

CHAPTER - IILINGUISTIC REALITY OF INDIA

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CHAPTER - II

LINGUISTIC REALITY OF INDIA

Indian Linguistic Scene

India is a vast country with an area of 32,87,782 square kilometres.¹ It is a country with a very ancient culture and civilisation. The present day linguistic reality of India is basically due to its large size, its different races, castes, creeds and finally its ancient and uninterrupted history. It is the second largest country in the world in terms of population. This is the only country where people of different races, castes and tribes have been living in harmony. Even Russia which is the largest country in the world in terms of area, has not such racial varieties. Acharya Vinoba Bhave in his book "Language Problem" has rightly said, "no other country provides such a grand spectacle - a coming together of people

1. "India 1976", Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, p.1.

speaking different languages, professing different religions and belonging to different castes".¹

India is not only a large country with such a variety of people but it is also a multi-lingual nation. This fact is corroborated by the Report of the Census of India 1961 in which 1652 mother-tongues had been reported.² Although the provisional figures for the important language have been published in the Census report of India 1971 but the final picture is not yet clear. However, as the Census report of India 1971, says the linguistic structure of the country should basically be the same as it is in 1961 census. The Indian constitution originally recognises 14 languages in the VIIIth Schedule but now the number of languages has risen to 15 with the 21st amendment to the Constitution. As stated in the Constitution 87.5 percent of the population is covered by 15 languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule.³

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1. Vinoba Bhave, "Language Problem", Varanasi: Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan Rajghat, 1970 p.1.
 2. "Census of India 1961", Vol.I, Part II-C(ii), p.11.
 3. Ibid, Part II-C, p.3

This multi-lingual character of the country was noticed at first by the British rulers and they decided to get a detailed survey. In the Indian Census of 1881 the mother-tongues of the individuals were recorded for the first time. And in this way a systematic study of the spoken languages of India started.¹

Linguistic survey of India was at first considered in 1894. But "the detailed classification and enumeration of Indian languages in the monumental 'Linguistic Survey of India' was issued during the 25 years from 1903 to 1928 in 11 volumes, altogether subdivided into 19 parts by Sir George Abraham Grierson".²

In this report, he mentioned 179 languages and 544 dialects in India. But the Indian peoples themselves returned during the Census of 1921, only 188 languages with 49 dialects for both India proper and Burma. The average number of languages uniting the name of dialects comes to about 180.³

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1. Jyotindra Das Gupta, "Language Conflict and National Development", Oxford University Press, University of California Press, 1970, p.32.
 2. Siddheshwar Verma, "G. A. Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India - A Summary Part I", Hoshiyarpur; Vishveshwar Institute Punjab University, 1973, p.4.
 3. Sumit Kumar Chatterji, "Indo-Aryan and Hindi", Calcutta; Firma K.L.Mukhopadhyay, 1960, pp.141-142.

Whatever may be the number of languages in the country but the fact remains that there is great similarity in the Indian Languages as if they have a common origin. India has 15 main languages as enlisted in its Eighth Schedule of the Constitution although it has a large number of languages and dialects as recognised from time to time in the Census reports. "Many of these languages have an enormous wealth of literature and literary traditions going back over centuries and in the case of some of them the literary tradition reaches back certainly more than a couple of thousand years and possibly very much longer. Considering the size and population of the country and further having regard to the close affinities amongst the different forms of speech, generally and more especially within the two or three linguistic families into which the languages fall, what is striking is not their multiplicity so much as the extent to which we find common elements and strong affinities amongst the various Indian languages."¹

1. "Report of the official language Commission, 1956",
New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1951, p.249.

All these languages of India although seem to have a common origin but they do not belong to the same stock.¹ India is divided linguistically in different zones and since long naturally it has never had one spoken language all over the country. But it has developed common links for inter-regional communication. The great literary language serve these links. The great Indian literary languages have been serving in inter-communication. Although even small hill tribes have their own separate dialect, but they are confined to their own narrow tribal life. "For a broader more cultural existence, an acquitance with a great cultural language which is current in or about its home land is a necessity which is fully realised and admitted in practice".²

In this way "affinities between the different forms of speech current in different regions in the Indian subcontinent are of course only a reflection of that fundamental bed back of common cultural traditions, ideals and values in short the Indian way of life which underlies the apparent diversities and differences amongst linguistic or cultural groups in the Indian community".³

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1. Dr. Nagendra, "The Basic Unity of India" In Dr. Nagendra (Ed) "Indian Literature", Agra: Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, 1959. p. 4
 2. Sumti Kumar Chatterji, "Indo-Aryan and Hindi", Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1960 p.142.
 3. "Report of the official Language Commission (1956)", New Delhi: Govt. of India, Press, 1957, p.250.

