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Linguistic Genocide of Indigenous Languages in Pakistan and India: A Comparative Analysis of Language Policies and Practices

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ABSTRACT

In the postcolonial world, language policies significantly influence the linguistic configuration of nations, often determining the survival or extinction of indigenous languages. This research provides a comparative analysis of Pakistan's and India's language policies and practices to examine whether they promote linguistic diversity or perpetuate linguisticism. Data were collected from the constitutions of both countries and credible online sources documenting actual language practices. The study employs textual analysis, using linguisticism as the conceptual framework and linguistic imperialism as the analytical framework. Findings reveal that English, as a colonial legacy, continues to shape language policies in both nations. Pakistan officially recognizes English and Urdu, with both dominating key domains such as politics, the economy, law, and education. Indigenous languages are largely marginalized, facing decline and potential extinction due to active linguistic assimilation. India, while also granting English and Hindi significant roles, officially recognizes 22 languages and incorporates them into politics, education, and economic activities, thus fostering a more inclusive linguistic environment. The study concludes that Pakistan exhibits high levels of linguistic discrimination, contributing to the erosion of indigenous languages, whereas India demonstrates relatively lower degrees of linguisticism by supporting multilingualism. It calls for the development of inclusive policies that protect and promote indigenous

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languages, ensuring equitable opportunities for all linguistic communities. Furthermore, the research aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 (Quality Education) and 10 (Reducing Inequalities), emphasizing the critical role of language policy in expanding access to education and reducing social disparities in postcolonial contexts.

Keywords: Indigenous Languages; Linguistic Genocide; Linguicism; Language Policy

1. Introduction

Colonial powers such as the British, the Spanish, and the French undertook the colonization of innumerable regions in Asia, Africa, and the Americas between the 16th and early 20th centuries. Dismissing indigenous cultures and languages as inferior and worthless, these colonizers imposed their languages on the indigenous populations and used them actively in education, law, politics, and other key domains as a means of exerting socioeconomic control. This practice, marked by an “ideology of contempt” for indigenous languages^[1], led to the neglect of indigenous languages greatly and created a linguistic hierarchy that placed a colonial language at the top, followed by Indigenous languages. In decolonized Asia and Africa, the colonizers’ languages have stayed and are being actively used in key domains such as politics, law, education, and media.

Throughout history, languages have emerged and died. However, in recent years, a multitude of languages have become endangered due to colonization, globalization, and language policies. These factors are leading to the neglect, decline, and potential death (termed as linguistic genocide) of these languages. In this scenario, the phenomenon of linguistic genocide of indigenous languages, which are languages spoken by indigenous communities, has emerged. This phenomenon stems from deliberate policies and practices that suppress indigenous languages such as Punjabi, Sindhi, and Balochi in favour of dominant languages such as English, French, or Urdu. These policies favouring dominant languages have been formulated and perpetuated by colonial as well as postcolonial governments. Such policies prioritize the usage of dominant languages in key domains at the expense of indigenous languages, which leads to their reduced usage and potential extinction.

The repercussions and consequences of the linguistic genocide of indigenous languages are devastating. Their extinction causes cultural identity loss, social fragmentation, and the erosion of historical memory, for indigenous

languages are not only a means of communication for indigenous communities but also the carriers of the history, traditions, and worldviews of their speakers. The loss of indigenous languages is tragic not only for the indigenous people but also for linguistic diversity and cultural heritage. This comparative analysis aims to study Pakistan’s and India’s language policies and practices (i.e., politics and economy) to determine which policies and practices elevate dominant languages (English, Urdu, Hindi) and which preserve or undermine indigenous languages.

To guide the reader through our analysis, this study adopts a structured, point-by-point comparison of Pakistan and India along the five dimensions laid out in our Comparison Plan (Section 3.6):

- (i) The ideological foundations of each country’s language policy,
- (ii) The structural support allocated to different languages,
- (iii) Linguistic representation in key official documents,
- (iv) The symbolic use of languages on currency notes, and
- (v) The overall impact on linguistic diversity and the risk of indigenous-language genocide.

By working through these five lenses, we can systematically evaluate how Pakistan’s and India’s policies either perpetuate linguistic exclusion or foster pluralism—and trace the mechanisms by which policy translates into practice.

“Mother tongue” refers to the primary local language as used in Article 350A (**Appendix A**); “indigenous languages” refers to any non-official regional languages.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The peak of European imperialism occurred during the 19th and early 20th centuries. During this period, the colonial administration implemented assimilationist policies in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, which favoured the European languages in key domains such as education, administration, politics, and law, leading to the neglect of

indigenous languages. Post-colonization, similar policies persisted, with the European languages being accorded a higher status through top-down language policies than indigenous languages. In addition to a dominant language such as English being promoted, many postcolonial countries, such as Pakistan, India, and Tanzania, have designated local lingua franca: Urdu, Hindi, and Swahili, respectively for national cohesion and nation-building. In this way, a handful of dominant languages are prioritized and promoted by postcolonial administration at the expense of indigenous languages, which are often considered inferior as well. Consequently, indigenous languages face a dual pressure: one from an international lingua franca and one from the local lingua franca, leading to the decline and potential genocide of indigenous languages.

There is a need to critically examine how current language policies and actual practices in postcolonial nations contribute to the survival or suppression of Indigenous languages. This study, therefore, conducts a comparative analysis of Pakistan's and India's language policies and practices to evaluate their roles in either promoting linguistic diversity or enabling linguistic genocide.

1.2. Delimitation

This study is delimited to Pakistan's and India's language policies and practices in two domains. One domain is the language(s) of the constitution, and another is the languages on currency notes in both countries.

1.3. Significance of the Study

Indigenous knowledge, indigenous cultures, and indigenous languages are important for the sustainable development of the environment and social equity. Indigenous communities have singular insights and practices that can provide us with valuable insights and solutions to environmental and development issues. Sustainable practices being practiced by Indigenous communities for taking care of the environment contribute to the ecosystem and guide decision-making in fields such as agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. Likewise, valuing and respecting Indigenous languages is essential as they contain unique knowledge and cultural expressions. However, innumerable Indigenous languages are experiencing endangerment or near extinc-

tion due to state-sanctioned policies, globalization, and social and economic marginalization.

The United Nations (2024) introduced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to eradicate poverty, protect the environment, and ensure global peace and prosperity by 2030 ^[2]. This research holds significant importance as it directly relates to the global initiative outlined in the SDGs. The study focuses on the issue of linguistic genocide and highlights the importance of preserving Indigenous languages. By advocating for the protection of these languages, the research aims to reduce inequalities and promote linguistic and cultural diversity. It emphasizes the implementation of inclusive policies that lead to the upliftment of different segments of society and uphold the rights of indigenous communities, coinciding with SDG 10 (Reducing Inequalities).

1.4. Research Questions

1. What official status has been assigned to English and Indigenous languages within Pakistan's language policy?
2. Which languages are the constitutions available in, and what languages are represented on banknotes?
3. To what degree do language policies and practices favor English or exhibit linguisticism against indigenous languages?

