

CHAPTER - III

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE OFFICIAL  
LANGUAGE POLICY OF INDIA IN THE  
PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

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### CHAPTER - III

#### SALIENT FEATURES OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE POLICY OF INDIA IN THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

The official language policy is not a new thing in a country like India which has been a multi-lingual since time immemorial has a recorded history of more than two thousand years. Although language planning is considered a relative new branch of linguistic study, but languages have been planned, propagated and prescribed for specified official uses on the basis of many socio-cultural and political consideration from the very beginning. But it has been considered a problem at present in India for quite some time. It would therefore be profitable to study the tradition of official language in India. Because to decide regarding the language for adopting it as an official language various aspects are to be kept in mind along with its tradition. It will be necessary to trace the salient features of the official language from ancient period for this purpose. The Indian history of pre-independence period can broadly be divided into

three periods:

1. Hindu Period (from the beginning to 1,300 A.D.)
2. Muslim Period (1,300 A.D. to 1,760 A.D.)
3. British Period (1,760 A.D. to 1,947 A.D.)

### Hindu Period

To know the official language of the Hindu period one has to depend entirely on the Indian literature prescribed in Sanskrit, Pali, Ardhamaghadhi, Apabhramsha and other modern Indian literary languages in ancient and medieval ages; although left of the literature is already published and well known, it is originally available in the form of manuscripts and inscriptions. In the ancient days the writing in India was done on Palm wood, leather, metal, Khojpatra, stone and copper plates etc. Various inscriptions were engraved on monolith, pillars or coins and adgens, stone, stamps and copper plates etc.

The first century B.C. inscriptions in the Hathingumpha throws light that Kharevala underwent a training in the drafting of documents. "In fact we had a Lekhapadhti or standard forms of writing of official documents of Sanskrit which has come down to us and which show us the elaborate nature of the forms in use

by the bureaucrats of ancient India".<sup>1</sup>

"The earliest inscriptions we have barring the few pictographs on seals from Mohanjodaro etc. that we have the Maharashtra inscription from North Bengal are the edicts of Ashoka. All belong to the Mauryan Dynasty".<sup>2</sup>

As regards the language of the Indus Valley civilisation, nothing can be said positively as no one has yet been able to decipher the inscriptions, so the language of the people of this civilisation remains unknown. But later we have inscriptions written in Sanskrit and Prakrit all over India.<sup>3</sup>

The most famous of the inscriptions on the rocks, stones and pillars belong to Ashoka period (272-231 B.C.). These inscriptions are greatest in number and scattered over all parts of India. These inscriptions although appear for the purpose of religion but may also contain matters pertaining to internal literary, geography,

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1. K.M. Panikkar, "A survey of Indian History". Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1956, p.110.

2. Times of India, May 3, 1965.

3. Ibid.

orthography, administration and other subjects.<sup>1</sup> The administration of that time was done in particular language and generally it is different from the language of the people. This fact is clear from the Ashoka's inscriptions, written in two scripts, i.e. Brahmi and Kharoshthi.

We know of some "documents written in Kharosthi in the Hiya territory in Central Asia, a meeting point of many distinct language families, represent a Middle Indo-Aryan vernacular which had achieved a certain type of linguistic evolution in that period equalled only by what the new Indo-Aryan achieved nearly eight centuries later in the Indian sub-continent; while its vocabulary shows loans from all the contributing members of the various families".<sup>2</sup>

The edicts in the North-East India are in Prakrit which was not the language through out India particularly in Sindh, Sawrashtra, Andhra and Karnataka. What Ashoka did was that a draft of the edicts was prepared at Patliputra and sent out to different parts of India,

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1. A. A. Macdonell, "India's Past", At Clarendon Press, 1927, p. 53.
  2. S.K. Katre, "The official language and the national language of India". In 'Language and Society in India', Simla; Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1969, p. 166.

irrespective of the fact whether it was Southern or the Eastern corner of his far-flung empire. An exception, however, had to be made, as has very recently come to light in the case of Indo-Greek principalities, located in what is today Afghanistan, here the edicts carved on a rock just outside Kandhar are to be found in a bilingual script, viz. Greek and Arabic.<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that Sanskrit was first cultivated and used for religious, educational and administration purposes. But contrary to this all earliest inscriptions available upto now are in Pali and not in Sanskrit. But in the first century A.D. the trend towards Sanskrit inscriptions increased all over India. Although it is not known in which language the business of the Government and the law courts was done in the Mauryan Empire the law and their interpretations was certainly done in Sanskrit as it appears from the literature of that time. It can be presumed that Sanskrit was the language of law during this period.