Shri Baldev Raj in his book "National communication and Language Policy of India", has stated "this more realistic view of linguistic diversity in India does not by any means imply linguistic homogeneity within any of the major languages. On the contrary, there is likely to be considerable amount of dialectal diversity within each region where a major language prevails".¹

But inspite of this variety of linguistic forms, India is basically a well integrated nation. These languages have influenced one another. With the lapse of time even the Dravidian languages of South have influenced the other languages of the country. "All our languages, including what are known as the Dravidian languages, have through all the centuries of their existence habitually drafted, in a greater or less degree, to meet every new situation or requirement for expression of a new idea or shade of meaning, upon that vast and inexhaustible treasure house of vocabulary, phrase, idiom and concept comprised by the Sanskrit language and literature. The literary traditions of different Indian languages have for the same reason strong identities".²

1. Baldev Raj Nayar, "National Communication and Language Policy of India", New York: M.C. Gill University, Fredrick A. Pragea Publishers, 1969, pp3-9.

2. "Report of the Official Language Commission (1956)" New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1957, p.249.

Though India has different languages yet the situation in India is not bad as compared to other countries having so many different languages. This is due to the fact that all these languages have a common origin.

The languages prevalent in India belong to the following four distinct language families:

- i. The Austric (Austro-Arabic) family
- ii. The Dravidian Family
- iii. The Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Chinese) Family
- iv. The Indo-European Family - Indo-Aryan.

There are fundamental differences in the structure and vocabulary among these, but contact among them for 3,000 years or more, particularly through masses of Austric, Dravidian and Sino-Tibetan speakers adopting Aryans has led to the imposition upon each other or to common evolution, in spite of original differences, of a number of common characteristics which may be specially called Indian and which are found in languages belonging to these families Austric, Dravidian and Aryan, over laying their genetic diversity. There is thus in Indian languages at the present day an Indian character which forms one of the bases of that "certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalyas to cape comorin, that general Indian personality which has been admitted even by Sir Hubert Risley, otherwise

so spactical about India's claim, to be considered as one people".¹

According to S.K. Chatterji's view the first human inhabitants of India appear to have come from Africa and belong to Negriod race. They settled in India after coming along the coast line of Arab countries and Iran. But the people possessing Negriod elements have virtually died out in India except in some pockets of the country and in Andaman Islands. Their language has also vanished as the persons belonging to this race in South India have given up their own language and speak the debased forms of the various Dravidian languages.²

Aryans came and settled in the North part of India in the Sindh Area and subsequently moved to other parts of India. The Austrics, the Dravidians and the Sino-Tibetans - these three groups of languages were in India when the Aryans came here.³

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1. Sumiti Kumar Chatterji, "Language and Linguistic Problems", In Anil Sarkar (Ed) "Handbook of Languages and Dialects of India". Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadyay, 1964, pp. XI-XII.
 2. V.K. Narasimhan, A.G. Venkatachary, and V.K.N. Chari (Ed) "The Language of India - A Kaleidoscopic Survey". Madras: Our India Directories and Publications, Pvt. Ltd., 1958, p. 4.
 3. William Hunter, "India Languages", Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, A.D. 1970.

Out of the above four groups the Austric and Dravidians have furnished some of the fundamental bases to the Indian population and Indian cultural and social life. Similarly the Sino-Tibetians have also supplied some cultural elements to the population, but in a limited area in the North-East only. The Indo-Aryan and the Dravidian languages are very important families in the linguistic evolution of India in the recent historical period.

(1) THE AUSTRIC (AUSTRO-ARABIC) FAMILY

The Austric languages are the oldest amongst the speech families of India. It occupies a vast tract of land rivalling in its extent most other great speech families.¹ The scholars are of the opinion that the origin of Austrics is in Indo-China and South China. According to them they spread Eastwards into India and South into Malaya and then passed into Islands beyond. Other modern scholars points out that the Austrics are a very old off shot of the Mediterranean people who came into

1. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, "Languages and Literatures of of Modern India", Calcutta: Bengal Publishers Pvt.Ltd., 1963. p.13.

India from the West, probably even before the
Dravidians.¹

Some others are of the opinion that most probably the oldest people in India came from Africa, through the countries touching the coast line of Arabia and Iran. They belonged to the race of Negriod and Negrito. Now the Andaman Islands only have the people belonging to this race.² Subsequent to the above the proto-Austroloid racial type people may have inhabited over a large part of India. From the forms of speech prevalent amongst those people the dialects in languages belonging now to the Austric speech family are derived. Probably in the Ganges Valley, the basic agricultural civilisation of India was built up by the Austics. At some times Kole or Munda people belonging to Austric family appeared to have spread all over India.

It is believed that Kol or Munda people have merged very largely with the masses and lower classes of people in India all over the country and particularly in the riverline valley of North India and Central India.

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1. William Hunter, "Indian Languages" Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, A.D. 1970 p.16.
 2. Anil Sarkar (Ed), "Handbook of Languages and Dialects of India", Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1964. p.x.

They are people of medium or short height, very dark in complexion, long headed and with a slightly flat nose." ¹

A large part of population of India has received the basic elements from Austriacs. Generally the Austric tracts are available among the lower or sub-merged classes of people in the countries.

