

Discrimination Generated by English in Indian Education System



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Abstract

Education is one of the most prominent factors which can be said the fundamental requirement of development in a country. Generally it can be easily observed that the uneducated people or semi educated people in comparison to the highly educated people always, remain undeveloped. Thus education proves itself an essential and primary component of the development and better living. The fact which proves the superiority of education and can be observed from society easily is that the people who live a high standard life, are happens to be highly educated. The world is full of such kinds of demonstrations which prove the education, as the fourth fundamental need along with the other three; bread, house and cloth.

These factors, mentioned above, work similarly in India also because we, people are also developing country. Education is a fundamental right provided by the Indian constitution and counted among the basic human rights of each and every citizen of the country. The constitution of India claims that education is must for everyone. Moreover primary education has been provided free and claimed compulsory in the constitution of India. But the question is, the education which is provided to the students in the government institutions and convent institutions are so different, that this difference becomes the base of several types of discrimination.

In the present conditions in our country it reflects from all kinds of education that people, who know to speak, read and write English are supposed reputed and well educated, no matter if they really are or not, and the people who don't know to speak, read and write English are not treated similarly but they are treated as uneducated and not reputed. So English language has created and still creating a discrimination of its own kind. This discrimination can be concerned as the discrimination between English and Hindi or other regional languages. Due to this one discrimination some other discrimination like skill, growth, social, political, economical, employment, better opportunities, job placement and commercial are also being formulated mechanically.

Though it may not be a burning question of the time but many students in such educational institutes found themselves unable to adopt these circumstances, created by this language distinction. In this article we want to discuss about the medium of education as the base of discrimination. Is English language strongly required or it is just an impact of modernity or it has been just an attraction of generations in India. In this research paper we are not trying to pose a question, instead just trying to lighten another face of the Indian education system which shines much but wicked enough.

Keywords: Discrimination, Education.

Introduction

We all know that education plays an essential part in the development in a country. The world today, is the world almost commercial and dependent upon sciences. So it is also a fact that more educated people in a country organize more development to the country. Because development is the fundamental unit of the well civilized society so it is also true that a society can be called well civilized if it is developed enough. Development is not a one step formulation but it is a linkage process of succession and for this it is necessary that all the links and steps ought to be taken wisely. These wise steps can be taken wisely only if the people of the country are well educated and learned. Tools and techniques are basic requirements for the development so it is necessary that the people must be skilled, so that they could provide new techniques and tools. But a big problem arises mechanically when the education becomes formal in a country and that is where our research paper deals.

This research paper critically deals to the extreme use of English language in India over the mother tongue, Hindi and regional languages and some other related factors. Language is meaningful only for the communication purpose but in Indian communities, English has become the symbol of reputation. We shall try to pick out those sectors of education and its employment where English has created discrimination.

We shall divide the containing of this work into five sections. In the first section, we shall try to define the meaning of education according to the several educationist and leading personalities of the society. In the same section, we shall explore that nowhere, any language by any educationist has been shown, as an essential part of education. In second section we shall try to define the meaning of education and its importance, administration as well as provision, according to the Indian constitution. Here we shall try again to show that language here, is also not given any importance in education but it is just the way of communication. In third section we shall try to state the problem and try to analyze it in reference of education. In this section we shall also try to explore the fundamentals of the problem by mentioning Macaulay's education policy in British India. In the fourth section we shall describe the linguistic discrimination in education and its relevance, created by the English. In the final section we shall complete the methodological requirements of the work. Here we shall write the area of the study, describe the methodology used in the paper, findings of the collected data and conclude the findings and try to give appropriate suggestions. But first of all, we shall define the education which is the fundamental concept of our work.

Section: (A) Idealistic Meanings and Definitions of Education

Education has been defined differently by many thinkers and these definitions show the importance of education in the every field of life but no where these definitions have shown that English or any other language can be fundamental call to be educated. **Mohit Chakrabarti** defines the education from Tagore's point of view in his book **Tagore and Education for Social Change** thus, "Education starts with this promise of making oneself social through extinction of the little 'I' that carves for prominence."¹ Here the meaning is something spiritual yet having employment, education starts with this determination and aim that it tries to remove the I (ego) and merge the Individuality to the society, where one feels society within oneself and gets more and more universal as he gets more and more educated. In other words, more education makes a man more social, moral and universal, and removes his ego. In this reference **Swaroop Saxena** writes, "Tagore was the great personality of India. His philosophy emphasized that among human being, nature and international relations there exists a basic unity and love. Hence true education should promote this fellow- feeling and love in the entire present thing."² **Mr. Frobel**, who relates the education to the holistic development of a man in his definition, "Education is a process by which child makes his internal external."³

