

## COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LANGUAGE POLICIES FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THREE SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES

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### Abstract:

This study examines the language policies in India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka within the context of school education at primary and elementary levels. Based on the review of policy documents and the current available literature, this research focuses on the objectives, implementation challenges and outcomes of language policies. Comparative analysis reveals some common themes such as the promotion of national unity, the need for a common language for easy and quick communication, balancing linguistic diversity, preserving the regional and marginalized languages and addressing the issue of learning the global language. Challenges in the implementation of the policy include no political will, a lack of enthusiasm for preserving regional languages, shortage of qualified teachers, poor infrastructure, and limited resources and teaching and learning materials. A prominent theme is that of the low proficiency of the three nations in English. Each country is grappling with the growing influence of English which overshadows the growth of the rest of the languages. In the absence of a national language, India's three-language policy faces uncertainty about having a lingua franca across the country. While Pakistan has a strong national language, it turns out to be marginalizing the regional languages. With two national languages, Sri Lanka's trilingual policy emphasizes learning three languages to develop ethnic reconciliation. However, the policy's uneven and poor execution is producing the speakers with low proficiency in the target languages, especially in English. This comparative analysis will help policy makers to identify the basic issues in the education language policies so as to overcome them for a more linguistically proficient and vocal India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in future.

**Key Words:** *Language Policies for School Education, Comparative Analysis, Three South Asian Countries: India, Pakistan & Sri Lanka*

### Introduction:

Language is associated with culture and both of them together shape the identity of an individual or a group. People are emotionally attached to their mother tongues and do not want to forgo them for some other languages. Learning a new language and acquiring a native –like proficiency needs time and consistent hard work. Those who are blessed with the acquisition of a language in their childhood do not need do extra hard work in learning that language later in their lives. But those who are born with the marginalized languages need to work harder to learn the languages recognized, promoted and patronized by the states. For creating an environment conducive to teaching and learning a new language, qualified teachers, resources, and suitable infrastructure are required. That is only possible when there is strong political will to make possibly every individual in a nation bilingual or trilingual or multilingual so as to achieve national unity, promote ethnic harmony, preserve maximum possible linguistic diversity and address global competencies. In order to achieve all these goals, a state is supposed to draft, without any bias, a language policy, covering all such significant aspects. The language policy is designed to promote and patronize certain languages in administration, judiciary, media and education.

Every language of as large a linguistically diverse country as India or Pakistan cannot be accommodated in a language policy for education due to financial constraints and lack of qualified workforce. The most

important languages, which could help people grow educationally and economically, be given a place in the policy. All the school-going children should have equal opportunity to learning the languages that are designated to be national and official; otherwise, it will create a huge class-divide, causing a sense of deprivation amongst the people. Every individual matters in the progress and prosperity of a nation.

India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are multilingual countries. Generally, every ethnic group, whether large or small, is proud of its language, culture and identity. India, with its 1652 languages, Pakistan, with its 74 languages, and Sri Lanka, with 10 to 15 languages, have each formulated a trilingual policy to suit their specific socio-politico-economic needs. These language policies have their own objectives, challenges for implementation, and outcomes discussed in details in this paper.

## **Section I: India**

### ***1.1. Three-language policy for School Education***

In India, three-language policy is being followed in school education since as long as 1964 in order to preserve linguistic diversity, ensure equal access to education, promote national unity, and facilitate economic growth, to mention but a few. Those three languages are mother tongue or a dominant common regional language, the official or co-official language of the union if it exists, and a modern Indian or foreign language (MOE 1966:192). Generally, this policy in educational institutes comes down to three languages: regional, Hindi and English. Despite the fact that this policy is taken as practical to incorporate in school education, concerns have been raised on its unsatisfactory execution. Different proficiency levels of English amongst teachers, family backgrounds of children and the linguistic environment of educational institutes have created a significant divide in the quality of education and language skills.

### ***1.2. No National Language***

India, interestingly, does not have any national language. Every state has its own official language. Out of 1,652 languages (GOI 1971) used in India, 22 are recognized officially at the state level. Hindi and English are two of them. Those who want to join central government positions can opt any of these languages to take the exams. Amongst the official languages, 15 are used for administrative purposes (Meganathan, 2011). 47 languages are used as media of instruction (Rao, 2008) in schools. An interesting phenomenon, which is emerging now, is a significant drop in the use of these languages to English, which parents want their children to learn for a brighter future within and outside the country. English in India is considered to be a language that can help people come out of poverty (Graddol 2010:120) into a better lifestyle.