2. Literature Review

This section critically reviews the existing research on the significance of languages and their preservation, linguisticism and linguistic imperialism, indigenous languages, language vitality, and language policy.

2.1. Why Do Languages Matter?

Numerous scholars have advocated for the importance of languages. Crystal (2013) emphasizes the critical need for language preservation, citing several cogent reasons ^[3]. Firstly, languages are essential for maintaining diversity; the arguments that support the preservation of biological diversity equally apply to linguistic diversity. Secondly, languages function as expressions of identity. People often feel a strong connection to their linguistic heritage, with

some even sacrificing their lives to protect it, as evidenced by the events in Dhaka in 1952 ^[4]. Thirdly, languages function as vessels of history, enshrining cultural narratives and traditions. Furthermore, they contribute significantly to the collective body of human knowledge. The interplay of identity and history ensures that each language offers a unique perspective on human existence, highlighting the importance of caring for languages at risk of extinction. Lastly, the intrinsic nature of languages makes them fascinating subjects of study in their own right. The preservation of languages is not merely about maintaining communication systems; it is intimately linked to preserving cultural diversity, identity, history, and human knowledge, making it an urgent priority in the face of growing linguistic endangerment. The loss of any language diminishes both the affected community and the global cultural landscape.

2.2. Linguicism: Language-Based Discrimination

Linguicism refers to language-based discrimination. It denotes the power dynamics and inequalities that occur due to language hierarchies, but they differ in their focus on individual discrimination versus global dominance. Linguicism has been defined as: “Ideology, structures and practices, which are used to legitimate, effectuate, regulate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between groups defined on the basis of languages” ^[5].

Linguicism, discrimination based on language, manifests in three forms:

- i) **Ideology:** These beliefs label languages as sophisticated or foul, modern or backward, superior or inferior. These beliefs can perpetuate harmful stereotypes

and stigmatize certain languages or their speakers. English, for instance, in the postcolonial context, including Pakistan and India, is considered a refined language. Moreover, Urdu in Pakistan has been called an ‘Islamic’ ^[6], where indigenous languages are often considered “not sufficiently civilized” ^[4].

- ii) **Structure:** Laws and language policies that explicitly or implicitly mandate the use or non-use of specific languages. These laws create unequal access to resources, opportunities, and services.
- iii) **Practice:** Discriminatory actions directed against individuals or groups due to their language, such as mocking or excluding those who speak certain languages. This practice can also prioritize and favour dominant languages in education, media, and other key domains, exemplified by forcing students to abandon their native languages in favour of dominant languages such as English, Urdu, or Hindi.

Linguicism can also deny services or opportunities to individuals who lack proficiency in the predominant language. Linguicism perpetuates discrimination based on language, reinforcing social inequalities and limiting opportunities for linguistic diversity and inclusivity.

These components work together to legitimize language-based discrimination, appear justified or normal, effectuate, enact, and enforce language-based inequality, regulate control and manage language use to maintain dominant language privilege, and reproduce and perpetuate language-based power imbalances across generations. Linguicism can cause marginalization and oppression of individuals and groups based on their language, which leads to social, economic, and political inequalities, as tabulated below (**Table 1**):

Table 1. Components of Linguicism and Their Function.

Component of Linguicism	Function
Legitimate	Make language-based discrimination appear justified or natural.
Effectuate	Enact and enforce language-based inequality.
Regulate	Control and manage language use to maintain dominant language privilege.
Reproduce	Perpetuate language-based power imbalances across generations.

The consequences of these components of linguicism are tabulated below (**Table 2**):

Table 2. Consequences of Linguicism.

Consequence	Description
Marginalization	Excluding and sidelining individuals or groups based on their language.
Exclusion	Denying participation in social, economic, or political activities due to language.
Inequalities	Social, economic, and political disparities arising from language discrimination.

2.3. Linguistic Imperialism: Global Language Dominance

Linguistic imperialism denotes the imposition of a dominant language on people with a different language, exemplified by the spread of English across the world. Linguistic imperialism can be caused by different factors, including trade, immigration, and colonialism^[7,8]. Linguistic imperialism is a form of linguicism, with the following features:

- “Linguistic imperialism interlocks with a structure of imperialism in culture, education, the media, communication, the economy, politics, and military activities”^[8,9].
- “In essence, it is about exploitation, injustice, inequality, and hierarchy that privileges those able to use the dominant language”^[8,9]

2.4. Linguistic Genocide: The Extinction of Indigenous Languages

Linguicism results in linguistic or linguistic genocide if it remains undeterred^[9]. Linguistic genocide/linguicide refers to the killing of a language, often owing to language policies that favor pre-dominant languages illustrated by the imposition of a national or official language(s) in key domains such as education, law, politics, education, and government, which leads to the marginalization of unrecognized languages^[10]. Linguistic genocide presupposes the existence of a force that causes the extinction of languages. This force influencing the language can be either active, involving deliberate attempts to kill a language, or passive, allowing it to die through lack of support, or restricted usage in important domains. ‘An unsupported coexistence’ policy recognizes multiple languages but lacks official support for linguistic diversity. Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1994) term the first policy ‘overtly linguisticidal’ (the killing of a language), the second and third ‘covertly

linguicidal’^[11]. Unsupported co-existence refers to a scenario when support is extended to unrecognized languages. These are languages that have no official or national status. The lack of support results in their decline in key domains such as education, politics, media, and law. At a certain point, a situation arises when speakers of indigenous languages forsake their languages for a predominant language(s) that has more prestige and utility.

Indigenous languages worldwide are under severe threat due to the imposition of dominant languages. Linguistic genocide denotes a phenomenon where dominant languages suppress minority languages and have been perpetuated through language policies and practices in a large number of countries. By studying the historical, political, and social contexts of language use and language rights, this review aims to identify the factors that are resulting in the decline of indigenous languages in these countries and how language policies and practices commit linguistic genocide. Through the notion of linguicism, which asserts that language is a tool of power and control, this review seeks to examine how dominant language groups have imposed their languages on marginalized communities, leading to language shift, language loss, and linguistic genocide. Thus, both linguicism and linguistic imperialism work together; they reinforce one another and ultimately contribute to linguistic genocide. Linguicism operates at the individual and societal level, creating inequalities and discrimination based on language, while linguistic imperialism expands this dynamic globally, imposing dominant languages over others. Together, these forces lead to the marginalization, suppression, and eventual extinction of indigenous peoples, potentially resulting in linguistic genocide.

2.5. Indigenous Languages

The next section in this review reviews indigenous languages. The term ‘Indigenous’ denotes someone/something hailing from a specific region rather than originating

or migrating from elsewhere. Indigenous communities are those who have inhabited a place for centuries, as opposed to those who have been living there for only a few decades or a century or two centuries ^[12]. In this way, indigenous languages refer to languages that are spoken by indigenous people. By this definition, English and Urdu are non-indigenous languages in Pakistan, whereas English is non-Indigenous in India as well as in Nigeria. The world is home to 7164 languages; out of this number, 3045 (40%) are endangered. Most of these languages are indigenous languages ^[13]. The loss of indigenous languages is a significant loss to indigenous communities worldwide, as these languages embody their identity, express their customs and traditions, and keep them connected to their environment. Moreover, the loss of a language results in the reduction of linguistic diversity, which leads to a reduction in cultural diversity in the world.