Here again education is said as the probability of Development of skills which are already contained within the child. Education is that activity of life through which a child manifests his internal as well as external skills and abilities and he merges himself in the outer society. **Mahatma Gandhi** also defines the education thus, "By education I mean an all round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and soul."⁴ Here education is said a drawing in which a man tries to portrait his life in holistic vision by using different types of colours; physical, mental and spiritual. In other words, education for a man becomes a platform where he gets opportunities of preparing himself physically, mentally and spiritually to serve the society. Greek Philosopher, **Socrates** also defined the education as universality of man. He says in this reference, "Education means the bringing out of the ideas of universal validity which are latent in the mind of everyman."⁵ It is known to everybody that any kind of knowledge can be achieved only through the ideas and if those ideas are universal the knowledge is strongly valid. So according to Socrates, Education means to explore those universal ideas, which are already contained in human mind but unexplored. In other words through the education human being extend their knowledge and by extending knowledge man develop his skills of thinking and understanding. Along with the physical and mental development, a man develops quest of getting absolute knowledge through the reason, which makes him hungry for the knowledge. By this process, he presents his unexplored ideas which are hidden in his mind or reason. Indian thinker and social reformer as well as great saint **Swami Vivekananda** defines the education in these authentic words, "Education is the manifestation of perfection already reached in man."⁶ Thus according to Vivekananda, the perfection that is already inbuilt in human soul is manifested by education. Thinking and understanding are **ethereal** qualities of human being and due to these qualities he gets a natural quest of new knowledge. Education is the ground where uncountable attempts are made to fulfil this quest of man.

All in all on the basis of the definitions given above, we can say that education creates a quest for knowledge in children and education itself tries to fulfil that quest. Education excites the man to travel into the adventures of the existence. Education provides that platform upon which man tries to find out the ultimate reality. But the fundamental question of our article 'can education or knowledge be surrendered to any language' is answered 'NO' by all the educationists. From the practical life we can observe only that a language can be the medium of communication so that we could share the ideas but to acquire knowledge a specific language is fundamental need, it is not so. It is absurd, while arguing that through English we can get knowledge but through Hindi we cannot get it. Reading and learning deal only with specific methods, not with specific language. Thus, it cannot be claimed that through English language better education can be provided.

Thus, after defining the meaning of education from the different prospective and analyzing

that specific language may be a necessary requirement of communication but it cannot be the necessary requirement of achieving knowledge, here we shall try to find out the grounds of education in India and also try to explain the education according to Indian constitution.

Section: (B) Education in Honourable Constitution of India

Indian government has different departments to regulate different areas. In Indian constitution education has been proclaimed an essential, valuable and prominent need of human existence. 'Ministry of Human Resource Development' mentions the constitutional amendments of **right to education**⁷ in his working areas to provide the educational right to all the citizens of India. According to this 'The constitution (eight-sixth amendment) Act, 2002 inserted article 21-A in the constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a fundamental Right in such a manner as the state may, by law, determine. The Right of children to free and compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represent the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfy certain essential norms and standards.

Article 21-A and the RTE act came into effect on 1 April 2010. The title of the RTE act incorporates the words "free and compulsory". 'Free Education' means that no child, other than a child who has been admitted by his or her parents to a school which is not supported by the appropriate government, shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or completing and pursuing her from obligation on the appropriate government and local authorities to provide and ensure admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children in the 6-14 age group. With this, India has moved forward to a rights based framework that casts a legal obligation on the central and state government to implement this fundamental child right as enshrined in the Article 21-A of the constitution, in accordance with the provision of the RTE Act:

1. Right of children to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighborhood school.
2. It clarifies that 'compulsory education' means obligation of the appropriate government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child in the six to fourteen age group. Free means that no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education.
3. It makes provisions for a non-admitted child to be admitted to an age appropriate class.
4. It specifies the duties and responsibilities of appropriate government, local authority and free providing in parents responsibilities between the central and state government.
5. It lays down the norms and standards relating inter alia to Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTRs), buildings and

infrastructure, school-working days, teacher-working hours.

