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**SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL LANGUAGE
PREFERENCES: A CASE STUDY OF MIGRANT
KASHMIRI PANDIT YOUTH**

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ABSTRACT

The present paper aims to discern the socio-psychological preferences given to different languages being the part of verbal repertoire of migrant Kashmiri Pandit Youth who have migrated to Jammu and Udhampur areas during the turmoil of 1990's. To understand the linguistic situation of the migrant community, the socio-psychological tendencies in the patterns of language preservation, language use and language shift towards another language/s was examined. For the present study, data was elicited from a random sample of 400 informants (200 each from Jammu and Udhampur), falling within the age group of 10 to 30 years.

Keywords: Pandit, Community, Migration, Verbal Repertoire

1. Introduction

Kashmiri Pandits are the inhabitants of Kashmir valley. The origin of the community covers more than a period of five thousand years. Kashmiri Pandits are the Saraswat Brahmins (Chitrlekha Zutshi, 2003: 11). Kashmir is considered as the land of their ancestors and forefathers. However, Kashmiri society has experienced migration throughout from antiquity till date. Migration has shaped as well as de-shaped the Kashmiri society at important epochs of history and in all stages of development. Migration has caused a large-scale impact on Kashmiri society, especially on religion, economy, culture, language, demography, education, occupation, and many other fields. With the rise of the militancy in the year 1989, Kashmiris started to migrate to different areas. At that time, most of the Pandits migrated to Jammu, Udhampur, Kathua, Shimla, Chandigarh, Delhi and other cities-towns in the state and in the country (Dabla, 2008).

The mass exodus in 90's led a remarkable effect on the language of the migrants, which in turn reflected in the choices of their language preservation and language shift. The present paper aims to study the socio-psychological preferences given to different

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languages by the migrant Kashmiri Pandit Youth falling under the age group of 10-30 years. However, it is interesting to note that majority of migrant Kashmiri Pandit youth who fall under the age group of 10 – 30 years are not the direct victims of migration process, rather their n+1 (parents) and n+2 (grandparents) generations are the direct sufferers of migration. No doubt, informants falling in the age group of 25 – 30 years would have been of the age 5 or 6 years at the time of migration. It was due to this fact that the youth were selected forth in study, as majority of them were born in Jammu and Udhampur or were infants at the time of migration. As such they were born and bred in a different linguistic environment than their elders including parents and grandparents who grew in Kashmir valley where Kashmiri is the dominant language. On the other hand, Dogri is the mother tongue of majority of residents of Jammu and Udhampur and Hindi is the dominant language of the place, therefore, it is interesting to see the socio-psychological language preferences among them.

The analysis procedure for the present research was carried out using SPSS. The data collected from Jammu and Udhampur was codified, tabulated and quantified for every informant. After codification, tabulation and quantification, all the data was entered into a Microsoft excel spread sheet, which was then transferred to the SPSS software to draw out the results. For the present paper, data was collected from the migrant Kashmiri Pandit youth residing in the areas of Jammu and Udhampur and falling within the age group of 10-30 years. The respondents were enquired using the questions which directly or indirectly investigated their socio-psychological preferences for different languages. The answer to these questions were elicited from the informants which were 400 in number (200 from each; Jammu & Udhampur) in order to mark out the socio-psychological preferences for different languages, thereby giving the idea regarding the language attitudes and views of Kashmiri migrant Pandit youth.

2. Analysis

2.1. Language/s in Mind while Praying

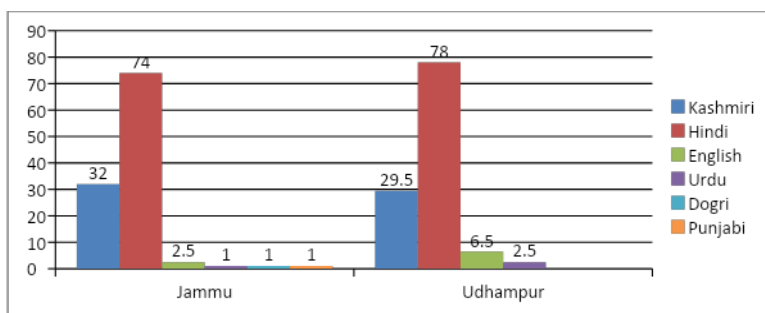


Fig.1: Language in Mind while Praying

From the figure, it can be observed that majority of respondents have claimed to use Hindi language (in mind) while praying, which is followed by Kashmiri language. Hindi language gets maximum score, which may be interpreted as their strong emotional connect with the Hindi language and it certainly reveals that Hindi is taking over the place of Kashmiri language in the emotional as well as mental sphere. From the graph, it is also clear that respondents from both the areas have shown a tremendous shift towards Hindi language. However, Kashmiri language is preserved to some extent, as it takes the second place among all the six languages under study.

Analyzing the above data on the basis of the variables of age and gender reflects the following frequency scores.