2.6. Language Policy and Linguistic Human Rights

Language policy denotes rules regarding the use and status of languages in a country ^[14]. Virtually every country has some form of language policy affecting the status of all the indigenous languages in the country as well as the status and role of a foreign language such as English, French, or Spanish. Different groups in different countries vie for their languages to be recognized in some way ^[15]. Historically, the most powerful groups have imposed their languages on the rest of the population ^[16], as seen in Pakistan in 1947. The Urdu-speaking population, more educated and holding key government positions, arrived from India and imposed their language on the rest of the country ^[6]. This exemplifies linguistic imperialism. This phenomenon, where the powerful language is imposed on the less powerful, results in the stigmatization, diminished use, and potential death of the unrecognized Indigenous languages. India, by contrast, has historically adopted a more inclusive approach. Post-Partition India recognized 14 languages. Over the years, more languages have received official recognition ^[17].

A language policy that grants recognition to one or two languages to the neglect and detriment of indigenous languages is termed a linguistic policy. An illustration of linguistic imperialism, such a policy violates the linguistic

human rights of those whose languages have remained unrecognized. Linguistic human rights (LHR) refer to the rights that allow individuals to positively identify with their mother tongue and have that identification respected by others, irrespective of whether their mother tongue is a minority language or a majority language. It denotes the right to learn the mother tongue, including the attainment of mother-tongue-based primary education ^[18]. A language policy that grants recognition to only dominant languages, such as English or Urdu, violates the linguistic human rights of communities. Such policies undermine SDG 4, which promotes quality education based on the mother tongue; they also perpetuate injustice and inequality, as highlighted by SDG 10, which emphasizes the need to reduce inequalities. By disproportionately privileging one linguistic group over others, these policies undermine the rights of speakers of Indigenous languages and their cultural identity.

2.7. Linguistic Make-up of Pakistan and India

Pakistan and India are highly multilingual countries with a rich linguistic heritage. Pakistan has 68 indigenous languages, alongside nine non-indigenous living languages used within the country ^[13]. Similarly, India has a vast linguistic landscape, with 424 indigenous languages and 29 non-indigenous languages. In addition to numerous officially recognized languages at the provincial level, English and Hindi are designated as official languages at the federal level ^[13].

2.8. Summary of the Literature Review

This literature review has examined the critical role of language in preserving cultural identity, promoting diversity, and maintaining social equity. It explored the concepts of linguistic imperialism, and linguistic genocide, highlighting how dominant languages, both global and national, have historically marginalized and suppressed indigenous languages. The review discussed how language policies, particularly those favoring a few dominant languages such as English, Urdu, or Hindi, often violate linguistic human rights by restricting the use and development of mother tongues. It also emphasized that the loss of indigenous languages results in diminished cultural

diversity, erosion of knowledge systems, and increased social inequalities.

Additionally, the review presented an overview of the linguistic makeup of Pakistan and India, illustrating the tension between recognized official languages and the multitude of indigenous languages at risk of decline. These discussions collectively underscore the urgent need for inclusive and equitable language policies to safeguard linguistic diversity. Building on these insights, the following chapter examines the language policies and practices of Pakistan and India in two specific domains: constitutional language use and representations on currency notes, to assess their impact on indigenous languages and linguistic equity.

3. Research Methodology

This section discusses the research methodology employed in this study, including the research approach, theoretical frameworks, research design, and data collection and analysis methods.

3.1. Research Approach

This research has adopted a qualitative research approach and is based on the notion of linguisticism as formulated by Skutnabb-Kangas (1989, 2015) ^[5,10]. The study has employed the analytical framework of linguistic imperialism proposed by Phillipson (2012) ^[8]. Through a comparative language-policy-and-practice textual analysis, the research aims to explore trends and their potential impact on indigenous languages. Some countries have made laws that

ban the use of a language. However, such situations are rare. Language policies often promote dominant languages while restricting indigenous languages; such policies are often enforced by structural entities of states through laws ^[10]. These laws (policies) are what this research seeks to investigate. Moreover, linguistic genocide of Indigenous languages may also occur through passive agents ^[11]. Linguistic genocide may take place through passive means in scenarios where a language is allowed to die. This happens when a state offers no support to the indigenous languages, which results in reduced usage in key domains. This area is also the focus of this study, which is the usage of language in actual language practices in two domains.

3.2. Data Collection

Data have been collected from the constitutions of the countries concerned as available in the public domain. The image of the Pakistani 100-rupee note has been downloaded from the State Bank of Pakistan, whereas the Indian 100-rupee note has been downloaded from the Reserve Bank of India ^[19]. All legal texts, constitutional versions, and currency images were sourced from official government websites, ensuring high reliability and currency.

3.3. Theoretical Framework

This research is based on the notion of linguisticism/linguicide/linguistic genocide as propounded by Skutnabb-Kangas (1989, 2015) ^[5,10,11]. This framework is comprehensive and has been operationalized for this research as tabulated below (**Table 3**):

Table 3. Operationalized Theoretical Framework ^[5,10,11].

Factors causing linguistic genocide	Description
1. Linguicism/linguicide genocide may be caused by structural entities (such as a state or a law) ^[5,10]	Linguistic genocide may occur when laws (language policy) assimilate Indigenous language speakers into a predominant culture through the state-sanctioned language policy, replacing their language with a predominant language(s).
2. Linguistic genocide via a passive agent ^[11]	Linguistic genocide may occur subtly through passive means. This happens owing to unsupported coexistence granted either to non-state-sanctioned languages or through the expansion of domains for the dominant language and the reduction of the Indigenous language's domain.

Linguistic genocide can be understood through the active and passive roles of agents. Active agents, such as laws, play a direct role in suppressing indigenous languages by implementing language policies that enforce the assimilation of minority language speakers into the dominant culture. These policies often favor the dominant language, leading to the gradual replacement of indigenous languages. On the other hand, passive agents also contribute to passive linguistic genocide, not through explicit policies but by neglect. When non-dominant languages are left unsupported or their domains are reduced, while the domains of the dominant language expand, this passive disregard leads to the reduction of the minority language's use and significance over time. Both active and passive agents thus play a crucial role in the loss of linguistic diversity.

3.4. Analytical Framework

This research work has employed an operationalized version of Phillipson's (2012) scale of linguistic imperialism as outlined below ^[8]:

- i) It is ideological. Beliefs glorify the dominant language and stigmatize others, and rationalize this hierarchy.
- ii) It is structural. More material resources are allocated to the dominant languages than to others.
- iii) It is about injustice and hierarchy that privileges those able to use the dominant language.
- iv) Linguistic imperialism is invariably contested and resisted.

3.5. Research Design

This research study employs a comparative design, a methodological approach ideal for examining parallel situations where the researcher lacks control over the variables. This design facilitates the investigation of similar situations, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study. The comparative approach is particularly ideal for non-experimental research, where real-world contexts are examined without manipulation.

