of government work, English is used here. The official languages of the centre are used in the union territories - Chandigarh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Daman and Diu and in Pondicherry the official language is Tamil.

Another important issue is that of national language. Many of us think that Hindi is the national language of India. However, it is important to remember that the Constitution of India says nothing about the existence of a national language. At the same time, Article 351 does state that the union must promote the spread of Hindi and develop Hindi as the medium of expression.

Check Your Progress-2

1. Which Part of the constitution contains provisions related to language?

- (a) 17
- (b) 18
- (c) 19
- (d) 20

2. Under which act did English get the status of associate official language?

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2.4 CATEGORIES OF LANGUAGES IN INDIA.

2.4.1 SCHEDULED LANGUAGES

Languages mentioned in the 8th schedule of the Indian Constitution are called Scheduled Languages. 14 languages were named in this schedule in 1950. These languages were - Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. Sindhi was included in this list through the 21st amendment to the constitution (1967). Similarly, Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali were included through the 71st constitutional amendment (1992) and Boro, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri were included through the 92nd amendment (2003). Thus, at present a total of 22 languages are listed in the constitution as scheduled languages. Furthermore, many states are making an effort to get their languages listed in the schedule. “Once a language gets listed in the schedule, its name and status changes and it is identified as a modern Indian language or a scheduled language.” (Malikarjun, 2004)

2.4.2 REGIONAL LANGUAGES AND MOTHER TONGUES

Indian languages can also be categorized as regional languages and mother tongues. A total of 100 regional languages were listed by the 2001 Census and most of these languages contain within themselves many mother tongues and dialects. Thus, a regional language contains within itself many mother tongues. The 1961 Language Census identified 1652 mother tongues. The word ‘mother tongue’ commonly refers to the language spoken at home. The census department defined ‘mother tongue’ in the following manner for the 2001 Census-

“Mother tongue refers to the language in which a person’s mother speaks to him or her in their childhood. If the mother is not present then the language spoken at home will be the mother tongue. If there is still doubt then the language mostly spoken at home is the mother tongue.”(Malikarjun, p. 8)

Two people living in the same family can also have different mother tongues, for example when the husband and wife belong to different communities and regions. One more point of importance is that a child can have more than one mother tongue, if more than one language is spoken equally at home.

2.4.3 CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

Languages which have a long history, whose grammar has been the subject of much study and in which much literature has been written are referred to as classical languages.

The Indian government has laid down the following criteria for declaring a language to be a classical language:

1. The language has a history/ written literature which is 1500 to 2000 years old.



2. Some ancient literature/ epic has been written in the language and the speakers of the language consider this literature/ epic a valuable resource.
3. The language has an original literacy tradition and not one which is borrowed from other language communities.

Tamil was declared a classical language in June, 2004, Sanskrit in 2005 and Kannada and Telugu were given the status in 2008.

2.4.4 IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND DIALECT?

People generally consider ‘languages’ and ‘dialects’ to be different. They give various reasons for this- languages are spoken by more people, dialects are spoken by lesser numbers; languages have a literature, dialects do not; languages have a script, dialects do not etc.

However, in reality all these reasons are incorrect. From a linguistic point of view, there is no difference between a language and a dialect. Both languages and dialects have a grammar i.e. they are rule governed. Awadhi, Braj, Bhojpuri have their own grammar just like Hindi, English, Sanskrit and other language. Similar is the case of literature. Much literature has been written in so called languages like Hindi, English and Sanskrit and also in so called ‘dialects’ like Awadhi, Mathili and Braj. The matter of script’ is also not correct as any language of the world can be written in any script.

For example- याम खाता है। (Devnagari script)

Shyam khaataa hai (Roman script)

Thus, it is clear that we cannot make a distinction between language and dialect based on script, literature and grammar. What is called a language and what is called a dialect is a social and political question. As Rama Kant Agnihotri notes, “What is spoken by powerful and rich people often comes to be known as ‘language’. Grammars and dictionaries are written for this ‘language’. Literature also comes to be written in this language. The ‘language’ also becomes the medium in which school teaching takes place and thus gets identified as standard language. Languages which are similar to this standard language come to be known as its dialects. The status of a language also changes with change in the centre of power. When the political centre for power was Kanoj, then the language of literature was ‘Aparabramsh’; Khadi Boli, Braj and Awadhi became its dialects. Similarly, when the centre for political power was Braj, then, the language of literature was Braj and the Khadi Boli spoken in Delhi and Meerut become its dialects. And when the centre for power was Delhi and Meerut, Braj, Awadhi etc became dialects of Hindi.”

Thus, the main issue is that of understanding the relationship between language and power as that is what defines what will be called language and what will be called dialect.



