

काशी हिन्दू
विश्वविद्यालय



BANARAS HINDU
UNIVERSITY



National Seminar

(Hybrid Mode)

On



LANGUAGE, IDENTITY, AND POWER: SOCIOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON NEP 2020 AND THE MOTHER TONGUE

*Exploring the Social, Historical, Political and Economic
Dimensions of Language in Indian Education*

SEPTEMBER 24-25, 2025

Organized By

**Department of Sociology
Faculty of Social Sciences
Banaras Hindu University
Varanasi-221005**

**In collaboration with
RC-05 Sociology of Education
Indian Sociological Society, New Delhi**



VENUE

SAMBODHI SABHAGAR

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Dean, SASS, MANUU, Hyderabad

About the Seminar

Language, Identity, and Power:

Sociological Reflections on NEP 2020 and the Mother Tongue

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recommends a paradigm shift in India's education system through a restructured 5+3+3+4 framework, emphasising the use of the mother tongue or regional language as the medium of instruction at least up to Grade 5. This policy direction resonates with India's rich linguistic diversity, encompassing 121 major languages and 22 constitutionally recognised languages under the Eighth Schedule. The Constitution of India, under Article 350A, mandates the provision of primary education in the mother tongue, while the Seventh Schedule, which places education under the concurrent list, empowers both the Union and State governments to foster mother tongue-based education within regional contexts while maintaining national coherence. In aligning policy with these constitutional provisions, NEP 2020 emphasises the importance of language in shaping identity, fostering cognitive development, and promoting social inclusion in a multilingual society. From a sociological perspective, the emphasis on the mother tongue in NEP 2020 reflects a functionalist understanding of language as a critical institution that sustains social cohesion and facilitates the transmission of cultural values across generations. Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, the policy seeks to revalue indigenous linguistic assets historically marginalised by colonial and post-colonial educational frameworks that privileged English as the sole medium of upward mobility. Language, in this context, functions not merely as a communicative tool but as a symbolic asset within the field of education, structuring thought and fostering deep comprehension in early childhood learning. NEP 2020's reference to Nobel laureates thinking in multiple languages underscores the cognitive and epistemological benefits of multilingualism, aligning language policy with contemporary research on learning sciences. NEP 2020 can also be viewed as an attempt to dismantle the epistemic hierarchies entrenched during colonial rule, which positioned English as the exclusive gateway to modernity and success. By validating regional languages and integrating them into formal education structures, including conducting national-level entrance examinations in 13 Indian languages and encouraging the publication of textbooks in regional languages, the policy seeks to democratise knowledge and enhance access for diverse social groups.

This approach facilitates the reclamation of regional languages as vehicles of identity, cultural continuity, and social mobility while ensuring transnational readiness through continued English education. The seminar will critically examine how NEP 2020 negotiates the dialectic between local habitus and global aspirations, analyzing how symbolic interactionism can provide insights into the role of language in shaping students' self-concept, motivation, and classroom experiences. It will explore the policy's advocacy for re-legitimizing indigenous languages in the public sphere as essential for meaningful learning, equity, and inclusion. Ultimately, the seminar aims to reflect on NEP 2020's attempt to align India's educational system with its sociolinguistic realities, recommending strategies for balancing mother tongue-based instruction with global language competencies to promote cultural rootedness and equitable educational access in a knowledge-driven economy.

Seminar Objectives

- To critically examine the sociological implications of NEP 2020's emphasis on mother tongue instruction concerning identity formation, social inclusion, and cultural continuity.
- To analyze the historical, political, and economic dimensions of language policy in India, with particular reference to colonial legacies and contemporary globalization.
- To explore the role of language as cultural capital and its impact on educational access, cognitive development, and social mobility across diverse communities.
- To assess the challenges and opportunities in implementing mother tongue-based education within India's multilingual and multicultural contexts.
- To recommend strategies for balancing local linguistic rootedness with global language competencies in a knowledge-driven economy.

