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## **THE STUDY OF MAHATMA GANDHI'S THOUGHTS REGARDING LANGUAGE**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

A common language plays an important role in the development of the national spirit of any country. Having a common language in the nation is an indisputable requirement through which various activities of national life are conducted. With the objective of strengthening India as a nation, its leaders had stressed from the very beginning that Indian nationality could not be strengthened in the absence of a national language. This was the reason that Keshav Chandra Sen and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee of Bengal and Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati of Gujarat and Mahatma Gandhi and Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra, etc., recognized leaders of non-Hindi speaking provinces, and said Hindi was suitable for a national language.

The language is derived from the Sanskrit 'bhash' which means to speak. That is, whatever is spoken is the language. The language through which our thoughts are conveyed or thoughts are expressed or edited is called language. Different scholars have given different definitions about language, but the definitions of all those scholars can be summed up in such a way that "language analysis is a relative, meaningful, traditional and random phonetic system through which social man expresses his feelings, and thoughts, etc. Its goal from the beginning to end is mutual understanding. Variability is a major feature of the language. Therefore, there is continuous development in its form and new forms are coming out.

There are various forms of language, in which a very important form is the 'national language'. Every advanced, independent, self-respecting country has its own national language. In all the countries like America, England, Russia, Japan, China, etc., the most widely spoken language is expressed as the national language. The defense of the national language is more important than the defense of borders because it is more capable than the mountains and rivers to prevent foreign invasion.

On the basis of the acceptance of Hindi, our Father of Nation always tried very hard to establish it as the national language of India. From time to time, Gandhiji has thrown extensive light on this in his various articles, magazines, and speeches.

Gandhi expresses his deep and foresight by expressing his ideas about language. From time to time, he has expressed his views related to language in his articles written and published in his papers and meetings of Education Councils and other Social Service Councils. For the purpose of studying their language-related ideas, the topic of this research paper has been chosen as "The Study of Mahatma Gandhi's Thoughts Regarding Language".

**KEYWORDS:** Gandhi's Thoughts, Language, National language

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The official language of India was Persian for almost three centuries from the time of Akbar and after 1833, Urdu at the lower level and English at the higher level enjoyed the status of the official language. But Hindi has always been the contact language of the whole country. The official language is that through which all the official work-government orders, courts, advertisements, etc. are carried out, while the national language is that through which citizens of the whole nation create literature on mutual contact, correspondence, or universal level. In India, the language of the middle country has become the medium of the whole country for ages. Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, and Hindi have been used throughout the country in every era respectively. Politically, the unity of India may be a recent thing, but cultural unity has always remained here and a language has been expanding with the expansion of Indian culture. All the literature of the ancient times of Hindi was composed outside the Hindi state. Nath literature was written in Western India, Siddha literature in Eastern India, and Adi Bhakti literature in Maharashtra and Gujarat. Hindi has been the language of pilgrims, merchants, and artists for ages.

The English language belongs to the Indo-European language family and in this view, it has a distant relationship with Hindi, Urdu, Persian, etc. It is considered to be the first international language in the world. It is the main official language of many countries of the world and today is also the main language of science, computer, literature, politics and higher education in many countries. The English language is written in Roman script. As a result of the military, scientific, political, economic, and cultural influences of the United States in the first half of the 19th century and the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries of the British Empire, it has become the common language of speech in any places of the world. It is widely used as a second language and official language in many international organizations and Commonwealth countries.

The future of English in India is a contentious issue. There has been a change in attitudes in this regard over the years. Before independence, both British and English were condemned as opposing foreign and national interests. Mahatma Gandhi, who was a good influential writer of English, believed that the English language has taken away our piety and made our intellect captive. He felt that the English language made us followers. Many other people also presented the view that the "serious imposition" of the foreign medium of education on the countries youth is one of the worst evils.

The English language cannot become a common all-India medium of communication, however, it will continue to be a major medium for dialogue with the world. The English language has broadened the Indian outlook and horizons. It has shown the possible path of a new minded

liberal class in businesses and services. It has to be accepted that English is one of the greatest and best languages in the world. Two-thirds of the world's scientific-technical books are published in English. It is probably the simplest foreign language for the people of India to learn. Importance of English Education - However, Rabindranath Tagore has paid a fitting tribute to

the contribution of English literature. He said that English literature nourished our brains. Many of our novelists, storytellers, and poets have enriched English literature. Jawaharlal Nehru himself owned the English language. He had admitted to English in India that we cannot educate crores of people in the foreign language completely; however, he recognized that the English language is definitely important to us due to our close associativeness and its present importance in the world.