Check Your Progress-3

- 1. How many languages are mentioned in 8th schedule of the constitution now?
 - (a) 14
 - (b) 18
 - (c) 20
 - (d) 22

2. What is the meaning of 'mother tongue'?

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3. What are the necessary conditions for categorizing a language as a classical language?

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4. Is there a difference between 'language' and 'dialect'?

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2.5 THE STATUS OF HINDI IN INDIA

Hindi is the language which is spoken in 'Hind' or India. Its ancient names 'hinduii' and 'hindvii' carry the same significance.

The Hindi: This form of Hindi is not influenced by other dialects of Hindi. It also does not contain any words of Sanskrit, Arabic and Farsi.

Khari Boli: This form of Hindi is considered to be standard Hindi, today. Different from Braj and Rekhta, this was the language of the common people, the language of day-to-day use and it was also possible to write literature in this language.

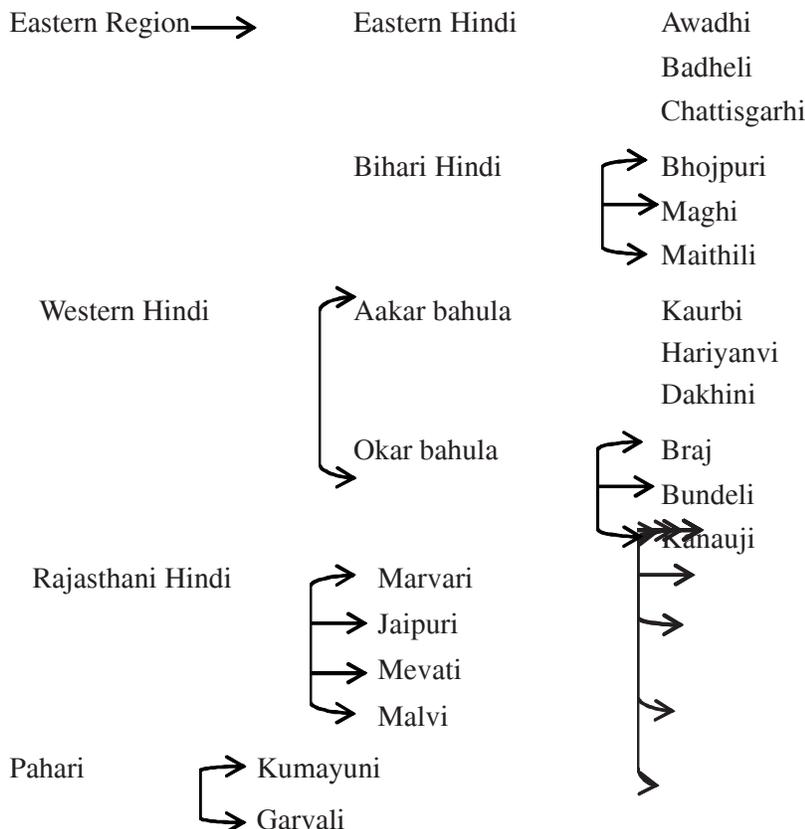
Nagri Hindi: The form of Hindi which was used to write literature.

Hindustani : Both, Hindi and Urdu are a part of this form of Hindi. It uses both Hindi and Urdu words and is a mixture of these two 'languages'.



Standard language: When, out of the many spoken dialects, one comes to be spoken by the educated and elite sections of society, it acquires the status of a standard language. “The standard language is not purer than the other languages. At the level of language, all languages are equally organized. But yes, they are not equal at a societal level.” (Agnihotri, 2007, p. 3). The Standard form of Hindi is based on the varieties of three main centres - Meerut, Delhi and Agra.

A categorization of Hindi dialects



Along with the afforesaid Pahari, Nimari, Haroti, Dhudhari, Ahirati are also dialects of Hindi. Here we seem to be talking about the Hindi language and its dialects: Awadhii, Braj, Maithili, Raajasthani, Bhojpuri etc. But it needs to be remembered that these ‘dialects’ are languages and at one time enjoyed the status of a language.

When Khadi Boli acquired prominence, due to political and economic reasons, then these languages lost their independent identities and were forced to become dialects of Hindi. Dr. Ravindranath Srivastav writes, “During processes of social re-organisation a particular dialect gets more importance than other dialects due to economic, political or cultural reasons. As a result, this ‘dialect’ starts being used as the medium of communication between speakers of the other dialects, also. In time the speakers of these other dialects attach their social identity to this dialect which has become the standard medium of communication. In present times, Khadi Boli is a synonym for



standard Hindi and enjoys the status of a language while Braj, Awadhi, Bhojpuri etc. are mere dialects.” From now on whenever we talk about Hindi, Braj, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Rajasthani etc. will be depicted as dialects, however it is important to keep in mind the language-dialect distinction that we have talked about above.