FOCAL THEME

Language, Identity, and Power: Sociological Reflections on NEP 2020 and the Mother Tongue

SUB-THEMES (but not limited to)

- Mother Tongue, Cultural Capital and Social Mobility in Indian Education
- Colonial Legacies and Linguistic Futures in India's Language Policy
- Power, Politics and Pedagogy in Language and Educational Access
- Language and Livelihood in the Knowledge Economy of India
- Mind, Language and Learning in Mother Tongue Instruction
- Cinema and Mass Media Ecosystem as Language Learning Agents
- Language Learning in the Digital Age through Social Media Platforms
- Constitutional Promises and Linguistic Diversity in Indian Schools
- Globalization and the Mother Tongue in a Changing Marketplace
- Multilingualism and Knowledge Democratization in Indian Education
- Language Policy and Regional Aspirations under NEP 2020
- Language, Equity and Inclusion in NEP 2020 Operationalization
- Digital Divide and Language in NEP 2020 Online Education Spaces
- Teacher Training and Language Pedagogy under NEP 2020
- NEP 2020, Language, and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
- Curriculum and Textbook Development in Regional Languages Post-NEP
- Language, Gender, and Access in the NEP 2020 Framework
- Mother Tongue Instruction and Dropout Rates under NEP 2020
- NEP 2020 and Linguistic Minorities in Rights and Representation
- Language, Identity and National Integration in NEP 2020
- Multilingual Schema and Higher Education under NEP 2020
- Advantages of Mother Tongue Instruction in Indian Education
- Implementation Challenges of Teaching in Mother Tongue

CALL FOR PAPERS & PARTICIPATION

Original and empirical research papers are invited for oral presentation on various sub-themes at the national seminar on “Language, Identity, and Power: Sociological Reflections on NEP 2020 and the Mother Tongue” scheduled for September 24–25, 2025. This seminar seeks to explore the social, historical, political, and economic dimensions of language in Indian education, with a special focus on NEP 2020’s emphasis on mother tongue instruction.

PUBLICATION OPPORTUNITIES

Quality abstracts will be selected for publication as chapters in an edited book by the international publisher. Communication on this matter will be shared to the selected paper presenters post seminar.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Interested students, research scholars, postdoctoral fellows, school teachers and principals, faculty members from different disciplines, researchers, policymakers, and NGO personnel are welcome to submit their research work to share with a wide range of audiences coming from across India who present at BHU during seminar days. Those who want to attend the seminar without a paper presentation need not fill out the submission link but should drop an email to us indicating their interest in attending the seminar.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- Kindly send your abstract within 200-250 words along with 4-6 keywords on or before 28/08/2025.
- For English, use Times New Roman, font size 12, and for Hindi, use Unicode, Mangal font size -12 in MS Word format.
- Besides, submissions in all the official languages of India are also welcome in the standard format (prescribed font and size) to reach the objective of the seminar—not only admiring the linguistic diversity of India theoretically but also including them practically for intellectual debates.
- The abstract must include name of author/s, designation, address of affiliated institution, mobile number and email address (in English only).

To send your abstract in full format and structure, click the Google Form/ Submission Link given below:

<https://forms.gle/nQprTesqHP4Npcns9>

*If you face any difficulty while submitting your abstract or need any technical assistance, drop a mail to **languagepowerbhu2025@gmail.com** OR make a call to either of the two mobile numbers provided here: **8840114852, 9198425789**

IMPORTANT DATES

- Last date for abstract submission: August 28, 2025
- Notification of abstract acceptance: September 04, 2025
- Last date for registration: September 15, 2025
- Seminar Dates: September 24-25, 2025

REGISTRATION FEES FOR PAPER PRESENTERS & PARTICIPANTS

The registration fees for different categories of presenters and participants are listed below. Just so you know, the registration fee is non-refundable, and on-the-spot registration is not allowed.

CATEGORY OF PARTICIPANTS	WITHOUT ACCOMMODATION	WITH ACCOMMODATION (TWIN SHARING)
PG STUDENTS	Rs. 600	Rs. 1600
RESEARCH SCHOLARS, POST-DOC FELLOWS & SCHOOL TEACHERS	Rs. 1200	Rs. 2500
FACULTY MEMBERS, SCHOOL PRINCIPALS & RESEARCHERS	Rs. 1600	Rs. 3200
OTHERS (POLICY MAKERS & NGO PERSONNEL)	Rs. 1900	Rs. 3800

*Extra charges are applicable for accompanying person as per university norms, if rooms are available

REGISTRATION FOR THE SEMINAR & MODE OF PAYMENT

After selection of abstracts, another Google Form/Registration Link along with bank details/ QR Code for requisite fee payment will be shared individually through email.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY

