

Linguistic Movements in India: A Historical Study of M. S. Golwalkar's (Shri Guruji) Contribution to States Integration

Prachi Prabha Gautam¹, Somesh Kumar Singh²

¹Ph. D Scholar, Department of History, Shahid Captain Ripudaman Singh Government College, Sawai Madhopur, (Rajasthan), University of Kota

Email id: [Prachiprabha8\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:Prachiprabha8[at]gmail.com)

²Associate Professor, Department of History, Shahid Captain Ripudaman Singh Government College, Sawai Madhopur, (Rajasthan), University of Kota

Abstract: *Due to India's linguistic diversity, certain states were constituted on the basis of language following independence. As a result, linguistic disagreements arose in various states of India, leading to resentment. Shri Guruji, with the assistance of volunteers of Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh, was instrumental in bridging these gaps and fostering unity among various linguistic groups in such tense situations. This paper will look into the historical background of India's linguistic problems and go into more detail about M. S. Golwalkar's contribution to reducing social animosity.*

Keywords: Golwalkar, linguistic, Movements, Integration

1. Background of State Reorganisation

After India gained its independence, populist movements for the establishment of linguistically - based independent states began to form in the south and the north. In order to examine the problems raised by these movements, the first Linguistic Provinces Commission, commonly known as the **S K Dhar Commission**, was constituted by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, president of Constituent Assembly, in June 1948. SK Dhar, a former judge from the Allahabad High Court, Jagat Narain Lal, a former Indian Civil Service officer, and Panna Lal, a lawyer and member of the constituent assembly, made up the committee. S K Dhar served as the commission's chairman. This panel examined the issue of whether or not states may be constituted based on the respective languages of the people who live in them and further recommended against creating provinces based on the language.¹

Soon after the S K Dhar commission submitted its report, a new committee known as **JVP committee** was formed in December 1948 to study the recommendations of the S K Dhar commission. This committee included Jawaharlal Nehru, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, and Vallabhbhai Patel. This committee reviewed and reiterated the S K Dhar Committee's recommendations,² and emphasised that the rearrangement of states is based on the nation's security, unity, and economic prosperity.

However due to the protest of Potty Sriramalu and his subsequent death forced the government to create Andhra Pradesh on linguistic criteria on 1st October 1953. With the formation of Andhra, intense campaigns for the formation of language - based states erupted in other regions.³

As a Result, in December 1953, the Government of India established a three - member State Reorganisation Commission, chaired by Fazl Ali, to re - examine the entire problem. It also included K. M. Panikkar and H. N. Kunzru

as its members. This commission was expected to look into "the question of reorganising the States of the Indian Union in order to improve the welfare of each constituent unit as well as the nation as a whole" objectively and impartially. It submitted its report in September 1955, and language was broadly adopted as the basis for state reorganisation.^{4, 5} The committee's recommendations resulted in the passage of the 1956 state reorganisation legislation.⁶

Following the passage of India's State Reorganization Act in 1956, various states were formed based on language. For example, Andhra Pradesh was formed in 1956, Maharashtra in 1960, and Punjab in 1966. As a result, there was a flow of mutual animosity and differences, as well as a sense of otherness in Indian society. Shri Guruji travelled across India, where linguistic disputes flourished, and assisted in the development of a sense of harmony to reconcile these circumstances. Several efforts were made with the assistance of Sangh Volunteers to resolve the disputes, and cooperation was extended to the governments in order to maintain uniformity.

Linguistic Movements in India & Role of Shri Guruji -

The demand for linguistic states and the ensuing animosity were the fundamental causes of India's cultural collapse, which disrupted the foundation of diversity. The polarising groups did everything they could to weaken Indian nationalism and make the crisis worse. In such a scenario, Shri Guruji presided over a meeting in Mumbai to denounce the provincialism of the several states, and it was apparent from his speech that he was in favour of the creation of a unitary state for India. Shri Guruji said during this Mumbai session that the Indian culture extends from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari, and that stressing differences and taking pride in distinctive regional cultures is not in the country's best interests. Therefore, one state and one nation were endorsed by Shri Guruji.⁷

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Linguistic Movement in the State of Maharashtra -

In 1946, the "Samyukta Maharashtra movement" was sparked by the need for a state for Marathi - speaking people in Maharashtra.⁸ When Jawahar Lal Nehru accepted the language as the foundation for the formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1956 and the SRC recommended a bilingual state for Maharashtra - Gujarat, Maharashtra's agitation for a separate state for Marathas became ferocious. In Maharashtra, as in other states, communists were instrumental in leading the protests, forming the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti in 1956.⁹ Shri Guruji had always been opposed to the linguistic formation of Maharashtra state.¹⁰