### ***1.3. Primary & Upper Primary Education***

The three-language policy is not implemented at primary level, which is from grades 1 to 5, because primary education uses the mother tongue or regional language. This approach aims to teach children in a language they understand best to enhancing comprehension and cognitive development. This policy usually begins at the upper primary level, which is from grades 6 to 8. At this stage, students are introduced to Hindi, English and a regional language. This policy promotes multilingualism and enables students to appreciate linguistic and cultural diversity of the country. The gradual addition of languages at the upper primary level ensures that students have already established a strong educational foundation in their mother tongue. This helps in a smoother transition to learning new languages.

### ***1.4. Two-language policy for North Indian School Education***

In some states such as Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, two-language system is used. There, a regional language with English is taught in educational institutes. These states are doing well economically with this policy. Communicating to the rest of the country at times becomes problematic for the people from such states due to the absence of a common language because they know either the regional language such as Tamil or English. Indians in Hindi speaking regions at times do not know English let alone Tamil and communication becomes challenging. Even though English is taught as the

second or third language in educational institutes, many people in North India are still not proficient in English because of poor schooling. Such North Indians cannot communicate easily to South Indians, emphasizing a need to have a language that could connect both the regions. Although the three-language formula already offers a solution by stating that Hindi should be taught in non-Hindi speaking regions, South Indians often have an aggressive attitude towards Hindi. They view it as a threat to their linguistic and cultural identity. This resistance comes out of a desire to preserve regional languages and reduce central dominance, which underscores complexity of language politics in India.

### ***1.5. Most Frequently Offered Languages in Schools***

Languages that are most frequently offered by the states in educational institutes are English, Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit, Bengali and Tamil. English is a global language. In India, it is still considered to be a colonial language despite the fact that it can serve as a lingua franca within the country with no national or unifying language in the presence of 1,652 languages (GOI 1971). Hindi which is the most widely spoken language in India and which is promoted for national integration by the central government meets resistance in South India, where people prefer to learn regional language with English. Urdu, with its rich literary heritage, is prevalent in states with significant Muslim populations. This is mutually intelligible with Hindi because both of them are similar except for their writing systems. Hindi is written in the Devanagari script, while Urdu uses the Perso-Arabic script. Even though Sanskrit is the classical language of ancient Indian scriptures and is not commonly used, some states still offer it to the students to preserve cultural and historical heritage. Bengali is spoken by millions in West Bengal and neighboring states and is taken as integral to regional identity and literature. Tamil is older than Hindi. With its profound literary tradition, it is widely taught in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Reflecting India's linguistic diversity and cultural richness, these are examples of some of the many languages offered as subjects for school education.

### ***1.6. Medium of Instruction at Schools***

Medium of instruction plays a significant role in laying academic foundation and developing cognition. It acts as a bridge between the learner and the content. It enhances comprehension, retention and application of knowledge. Students can grasp the concepts more quickly and easily when the early education is in their first language. Therefore, keeping in view the linguistic background of the learners, choosing an appropriate medium of instruction is crucial. In India, the medium of instruction in 92.07 per cent primary and 91.34 per cent upper primary schools is the mother tongue (Meganathan, 2011, p.19).

## **Section II: Pakistan**

### ***2.1. Three-language Policy for School Education***

The three-language policy used in Pakistan differs from that of its neighboring country, India. According to the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan:

1. The national language of Pakistan is Urdu, and arrangements shall be made for it to be used for official and other purposes within fifteen years from the commencement 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, Article 251).

This is interpreted as the imposition of three languages, i.e., Urdu, English, and a major provincial language. Pakistan is a multilingual country but surprisingly does not have any language policy at national level (Jabeen, 2023).

### ***2.2. One National Language***

Unlike its neighboring country India, Pakistan has a national language, Urdu. Although it is the mother tongue of only 7.57% of the population (GoP 2001), it is considered a unifying language for the rest of the population with linguistic diversity. The use of Urdu has been emphasized since independence to keep the people united. Initially, it met some resistance in Sindh, but over time, the entire country was taught Urdu in the name of unification. Today, those who speak Urdu in Pakistan have outnumbered its native speakers. Urdu was declared the national language due to the Muslim identity it carried before partition and during the independence movement.

