



## DECLINE OF KASHMIRI LANGUAGE: ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND OTHER LANGUAGES

<sup>1</sup>**Mohd Altaf Beigh**

Research Scholar, Dept. of English, Guru Kashi University (Punjab)

<sup>2</sup>**Dr Saurabh Bhardwaj**

Assistant Professor, Dept. of English, Guru Kashi University

### Abstract

The current abstract delves into the various elements that have led to the downfall of the Kashmiri language, with particular emphasis on the crucial function performed by governmental regulations and the consequences of the migration of languages. The distinctive language of Kashmir, which has significant cultural and historical value, is gradually losing its linguistic life. The research explores the historical background, emphasizing the changes in language dynamics in the area. The language landscape is greatly influenced by government policy, both historical and modern. The study examines the government's language-related decrees, educational plans, and media laws, evaluating their effects on the advancement or disregard of the Kashmiri language. The study also looks into how language plays a part in identity politics, providing insight into how linguistic decisions might affect social and political dynamics in the area. The study also looks at how other languages—Urdu and English in particular—have affected Kashmiri language decline. Due to migration, globalization, and changes in schooling, these languages are now more often used than Kashmiri. The research examines how this linguistic change may affect intergenerational language transmission, communication styles, and cultural legacy.

**Keywords:** Kashmiri Language, Government, Languages, Historical, Modernity.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Society and language are intertwined. There are two approaches to studying the relationship: (i) sociology of language and (ii) language use in society. Given the central issue of the book, it would be pertinent and interesting to investigate how the language is used in Kashmiri society and how it relates to the language itself. Nonetheless, a few comments regarding language sociology will be made. We shall limit our description and analysis to specific Kashmiri linguistic traits, concerns associated to its growth with particular reference to its application in various sectors, its standardization and modernization, without delving into theoretical aspects of sociolinguistics. In its natural setting, language serves as a potent marker of social and ethnic identity. When members of a specific language group relocate to a far-off place due to political and socioeconomic reasons, language identity becomes more difficult to maintain. We will highlight a few language-related social characteristics, paying particular attention on Kashmiri linguistic identity, language loss, and language maintenance among displaced or emigrant children.

As obviously as society is represented in language, language also reflects society. It would be required to specifically mention the linguistic features of Kashmiri surnames, personal names, and nicknames in order to demonstrate this claim. They are reflection of the linguistic, religious, and sociocultural norms of the community. Two primary religious streams are represented by the majority of Kashmiri personal names. In addition to a few true surnames, a significant portion of nicknames and surnames have evolved as a result of regional influences and prevalent sociocultural trends that define Kashmiri society. There doesn't seem to be any place for clearly established religious borders in them. The idea of Kashmiri is braided with a strong texture, and Kashmiris are highly prolific in coming up with names and nicknames. Similar to this, in everyday communication, the words of kinship, manners of addressing one another, and ways of greeting one another reflect the sociocultural context of Kashmiri society. With particular regard to their use, they are illustrated. They have a significant role in language sociology and the use of language in society. The dramatic testimony to the complex interactions of linguistic legacy, governmental regulations, and the impact of other languages is the decline of the Kashmiri language. The rich and old language of Kashmir, which is deeply ingrained in the region's culture, has been gradually disappearing in recent years. Government initiatives, whether deliberate or not, have greatly influenced the linguistic landscape, hence the government's participation in this loss cannot be overstated. In addition, Kashmiri has been marginalized as a result of other languages' omnipresence and domination in a variety of domains. This complex network of interrelated variables emphasizes how urgently we need to grasp the linguistic diversity that Kashmiri represents and work together to resuscitate and preserve it.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Ahmed's (2023) investigation of how state apathy affects the ethnolinguistic life of the Baltis in Kargil is fascinating and enlightening. The careful investigation explores the complex interplay between language and cultural preservation and policy decisions made by the government.

