

Effect of Globalization on Indigenous Languages

Paper id: 12425 Submission: 11/01/2022, Date of Acceptance: 21/01/2022, Date of Publication: 23/01/2022

Abstract

The effect of globalization on the economy, industry, media, and sometimes on society are almost regularly analysed and debated. But, the investigation into the effect of globalization on languages is yet to be done. The impact of globalization on language and literature is quite significant. It has, in many ways, led to the slow death of many languages of the world. The state of indigenous languages today mirrors the situation of indigenous peoples. In many parts of the world, they are on the verge of extinction. Not long ago, thousands of languages were spoken around the globe, but they are disappearing in a way that parallels the loss of endangered species.

Keywords: Endangered Languages, Language Loss, Multicultural, communication, Globalization, Language Policy, Indigenous Languages.

Pankaj Bala

Srivastava,

Associate Professor,
Dept. of English,
Mahila Vidyalaya
Degree College,
Lucknow, Uttar
Pradesh, India

Introduction

Language is a prerequisite part of human interrelationships and communication. Although all species have their ways of communicating, humans are the only ones that have mastered cognitive language communication. Language allows us to share our ideas, thoughts, and feelings with others. Language reveals that human beings are all fundamentally alike, yet at the same time, diverse, innovative and unique in fascinating ways. It not only divulges the ravishing variety of human culture and experience, but also gives the limits and possibilities of our minds. Language has the power to build societies, but it also tears them down. There is a strong correlation between linguistic diversity and biodiversity; where there are most species of plants and animal, there are most languages spoken. Languages are closely connected to the environment they are spoken in, so in such areas they contain rich, detailed and technical knowledge about the flora, fauna, and habitat of that area.

There are around 7000 languages spoken on Earth and around half of all the world's languages have no written form, but this does not mean that they are lacking in culture. Unwritten languages are rich in oral traditions; stories, songs, poetry, and ritual passed down through the generations that remain remarkably consistent and reliable through time. 23 languages are spoken by around half of the world's population. Nearly 2500 languages are considered endangered. The condition of indigenous languages today reflects the situation of indigenous peoples. In many parts of the world, they are on the verge of disappearance.

Research Design and Methodology

The purpose of this study is to enhance the understanding of the connection between the globalization and disappearance of indigenous languages. The exploratory research design method is used to explore the problem.

This paper presents an analysis of some of the impact of globalization on Indian languages, and presents various inferences based on facts and figures. The paper looks at both the positive and negative effects of the covert and overt impact of economic globalization on Indian languages and their speakers. An attempt is made here to probe into what happens to the speakers of the language and what happens to the status and corpus of the language.

Problem and discussion

Globalization is not a new concept. Traders travelled vast distances in ancient times to buy commodities that were rare and expensive for sale in their homelands. The Industrial Revolution brought advances in transportation and communication in the 19th century that eased trade across borders. The term "globalization" began to be used more commonly in the 1980s, reflecting technological advances that made it easier and quicker to complete international transactions—both trade and financial flows.

Due to globalization, English language emerged as a global force. English language is the most widely spoken tongue in the world today and it has become the global de-facto standard used in business, cultural, political and linguistic exchange.

Now “English rules” is an old phrase, “English language rules” is the new phrase emerged out of Globalization. Knowledge of English is very essential because countries are becoming globally integrated and coupled with each other in all aspects in terms of culture, economy, trade and commerce. This integration can happen only when language spoken is the same. English and Globalization are inseparable, living one on another in the present-day world like body and soul of a human being.

In recent years, much literature in the disciplines of sociology, economy, politics and history, etc., has been devoted to the theme of globalization, but not so much in language studies. The role of language in globalization and the relationship between language studies and globalization cannot be emphasized more, not only in that globalization necessarily involves the globalization and mobility of language, but also in that language is an important globalizing force.

