

## Language, Choice and Multilingualism in Karnataka.

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**Abstract:** This paper analyses the complexity of the issue of Language in Karnataka under four focal points- Multilingual nature of the Kannada people, Unification, Gokak agitation and the Supreme Court Verdict on the Medium of Instruction. An attempt is made to see the reasons for such a change. The paper attempts to posit the language choice within a socio – linguistic framework.

**Keywords:** Multilingualism, Unification and Gokak agitation –concepts that are explained in the course of the paper.

### Introduction- land, People and languages:

Karnataka is the name of a linguistically administered State in South India. From the year 1956 - 1964 it was called Mysore State which in turn emerged out of the princely state of Mysore. The present Karnataka is about 1, 91,791sq kms in area in the Deccan Plateau. It shares its borders with Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The Arabian Sea forms its coastline on the western side. Karnataka is one of the 29 States of independent India. The 2015 Census pegs the population of Karnataka at 6,50,61069.

Philologists have categorized Kannada as belonging to the Dravidian language family. The word ‘dravida’ refers to territory, ethnicity and language. The territory it refers to is to the South of Vindhyas. As a term that denotes ethnicity, it refers to the people who are believed to be of Dravidian race. It also refers to the language group called Dravidian. Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, Tulu and Malayalam are believed to belong to this language family -“The name Dravidian is derived from the Sanskrit word- ‘dravida’ which is derived from an older version –‘ dramila’, ‘damila’ which in turn is identical with the name Tamil”<sup>1</sup>. In reality the term refers only to Tamil and does not include the other speech communities. Pampa in his ‘*Vikramarjuna Vijaya*’ refers to the armies of various countries- “Magadha, Sourashtra, Varata Lata Karnataka... Malaya Maalava Nepala...Kashmeera Koushikandhra Dravila...”<sup>2</sup>. These are references to prove that ‘dravida’ and ‘Karnataka’ are two different entities as far as language is concerned. Quoting Shamba Joshi, K.V.Srinivasa Murthy writes-“Herbert Risley made the mistake of using the term ‘dravida’ as a cover term to refer to the people of South of India”<sup>3</sup>. In the same volume K.V.S.Murthy makes a mention that Alooru Venkatarayaru had brought this to the notice of the Central Govt. and had made a request to add Karnataka to the National Anthem. The land and the people have had an independent entity from ancient times. The Kannada people are believed to be one of the ‘vaduga’ referred to in the Shangan literature. It is believed that Karnataka is home to people of diverse racial background.

In the past sixty years, there are at least three different points in the language attitude of the people of this state. An effort is made here to address the issue with its multiple dimensions. The shift in attitude towards language can be read under the umbrella of Multilingualism.

1. Multilingualism
2. Unification and its inclusive narrative
3. Gokak Agitation
4. Supreme Court verdict on Medium of Instruction

**Multilingualism:** The whole of South India irrespective of whether it was under Madras Presidency or the Princely rule was multilingual. This multilingualism is different from the Western idea of bilingualism, trilingualism and multilingualism where the second and the third languages are learnt after learning mother tongue or the home language. There the learning takes place in a controlled setting like a school. Multilingualism in South India in general and the old Mysore area (Princely state of Mysore) in particular, is totally different. Here a child under normal circumstances picks up at least three languages simultaneously, before he enters school. Be it home, school or administration, the approach to language has been multilingual here. C.P. Brown, an officer under the British during 1820-1854, gives a picture of the language scene- “Governmental business in South India is chiefly transacted in the language of the Hindus, either Tamil, Telugu, Kannadi ( Kannada), Malayalam, Marata( Marathi); while the Mussalmans still speak Hindustani ( as well as the local native tongue...”<sup>4</sup>. The Fifteenth Century poet Srinatha praises his patron Ananya of Areti family having control over-“ Arabic, Turkish, Oriya, kannada, Telugu, the barbarous languages of the Sakas, Sind and the Sauvira, the Karhata language and many other exotic languages”<sup>5</sup>. Srinatha gives a multilingual description of his own poetry- “ In its maturity, my poetry is considered Sanskrit, the method of my utterance is felt to be Telugu; it doesn’t matter what people call it! My poetry in truth is Karnataka language”<sup>6</sup>. Srinatha refers to the being of multiple languages and their use as normal occurrence. This also refers to the give and take that took place between languages that resulted in the stylistic resemblance. Srinatha is not comparing one language with the other or positing one above the other. The Vijayanagar Kings, who ruled over multilingual geographical space were polyglots. Krishnadevaraya “ patronized poets who composed in Telugu, Kannada, Sanskrit, and Tamil and ruled territory that now lies in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu”<sup>7</sup>. “ The Nayaka courts of the late sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, which succeeded the Vijayanagara dynasty, produced a vast literature in Telugu, Tamil, an Sanskrit clearly aimed at multilingual audience”<sup>8</sup>. In the Seventeenth Century, Rani Belavadi Mallammaji and her brother “were taught Kannada, Marathi, Urdu and Sanskrit.”<sup>9</sup> Linguistic boundaries were amoeba type-fluid. The coastal Andhra included “ some regions that are today part of the neighboring Oriya linguistic state where Telugu inscriptions have been found. Simialrly, Rayalseema once included regions that are dominated by Kannada-tongue - speakers and are now in the neighboring Kannada linguistic state of Karnataka; These facts attest to the complex multilingualism out of which present –day –mother tongue commitments and geo –political reorganization have grown<sup>10</sup>”. The Kannada administrative territory was formed out of the multilingual space mentioned above.