6. It provides for rational deployment of teachers by ensuring that the specified pupil teacher ratio is maintained for each school, rather than just as an average for the State or District or Block, thus ensuring that there is no urban-rural imbalance in teacher positing. It also provides for prohibition of deployment of teachers for non-educational work, other than decennial census, elections to local authority, state legislatures and parliament, and disaster relief.
7. It provides for appointment of appropriately trained teachers, i.e. teachers with the requisite entry and academic qualifications.
8. It prohibits (a) physical punishment and mental harassment; (b) screening procedures for admission; (c) capitation fee; (d) private tuition by teachers and (e) running of schools without recognition.
9. It provides for development of curriculum in consonance with the values enshrined in the constitution and which would ensure the all round development of the child, building on the child's knowledge, potentiality and talent and making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety through a system of child friendly and child centered learning.'

Thus in Indian constitution, education is defined and assigned under different approaches and responsibilities of providing education are transferred to the directly or indirectly related persons and institutions. Education is described as one of the fundamental right in Indian constitution. RTE (Right to Education) was provided by Indian government in 2009 in which it was made compulsory to make everyone educated. It was very positive and revolutionary step in the education system of country. But what, if the meaning of a literate person is assigned, just to be literate enough that he could write only his name? In other words according to our education system if a person can write his/ her name, he/ she should be count in literate population of the country. It means in our country the lower limitations, of being educated are, just to know, writing his/ her name. But factually education should have a primary requirement that a person must learn to write and read. But the definition of a literate person in our country is very childish. Anyway this is another problem which is not related to our present work. As we have shown in the first section, that no particular language is assigned by anyone as the base of knowledge and education. The similar factor is here. No language is assigned compulsory to get education in any institution in Indian constitution. But we can observe this fact from the educational institutes of India that the preference of communicative language is given Hindi rather than English. English is concerned by the scholars when the question of placement or employment is raised. This compulsion of English is forced by the concept of westernization which is disguised as modernization. It has become fallacy in Indian people that more they earn western culture, food, clothes, life style and language, more they get modern and reputed. But being western does not mean being modern. The Indian communities are also captured in this fallacy and increasing graph of

English and downfall of Hindi, are its consequences which have been affecting the Indian culture and innocent life style badly along with the mother tongue Hindi.

Section: (C) Statement of the Problem

Language is the medium of communication, understanding, learning and representation, but a man can complete these tasks only in the language which he can understand and speak. A man can understand and communicate best in the language which he has been using since childhood. Mother tongue or native language is that language in which he understands at best because he has best understanding of that language.

Hindi being our official language {Rajya Bhasa in article 343} is mostly spoken and used language in our country. So it should be given importance and extension at its best by the government and the other educational institutions. But in present conditions of the country one can easily look with the closed eyes that Hindi is not given importance what it deserves and the reason behind it, in modern culture English is given more importance by the educational institutions and government as well. Because English is a worldwide language and it has become mostly used language in the communication, all over the world. That is the reason it has entered in the primary teachings in Indian schools and institutions. Peoples are making their mind that speaking and reading English is the symbol of modernity. English has been taught as the primary language all over the country but our communicative language is still Hindi, at least in society and culture as well as in institutions. By using this dialect somewhere unknowingly we are raising a language discrimination which is becoming the base of other discriminations.

In India English appears first with arrival of **East India Company** in 1600. English comes to India first in that very year and after that they ruled the country almost for 350 years. In those 350 years they promote their culture, language and civilization at broad level and tried to suppress and demolish the Indian culture, language and civilization, so that the people could accept their culture and language. To fulfill that purpose they also promote their religion. In South India they promoted their religion and language at very high ratio.

The *English* also implied their education policy just to make Indian slave of their culture and religion. The legal adviser of English Government of India, Macaulay on **19 June 1834** in the period of **Lord William Bentinck (1828-1835)** starts the education policy for India which was aimed only to rule India more and more time. This education policy was a propaganda imperialism policy. **Macaulay** presented the proposal of promotion of English language. The manifesto presented by **Macaulay** contains these conditions.....

In his statement **Macaulay** explains the 43 provisions of 1813 '**Order Letter**'⁸ this-

1. The government is independent to spend the amount till 1 lakh.
2. According to the term 'Literature', not only Arbi and Sanskrit but English also can be included.

3. Indian Scholar- the scholars of Islam or Maulvi and the scholar of Hindu or Pandit are also free to be the scholar of English language and literature.