When the movement became more violent, the Morarji Desai government resorted to suppression and attempted to crush it. 105 people were killed in two police shootings during the Samyukta Maharashtra movement of 1956 - 60.¹¹ Shri Guruji had been outspoken in his opposition to the government's repression of the Maharashtra movement. He states that "though I completely despise the demand of linguistic state, today, if I do not ridicule this exploitation, it will be a deficit in my efforts for national worship, ".¹²

Pandit Nehru was visiting Maharashtra at the time of the agitation movements to inaugurate the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The Samyukta Maharashtra Pandit Nehru was visiting Maharashtra at the time of the agitation movements to inaugurate the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The Samyukta Maharashtra Committee had decided to strongly oppose this function and to oppose Nehru. Shri Guruji realised at the time that this opposition was strictly against India's integrity, so he issued a statement stating that the unveiling of the statue of Shivaji, a great hero of India, by Pandit Nehru is an issue of national honour because Shivaji made incomparable contributions to the land of India. Shri Guruji urged Maharashtrians to attend the unveiling of Shivaji's idol. The supporters of the united Maharashtra committee were forced to reconsider their decision, and the programme of Shri Shivaji Maharaj's idol was completed magnificently.^{13 14}

While Shri Guruji was opposed to using sticks to crush Maharashtra and Gujarat agitators, in Maharashtra, Shri Guruji called for a Pandit Nehru - respecting programme. This demonstrates that Guruji was a nationalist, not an individualist, who was concerned with national unity and attempting to resolve issues that were tearing it apart.

Creation of Punjab State and Shri Guruji

The demand for Punjabi Suba based on the Punjabi language was rising in 1953-1954 under the direction of the Akalis.¹⁵ Punjab was proclaimed bilingual when all of India's states were recreated using the linguistic formula, putting Sikhs in jeopardy. Their aspiration to create a distinct Punjab Suba inside the Union of India has already been crushed. Therefore, in order to convince the authorities of their "folly", Guru Tara Singh, a Sikh leader, had to start an agitation (morcha).¹⁶

At the same time, along with members of the RSS and the Jan Sangh, Arya Samaj leaders demanded that Maha Punjab lead protests against the linguistic division of Punjab. As a result, communal tensions between Hindus and Sikhs in

Punjab had heightened.¹⁷ In this tense environment, Shri Guruji visited Punjab and reminded all Hindus and Sikhs that Punjabi is the language of all Punjabis and that they should worship and respect it. He described Hindus and Sikhs as being no different; they are both members of the same society. In this way, he attempted to bridge the growing Hindu - Sikh divide in Punjab.^{18 19}

In a statement given in New Delhi on November 10, 1960, about the Punjab Suba Movement, Shri Guruji stated that provinces must be created for administrative convenience, but there is no reason for the division of Punjab that exists in today's political situation based on language. All people in Punjab communicate in Punjabi. However, there are a sufficient number of people who speak Hindi as their first language. As a result, in addition to Punjabi, Hindi should be used in official state transactions.²⁰

Shri Guruji's timely guidance averted hostility between Sikhs and Hindus. The Punjabi state was eventually established in March 1966, but the bond between Hindus and Sikhs grew stronger in Punjab. This greatly impressed Akali leader Master Tara Singh, who expressed gratitude to Guruji. Later, on Shri Guruji's invitation, he also took part in the establishment of Vishwa Hindu Parishad.^{21 22 23}

The Hindi Raksha Samiti was established in 1961 as a means of protest against the Punjabi language teaching in Punjabi schools. At that time as well, Shri Guruji requested that these protestors end their demonstration, and Guruji backed the idea that Punjabi should be the language of teaching in institutions and schools because it is just as national as Hindi. As a result, the anti - Punjabi agitation was put to a stop, Punjab experienced increased tranquility, and the dispute between Punjabi and Hindi was settled.²⁴

Andhra and Telangana Movement

In 1956, the State Reorganisation Commission recommended that Telangana be granted independent state ship status, but the central government rejected the recommendation, and Telangana was merged with Andhra. Following that, tensions between Andhra and Telangana grew deeper and worsened in 1969, when student and worker protests over discrimination erupted. During the protests that lasted until 1973, 369 young people were killed as a result of violence.²⁵