A systematic approach has been employed for the comparative study. A point-by-point comparison as docu-

mented by Kirsznner & Mandell (2011) has been used for the comparison of language policies and practices ^[20]. By addressing each point side-by-side, this approach ensures a balanced and comprehensive analysis of similarities and differences in language policies and practices across both nations.

3.6. Comparison Plan

This study compares Pakistan and India across five key dimensions:

- i) Ideological foundations of each language policy,
- ii) Structural support for languages,
- iii) Linguistic representation in official documents,
- iv) Language use on currency as symbolic recognition, and
- v) Overall impact on linguistic diversity and potential linguistic genocide.

3.7. Summary

In conclusion, this study has employed a qualitative methodology, employing linguicism as a conceptual framework and linguistic imperialism as an analytical framework and comparative research design to explore the potential impact of Pakistan's and India's language policies on indigenous languages.

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Overview

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the comparative study of language policies and practices. Using the conceptual frameworks of linguicism and the analytical framework of linguistic imperialism, this chapter examines degree to which the language policies and practices of the selected countries are likely to lead to the potential genocide of Indigenous languages.

In what follows, we apply the five dimensions outlined in Section 3.6 : (1) Ideological Foundations; (2) Structural Support; (3) Representation in Official Documents; (4) Symbolism of Currency Notes; and (5) Impact on Diversi-

ty & Genocide Risk—to both Pakistan and India in turn.”

4.2. Comparative Analysis of Pakistan's and India's Language Policies

The section conducts comparative analysis of language policies. As per Article 251 of the Constitution of Pakistan (1973), Urdu is the country's national language, and steps will be taken to make it the country's official language. English is the country's official language until it is replaced by Urdu, and provinces are authorized to use, promote, and teach provincial languages as desired. The analysis of the policy through the operationalized analytical framework lens reveals the following key insights:

4.2.1. Ideological Foundations

The ideological aspect of Pakistan's language policy reveals the following insights. Urdu and English have received official recognition as national and official languages, respectively. This designation leads to a language hierarchy where the two languages occupy a primary status, followed by indigenous languages. In a country that has 65 languages as documented by Eberhard et al. (2024)^[13], the designation of merely two languages is an ideological action. In the Pakistani context, English takes precedence, followed by Urdu, and followed by indigenous languages. The two state-recognized languages are glorified as modern and refined, whereas indigenous languages are stigmatized as backward and non-sophisticated. This process is presented as normal. Post partition, the Bengalis demanded recognition for their language. However, their demand was not granted. One reason Bangali was neglected was its perceived lower status. The language had a Sanskrit-based script and was therefore considered not 'Islamic' enough to qualify as a state language. Urdu, by contrast, was glorified as an 'Islamic' language, therefore an apt choice to serve as the country's national language^[4,21]. Thus, the ideological glorification of Urdu and English not only influences public perception but also establishes a structural framework that prioritizes these languages in governance and education, leading to disparities for indigenous language speakers.

Conversely, the Constitution of India (1950) grants

official recognition to 22 languages. Although the policy designates Hindi and English as official languages at the national level, the policy does have provisions for the use of indigenous languages, which elevate those languages ideologically. The policy states that either English or Hindi will be used in the parliament. However, a member may express themselves in their mother tongue if they lack proficiency in these two languages. Moreover, the President may grant recognition to another language also in addition to the 22 languages, if a demand is made by a significant number of people in the country. The policy (**Appendix A Chapter IV**) also states that an individual may convey their grievance to the state in any language they are familiar with, which is a commendable act.

Ideologically speaking, English and Hindi enjoy a privileged status with significant resource allocation. However, measures are in place to ensure that indigenous languages are not disadvantaged. Significantly, 22 languages have been officially recognized. Granting 22 languages official status at the provincial level demonstrates their significance in the Indian context, bringing them closer to being on par with English and Hindi to a greater degree. A pertinent question arises concerning the many unrecognized endangered languages in India. To promote and preserve these endangered languages, India has established the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CILL) with branches across India. Regrettably, no parallel institute exists in Pakistan, as Pakistan too has endangered languages that need protection.

This inclusive ideological stance demonstrates India's commitment to linguistic pluralism, recognizing and validating the cultural and communicative rights of its diverse linguistic communities. This inclusivity symbolizes not only recognition but also the state's affirmation of indigenous linguistic identities. Where Pakistan's model normalizes linguistic exclusion, India's promotes celebration and preservation. To crystallize these ideological contrasts, **Table 4** presents a side-by-side snapshot of Pakistan and India's foundational language-policy orientations (**Appendix A**).

Table 4. Ideological Foundations.

Dimension	Pakistan	India
Officially recognized	Urdu (national), English (official until replaced)	22 scheduled languages + Hindi/English (union)
Ideological stance	Exclusionary: glorifies Urdu/English, stigmatizes all others	Pluralist: affirms cultural/linguistic rights of all 22, plus mother-tongue parliamentary allowance (Appendix A Art. 120)
Institutional affirmation	No dedicated body for minority languages	Central Institute of Indian Languages + Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities (Appendix A Art. 350B)

4.2.2. Structural Support

The designation of these languages- English and Urdu is also structural; this means significant resources will be

allocated to only these two languages, possibly to the neglect of indigenous languages. To illustrate each **state's structural support**, **Table 5** summarizes which languages appear on key federal and provincial websites.

Table 5. Language Usage on Major Pakistani Government Websites

Website	Languages
https://www.pmo.gov.pk/	Predominantly English. To a lesser degree, Urdu
https://www.nadra.gov.pk/	English and Urdu
https://www.supremecourt.gov.pk/	English
https://www.peshawarhighcourt.gov.pk/app/site/	Predominantly English. To a lesser degree, Urdu
https://pabalochistan.gov.pk/new/	English

It is evident that English and Urdu are predominantly used on government websites, showing their privileged status and central role in official communication and governance in Pakistan. This widespread use highlights the institutional preference for these two languages, further reinforcing their dominance in public domains. The limited representation of indigenous languages on these platforms highlights the marginalization of these languages in key

areas such as law, administration, and public information. Consequently, speakers of indigenous languages are often compelled to prioritize English or Urdu to access essential services, which perpetuates the linguistic hierarchy that privileges the official languages over others. The Constitution of India (1950) grants innumerable languages ^[22]. However, their usage in different domains needs to be investigated, as tabulated below (**Table 6**):

Table 6. Government Websites and Their Language Usage Details.

Website	Languages
https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/	15 Languages
https://uidai.gov.in/	16 Languages
https://www.sci.gov.in/	English and Hindi
https://highcourt.kerala.gov.in/	English and Malayalam
https://www.calcuttahighcourt.gov.in/	English and Bengali

Although English is dominant, the allocation of resources to the use of numerous indigenous languages on different Indian government websites is an impressive practice. The allocation of resources to languages, particularly in key domains such as politics, public administration, and law, contributes to their relevance in daily life. This support strength-

ens their community engagement and intergenerational transmission, which are key to the vitality of language. In Pakistan, resource allocation is dedicated to only English, whereas in India, it is towards numerous languages. The structural differences are laid out in **Table 7**, which aligns each country's website and institutional support metrics.