The Govt. of India welcomed globalization through its new economic policy in 1993. Anthropologists and linguists have found that globalization in India has affected the indigenous communities the most. According to a communique of Anthropological Survey of India, Ministry of Culture, namely “Globalization: Its Impacts on Indigenous Communities”:

According to the Anthropological Survey a total of 4,635 communities are found in India. Out of this total, ‘tribal’ or Indigenous communities’ number 732 under globalization. The impact of globalization on the Indigenous communities is manifold, and often they are ones most negatively affected. Under globalization, it is the tribal Indigenous areas that have had to face the attacks of massive developmental projects. Cases of displacement of tribal populations have increased in India. Commercial activities have also introduced alien forces, cultures and influences into the traditionally insulated life and culture of the Indigenous peoples. Deprivation of land and forests are the worst forms of oppression that these people experience. It has resulted in the breakdown of community life and a steady cultural death or ‘ethnocide’. The tribal people are exterminated by a process of attrition, through which their lands are taken away, their rivers poisoned, their cultures undermined and their lives made intolerable. Hunters and gatherers, forest produce collectors, fisherfolk, both inland and marine, and the rural artisans are the victims of globalization and modern development through appropriation of people’s resources for industrial advancement, especially in association with capital intensive, machine-oriented technology. Its disturbing impact on family and the drastic According to the latest census in India (Census 2011), tribal people are 8.2 per cent (21467179) of the total population. Researchers like Atal (2017), Hasnain (2017), Jaiswal and Saha (2014), and Radhakrishna (2016) have examined the transition of the tribal of India from a hoary past to the cruel realities in the wake of globalization. They conclude that Globalization has not only led to the marginalization of the indigenous people and compromise with their human rights (Thornberry, 2002), but also to language endangerment. Globalization has accelerated the process of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992).

India is one of the signatories among 150 countries to the Rio Earth Summit (1992), the Convention on Biological Diversity, dedicated to promoting sustainable development, which focuses on the “interlocking of language and ecology in traditional knowledge and its inter-generational transfer”. It also highlights how traditional knowledge/culture is transmitted through language.

Indigenous people face many critical political, social, economic and cultural challenges. One of the greatest challenges will be to develop practical models to capture, maintain, and pass on traditional knowledge systems and values to future generations. Indigenous people place a high premium on preserving tribal culture, languages, healing arts, songs, and ceremonies. Researchers on the tribal languages indicate trends of shift from their home language to the dominant language. While the process of shift in language is occurring due to migration from the rural to the urban, and language contact of the rural on the borders of the urban.

In multi-lingual and pluri-cultural societies in India, small linguistic groups show inferior complex towards their language and culture. There are generations of indigenous people, who were taught that their languages are inferior to the national language thus creating a negative social stigma of being indigenous as “inferior.” With the empowerment of indigenous movements and recent developments with

regards to the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights at the national and international level, indigenous languages has become an integral aspect of indigenous peoples' right to culture. It may not be inappropriate to assume that people all over the world are paying a heavy price for a globalized development in terms of their language heritage.

When contemplating the challenges faced by indigenous people worldwide, how will our education system preserve the indigenous language or whether it will lead to loss? Amidst the global language how will this language be able to compete with its naturalness? What is the attitude of the indigenous community to go for protection of their language when there is so much exposure through media and tele-communication in non-indigenous language? Not only that when there is demand of a global language for capital accumulation. What will be pro-activeness by the state government for promotional of the indigenous language? – some of these important issues has been discussed in the present paper.

The term 'indigenous people' has no universal, standard or fixed definition, but can be used about any ethnic group who inhabit the geographic region with which they have the earliest historical connection. India's tribal population had for ages lived in isolation and had not participated in main-stream socio-economic development. As per the 2001 Census, the tribal population in India is estimated to be 84.3 million, or 8.2% of the total population of our country. One of the distinguishing features is that a majority of the tribals live in scattered habitations located in interior, remote and inaccessible, hilly and forest areas of the country. Linguistically the tribes of India are broadly classified into four categories, namely

1. Indo-Aryan Speakers
2. Dravidian Speakers
3. Tibeto-Burmese speakers, and
4. Austric speakers.

The Government of India classifies indigenous peoples as 'Scheduled tribes', which is their Constitutional status. Before the term 'scheduled tribe' was designated in 1950, it was referred to at various stages as 'forest tribe', 'primitive tribe', 'backward tribe', etc, the term 'tribe' is not defined anywhere in the Indian Constitution, rather it categorizes the indigenous peoples in terms of economic backwardness with a primitive living standard.