"The earliest inscription in Sanskrit dates from 150 A.D. but it became the regular language of official

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1. Times of India, 3rd May, 1965.

inscription only in the 4th century A.D."<sup>1</sup> The Gumar inscription gives the evidence that from the time of Kniska Sanskrit was prevalent as a court language.<sup>2</sup>

The inscription of the Kushan period is GATHA dialect which is as a mixture of Sanskrit and represents the spoken language is not the vernacular of the Sishta people from the first century B.C. to the third century A.D. Sanskrit was being studied largely due to the increasing supremacy of the Brahmanism even the Non-Brahman section also studied Sanskrit. As a matter of fact Pali had not come into existence as a literary language like Ardhamagadhi, it was a religious language originally accepted i.e. standardised and cultivated by Gautam, the Buddha and further developed only as a language of Hinayan Buddhism. But lateron Sanskrit became so important that it was accepted by the Buddhists, Jains and Hindus without any reservation. This is the reason why we find some Buddhists that arose in the Kushan period had their scriptures in Sanskrit i.e. the language of Sishtas.

During the Gupta period Sanskrit was the national language. The popularity of Sanskrit is clear

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1. "Census of India 1971" p. 308
  2. B.C. Nag, "Sanskrit, A language with Past and Future" in "India and Foreign Review", Vol.No.8, Feb.1971 p.20.

from the fact that prior to that period Abhilekhas were written in Prakrit but now the same were written in Sanskrit which shows that commonly educated people had the proper knowledge of Sanskrit. Sanskrit was adopted as the official language by Gupta emperors which was prevalent prior to them also. Most probably Sanskrit was the official language studied by the masses even during the Buddhas time. In the succeeding period of Gupta the Sanskrit language continued to be the official language. Although it was not the language of the masses.<sup>1</sup> During the said period in other parts of India Sanskrit was also adopted and progressed over some local dialects and languages. Sanskrit reached Bengal only in fifth century and after that it reached Andhra, Mysore and Madras. This fact is testified by inscriptions pertaining to Gupta's, Chalukyas and Pallavas. Due to spread of Sanskrit names of the villages and towns were also sanskritised. Sanskrit held undisputed sway all over India and became an international language of whole of South-East Asia.

With the fall of Gupta's dynasty the difficulty of official language arose as the Huns became the ruler in the North India and Pallavas in the South India. But

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1. A.K. Mazumdar, "Problem of Hindi: A Study". Bombay; Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan, 1965, p.4.

ultimately these rulers also accepted Sanskrit as their official language. Although they patronised some of the Prakrits, there are evidences that by the beginning of the sixth century Pallavas began to patronise Sanskrit. In the South there were Tamil and Kannada already cultivated that is why the names of the villages were not Sanskritised as it was done in the North. That is to say that in South Tamil, old Kannada and Telugu, but near about 750 A.D. Sanskrit also enjoyed a privileged position in the courts in almost all the Southern states, for instance, Pallavas who were the rulers in the South, favoured Tamil and Telugu, besides Sanskrit. This shows that they gave recognition to the regional languages in the official transactions. The Cholas, the successors of Pallavas followed the tradition of Pallavas and introduced Tamil in keeping their records. The Kerala state also followed the bilingual policy that it used Sanskrit and Malayalam upto 900 A.D. But in these parts of India there are differences in such policies.<sup>1</sup> From the voluminous record of inscriptions left by Pallavas, it appears that the Prakrit was being used for the official purposes. Moreover they maintained the

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1. Times of India, 3rd May, 1965.

original traditions of the Satvahans in encouraging Prakrit.<sup>1</sup>

The inscriptions belonging to the Kanya Kubja Dynasty are in classical Sanskrit. Like Kanya Kubja, Champa was also a great centre of Hindu culture of King Indravardhan III of the Brigu dynasty. Sanskrit was the official language and more than a hundred inscriptions in that language have so far been discovered.<sup>2</sup>

During 606 to 648 A.D. Harsha Wardhan was the king of India. His empire was spread over the area from Thaneshwar to Kannauj. He was a great patron of Sanskrit. But after his death the empire was dissolved immediately. In 630 A.D. Hiuen Tsang, a Chinese Buddhist, visited India during the reign of Harsh Wardhana. He has written in his report that Sanskrit was the language of the learned people of India. He has also written in his report that during that period the Buddhist used Sanskrit language even in real theoretical discussions.<sup>3</sup>

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1. K.M.Pannikkar, "A survey of Indian History". Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1956, p.88.
  2. Ibid, p.95.
  3. A. A. Macdonell, "A History of Sanskrit Literature", New Delhi: Munshi Ram Manoharlal, 1958, p.26.

