A pre-conference event by
National Multilingual Resource Consortium
(Jawaharlal Nehru University)

Research symposium on 'Language and Poverty'

From 'Language Policy' to Public Policy on 'Multilinguality, Education and Labour'

Date: 17 November 2015, from 9.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.
Venue: Convention Centre, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (6 miles from the conference venue; g-map will be uploaded soon)
Convener: Minati Panda, Director, National Multilingual Resource Consortium, JNU (minatip@gmail.com)

The perception that the linguistic diversity is in itself a problem is deeply entrenched into people's mind. The poverty data showing income disparities between countries with high and low linguistic diversities perpetuate the myth that 'the linguistically diverse countries are economically less developed'. The economic success of the nation state project of modern European nations and the privileging of English and French over local languages in many Asian and African colonies influenced the language-in-education policies of these countries and created historically the irreversible cycles of disadvantage for the poor and the marginalized. Use of languages other than children's home language in the school reduced overall literacy benefits for the disadvantaged communities and widened the gaps between the rich and the poor. The studies undertaken in conflict-ridden border areas show how the market and the language-in-education policy go hand in hand in privileging speakers of certain languages and reducing the literacy and economic benefits of the 'other'. The 'other' here comprises of the linguistically, socially and economically poor and marginalized. Frequent internal violence in border areas is attributed to suppression of socially and linguistically mediated economic rights of the people. The psychological states arising from these experiences of marginality in education, labour market and the state bureaucracy perpetuate violence among people and between regions. The present symposium will therefore engage in an interdisciplinary inquiry into the relationship between language and poverty and how the ontological reification of this relationship creates and maintains internal violence in the socio-linguistically and economically challenging areas of Asia, Africa and Australia.

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The invited papers will use the analytical tools of psycholinguistics, sociology and micro and macroeconomics to examine the relationships between language, poverty and violence in the era of globalization and reflect on the possible benefits of arguing for a stronger public policy on multilinguality, education and labour market. Given below are some of the economic and policy related questions that the invited papers will address along with the psycholinguistic and sociological questions:

- Is language a public good?
- What does multilinguality mean in educational and economic terms? How does a public policy in India grasp this multilinguality and translate multilinguality into public actions? What challenges does neoliberal economy pose in the formulation of public policy on multilinguality?What kind of public policy on language benefits the poor and the marginalized?
- What is the relationship between language, education, poverty and violence? What kind of public policy on language and education address the issue of poverty and violence in the border areas?
- What is the cost of multilingual education in simple economic terms?
- In what waysdoes a good public policy on multilingualityimprove the relationship between classes, castes, religious groups and ethnic minority communities?

Audience:

- Researchers and academics working in language, development, poverty, labour market mobility
- All participants of the 11th Language & Development Conference

Registration and Fees

INR 500 for Indian delegates
USD 10 for non-Indian delegates
(based on passport / travel document)
All attendees need to register in advance, latest by Monday 9 November, with Prof MinatiPanda (minatip@gmail.com) or LDC2015@in.britishcouncil.org
Fees payable in cash at the registration desk

Programme and featured speakers information will be available soon.