Arguments In favour of English by Macaulay

After explaining the 43rd provision of order, **Macaulay** repeated the eastern languages and literature and tried to prove the superiority of western languages and literature through the English language. Firstly, by telling the Indian languages meaningless for study **Macaulay** argued that customary local languages in India have no literature and scientific knowledge, and they are so Orthodox and rude that any book cannot be translated till they are not made rich by using worldly stock of literature. Modern educationist S.P. Chaubey shows his disagreement with Macaulay's statement in these words, "it was surprising that the Indian literature and culture which was praised and admired by several European Scholar was regarded by Macaulay as a store of ignorance. Evidently, he was prejudiced and failed to make a correct assessment of Indian literature."⁹

After explaining the Indian languages meaningless **Macaulay** writes to give highest position to English in comparison to Arbi, Farsi and Sanskrit, "A single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia."¹⁰

Thus throwing the Arbi, Farsi and Sanskrit out of the studies, **Macaulay** told the English better than those and gave these arguments, which is known as '**Macaulay Minutes**'¹¹, in the favour of study of English :-

1. It was the key to modern knowledge and science. It means English is more useful in comparison to Arbi and Sanskrit because it is the key of new knowledge.
2. It was a pre-eminent language of the west and was likely to become the language of trade and commerce because English is the language of rulers of India, it is spoken by the higher classes and in European seas it has become the languages of trade.
3. It would bring about social and economic renaissance in India or we can say that Latin and Greek languages became the base of resurrection in England, some western European languages became the base of resurrection in Russia and English will do in India.
4. The natives were desirous of being taught English because he feels that Indians are more excited for English than to study Arbi and Sanskrit.
5. It was possible to make the natives of this country, thoroughly good English scholars.

Above all these arguments, Macaulay denoted his special attention to formulate a special community in India who would be **Indian** by blood and **English** by culture and language. In this reference he writes, "Through the English education a class of that kinds of people in this country can be formulated, who may be Indian by blood and colour but will be English by hobbies, thoughts, morality and skills."¹²

On the basis of above arguments **Macaulay** presents this opinion that to expense upon the institutions of ancient education is foolish and it should be stopped. We should formulate the institutions that will provide the education through the

English languages. Praising and supporting the English language **Macaulay** says. "English stands prominent even among the languages of the west. Whoever knows the English language has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created."¹³

Here we are discussing some views of Tagore on the structure¹⁴ of Indian education system. These arguments, given by Tagore in favor of mother tongue and native culture show that what should had been done and what happened due to the wrong and dominated education policy of English.

These are:

1. The medium of instruction should be mother tongue.
2. Foreign education cannot be the basis of national education.
3. National education should be closely connected with national life.
4. Through education, children should be acquainted with the ideas and values of national culture.
5. Indian should be given Indian education.

Acceptance of Statement Order by Bentinck

When Bentinck was about to ready to accept the policy, H.T. Princep, who was an orientalist and who was concerned for his views about the policy, opposed Macaulay's Educational Policy at that time. After approval of Macaulay's statement Bentinck declares the education policy of government by an announcement in paper. All government fund appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone, British ruled Government of India Proclaimed in education policy 1835 and "Lord Bentinck gave his approval to the policy advocated by Lord Macaulay. The subsistence of Lord Bentinck declaration was as below"¹⁵

1. The British rule in India will propagate European science and literature in the country and the money sanctioned or to be sanctioned for education will be utilized towards this goal.
2. The old institutions will not be closed and the financial assistance already given to them will be continued. But neither the government will give stipends to new students in the old institutions nor will be responsible for their education. But the teachers in them will be appointed by the government.
3. The government will not help in printing and publication of literature in Indian languages nor will publish them itself.
4. Whatever money is saved as a result of the above policy will be utilized for publishing and propagating European languages, literature and science.

Thus the acceptance of India education policy in 1935 by William Bentinck, which was prepared by Macaulay though being biased, had planted the seeds of linguistic discrimination which have grown now fully and also giving their fruits. As in India our grey headed people usually comment '*Angrej chale gaye angreji chhod gaye.*'

Section: (D) Linguistic Discrimination

Discriminatory traditions, policies, ideas, practices and laws exist in many countries and institutions in every part of the world, even in ones

where discrimination is generally looked down upon. In some places, controversial attempts such as quotes or affirmative action have been used to benefit those believed to be current or past victims of discrimination- but have sometimes been called reverse discrimination themselves.

