

Media as an Institution for the Promotion of Minority Languages and Cultures

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Abstract

The role of Media is conveyed on its agentive role through which symbolic communication influences human thought, culture and language. In its process of dissemination of information, communications systems operate through two ways; one is the way by which they promote changes by information, motivation, and guidance to its viewers at individual level. The other is the socially mediated way through which media influences connection between the viewers to social networks and social settings. This communication at mass level provides natural speedy and continuous regulation, for desired change. Media-based influences on social, psychological and linguistic domains can be analyzed by the diffusion of new styles of behaviour in terms of the factors governing their acquisition and adoption and the social networks through which they spread and are supported. Media being the powerful instrument in constructing different aspects of mental and social behaviour of the audiences, its-rooted impact on various linguistic domains will not be spared. Minority language media is one of the central media-based initiations which influence the linguistic domains of the society. The present paper tries to find out the media-language valorization relationship and its impact on language planning for indigenous languages of J & K State. The present paper also tries to ascertain whether media exhibits institutional support for maintaining and promoting indigenous language(s) in the context of linguistic diversity in the valley.

Key Words: Media, Culture, Language, Valorization

1. Media-Language and Language Valorization

Herman and Chomsky (1988) proposed “The mass-media serve as a system of communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with values, beliefs and codes of behaviour that will integrate them to the institutional structures of the larger society.” Although, the doctrine proposed by Herman and Chomsky seems to have political and economic perspective, but it has direct ramifications in the non-economic and non-political suprastructures like values, beliefs and codes of behavior (Guy 1989). These issues are related to various areas of public life. Thus the issues like how the people should understand the world in which they live in or making the interaction between psychologies of the people and the social structures surrounding them, are some of the themes in this context. The genres in the mass media which include a) traditional media like the puppet shows, concerts, dramas and dance; b) print media like newspaper, journals, magazine etc; c) electronic media like radio, television, cinema, computers and d) interpersonal communication media like post cards, invitation cards, pager, cell phones, etc primarily survive due to language resource. According to Herman and Chomsky, media has logistic impact upon the audience for inculcating values, beliefs and codes of behaviour. Therefore, shaping the value system, beliefs and codes of behaviour is the response of audience to media genres. Since language is the nucleus to the whole of this organization, therefore, the issue of language valorization has logical reflection of the audience to the media response. In

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most of the multilingual speech communities, media generates people's linguistics taste for one language or the other which results in the inclination towards language valorization. Thus, in multilingual speech community like Kashmiri Speech Community, one language can capture considerably a dominant role to fulfill various functional domains of media. This attitude has influenced the language behaviour of the people, simultaneously increased the domains of the use of Urdu that results in to Urdu language valorization as the linguistic repertoire of the people. Riggins for instance, illustrates that "due to minority language media, ... skills of imperfect speakers are improving, languages are being modernized by addition of new technological vocabulary related to contemporary life, and ... standardized". (1992:283)

Therefore, in present day circumstances, mass media plays an important role for the promotion and valorization of language. But "the effect of the mass media on the speech of its audience are not well established as a field of research yet, due to the uncertainty to which media may affect people's habits". (Matsumoto Kazuko 2001:99). Some sociolinguistics are of the view that frequent exposure to pronunciation on television can result in change (Naro and Sherre (1996:223-8). "... it is worth mentioning that there is a small amount of evidence that sheer exposure of people who show no other sign of identifying with upper social class." (Naro 1978 quoted in Hudson 1980: 171). Therefore, "[t]he effect of the mass media on people's speech [and attitude] deserves careful study." (Hudson 1980:171); while others assume that face to face interactions necessary before change take place(Trudgill 1986; Chambers 1997). Holmes suggest that, "television can soften people up by presenting new forms used by admired pop stars or TV personalities, so that when they ultimately get exposed to a particular form in speech of a real person, they are more ready to adopt it". (1992:236).