In order to solve the linguistic problem, Article 343 (1) of the Indian Constitution provides that the official language of the country will be Hindi in Devanagari script. The second section of this article provides that the English language will continue to be used along with it for the first fifteen years after the constitution came into force in 1950. According to the demand of the southern states, the use of English has been extended several times for the official use of the Union. But Mahatma Gandhi had different views regarding language.

### **THE STUDY OF MAHATMA GANDHI'S THOUGHTS REGARDING LANGUAGE:**

In the 19th century, Hindi was widely promoted. The Christian missionaries had already made Hindi an all-India medium of their propaganda. He had a simple feeling that 'Hindi' is the only means to reach the masses. Hindi has been the language of mutual contact of the entire country for a long period. Regardless of the official language of any country, its national language should be its own. It is necessary to study Gandhi's ideas on the national language, Gandhi's ideas in the context of the provincial language, and Gandhi's ideas on the English language so that we can be introduced to the development of language.

Gandhi clearly believes that 'If we have to fulfill our claim of being a nation, then our many things should be the same. We need a common language instead of native and provincial languages. If it is possible to adopt a common script, then a big obstacle will be overcome in the way of fulfilling our dream of a common language. "

In practical terms, he says that even today, the administrative machinery working under the British Government is of British officers. Even today most of the employees are Indians and their number has been increasing day by day. In such a situation, it has to be accepted that 'Hindi' is much easier than English for government services where there is a large number of Indians. Our religious, social, and cultural behavior cannot be done normally until everybody acquires knowledge of the English language. Here too, there is a natural feeling of the limitedness of the English language. Because teaching English to everyone is more logical than teaching the Hindi language to some people. English is still a small language. In comparison, Hindi is the language spoken by a large number of people in India. On these grounds, Hindi is definitely a stronger language than English because all these characteristics are present in Hindi.

Gandhi says- 'Bangla is the second place after Hindi. Still, Bengalis use Hindi only outside Bengal. Hindi speaking people use Hindi everywhere. Nobody is surprised when they do this because Hindi's presence is almost everywhere. Hindi sermons and Urdu clerics make their speeches all over India in Hindi and illiterate people understand them. In this way, the Hindi language has already become the national language. We have used it as the national language years ago. In this way, we see that in Hindi as the national language, the eligibility to become the language of the entire Indian people is the highest. For this reason, Gandhiji had full faith that the Hindi language is capable of connecting all Indians in harmony.

According to Gandhiji, leaving self-language and falling in fascination with the language, is a great malign. Mother, mother tongue, and motherland - a self-respecting human can never tolerate any of these three. Inspired by this sentiment, Gandhiji in his article on the importance of provincial languages in Harijan-Sevak (25.08.1946) says: "No matter how many flaws are there in my mother tongue, I will cling to it in the same way as my own From mother's chest, she can give me life-giving milk. I love English instead. But if the English want to seize the place they do not deserve, then I will hate them desperately. It has been accepted that English has become the language of the whole world today. So I would give it a place as another language - but in the university curriculum, not in schools. It can be a thing for some people to learn, not the language of millions. Today, due to our mental slavery, we have started to believe that without English our work cannot go on. I don't believe in this thing. "

Gandhiji certainly believes that - "We had more love than the English. In comparison to our mother tongues, the result was that the relationship of the common people with the educated and politically awakened upper class was severed and there was a deep gap between the two. That is why the languages of India have become poor and they have not received full nutrition.

Expecting the government of independent India to take necessary steps in this direction, Gandhiji writes in Harijan-Sevak (21.09.1947) that "If governments do not take further precautions, then it is possible that the English language should take the place of Hindustani." Due to this, crores of people of India will suffer immensely, who will never understand English. In my opinion, it should be very easy for the provincial to keep such employees, who do all the work in the provincial languages and inter-provincial languages. In my opinion, the international language can only be 'Nagari' or 'Hindustani' written in Urdu script. "

Suggesting this, he says - "The first and foremost thing is that we amend our provincial languages, which have been given as a boon to Hindustan. It is nothing but mindless laziness to say that in our courts, our schools, and even in our offices, it takes some time, maybe a few years, to make this language-related revision. Provincial governments can find a way by which people of those provinces can feel familiar there.