The Bengali Language Movement emerged in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in 1952 against the imposition of Urdu as the sole official language. It would have meant the loss of jobs, language, culture, and identity for Bengali-speaking people. They demanded the recognition of Bengali as another national language. The demonstrations and strikes ultimately led to Bengali being recognized as one of Pakistan's national languages in 1956. After the separation of the East Wing in 1971, Pakistan was left again with one national language, Urdu.

Interestingly, the exam to join the bureaucracy is not in Urdu but in English, giving it supremacy over the national language. Commissioned officers in the armed forces are required to have at least working level proficiency in English. Since English language differentiates the Pakistani elite from the masses, its continuation goes in their favor. English, being an easy breadwinner and a source of power, is attracting more and more people, with parents trying to send their children to English-medium schools. Urdu, after being promoted by the state, has become the lingua franca in a country with 74 languages and is used widely.

### ***2.3. Primary & Lower Secondary Education***

Pakistan is a multilingual country but, surprisingly, does not have any language policy at the national level (Jabeen, 2023). However, a tradition of a three-language policy has been followed unofficially for a long time. In Pakistan, the primary level comprises grades 1 to 5, whereas the lower secondary level includes grades 6 to 8. At government-sponsored schools, three languages are offered. For example, in Sindh, Urdu, Sindhi, and English are offered as subjects.

People at the community level have established primary schools to impart education in the mother tongue. Two schools in the Kacchi language and four pre-primary schools in Balochi have been established in the area of Lyari in Karachi (Rahman, 2008), and one school in the Parkari language has been established in Tharparkar (Rahman, 2008; Rahman & Zaman, 2011). Rahman and Zaman (2011) report that some pre-primary and primary schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan for teaching and learning in mother tongue have also been established.

### ***2.4. Medium of Instruction at Schools***

Many issues, including the medium of instruction, have arisen due to the absence of a language policy in Pakistan (Jabeen, 2023). Elite-class private schools and cadet colleges are English-medium. Lower- to upper-middle-class schools claim to be English-medium, but education there is imparted through the medium of Urdu owing to the non-availability of teachers with good proficiency in English. With the exception of a few English-medium institutions such as Sindh Madrasatul Islam School in Karachi, government schools are Urdu-medium.

The medium of instruction depends on the language generally used by the community where a school is located. Up to Class 5, the medium of instruction is Sindhi in rural Sindh and Pashto in some areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Rahman, 2008). However, this is not the case throughout rural Sindh. There are many schools where Urdu is the medium of instruction. Marwari, a dialect of the Rajasthani language, is also used in some schools in rural Sindh where Marwari people are in the majority. Generally, the medium of instruction at state-sponsored schools is Urdu for primary and lower secondary education. It should

also be noted that books are available in Urdu, English, or Sindhi from the Sindh Textbook Board for rural Sindh. Books are not published in Marwari or any language other than those mentioned earlier. Since 1992, in Balochistan, Urdu has been the medium of instruction in state-sponsored schools instead of mother tongues such as Balochi, Brahui, and Pashto (Rahman 1996, p.169) because people themselves are not interested in the less privileged languages. In the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, Urdu is the medium of instruction in state-sponsored primary and lower secondary schools. The same attitude is maintained towards over 50 small languages in the Northern Areas of Pakistan (Rahman, 2008). These languages are under great influence from Urdu and English.

Not a single school in the Punjab province teaches Punjabi (Jaffrelet, 2002; Rahman, 2005; Asher, 2008) for several reasons, two of which are prestige and economic factors associated with Urdu and English (Saxena, 1995; Zaidi, 2010). No regional language other than Pashto and Sindhi, which are taught as subjects in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and Sindh provinces, respectively, is taught in schools (Rahman, 2000 and 2003). An initiative taken by the Balochistan government in 1990 to teach Balochi, Pashto, and Brahvi languages in the province was discontinued in 1992 (Rahman, 2008).

### **Section III: Sri Lanka**

#### ***3.1. Three-language Policy for School Education***

Language policy in Sri Lanka mainly covers three languages: Sinhala, Tamil, and English. Sinhala is used by 75% of the population, while Tamil is used by 12%. English is used for official and administrative purposes.

Other languages are also spoken by smaller communities. Muslims primarily use Arabic for religious purposes (Liyanage, 2019). Sri Lankan Creole Malay is spoken by Muslim Malays.

After the end of hostilities between the government and Tamil separatists in 2009, a trilingual language policy was drafted to contribute to the reconciliation process (Liyanage & Canagarajah, 2014). Proficiency in Sinhala and Tamil languages will bridge the cultural gap between the two groups, helping people understand each other's viewpoints and live peacefully (National Education Commission, 2016, p. 122). English serves both national and international purposes (Aturupane, 2011).