The prevalence of multiple languages resulted in “polyglossia” with such individuals typically navigating multiple linguistic codes and scripts”<sup>11</sup>.The effect of knowing and using multiple languages right from childhood has not been studied to its full extent. The making

of the linguistic states was a paradigm shift from multilingual to unilingual in administration, judiciary and education. True to the multilingual ethos of the state, single language loyalty in all domains is resisted in Karnataka. We need a different theoretical tool to study the language attitude of Kannada people. With 162 languages, Karnataka is the most multilingual state in south India.

## **2.Unification and its inclusive narrative:**

Karnataka was coming together of not only the scattered Kannada speaking territories but also of multiple languages- Tulu, Kodava, Konkani, Byary, Gowda Kannda , Havyaka Kannada, Urdu, Banjara and people speaking many more languages. When the rest the of the independent India was redrawing the cartography on unilingual lines, Karnataka was formed by unifying the scattered Kannada speaking people and other languages speaking people who identified themselves with ‘Kannada’ which was more than language. Kannada was a worldview. Karnataka did not see the kind of riots Andhra witnessed as a run up to the formation of the linguistic administrative territory. What was missing in Mysore /Karnataka was the binary of Kannada v/s Hindi, Kannada v/s Sanskrit or us v/s them. In the absence of such a binary which was central to the language movement in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, the movement for Unification is a potential topic of study in a multilingual country like India. Karnataka did not display the vehemence and violence that Andhra showed in demanding a linguistic state. This prompted Alooru Venkataraya to say –“ Karantaka has been created through nonviolence”<sup>12</sup>. Unlike any other linguistically administered state, Karnataka was formed on an inclusive narrative. The narrative was based on the socio linguistic ground reality of the Kannada territory. “Neither in Mysore country nor in Karnataka country are there only Kannada speakers.....the principle of building up a state on the basis of language alone is not correct”. <sup>13</sup>H.S. Siddaiah was referring to a larger issue that can form the basis of a state like Karnataka. What is the larger issue which can bind people together? This needs a revisit in the wake of the formation of two Telugu states. Language alone has not held people under one administrative territory. Karnataka needed a narrative that could describe the existence of multiple languages speaking people under one umbrella. This inclusive narrative had guarded people against linguism.

Karnataka did not make an effort to be a part of the Dravidian identity which the Tamil Nadu was successfully establishing. The Kannada movement was not against either Hindi or Sanskrit. There was a need to be correct within the ambit of the constitution on the one hand and be accommodative of the multilingual situation on the other. The Kannada identity was a narrative and not a counter narrative as the Dravida movement was. The Kannada movement played a matured accommodating role with Sanskrit. “ Sanskrit is like a mother to Kannada” <sup>14</sup>. The enrichment of Kannada language with Sanskrit phonological and syntactical features, the Sanskrit literary models on which Kannada poetry was enriched, is what D.V. Gundappa had on his mind when he referred to a filial bond between Kannada and Sanskrit. Kannada played an accommodating role with Tulu, Kodava, Konkani, Byari and other languages too. The making of Karnataka has to be seen as expansion of an already

existing identity - “Mysoreans were excessively conscious of their identity as Mysoreans”<sup>15</sup>. The identity that was being nurtured was a multilingual, multi cultural multi dimensional, development oriented worldview. There have been concrete attempts to explain this inclusive worldview.

