

Standardisation of languages and loss of vernacular scripts: A case study on Indian languages

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Abstract

The paper examines the tension between state-led language standardisation and the survival of vernacular scripts, exploring how the drive for administrative and educational efficiency often marginalises indigenous and regional writing systems. Standardisation makes nationwide or centralized communication easier, but picking up one single language as “formal” and “official” often kills the local languages of the masses, eventually sidelining their cultural history and identity.

The research explores three primary areas: first, how and why certain languages come to hold greater institutional importance than others; second, the challenges faced by communities whose languages are marginalized for being perceived as insufficient to be considered as “formal”; and third, how more inclusive forms of communication can be developed in the modern world without further endangering linguistic diversity.

This paper argues that although language standardisation facilitates administrative efficiency and wider communication, it often contributes to the marginalisation of vernacular languages and scripts, threatening cultural identity and historical continuity. By examining the social and institutional hierarchies that elevate certain languages as “formal” or “official,” the study highlights the challenges faced by communities whose linguistic traditions are excluded from dominant systems of communication. Ultimately, the paper advocates for more inclusive and multilingual approaches that enable effective communication while preserving linguistic and cultural diversity.