#### ***3.2. Two National Languages***

Sinhala and Tamil are the two national and official languages of Sri Lanka. English has been given the status of semi official link language.

Gunasekera (2005, p.15), in a chronicle of the statuses of languages in Sri Lanka, reports that after the independence of Sri Lanka in 1948, English was the official language. It was replaced by Sinhala in 1956. In 1978, Sinhala and Tamil were declared the national languages. However, Sinhala remained the only official language. In July 1987, Sinhala, Tamil, and English were declared the official languages. However, in November, this decision was amended, with English being made the link language having no official status.

#### ***3.3. Primary & Junior Secondary Education***

In Sri Lanka, the primary education level is from grades 1 to 5, and the junior secondary level covers grades 6 to 9. These two levels use both Sinhala and Tamil as mediums of instruction. These languages reflect the country's major ethnic groups. Due to its importance, English is often introduced as a second language from early grades. In urban areas and some private and international schools, English is used as a medium of instruction for various subjects. This trilingual approach aims to ensure that students not only are proficient in their mother tongue but also in English. This can help the students bridge a cultural gap within the country and give employment opportunities outside the country.

#### ***3.4. Medium of Instruction at Schools***

Medium of instruction (MoI) in Sri Lanka was monolingual from 1978 until 2001, with either Sinhala or Tamil used as the MoI in schools. However, recognizing the importance of English for individual

socioeconomic opportunities, Walisundara & Hettiarachchi (2016) report that bilingual medium of instruction was introduced from 2001 onwards. This new approach uses a combination of Sinhala and English or Tamil and English. Additionally, some schools have adopted a trilingual MoI, incorporating Sinhala, Tamil, and English.

It is noteworthy that the use of Sinhala and English or Tamil and English as the MoI occurs predominantly in areas where Sinhalese or Tamils are in the majority. Despite English being included as one of the languages for MoI, the proficiency of children in Sri Lanka remains poor due to reasons such as the lack of teachers proficient in English (Walisundara & Hettiarachchi, 2016) and the overall linguistic environment in educational institutes. The situation is generally better in urban areas compared to rural areas.

Liyanage (2018) reports that while the state endorses Sinhala and Tamil as MoI, Sinhala with English, Tamil with English or English only as medium of instruction is supported officially. Independent international schools offer English as the only medium of instructions.

#### **4.0. Discussion**

Despite the fact that the language policies in India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka are similar due to their colonial past and geographical proximity, they are unique because of different social, political, and economic reasons. This section critically analyzes and compares the language policies for school education across these three countries, focusing on their objectives, implementation, challenges, and implications.

##### **4.1. India**

India's three-language policy is designed to promote linguistic diversity and national unity. The rationale behind this policy is multifaceted. It aims to preserve regional languages, facilitate national integration, and equip students with global language skills. Its implementation, however, has faced many challenges. Regional disparities have hindered the policy's effectiveness. For example, students' proficiency in English varies across states. The reasons are the non-availability of qualified teachers, the socio-economic backgrounds of students, and the overall linguistic environment of schools. Moreover, resistance to Hindi in non-Hindi speaking regions has been witnessed, posing challenges in enforcing one common unifying language throughout India.

There is no uniformity in the implementation of the three-language policy at the primary level across the country. In some states like Tamil Nadu, a two-language policy is used, which complicates the policy's national uniformity.

One of the best aspects of the policy is the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction at the primary level (grades 1 to 5) because cognitive development theories suggest that children learn best in their first language. Generally, the introduction of a new language begins at the upper primary level (grades 6 to 8).

Despite the fact that the three-language policy caters to linguistic diversity, parents prefer to send their children to English-medium schools because of the socio-economic advantages of English proficiency. This trend indicates a shift towards English as a lingua franca, potentially at the expense of regional languages.

##### **4.2. Pakistan**

Contrary to India, Pakistan's language policy designates Urdu as the only national language. It supports English for official purposes and regional languages at the provincial level. This framework not only aims to promote national unity through a common language but also accommodates regional linguistic diversity. However, the implementation of this policy has its own challenges.

Urdu, promoted by the state as a unifying national language, is the mother tongue of a minority. After the independence of Pakistan in 1947, this move aroused the wrath of people who did not speak Urdu.