In response to the protest movement, Shri Guruji stated that, given the level of violence on both sides, Andhra Pradesh should be divided into two by separating Telangana. He went on to say that there is no harm in dividing Andhra because their demand is based on administrative lines rather than linguistic ones. As a result, the government should ideally accept the demand without amplifying the violence. If the government's actions are delayed, it will not only increase animosity between the two sides, but it will also result in a loss of faith in the government.²⁶

Shri Guruji stated that if small states like Nagaland and Meghalaya can be formed under international pressure, why can't Andhra and Telangana be formed for administrative purposes?²⁷ He asserted that their demand is just and logical because the languages of these two states are similar and two

states in the area that speak the same language could be established to facilitate administrative work.²⁸ Therefore, he suggested that Andhra be partitioned for administrative purposes in order to achieve peace. However, this suggestion was not accepted until June 2014, when Telangana became a separate state.

He believed that reorganising territories based on language was never a good idea because it would be detrimental to the country. He stated that if the territories are reorganised based on administrative convenience rather than language, the dissolution process will be halted. He expressed these sentiments in an **interview on February 10, 1973, in Bangalore**. He had stated that the formation of states on the basis of administration in Andhra, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Gujarat was not anti-national, whereas the formation of states on the basis of language and sect was a threat to the country in the states separated from Assam.²⁹

Despite this, he maintained his position that an united form of governance is better suited to our country³⁰ and the Government of India should have the courage to amend the Constitution to make India a united states.³¹

Linguistic Controversies in the Southern States and the Role of Shri Guruji

Shri Guruji expressed his profound sadness in response to the furious violence surrounding the Maharashtra - Karnataka boundary dispute. He urged the administration to prevent violence at the time and emphasised the importance of maintaining national integrity at all times. He believed that the nation's unity should be preserved at all costs.³²

Hindi language and Vision of Shri Guruji

Shri Guruji advocated for Hindi to be designated as a world language at the **Haryana Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in 1950**. In his speech, he stated that all of the languages of this country are ours. And we must treat these languages with the utmost respect. Prior to the Mughal and British conquests of our country, we only communicated in Sanskrit. Prakrit gradually replaced Sanskrit as the primary language. Many provincial languages arose from the Sanskrit language later on, which is similar to Sanskrit itself.³³

During the ceremony, Shri Guruji stated that now that India is independent, Hindi, the daughter of the Sanskrit language, deserves to be the national language. He remarked that while province languages are local languages, only one language is required for universal and official practise, and that language is Hindi, which is commonly acknowledged and general. This, however, does not diminish the significance of provincial languages. Today, Hindi is widely spoken throughout the country, both in rural and urban areas. He stated that visitors from the south also speak and express themselves in Hindi in Badrinarayan or Prayag.³⁴

As a result, we must make Hindi a prosperous language. A strong sense of self-respect should be instilled in Hindi as well. It should be recognised as a world language. If we do this, people will be eager to learn Hindi not only in India, but also around the world, and Hindi will gain prominence. He contends that social harmony is being harmed within the country due to language differences. It is all of our

responsibility to prioritise Hindi. And as children of Mother India, we must respect Hindi in order to build social peace in India.³⁵

Shri Guruji stated that the British imposed the English language on us. It is not our first language. It makes no sense to be proud of a foreign language and to defend it. As a result, imposing the burden of English on every boy and girl in the country is inappropriate. He stated that a person with self-respect for his country will never take pride in a foreign language under any circumstances. Language expresses a society's way of life. For thousands of years, our culture has continued unabated. We protected our culture from numerous hurricanes by continuing to speak our languages. As a result, we must accept Indian languages as our official languages.³⁶

Since Hindi is widely spoken, it could be designated as an official language. The extension of Hindi conforms to the extension of our lives. By accepting Hindi as a link throughout India, the work of national unity and development should be completed.³⁷

He went on to say that, given their circumstances, the people of southern India should regard Hindi as their natural language. The constitution designates Hindi as the official language. Insulting Hindi is an insult to the Indian constitution. As a result, if Hindi is not adopted, the constitution will be violated, and allegiance to the constitution will fade away. And the Hindi language will be derided.³⁸

During the same anti-Hindi movement in southern India, Shri Guruji delivered a speech in a programme on the unity of India's culture in which he stated that Hindi can serve as India's link language. Sri R. K. Shanmukham Chettiar presided over this programme as a Union Minister who was vehemently opposed to Hindi in the Constituent Assembly. Following Shri Guruji's speech, Chettiar stated that he had no objections to Hindi being chosen as India's link language. He stated that he agrees with Shri Guruji on the vision of Hindi.³⁹