Age Group/ Languages	Jammu						Udhampur					
	Males			Females			Males			Females		
	10-16	16-22	22-30	10-16	16-22	22-30	10-16	16-22	22-30	10-16	16-22	22-30
Kashmiri	1	2	2	0	37	22	4	4	13	2	13	23
Hindi	12	33	15	36	30	22	31	24	35	20	28	18
English	1	0	1	1	2	0	4	0	4	2	3	0
Urdu	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	3
Dogri	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Punjabi	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 1: Language in Mind while Praying

From the above table, it is evident that females belonging to Jammu region use Hindi language more frequently for praying as compared to males. While as, the results are contrary for Udhampur region, where males are observed using Hindi more frequently as compared to females. Interestingly, the scores for females of Jammu regions are considerably higher than their male counterparts in case of use of Kashmiri language, particularly high range of usage among 16-22 years of age group. Almost same scenario is found in case of use of Kashmiri in Udhampur region; however here the age group of 22-30 years has higher score for using Kashmiri language.

2.2 Language/s Used in Dreams

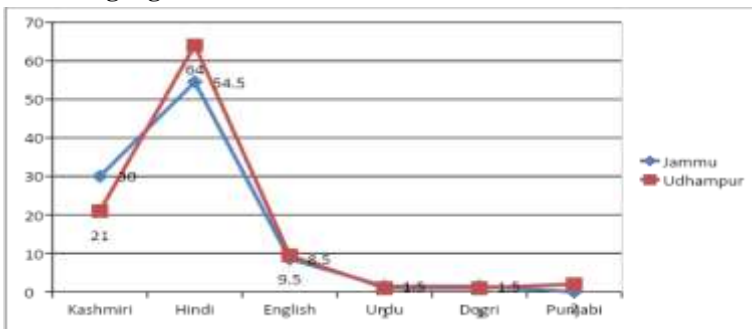


Fig. 2: Language Used in Dreams

Respondents from Jammu as well as Udhampur claim that the language they dream in is Hindi. Kashmiri gets less percentage score than Hindi, which once again divulges the fact that Hindi is emotionally more dominant among migrant Kashmiri Pandit youth than Kashmiri language.

Categorizing the above data on the basis of gender and age group, the frequency score is tabulated as under:

	Jammu						Udhampur					
	Males			Females			Males			Females		
Age Group / Language	10-16	16-22	22-30	10-16	16-22	22-30	10-16	16-22	22-30	10-16	16-22	22-30
Kashmiri	1	5	32	1	1	20	2	9	13	0	4	14
Hindi	8	9	22	28	30	12	31	23	10	25	13	26
English	3	6	3	2	0	3	4	6	3	2	2	2
Urdu	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Dogri	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Punjabi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0

Table 2: Language Used in Dreaming

From the above table it is clear that both males as well as females falling under the age group of 22-30 years show high frequency score of Kashmiri language. While as, the overall frequency score for Hindi language is more as compared to the Kashmiri language when taking into consideration the language informants usually dream in.

2.3 Language Used when Angry or Happy

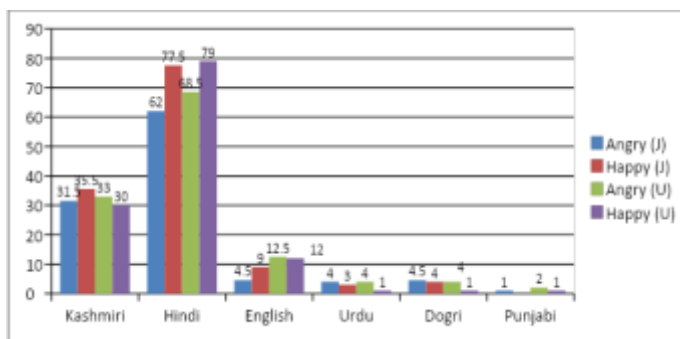


Fig.3: Language Used when Angry or Happy

The above figure gives a clear picture that Hindi language is more frequently used by migrant Kashmiri Pandit youth of Jammu as well Udhampur. Language used while expressing emotional state of mind reveals more closeness towards that language, thus, the above figures, depict more emotional bond of respondents with Hindi language than Kashmiri. Respondents from Jammu as well as Udhampur seem less emotionally attached to Kashmiri as compared to Hindi language.

Categorizing the above data on the basis of gender and age

groups, the frequency score is provided below.

	Jammu						Udhampur					
	Males			Females			Males			Females		
Age Group / Language	10-16	16-22	22-30	10-16	16-22	22-30	10-16	16-22	22-30	10-16	16-22	22-30
Kashmiri	2	1	36	8	0	16	9	11	9	14	5	23
Hindi	10	11	32	21	24	26	31	29	32	24	20	19
English	0	3	2	1	2	1	0	2	10	0	3	3
Urdu	0	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	0	0	2	0
Dogri	0	1	2	1	4	1	2	6	0	0	0	0
Punjabi	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 3: Language Used when Angry

From the above table it is clear that, male respondents from Jammu and female respondents from Udhampur falling within the age group of 22-30 years use Kashmiri language more frequently as compared to Hindi language. While as, the overall frequency for the usage of Hindi language is more among the respondents when they are angry.