The inscriptions belong to Kanya Kubja dynasty are in classical Sanskrit. So from this we can say therefore that the official language of the Kanya Kubja was Sanskrit.

During the period 600 A.D. to 1200 A.D. the North India was divided in small states which were ruled by Hindu kings, such as Pratihars, Gujara, Chauhan, Jat, Chalukya, Rajput etc. In the South there were three main kingdoms: Pandya, Chola and Chera. The exact nature of the influence of Sanskrit language is not yet determined but it is clear from the inscriptions of the period of Gurjar, Partiharas, Pallavas of the Northern and Central India that the number of non-Sanskritised names of the peoples and places were increasing. This feature clearly indicates that the king spoke and understood Sanskrit but masses did not. So the regional languages achieved great influence.

By the 10th, 11th century, proto Hindi languages e.g. Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada, Telugu, emerged in inscriptions. At the end of the Hindu period the Pallavas, Varmnas and Sevas records testify that Sanskrit reached late.

Later Yadavas who ruled over Western parts of India viz. part of Maharashtra, Andhra and Mysore (Karnataka) were multi-lingual Sanskrit, Marathi, Kannada and probably Telugu were the languages used by them in the great portion of

inscription in Maharashtra is in proto Marathi while the script is Devanagari. Later on in Southern parts Brahmi and proto-Kannada were also adopted.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it may therefore be concluded that in the Hindu period from Ashoka to Prithvi Raj, by and large Sanskrit had been the main official language. Although in some period Prakrits and some of the regional languages influenced by Sanskrit, became the official language. The languages of the people who came to India influenced Sanskrit and gave rise to the modern Indian literary languages, some of which were later on adopted as official languages. A type of Sanskrit and Modern Indian literary language-bilingualism was taking place in Indian Linguistic scene when the Hindu period ended and with the Muslim invasions from West Asia in India, Muslim period started.

#### Muslim Period:

The Mohammadans who came to India were mainly the Turks, the Pathans and the Mugals. The boundaries of Delhi Kingdom had been increasing and decreasing from time to time.

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1. Times of India, 3rd May, 1965.

A period of one thousand years in the Indian history prior to 1947 was in fact the period of foreign invaders, political struggle, social changes and spreading of the new ideas.<sup>1</sup>

But no conqueror can thrust their language on the conquered masses and this has been exemplified by the Muslim rulers in India. In the 8th century Mohammed Bin Kasim conquered Sindh but his Government's accounts used to be kept in an Indian language i.e. Hindi. This tradition of keeping accounts in Hindi continued although the language of the Arabs was Arabic. But later on when other Muslims came and settled in India they brought with them different languages and cultures which they could not spread among the conquered people wholesale but did make a positive change in the linguistic structure of the country by introducing Persian as the official language by all the subsequent Muslim rulers. The muslims spoke Persian as a rule, but it was not pure Persian, a hundreds of Arabic words had found their way into it. The Muslims who came to India were themselves influenced by the Indian culture and casteism. Although in the beginning the rulers were the Turks but the official language was Persian. The Pathan ruled over

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1. Ram Gopal, 'Swantrata Purva Hindi Ke Sangharsh Ka Itihas'. Prayag: Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Shak 1886, p.ii

Delhi but they also continued the Persian. Due to patronage to the Persian the Turki, Pato and other languages could not get any place and were not used as official languages. Syed Ahtasham Hussain has written in the "Urdu Sahitya Ka Itihas", that Muslims who came in India used to speak Arabic, Persian, Turki and other languages of Central Asia. But the medium of their literary and cultural activities was Persian.<sup>1</sup>

In the words of Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, we can say that with the Muslim rule, Persian came as the official language in Hindustan and it continued till the end of the Mughal dynasty.<sup>2</sup>

But it is interesting to note that Mohmmud of Ghazni's coins had marginal legends in Sanskrit to explain the Arabic inscription.<sup>3</sup> Al Beruni, a learned Arab scholar and astronomer, who came to India during the reign of Mohammad of Ghazni, noted that the Sanskrit was largely spoken at that time. Mohammad Ghazni was a great lover of education and admitted the importance of Sanskrit language. as he gave some place to Sanskrit on his coin along with Arabic.