Table 7. Structural Support for Language Use in Government Domains: Pakistan vs. India.

Dimension	Pakistan	India
Government websites	Predominantly English (some Urdu), Indigenous languages absent	Mix of English, Hindi + 15–16 regional sites in local languages
Resource allocation	Narrow: major IT, legal, administrative portals in EN/UR only	Broad: federal + state sites offer content in multiple official languages
Dedicated institutions	None	CILL branches, State-level language bodies

4.2.3. Representation in Official Documents

Those who have an excellent command of English and, to a certain degree, Urdu enjoy numerous privileges in Pakistan, including better access to education, employment opportunities, and participation in governmental and administrative processes, as these languages are predominantly used in formal contexts (**Table 8**). Conversely, speakers of Indigenous languages face disadvantages

such as limited representation in educational curricula and government communications, which can impede their socio-economic mobility and reinforce systemic inequalities. This linguistic hierarchy not only marginalizes indigenous language speakers but also diminishes the cultural value and utility of their languages, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage, as evidenced by the declining status of Punjabi speakers in Pakistan.

Table 8. Representation in Official Documents.

Dimension	Pakistan	India
Legislative language use	Parliament business only in English/Urdu	MPs may address the House in their mother tongue if not proficient in English/Hindi (Art. 120)
Mother-tongue education mandate	No explicit constitutional guarantee	Art. 350A – primary instruction in children’s mother tongue for minorities

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics’ (2023) results ^[23], 9.25% of the country’s population speaks Urdu as their native language, and English is not a community’s native language in Pakistan, despite being widely used as a second language and an instructional medium in many educational institutions. The glorification of only two languages empowers those who master them, granting these individuals higher status and access to numerous advantages and better employment opportunities. The neglect of a large number of unrecognized languages is a gross injustice to those who lack proficiency in these two languages, as the country houses the second-largest number of out-of-school children in the world.

Pakistan’s language policy has always prioritized Urdu and English, contributing to the decline of Indigenous languages like Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, and many more. Urdu, the mother tongue of a very small ethnic group, was designated as the national language at the time of independence

to promote national unity. Beyond these policy provisions, actual speaker-population trends reveal the human impact of exclusion. **Table 9** tracks the sharp decline in Punjabi speakers in Pakistan from 1951 to 2023—a clear indicator of how sidelining indigenous languages in key domains accelerates their erosion.

Table 9. Decline in the Number of Punjabi Speakers Since 1951.

Census	Percentage Of Punjabi Speakers
1951	57.08 %
1961	56.39 %
1972	56.11 %
1981	48.17 %
1998	44.15 %
2017	38.78%
2023	36.98

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

It is evident that the percentage of Punjabi speakers in Pakistan has declined from 57.08% in 1951 to 36.98% in

2023. Soofi (2024) is highly critical of Punjabis for abandoning their language^[24]. ‘They have killed their language. Not just that. They celebrate it to show unabashedly to the world that it rightly deserves to be extinct, as if it were an aberration. Soofi’s (2024) harsh critique urges the Punjabis to reclaim their language and cultural identity as one’s mother tongue is akin to a mother, inherently valuable and beautiful^[24].

To calculate the overall decline, constituting a 35.2% decrease in the proportion of Punjabi speakers in Pakistan since 1951. This research argues that this alarming decline in Punjabi speakers is not merely a statistic but a direct consequence of the country’s language policy that privileges English and Urdu.

Pakistan’s language policy has been instrumental in the marginalization of indigenous languages such as Punjabi, Balochi, and Pashto, with many families currently making every effort to educate their children in Urdu or English for better socioeconomic opportunities. The focus on Urdu as the instructional medium in public schools and English for higher education creates a linguistic hierarchy that limits the practical utility of indigenous languages in educational contexts. Under the influence of the language policy, Pakistan’s language education policy delivers education mainly in English and Urdu to the neglect of indigenous languages. In this way, English and Urdu connote education and sophistication, and indigenous languages backwardness and marginalization. Moreover, only English and Urdu are used in key domains such as law, politics, administration, and media, compelling indigenous language speakers to shift to the dominant language.

To provide context, Pakistan’s population, according to the 2023 census, was 241 million. In 2017, Punjabi was spoken natively by 38.78%, which dropped to 36.98%. This drop in percentage, when calculated, adds up to a million speakers. It means five million speakers in the last 6 years abandoned their mother tongue, contributing to the

decline and eventual death of the Punjabi language, mainly under the influence of the language policy, which prioritizes English and Urdu only. Phillipson (2012) asserts that linguistic imperialism is based on ideologies that regard certain languages as superior and certain inferior^[8]. English and Urdu in the Pakistani context are associated with intelligence, progress, education, and sophistication. Indigenous languages like Punjabi and Pashto are stigmatized as inferior and backward. Consequently, people are compelled to abandon these indigenous languages in favour of the dominant language, Urdu.

In India, English and Hindi enjoy the status of official languages, giving rise to injustice and a linguistic hierarchy. However, there are measures in place for the usage and promotion of languages other than these two languages. For instance, Indian parliamentarians can, a provision granted by Article 120 of the Constitution of India (1950)^[22], use their mother tongue if they lack proficiency in English and Hindi. Article 350A provides for mother-tongue education for children from different linguistic backgrounds; Article 350B establishes the appointment of a special officer, known as the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities (CLM) for the redressal of grievances of linguistic minorities (**Appendix A**). Such provisions play a crucial role in establishing linguistic equity and dismantling linguistic hierarchy. Moreover, in the Indian context, languages other than English and Hindi are actively used in different domains. Article 350 of the Constitution allows citizens to express their grievances in a language they are proficient in, which is a commendable step towards linguistic pluralism and equity. Additionally, Indian citizens receive their utility bills in a language other than English and Hindi. The Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) (<https://www.pspcl.in/>) prints bills in the Punjabi language, a praiseworthy initiative towards the protection of the linguistic rights of Indians. To conclude, Pakistan’s language policy violates the linguistic rights of Pakistani citizens, whereas India’s policy appears to uphold them as depicted in **Table 10**.

Table 10. Languages of Constitutions.

Dimension	Pakistan	India
Constitution languages	English + Urdu only	Texts available in all 22 scheduled languages
Legislative usage	Parliament business only in EN/UR	MPs may address in mother tongue if not proficient in EN/HI (Art. 120)
Education provisions	No explicit mother-tongue schooling mandate	Art. 350A: Primary education in mother tongue for minorities

4.2.4. Symbolism of Currency Notes

Pakistan's language policy grants official recognition to only two languages (**Table 11**). The policy may be termed discriminatory; The promotion of these two has led to opposition from different groups^[25]. The first group demands the usage of Urdu at all tiers of government, replacing English. The second form of opposition comes from different ethnicities in Pakistan who resist the imposition of Urdu, which is leading to the decline of their ethnic languages. The first ethnicity to challenge this policy was the Bangali, who demanded recognition for their language^[4,21].