Banaras Hindu University (BHU), situated in the sacred city of Varanasi, is an internationally renowned temple of learning. Established in 1916 by the visionary nationalist leader Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, with the support of eminent personalities like Dr Annie Besant, it was envisioned as the “University of India.” Founded under the B.H.U. Act, 1915, the university played a pivotal role in India’s freedom movement and has since evolved into one of the nation’s premier centres of higher education. Spread over 1,300 acres, the main campus boasts verdant avenues, architectural landmarks, and a central temple. The second campus at Barkachha, Mirzapur, spans 2,700 acres. BHU today comprises IIT (BHU), five institutes, 14 faculties, 144 departments, 4 interdisciplinary centres, a constituent women’s college, and 3 schools, covering disciplines from humanities and social sciences to science, technology, medicine, fine arts, and performing arts. The Bharat Kala Bhavan museum is a repository of rare treasures, while the university’s 927-bed Sir Sunderlal Hospital offers advanced medical care. Home to around 15,000 students from across India and abroad, 1,700 faculty members, and 8,000 staff, BHU is a vibrant microcosm of diversity. With students from the USA, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, the University fosters global integration, intellectual growth, and cultural enrichment—truly embodying its motto of nurturing intellect and character for nation-building.



ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

One of BHU's oldest and most distinguished centres, the Faculty of Social Sciences has significantly enriched the university's academic fabric. Established in 1971 after its bifurcation from the Faculty of Arts, it offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs in economics, history, political science, psychology, and sociology, along with centres for Women's Studies, Peace Studies, and professional courses addressing contemporary challenges. Renowned for its research, the faculty's scholars have earned national and international acclaim. Comprising sociologists, psychologists, economists, political scientists, and historians, it continues to shape social thought, interpret change, and provide critical insights into the economy, polity, and society. The Department of Sociology offers undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral research and postdoctoral research programs. The Department is also offering allied courses like Social Work, Anthropology and Gender Studies under self-finance programs.



ABOUT VARANASI

Varanasi, or Benaras (also known as Kashi), is one of the oldest living cities in the world. The city has been famous for centre of learning and civilization and steeped in legends, spirituality, and cultural richness with a history of 3,000 years. Varanasi's founding is attributed to Lord Shiva in Hindu mythology, and its name is derived from the Varuna and Assi rivers that flow alongside it. Mark Twain, the English author, who was enthralled by the legend and sanctity of Benaras, once wrote, "Benaras is older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend, and looks twice as old as all of them put together." Kashi has been the ultimate pilgrimage spot for Hindus for ages, as they believe that one who is graced to die on this land would attain salvation and freedom from the cycle of birth and rebirth. The Ganges in Varanasi is believed to have the power to wash away the sins of mortals. With Sarnath, the place where Buddha preached his first sermon after enlightenment, just 10 km away, Varanasi has been a symbol of the Hindu renaissance. Knowledge, philosophy, culture, devotion to gods, and Indian arts & crafts such as Banaras brocades have all flourished here for centuries. Also a pilgrimage place for Jains, Varanasi is believed to be the birthplace of Parsvanath, the twenty-third Tirthankar. Varanasi's topography is shaped by its location on the banks of the sacred Ganges River. The city spans an area of approximately 112 square kilometres and boasts over 88 ghats, providing a stunning backdrop for religious and cultural activities. Varanasi's average temperature in the month of September is generally a high of around 33°C (91°F) and a low of about 25°C (77°F). The city witnesses the transition from the monsoon to autumn, with decreasing rainfall as the month ends.



HOW TO REACH VARANASI?

Banaras Hindu University is conveniently accessible by road, rail and air transportation from all parts of the country, including major cities of India such as Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Jaipur, Lucknow, Pune, Patna, Prayagraj, Ayodhya, etc.

By Road

Varanasi is well-connected by road networks to major cities. You can reach Varanasi via national highways and state highways.

By Rail

Varanasi is well-connected to major cities in India via rail as well. Varanasi Cantt railway station (BSB)—about 10 km away from BHU and Banaras railway station (BSBS)—about 5 km away from BHU—are the two main railway stations to reach Varanasi City. Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction (DDU) is another railway station, which is about 20 km away from the BHU campus

By Air

Fly to Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport (Varanasi Airport), which is around 30 km away from the BHU Campus. From the airport, taxis and car rentals are available round the clock for reaching Varanasi City as well as the BHU Campus.



CONTACT DETAILS

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BHARAT RATNA MAHAMANA PT. MADAN MOHAN MALVIYA JI

THE FOUNDER OF BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY