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1. Syed Ahtasham Hussain, 'Urdu Sahitya Ka Itihas'. Aligarh; Anjm Ne Tarkee - Urdu, 1954, p. 20.
  2. Jawaharlal Nehru 'Rashtra Bhasha Ka Swal'. Ahmedabad; Nav Jiwan Prakashan, 1949, p.11 (in Hindi).
  3. A. A. Macodonnell, 'India's Past' Oxford: At the Clerndon Press, 1927, p. 268.

When the Mohammadans had settled in India for sometime and two human races - Hindus and Muslims - came into contact, they influenced each other in culture, literature and language etc.

As Hindi was the only mass language of their contact with people, it absorbed many Persian and Arabic words. Even in the twelfth century, when the vernaculars had come on the scene, communication between people at higher level of the society in all the parts of India were carried on in Sanskrit.

In another and no less important manner Islam influenced Hinduism. It gave an immediate fillip to the vernacular languages which were cultivated and used for literary and cultural purposes. Sanskrit could no longer be the language even of official documents and as a result the common patois was elevated to a position of importance.<sup>1</sup> The coins of Pathans Kings of Delhi particularly Shamsuddin Altamash, Rajia Begum, Allaudin had Hindi inscriptions.

Persian or rather Arabic-Persian came to India at the time of Turkish conquest. It was the language of the culture of the Mohammedans. Persian which had become the Court language in the 13th century continued to influence

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1. K.M. Panikkar, "A Survey of Indian History", Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1956, p.132.

the Sanskrit and other Indian languages. The language of Muslim rulers was Persian. Therefore, it was the language of the administration. During the periods of Turks and Afghans, Persian was the Government official language, but to some extent Hindi was also used in official work.

But as Persian was the official language, the Hindu Government employees also began to learn Persian during the reign of Sikander Lodi in the beginning of the 16th century. But the Government accounts were kept in Hindi. Therefore, the learning of Persian was not compulsory for Hindu Government employees of the Kingdom.

During the reign of Mohammed Tughlak, the ordinary Hindu employees continued to keep their accounts in their own language. All the matters pertaining to the common people used to be written in Hindi. The Persian was limited to Raj Darbar, Military Cantonment and high officials. But it was not the mother tongue of any Turk, Afghan or Pathan King. Due to its use in administration, official job, judiciary and also being the language of the Sufi religious school it became popular in the local population.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Mohan Lal Tiwari, "Shashtra Vigyan Granthmala - 8 - Hindi Ehasha Par Pharsi Aur Angreji Ka Farbhav", Varanasi: Nagri Parcharini Sabha, 1969, p.7.

In 1327 due to change of the Capital by Mohammed Tuglak from Delhi to Daultabad (Dagiri), a large number of traders, Government officers and military personnel moved from North to South. The language of these persons was Persian and Hindi, Garsan-De-Tasi has written in his Hindui that the Mohammedan Kings used to always have a Hindu Secretary who was called as Hindi Navis and Persian Secretary who was called as Pharsi Navis so that their orders can be written in both the languages.<sup>1</sup> By the time of Akbar Hindi had become the language of the royal Mughal Palace. Sher Shah Suri appointed Hindi writers along with the Persian writers in offices so that the common people might not have any difficulty. During the reign of Akbar (1556-1605) Persian was made the court language and Hindus were also appointed in the administration. Thus Hindus and Muslims came into very close contact in the administration.<sup>2</sup> But Hindi's choice as official language had not been abundant. Raja Todar Mal, the Finance Minister of Akbar made the Persian as official language instead of Indian language and Hindi particularly in the Revenue:

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1. Ram Gopal, "Swatantrta Purva Hindi Ke Sangarsh Ka Itihas", Prayag: Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, p.4.
  2. Swami Nath Sharma, "Lingua Indiana", Bombay: Nalanda Publications, 1947, pp.11-12.