Aluru Venkatarao summed up his notion of Kannada on the occasion of Unification of Karnataka in 1956- “ In short, we should not forget that Karnataka is much broader an entity than Kannada. Not only the speakers of dialects, we should also not forget the minorities who speak other (neighboring) languages- in the construction of united Karnataka. This is a principle to be kept in mind. In other words, Kannada has the dominant status. But knowledge is welcome from all sides...”<sup>16</sup> Karnataka is the name that encompasses all the languages. Kannada as a blanket term, is reason enough to be tolerant and soft towards the other languages. Aluru Venkataraya called this ‘ Kannadathwa’- spirit of Kannada, the ‘thisness’, ‘swabhava’ of Kannada people. Explaining what ‘karnatakatwa’ meant to him, Aluru writes-“ My notion of karnatakatwa is universal”.<sup>17</sup> “ It can be called regional nationalism. It’s not political, neither it is purely religious. It is culture specific and language is it’s foundation”<sup>18</sup> . Yet, Aluru’s ‘ karnatakatwa’ was pushed to the background when the people suspected that the meaning of the term was moving towards being exclusive- vaidic, brahminical and Sanskrit oriented. It was unacceptable to a people who had a tradition of inclusion. Aluru must be credited with beginning the tradition of naming the inclusive socio-linguistic life of Kannada people.

The next attempt at describing the same idea as ‘Kanndatana’ by B.M. Shree. There are others like Deputy Chennabasappa, Shantakavi, Hattangadi Narayana Rayaru, Panje Mangesha Rayaru, Govinda Pai and many more who toiled to spread awareness about language and the culture it encompassed. Strangely, many who worked relentlessly for the Unification and the continuation of an inclusive linguistic culture did not have Kannada as their mother tongue.

Kuvempu’s call to ‘ be kannada’ is another attempt at inclusive narrative. Kuvempu’s idea transcends language and geography- to ‘be kannada’ it is not essential to live in Karnataka. To him, Kannada is a mindset which could be practiced anywhere. This mindset would make a person global/universal-‘vishwa manava’. Accordingly, someone who is ‘Kannada’ becomes a global citizen whose spirit was boundless. Ham.Pa. Ngaraj writes about the unique quality of the Kannada mindset-coordination, inclusiveness, religious tolerance,charitable, heroic,generous, sacrificing/renouncing...”<sup>19</sup> Girish Karnad referred to ‘Kannada culture’ being against violence to a T.V.Channel during the protest against M.M.Kalburgi’s murder on 30-8-2015. Dr. Rajendra Chennry expressed his “ concern about the society in Karnataka becoming forgetful of the great tradition of free intellectual enquiry which shaped modern Kannada culture”.<sup>20</sup> Both Karnad and Chennry were very close to Aluru’s description of Kannadatwa-“ There is no room for violence in Karnataka. The notion of Karntakatwa is all encompassing...”<sup>21</sup>. The inclusive narrative would embrace diversity within its fold.

It is imperative at this point in time to understand this great idea of Kanndathwa/ kanndathana/ be kannada. “There is an urgent need to search for the Kannada model”.

<sup>22</sup>Efforts to replicate the Telugu or the Tamil language models would rob Kannada of its essence of being Kannada. The language model that has been followed in Karnataka, the merits of the model that includes linguistic diversity will have to be spelt out. The Kannada people have scuttled monolingual policies if they go against the ethos of a multilingual mindset. People have set domains for languages- Sanskrit is used in religious occasions in temples, homes and marriages and in invocation during formal functions. Kannada marriage ceremony popularized by Kuvempu- ‘manthra mangalya’ is also performed in some marriages. Tamil, Telugu, Hindustani and Kannada are a pallet of choice in music. Sanskrit, and English pepper formal Kannada speeches and conversation. Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam, Hindi and good Kannada films are watched, Kannada Newspapers are favoured , a large number of English newspapers also sell, English medium schools are preferred over Kannada schools. Multilingualism and the resultant mindset- multilinguality has enabled the people to glide from language to language, mix languages, switch code, substitute phonemes and morphemes, intermix syntax and choose different languages for different functions and look wanting when forced to speak/use one language! The various outfits that drum for Kannada in all domains of life are in reality forcing a unilingual model that is borrowed from the neighboring states which in reality was introduced by the West. Modern Karnataka is fit to be called a linguistic marvel- a laboratory of multilingualism.