In both the domains of the mass media and education, "the role of institutional support is often very important for the maintenance and promotion of the indigenous language and the minority language". (Matsamoto Kazuko 2001:99)

2. Linguistic Composition and Their Domain of Function in J & K State with Special Reference to Kashmir Division

The State of Jammu and Kashmir is inhabited by multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic groups. The linguistic composition of the State is very complex and this linguistic complexity is enunciated by the fact that the state is inhabited by the speakers of three language families like Indo-Aryan, Dardic, and Tibeto-Burman. Some of the languages are Kashmiri, Shina, Kohistani etc (examples of Dardic) Dogri, Pahari, Punjabi, Goujri (examples of Indi-Aryan) Ladhakhi, Balti, Tibeti etc (examples of Sino-Tibetan), Burushaski which is considered as language Isolate or orphan language is also spoken here by some *Burshus*. Apart from these, Urdu, non-aboriginal language, is the *lingua franca* and official language by means of which people of different speech communities communicate with each other particularly in the situation where communication becomes unintelligible. The speakers of these diverse and mutually unintelligible languages are socially situated in such a way that they have no option but exchange services and interact regularly with each other. English, a global language, serves the function of official language and language of education at present both in primary and higher education. The linguistic inventory of the state also includes the languages like Sanskrit and Persian. Both the languages have definite history in their placement in Kashmir. These languages serve particular social, cultural and religion functions. All the languages and varieties serve their domains of use, for example, language of media, language of education, language of business, language for international communication, language for administration, court etc. Interestingly, the aboriginal languages were always confined to their native speakers to the limits of the group. Mostly these languages have been restricted as language of home which is

used in defined social situations in limited domains. Thus the mentioned varieties or languages almost never enjoyed the equal status.

3. Television in Kashmir

As recently as the 1970s and 1990s, television consisted of primarily the network of Prasar Bharati, Broadcasting Cooperation of India: broadcasting from Doordarshan Kendra National and broadcasting from regional Service, Doordarshan Kendra, Srinagar. These channels aimed their programming primarily at middle-class families. Even so, some middle-class households did not even own a television. Today, one can find a television in the poorest of homes, and multiple TVs in most middle-class homes. Not only has availability increased, but the availability of diverse programmes aimed to please all ages, classes, backgrounds, and attitudes has tremendously increased. Due to satellite transmission, the number of the channels also increased tremendously and unlimitedly. Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar launched one more channel namely DD Kashir. Also various channel either the in-house regional or in collaboration with some famous satellite channels of India have been launched from Kashmir valley.

4. Broadcasting Stations

The list of some of the channels telecasted in Kashmir Division is given in the following table (1).

S.No	Name of the Channel	Organization
1.	Doordarshan Regional /National Service (Terrestrial)	Government
2.	DD Kashir (Satellite channel)	-do-
3.	DD NEWS (Satellite channel)	-do-
4.	TAKE ONE (satellite channel)	Private Ownership
5.	SEN Channel (Satellite channel)	-do-
6.	MOUJ (Satellite Channel)	-do-
7.	WADDI channel (Satellite Channel)	-do-
8.	TAKE NEWS (Satellite Channel)	-do-
9.	NEO SPORTS (Satellite Channel)	-do-
10.	DISCOVERY (Satellite Channel)	-do-
11.	ZEE TV (Satellite Channel)	-do-
12.	ZEE SMILE (Satellite Channel)	-do-
13.	ZEE CENIMA (Satellite Channel)	-do-
14.	SONY (Satellite Channel)	-do-
15.	ZEE MUSIC (Satellite Channel)	-do-
16.	STAR SPORTS (Satellite Channel)	-do-
17.	STAR MOVIES (Satellite Channel)	-do-
18.	STAR UTSAV (Satellite Channel)	-do-
19.	STAR TV (Satellite Channel)	-do-
20.	SAHARA NEWS (Satellite Channel)	-do-
21.	AJ TAQ (Satellite Channel)	-do-
22.	TEN SPORTS (Satellite Channel)	-do-
23.	ETC (Satellite Channel)	-do-
24.	JAIN TV (Satellite Channel)	-do-
25.	CORTOON NETWORK (Satellite Channel)	-do-

26.	QTV (Satellite Channel)	-do-
27.	PTV (Satellite Channel)	-do-
28.	GEO TV (Satellite Channel)	-do-
29.	PEACE TV (Satellite Channel)	-do-
30.	ZEE PUNJABI (Satellite Channel)	-do-
31.	ETC PUNJABI (Satellite Channel)	-do-
32.	NDTV (Satellite Channel)	-do-
33.	STAR GOLD (Satellite Channel)	-do-

Table 1. List of TV channels.