Department this was great change in the official language but as the result of this Hindu's also began to learn Persian for getting government service.<sup>1</sup> This measure accelerated the evolution of Persianised Hindi i.e. Urdu.<sup>2</sup>

"In Gujarat a mixed or hybrid Sanskrit had come into existence as early as the 12th - 13th century A.D. and continued to survive until the 17th century as the Lekhapadhati, a collection of Treaties, court orders, sale deeds and revenue matters - undoubtedly shows. Probably because of his continuous tradition of the use of Sanskrit as late as the 15th century, Mohammed Begada of Gujarat and a few other Muslim kings thought it necessary or took pride in recording their exploits in beautiful Sanskrit Verse. The same thing was done by a king of Mandla, M.P. two centuries later".<sup>3</sup>

The Chief Minister of Bahamani dynasty Gangu Brahman adopted Dakhini Ehasha as official language. Actually this Dakhini was the language of North India which was spread in South and had been influenced by the languages of South. Dakhini Ehasha became the medium of communication, so the rulers were compelled to adopt it as official language.

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1. S.K.Chatterji, "Origin and Development of Bengali Language", Calcutta: Firma K.L.Mukhopadhyay, p. 202.
  2. Gopi Nath Shrivastva, "The Language Controversy And The Minorities", Delhi: Atma Ram & Sons, 1970 p.98.
  3. H.D.Sankala, "Indian Language (300 B.C.-1960 A.D.)", Times of India, 3rd May, 1965.

The most probably reason for adopting Dakhini as the official language is that the South was divided into Telugu, Kannada, Marathi languages etc. and all these could not be given the status of official languages. The second reason could be that the military soldiers and officers who came from North India were not very much familiar with these languages. They were acquainted with Hindvi and Bhaka and it was easier in Hindi. In this way during the whole period of Bahamni rule Dakhini continued as official language.<sup>1</sup> In the latter half of the 15th century the Bahamni kingdom was divided in small states. But Hindi was continued the official language of these states. The rulers of Bijapur adopted Dakhini Hindi as their official language. In this way upto the beginning of the 17th century Dakhini became the language of the King and the peoples of the South. Hindi or Bundel Khandi was the official language of Madhya Pradesh during the period of Chhattarsal (1649 -1731). All the official work of Chhattarsal was carried out not in Persian but in Hindi in Devnagri script. The gist of all the letters received in Persian was presented to Chhattarsal either in Hindi or Bundelkhandi like the translation of all the official letters into Marathi used to be presented to

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1. Dr. Shivraj Verma, "Hindi Ka Rashtra Bhasha Ke Roop Mein Vikas", Delhi: Atma Ram and Sons, 1970, pp.119-120.

Shivaji due to personal influence of Chhatarsal.<sup>1</sup>

After the death of Aurangzeb the Mughals were Indianised slowly and slowly, therefore, Persianised Hindi i.e. Urdu came to be used freely in place of Persian as the official language. Mughals united the whole North into one Kingdom. In the 17th century in the period of development, a common language for India was also developed. This was used outside literary and official circles. This was a mixed form of Hindi in which quite a number of words of Arabic, Persian and Turkish origin had been absorbed. This mixed form of speech became a sort of Lingua franca in the military and bazars outside the Mughal palaces. This language was called the Zabane-Urdu-E-Mullah. The name Zabane-Urdu-E-Mulla: i.e. "The language of the exalted camp was given to it. It lateron assumed a shorter form 'Zabane-Urdu' or 'Simply Urdu'."<sup>2</sup> Formally Urdu could never become the official language during the centuries of Muslim rule. However, Hindi enjoyed partly that status though not continuously in Hindu Kingdoms. Public orders were issued both in Persian and Hindi. The

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1. Mahendra Partap Singh, "Etihassik Parmanavali Aur Chhatrasal," Delhi: National Publishing House, 1975, pp.156-158.
  2. Gulistan J.Kerawala, "A Study of Factors Influencing The Language Policies In India And The USSR. A Comparative Approach", New Delhi:NCERT, 1976, pp. 24-25.

inscription on the coins also appeared in both the languages.<sup>1</sup>

If the official languages are plotted on a graph over a period of 2,000 years, it will be found that first Prakrit (C. 300 B.C. - 100 A.D.) then Sanskrit (100 A.D. - 700 A.D.) and then Sanskrit with an increasing use of regional languages (700 A.D. - 1200 A.D.) were the principal languages used in courts and administration as evident in inscriptional usage. Then came Arabic and Persian,<sup>2</sup> and were used during the whole of Muslim period in higher circles and government affairs. But formally it was mostly Persian and partly Hindi and/or Persianised Hindi i.e. Dakhini and Urdu were used as official languages.