The inclusive narratives did not come in the way of the implementation of Kannada in Administration and Judiciary. THE KARNATAKA OFFICIAL LANGUAGE ACT-1963 is the legislature made by the Government of Karnataka to declare Kannada as the Official Language of the State. The Act also ruled that English to be continued to be used for official purposes until the Government otherwise directs. In the year 1980, the state Government ordered that Kannada will be the official administrative language. <sup>23</sup>Punitive action against the officials who did not use Kannada ensured the use of it for all official purposes.

Kannada is the language in the domain of Judiciary in the lower courts. The Constitution is very clear about the Language to be used in the higher courts- High Courts and Supreme Courts. Art.348 states that the language of these courts has to be English. As per the Art. 348 of the Constitution of India the language of the Higher courts has to be English. The implementation of the Official Language in the domains of Administration and Judiciary in the State can be termed a success story- given the multilingual landscape of the State. The billboards have a stipulated rule for the use of script- Kannada followed by English. .... The rule is followed dutifully where the English name is written in Kannada script. People of kannada have willingly accepted these changes. There is no resistance or debate on the use of Kannada in administration or judiciary. But the **Language of Education** has been a debatable issue in Karnataka whose average literacy rate, as per the 2011 Census of India was 75.60%. <sup>24</sup>

### **3. Gokak Agitation:**

The Unified Karnataka, true to its multilingual ethos and the inclusive narrative-‘Karnatakathwa/ Kannadathana/ be kannada’, coined by the writers, was easy going with the issue of Medium of Instruction. Karnataka had inherited a multilingual media

education. The task of providing education for all could not be realized without the help of private educational institutions. Between 1960 – 1987, the Government of Karnataka allowed English medium schools to be opened. This is in addition to the English medium schools that existed before the Unification. It was at the Secondary School level that there were Seven languages offered as First languages. Sanskrit was one of them. There was a huge disparity in the corpus planning of Sanskrit texts vis-a-vis other languages offered. Students began letters of Sanskrit alphabets in Class VIII. Sanskrit was made ultra easy with an option to write answers in either English, Kannada or Hindi. Majority of the students opted for Sanskrit as they could score 90+ marks effortlessly which in turn would catapult them to a better rank. Kannada, on the other hand was made quite a hard nut to crack with Old Kannada, Middle Kannada and large chunks of grammar. Students whose mother tongue was Kannada, found the texts difficult. On learning of the dwindling number of students opting for Kannada, the then Chief Minister Devaraj Urs began the debate on Language in education by ordering the removal of Sanskrit from the list of First Languages and relegated it to the level of Third language at the Secondary level. The move was defended on the grounds that Sanskrit was not a mother tongue and it was not studied at the primary level. The next Chief minister Mr. Gundu Rao reverted the order- brought Sanskrit back on the list of First Languages as “ the Udupi Swamijis made a request to the CM that Sanskrit should be given importance in education.”<sup>25</sup>. This move triggered widespread opposition in Karnataka. The Government set up a Committee under the Chairmanship of V.K. Gokak to look into the language issue and submit a report.

Gokak Committee submitted its report on the status of Sanskrit and Kannada in Education at the Secondary level. According to the Report, the Three Language Formula was proposed. The focus of Gokak agitation was the status of Kannada in education. To press the Govt. to implement the Gokak report, there was unprecedented widespread agitation all over Karnataka. Be it Unification or the Gokak agitation, the people who were prominent in these two agitations were writers of Kannada. “ Sham. Ba. Joshi was the President of the Task force of the Gokaka agitation. Basavaraj Kattiamni, Dr. R. C. Hiremat, Chennaveera Kanavi, Dr. R.U. Dharwadkar, Dr. S.M. Vrishabhendra swamy, V.S. Hiregowda and others were the Vice –Presidents. Prof. Chandrashekhara Patil M.M. Kalburgi, Gurulinga Kapase were the Secretaries”<sup>26</sup>. It is interesting to note that there is a long tradition of writers being the torch bearers of language related issues in Karnataka. The outcome of the agitation was the Government order dated 30-4-1982. Based on the Gokak report, the order made Kannada/ Mother tongue as the First language at the Secondary level. Patil Puttappa who spearheaded the agitation, told Gokak in Hubballi –“ You have designed a formula that can boost the growth of all regional languages of India. Your report is not only applicable to Karnataka but to all the other states of India. All that one has to do is to substitute the word ‘Kannada’ with their own regional language”.<sup>27</sup> The Gokak Report was in keeping with the Three language Formula proposed by the Kothari Commission Report and the **National Education Policy of 1968**.

