

An insight into the debate : Analysis of the National Language Enigma

Paradox Behind Language Imposition vs Promotion

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Abstract—Analysis of the debate regarding ‘Hindi is/is not the National Language of India’ on social media platform like Twitter using NodeXL. This paper tries to evaluate and resolve the debate by citing “Indian Constitution” along with “President’s Orders on the recommendations of the Committee of Parliament on Official Language”. Through the analysis we try to demonstrate that no language is being imposed in India instead progression is warranted by being multilingual. Hindi is not the national language of India but it is the official language.

Keywords—*National Language, Linguistic Diversity, Survey, NodeXL, Indian Constitution, Social Media Debate, Imposition, Official Language, Census, Hindi, Regional Language, Unity, Multilingual, Article, Courts, Law Governing Bodies.*

I. INTRODUCTION

History confirms that since time immemorial India had a very rich heritage in terms of language. The expression National Language was coined during India’s struggle for freedom as it was observed as the uniting force and nation’s pride. Post-independence, Hindi was seen as the language against English elitism but this was given the color of Hindi language imposition especially against local regional languages. Suggestion of Hindi being named as the nation’s Official Language because it was the mother tongue of approximately 40% of Indians and was understood by a bigger chunk of non-Hindi dialect population. This pitched debates / demonstrations / discussions amongst non-Hindi regions. Quickly, tensions and anguishes spread across India. Many people even questioned on Hindi being chosen as the Official Language rather than Bengali, Marathi, Telugu, etc. that too had a large following. [1]

Hence to resolve the debate following are the questions which would be analyzed: (1) Does the Indian Constitution define any guidelines aimed at declaring any language as National Language of India? (2) Where are the debates / discussions / demonstrations happening? (3) How many Indian’s speak Hindi? (4) What do the linguistic survey reveal? and (5) Is Hindi being imposed?

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

(1) Does the Indian Constitution define any guidelines aimed at declaring any language as National Language of India ?

India is bestowed with numerous languages henceforward; the founding creators of Indian Constitution caressed the

requirement to stipulate the languages to be cast off in many regions. Consequently, Part XVII of the Indian Constitution “offers the Official Language to be used in the Union (Article 343-344) also Official Languages to be used by the different States (Article 345) in addition to the language to be used for interstate link activities (Article 346-347) besides the language for the courts and to be used by the legislature (Article 348). To one side from these requirements, some special directives were also stated (Article 350-351)”.

The well-known “Munshi-Ayyangar formula” coined language policy as: (A) Language to be used by Nation, (B) Provincial languages, (C) Languages to be used by Courts and (D) Foremost Ideologies. [2]

A. Language to be used by Nation :

“Hindi inscribed in Devanagari script to be India’s Official Language. Indian Constitution creators ever since desired to substitute English through Hindi once Hindi had gained sufficient traction to swap English in all planes where its usage existed historically. Nonetheless 15 years temporary passé was established ever since Constitution’s inception for the practice of English as one of the Official Languages following which Hindi would be the India’s sole official language” as mentioned in Article 343.

Nevertheless, as 15-years elapsed, Parliament determined that the timing was not yet right to make Hindi the sole Official Language. There was also the possibility of ferocity in Dravidian states as masses resisted the adoption of Hindi to be an Official Language.

Subsequently, the Official Languages Act 1963, passed by Parliament, under Article 343(3) and 120(2), provides for the continuation of English for official usage and Hindi intended for all administrative and legislature activities. [3] Nevertheless, this Act has little bearing on Hindi’s increasing use and advancement as an Official Language rather than a National Language.

Meanwhile Hindi was insufficient in replacing English, Article 344 proposed the composition of “a Committee for Official Language which comprised of 30 members (20 members from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha) elected by the respective houses for examining the recommendations of the Commission and to report their opinion to the President of India concerning the language’s progressiveness”.