The historical analysis of the fall of multilingualism in colonial Allahabad by Poddar (2023) offers a fascinating picture of cultural politics and the function of the press at a pivotal juncture in Indian history. It is admirable how much care has been taken to trace the development of language dynamics in the public domain.

Kumar (2024) explores the nexus between politics and demography in "Numbers as Political Allies," where he looks at the census in Jammu and Kashmir. The distinctive viewpoint this publication offers on the political ramifications of population data makes it stand out. Kumar skillfully explains how, in a location with complicated geopolitical dynamics, numbers can become effective partners in political maneuverings.

An intriguing look at the dynamics of language preservation in a diasporic context can be found in Ganai and Naikoo's (2023) study on the language preferences of Kashmiri children in the Jizan Region of Saudi Arabia. In addition to discussing the difficulties encountered by the Kashmiri speech group, the study clarifies how linguistic and cultural identities change when living abroad. Puri's "Anxious Majorities" adds a nuanced perspective to the discussion started by Kumar's (2023) "Numbers as Political Allies." The book explores the nuances of majority anxiety and how it shows

itself in relation to the census that is taking place in Jammu and Kashmir. Puri offers a sophisticated analysis of how majority worries manifest in political and demographic narratives in her incisive and captivating writing.

### **3. DECLINE OF KASHMIRI LANGUAGE**

The dwindling usage of the Kashmiri language is a complex issue with intricate historical roots. The area has had a variety of cultural impacts over the ages as a result of invasions and succeeding rulers. During various points in Kashmir's history, Persian and then Urdu were the primary languages of administration, progressively pushing out the local Kashmiri tongue. Because conquerors wanted to impose their languages for communication and governance, there occurred a linguistic shift that resulted in a lower position for Kashmiris. The language situation in Kashmir was further complicated by the 1947 Indian split. The area became the center of the India-Pakistan conflict, creating a tumultuous atmosphere that affected language dynamics in addition to the political and social domains. The turmoil caused migration and population displacement, upsetting established language transmission patterns and accelerating the loss of linguistic distinctiveness. Politically speaking, there have been several shifts in Kashmir's government, with successive regimes prioritizing international languages above local tongues like Kashmiri.

This tendency is seen in educational institutions where there is less emphasis on Kashmiri, and official communications frequently give priority to languages that have a wider audience across national or international borders. Since the vitality of a language is intimately linked to its institutional support and recognition, the marginalization of Kashmiri in institutional settings has been a major factor in its decline. The younger generation in Kashmir is battling the social effects of globalized communication and media. Young people's linguistic choices have changed as a result of the rise in popularity of Hindi and English as languages of modernity and upward mobility. The fact that Kashmiri is frequently restricted to informal and familial spheres rather than being actively used in larger social situations further exacerbates this linguistic assimilation

#### **Priorities for the Government:**

In a territory characterized by ethnic variety and political instability, Kashmir has seen several administrations struggle with issues of identity and governance. International languages have frequently taken precedence over regional tongues in government goals, notwithstanding Kashmiri's rich linguistic tradition. The preference for languages like Hindi and English that are more widely accepted domestically or internationally has caused Kashmiri to be marginalized in official spheres and has worsened the language's demise. The usage of international languages has been given precedence by government organizations, especially educational and administrative agencies, through policies and practices that have relegated Kashmiri to a secondary or even tertiary status. Kashmiri's loss in favor of more pragmatic or prestigious languages has been exacerbated by the absence of institutional support and respect for the language, which has made it difficult to preserve and promote. Consequently, the political climate in Kashmir has greatly influenced the development of the Kashmiri language, with governmental priorities making it more difficult for speakers to preserve their linguistic legacy in the midst of instability brought on by conflict and relocation.