The language policy in Pakistan manifests linguisticism and linguistic imperialism by prioritizing English and Urdu, which are glorified as modern and sophisticated, while indigenous languages are marginalized and stigmatized. This hierarchical structure not only undermines the cultural value of these indigenous languages but also perpetuates socio-economic inequalities for their speakers. Together, they reinforce one another and amplify their impact, leading to the suppression and potential eradication of indigenous languages as manifested by the alarming declining numbers of Punjabi speakers in Pakistan.

Table 11. Languages on ₹100 Note.

Dimension	Pakistan	India
Languages on ₹100 note	2 (English, Urdu)	17 (English, Hindi + 15 other scheduled languages in alphabetical order)
Symbolic message	Reinforces EN/UR hierarchy, sidelines regional tongues	Celebrates multilingual heritage, elevates many regional languages

In 1947, India officially recognized 14 languages, and currently the number stands at 22, as outlined in the Constitution of India. Initially, India encountered language riots. However, the situation appears to have settled. Thirty-eight additional languages are likely to receive official recognition^[17,22], highlighting a commitment to linguistic pluralism and an apparent lack of linguisticism and linguistic imperialism^[18].

4.2.5. Impact on Diversity and Genocide Risk

A comparative lens reveals that Pakistan's language policy tends toward what Skutnabb-Kangas (2015) terms *linguicism* and also exhibits features of *linguistic imperialism*^[8]. By elevating English and Urdu to privileged statuses—while omitting formal protections for indigenous languages—the state contributes to the systemic marginal-

ization and possible erosion of its linguistic diversity.

India, by contrast, embeds a range of institutional safeguards that reflect a more inclusive linguistic ideology. These include:

- Constitutional recognition of 22 scheduled languages.
- The right of Members of Parliament to speak in their mother tongues (Art. 120);
- A guarantee of mother-tongue instruction at the primary level (Art. 350A); and
- The establishment of the Office of the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities (Art. 350B).

Together, these provisions signal a constitutional and policy-level commitment to curbing linguisticism and promoting linguistic pluralism. **Table 12** summarizes the contrasting policy dimensions and their potential effects on indigenous languages in Pakistan and India:

Table 12. Comparison of Language Policies.

Aspect	Pakistan	India
Language prioritization	English & Urdu	English & Hindi
Impact on indigenous languages	Endangerment & potential death	Protective measures in place
Parliamentary language use	Urdu (and English)	MPs may use mother tongue (Art. 120)
Mother-tongue education	Not specified (de facto UR/EN)	Guaranteed by Art. 350A
Official recognition of indigenous languages.	None	22 scheduled languages
Linguicism	Present	Largely absent
Linguistic imperialism	Present	Largely absent
Inclusivity	No	Yes
Commitment to linguistic diversity	No	Yes

While both countries grapple with postcolonial multilingual realities, India's constitutional and institutional design provides broader structural protection for minority languages. In contrast, Pakistan's approach—centered narrowly on Urdu and English leaves indigenous languages

vulnerable to attrition and, in some cases, extinction.

To consolidate the findings from across all five analytic lenses, **Table 13** presents a synthesized overview of key policy dimensions and their implications for indigenous-language survival in each country.

Table 13. Overview of Policy Dimensions & Effects on Indigenous-Language Survival.

Dimension	Pakistan	India
Ideological foundations	Exclusionary (EN & UR)	Pluralist (22 langs + EN/HI)
Structural support	Narrow (only EN/UR on key websites)	Broad (EN/HI + many regional sites)
Official-document representation	Marginalizes indigenous languages	Extensive representation
Currency-note symbolism	Monolingual panel (EN & UR)	Multilingual panel (17 langs)
Impact on diversity & genocide risk	High risk of language loss	Low risk: protective measures embedded

Viewed holistically, Pakistan's exclusionary framework—rooted in ideological, structural, and symbolic privileging of Urdu and English—raises serious concerns about linguistic sustainability. It reflects what Skutnabb-Kangas (2015) ^[10] characterizes as a linguicidal environment, where state-sanctioned policies actively suppress linguistic diversity.

Conversely, India's comparatively pluralist design offers not only protective measures but also symbolic inclusion, such as its multilingual currency-note panel and regionally localized digital access. These institutional prac-

tices reduce the risk of linguistic genocide and provide a replicable model for preserving linguistic heritage in other multilingual societies.

4.3. Language Use in Practice: Constitutions and Currency in Pakistan and India

4.3.1. Constitutional Language Representation

We first assess which languages each country's constitution is published in as it is an ideal lens on ideological priorities as in **Table 14** below ^[26].

Table 14. Languages of Pakistan's & India's Constitutions ^[26].

Domain	Pakistan's Constitution	India's Constitution
Politics	English and Urdu	22 Languages

Sources for the Constitution of Pakistan:

https://na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1333523681_951.pdf (English);

<https://www.pips.gov.pk/resources/the-constitution-of-the-islamic-republic-of-pakistan-31-05-2018-urdu/> (Urdu) .

Source for the Constitution of India:

<https://legislative.gov.in/constitution-of-india/>

A country's constitution is one of its most significant and key documents as it outlines the fundamental principles and laws governing the country. Thus, the language in which this document is drafted holds great importance as it reflects the linguistic priorities and inclusivity of the nation. Ideologically, in Pakistan, two languages are ele-

vated, and they are English and Urdu, as the constitution is drafted in only these two languages. This way, these two languages are glorified and all indigenous languages are stigmatized through neglect, and this is presented as normal. The allocation of resources, which is evident in this case, further cements the dominance of dominant language-

es. Linguistic imperialism leads to a power imbalance, which favors those who speak the dominant language(s) and disadvantages those who do not. However, this leads to resistance from different segments of society whose languages are sidelined by the state ^[6,27].

In contrast, India's approach is more inclusive, with the constitution available in 22 languages. This way, they celebrate the richness of indigenous languages and demonstrate and prove a commitment to promoting their indigenous languages. The availability of the constitution in 22

languages raises indigenous languages and is a significant stride towards promoting indigenous languages, which are absent from Pakistan's constitution. The next section investigates language usage on currency notes in the selected countries.

4.3.2. Currency-Note Language Symbolism

Next, we examine the languages displayed on the 100-rupee banknotes of each country (Figures 1 and 2):



Figure 1. Pakistani 100-Rupee Banknote.

Source: State Bank of Pakistan (2024)



Figure 2. Indian 100-Rupee Banknote.

Source: Reserve Bank of India (2024)

These details can be tabulated, as follows (Table 15):

Table 15. Languages on Pakistani & Indian 100-Rupee Notes.

