Spatial patterns of Ethno-Linguistic Groups in Nagaland

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Statement of the Problem

Nagaland is one of the few states of India facing political problem. This is compounded with various socio-economic factors. Ethno-linguistism is an important dimension to understand the present crisis of the state.

Racially the state of Nagaland is inhabited by mongoloid people, dominated by the Nagas Scheduled as tribes in India. They are divided into dozens of groups having distinct linguistic identity of their own. The in-group clashes among the Nagas have bearings on their separate identities, but the mass conversion to Christianity in Nagaland has brought them together. Such religious cohesiveness among the different sections of Nagas may go a long way to achieve their social, political and economic goals. On the question of anguage they are still divided and do not show any sign of compromise. This has resulted to impose English as the state's official language, although it is spoken by a small number of the Nagas mostly confined to the towns of Nagaland. Christianity has brought them to one platform but they are still divided on account of ethnicity and languages. The dominance of cultural identities (ethnicity and language) among the Nagas must be studied in detail both spatially and temporally in order to understand the mechanism through which these two components of culture command and control the sentiments uf the Nagas and all the economic and political decisions are based on them. Therefore there is an urgent need to study these important sensitive issues of the Nagas. The present study is to examine the ethno-linguistic situation of Nagaland.

Language is not only a means of communication but it also reflects the culture and character of the people. In certain circumstances especially in multilingual state like Nagaland. language can be a dividing factor. This may happen in the absence of a proper methodology to workout correct solutions on the problem in the inter-relation between different languages. The state with a small area shows remarkable diversity in languages and each language has almost the same proportion. Therefore it becomes difficult to take the right decision as to which language should be taken as the state official language. In terms of democracy the size of the language should be taken. However, in terms of functionality it is not feasible.

The linguistic diversity runs through languages though they belong to the same linguistic group. As a result, all the Naga languages are mutually unintelligible. Regionalism in Nagaland has crept in due to multilingual society. Language regionalism is considered to be a by-product of language consciousness. The lack of consciousness is higher among those sections of the tribal population that is politically active. Politics mixed with language pushes the socio-economic and other considerations behind and emerges as a force that has surpassed the class and religious boundary. Language mixed with ethnicity has had much bloodshed in many parts of the state. Like all other states of the northeast. both language and ethnicity go hand-in-hand.

Geographical analysis of ethno-linguistic composition of the linguistic groups in Nagaland is an important dimension as it will help in understanding the regional variation of changing linguistic identity of the tribal population over a period of time. Therefore, the study uf spatial distribution of Naga languages and the kinds of incidence of multilingualism. language maintenance and language shift will be of great help to understand the gravity of the ethno-linguistic situation in Nagaland. The study will also help in integrating the Naga society into the main stream of the nation. Such studies also become a strong base not only to understand language dynamics but also help in language planning in a multilingual country like India.

Objectives
The objectives of the study are as follows:
1   To find out the spatial distribution of linguistic groups in Nagaland.
2   To analyze nature of multilingualism among the Nagas.
3   To study the linguistic composition among the selected groups of the Nagas.
4   To examine the language shift and language maintenance among the various linguistic groups of Nagaland.
5   To findout the inter-relationship between the levels of linguistic shift/maintenance and various socio-economic factors.
6   To study the frequency of language use among the Nagas.
7   To study the attitude of the Nagas towards Nagamese.
8   To study insurgency and linguistic identity of the state.
9   To suggest measures in order to solve the ethno-linguistic problem of the state.
10 To evaluate and suggest measures for language planning of the state.

Hypotheses
The hypotheses to be examined are as follows:
1   Higher the literacy, higher would be the consciousness of their linguistic identity. This ultimately leads to higher order of ethno-lingual problems among the Nagas.
2   Urbanization is playing a catalytic role in bringing ethno-linguistic consciousness, more as compared to, people residing in rural areas.
3   The question of state official language is leading to linguistic chauvinism and higher order of ethnic clashes.
4   Dominant groups among the Nagas are more consciousness of their linguistic identity.
5   More the workers engaged in primary sector, higher are the language maintenance.

6   The older the age-group show higher degree of language maintenance than the younger ones.
7   Females show positive relationship with language maintenance than males.

Database and methodology

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The secondary data have been derived from the census ofIndia (1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991). Efforts are made to collect secondry data for four decades.

In order to make the study more meaningful, it is decided to select only those languages having more than 10.000 speakers each. On this basis 13 languages have been identified for the analysis of the study. The primary data is collected through intensive fieldwork covering 35 households from each of the thirteen major linguistics groups. All socio-economic parameters are included in framing the interview schedule for data collection. Altogether 455 households are surveyed through purposive sampling technique. The scheme of sampling is given below:
   a   20 households from rural areas each of which includes low, middle and high income groups.
   b   15 households from urban areas each of which includes low. middle and high income groups.

The field as-well as secondary data are tabulated and subjected to suitable statistical techniques. Techniques are discussed in detail in the respective chapters. Besides, statistical techniques and cartographic techniques are used to transform the statistical data into graphic representation for easy interpretation of the data.

The data collected from the census include the following variables:
   1. Total population of the state
   2. Total population under male and female component.
   3. Total population under rural and urban component.
   4. Population Density.
   5. Sex-Ratio of the state
   6. Population engaged in economic sector.
   7. Total main workers.
   8. Tolal marginal workers.
   9. Population by religion
   10. Naga speakers to total population of the state.
   11. Nagas speaking regional languages.
   12. Nagas speaking other tribal languages.
   13. Nagas speaking their own mother-tongue.
   14. Nagas speaking non-tribal and non-regional languages.