#### 4. GOVERNMENTAL ROLES

##### Language Policies

The development of government language policies is closely related to the history of the Kashmiri language. These laws, which cover media, education, and official correspondence, have had a significant impact on how Kashmiris have lived and developed. The public's perception and familiarity with Kashmiri are significantly impacted by the decisions the government makes about language use. To determine whether these policies have intentionally promoted the use of Kashmiri or, possibly inadvertently, marginalized it in favor of more frequently spoken languages, a thorough examination of these policies is necessary. The language that the government uses in official letters sets the standard for linguistic conventions. The visibility and recognition of Kashmiri language is enhanced by policies that give precedence to its inclusion in government documents and communication. On the other hand, policies that promote languages like English or Urdu could unintentionally lower the status of Kashmiri and restrict its use in formal contexts. Analyzing these linguistic decisions makes it easier to assess how committed the government is to protecting and advancing linguistic diversity.

Government initiatives in the field of education play a crucial role in the fight to preserve language. Education policies that incorporate Kashmiri language instruction into the curriculum at all levels of education help ensure that it continues for future generations. However, the vitality and cultural value of Kashmiri language are undermined if the government ignores or marginalizes it in educational curricula. Examining these rules allows us to understand how committed the government is to creating a language environment that supports and cherishes Kashmiri. The media, as a potent tool for communication, both influences and reflects public opinion. Government initiatives that support Kashmiri language use via media channels increase the language's awareness and accessibility. On the other hand, laws that disregard or dissuade Kashmiris from appearing in the media further their marginalization. Comprehending these dynamics is crucial in order to appreciate the government's function in promoting or impeding the linguistic diversity embodied by Kashmiri. As the inquiry progresses, it aims to find workable language revival strategies within the constraints of current government directives, in addition to criticizing current policies. Proposing measures in line with existing policies is the goal, guaranteeing a practical and long-lasting approach to language revitalization. Through offering perspectives on how policy measures might be modified, the study aims to support the revival of the Kashmiri language and ensure its ongoing existence in many domains of society. Ultimately, developing ways to protect and advance Kashmir's linguistic legacy will need a critical examination of government language policies. The history of the Kashmiri language has been significantly shaped by government language policy in the region. These policies have had a major impact on the lives and development of Kashmiris and cover a wide range of areas, including the media, education, and official correspondence. Government decisions over language use have a big influence on how people see and are familiar with Kashmiri. Therefore, a detailed analysis of these policies is necessary to determine if they have purposefully encouraged the use of Kashmiri or unintentionally marginalized it in favor of languages that are more commonly used. Language

standards and conventions are established by the language used by the government in official communications. The visibility and recognition of Kashmiri language are improved by policies that give precedence to its inclusion in official documents and communications. On the other hand, policies that priorities languages like Urdu or English could unintentionally devalue Kashmiri and limit its official use. Thus, assessing the government's dedication to preserving and promoting language diversity inside Kashmir requires a close examination of these linguistic choices.

Another important area for language preservation is education policy. To ensure that Kashmiri language education continues for future generations, it must be incorporated into curricula at all educational levels. However, the vitality and cultural significance of Kashmiri people are compromised when they are ignored or marginalized in school curricula. We can assess the government's commitment to creating a language environment that cherishes and supports Kashmiri by looking at these policies.

The media may both shape and reflect public opinion, making it a potent weapon for communication. Initiatives by the government to encourage the use of Kashmiri in media outlets raise awareness of and increase accessibility to it. On the other hand, rules that dissuade or ignore Kashmiris' representation in the media further marginalize them. Comprehending these processes is crucial in order to recognise the extent to which the government either facilitates or obstructs the linguistic diversity that Kashmiri represents. As the investigation moves forward, its goals will be to both critique current practices and pinpoint workable language revitalization plans that fit inside the parameters of current government mandates. The objective is to suggest actions that are in line with current regulations, guaranteeing a workable and long-lasting strategy for language revitalization. The study aims to provide insights into how policy measures might be modified in order to facilitate the resurgence of the Kashmiri language and guarantee its continuous existence in diverse spheres of society. In the end, a critical analysis of government language policies will be necessary to preserve and advance Kashmir's linguistic legacy.