The people belonging to Munda branch of Austric family are the inhabitants of the Central and Eastern regions. "It includes the speakers of well known languages of the people inhabiting mostly out of the way areas in the hills and jungles of Bihar, Chota Nagpur, Orissa and Central India. The names of numerically more dominate speech community groups in the Munda Branch are Santal, Kharia and Sora. The other branch which belongs to the Austric family is known as Mon-Khmer Branch. This includes Khasi group of languages of Assam and Nicobarese of the Nicobar Islands".²

The speakers of Austric languages are found in all walks of life and are largely bilinguals, because they know some Aryan language also. The Austric speaking

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1. V.K. Narashimn (Ed), "The Language of India - A Kaleidoscopic Survey" Madras: Our India Directories and Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1958, p.4.
 2. "Census of India 1971 Language Hand Book on Mother-tongues in Census", Govt. of India, p.xxxv.

people are mostly either labourers in colliery and plantation or small farmers.

According to the Census of India 1961, 65 mother-tongues were classified into this family of language. Speakers of these tongues are concentrated in Assam, Bihar, Orissa and Eastern Madhya Pradesh. Mother tongues spoken by more than one lakh people of Austric family have been shown in Table 2.1.

Table No. 2.1

Languages spoken by one lakh people and above belonging to Austric (Austro-Arabic) family.

S. No.	Name of the Languages	Number of speakers
1.	Khasi	289,650
2.	Santhali	3,130,829
3.	Mundari	736,524
4.	Bhumi j	131,258
5.	Kada/Kora	113,277
6.	HO	648,066
7.	Korku	220,242
8.	Kharia	171,269
9.	Savara	265,721
10.	Munda (Unspecified)	167,159

Source: Based on "Census of India, 1971 Language Handbook on Mother-tongues in Census", Govt. of India, Annexure-I, p. (i) to (vi).

(ii) THE DRAVIDIAN FAMILY

It is said that the Dravidians came from Asia minor and Eastern Mediterranean. Thus the Dravidians of India were originally a branch of the pre-Hellenic people of Greek and Asia minor. The ancient peoples speaking Dravidian, when entered India, other races were already settled in India. It is generally held that Dravidian came in India about 3500 B.C.

The Dravidian language family consists of all the main languages of South India. The Dravidian languages are spread not only over the Southern India but are found in the northern half of the Ceylon. "The Northern frontier of the Dravidian languages may be taken to begin at a point of the Arabian Sea about a hundred miles below Goa and follow the Western Ghats to Kolhapur. It then runs northern coast in an irregular line through Hyderabad, cuts off the southern border of Barar, and continues eastwards to the Bay of Bengal. Further to the North we find Dravidian dialects spoken by several tribes in the central provinces and Chota Nagpur and even upto the banks of the Ganges at Rajmahal, finally there is a Dravidian dialect in the North-west in Balochistan".¹

1. Siddheshwar Varma, "G. A. Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India, A summary part", Hoshiyarpur: Vishveshwar Institute Punjab University, 1973, pp. 398-399.



Although the Dravidian languages are spoken mainly in South India but "from a philologists point of view, there are some very interesting remnants in the Central and Northern parts of Indian sub-continent, like Gondi in Central provinces, Kui in Orissa and Brahui in Baluchistan, remnants which are curious historical survivals from a time when Dravidians forms of speech prevailed over wide regions of the sub-continent and were not confined to the peninsula as at present."¹

The Dravidian peoples are responsible for some of the fundamental basis of Hindu civilisation and religion. Some of the Dravidian languages are very rich in literary work. Four main languages of Dravidian family viz. Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada have achieved considerable literary advancement. The Dravidian family has 153 mother-tonges spoken in India.²

Out of these four language familieis the Dravidian family is the second largest language family in India. According to the Census of India 1961 the Dravidian languages are spoken by more than 107 million people which is 24.47% of

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1. "Report of the Official Language Commission (1956)", New Delhi: Govt. of India, Press, 1957, p. 20.
 2. S.R. Patnaik, "Languages of Many Tongues" in "Times of India (Delhi)" 16th September, 1973.

of the total population of India. This family embraces four major regional languages of South India, i.e. the Tamil (30 million), the Telugu (about 38 million), Kannada (17 million) and Malayalam (17 million) and these four languages account for 95.58% of the total number of Dravidian speakers in the country.¹

Out of the four Dravidian languages, Tamil has the oldest continuous literary traditions going back to the early christian era. Kannada which is also one of the major languages of the Dravidian family has very old literature. Tamil is not only the oldest language amongst the modern Dravidian languages, but is also considered to have "one of the largest unbroken literary traditions of any of the world's living languages".²

The third major Dravidian language viz. Malayalam is the state language of Kerala, it is very near to Tamil "emergence of Malayalam as an old off shoot of Tamil goes back to perhaps the ninth century".³ Telugu, the fourth

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1. "Census of India 1971, Language Handbook on Mother-tongues in Census", Government of India, p. xxxvi.
 2. Baldev Raj Nayar, "National Communication and Language Policy of India", New York, M.C. Gill University, Fredrick A. Pragea Publishers, 1969, p. 36.
 3. "Census of India 1971 Language Handbook on Mother-tongues in Census", Government of India, p. xxxvii.

major Dravidian language, has a rich literary heritage. The oldest inscription in this language belongs to sixth or seventh century A.D. The literary career of Telugu appears to have started around the 11th Century.