Domain	Pakistani 100-Rupee Banknote	Indian 100-Rupee Note
Currency Notes	Two Languages	17 Languages

Pakistani currency notes feature and elevate only indigenous languages, which solidifies their dominance in key domains such as education, politics, and, of course, in the economy, as evidenced by their presence on currency notes. This scenario, where a handful of languages are favored over others, exemplifies linguistic imperialism

and linguisticism. Although the prioritization of English and Urdu benefits a small minority, it equips them with rights that others are deprived of. This leads to injustice for those who lack proficiency in these languages. Such prioritization is often contested and resisted by different sections of society, who demand equal recognition for their languages. By contrast, the inclusion of 17 languages in Indian currency is remarkable from the perspectives of inclusivity and linguistic diversity. The Indian ten-rupee note has its amount written in 17 languages. The languages are displayed in alphabetical order. The languages included on the panel are: Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu. On the obverse, the denomination is written in English and Hindi, and on the reverse, there is a language panel that displays the denomination of the note in 15 of the 22 official languages of India.

Currency notes are small and cannot accommodate many languages. The inclusion of a word or phrase from a particular language might not be sufficient to raise the status of a language and save it from extinction. However, this is not the case. The presence of a word or phrase in a particular language is more symbolic and ideological than practical. This step demonstrates the importance of that

language to the state. In this way, the use of multiple languages on Indian currency notes demonstrates the significance of these languages for India, a feature that is absent in the Pakistani context.

4.4. Overall Comparison of Pakistani and Indian Language Policies and Practices

Table 16 presents a stark contrast between Pakistan's and India's language policies. Pakistan's language policy lacks respect for linguistic diversity and inclusivity. In contrast, India's policy prioritizes linguistic diversity and promotes a more inclusive approach. Pakistan's policy's inherent linguisticism poses a threat to indigenous languages, which is potentially leading to linguistic genocide. India's policy is largely free from such linguistic bias. While India's policy respects linguistic diversity, promotes inclusivity, and avoids linguistic imperialism to a greater degree, Pakistan's policy falls short in these areas. This disparity has significant implications for language preservation, cultural identity, and social cohesion in both countries. India's approach can be a model for Pakistan to reevaluate and reform its language policy. In this way, Pakistan can promote a more inclusive and diverse linguistic landscape.

Table 16. Pakistan's and India's Language Policies.

Aspect	Pakistan's Language Policy	India's Language Policy
Commitment to Linguistic Diversity	Absent	Present
Inclusivity	Absent	Present
Linguistic Imperialism	Present	Largely Absent
Linguistic Genocide Risk	Present	Largely Absent

4.5. Key Findings

The study has revealed the following findings:

1. English holds a key position in Pakistan, enjoying official status through constitutional provisions. Alongside Urdu, it dominates the domains of power, such as government, media, education, and the corporate sector, while indigenous languages are mar-

ginalized. This aligns with Rahman's (2006c) argument that English functions as a symbol of power, sophistication, and elite identity^[21], reinforcing its status within the upper class and further contributing to the marginalization of indigenous languages.

2. Pakistan's constitution is available only in English, whereas India's constitution is available in 22 languages. Moreover, Article 350A of India's constitu-

tion outlines mother-tongue education, which aligns with SDG 4.

3. Pakistan's language policy is assimilationist in nature, while that of India is pluralist. Pakistan's policy promotes assimilation in favor of Urdu and is leading to the endangerment and potential genocide of indigenous languages. This aligns with Kamath et al.'s (2018) argument that Pakistan's language policy is committing systemic genocide of indigenous languages^[28].
4. Pakistan's language policy remains underdeveloped, while India's is far more comprehensive, explicitly addressing linguistic diversity.
5. Pakistan's language policy has designated Urdu as the national language, which appears to indicate the existence of only one nation in Pakistan, which seems problematic. By contrast, India's policy lacks the designation of a national language, with Hindi being designated as one of the official languages in addition to English.
6. English and Urdu dominate actual language practices in Pakistan, whereas in India, different indigenous languages take precedence in key domains.

5. Conclusions

Pakistan's language policy has granted official status to English and national language status to Urdu, leaving a large number of indigenous languages unrecognized. This neglect has led to the endangerment of these languages, and they face potential death as they are restricted to mostly less significant domains. In Pakistan, English and Urdu enjoy a privileged status, whereas indigenous languages are stigmatized and considered inferior, exemplified by the Bengali language being vilified as un-Islamic and the Punjabi as foul. India, on the other hand, has recognized 22 indigenous languages and is using them in key domains such as education, politics, and the economy. Furthermore, the language policy in Pakistan fails to align with the 10th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), as it not only fails to reduce the challenges outlined in the 10th SDG but also exacerbates them.

Indigenous peoples have the right to speak, learn, and develop their languages, just like any other language. This

research calls for an end to this language-based discrimination and linguistic imperialism in Pakistan, where only two languages have received excessive importance. Consequently, the officially recognized languages thrive, and indigenous languages are disadvantaged and are faced with potential extinction. This research demands the recognition of multiple languages at the provincial level in Pakistan. It proposes that languages such as Punjabi, Saraiki, Pashto, Hindko, Balochi, and Khwar be granted official status in their respective provinces. India has a significant number of endangered languages that may be granted official recognition or accord protection through education, documentation, and revitalization programs.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, H.N. and M.M.; methodology, M.M.; validation, H.N. and M.M.; investigation, H.N.; resources, H.N.; data curation, H.N.; writing—original draft preparation, H.N.; writing; review and editing, S.K.B.; visualization, H.N.; supervision, M.M.; project administration, M.M. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

Language Policies in South Asia

1. Language Policy of Pakistan

- (1) The National language of Pakistan is Urdu and arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes within fifteen years from the commencing day.
- (2) Subject to clause (1) the English language may be used for official purposes until arrangements are made for its replacement by Urdu.
- (3) Without prejudice to the status of the National language, a Provincial Assembly may by law prescribe measures for the teaching, promotion and use of a provincial language in addition to the national language (Constitution of Pakistan (1973, Article 251).

2. Indian Language Policy

2.1. Language Use in Parliament and State Legislatures

Article 120. Language to be used in Parliament. —

- (1) Notwithstanding anything in Part XVII, but subject to the provisions of Article 348 business in Parliament shall be transacted in Hindi or in English.

Provided that the Chairman of the Council of States or Speaker of the House of the People, or person acting as such, as the case may be, may permit any member who cannot adequately express himself in Hindi or in English to address the House in his mother tongue.

- (2) Unless Parliament by law otherwise provides, this article shall, after the expiration of a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, have effect as if the words “or in English” were omitted therefrom.

Article 210. Language to be used in the Legislature.

- (1) Notwithstanding anything in Part XVII, but subject to the provisions of article 348, business in the Legislature of a State shall be transacted in the official language or languages of the State or in Hindi or in English:

Provided that the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly or Chairman of the Legislative Council, or person acting as such, as the case may be, may permit any member who

cannot adequately express himself in any of the languages aforesaid to address the House in his mother tongue.

- (3) Unless the Legislature of the State by law otherwise provides, this article shall, after the expiration of a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, have effect as if the words “or in English” were omitted therefrom:

1 [Provided that in relation to the 2[Legislatures of the States of Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura] this clause shall have effect as if for the words “fifteen years” occurring therein, the words “twenty-five years” were substituted:]

3 [Provided further that in relation to the 4[Legislatures of the States of 5[Arunachal Pradesh, Goa and Mizoram]], this clause shall have effect as if for the words “fifteen years” occurring therein, the words “forty years” were substituted.]