Article 344(3) exhibits mis-communication was easily feasible throughout the shift from English towards Hindi, which demonstrates the difficulties involved. Even when the Indian Constitution was framed it was not possible to interpret it in Hindi. [4]

B. Provincial Languages:

Articles 345-347 stipulates that states must identify provincial languages in official duties. These Articles were important for reconstructing India on the basis of language, hence they are protuberant in those regions. Article 345 empowers the state to select and approve any region-based language as its Official Language. The 8th Schedule does not always have a provision to include such a region-based language. Also, until a legislation is framed and approved, English will be the Official Language of that region-based state.

C. Languages to be used by Courts:

The Indian Constitution's Chapter III articulates the language to be used by the Supreme Court and High Courts and for all legal documents. According to Article 348, Official Language of law governing bodies should be English. However, Head of each state can sanction the usage of any Official Language for the State and aforementioned law governing bodies. Nonetheless legal communication by the law governing bodies ought to be English. "Authoritative text of all orders, rules, regulations and bye-laws issued under Constitution or laws and all the Acts, bills, ordinances promulgated by the President or Governor shall be in English for the purpose of proceedings before the Supreme Court and High Court according to Article 348(1)(b). However, Article 394A does not place Hindi version on a par with the English text for the application in law governing bodies". [5]

English was to be used by law governing bodies. Mr. Ayyangar stated the rationale as, "Our courts are accustomed to English; they have been accustomed to laws drafted in English; they have been accustomed to interpret in English. It is not always possible to find proper equivalent to an English word in the Hindi Language and then proceed to interpret it with all the precedents and rulings which refer only to the English words and not the Hindi words." [6] 15 years deadline to substitute English through Hindi did not apply to lawful testaments of law governing bodies.

Article 349 states that "enactment of certain laws concerning to language whereby the President of India should not give permission to the introduction of a bill relating to language except after considering commission and committee formed under Article 344". [7]

Indian Constitution's Article 120 and 210 mentions the language for legislature and Part XVII mentions language for law governing and administrative bodies. [8]

D. Foremost Ideologies:

Foremost Ideologies envisioned to guard minorities language welfare are articulated in Chapter IV of Indian Constitution. "A person can submit a representation for the redressal of his grievance in any language no matter to which officer is addressed" as stated in Article 350. Moving further, Constitution forefathers articulated in Article 350A "State and the local authorities within its limits, can make an endeavour to deliver adequate facilities for instructions in the mother-tongue

at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups". [9]

"The appointment of a Special Officer by the President for linguistic minorities to investigate matters concerning to safeguard to which the linguistic minorities are entitled" has been clearly mentioned in Article 350B.

It has been specified in Article 351 "the development and promotion of Hindi language as a medium of expression for the composite cultures of India and to draw vocabulary from Sanskrit and other languages". Thus, there were two aspects: a) efforts for the promotion and spread of Hindi b) it should be comprehensive to include linguistic elements from other regional languages to symbolize the 'composite culture of India'. [10].

III. ANALYSIS

2) WHERE ARE THE DEBATES / DISCUSSIONS / DEMONSTRATIONS HAPPENING ?

Social Media users are expressing their opinion and creating a debate on Twitter regarding the National language of India.

This debate surfaces periodically. Some popular users recently got into a war of words on Twitter using some hashtags like #NationalLanguage, #HindiIsNotNationalLanguage, #HindiImposition. The NodeXL analysis of the #HindiIsNotNationalLanguage was conducted and the total number of tweets observed for the analysis was 500.

The following observations were drawn:

Vertices	538
Unique Edges	684
Total Edges	723
Self-Loops	72
Average Geodesic Distance	4.819
Graph Density	0.00219

Table 1. Metrics Analysis of #HindiIsNotNationalLanguage Source: Twitter
– A social media platform.



Fig 1. The network graph of #HindiIsNotNationalLanguage

The analysis of the hashtag uncovered the findings about our audience as to how much awareness they had regarding the National Language of India as well as the usage of Hindi language. Observing the metrics and the values just for a few tweets, so many actors were involved forming the vertices in the graph. Not only individual users but also groups, some famous news channels, newspapers were also a part of this network.