Hindi as the language of literature

Braj, Maithili and Awadhi are the prominent languages that have very rich literature and it is in many ways considered a part of the Hindi heritage. A lot of literature was written in Braj till the beginning of the 20th century and it is the language spoken in quite a big geographical area, even today. Poets like Soordas, Mirabai, Keshavda, Rahim, Raskhan, Bihari, Dev, Dhanand, Senapati, Bhushan, Padmakar, Ratnakar among others have enriched the literature in the language in the medieval period.

Jaysi and Tulsidas are the prolific poets of Awadhi. Jayasi’s ‘Padmawat’ is a literary epic in Awadhi. Tulsidas has written a total of 12 prominent pieces - Ramcharitramanas, Kavitali, Gitawali, Vinaypatrika etc. Gitawali, Vinaypatrika and Kavitali are in Braj. Tulsidas wrote with equal control in both Braj and Awadhi.

Various sufi poets like Kabir, Dadu, Redas and Guru Nanak enriched Sufi literature.

In modern times, Bharatendu, Mahaveer Prasad Dwivedi, Bal Krishna Bhatt, Prasad, Pant, Nirala, Mahadevi, Agyay, Raghuvveer Sahay and many other writers have given new shape to Hindi literature, have provided it with energy. Poems, stories, plays, historical accounts, critiques, biographies, travelogues, essays, diary accounts, reports written by these authors have contributed significantly to the growth of Hindi.

The publication of newspapers and magazines in Hindi has also contributed to giving Hindi stability. It is relevant to mention over here the contribution of the first Hindi newspaper ‘Udant Maatrand’ released from Calcutta in 1826 as well as that of the second newspaper ‘Bangdoot’. Calcutta and non-hindi speaking Bengali’s have had a significant role in the growth of Hindi newspapers and magazines.

The growth of Hindi as the language of administration

The Constituent Assembly adopted Hindi as the official language of the Indian union on 14 September 1949. This does not mean that Hindi did not have an identity in the form of a regional language before this development. The administrative work in various princely states (riyasat) like Gwalior, Jaipur etc was carried out completely in Hindi. Furthermore, even though English was the official language of the Indian government, it was necessary for the British to learn Hindi and this had started as early as the 1800s with the establishment of Fort William College. In 1878-79 it was necessary for every official coming from England to India to know Hindi and Hindustani. In 1925 the Congress decided that it would carry on its day-to-day work in Hindustani, due to Gandhi’s efforts.



Present status: Hindi is not only the official language of the central government but also the official language of various state governments. It is common knowledge today that in states where the official language is Hindi, most of the administrative work is done in Hindi. The High courts of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan give their decision in Hindi and documents can also be submitted in the language. In many states, Hindi is the alternate medium of education for graduate courses in Science, Humanities, Law etc. Various centers have also been established to teach computer sciences in Hindi. In fact, in government offices a variety of work on the computer is being done in Hindi.

Hindi is also being used as the alternate medium in recruitment examinations of various important offices, institutions and banks of the central government, even through these examinations have a necessary paper for English language. Lastly, Hindi continues to be the medium of communication among common people, to a large extent.

Check Your Progress-4

1. *In which language Jaysi's Padmawat is written?*

- (a) Braj
- (b) Awadhi
- (c) Maithili
- (d) Hindi

2. *The name 'Hindustani' was used to denote which two languages?*

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3. *Hindi is not only the official language of the central government but also the official language of various state governments. Name these states.*

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4. *Describe briefly, the development of Hindi as a language of literature.*

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2.6 STATUS OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

Christian missionaries from Britain came to India in 1813 and established various primary schools which used the local language as the medium of education. Later on, they established various English medium high schools. British administrators established their universities after 1857 and English became the first language for Indian education. Indians who were proficient in English became the new class of elites. Many English medium schools were opened. English became the medium of education at the university level also and aspiring Indians were partial to schools which emphasized English. English continued to be a language of prominence even after independence. At a government level it got the status of an associate official language. Even today, schools which emphasize English are considered to be better schools. The situation is not different at the university level as well.

One-third of the Indian schools were English medium between 1970 and 1980. English continues to play an important role in India, even today. The reasons for this are as follows:

Important books and most of resource material is written in English.

English is the language for commerce.

Proficiency in English is the marker of a dignified and distinct personality.

English is used as a medium of education.

World-over development in science, technology agriculture and business use English as the medium of communication.

At an international level, English has an important status. It is also spoken and understood in most countries of the world.

English occupies an important position at a governmental level. States use their regional languages for purposes of official work, but English aids them in communicating with each other.