#### British Period:

When British rulers came in India, it was divided into smaller principalities. The official or court language and the language of administration of these principalities was generally the regional languages. The following languages

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1. Ram Gopal, "Linguistic Affairs of India", New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, p. 101.
  2. Times of India, 3rd May, 1965.

were being used in India at the time of Company's establishment:

A. Foreign languages:

- i) English, Company's own language,
- ii) Persian, language of Muslim states.

B. Modern Indian languages:

- i) Hindi in both Hindu and Muslim states,
- ii) Regional languages in small Hindu kingdoms.

The court language of Tanjore (Rajah Serfoji) and even smaller principalities like Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga and Pudukottai was Tamil. The areas nearer Madras were under the rule of the Nawab of Arcot. In these states the official language was Persian, though communications were to be made in Tamil so far as the ordinary people were concerned. Similar was the position throughout the rest of the country and in different areas, the language of the people was the court language, the language for all purposes except when the ruler was a Muslim Nawab who brought with him his own language, Urdu or Persian.<sup>1</sup>

After the battle of Plassey the Britishers got full hold on Bengal. At that time Bengal comprised Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. During the reign of Muslim Nawabs the official

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1. S. Mohan Kumaramangalam, "India's Language Crisis", Madras: New Century Book House (P) Ltd. p.2.

language of these states was Persian, and Hindi was prevalent as the second language. The same position was in U.P., a part of which came under the British rule after the battle of Plassey.

In 1798 Weljoli came as the Governor General of India. He made knowledge of regional languages compulsory for the Company's servants. The Britishers in their early period realised the importance of having working knowledge of the main vernacular languages. In 1800 Calcutta's Fort William college was established keeping in view the teaching of the language of masses to civil servants of the East India Company. But people were not getting due justice due to Persian. The Britishers were well aware of this fact. But they intended to make English as the official language. But the ordinary people were in favour of Indian languages upto 1830 and the Company also followed this policy and allowed the Indian languages their due place in the courts. The Company followed this policy properly upto 1837.

In 1835 Lord Macaulay replaced Persian by Urdu in the courts, the civil and criminal laws were translated into Urdu but the use of Persian and Arabic also continued. But on the suggestions of Sir Jhon Shore and other officials the Indian Government decided to adopt the languages of

the people in the courts in place of Persian and ultimately in 1836 the British Government distributed hand bills declaring that the work in the courts should be in the prevalent language of India.<sup>1</sup>

In practice the language policy of the East India Company was to give more importance to Urdu and it had important place in the official work.

In Indian courts Persian was introduced by law so it could be removed only by law. On 20th November, 1837 for this purpose an act was framed, with the help of which the Indian languages were allowed to be used in the courts. In accordance with this Bengali in Bengal, Oriya in Orissa, Gujarati in Gujarat and Assamese in Assam were recognised. According to this law in the courts of U.P., Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, Urdu was adopted in Persian script instead of Hindi. In this way the Company removed the Persian as the official language because it was a burden on the common people, but also deprived Hindi from its due place. Urdu was recognised as the sole official language.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ram Chandra Shukla, "Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihas", Kashi: Nagri Pancharini Sabha, p.408.
  2. Dr. Shiv Raj Verma, "Hindi Ka Rashtra Bhasha Ke Roop Mein Vikas", Delhi: Atma Ram & Sons, 1970 p.150.

"The Hindustani news broadcast by the official All India Radio stations at Delhi and elsewhere during British times, and later on also, was generally given out in highly Persianised literary Urdu, which used foreign perso-Arabic words in preference to native Hindi or Hindustani and scrupulously preserved its Urdu character by avoiding Sanskrit and correct Hindi words. The same may be said of the "Hindustani" of certain war efforts talkies which were under British Governmental inspiration. There was thus quite a good deal of support for Persianised Urdu from the British Government in India, as Urdu was looked upon as an inheritance from Mohammeden India. It is for this reason that George IV, early Victoria, Edward VII, George V and George VI rupees and other silver coins of India had their denominations indicated only in the Persian language and character, as Persian was the official language of the Mughal empire to which the British theoretically succeeded. The Hindus also suspected that the political bias of the British in India for the Mohammadans was also largely responsible for this".<sup>1</sup>

Next to English, Urdu in Roman script was also adopted in the British Indian Army. The Army Department published books and tracts in Roman Urdu for the use of

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1. S.K.Chatterji, "Indo-Aryan and Hindi", Calcutta: Firma K.L.Mukhopadhyay, 1960, pp.163-164.