The term **discriminates** appeared in the early 17th century in the English language. It is from the Latin **discriminate-'distinguished between'** from the verb *discriminare*, from *discrimen* '**distinction**', from the verb *discernere*. "Discrimination" derives from Latin, where the verb *discrimire* means "to separate, to distinguish, to make a distinction".¹⁶

Linguistic discrimination (also called **linguicism** and **linguagism**) is the unfair treatment of an individual based solely on their use of language. This use of language may include the individual's native language or other characteristics of the person's speech,.... linguistic discrimination is culturally and socially determined due to a preference for one use of language over another....¹⁷ Language discrimination is suggested to be labeled linguicism or logocism anti-discriminatory and inclusive efforts to accommodate person who speak different languages or cannot have fluency in the country's predominant or "official" languages, is bilingualism such as official documents in two languages and multiculturalism in more than two languages.

The paper is not designed to discuss the problem of education in India. Through this paper we want to attract a beam on the disparity which has been growing because of the various forms of education, developed in India. The constitution of India provides free and compulsory education to the children but there is a great disparity in the forms of provided education. The education system of India provides two medium of education:

1. Hindi medium
2. English medium

The two mediums were given to provide Indian children education in their mother tongue so that they can easily grasp it. But the time since then has changed. In the modern India, where technological development is needed, professional education organizations such as those for B. Tech., M. Tech. and Management are given more importance and rightly so. But we want to stress over a problem that is not so much discussed by now and it's that students who come from the Hindi or regional medium schools or govt. schools are looked down by those coming from the English medium school.

This has not been such a big issue by now but there have been some reports of such clashes. The students from the two mediums totally divide in groups. The education medium is now becoming the symbol of economic status and the intellect. It sometimes poses the same problem as once racialism did.

Section: (E) Methodological Requirements of the Work

Area of Study

We have selected some of the professional institutes from Barabanki, Lucknow and Kanpur for this study.

Research Methodology

In this research work the steps involved so as to conduct it well and to make it complete is as follows:

1. Pilot study
2. Sampling
3. Pretest
4. Interview Schedule
5. Observation

In this field work we had sample of 250 students with a ratio of 1:1 of English medium and Hindi medium students so that we could have a better response for our research work.

The interview schedule consisted the questions on the medium of education the students had, what they think about the students of the other medium education, do they help or seek help of the other, do they see any discrimination in between the two, are they a part of the discrimination, what are their personal view over it and about the reasons behind the problem and the impact of discrimination on them.

Analysis of the Research

Findings of the data are being reported here on the basis of the collected data from different areas. The various categories undertaken for response and the analysis were as follows:

Discrimination

The 56% of the students in the sample taken said that there is discrimination in the two medium students.

Type

When asked for the type of discrimination the responses were mixed:

1. Looked down by the English Medium students
2. Intellectual discrimination
3. Hindi medium students are thought to be of low economic students
4. Different groups of English and Hindi medium students they don't want to come across each other

Impact

The impact of the discrimination on the base of medium of education is as follows:

Psychological Impact

The psychological impact of this type of the discrimination among the students brings about a vast gap in between the students of two medium.

Educational Impact

Not only psychologically the discrimination brings out an educational impact too. They don't try to discuss their problem with the students of the other Medium students and they lag behind due to the same.

Conclusion

Thus as we have read above the paper discusses about a fundamental problems of education system in India. May be it is something not a very big issue by now and an under discussed issue but we have tried to explore a glimpse of it. There is reason why this is not a big and burning issue of education because in our Indian education system the problems are just looked in cities and towns. The medium of education is there in rural areas and small towns because people there are not economically sufficient to educate their children in convent school and if

anyhow someone is economically strong there are no convent schools or high profile institutions in the remote areas. So all in all they people are compelled to send their children in the government schools and it is known very well that government doesn't provide convent facilities.

Thus it is quite clear that most students in India are compelled to study in Hindi medium institutions and when for the purpose of employment, technical and higher education they come in the contact of main stream they find themselves uncomfortable and guilty. A lot of good skilled students of rural areas remain away of development just because of this discrimination of English language. We cannot ignore this fact that without the English India cannot flow in the stream of globalization because English is the main communicative language between the countries. But in India it has become a fashion not a medium of communication, it has become the parameter of reputation and because of this parameter the English as a language has created different kinds of discriminations. So in this work we are just asking for the consent of the more senior scholars over the issue. Some more serious studies on this topic may highlight this issue before the authorities as a big threat for the mother tongue and other native languages. We shall ask the beam of the government over the issue to try and provide equal education to all the children so that this problem could not rise in its problematic form.

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