The geodesic distance defined as “distance between two vertices is the number of edges of the shortest path between the vertices”. The value 4.819 of the geodesic distance reveals that network is mostly connected, but the average distance is short, and the longest path is not that longer. This means that information can spread quickly to greater majority of the people through this network.

The analysis also revealed that the information that is passing through this network is that Hindi is not the National Language of India and due to the well interconnection of all the vertices within just a few seconds the tweets spread and thereafter took the turn of a debate as all the nodes started expressing their opinions and views.

3) HOW MANY INDIAN'S SPEAK HINDI ?

According to the last census (2011), 43.634% of total Indian population of 1,21,08,34,977 people speak Hindi that is 52,83,47,193 Indians speak Hindi and this includes a considerable amount of other mother tongue like Bhojpuri, Rajasthani, Chhattisgarhi, Magadhi and other dialects of Hindi spoken in the Central and Northern part of India. [14]

S. No	Language	Total	% of Total Speakers
1	Assamese	1,53,11,351	1.26
2	Bengali	9,72,37,669	8.03
3	Bodo	14,82,929	0.12
4	Dogri	25,96,767	0.21
5	Gujarati	5,54,92,554	4.58
6	Hindi	52,83,47,193	43.63
7	Kannada	4,37,06,512	3.61
8	Kashmiri	67,97,587	0.56
9	Konkani	22,56,502	0.19
10	Maithili	1,35,83,464	1.12
11	Malayalam	3,48,38,819	2.88
12	Manipuri	17,61,079	0.15
13	Marathi	8,30,26,680	6.86
14	Nepali	29,26,168	0.24
15	Odia	3,75,21,324	3.10
16	Punjabi	3,31,24,726	2.74
17	Sanskrit	4,821	0.00
18	Santali	73,68,192	0.61
19	Sindhi	27,72,264	0.23
20	Tamil	6,90,26,881	5.70
21	Telugu	8,11,27,740	6.70
22	Urdu	5,07,72,631	4.19
23	Non-scheduled	3,97,51,124	3.28
		Total	1,21,08,34,977

Table 2. Total number of Scheduled and Non-Scheduled languages speakers in India as per census,2011.

Source: Language Atlas of India 2011. [14]

Comparing and analyzing the above table it is clearly evident that next to Hindi language Bengali, Marathi, Telugu

and Tamil language are prominent. The Dravidian states forms 18.89% of the local regional language.

The number of people speaking Hindi increased by 100 million which is 25% growth between the year 2001-2011. [11] Although Hindi has seen a considerable rise in the speakers in the last few decades but still the Dravidian States have neither shown much rise nor much acceptance for Hindi language.

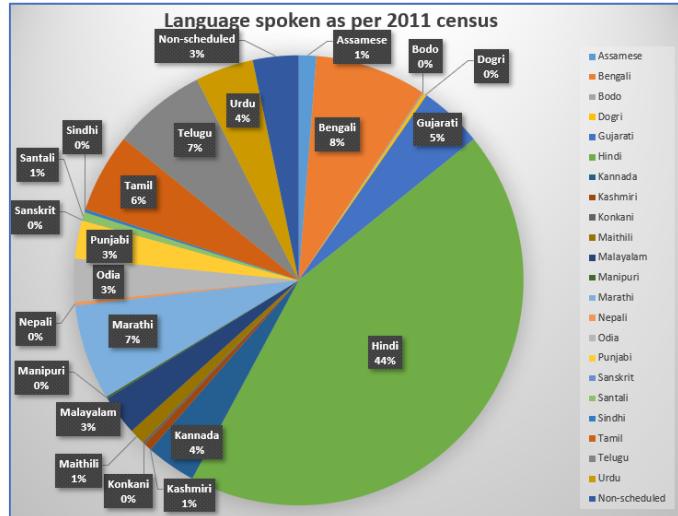


Fig 2. A pie chart representing the languages spoken as per census 2011.

Source: Language Atlas of India 2011.

