

Bhartiya Bhasha Parivar: Preserving Linguistic Heritage through Educational Institutions

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ABSTRACT

India represents one of the most linguistically diverse nations in the world. The concept of Bhartiya Bhasha Parivar refers to the vast family of Indian languages that have evolved over centuries, encompassing classical, modern, regional, tribal, and folk languages. These languages are not merely tools of communication but repositories of India's civilizational knowledge, cultural memory, philosophical traditions, and collective identity. However, in the contemporary educational landscape dominated by globalization and the increasing hegemony of English, Indian languages face marginalization. This research paper examines the importance of the Bhartiya Bhasha Parivar in education and analyzes the role of educational institutions in their preservation and promotion. Drawing upon linguistic, cultural, and educational perspectives, the paper highlights challenges, policy frameworks such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and strategic measures necessary for strengthening Indian languages within formal education systems. The study argues that meaningful promotion of Indian languages is essential for inclusive education, cultural continuity, cognitive development, and national integration.

Keywords: Bhartiya Bhasha Parivar, Indian languages, multilingual education, NEP 2020, cultural identity, language policy

Introduction

Language is the soul of a civilization. India's civilizational continuity is deeply embedded in its linguistic plurality. The term Bhartiya Bhasha Parivar signifies the collective linguistic heritage of India, comprising Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austroasiatic, Tibeto-Burman, and several other language families. From Sanskrit, Tamil, Pali, and Prakrit to modern regional languages such as Marathi, Bengali, Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam, Indian languages have carried knowledge systems, literary traditions, ethical frameworks, and socio-cultural values across generations.

Despite constitutional recognition and cultural significance, Indian languages face declining academic prestige in formal education. English has increasingly become the dominant medium of instruction, often perceived as the sole gateway to economic mobility and global relevance. This imbalance has led to linguistic alienation, especially among first-generation learners and rural students. Educational institutions, therefore, bear a critical responsibility in preserving and promoting Bhartiya Bhasha Parivar while balancing global competencies.

This paper explores the importance of Indian languages in education and examines strategies for their promotion within educational institutions, aligning with India's socio-cultural realities and policy frameworks.

Concept of Bhartiya Bhasha Parivar

The concept of Bhartiya Bhasha Parivar transcends mere classification of languages. It emphasizes the interrelatedness, mutual influence, and shared cultural ethos among Indian languages. Unlike monolithic linguistic models, Indian multilingualism has historically been inclusive and organic. Scholars note that Indian languages have evolved through dialogue rather than domination (Annamalai 27).

Indian languages functioned as mediums of education, administration, literature, and scientific inquiry for centuries. Gurukuls, madrasas, monasteries, and pathshalas employed local and classical languages to disseminate knowledge. The colonial introduction of English disrupted this indigenous linguistic ecology, leading to a hierarchical linguistic structure that persists today (Raja 112).

Review of Literature

Scholarly discourse on language and education consistently highlights the role of mother tongue and regional languages in cognitive development and academic success. UNESCO advocates education in the learner's mother tongue, particularly at the foundational level, to ensure conceptual clarity and inclusive learning (UNESCO 15).

Kramsch argues that language is inseparable from cultural meaning-making, and education divorced from linguistic roots leads to cultural dislocation (Kramsch 67). Indian scholars emphasize that neglecting indigenous languages results in the erosion of traditional knowledge systems, oral traditions, and literary heritage (Annamalai 45).

The National Education Policy 2020 reinforces these findings by advocating multilingual education and the use of Indian languages as mediums of instruction wherever possible (NEP 2020).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research paper are:

To examine the educational and cultural importance of Bhartiya Bhasha Parivar.

To analyze challenges faced by Indian languages in educational institutions.

To study the role of educational policies in language promotion.

To propose strategies for strengthening Indian languages in education.

Importance of Bhartiya Bhasha Parivar in Education

Cultural Preservation and Continuity

Indian languages embody cultural memory, ethical philosophies, folklore, and collective wisdom. Literature in regional languages reflects local histories and social realities that remain inaccessible through translation alone. Educational institutions play a vital role in preserving this heritage by incorporating Indian languages into curricula and academic discourse.

Cognitive and Pedagogical Benefits

Research indicates that learning in one's mother tongue enhances comprehension, analytical thinking, and creativity. Multilingual learners exhibit greater cognitive flexibility and problem-solving abilities (Cummins 39). Indian language education thus supports holistic intellectual development.

Inclusive and Equitable Education

Education in Indian languages promotes social equity by making learning accessible to students from diverse linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds. English-only instruction often disadvantages rural and first-generation learners, widening educational disparities.

National Integration and Social Harmony

Indian languages act as bridges between communities, fostering mutual respect and unity in diversity. Encouraging multilingual competence strengthens national integration without undermining regional identities.

Current Status of Indian Languages in Educational Institutions

Despite constitutional safeguards under Articles 343–351 and inclusion of 22 languages in the Eighth Schedule, Indian languages face marginalization in higher education and research. English dominates professional courses, academic publications, and competitive examinations. Many universities offer Indian languages merely as optional or skill-based courses rather than as core academic disciplines.

Challenges in Promoting Bhartiya Bhasha Parivar

Policy–Practice Gap

While NEP 2020 advocates multilingual education, institutional implementation remains uneven due to administrative inertia and lack of clarity.

Shortage of Trained Faculty

There is a significant lack of trained language teachers, especially in higher education and technical disciplines.

Perception and Employability Concerns

Students and parents often perceive Indian languages as less economically rewarding, leading to declining enrolment.

Limited Digital Resources

Compared to English, digital learning materials, academic databases, and technological tools in Indian languages are inadequate.

Role of Educational Institutions in Promotion

Multilingual Curriculum Design

Institutions should implement multilingual curricula that integrate Indian languages across disciplines, not confining them to language departments alone.

Teacher Training and Research

Regular faculty development programmes, translation initiatives, and interdisciplinary research in Indian languages should be encouraged.

Integration of Culture and Literature

The inclusion of Indian literature, theatre, cinema, folk traditions, and oral narratives enriches education and nurtures cultural pride.

Technology and Innovation

Digital platforms, MOOCs, e-content, and AI-based translation tools in Indian languages can expand accessibility and relevance.

Community and Cultural Engagement

Language clubs, literary festivals, debates, and storytelling sessions foster active student participation and linguistic confidence.

National Education Policy 2020 and Indian Languages

NEP 2020 marks a paradigm shift by emphasizing mother tongue instruction at the foundational level and promoting Indian languages in higher education. It envisions Indian languages as mediums of knowledge creation rather than mere subjects of study (NEP 2020). Effective implementation of this vision is crucial for linguistic rejuvenation.

Conclusion

The Bhartiya Bhasha Parivar is the backbone of India's cultural and intellectual heritage. Its promotion in educational institutions is not an act of nostalgia but a strategic necessity for inclusive, equitable, and meaningful education. By embracing multilingual pedagogy, strengthening policy implementation, investing in teacher training, and leveraging technology, educational institutions can restore Indian languages to their rightful place in academia. A balanced coexistence of Indian languages and global languages like English will ensure cultural rootedness alongside global engagement.

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