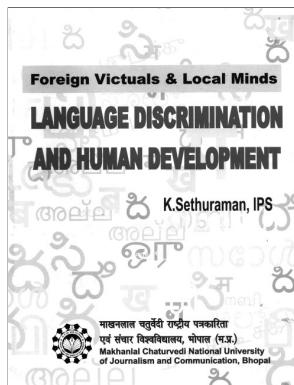


# LANGUAGE DISCRIMINATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

C.K.Sardana

The book has been written by K.Sethuraman, an IPS officer of 2004 batch. That a young Police Officer has written a 365-page book on the most important subject of language and human development is commendable. As one reads through chapter after chapter containing data, statistics, revealing information and findings, one is bound to compliment him for an excellent treatise.

	Book Name-	Language Discrimination and Human Development
Writer-	K.Sethuraman, IPS	
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Let me start with a few vital statistics about language(s) of communication and administration in India over the centuries. As a result of a well-planned and well-executed deliberate policy, the British rulers, in their 200-year rule, could make only 1.57 percent of the population have English as their language. Juxtaposed to this is the status of English after Independence.

According to 2000-2001 Census, only 2.3 lakh reported English as their primary language. Of the remaining, nearly 70 percent have Hindi as their language and the balance had other vernacular language.

I dare say English is not the language of this country. Even so, those not knowing English are termed as backward, illiterate and so on. Hindi and other vernacular languages have thus become the main casualty in the national education policy framed in the first 15 years after

1947. This has far-reaching effects on the pace of Human Development of India's 130-crore population.

Despite this huge manpower, India lags behind lot many other countries on several reckonings. This situation is because language of communication and administration is no where near their own language, namely, Hindi and other vernacular

languages making them insensitive to their own role and responsibility towards nation-building programs. This must end-sooner the better.

What is Human Development? It means creating and augmenting sources of economic growth and building institutions of governance to enhance the capacity of people to participate in the development process. On both these scores, our record is far from satisfactory. There is growing unemployment, social and economic crimes, lukewarm response of people to welfare and other programs, indiscipline, chaos and practically no concern for the country. One of the main reasons for such a miserable state of affairs is elite thinking and decision-making.

At the same time, Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication at Bhopal is entitled for kudos for choosing such an important subject, getting

that analysed in depth, and designed volume.

Professor B.K.Kuthiala, Vice Chancellor, says in the preface 'It is a strange but bitter truth that some basic principles of human existence are being ignored in our race to modernize. One serious folly of our modernizing society is the curious attempt to thrust unfamiliar language on the children for learning and communication.'

Considering the importance of language for human development, it is only appropriate that our policy-makers in the Governments at the Centre and in the States read the volume seriously, especially last three Chapters. An Action Plan should be prepared, after very careful deliberations, for according due place to Hindi and vernacular languages in all scheme of things. This will hopefully pave the way for faster human development through languages of the people.

The volume covers all the under-developed, developing and developed countries of the world through data, statistics, analysis and conclusions of even the global organizations both under and outside UN umbrella. In support of his

analysis, Sethuraman has given, in detail, sources of his information. This lends credibility to what he says.

Describing the biggest and richest economies in the world, Sethuraman says 'Except India, all top 20 economies of the world run their administration, provide professional education and disseminate knowledge in the languages of the people. As a coincidence, India has the lowest per capita GDP among the top twenty economies of the world.'

Barring USA where the language of communication is English, all the remaining four countries among the top five economies have their native language only. They are Japan (Japanese), China (Chinese), Germany (German) and France (French). Other top economies have languages like Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Korean, Dutch, Turkish, Polish and Indonesian.

We, India and Indians, need to learn a lesson, take pride in our languages and go all out to give them a pride of place in all our sectors.