Among all these channels, the worth mentioning is Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar and DD Kashir, Government Co-operation. It is two-way convincing communication process, which is used to generate understanding, cooperation and goodwill between the government on one hand and the public on the other hand. The two main responsibilities: first is to give important information on policies, plans and achievements of the government and second is to educate the public in all matters that reflect the life of the citizen.

The widespread availability and exposure makes television, the primary focus is on what role television can play for institutional support and promotion of indigenous and minority languages along with cultural heritage? As far as in-house transmissions are concerned, it should be their goal to achieve. In Kashmir valley, Doordarshan is playing very important role to promote and save linguistic and cultural diversity. However, the private channels, whose aim is earn money, therefore, work hard for entertainment programmes for their publicity. They do nothing to preserve linguistics diversity and cultural heritage. All most 90% percent programmes are telecasted in Urdu language. Kashmir language is limited Kashmiri Songs when telecasted.

5. Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar

Doordarshan Kendra, Srinagar has the distinction of being the third after Delhi and Mumbai. It was commissioned on 26th January 1973. It started as a regional station. Since then it is playing a major role in the development of the society. During the last 43 year's time, Doordarshan has contributed tremendously not only in increase in time duration and in channels but by increasing the languages of the linguistic diversity of the Valley. Doordarshan, Srinagar is playing a crucial role in educating Kashmir people about their native languages and cultural heritage. Its aim is to educate people, one side, about importance of mother tongue, cultural heritage of various ethnic groups of different value and beliefs, and on the other side about the changing scenario of the country, entertainment, sports, modern trends in science and technology, industrial revolution etc through its programmes. Some details of transmission timing, languages and programmes telecasted (source: Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar (2012)) is given as under:

5.1 No. of Channels

1. Regional service
2. DD Kashir.

5.2 DD Kashir -24 hrs daily

Regional network transmission from 1730 to 1830 hrs Monday to Friday originated for regional service is being carried by transmitters situated in Jammu and Kashmir State and the whole transmission is carried by Kashir channel also. DD Kashir is the only satellite Channel of Doordarshan with terrestrial support.

**6. Some feature of current fixed point chart (source: Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar (2012))
Language-wise break-up**

Language	Regional Service	DD Kashmir
1. Kashmiri	52%	36%
2. Urdu	35%	57%
3. Hindi	1%	0.5%
4. Dogri	2%	1%
5. Ladakhi	1%	0.5%
6. Punjabi	2%	1%
7. Gojri	2%	1%
8. Pahari	2%	1%
9. Pashto	1%	0.5%
10. Sheena	1%	0.5%
11. Balti	1%	0.5%
12. English	1 %	0.5%

Details of News Bulletins

S. No	Language and Timing	Duration	Source of Telecast
1.	Kashmiri- 9000 hrs	5 mts.	DD Kashmir
2.	Urdu 0905 hrs	5 mts.	-do-
3.	Kashmiri- 1430 hrs	5 mts.	-do-
4.	Urdu- 1435 hrs	5 mts.	-do-
5.	Kashmiri-1900 hrs	15 mts	Simulcast

Regional Service and DD Kashmir

6.	Urdu- 1915 hrs	15 mts.	-do-
7.	Bulletin for Speech and Hearing impaired (weekly on Saturday at 1630 hrs.)	10 mts.	-do-

Programme Composition

S.No	Format/Genre	Regional Service	DD Kashmir
1.	Entertainment	30%	40%
2.	Magazine/spoken Word	38%	10%
3.	Fiction	10%	20%
4.	News/Current Affairs	20%	20%
5.	Film based	2%	10%

As clear from the figures of language of transmission and genres, Doordarshan Kendra has given relative importance to languages to cater the wishes of the minority groups. The initiative of telecasting different programmes in minority language like Gojri, Pahari, Punjabi, Ladakhi, Pashto, Sheena, & Balti in the context of linguistic compositeness of Jammu and Kashmir State has also successful in drawing attraction for people who speak these languages. Unlike print media and private satellite channels which is under private ownership in Kashmir, Doordarshan in its expansion in last 43 years playing a phenomenal role.