The Bengali language movement in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) highlights the resistance against the imposition of Urdu as the only national language in a country with almost 74 languages, including six major ones. Among the several reasons for the disintegration of Pakistan in 1971, one was the forced imposition of Urdu on Bengali-speaking people. The imposition of Urdu met similar resistance in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces in the initial years of Pakistan, yet it was not as forceful as the Bengali movement.

Punjab had an interesting role to play in this as it did not show any resistance towards Urdu as the only national language, despite the fact that Punjabi is spoken by as large a group of the population as 44 percent. One of the reasons behind this was that Punjabis considered Urdu as the identity of Muslims and the language of prestige and upward economic mobility since as far back as 1849 when the British defeated Ranjit Singh and occupied the state of Punjab. The language of Ranjit Singh's administration was Persian, which was replaced by Urdu and English under British rule. After the independence of Pakistan, Punjab had a welcoming attitude towards Urdu as the national language, which otherwise was the mother tongue of approximately 7 percent of people who had migrated from India. Since Urdu was promoted by the state in educational institutes, people today feel proud of speaking Urdu rather than their own mother tongue.

This does not mean that the major regional languages such as Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi, Punjabi, Siraiki, Shina, Hindko, and Kashmiri Pahari have died. They are growing significantly among the people and are widely spoken. Over time, people have developed a less aggressive attitude towards Urdu. However, the preference for Urdu and English is likely to marginalize regional languages in the future.

English is another language that people want their children to learn due to it being the language of the Pakistani elite. English-medium education, therefore, is perceived as a pathway to upward socioeconomic mobility. English and Urdu are becoming the two favorite languages of the people.

The medium of instruction (MoI) plays an important role in the cognitive development of children. At the primary level, the MoI varies significantly. For example, in Sindh, government schools offer instruction in Sindhi and Urdu. One school in Karachi also offers English as the MoI. Some community schools may use local languages like Balochi and Marwari. Other provinces generally use Urdu as the medium of instruction.

#### **4.3. Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka's language policy is shaped by its ethnic composition and historical conflicts. This trilingual policy promotes Sinhala and Tamil as national languages, with English as a link language. The policy aims to bridge ethnic divides and promote national unity while acknowledging the importance of English for global communication.

The policy's origins can be traced back to post-independence language politics, where Sinhala replaced English as the only official and national language. Later, Tamil was added to address ethnic tensions. Today, the trilingual policy is seen as a tool for reconciliation. The state encourages proficiency in both Sinhala and Tamil to foster mutual understanding between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities.

Sinhala and Tamil are the main mediums of instruction, with English introduced as a second language at the primary and junior secondary levels. However, children generally do not acquire good proficiency in English due to a shortage of qualified teachers and resources. They are proficient in their mother tongue, though. The quality of language education suffers due to a lack of proficient teachers and adequate infrastructure.

The medium of instruction in Sri Lanka has evolved from a monolingual to a bilingual and, in some cases, a trilingual approach. English is given importance in private schools, particularly because of potential employment opportunities in multinational companies within and outside the country. Despite

policy support for bilingual education, actual proficiency in English among students remains low. Teachers need better proficiency in the languages they teach, better training, and better resources.

### **5.0 Comparative Analysis of Language Policies**

The language policies of India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka promote national unity and multilingualism. They reveal significant similarities and differences in their objectives, implementation, and outcomes.

#### **5.1. Theme 1: Objectives**

- India seeks to balance linguistic diversity with national unity in an environment where 1,652 languages are spoken. It promotes multilingualism through a three-language policy.
- Pakistan aims to unify its diverse population through the promotion of Urdu in an environment where 74 languages are spoken. English serves as an auxiliary official language, and regional languages are supported at the provincial level.
- Sri Lanka strives to bridge ethnic divides through a trilingual policy. It promotes proficiency in Sinhala, Tamil, and English to foster reconciliation among the ethnic groups. Sri Lanka does not have much linguistic diversity, with Sinhala being spoken by almost 75 percent of the population. To appease Tamil separatists, the government added Tamil as one of the two national languages, with English as the link language.

Overall, national unity, balancing linguistic diversity, preservation of major regional languages, reconciliation, and global demand best reflect the trilingual language policies of these three countries. Each country has formulated a language policy based on its political, social, and economic needs. These policies should continue to evolve according to the needs and demands of the times.