The above pie chart depicts the language spoken across India as per census 2011 survey which had two questions regarding language (1) Mother Tongue (2) Other Languages Known. Based on this queries census department has come up with the Language Atlas of India 2011 [14] which was published in April 2022

4) WHAT DOES THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY REVEAL ?

A Linguistic census discloses a wide range of languages in India. Our multi-cultural nation is home to around 780 dialects and 66 diverse scripts. Arunachal Pradesh is the most amusing State with 90 languages.[12]

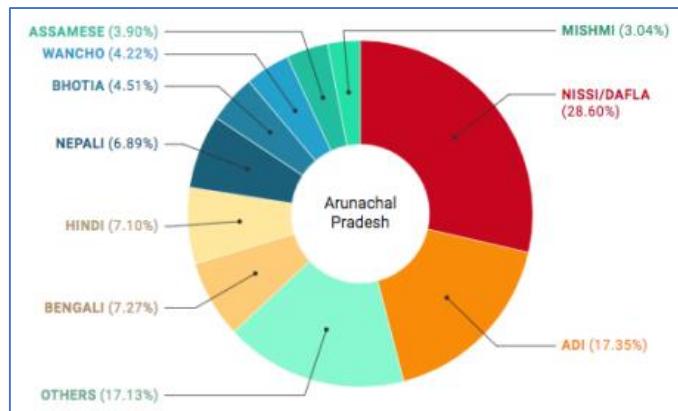


Fig 3. Languages spoken by the most linguistically diverse state in India (Arunachal Pradesh).

Source: Language Atlas of India 2011. [14]

5) IS HINDI BEING IMPOSED ?

This would be analyzed based on facts emerging from (A) Here's How Hindi is far behind from being imposed? (B) 8th

Schedule of the Indian Constitution and (C) Tri-Language Formula.

A. Here's How Hindi Is Far Behind From being imposed

India's concern with the language debate dates back since its independence. In a land of several cultures and ethnicities, language forms the fundamental of an individual's identity. Among the Hindi speaking people of India, there are 100s of dialects and mother tongue which reflects that Hindi is more of an official language in the Northern Hindi dominant states rather than only language of communication.

SL. No.	Mother Tongue	Total Number of Speakers	%
1.	Hindi	32,22,30,097	61%
2.	Bhojpuri	5,05,79,447	10%
3.	Rajasthani	2,58,06,344	5%
4.	Chhattisgarhi	1,62,45,190	3%
5.	Magadhi	1,27,06,825	2%
6.	Others	10,07,79,290	19%
Total		52,83,47,193	

Table 3. Total Hindi speakers and their Mother tongue

Source: Language Atlas of India 2011. [14]

Out of a total of 52,83,47,193 Hindi speakers only 32,22,30,097 have mother tongue as Hindi which means that only 61% of the total Hindi Speakers have their mother tongue as Hindi remaining 39% of people don't have Hindi as their mother tongue thus ensuring that Hindi is far from being imposed. [13]

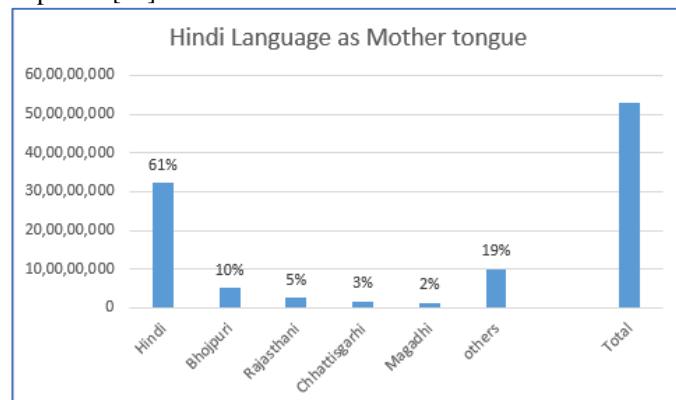


Fig 4. Graph representing Hindi as Mother Tongue.

Source: Language Atlas of India 2011.