## **5. INFLUENCE OF OTHER LANGUAGES**

### **Dominance of Urdu and English**

The prevalence of Urdu and English in several fields, including education and management, has resulted in the considerable marginalization of the use of Kashmiri language. There is little room for the promotion and maintenance of Kashmiri as a language of teaching in educational institutions since Urdu and English are frequently used extensively as the medium of instruction. This change in language not only makes it harder for Kashmiri speakers to receive education in their mother tongue but also widens the linguistic divide between generations. Moreover, the predominance of Urdu and English in official and administrative correspondence further marginalizes Kashmiri. The primary languages used in government papers, public services, and court processes are Urdu and English, resulting in a linguistic hierarchy that disadvantages Kashmiri. The marginalization of Kashmiris in official domains exacerbates the prevailing belief that they are less essential or significant.

This linguistic transition has a significant and wide-ranging effect on the Kashmiri language. First of all, it causes Kashmiris to be less visible and recognized in the general consciousness. Kashmiri faces the danger of being restricted to more informal and domestic spheres as Urdu and English rise to prominence and influence, impeding its continued growth and advancement. The economic ramifications also cannot be disregarded. The perception that having fluency in Urdu and English is necessary for job prospects and career progression deters people from using and learning Kashmiri. In addition to having an impact on individuals, this linguistic hierarchy also adds to the general socioeconomic divide in the Kashmiri-speaking population.

Examining the effects of Urdu and English's domination makes it clear that this problem needs to be resolved if Kashmiri language is to be revived. In order to promote a linguistic environment that acknowledges and cherishes the distinctive legacy of the Kashmiri language, efforts must be made to integrate Kashmiri into official communication, administration, and education. The Kashmiri language has suffered greatly from its widespread use in Urdu and English in a variety of fields, including administration and education. There is limited opportunity for the promotion and maintenance of Kashmiri as a teaching language in educational institutions since Urdu and English are frequently utilized as the medium of instruction. This change worsens the linguistic divide between generations and presents difficulties for Kashmiri speakers who want to receive an education in their home tongue. Thus, the prevalence of Urdu and English in education continues to keep Kashmiris on the margins.

Kashmiri people are further marginalized by the dominance of Urdu and English in official and administrative domains. Urdu and English are the primary languages used in government papers, public services, and court processes; this creates a linguistic hierarchy that affects Kashmiri speakers. The idea that Kashmiris and their language are less important or valuable is reinforced by their marginalization in official spheres, escalating already-existing disparities. The implications of this linguistic shift go beyond awareness and identification. As Urdu and English become more popular, Kashmiri may find themselves restricted to informal and home contexts, which would impede its advancement. Furthermore, studying and utilizing Kashmiri is discouraged since it is widely believed that proficiency in Urdu and English is necessary for employment opportunities and career progression. This has important economic ramifications. Furthermore, the socioeconomic gap within the Kashmiri-speaking community is made worse by this language hierarchy.

It is essential to oppose Urdu and English's dominance in order to address these issues and bring back the Kashmiri language. Integration of Kashmiri into official correspondence, government operations, and educational programmes must be pursued. Establishing a language environment that acknowledges and values the distinct heritage of the Kashmiri language is crucial to its revival and conservation. It is possible to lessen the language's marginalization and ensure that it remains relevant and alive in Kashmiri society by encouraging the use of Kashmiri in a variety of contexts and making sure it is taught in school curriculum.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the dwindling usage of the Kashmiri language is a complex problem with wide-ranging effects. Globalization and socioeconomic shifts are just two of the many causes contributing to the slow loss of this rich linguistic legacy. The government has a critical role in protecting and advancing regional languages, but the steps it has made so far might not be sufficient. To buck the tendency and revitalize the Kashmiri language, a more extensive and persistent effort is needed. Kashmiri has also been greatly overshadowed by the influence of other major languages, both locally and internationally. It is crucial to strike a balance between the practicalities of a globalized society and linguistic diversity. In the end, the revitalization of the Kashmiri language and its cultural relevance can be facilitated by the government's deliberate initiatives combined with the cultivation of a sense of pride and ownership within the Kashmiri-speaking community.

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