Yet, there has been no major survey done on the number of tribal languages in India but it is said that there are more than 270 main dialects spoken. The tribal languages are segregated into three types Dravidian, Sino-Tibetan and Austric. Tribals in India originate from five language families, i.e. Andamanese, Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian, and Tibeto-Burman. It is also important to point out that those tribals who belong to different language families live in distinct geographic settings. For example, in South Orissa there are languages that originate from the Central Dravidian family, Austro-Asiatic (Munda) family and the Indo-Aryan. In the Jharkhand area, languages are from the Indo-Aryan, North Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic. There are tribal languages, which serve the day-today oral communication within the tribes without any official status although the constitutional provision for the preservation or conservation exists (constitution of India, article 29 (a, b) and 30). Hindi and English are constitutionally enshrined as link languages at the national level.

There are four hundred tribal languages, which means that most of the tribes have their own languages. However, in a majority of cases, these languages are unwritten ones. In Orissa the speakers of the Tibeto-Burmese language family are absent, and therefore Orissan tribes belong to other three language families. The Indo-Aryan language family in Orissa, includes, Dhelki-Oriya, Matia, Halaba, Jharia, Saunti, Laria and Oriya (spoken by Bathudi and the acculturated sections of Bhuiyan, Juang, Kandha, Savara, Raj Gond etc.).

The Austric language family includes eighteen tribal languages namely, Birjia, Parenga, Bhumij, Koda, Mahili Bhumij, Mirdha-Kharia, Ollar Gadaba, Juang, bondo, Didayee, Karmali, Kharia, Munda, Ho, Mundari and Savarna. And within the Dravidian language family there are nine languages in Orissa, namely: Pengo, Gondi, Kisan, Konda, Koya, Parji, Kui, Juvi and Kurukh or Oraon.

There was a general misconception that tribal communities did not possess languages but dialects. But with the extensive study of tribal languages Linguists

have come to the conclusion that tribals, do possess languages. Tribal languages contain the same features which other languages possess, such as (i) duality of structure (phonemic and morphemic) (ii) productivity capability (creativity and novelty) (iii) arbitrariness (no correlation between linguistic morphs and their meanings) (iv) interchangeability (vocal and auditory functions are simultaneous) (v) specialization (codes and code-switching capability. (vi) displacement (abstractness of speech) (vii) prevarication (ability to misrepresent reality) and (viii) cultural transmission (learning and inculcation). Besides, tribal languages have all the four subsystems, such as

1. phono morphemic
2. syntactic
3. semantic and
4. symbolic, which other languages have.

The ratified Declarations of the Indigenous Peoples' Organizations states that "the culture of Indigenous Peoples is part of mankind's cultural patrimony and the customs and usages of the Indigenous Peoples must be respected by nation states". But the problem in the Indian context is that small and isolated ancestral languages and cultures, whose number is less than 10,000 get eliminated in official assessments like the Census Reports.

This is the biggest dilemma of the indigenous language that, on one hand it speaks about the promotion and protection of the indigenous language and on the other hand it just does not make any appropriate arrangement to make it successful. It is sometimes argued that when an indigenous language disappears then the group itself no longer exists. Then the group might have merged into another group with other languages. In other words, a fifth part of India's linguistic heritage has reached the stage of extinction over the last half-century. When contemplating the challenges faced by indigenous people worldwide, how will our education system preserve the indigenous language or whether it will lead to loss? Amidst the global language how will this language be able to compete with its naturalness? What is the attitude of the indigenous community to go for protection of their language when there is so much exposure through media and tele-communication in non-indigenous language? Not only that when there is demand of a global language for capital accumulation. What will be pro-activeness by the state government for promotional of the indigenous language?