The place of English in the school curriculum

The Secondary Education commission (1952-53) emphasized the importance of English. The Education commission (1964-66) also agreed to it. It proposed the Three-language Formula till class 10. The Three-language Formula states that the first, second and third languages in school will be:

First language

The first language which should be taught in school should be the mother tongue or regional language.



2.7 THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY IN INDIA

Since independence, the Central and State Governments in India have continued to give careful consideration to education, as a matter of national development and security. It is important to understand the recommendations made by various commissions and committees for education, for understanding the Language Education Policy of India.

The National Policy of Education 1968 accepted that the development of Indian languages and literature is a necessary condition for educational and cultural progress and until this is done, people's creative energies will not be utilized, there will be no improvement in the status of education and the gap between the academic and common people will not be bridged.

The use of regional languages as the medium of education in primary and secondary classes has been encouraged for many years now. It has also been said that State Governments should enforce the three-language formula for the secondary classes. Thus, children should learn three languages at the secondary level.

While talking about the development of languages, the National Policy of Education, 1986 has accepted that the National Policy of Education, 1968 should be implemented meaningfully and with speed. In this context, the Ramamurthy committee, 1990 reviewed the National Policy of Education 1986 and significantly commented that an important reason for why rural children are not able to access higher education is the continued dominance of the English language. Thus, it is the need of the times that regional languages may be encouraged as the medium of education at all levels.

According to NCF-2005 children have an innate (by birth) potential to acquire language. Most children have internalized various complexities and rules of language even before they enter school and when they start school can understand and speak two or three languages.

This curricular framework has asked for the effective implementation of the three language formula. There is also an emphasis on gaining acceptability for using children's mother tongues including tribal languages as the medium of education. The multilingual character of Indian society should be looked upon as a resource for developing multilingual proficiency in each child and proficiency in English is a part of this package. This is only possible if the pedagogy of language teaching is based on the use of the mother tongue.

Bilingualism or multilingualism definitely has cognitive benefits. The three-language formula is an attempt to deal with our linguistic challenges and opportunities. It is a strategy which lays down the path for learning various languages.



Check Your Progress-6

1. *In which years were the National Policies of Education released?*

- (a) 1968
- (b) 1986
- (c) 1990
- (d) 1992

2. *What does the Three-language Formula state?*

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3. *What advantages did the National Policy of Education, 1968 think would come out from the development of Indian languages and literature?*

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2.8 LET US SUM UP

Multilinguality is an integral part of the Indian linguistic heritage.

Being multilingual is not a problem for India, both at an individual and societal level. It is in fact a resource and an expression of our cultural richness.

Multilinguality is a resource because people who know more than one language are not just proficient users of languages but their views on society are also sensitive.

The culture and attitude towards language has a prominent role to play in a country being monolingual or multilingual.

If, we have an open attitude to diversity in languages than we help in the existence and growth of all languages spoken in the environment. On the contrary intolerance and narrow thinking about languages other than our own become reasons for discord and disagreement.

Languages belonging to four different language families are spoken in India, but we are still one linguistic area.

From the point of view of the science of language there is no difference between ‘language’ and ‘dialect’.

Stories, poems, plays, historical accounts, critiques, biographies, travelogues, essays, diary accounts, reports etc. have all contributed to the growth of Hindi.



Hindi was declared to be the official language of the Indian union and English was declared the associate official language in the Constituent Assembly on 14th September, 1949.

English in India is a global language in a multilingual country.

The Three-language Formula is the strategy which lays down the path for learning many languages.

2.9 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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2.10 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Describe the linguistic diversity of India in your own words.
2. Multilinguality is not a problem but a resource for India. Explain.
3. Which language families are found in India?
4. India is one linguistic area. Explain how?
5. What are the parameters for declaring a language to be a classical language?
6. Braj, Maithili and Awadhi have contributed immensely to the development of Hindi literature. Give arguments in favour of and against the aforesaid statement.
7. Critiques, biographies, autobiographies, character sketches, reports, diary accounts, travelogues, plays, essays, have all contributed to the development of Hindi literature.



Express your views on the aforesaid statement.

8. What does NCF-2005 say about multilinguality? What is your opinion on its stand?
9. How many languages are there in the 8th schedule of the Indian constitution, at present? Name them.
10. The positive attitude that the Naga community has towards diversity in languages makes them multilingual. What is it that the Naga community does, that provides evidence of their positive attitude towards variety in languages?

ACTIVITY

1. Do a survey of one or two villages around you and find out if the people in the village are multilingual? Also name the languages they know?
2. Which activities will you organize on Hindi Day in school in order to generate interest among children for Hindi?
3. Find out which languages are taught under the Three-language Formula in schools around you.