	Jammu						Udhampur					
	Males			Females			Males			Females		
Age Group / Language	10-16	16-22	22-30	10-16	16-22	22-30	10-16	16-22	22-30	10-16	16-22	22-30
Kashmiri	2	5	38	1	2	18	4	13	11	9	5	18
Hindi	11	14	34	28	28	22	29	29	32	24	20	24
English	1	6	3	2	8	5	4	4	8	2	3	3
Urdu	0	0	4	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
Dogri	0	0	2	1	4	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
Punjabi	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4: Language Used when Happy

From the above table it is clear that, Hindi gets the maximum frequency score than any other language in the inventory when taking into consideration the language/s use while happy. However, the frequency score of males from Jammu falling within the age group of 22-30 years using Kashmiri when happy is more as compared to the males falling under the same age group from Jammu using Hindi.

2.4. Language Used when Sad

	Jammu						Udhampur					
	Males			Females			Males			Females		
Age Group / Language	10-16	16-22	22-30	10-16	16-22	22-30	10-16	16-22	22-30	10-16	16-22	22-30
Kashmiri	2	1	34	6	0	18	6	7	9	9	5	21
Hindi	12	14	30	24	31	22	33	27	32	24	20	24
English	0	1	3	1	2	2	2	4	0	0	0	0
Urdu	0	2	4	1	2	5	2	2	8	0	3	3
Dogri	0	2	4	1	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
Punjabi	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

Table 5: Language Used when Sad

From the above table it is clear that, Hindi language is mostly used by the males and females of Jammu and Udhampur, which depicts that Hindi language has greater emotional connect than any other language included in the inventory for the present study. However, Kashmiri language is seen with a good frequency score among the males and females of both the regions falling under the age group of 22-30 years. Hindi language is found to be more acquainted than Kashmiri language while explaining the emotional connect of the migrant Kashmiri Pandit youth of Jammu and Udhampur. Dogri being one of the dominant languages of the field areas show very less usage score, hence revealing its feeble bond with the migrant Kashmiri Pandit youth of Jammu and Udhampur.

3. Conclusion

The main aim of the paper is to discern the socio-psychological preferences given to different languages being the part of verbal repertoire of migrant Kashmiri Pandit Youth who have migrated to Jammu and Udhampur areas during the turmoil of 1990's. To understand the linguistic situation of the migrant community, the socio-psychological tendencies in the patterns of language preservation, language use and language shift towards another language/s was examined. Thus, to examine the issue data was elicited from a random sample of 400 informants (200each from Jammu and Udhampur), falling within the age group of 10 to 30 years.

The study has shown that migrant Kashmiri Pandit youth from Jammu as well as Udhampur region has shown remarkable shift towards the Hindi language. The primary reasons being:

- Less percentage of joint families in both the regions, thereby, decreasing the role of n+2 generation in imparting the knowledge of Kashmiri to their children.
- Kashmiri is not taught in schools; thus, migrant Kashmiri Pandit youth do not possess the language skills in Kashmiri.

- Kashmiri is not the predominant language of Jammu and Udhampur, thus, migrant Kashmiri Pandit youth do not find the need to communicate in Kashmiri language.

The study also points out the fact that migrant Kashmiri Pandit youth in Jammu and Udhampur are in a transitory state, a state where they cherish their Kashmiri language but, at the same time, are influenced by the changing trends and alien language environment around them. Migrant Kashmiri Pandit youth have no doubt shifted towards Hindi language, but at the same time they have not altogether lost Kashmiri language. The preservation of Kashmiri language is although less as compared to the shift towards Hindi language. However, the preservation of Kashmiri language to some extent among the migrant Kashmiri Pandit of Jammu and Udhampur is due to following reasons:

- n+2 generation plays the vital role in imparting the knowledge of language skills (mainly speaking and listening) of Kashmiri to their children, and to some extent they have succeeded, as the present generation understands and speaks Kashmiri quite well. Usage of Kashmiri language is mostly seen in home domain between youth and their grandparents, thus rendering them with the knowledge of Kashmiri language.
- Migrant Kashmiri Pandit youth consider Kashmiri as their mother tongue and at the same time want its preservation. They are positively inclined towards Kashmiri language and Kashmiri culture. This emotional attachment keeps the spark alive in them to preserve Kashmiri, and home domain in this regard plays very significant role in its preservation. Other language like Dogri, English, Urdu and Punjabi are also part of the linguistic repertoire of the migrant Kashmiri Pandit youth of Jammu and Udhampur, but the influence of Hindi language over the youth is much more than any other language included in the inventory of languages for the present research.

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