Shri Guruji stated unequivocally that in order to solve the linguistic problem, the country must have a single language for higher education and research. He stated that Sanskrit is a language that is thousands of years old. It can replace the national language, but Hindi is a common language that allows for intellectual exchange across the country and can serve this purpose. Some people believe that as the Hindi language develops, local languages such as Bengali, Tamil, Marathi, and Telugu will become extinct. However, I believe that, in addition to Hindi, these local languages will grow in strength. Hindi is a national treasure. All other languages are also part of the national heritage. As a result, while respecting all languages, the Hindi language should be preserved.⁴⁰

Hindi is the language that the vast majority of people speak, according to Shri Guruji. It, therefore, poses no threat to anyone. Not just in India, but also in other nations worldwide, we should endeavour to spread it.^{41 42}

Reverence for Provincial Languages

Shri Guruji also enjoyed writing in a variety of languages. During his 1953 visit, Shri Guruji read an Oriya magazine called "Oriya Masik Sarvodaya" and asserted that Oriya literature should be published not only in Oriya, but also in all other Indian languages, so that speakers of other languages could learn Oriya literature and other Indian languages could be made more widely known in Oriya. He stated that this should be done for all literature published in Indian languages. As a result, India's monotonous lifestyle will come to an end, and the immortal flag of the Indian nation will be flown in unison.⁴³

On July 31, 1957, Shri Guruji wrote a letter to Shri Ghanshyam Singh Gupta that agitators should not engage in petty communal fights under the guise of the Hindi Raksha Movement. All languages should be treated equally. Love for our native languages is natural, but if it leads to separation, it should be abandoned. Shri Guruji told the movement's members that the importance of Hindi should be revealed to the countrymen by adopting a national spirit.⁴⁴

In a statement given in Delhi in 1960 about the Punjab linguistic controversy, he stated that language cannot be associated with any sect (Akali Dal in reference to the Punjab Suba Movement). It is the sacred duty of all Punjabi speaking people not to let their mother tongue become a slave of politics and separatism. He stated that the association of Punjabi and Sikhs is unrealistic and unnecessary. The language and script of that language should be determined by its speakers, not by political pronouncements.⁴⁵

He went on to say that demanding a separate state for the Sikh community based on language criteria would be fatal to our country's integrity and unity. Mutual goodwill and trust are required among the various Hindu sects. We are all Hindus; only by realising and celebrating this fact will we be able to achieve our goals. They should always consider themselves Sikhs in their whole practise as members of this huge Hindu society, with due regard for the Gurus' virtuous legacy.⁴⁶

As a result, all brethren in Punjab should adopt their native language without hesitation or fear, putting political considerations aside. Only by presenting the true facts with such fervour can the complicated Punjabi issue be resolved.⁴⁷

In a letter to Shri T. Laxminarayan of Vijayawada on March 18, 1965, Shri Guruji emphasised the significance of the Hindi - Marathi weekly's initiative to publish Tamil, Telugu, and Bengali literature. He believed it was a great idea because it would help people learn about India's rich heritage, which is presented in various languages, and it would foster unity and respect for all languages.⁴⁸

Shri Guruji also praised the opening of the Hindi medium school in Hyderabad, saying that it is a very important thing, especially in areas where Hindi is not used in daily practise; this arrangement must be made with special care in those areas. Along with the development of local regional languages, he believed that knowledge of Hindi and the

ability to study in it would be advantageous in that a sufficient number of dedicated workers from across the country would be able to carry out a wide range of activities.⁴⁹

2. Conclusion

In a vast country like India, where cultural diversity is obvious, linguistic issues arose, and social and emotional integration was at odds due to mutual animosity. Shri Guruji was instrumental in addressing such issues at the time. The research paper investigated how Shri Guruji, with his high emotional sensitivity and leadership power, decelerated movements in Maharashtra, Punjab, and Andhra Telangana. According to the paper, Shri Guruji also highlighted the importance of making Hindi a National Language of India in order to unite the entire country under one language that has widespread recognition and understanding. At the same time he also believed that making Hindi a National Language would not limit the development of province languages but we should also bear in mind that regional Provincial languages should not become the reasons of alienation and sectarian hostility. Essentially, Shri Guruji was a remarkable visionary who envisaged a "Akhand Bharat" and motivated every individual in this nation to work towards it.

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Author Profile



Prachi Prabha Gautam, Ph. D. Scholar at University of Kota



Somesh Kumar Singh, Associate Professor, Department of History, Shahid Captain Ripudaman Singh Government College, Sawai Madhopur, (Rajasthan), University of Kota