#### **5.2. Theme 2: Challenges in Policies' Implementation**

- India faces numerous challenges in implementing its three-language policy. As a secular country with 1,652 languages spoken, the policy is destined to face hurdles, especially in areas with a Hindi or non-Hindi majority. The central government promotes Hindi through vibrant media, which is opposed in the educational sector by people in North India, where states promote a two-language (regional and English) policy. Many people have an aggressive attitude towards Hindi and prefer English as the lingua franca throughout the country. Besides, lack of resources, poor infrastructure, and unqualified teachers have compounded the challenges in the policy's implementation. An easy way out for the Indians is to promote Hindi in non-Hindi speaking regions and North Indian languages in the South India. Though it requires a lot of time and patience, Hindi eventually will become the lingua franca in the whole of the country.
- Pakistan lacks a formal national language policy, resulting in inconsistencies across different provinces. While Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have three languages at the primary and upper primary levels of education, Punjab, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Kashmir follow a two-language policy, with Urdu and English dominating over regional languages. The preference for English in elite private educational institutes perpetuates socio-economic divides, particularly affecting regional languages. However, Pakistan has succeeded in making Urdu the only national language and the lingua franca throughout the country. The potential rise of regional languages does not pose a threat to national integrity, as people generally prefer their children to learn English and Urdu for better socio-political and economic opportunities. The resistance to the promotion of Urdu has diminished over time, as it is now widely seen as a symbol of Muslim identity.
- Sri Lanka implements a bilingual approach at the primary and junior secondary levels, with English introduced as a second language. With Sinhala and Tamil as national languages, the trilingual policy aims to promote ethnic harmony. However, this policy faces challenges such as resource constraints and teachers' proficiency in the target languages. Despite Sinhala and Tamil

being the national and official languages, English is gaining popularity due to its socioeconomic advantages, including employment opportunities, education, global communication, prestige, and social mobility. There is a significant lack of teachers proficient in all three languages, particularly English. Many teachers are not adequately trained to teach in a multilingual environment. Additionally, schools often lack necessary resources such as textbooks and teaching materials in all three languages. The uneven implementation of the trilingual policy across the country leads to disparities in language education quality. Children often do not have access to language labs and technology to learn languages. Students from poorer backgrounds have less access to quality education, creating a class divide. Parents and communities generally prioritize English over Sinhala and Tamil due to its perceived economic benefits, which results in a lack of enthusiasm for a truly trilingual education.

### 5.3. Theme 3: Outcomes

- India sees a growing preference for English-medium education due to its socio-economic advantages. People try their level best to send their children to English-medium schools. They are emotionally attached to their mother tongues and the regional languages but they do not show any enthusiasm towards them. Even though the three-language policy promotes multilingualism, it struggles with regional disparities.
- Pakistan experiences a linguistic divide. Interestingly, English dominates Urdu and Urdu dominates the regional languages. Due to the absence of a cohesive policy at national level, people's lack of interest and no socio-economic mobility, regional languages are often marginalized. Since it is necessary for the people to know English if they want to reach better bureaucratic positions, therefore, this language has overshadowed the rest of the languages including Urdu.
- Sri Lanka's trilingual policy aims to promote ethnic harmony and global competencies. Its poor implementation, however, needs a lot of improvement, particularly in English education. People are proficient in their mother tongues and have poor linguistic and communicative competences in English language.

### Conclusion:

In the language policies of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, English language has dominated the other national and regional languages due to its administrative and global needs. English language has been associated with the colonial past of these three countries but with the passage of time, this perception is dying. For example, in India, English is seen as the potential lingua franca between its North and South regions because North Indians follow two-language policy (regional language with English), creating a large group of people who do not know Hindi. English language works there as a connecting language. There is a lot of resistance towards Hindi in North India; therefore, English turns out to be the only neutral language for all the stakeholders. English, however, does not seem to be taking over because of the low proficiency that people commonly have in it. As a neutral language, it can become lingua franca in these three South Asian countries if it is taught in early level of education the way it should.

Because of financial constraints, limited recourses, poor infrastructure, unqualified teachers, and lack of political will and enthusiasm, language policies are unable to produce the intended results.

On the other hand, explicitly or implicitly declared national languages are marginalizing the regional languages. Pakistan has Urdu as the only national language. India does not have any national language; yet, Hindi is growing by leaps and bounds in a large part because it is widely spoken by the people and

used commonly in administration and media. It is a sort of unifying national language. These national languages are sidelining and overshadowing the rest of the regional languages. Until and unless regional languages are given their right due place and reverences at the institutional level, their preservation and promotion will remain challenging.

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