The Scheme for protection and development of Primitive Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), came into effect from April 1, 2008 by the Government of India. It identifies 75 PVTGs. Much like the PVTG's, their languages too, are endangered. At least for the indigenous people in India need a sociolinguistics of globalization to study and control the impact of globalization on language and culture (Phillipson, 2012; P 407).

The UNESCO's latest interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger has identified nearly 2,500 languages endangered out of the 7000-odd languages spoken across the world. With as many as 197 endangered languages among its 600 plus tongues spoken, India tops the list. Further, among the worst hit are the tribal languages. In a country that boasts of linguistic and cultural diversity, language attrition of this scale is arguably a major setback. With the death of a language, we lose the life force of a community -- its secret practices, future interpretation of extant literature, environmental knowledge, ancestral world views, and cultural heritage.

Alarmed by the UNESCO's 2010 revelation about the country's threatened voices, the Govt. of India has put in place the Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages of India (SPPEL) in 2013 for the revitalization of endangered languages and for a reverse language shift (RLS). The Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), a research and teaching institute of Govt. of India, is overseeing the implementation of the SPPEL. Under the scheme, Central Universities have been entrusted with the documentation of 500 vulnerable languages that are spoken by less than 10, 000 people each, called "potentially endangered" language.

Objective of the Study English is the most frequently spoken second language in the world and as accessibility to the digital world expands it becomes the language of planet. This expansion impacted all languages but those languages already endangered will be the most severely impacted as young people become fluent in the language of the internet and not their home language; the impact will be compounded through the successive generations.

Language is the foundation of a culture. For Indigenous oral societies, words hold knowledge accumulated for millennia. A language also clasps the stories, songs, dances, protocols, family histories and inter-relations. It is an irretrievable body of knowledge. Science, medicine, governments and resource planners all believe in part on Indigenous traditional knowledge and are all impacted when that irreplaceable storehouse of traditional environmental knowledge is gone. When a language dies then without that crucial connection to their linguistic and cultural history, people lose their sense of identity and belonging. Each language that dies means the loss of a cultural treasure.

Many Indigenous languages are endangered globally and the rate of loss is estimated at one language every two weeks. Due to these critical conditions of Indigenous languages, UNESCO had declared 2019 The Year of Indigenous Languages. The main aim of this study is to enhance the understanding of the connection between the globalization and disappearance of indigenous languages. The paper looks at both the positive and negative effects of the covert and overt impact of economic globalization on Indian languages and their speakers.

Conclusion The article 350 A of the Indian constitution mandate states that, primary education should be imparted in the mother tongue. So, the state government is moving towards implementation. There should be some alternative to promote indigenous language keeping in mind the geo-ethnic specification. To make tribal education effective and sustainable, policies need to promote

To do this requires attention be paid to gender equality, curriculum relevance, mother-tongue instruction, and appropriately trained teachers. An increasing number of researchers strongly advocate the use of the mother tongue or home language as medium of instruction in early stages of education. This assumes greater significance in the context of education of tribal children because their mother tongue is often quite distinct from the prominent languages in the state or regional languages. One fears that this may be the situation not in any one country alone, but practically all over the world, since the contextual factors responsible for language decline in one country also form the context of modernity in other nation states in the world. There is a need for relevant teachers, as much as possible drawn from the tribal communities and who are motivated and sensitized towards working in tribal areas.

Education for Indigenous peoples is a process ultimately connected to the entire cycle of life, all is interconnected. It embraces both the growth of individuals and the broader community. It includes all forms of learning, including survival skills, socialization, and traditional knowledge, including visual and oral traditions. This perspective must inform all policies and programs designed and implemented for and by indigenous peoples. They have a right to an education that provides equitable outcomes.

Most important thing is that the people who understand these tribal languages must be given preference in Government jobs. The argument in favour of providing children an education, at least at the primary school level, for a healthy development of their intellect is indeed an incontrovertible one.