The Hindu religion and Sanskrit literature dominate these languages generally everywhere in India. But inspite of this, the Dravidian languages have developed through a perfect synthesis of the Aryan and Dravidian traditions. Even today the Sanskrit maintains the link amongst the language of the proto-Dravidian and Indo-Aryan groups.

South Indian languages contain a considerable Sanskrit vocabulary of course the percentage differs from language to language. This proves that the historical synthesis in Aryan and Dravidian culture, patterns and forms of speech have come over centuries of inter-course and communications between the two groups of people.

The languages of the Dravidian family have been grouped on geographical classification.

South Dravidian: Tamil, Malayalam, Toda, Kota, Kannada, Kadoogu/Coorgi, Tulu and Telgu.

Central Dravidian: Kui, Khond, Kolami, Kondo, Parji, Gondi, Koya.

North Dravidian: Kurukh/Oraon, Melto and also Brahmi which

lies outside India.¹

Table No. 2.2

Table showing the languages spoken by one lakh and above people belonging to the Dravidian family.

Sr.No.	Name of the languages	Number of speakers
1.	Tamil	30,465,442
2.	Malyalam	16,994,916
3.	Kannada	17,305,629
4.	Tulu	934,849
5.	Telugu	37,642,439
6.	Kui	510,907
7.	Gonda	1,384,321
8.	Koya	140,321
9.	Khond/Kondh	168,027
10.	Kurukh/oraoh	1,132,931

Source: Based on Census of India 1971, Language Handbook on Mother-tongues in Census", Government of India, Annexure I, p.(i) to (vi).

1. S.R.Patnaik, "Languages of many Tongues" in "Times of India", 16th September, 1973.

(iii) THE SINO-TIBETAN (TIBETO-CHINESE) FAMILY

It is said that at that time when the four vedas were compiled, the people of Mongoloid origin, speaking languages of the Sino-Tibetan family were present in India.

According to Amal Sarkar¹ Sino-Tibetan speaking people came in India about the middle of the first thousand B.C. through Tibet and Himalayas. These languages are spoken in the North Eastern region of India by about two million. Like the speakers of the Austric languages they must be bi-lingual with some Aryan languages. But Siamese, Burmese and Tibetan became languages of literature and culture through Buddhism and Brahmanism at a comparatively later date.

"The Sino-Tibetan people represent, ethnically, various races. But basically, they belong to the mongoloid type - yellow skin, oblique eyes, high cheek-bones, straight hair, comparative absence of hair on face and body and medium height. It is said that the original

1. Amal Sarkar (Ed) "Handbook of Languages in India and Dialects of India", Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadyay, 1964, p.xi.

Sino-Tibetan speakers appear to have become characterised with their basic language at least 4000 years before Christ in the area to the West of China, between the sources of the Yantze and Hurang - Ho rivers."¹

The Mongoloid languages of India can be divided into several groups. Although there are two main branches of the original Sino-Tibetan speech viz. (i) Tibeto-Burman (ii) Siamese-China.

(i) The Simese family, however, is now represented only by one language spoken in and that is Khasui (only 300 speakers) which is distinct from Tibeto-Burma and belong to the Tai group of languages.

(ii) The Tibeto-Burman sub-family of languages is to be divided into two branches (a) Tibeto-Himalayan Branch and (b) Assam-Burma Branch.²

Some Sino-Tibetan languages have their literary languages in the form of Manipuri, Newari etc. All other Sino-Tibetan languages in India are not developed. Due to Christian missionary's efforts, most of these languages have been written down. "But for these Sino-Tibetan people

1. William Hunter, "India: Languages" Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1970 p.14.
2. "Census of India 1971, Language Handbook on Mother-tongues", Govt. of India, p.xxxviii.

in Assam etc. the knowledge of Assamese and Hindustani is becoming essential. And although they are keeping up their languages, it is inevitable that they will ultimately all become bilingual and loose their language".¹

As many as 226 names of mother-tongues were enumerated which, on scrutiny, partly on the basis of Grierson's classifications and partly on the basis of real informations collected by the census organisations were tentatively considered to consist of no less than 98 languages. The population represented by the entire family of the speakers was however, only about 3.2 million which, on population count, accounts for only 0.73%.² Over a vast area stretching from Ladakh in the West to the North Eastern Frontier and even touching the Eastern and Southern most portions of Assam. However, seven languages of the family were recorded to possess strength of more than one lakh of speakers each. The languages with

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1. V.K. Narasimam(Ed) The Language of India - A Kalei doscopic survey". Madras. Our India Directories and Publications Pvt. Ltd. 1958, p.7.
 2. "Census of India 1971 Language Handbook on Mother-tongues in Census", Government of India, p.xxxviii.

most numerous speakers are Meithili/Manipuri, Boda, Garo, Tripuri, Miri and Mikri.

Table No. 2.3

Table showing the languages spoken by one lakh and above people of the Sino-Tibetan family :

Sr.No.	Name of the languages	Number of speakers
1.	Miri	103,188
2.	Boda/Boro	286,339
3.	Garo	307,026
4.	Tripuri	215,624
5.	Mikri	154,786
6.	Manipuri/Maitheli	621,224
7.	Lashi/Mizo	221,985

Source: Based on "Census of India 1971, Language Handbook on Mother-tongues in Census" Government of India, Annexure I, p.(i) to (vi).

