

CONSEQUENCES OF ADOPTING A MULTIPLE LANGUAGE POLICY IN A MULTILINGUAL AND MULTIETHNIC COUNTRY: THE CASE OF INDIA

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Language is one of the prominent resources that should be planned for the sociopolitical wellbeing of a multilingual and multiethnic country. This study intends to examine the consequences of adopting multiple language policy in such a country. India is a multilingual and multiethnic country where several hundreds of mutually unintelligible languages and dialects are spoken. Therefore India has been chosen as the sample of this study. Attempts have been made to examine the consequences of multiple official languages policy India, citing official records on the subject as the sources of data. Indian government has declared a number of regional official languages for each of the regional states while adopting Hindi and English as the official languages of the whole country. All judicial, administrative, and educational matters in regional states are carried out in the respective regional languages. Hindi and English function as the languages of the central government and facilitate communication between central government and regional states. This language policy has drawn success in maintaining the sociopolitical wellbeing of the country, but not in securing the future of regional languages. The long lasted predominance of Hindi and English has threatened the status and the future of the regional languages. Therefore one can hardly say that this multiple language policy has done justice to the conservation of those languages. Thus it is clear that multiple language policy cannot be regarded as the best solution to all the language related issues in a multilingual and multiethnic country.

Key Words: Language policy, official language, regional language, multilingual country, language conservation

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