In a bid to provide the prime of place for Kannada at the Primary level, the government issued an order dated 20-7-1982, making Kannada the sole first language for the Secondary

schools. It also stated that ‘the teaching of Kannada from first standard will commence from the academic year 1983’<sup>28</sup> The order was in keeping with the *Resolution* adopted by the Provincial Education Minister’s Conference held in August 1949 which states- “ The Medium of Instruction and examination in the Junior basic stage must be the mother tongue of the child and, where the mother tongue is different from the regional and state language , arrangements must be made for instruction in the mother tongue...The mother tongue will be the language declared by the parent and guardian to be mother tongue.”<sup>29</sup>The implementation of the order poses multiple problems as the linguistically reorganized states continue to have a multilingual population. Without the political will to implement multilingual education, the states would find it difficult to impart education in multiple languages. The problem is simply a fall out of the linguistic reorganization of states which catapulted language to be an identity marker within the larger frame of a new nation state. The complications are due to the desire of leaders to see one language being used in all domains which is not in the genetic profile of Kannada people. Yet, the Gokak Report was an opportunity to impart education in Kannada which was lost due to two factors-

- a. Desire for higher education
- b. Private providers of education

**a .Desire for higher education:** The Gokak agitation ultimately gave Kannada the status of First language carrying 125 marks at the SSLC level. As the literacy rate increased in Karnataka, so did the demand for English as Medium of instruction. Post Unification, most of the leaders who came to prominence settled in Bangalore and sent their children to English medium schools. The direct correlation between western education and the job opportunities, coupled with the raising standard of the agrarian communities triggered a desire to be educated”. <sup>30</sup>In Karnataka “ it was the middle castes such as the Lingayats and Vokkaligas who tried to assert their economic strength and aspire for opportunities in education, employment and politics”. <sup>31</sup>The Dalit and backward community writes and leaders professed salvation through English. Students preferred to opt for English as a medium even at primary level as they found the switch over to English at Class V onwards smoother.

Educational institutions were set up as a means to strengthen caste. Successive governments too pandered to demands made by caste groups. At the time of the Unification, there was Karnataka Lingayat Education Society( K L E S) set up in the year 1916 and the Vokkaliga sangha set up in 1906, running colleges and hostels. The rise of these communities in education and their desire to unseat the Brahmins from cornering majority of government jobs and the tacit support of the Maharaja of Mysore that resulted in the implementation of the Miller’s Committee report – providing 50% of the posts to the non- Brahmins, are issues that are inter woven in a complex manner with the choice of a MI. Education in English is a means for the upward mobility of these communities whose aim is not basic education but higher education. Their aim is to fill up the posts in various professional colleges set up by their respective communities, and the lure of job opportunities in the US and Europe for the IT. The issue of MI in Karnataka has to be viewed through the prism of all these socio-economic, socio- linguistic factors. The Reformative action by the Government in terms of

reserved seats, scholarships and loans for education has triggered similar desire for a globally accepted MI among the Scheduled Castes and the OBCs.

The role of language in Education cannot be studied only from the point of view of language preferences based on caste. The preference for English education transcends caste boundaries. Though the demand for starting educational institutions and the sanction of permission for such institutions is based on caste, it is the desire for technical and medical education that is prompting parents to opt for English medium. The mushrooming of engineering colleges in every nook and corner of Karnataka coupled with the job opportunities for the engineers in the IT and ITES, the prestige factor attached to going to foreign countries- are all factors that reflect a people who are out to achieve upward mobility through higher education. There is also an imbalance in the number of jobs generated and the number of educated youngsters vying for these jobs. A good grip over the spoken form of English language becomes the litmus test for selection of a candidate. The existence of 1652 languages in the country itself creates a need for a language which is perceived as neutral.