(iv) THE INDO-ARYAN FAMILY

The people belongs to the tribes of this primitive Indo-Aryan stock had spread out from their home land to the South in Europe and Asia. One of its groups, came by way

of the caussian mountains and Northern Mesopotamia between 2500 to 1500 B.C. and then they spread further East into Iran and finally they came into India. Thus the Aryans came in India in about 1500 B.C. and spreaded Indo-European languages throughout the North and Central India that is Indus and the Ganges vallies.¹

The language of old-Indo-Aryan can be seen in the Richas and Mantras of the four Vedas which are written in the praise of their Gods, collected and compiled in India some time during the 10th century B.C.²

Some time in the 7th Century B.C. from this Vedic language was evolved the standardised language which has since been known as Sanskrit.³ The Aryan speech spread from the Funjab to Eastern part of the country along the valley of the Ganges and by 600 B.C. it has well established throughout the whole of the Northern Indian plains upto the Eastern Border of Bihar.

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1. Anil Sarkar (Ed) "Handbook of Languages in India and Dialects of India". Calcutta: Firma K.L.Mukhopadyay, 1964, p.x.
 2. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, "Languages and Literatures of Modern India", Calcutta: Bengal Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1963, pp. 28-29.
 3. "Report of the Official Language Commission 1956", New Delhi: Government of India, 1957, p.20.

"During the middle of the first millennium B.C. Middle-Indo Aryan or Prakrit was established. This middle Indo-Aryan or the Prakrit phase, the Brahmi teachers in North-Western India and elsewhere set up a kind of younger form of Vedic speech which they called Laukika or "current" speech as their language of study and literature".¹

The language of Vedas is different than the Sanskrit language which is considered as a younger form of the old-Indo-Aryan speech. Sanskrit was established by about 300 B.C. and it is considered as the great vehicle of religion and culture of Hindus. "The most exact rules of grammar in the history of language; with which it had been fortified by Panini (400 B.C. circa) proved its chief strength as well as weakness".² Subsequently Pali language a degenerated form of Sanskrit became the language of Buddhist scriptures.

Sanskrit for many centuries there after was the one language par excellence of culture amongst the literate in all parts of India.³ After Pali another form of language

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1. V.K. Narashiman (Ed), "The Language of India - A Kaleidoscopic Survey", Madras, Our India Directories and Publications, Pvt. Ltd., 1958, p. 11.
 2. R.K. Yadav, "The Language Problem", Delhi: National Publishers House, 1964, p. 22.
 3. "Report of the official Language Commission, 1956", New Delhi, Government of India Press, 1957, p. 20.

language in the form of Prakrit developed. "The various Prakrits or the middle Indo-Aryan dialects continued to be developed to expand some of these were adopted by Buddhist and Jaina Sects., in ancient India as their sacred languages, notably Pali among the Buddhists of Hinayana or Southern school. The process of simplification of the Aryan speech, which began with the second or middle Indo-Aryan stage, continued and by 600 A.D. we came to the last phase of middle Indo-Aryan, known as the Apabhramsa stage. Further modification of the regional Apabhramsa of the period 600-1000 A.D. gave rise with the beginning of the 2nd millennium A.D." ¹

"Two major varieties of Prakrit are Eastern Prakrit and Western Prakrit. The most significant representative of the former was Magdhi, which prevailed in the Magadha region (South Bihar) and that of the latter was Saurseni in the Soursena region, the middle Gangetic Doab. In the area between the two regions, there existed a third variety, Archa-Magdhi, (half Magdhi), which shared the characteristics of the Eastern and Western Prakrits. Still another important variety was Maharashtri, the language of Maharashtra, related

1. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, "Languages and Literatures of Modern India", Calcutta: Bengal Publishers Pvt.Ltd., 1963. p. 30.

to Ardha-Margdhi, but learning rather to the Eastern than to the Western".¹

The modern Indo-Aryan Languages developed after 1,000 A.D. These languages covers the largest portion of the population in the world. It covers widest area of our country and the largest section of the population. As many as 574 mother-tongues, covering 331.7 million speakers or over 73 percent of India's (1961) population, are affiliated to the Indo-Aryan sub-family, which includes Hindi, Bengali, Oriya, Marathi, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Sindhi, Kashmiri, Bihari, Gujarati, etc.² Mother tongues spoken by more than one lakh people of Indo-Aryan family have been shown in Table No. 2.4.

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1. Baldev Raj Nayar, "National Communication and Language Policy of India"., New York: M.C. Gill University, Fredrick A. Pragea Publications, 1969, p. 31.
 2. S.B. Patnaik, "Land of Many Tongues" in "Times of India" (Delhi) September 16, 1973.