Secondly, the important suggestion was that all the big municipals should make the study of Hindi in their madrasas optional. Describing his experiences in South Africa, he says that 'almost all Tamil-Telugu-speaking people living there speak and understand Hindi. Similarly, if the Bengali brothers spend 2-3 hours daily, they will learn Hindi completely in the next two months.

Gandhiji says that "English is the language of international trade, the language of diplomacy. It contains many fine literary gems and through it, we get introduced to Western ideas and culture. So

it is important for some of us to know English. They can run the departments of national trade and international diplomacy and give the best literature, ideas, and science of the west to the nation. It will be the best use of English. There is no doubt about the attainment of modern knowledge, modern literature We need the knowledge of English for study, the introduction of the whole world, meaning and keeping in touch with the state authorities and other such things. Despite this, English can never become our national language. Even today, its empire is certainly visible. And English has taken a big place in our national works, but still, we should never fall into the illusion that English will acquire the national language.

In today's India, English has taken over our hearts and has enshrined our mother tongues from there. The need is that without knowledge of English, the highest development of the Indian brain should be possible. Getting rid of the temptation of English is a necessary condition for Swaraj. If Swaraj belongs to millions of people who die, crores of illiterates, illiterate sisters and Dalits and Antyas and for all these, then Hindi can be the only national language.

In the speech given from the President's post at the 24<sup>th</sup> session of Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (Indore) in 1935, he says- 'I have always believed that we do not want to harm or erase the provincial languages under any circumstances. We only mean that we should learn the Hindi language for the interrelationship of different provinces. The same language can become a national language which is known by a large number of people and which is easy to learn. Therefore, it is appropriate and possible that in every province, the language of that province, Hindi should be used for the mutual behavior of the whole country and English for international use.

Criticizing the foreign language in education, Gandhi says- 'Teaching English to crores of people is like putting them into slavery. The foundation of education that Macaulay laid was the foundation of slavery. Is it any less oppressive that if I want justice in my country, I have to use the English language? Being a barrister, I cannot speak self-language. We are people who know English as slaves of India. The burden that comes to the mind of getting an education in a foreign language is helplessness. Only our children can bear this burden, but they have to pay for it. They are no longer able to bear the other burden. This makes our graduates mostly dysfunctional, weak, uninspired, patient, and whims. In them, the power of search, the power to think, courage, endurance, bravery, fearlessness, etc., qualities are very attenuated.

The samskaras that are mixed with mother's milk and the sweet words that are heard, the connection between them and the school should be avoided by foreign language education. This has led to a distinction between the educated class and the general public. We have to atone heavily for the disrespect of the mother tongue.

On October 20, 1917, while speaking at the second Gujarat Education Council held in Bharuch as the President, Gandhiji said that "by freeing ourselves from the thoughtless fascination for learning English and freeing the society, we are the big Can serve larger than. The belief in the need for knowledge of English has enslaved us. He has made us unable to serve our true country. For the last 60 years, all our power is being spent learning unfamiliar words and their pronunciation rather than learning. This is a very sad event in our nation. Our first and greatest social service will be that we start using our provincial languages, give natural place to Hindi, do provincial work in provincial languages and do national work in Hindi"

On 27 December 1917, in the presidential address of the first Akhil Bharatiya Samaj Seva-Parishad held in Calcutta, he said - "It is my firm belief that today's English education has made educated Indians weak and powerless." This has put a huge burden on the power of Indian students and has made us copycats. No country can create a caste of imitators and a nation cannot do them. One of the greatest drills that India is suffering today is that knowledge of the English language is necessary to make the ideas related to freedom heartbreaking and to develop the ability to think rationally. "

Revealing the above facts, Gandhi always emphasizes that the importance given to English in the Indian education system, while replacing it with the need to provide education in the mother tongue and other Indian languages, is the principle of education in the mother tongue which is applicable everywhere. Countries like China, Japan, Russia, and France have made commendable development in various fields through their languages. Therefore, there is an urgent need to make the foundation of our education system based on the mother tongue and Indian languages based on Gandhiji's suggested principles.

## CONCLUSION:

In the research presented, Gandhi's language-related ideas have been studied in the context of Hindi language, provincial language, English language, etc. This study reveals the reasons for which Gandhi was opposed to the use of English language in Hindustan and stressed the acceptance of Hindi as a language and national language. Gandhi supported Hindustani as a national language for a strong and integrated India. He supported the need, preservation, and promotion of the provincial language so that India's cultural heritage could flourish. Seeing the English language as unsuitable for the national language, he considered Hindi to be a suitable language for the exchange of ideas.

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