**Profile of the Private providers of education:** The private providers of education who had spread their roots in Karnataka were eager to provide primary education in English in exchange of a fee. Missionaries, Caste Associations, mathas of all caste, Big Business houses like the Birla, U.B. Group, Ambani, Various Clubs like the Rotary International and Lions, Municipal Corporations, Bar Council, Defense Services, Private Individuals of all communities, Politicians of all hues, Trusts, NGOs and the Government are providing education at various levels in Karnataka. Some of the Former Ministers, MLAs and Parliamentarians are also providers of education in Karnataka. Any reading of language issues in Karnataka cannot neglect this development- the blurring line between the private and the government.

The Business of education has more or less united all the stakeholders. The associations like the COMED –K and Management associations are not on caste lines. Lingayats, Brahmins, Muslims, Christians, Jains, Dalits and other providers of education share the same platform. In the act of giving and receiving education in English medium, the parents and the students are with the managements. Any move the Government makes to introduce checks and balance regarding the medium of education under pressure from writers and members of the various Kannada organizations, the private providers have gone to court seeking redress.

**4.The Supreme court Verdict :**The Supreme Court verdict was on a case in which the Government and the Parent Teachers Association and the Private providers of education were involved. The Kannada people who fought for the supremacy of Kannada in the field of education during the Gokak agitation, have demanded for a right to send their children to English medium schools. The legal battle and the verdict that followed is a metaphor for the changing times.

On the side of the state of Karnataka, Commissioner of Public Instruction <sup>32</sup> and Fifteen educationists of Karnataka <sup>33</sup> – all pressing for primary education- Class I- IV in Kannada Medium on the grounds that it was the mother tongue of majority of the people and it was the language in which the children were comfortable with.



This group was fighting a legal battle against Private Schools management Association and the Parents Association. A cursory glance at a few focal points as a run up to the verdict would lend clarity to a very complex issue.

- On 2-7-2008-A Full bench of the Karnataka High Court heard the Writ Petition No.14363 of 1994 and quashed those clauses (No 2,3,6 &8) that brought the recognized unaided schools under the Language policy of the state. Thus, the High Court restricted the Government order of 29-4-1994 to the Schools run by the Government and the Government Aided Schools.
- On 3-7-2009- a Division Bench of the High Court asked the Government to comply with the judgment of 2-7-2008.
- 22-1-2012- A single judge directed the State Government to grant permission to a petitioner to run English Medium school from Class I-IV.
- This writ petition was challenged the Government before the Division Bench of the High Court.<sup>34</sup>
- 21-2-2012- The High Court dismissed the Writ Petition filed by the Government.<sup>35</sup>

**It is against this order of dismissal by the High Court that the ‘ State of Karnataka and the Commissioner of Public Instruction, Bangalore filed a Special Leave Petition before the Supreme Court.’<sup>36</sup>**

**A division Bench of the Supreme Court heard the petition.** On 5-7-2013, and by an order referred 5 Questions for consideration by the Constitution Bench. The answer to those 5 questions is what the Supreme Court verdict is made of.

The 5 Questions and the answers in short are-

1.What does Mother tongue mean? If it referred to as the language in which the child is comfortable with, then who will decide the same?

The answer by the Constitution bench was- Mother tongue in the context of the Constitution would mean the language of linguistic minority in the state and it is the parent or the guardian of the child who will decide what the mother tongue of the child is. The Constitution nowhere provides that the mother tongue is the language in which the child is comfortable with,... we can not either expand the power of the state or restrict the fundamental right by saying that mother tongue is the language in which the child is comfortable with.<sup>37</sup>

2.Whether a student or a parent has a right to choose a medium of instruction at primary stage?

As an answer the bench came to the conclusion that “ the freedom of speech and the expression will include the right of a child to be educated in the medium of instruction of his choice... a child, and on his behalf his parent or guardian, has the right to choose the medium of instruction at the primary school stage under Article 19(1)(a) and not under Article 21 or 21A of the Constitution.”<sup>38</sup>

3.Does the imposition of mother tongue in any way affect the fundamental rights under Article 14, 19, 29 and 30 of the Constitution?