2.2. Part XVII

2.2.1. Chapter I : Language of the Union

Article 343. **Official Language of the Union** (1) The official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script.

The form of numerals to be used for the official purposes of the Union shall be the international form of Indian numerals.

- (2) Notwithstanding anything in clause (1), for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, the English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immediately before such commencement:

Provided that the President may, during the said period, by order authorise the use of the Hindi language in addition to the English language and of the Devanagari form of numerals in addition to the international form of Indian numerals for any of the official purposes of the Union.

- (3) Notwithstanding anything in this article, Parliament may by law provide for the use, after the said period of fifteen years of—

- (a) The English language, or
- (b) The Devanagari form of numerals, for such purposes as may be specified in the law.

Article 344. Commission and Committee of Parliament on official language.—(1) The President shall, at the expiration of five years from the commencement of this Constitution and thereafter at the expiration of ten years from such commencement, by order constitute a Commission which shall consist of a Chairman and such other members representing the different languages specified in the Eighth Schedule as the President may appoint, and the order shall define the procedure to be followed by the Commission.

(2) It shall be the duty of the Commission to make recommendations to the President as to—

- (a) The Progressive use of the Hindi language for the official purposes of the Union.
- (b) Restrictions on the use of the English language for all or any of the official purposes of the Union.
- (c) The language to be used for all or any of the purposes mentioned in article 348;
- (d) The form of numerals to be used for any one or more specified purposes of the Union.
- (e) Any other matter referred to the Commission by the President as regards the official language of the Union and the language for communication between the Union and a State or between one State and another and their use.

(3) In making their recommendations under clause (2), the Commission shall have due regard to the industrial, cultural and scientific advancement of India, and the just claims and the interests of persons belonging to the non-Hindi speaking areas in regard to the public services.

(4) There shall be constituted a Committee consisting of thirty members, of whom twenty shall be members of the House of the People and ten shall be members of the Council of States to be elected respectively by the members of the House of the People and the members of the Council of States in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

(5) It shall be the duty of the Committee to examine the recommendations of the Commission constituted under clause (1) and to report to the President their opinion thereon.

(6) Notwithstanding anything in article 343, the President may, after consideration of the report referred to in clause (5), issue directions in accordance with the whole or any part of that report

2.2.2. Chapter II – Regional Languages

Article 345. Official language or languages of a State. Subject to the provisions of articles 346 and 347, the Legislature of a State may by law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi as the language or languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes of that State:

Provided that, until the Legislature of the State otherwise provides by law, the English language shall continue to be used for those official purposes within the State for which it was being used immediately before the commencement of this Constitution.

Article 346. Official language for communication between one State and another or between a State and the Union. —The language for the time being authorised for use in the Union for official purposes shall be the official language for communication between one State and another State and between a State and the Union:

Provided that if two or more States agree that the Hindi language should be the official language for communication between such States, that language may be used for such communication.

Article 347. Special provision relating to language spoken by a section of the population of a State. —On a demand being made in that behalf the President may, if he is satisfied that a substantial proportion of the population of a State desire the use of any language spoken by them to be recognised by that State, direct that such language shall also be officially recognized throughout that State, direct that such language shall also be officially recognised throughout that State or any part thereof for such purpose as he may specify.

2.2.3. Chapter III – Language of the Supreme Court, High Courts, etc.

Article 348. (1) Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of this Part, until Parliament by law otherwise provides—

- (a) all proceedings in the Supreme Court and in every High Court,
- (b) the authoritative texts—
 - (i) of all Bills to be introduced or amendments thereto to be moved in either House of Parliament
 - (ii) or in the House or either House of the Legislature of a State,
 - (iii) of all Acts passed by Parliament or the Legislature of a State and of all Ordinances promulgated by the President or the Governor 1*** of a State, and
 - (iv) of all orders, rules, regulations and bye-laws issued under this Constitution or under any law made by Parliament or the Legislature of a State, shall be in the English language.

(2) Notwithstanding anything in sub-clause (a) of clause (1), the Governor 1*** of a State may, with the previous consent of the President, authorise the use of the Hindi language, or any other language used for any official purposes of the State, in proceedings in the High Court having its principal seat in that State:

Provided that nothing in this clause shall apply to any judgment, decree or order passed or made by such High Court.

(3) Notwithstanding anything in sub-clause (b) of clause (1), where the Legislature of a State has prescribed any language other than the English language for use in Bills introduced in, or Acts passed by, the Legislature of the State or in Ordinances promulgated by the Governor 1*** of the State or in any order, rule, regulation or bye-law referred to in paragraph (iii) of that sub-clause, a translation of the same in the English language published under the authority of the Governor 1*** of the State in the Official Gazette of that State shall be deemed to be the authoritative text thereof in the English language under this article.

Article 349. Special procedure for enactment of certain laws relating to language.—During the period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, no Bill or amendment making provision for the language to be used for any of the purposes mentioned in clause (1) of article 348 shall be introduced or moved in either House

of Parliament without the previous of the President, and the President shall not give his sanction to the introduction of any such Bill or the moving of any such amendment except after he has taken into consideration the recommendations of the Commission constituted under clause (1) of article 344 and the report of the Committee constituted under clause (4) of that article.

Article 349. **Special procedure for enactment of certain laws relating to language.**— During the period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, no Bill or amendment making provision for the language to be used for any of the purposes mentioned in clause (1) of article 348 shall be introduced or moved in either House of Parliament without the previous sanction of the President, and the President shall not give his sanction to the introduction of any such Bill or the moving of any such amendment except after he has taken into consideration the recommendations of the Commission constituted under clause (1) of article 344 and the report of the Committee constituted under clause (4) of that article.

2.2.4. Chapter IV – Special Directives

Article 350. Language to be used in representations for redress of grievances. — Every person shall be entitled to submit a representation for the redress of any grievance to any officer or authority of the Union or a State in any of the languages used in the Union or in the State, as the case may be.

Article 350A. Facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at primary stage — It shall be the endeavour of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups, and the President may issue such directions to any State as he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities.

Article 350B. Special Officer for linguistic minorities. — (1) There shall be a Special Officer for linguistic minorities to be appointed by the President.

(2) It shall be the duty of the Special Officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under this Constitution and report to the President upon those matters at such intervals as the

President may direct, and the President shall cause all such reports to be laid before each House of Parliament, and sent to the Governments of the States concerned.]

Article 351. Directive for development of the Hindi language.—It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule, and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages Schedule, and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages

3. Eighth Schedule

(Referenced in Articles 344(1) and 351)

List of 22 languages recognized by the Constitution of India: Languages 1. Assamese.2. Bengali.3. Bodo. 4. Dogri.5.] Gujarati.6. Hindi.7. Kannada. 8.] Kashmiri. 9.] Konkani.] 10. Maithili,11.] Malayalam.12.]. Manipuri13. Marathi. 14. Nepali.15. Odia.16. Punjabi.17. Sanskrit.18. Santhali,19.] Sindhi,20. Tamil.21. Telugu, 22. Urdu.

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