Indian soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the Government's language policy particularly in North with the use of Urdu, in 1868 memorandum were addressed to the Government requesting for the use of Hindi in the Devanagri script in place of Persian in the courts and public offices. The Governor General agreed that the use of Hindi in Nagri script would be useful in official work but did not pass any order for its implementation. He was of the opinion that petitions and representations be written in Persianised Nagri. The proclamations for Hindi speaking state should be in Hindi. Though the Persian character was not abolished, the Nagri character had been given a place. In April, 1900, the Lt. Governor, Sir, Antony Macdonnell issued a Government Resolution laying down the extent to which the Nagri character, as distinct from the Hindi language, could without inconvenience, be more fully recognised in the courts and public offices of the state.<sup>2</sup>

But during the rule of Britishers a great emphasis was laid on English from the beginning and after sometime various Indian regional languages began to acquire their

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1. Ibid. p.163.

2. Gopi Nath Srivastava, "The Language Controversy and the Minorities", Delhi: Atma Ram & Sons, 1970, p.99.

places as medium of expression and gradually the use of Persian came to end. But the place was taken by English, therefore, modern Indian languages could not get their rightful place in Government administration etc.

As early as 1829, in reply to the committee of Public Instruction, a Government letter said, "It is the wish and admitted policy of the British Government to render its own language gradually and eventually the language of public business throughout the country". Charles Grant had for years been arguing: "as the Mohammedans employed Persian, British should employ English, their own language in the affairs of the Government."<sup>1</sup>

In 1854 the Government of North-West Provinces directed that the village revenue official papers should be maintained in Hindi in Devnagri script. In 1856 the junior officers of revenue Department were directed to learn the Nagri character failing which their services would be terminated. As a result of this Hindi found a place in subordinate revenue offices.<sup>2</sup>

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1. R.K. Yadav, "The Indian Language Problem", Delhi: National Publishing House, 1966, p.25.
  2. Ram Gopal, "Linguistic Affairs of India", New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1966, pp.168-169.

The agitation for the introduction of Hindi in the courts of united provinces continued in 1874 which got great momentum. During this period Bhartendu Harish Chandra pressed for the use of Hindi in the court of the province.

In 1893 the British Government raised a new question of using Roman script for Indian languages. In 1896 it was decided to introduce the Roman script instead of Persian in the United Provinces. The advocate of Urdu got a great shock as at that time Urdu was used in Persian script. On 16th July, 1893 the Nagri Pancharini Sabha met for advocating the use of Hindi in Nagri script and drew plan to oppose the introduction of Roman script. For this purpose they collected a huge amount and prepared a "Nagri Character" booklet in English. A Committee was formed by the Government which decided in favour of Roman script and the Nagri Pancharini Sabha opposed it very strongly.

"In 1898, a deputation of the representatives of those who were interested in this movement, waited on the Lt. Governor. The Lt. Governor while depreciating any hearty change in the existing practice of the courts, to which public as well as the officers of Government had become accustomed, admitted that some advantages might be

anticipated from the more general use of the Nagri character in official documents".<sup>1</sup>

After the establishment of Indian National Congress in 1885 some British officers began to create friction between Hindu and Muslims, in the Indian political life, Sir Saiyed became their allies and tried to keep the Muslims away from the congress.

The Government took the final decision in 1900 and announced its decision as follows:

"1. All persons may present their petitions or complaints either in the Nagri or in the Persian character, as they shall desire.

2. All summonses, proclamations and the like invernacular issuing to the public from the courts or from revenue officials shall be in the Persian and the Nagri characters and the portion in the latter shall invariably be filled up as well as that in the former.

3. No person shall be appointed, except in a purely English office, to any ministerial appointment henceforward unless he can read and write both the Nagri and Persian characters fluently".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid. p.172.

2. Ibid. p.173.

At the end of the above resolution it was said that all these decisions will be applicable to civil, revenue and criminal courts. As a result of this Hindi became the language of the court although it did not get much importance. But Urdu speaking people did not like the introduction of Hindi in the courts. They considered that this will reduce the importance of Urdu and therefore requested the Government to withdraw the resolution. But the Government did not agree.

Thus neither the advocates of Hindi were satisfied with the said decision nor the Muslim leaders. But in this way Hindi got a place in the courts by the end of 19th century.