The answer to this question referred to Art. 29(1) –‘ Protection of interests of the minorities’ and Art. 30(1) which guarantees the ‘Right of minorities to establish and administer

educational institutions of their choice’<sup>39</sup>. Under this Article ‘the linguistic minorities have a right to choose the medium of instruction’ The Constitution Bench held that ‘ the imposition of mother tongue affects the fundamental rights under Articles 19, 29 an 30 of the Constitution.’<sup>40</sup>

4. Whether the Government recognized schools are inclusive of both Govt. aided schools and private and unaided schools?.

As an answer to this question the Bench held that “ the Government recognized schools will not only include government aided schools but also unaided schools which have been granted recognition”.<sup>41</sup>

5. Whether the State can by virtue of Article 350-A of the Constitution compel the linguistic minorities to choose their mother tongue only as medium of instruction in primary schools?

Art. 350 A directs the State to facilitate instruction in mother tongue for the linguistic minority groups. The Court held that “ State had no power under Art.350A of the Constitution to compel the linguistic minorities to choose their mother tongue only as medium of instruction in primary schools”.<sup>42</sup>

Interesting take away from this verdict is-

- It dissociated the official language and the language of education there by making language choice domain specific.
- Taking cognizance of the changes in the society, it takes the language of education out of the traditional baggage and puts it directly under the global market.
- Education gets directly associated with employment, English as a Medium of Instruction is perceived to be a means to that end.<sup>43</sup>

The four focal points taken up for discussion in this paper – Multilingualism, Unification, Gokak agitation and the Supreme Court verdict mark four different language attitude by the people of Karnataka. They are-

- i. The Unification was an inclusive movement.
- ii. The Gokak agitation is a Kannada movement. Such an agitation for the supremacy of Kannada is unprecedented in Karnataka. The agitation was to establish Kannada in the sphere of education.
- iii. The response of the Kannada people to the Supreme Court verdict on the medium of Instruction forces one to revisit the Gokak agitation. There was not a whimper from the general public against the ruling of the Apex court.

How do we account for this change in attitude? Globalization, English language as separate from the speakers of that language and also the non parochial attitude of the Kannada people have been blamed for this shifting loyalties. There are practical difficulties in studying this change of attitude without a theoretical platform to posit it. Gokak agitation for Kannada in education and the Supreme Court verdict where the state lost to the private providers of English education do not gel with each other. The language attitude has moved from a narrative of unifying multilingual mind set to the demand for supremacy of Kannada in the domain of education to the rejection of Kannada as a medium of instruction. This is a huge

attitudinal change. Trying to see the reasons for this language promiscuity among the people of Karnataka is also due to the **Linguistic globalization** that has set in.

Globalization, in reality should have thrown up multiple language choices. Multipolarity which is a norm in post modern world, does not seem to apply to language. Globalization seems like the globalization of English in certain domains. Spread of English in the post colonial era is a strange phenomenon. The love for English language after rejecting the colonizers, forces one to draw a wedge between people and their language. Heather Murray<sup>44</sup> interpreted Globalization of English-“The increasing intrusion of the English language into the lives of town and city dwellers all over the world... it also skews the socio – economic order in favour of those who are proficient in English”. But how widespread is the use of English among our youth is a topic not worked on. For the youth of this country, English has brought tremendous opportunities. Linguistic globalization is a pan Indian and pan world phenomenon. Globalization of one language for all domains goes against the multilingual ethos of the Kannada people. Hence, the language choices they have made to accommodate multiple languages, needs more attention.

Conclusion: Kannada people have exhibited multiple choice of language. They have accepted Kannada in administration and judiciary. They have moved from Kannada as first language to English as Medium of Instruction because it is convenient and profitable. It should not be construed that they reject one language for the other. Today there is a need to know English along with other languages. If the need arises for some other language, the Kannada people would certainly learn that language too. The modern nation state’s endeavor to make the people handle all functions of life - administration, Judiciary and education, rituals and entertainment in one single language will not be a success with multilingual people. People of Karnataka have made domain specific language choice- “ English for economic progress, and, normally mother tongue for cultural purposes and as a token of identity.”<sup>45</sup> The policy makers will have to accommodate the people’s linguistic aspirations as “ language policy exists within a complex set of social, political, economic, religious, demographic, educational and cultural factors that make up the full ecology of human life”.<sup>46</sup> In Karnataka, the policy makers too seem to have understood that there can be a domain specific choice of language-going by their near silence on the Supreme Court verdict. The domain specific choice of language in Karnataka can be a model for studying every other diversity.

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