

## Book Review

VAGDEVI H.S.

**Title** : LANGUAGE DISCRIMINATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
**Author** : K. SETHURAMAN  
**Publisher** : MAKHANLAL CHATURVEDI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION, BHOPAL  
**Price** : 375/-

The book in essence upholds the Gandhian spirit by emphasizing the fact that, India with such glorious tradition of centuries of literature in all her regional languages has failed to employ the same in professional training and thus having conspicuously made 131.69 million children studying in language schools across India unfit for future employment. The author makes it clear in first few pages of the book that, the book does not banish English but it only banishes Anglicism. The stance of the author is very clear when he comes down heavily on usage of English and brings in instances from Norway and Iceland where, native languages are used for professional training including Science, Federal Bank Governance, Software Programming. The author endeavours to explode the myth created in India on the usage of English as inevitable and Indian languages being inadequate to impart professional training and owing to the use of English that India is heading towards development. The book tries to put in the facts and figures in relation to use of English language across the world and takes a peek into the recognition of major world languages in comparison to that of Indian languages in professional education, international forum and cyber space. The irony of the situation is, most of us usually think in local languages or as we call mother tongue and then translate it into English. Thus, book brings out a clear account on Knowledge, Educational, Diplomatic, Employment, Commercial, Social and Political Exclusion of Indian languages and result of which leads to instability and under development within the given socio political paradigm. The book gives a strong call to develop link languages to provide equal opportunities.

Throughout the book various examples from different countries with accompanying data and statistics both from India and the world are quoted. The book spreads out in six parts covering Language Hierarchy, Foundations and Myths, Deconstruction of Myths, Costs of Linguistic Imperialism, Lessons from Transition and Reform Effort with concentration on India. The first part throws light upon Indian Languages, viz., national status, international recognition and presence of

Indian Languages in Cyber space and also in Indian print medium. With interesting titles and sub heads the figures that are quoted to show the drastic difference in Indians using English as compared to other countries will throw you off cliff. An example of language trend in global Internet usage to speak, shows that, in 1997, 84.0% used English which declined to 29.1% by 2009 at the same time share of Chinese language went up from 0.05% in 1997 to 20.1% in 2009 where the share of Indian languages from then to now is negligible. The author uses connotative and punned sub heads all along the book one such part is where he puts it 'Indians Sow and English Reap'. A lot of effort is put to extract and compile the data.

The book takes you through the details on how Indian languages are excluded from professional education which has reflected in limiting employment potential among rural language medium educated dividend. The book looks at the nuances like; how the neo – colonial elite have created the unnatural situation where we lack confidence in our mother tongue in imparting professional training. It throws light on language policies across the world in comparison with Indian language policy which favours English in comparison to any other regional languages. It also shuns, 'anglophile' argument that English unifies and brings in spirit of nationalism. Rather the author observes that, equal opportunity can be created only through organic revolution of link languages. Though, the author himself is IPS officer, it is appreciable that he gets out of his comfort zone and boldly talks on implementing multi lingual education and recruitment policies to union services there by promoting equal opportunities.

Right from the start it is stressed that the fetish towards the Anglicism is increasing the knowledge gap among the inhabitants of this country and effecting its development the author details out that, the colonized countries that have adopted linguistic policies for empowering native languages have seen higher growth rate as compared to countries where English based higher education and official language policies are followed. This is done by analysing various socio, economic indicators in the above light.

With the worrisome data on diminishing native languages the book takes us through the trends in native English speaking countries along with language trends across the world. It also applauds the recent shifting trends towards the effort made in changing the language policy and introducing native language for professional education. A detailed study of Kerala in comparison with Catalonia a state in Spain in the above light is being done. The book just doesn't state the problems and leaves it but it

also accompanies some of suggestions based on findings where future of Indian languages in a situation where anglophile intelligentsia and colonial bureaucracy have the final say in all its policies and native language speaking talented politician is sidelined and dubbed as regional fanatic and thus marginalizing a majority of population. The book put forth some interesting findings and suggestions to empower Indian people by providing rightful place for its native languages.

The book has all the facts and figures complied with great effort and put precisely to make the reading interesting. It is not only interesting but also informative. This book is not just for the academicians who can take the knowledge to classroom and thereby sensitize the generation next but also to general public who have to be sensitized in making our regional languages more powerful for which it is imperative to understand the language politics and this book makes an effort towards creating awareness. Use of simple language gives more readability to the book where, a student can read and understand the crux of it. Definitely the issues presented in the book are to be looked in to and taken seriously. The persistent call of the author for moving away from being ‘race of imitators’ to becoming the ‘nation of innovators’ is indeed the call of the day.

**Author: Vagdevi H.S.**, Research Scholar, Dept. of Electronic Media, Bangalore University, Bangalore; Email:vagdevipurani@gmail.com