Once Hindi got its due place in Hindi speaking states the movement for making it the all-India national language, was started by the political leaders of non-Hindi speaking areas. The most important of these was B.G. Tilak. According to him Hindi was the proper substitute for English as an all-India language. In December 1905 at the conference of Nagri Pancharini Sabha held at Banaras, he said, "If you want to draw a nation together there is no force more powerful than a common language for all". He also emphasised to have a common script for all Indian languages. Tilk discarded the adoption of Roman script for Indian languages as they

could not express sounds of Indians' languages.

The importance of the language began to be realised for the independence of the country. Shri Kishori Das Vajpayee has written while describing the importance of a language in the national struggle. As a result of this struggle the real awakening of the nationalism developed. There was a hot discussion for the national language. Many Bengalis, Gujaratis, Punjabies and Maharashtrian leaders were trying for one national language which can be the medium for inter-communication between the provinces and on attaining the independence this national language can get the place of English language and become the language of the central Government of the country.<sup>1</sup>

Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj, was great advocate of Hindi although he was a Gujarati. He pressed that people from one province should do correspondence with another in Hindi and not in English.

Several nationalist leaders realised the need for a common language to unify the nationalist movement.

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1. Ibid. p.108.

The most important advocate of a common Indian language was Mahatma Gandhi. First thought of Mahatma Gandhi on various Indian problems which included the language problem were published in 1908 through his Hind Sawraj or Indian Home Rule. He said, "To give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave them".<sup>1</sup> Therefore he tried to replace English by a common national language to be evolved on the basic structure of Hindi.

In 1918 Mahatma Gandhi in his presidential speech at the 8th session of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Indore said that the distinction made between Hindi and Urdu is unreal, like the distinction between Hindu and Muslims. The Hindus should not reject Persian words and Muslims also should not reject Sanskrit words from their speeches. A harmonious blend of the two will be very good which will last for ever like the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna. But there would be some difficulty in regard to script. So both Persian and Nagri script have to be given due place and officials would be required to know both the scripts.

"In all our national councils Hindi alone should be used. Congress workers and leaders can and should do

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1. M.K. Gandhi, "Evil Wrought by the English Medium". Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 1956, p.5.

much in this respect. ...In our legislative bodies too the entire proceedings should be conducted through the national language. Our people cannot have training in political affairs so long as this is not done. .... Similarly in our courts too the national and provincial languages must be used".<sup>1</sup>

In 1924-25 Gandhiji as the President of the National Congress at Belgam said that Hindi parchar work should be taken up as a great national constructive programme. In 1924-25, the Indian National Congress accepted Hindustani as the official language due to the efforts of Gandhiji.

In 1937 when India got provincial autonomy and congress formed ministries in most of the provinces the work of propagating Hindi Hindustani at official level in non-Hindi provinces was taken up and pushed forward. "In Madras the Government had to face bitter opposition and the Chief Minister C. Rajagopalachari, who attributed the opposition to a great deal of misleading propaganda, issued a press note clarifying the position of Hindi vis-a-vis the provincial languages. The attainment by our province of its rightful place in the national life of India

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1. M.K. Gandhi, "Thought on National Language",  
Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 1956, p.12.

requires that our educated youths should possess most widely spoken language in India".<sup>1</sup>

In fact, Gandhiji's influence persuaded many other important leaders of the national movement to accept Hindustani. Thus in 1937 Nehru declared that Hindustani should be officially recognised as the all-India language. With a little effort from the states Hindustani can be developed as a national language which will bring about that national unity which we all desire. It will bring Hindi and Urdu closed together and will also help in developing an all-India linguistic unity. On that solid and common foundation, even if variations grow or diversions occur, they will not lead to separation.

It may, therefore, be concluded that during British period there were great linguistic changes leading to our National Language Policy as depicted in our Constitution. When Britishers established themselves as supreme power in the country, they formed regional

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1. Ram Gopal, "Linguistic Affairs of India", New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, p.184.

Indian languages in Hindu states and Persian and Urdu in Muslim states. After the first language controversy between the Anglicians and orientalist, the English language was accorded the status of the official language and the regional languages were also recognised for official work at state levels. But in North India the controversy between Hindi and Urdu started and Hindu Muslim communalism coloured it. The national leaders although in the beginning accepted Hindustani as the national language, later on progressively accepted Hindi as an inter-regional language. But as a matter of fact, English was the official language all over the country and its knowledge was required for all government jobs, it was also the most dominant language in our educational system.