It is necessary to teach, impart, and promote all the indigenous language of the state. There should be some alternative to promote indigenous language keeping in mind the geo-ethnic specification for instances. Extensive research conducted among these groups indicates that "distinct and seemingly strange grammars of various tribal languages are little windows through which we can see a distinct and different mode of perceiving and conceiving the world ... by these speech communities". The preservation of a language entails the preservation of the community that keeps that language in circulation.

The conservation or preservation of languages entails the preservation of the community that keeps that language in circulation.

References

1. Abbi, Anvita. (1996): *Languages of Tribal and Indigenous Peoples of India. The Ethnic space.* Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, New Delhi.
2. Aggarwal J.C. (1983): *Landmarks in the History of Modern Indian Education.* New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
3. Agnihotri and Khanna, A.L. (1997): *Problematizing English in India.* New Delhi: Sage Publications India.
4. Annamalai, E. (2001): *Managing Multilingualism in India.* New Delhi: Sage Publications
5. Atal, Yogesh (2017). *Indian Tribes in Transition.* Routledge. *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, UNESCO, 2010, 3rd Edition.
6. Brenzinger, M. (ed.), 2007. *Language Diversity Endangered.* Berlin, New York, Mouton de Gruyter.
7. Cantoni, Gina (1996), ed. *Stabilizing indigenous languages.* Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University
8. Carjuzaa, J. (2017). *Revitalizing Indigenous languages, cultures, and histories in Montana, across the United States and around the globe.* *Cogent Education*, Volume 4, 2017 - Issue 1.
9. Census India 2011. Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India; Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Available at: <http://censusindia.gov.in/>
10. Crystal, D. (2000) *Language Death.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
11. Dasgupta, Probal (1995) : *On the sociolinguistics of English in India' in Singh , Rajendra et.al. Explorations in Indian Sociolinguistics.* New Delhi: Sage Publications
12. Desai, M.P. (1956): *Our Language Problem.* Ahmedabad: Navjivan
13. Devy, G. N.; Davis, Geoffrey V. & Chakravarty, K. K. (eds) (2016). *The Language Loss of the Indigenous.* India: Routledge.
14. Edward, John (1985): *Language, Society and Identity.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
15. Fishman, Joshua A. (1991). *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages.* Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.
16. Frake, Charles. O. (1980): *Language and Cultural Description.* Stanford University Press. California.
17. Hasnain, Nadeem (2017). *Tribal India.* Lucknow: New Royal Book Company; 2017 edition.
18. Jenks, C. (1993): *Culture.* London: Routledge.
19. McCully, Bruce, T. (1966): *English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism.* New York: Columbia University Press.
20. Mishra, Prashant (2011). "Linguistic Human Rights and the Tribes in India". *Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, v37 n2 p119-137 Jul-Dec 2011. New Delhi: Bahri Publications.
21. Mufwene, Salikoko S. (2001): *The Ecology of Language Evolution.* Cambridge: CUP
22. Neelmani Jaisawal & P Sudeshna Saha (2014). "Marginalisation of Tribal Communities due to Globalization". *Indian Journal of Dalit and Tribal Studies*, Volume-2, Issue-2, July-Dec 2014, pages 37-54.
23. Pandharipande, R, V. (2002): *Minority matters: issues in minority languages in India*, in *International Journal of Multicultural Societies (IJMS)* Vol.4, No.2, 162-193
24. Pandit, P.B. (1972): *India as a Sociolinguistic Area.* Pune: University of Poona.
25. Pennycook, A. (1994): *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language.* London: Longman
26. Phillipson, Robert (1992). *Linguistic imperialism.* Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.
27. Sinha, S.P. (1978): *English in India.* Patna: Janki Prakashan.
28. Thornberry, P.: 2002, *Indigenous peoples and human rights*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.
29. Tsunoda, Tasaku, 2006. *Language Endangerment and Language Revitalization.* New York: Gruyter GmbH.