7. Other in-house Private Satellite Channels

Most of the in-house private satellite channels like, MOUJ, TAKE TV, TAKE NEWS, MY CHANNEL, TAKE MOVIES, WADDI CHANNEL, GULISTAN etc. The number of these in-house private satellite channels is the process of increase day by day. But as far as its role in language education is concerned is not worth to mention. These channels do not play any role in

institutional support and promotion of linguistic diversity and cultural identity. The transmission time is 24 hrs daily. The messages sponsor only products, but not nurture a sense of what is and is not important. The main motive is to entertain people and earn money by advertising. That is why maximum time is allocated to advertisements. If these private channels have also contributed 10% to give the institutional support to the linguistic diversity in Kashmir valley, it would have changed negative attitude of their native speakers towards the mother tongue into positive.

8. Radio in Kashmir

The history of radio starts with the launching of radio Kashmir, Srinagar. After India got independence 1947, Radio Kashmir Srinagar was launched on 1st July 1948. Previously, the programmes were broadcasted in Kashmiri, Urdu and Hindi (very less percentage). But over the last 67years, Radio Kashmir like Doordarshan Srinagar has the distinction of producing different cultural programmes, news bulletins, folk songs etc in 8 languages daily. Sanskrit is specifically for broadcasting news bulletins. The detail of transmission hours with frequency and language break-up is given the following table:

Details of Transmission hours with Frequency and Language Break-up.		
S.No	Details	Total Duration
1.	Primary service of Radio Kashmir Srinagar per day except Sunday	16 Hrs.20 Mts
2.	On Sunday	17 Hrs 15 Mts.
3.	Yu-Vani 62Service of Radio Kashmir Srinagar (684 KHz: 438.6 Mts.)	04 Hrs 35 Mts.
4.	Urdu Programme Broadcast	298 Mts./Day
5.	Kashmiri Programmes broadcast	316 Mts./Day
6.	English Programmes broadcast	62 Mts./Day
7.	Hindi Programmes broadcast	30 Mts./Month
8.	Gojri Programmes broadcast	01 Hr/Day
9.	Pahari Programmes broadcast	3Hr.45Mts./Week
10.	Punjabi Programmes broadcast	2 Hrs/Week
11.	Balti Programmes broadcast on Short wave	30 Mts Daily
Source: Radio Kashmir Srinagar (2012)		

Table 2. Transmission hours with Frequency and Language

Language wise break-up of broadcasting of programmes

Time allocated to the Programmes broadcasted in different languages from Radio Kashmir, Srinagar (Monthly basis).	
1. Kashmiri	3370 minutes (56 Hours and 16 minutes)
2. Urdu	2260 minutes (43 Hours and 33 minutes)

3. English	240 minutes (4 Hours)
4. Hindi	420 minutes (7 Hours)
5. Gojri	1800 minutes (Hours)
6. Pahari	900 minutes (15 Hours)
7. Punjabi	360 minutes (6 Hours)
8. Balti	840 minutes (14 Hours)

Table 3. Time allocation in different languages (Monthly basis).

Another private station (24 Hours daily transmission) in Srinagar which was launched in December 2006 by Reliance India is *92.7 FM*. The language used in the programmes according to them is *lingua franca* ‘an amalgamated form of Urdu and English’ which people understand. They don’t have any idea about what *Lingua franca* actually mean. The programme executive said “it is the mixed code, which people can understand. Broadcasting programmes in minority language like Pahari, Gojri etc will bore people”. Therefore when the administrators and programme executive have such an attitude about the linguistic diversity, how can they participate in the policies and plans adopted for the security of linguistic richness of the valley by the government. Evidently this station in terms of listenership is in demand because people don’t spent money in buying new music albums (VCD’s, CD’s, cassettes), also due to the good quality of the entertainment programmes and awareness programmes.

9. Conclusion

By this study we can ascertain that media can act as a source of formal linguistic and cultural education that extends institutional support for a language to survive and get standardized. It has proved as one of the most powerful motivation that can influence linguistic norms and linguistic attitudes. Interestingly as the language is a part of culture, the internalization of language through media exposure will also help in cultural awareness. The measures of media exposure keep the literacy rate in check.

In Jammu and Kashmir State, there is diversity in languages; therefore Government has given impetus and importance to regional languages and tribal languages in Doordharshan Kendar, Srinagar and Radio Kashmir, Srinagar. Likewise there must be separate channels under the control of government for each regional languages and tribal languages in television and radio stations. It will help in providing wide number of cultural programmes and news bulletins in that language. This will become more purposeful and effective in imparting education, institutional support to indigenous and minority languages.

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