Table No. 2.4

Table showing the languages spoken by one lakh and above people of Indo-Aryan family:

Sr.No.	Name of the languages	Number of speakers
1.	Kashmiri	1,914,446
2.	Sindhi	977,023
3.	Marathi	32,767,422
4.	Konkani	1,337,134
5.	Oriya	15,610,736
6.	Bihari	16,806,772
7.	Bhojpuri	7,964,755
8.	Magadhi/Magahi	2,818,602
9.	Mai thili	4,984,811
10.	Bengali	33,754,408
11.	Assamese	6,803,463
12.	Hindi	1,23,025,489
13.	Hindustani	122,011
14.	Urdu	23,323,047
15.	Punjabi	8,868,279
16.	Gujarati	20,105,846
17.	Bhili	769,340
18.	Rajasthani	804,274

contd..

19.	Nepali	1,004,026
20.	Kumauni	1,030,075
21.	Garhwali	809,746
22.	Sirmauri	119,389
23.	Mandeali	227,352
24.	Pahari-unspecified	1,015,203
25.	English	223,981

Source: Based on "Census of India, 1971, Language Handbook on Mother-tongues in Census", Government of India, Annexure I, p.(i) to (vi).

There were number of other Mother-tongues which could not classified under any of the four major families and remained as unclassified. According to Grierson unclassified languages are "all" mixtures of various forms of speech, but they passes one characteristic in common that they nearly all seem to have a Dravidian basis. Some Gipsy dialects like Beldari, Kolhati, Sikalgari, etc. are unclassified languages. There are 527 such languages covering 62,432 speakers. The 1961 Census also reported 103 foreign mother_tongues spoken by 3,00,000 people in this country.

Present Day Linguistic Reality

(i) India as a Linguistic area

The Indian people belong to different races, castes and creeds having different religions. Similarly, there are numerous dialects, and other-tongues spoken in India and belong to different language families. Acharya Vinoba Bhave has in this regard said that "there are many religions, languages and castes in India. (This great land has become the meeting place of different social groups). No other country provides such a grand spectacle of coming together of people speaking different languages, professing different religions and belonging to different castes. Yet it is remarkable that all these people consider India to be their home, their country".¹ This is also evident from the linguistic survey and the census report of India as they have recorded the various languages and dialects customarily. Moreover the survey has divided the languages and dialects into different families and sub-families. The languages and dialects of India are divided into four distinct families (These have been described into preceding pages).

1. Vinoba, "Language Problem", Varanasi: Sarva Seva sangh Prakashan Rajghat, 1970.p.1.

"Although all the languages of India do not belong to the same stock, but their literary inheritance is common".¹

In this respect Dr. S.K. Chatterji, an eminent linguist has also stated a very important thing. He says, "there are fundamental differences in the structure and vocabulary among these (languages) but contact among them for 33,000 years and more, particularly through masses of Austriacs, Dravidian and Sind-Tibetan speakers adopting Aryans has led to the imposing upon each other or to common evolution, in spite of original differences, of a number of common characteristics which may be specially called Indian and which are found in languages belonging to these families, Austriac, Dravidian and Aryan overlaying their genetic diversity. There is thus in Indian languages at the present day in Indian character which forms one of the basis of that certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, 'that general Indian personality' which has been admitted even by Sir Harbert Risley, otherwise so sceptical about India's claim to be considered as the people".²

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1. Dr. Nagendra (Ed) "Indian Literature", Agra: Laxmi Narain Agrawal, 1959, p.v.
 2. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, "Languages and Linguistic Problem of India". In Amal Sarkar (Ed), "Languages of India", Calcutta: P.XII.

Dr. S.K. Chatterji has further said about the formation of Indian societies their culture and unity. He said that peoples belonging to different races and culture came and settled down in India since very ancient period. According to their culture they organised their civilisation and a way of life. Perhaps Negrito were the ancient people who came in India and settled down. They were followed by Austriacs, Dravidians, Aryans and Tibeto Chinese tribes. These were the important races which supplied the basic elements in the formation of Indian societies, their culture and unity.¹

In this way when Aryans settled in India they influenced the people with their culture. "The Austriacs and the Dravidian supplied some of the fundamental bases of the Indian population and Indian social and cultural life. The Tibeto-Chinese also furnished some elements in the population, probably also in culture, in a restricted area in the North East. But it was the Aryans who with his superior organisation welded all these various elements into a united whole, in which the component parts were chemically combined in some places, or just mechanically

1. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, "Indo-Aryan and Hindi", Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadyay, 1960 p.2.

mixed in others, and the Aryans language was one of the most potent factors in the evolution of India humanity in its history, its religion and thought, in its characteristic culture. For this language became the vehicle, the symbol as well as the expression of the composite culture that grew upon the soil of India after the Austriacs and the Dravidians has prepared the bases and the Aryans had started to build on these bases; and, as Sanskrit and as Pali, as the ancient North Western Prakrit and Ardha-magdhi, and as Apabhramsa, and later as Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Oriya, Bengali and Nepali, and finally the Aryan language came to be indissolubly linked with the culture of India at various epochs and in various areas".¹

There are several common elements in the various Indian languages and they appear to be influenced by each other. In fact there seems some relationship in all major Indian languages. They seems to come from a common origin viz. Sanskrit "All languages including what are known as the Dravidian language have through all the centuries of their existence habitually drafted, in a greater or less degree, to meet every new situation or requirement for