This clearly depicts the diversity among the Hindi speakers which describes the everlasting culture of India that we are a country of multi-lingual and multicultural and efforts should always be towards progressing as multi-lingual.

B. 8th Schedule :

'Munshi-Ayyangar Formula' forms the premises for conception of 8th Schedule which gave equal consideration to all Scheduled and Non-Scheduled languages. Through Constitutional amendments many languages are added to the Schedule. 92nd Amendment recently added 2 new languages [15].

There are 22 Scheduled languages. Under this Schedule:

In the Linguistic Commission, these dialects must be indicated.

"Vocabulary can be taken from these languages for the development of Hindi" as per Article 51. [16]

Emotional fulfilment, sense of belonging and gratification is felt by the followers when a language is declared as a Scheduled Language.

C. Tri-Language Formula:

National Education System introduced Tri-language formula that is "a compromise between the demands of the various pressure groups and has been hailed as a masterly-if imperfect-solution to a complicated problem. It seeks to accommodate the interests of group identity (mother tongues and regional languages), national pride and unity (Hindi), and administrative efficiency and technological progress (English)." [17].

Lingual Category	As per Census 2001	% of Total linguals in 2001	As per Census 2011	% of Total linguals in 2011
Monolinguals	70,98,28,831	69	80,98,56,627	67
Bilinguals	25,51,26,884	24.8	31,49,88,770	26
Trilinguals	6,37,81,721	6.2	8,60,09,580	7
Total	1,02,87,37,436		1,21,08,54,977	

Table 4. Comparison of Multilingual Population as per census 2001 and 2011.

Source: Language Atlas of India 2011. [14]

Through the analysis of the available data it is clearly visible that out of total 18,21,17,541 newly added population, 8,26,89,745 have opted to be multilingual. This is a clear progression when comparing monolingual to multilingual. Parliamentary Committee on Official Language focus on progression towards being multilingual by monitoring Hindi rather than imposing Hindi in any sense.

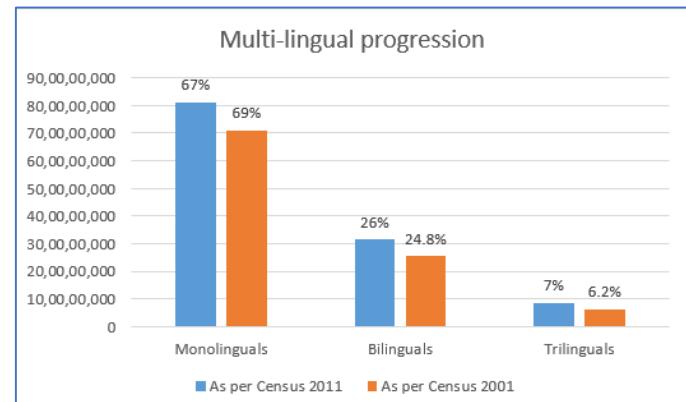


Fig 5. Bar Graph depicting multilingual progression as per census 2001 and 2011.

Source: Language Atlas of India 2011.

The above bar graph shows the multilingual progression wherein only Scheduled languages are being depicted. English being a Non-Scheduled language is not considered to be part of multilingual.

IV. INFERENCE

The enigma of National Language has taken a more complex twist by sparking frequent debates on social media and physical demonstrations than what the forefathers of the constitution anticipated. Due to community belief and conflicting viewpoints, the subject of National Language has become a intricate riddle. [18]

The disputes that occur on a consistent basis demonstrate that a language has the power to unite or divide a Nation.

Masses forms bonds with those who speak their native tongue. Multi-lingual strategy is the way forward for reinstating social accord and national unison which is also emphasized in the Indian Constitution's Preamble.

As a result, a harmonic blending of dialects can contribute to the nation's social advancement. The endeavor to bring disparate groups together is praiseworthy. Indians should be hopeful of resolving the linguistic debate by moving towards multi-lingual approach. The people of India should behave more responsibly towards the national concerns making India establish itself as an universal status as an exclusive illustration of "Unity in Diversity" for social progression.

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