1. Ibid, pp. 2-3.

expression of a new idea or shade of meaning, upon that vast and inexhaustible treasure-house of vocabulary, phrase, idioms and concept compromised by the Sanskrit language and literature. The literary traditions of different Indian languages have for the same reasons strong identities".¹ G.A. Grierson says that, "The Aryan languages as a rule merge insensibly into each other".²

In the North India we find Aryan languages which influenced the Sino-Tibetan language and vice-versa Sino-Tibetan language influenced the Aryan language. On account of this the Aryan speech was considered to a great extent and this notification was along the lives of the Dravidian and Austric speeches. In the South the old languages survive the impact of the modifications. This modification comes into existence when people with different languages meet together. Their languages affected in the field of construction of words and their phonology.

In the North the Non-Aryan change their phonology and syntax by adopting the Sanskrit and Prakrit words. As a result of this new words were formed. In all the South

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1. "Report of the Official Language Commission 1956" New Delhi, Government of India Press, 1957, p. 249.
 2. Siddheswar Verma "G.A. Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India - A Summary Part II", Hoshiarpur, Vishveshwar Institute of Punjab University, 1973, p. 539.

and Dravidian speeches the Sanskrit as Prakrit words were in large quantity and inalienable element. In the south the Aryan spirit prevailed over the Non-Aryan languages.

The Dravidian languages have borrowed words from Sanskrit, Middle Indo-Aryan from time to time. "The Munda languages likewise have much Indo-Aryan material, chiefly, so far as we know how borrowed from modern Indo-Aryan though this, of course, included items that are Sanskrit in form since modern Indo-Aryan borrows from Sanskrit very considerably".¹ e.g. "phala" (fruit) Sanskrit word which finds in the Indo-European family is a loan word from Dravidian.²

The Indo-European seems to have absorbed retroflex consonants of Sanskrit the t-varga from Dravidian. Due to contact between Indo-Aryan and Dravidian they influence each other and as a result of this both the groups influence each other and Dravidian borrowed Sanskrit words to influence its vocabulary.³ These words have been borrowed in such a way that their roots have not been affected and they do not seem foreign words like European words. "Like the other

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1. M.B. Emeneau, "India as a Linguistic Area" In Dell Hymes (Ed) "Language in Culture and Society", New York, Harper and Row, 1966, p.650.
 2. "Language and Society in India", Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1969, p.163.
 3. Ibid.

Indo-Aryan languages, it has approximated itself to the Syntex and thought process of the non-Aryan speeches of the country. Dravidian and Kol (Muda); so that a Dravidian or Kol speaking may find Hindi or Hindustani rootes and words different from those of his own language, but the mental atmosphere as indicated by the order of words and idioms he does not find to be different, it is a familiar habit of thinking which he gets in Hindi, not a quite different and a foreign one as in English".¹ Dr. M. Vardharajan is of the view that the fundamental structure of the Modern North Indian languages have been shared from the South Indian languages. In support of this he says that "the Modern North Indian language though called Indo-European or Aryan family of languages, have substituted agglutivated post fixes the flection and so have adopted the grammatical machinery of the Dravidian languages. Further the syntax of the former languages is almost the same as that of the later, so much so that sentences from one language can be translated into another language by the mere substitution of word for word, as seen in the following two sentences in Tamil and Hindi. One has to fill in the appropriate words and post positions of one language in the sentence from

1. S.K. Chatterji, "Indo-Aryan and Hindi". Calcutta, Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1960, p.146.

another, and the structure is then found complete Tamil - Nan vittukku Pakiren, Hindi - Men Gharo Ko Jata Hun, I house to going am. (I am going to house). There are many such points of agreement between the North Indian tongues and the Dravidian languages in the structure of words and sentences i.e. in morphology and syntax".¹

This feature found in a large area of Eastern and Central India. Murray B. Emeneau has relayed upon the fact that "some if not only, Indo-Aryan classifies morphemes are used in all the languages involved and on the further fact that these morphemes are used in only with Indo-Aryan numerals in some of the non-Indo-Aryan languages, is that the construction (so far as India is concerned) is originally Indo-Aryan. It spread then to the other languages as a total construction consisting of numerals + classics, and then was elaborated in some of the languages with native materials, the native numeral, native morphemes as addition classified etc.",

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1. Dr. M. Vardharajan, "Tamil", In Dr. Nagendra (Ed) "Indian Literature", Agra, Laxmi Narain Agarwal, 1959, pp. 3, 6.
 2. M.B. Emeneau, "India as a Linguistic Area". In Dell Humes (Ed) "Language in Culture and Society", New York, Harper and Row, 1966, p. 649.

M. B. Emeneau had tried to prove India as a linguistic area, while doing so he says, "certainly the end result of the borrowing is that the languages of the two families, Indo-Aryan and Dravidian, seem in many respects more akin to one another than Indo-Aryan does to the then Indo-European language".¹

Although India is divided on the linguistic bases in different states but in spite of this it is found that one language influenced the other neighbouring language. The mixture of two different states can be found on their borders. The people of that area understand and speak both the languages. This shows their near intimacy and relations. In this connection G. A. Grierson observes "Although Assamese differs widely from Marathi and a speaker in one will be unintelligible to the other, a man could almost walk for twenty eight hundred miles from Dibrugarh to Bombay and then to Dardistan without being able to point a single stage where he had passed from one language to another".²

1. Ibid. p. 650.

2. "Report of the Official Language Commission, 1956"
New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1957, p. 24.

The characteristics of near intimacy of the languages leads to the conclusion that India is a single "Linguistic Area". M.B. Emeneau says that "(This term "Linguistic Area" may be defined as meaning an area which includes languages belonging to more than one family but showing traits in common which are found not to belong to the other members of (at least) one of the families)".¹

There are many features which are responsible for bringing the Indian languages close to each other, all these form it into a single linguistic area. The most important feature is the language of the rulers which have influenced the other languages. The Aryan language influence the Dravidian language. Similarly the Persian and English languages also influence the Indian languages, when North Indian came into contact of the people from the South the Northern languages influence the Southern languages and vice-versa.

(ii) Pattern of languages used in India

Right from the very beginning different people from different countries came and settled down in different parts of India. But only the Aryans had given a shape to

1. M.B. Emeneau, "India as a Linguistic Area" In Dell Humes (Ed) "Language in Culture and Society" New York. Harper and Row, 1966, p.650.

the linguistic structure of the country. Along with Pali, Ardhamagdhi, Prakrit and Apbhamsa, they developed Sanskrit as a powerful pan-Indian language.

After the Aryans, many more people also came and settled down in India. But they lost their cultural and linguistic identity and were Indianised soon. They did not force any fundamental change in the linguistic structure. Thus the language pattern used was not effected.

But during 10th-11th century people, who came in India, brought with them their own linguistic and cultural character and profoundly influenced the linguistic structure of India.¹

The people who came from the West Asian countries came as traders, invaders, rulers, religious preachers, scholars etc. They were different people coming from different countries, but they had Islam as their common religion. They brought with them their own languages which were used in education and administration of the Muslim States. They introduced these languages as a sign of religion and culture respectively. As a result of this the

1. "Report of the Official Language Commission, 1956"
New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1957, p. 21.

language pattern used in the country was effected. The language which suffered most was Sanskrit and its use at the highest level of society got disturbed. Thus Arabic and Persian languages became dominant languages of administration, education and culture in most of the Muslim States in India.

But in the non-Muslim States, Sanskrit and other Modern Indian languages continued to be used in administration and educational institutions. But at the same time due to Socio-Cultural change non-Muslim States preferred modern Indian languages in comparison to Sanskrit. Thus the position of Sanskrit began to reduce. Consequently in non-Muslim States modern Indian languages were used in socio-cultural fields, educational institutions and even in Government administration. Thus after Aryans there were the Muslims who brought a lasting change in the language pattern of the country.

In the 16th and 17th centuries Bhakti Movement started in the South and spread all over the country. As a result of this Indian linguistic renaissance came into existence and Modern Indian literary languages were introduced in their respective regions and most of them have been recognised now by the Government for their use in education and as well as in administration.

Moreover in the Courts of Mughals Hindi dialect-Brajbhasha and style Urdu was recognised. Vernacular literature was also encouraged during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Therefore, it may be concluded that at the top level Sanskrit, Arabic and Parsian were in use. Modern Indian languages, Hindū-Urdu or Hindustani also hold the significant literary and academic place. Furthermore, during this period Modern Indian languages were studied in their respective regions at the elementary stage and Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian along with Hindū-Urdu were studied at the higher stage of education all over the country.

The British rule in India brought a lasting change in the linguistic structure of the country. They introduced English in administration, education, commerce etc. This introduction of English devalued the place of Modern Indian Languages.

Generally, introduction of English in the linguistic structure of the country is not liked by the people, but as it has been introduced in the name of modernization, at the all-powerful top level of the society it has become a symbol of modernity. Therefore, for middle class people

it has become a positive socio-cultural value with high prestige content and job potential. Before the modern Indian languages could establish themselves against Sanskrit and Persian in Hindu and Muslim States respectively, English language came at the top and added a new chapter to the language pattern in use.

Even after independence when Modern Indian languages have been progressively used in education and administration, English is continuing and is considered as the best language for serving all our needs. Though some people do not like that English should stay in India but it has stayed on and would perhaps stay in as long as the Modern Indian Languages do not become so powerful as English which is serving educational and administrative needs. But the Modern Indian languages have also a great force with their number of speakers, which may turn the language pattern.

Thus it can be considered that establishment of British rule added a new dimension in the Indian linguistic and as a result of this today we have three levels of language use in the country.

1. Top level - (A) English, other foreign languages, and
(B) Classical languages.

2. Middle level - (A) Traditionally cultivated modern Indian literary languages, and
(B) Neo-Literary languages.

3. Base level - (A) Uncultivated major spoken dialects or languages spoken by a sizable number of people, and
(B) Uncultivated minor spoken dialects or sociolects.