

Identity Politics of Tuluvas: Cultural Retrieval and Propagation in Social Media

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Abstract: Social media often become hap as a retrieval space for the lost connections and objects. As a connecting platform, the social media offers infinite opportunities. The exposing feature of the social media serves the purpose of Propagation. The significance of this paper lies in the discourses where it observed Social media being a cradle for a language and literature at infancy. This paper proposes to discuss cultural retrieval of the Tuluva identity through social media. Tulu is one of the Pancha Dravida languages along with Tamil, Kannada, Telugu and Malayalam, spoken by 1.8 Million in the Dakshina Kannada and Udupi Districts of Karnataka ad Kasaragod District of Kerala. Without a proper mode of writing, Tulu is considered as one of the Endangered Languages. The Tigalari Script once used to write Tulu had been retrieved by the effort of historians. This paper analyses how the Tigalari script had been introduced and propagated through social Media. The social media serves as the platform for the identity formation of an ignored Language and Culture. Tulu had been subdued by Kannada and Malayalam Languages at official levels. As it remained as an oral language it was neglected in the literary field. The paper intends to observe the recently emerging online Literature through Social Media and also categorise the efforts by Tulu Spaces in online propagating the Tulu cultural symbols like Bootharadhane, Nagharadhane and Yakshagana. The paper identifies an emanation of a separate ethnical consciousness through the online literature in social media. It also recognises a political discourse on the Identity formation in the social media platform.

Keywords: Tulu, Social Media, Identity Politics Cultural Retrieval, Online Platform, Literature.

INTRODUCTION

The advancements in the human history often observed with new horizons. From the nomadic life style to a modern day tight urban schedule, the humanity had been the cause of changes that had converted many aspects of the existing world. Each step was an advancement towards new advancements. It had changed existing patterns and lead a milestone to completely new patterns. The invention of Wheel was such a change that had caused a completely new era to be born in the history of the humanity. The events that humanity had been through in its history had constructed the present socio-cultural and economic scenario. The Cultural aspect of the humanity is deeply rooted. It was the resultant of the social life. The origin and progress of the cultural aspects of the humanity lies in Social relations. It is from these social aspects, traits of identity had been born. Language, Cuisine, Costume, Belief, Customs etc.

The world had witnessed changes such that had never played in its screens after the industrial revolution. The technological and scientific progress had lead humanity into a completely new sphere of life. Most popular among was the aspects regarding communication. The entire process of communication had become easier as it was never being. Telegram and Telephone had become more reliable than post. Further advancements such like Television had Radio had enhanced the sources of Entertainment. Never investigations on the field of Information Technology had lead the way into a new level. The Transformation of Computer from Double storied building ENIAC to the smart phone inside the palm was a inception of a new culture. The virtual communication had enabled several options in front of the humanity. Social Media was one such option.

The nature of Social Media denotes the space for communication. Regarding the nature of the Social Media, panel discussions are active around the world in determining whether it is a boon r a curse. However, in strict terms when analysing, we could observe that apart from an objective point of view, this discussion should hold a subjective analysis.

Social Media as platform that is connecting a wide range of community could have a large effect in the society. This wide range of community may varies by different terms, whether it is a family or persons belongs t a specific faith. The social Media provides deep opportunities to explore the unexplored.it could be a common platform for regaining an identity that had lost in time. In social Medias such as Face book, Satire and Mockery is conceptualized using trolls. There are specific groups and pages dedicated to different topics. It could be observed that these pages or groups ar exclusively sharing information in that topic. Sharing of possible information could be termed as an advantage of the social media. Likewise, there are such groups and pages that had been specific to a particular linguistic community. Such pages could gather the population as an online virtual space, which cannot be possible due to several physical, constrains.

India is known as diverse nation. Its diversity varies from the ethnicity, faith and tongues of its citizens. Speaking linguistically, India is considered as the second most linguistically diverse nation in the world after Papua New Guinea. According to UNESCO, the cultural body of the United Nations, More than 700 languages and dialects are spoken. The constitution of India recognise Hindi in Devanagari script as the official language while English serves as the subsidiary official language. The eighth schedule of the constitution recognises 22 major languages as scheduled languages. However, the majority of the other languages are minor languages with a few native speakers. The linguistic divide is mainly based on the origin of the languages. With the Indo Aryan, speaking north and the Dravidian speaking south India had also witnessed several linguistic tussles.

The Dravidian languages are of a separate origin. Tamil, Kannada, Telugu and Malayalam are considered as the major Dravidian languages with more than 10 million native speakers and ranking within the 50 most spoken languages in the world. These languages possess large literary traditions. Tulu is a Dravidian language which sometimes included in the above mentioned languages and collectively known as the Pancha Dravida languages. According to the linguists, Tulu is one of the oldest derived language from the proto Dravidian language. The linguistic aspects unique to Tulu are pointed out as an example for this. According to the 2011 census, 1.8 Million speak Tulu as their Native Language. It is one of the Non-scheduled languages in India. It lacks any recognition from the central government. However, the Karnataka Government in 1997 had established a Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy in Mangaluru in wake of the queries to preserve the Tulu language and Culture. Similarly, Kerala established a Kerala Tulu Academy in 2007 headquartered in Hosangadi in Manjeshwar, Kasaragod. It is considered a dead language or an inactive spoken tongue that spoken around a small geographical region. It had lacked any script. The Missionaries such as Basel Mission to compile texts in Tulu had used the Kannada Script. This Practice had been continued into the 21st century also.

There had been an initiative to recover the Tigalari script. The efforts are understood for familiarisation of the Tigalari. There had been official efforts from the Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy in Propagating the Tigalari script in Tulu. Publications are also available for learning Tulu script. The online platform are also used in familiarise the Tulu script. Particularly the social media. The Tuluva culture is also promoted along with the propagation of the Tigalari. The regions were Tulu has been spoken as the native language had witnessed a huge momentum of cultural retrieval.

ONLINE LITERATURE

The New trend that could be observed now days is that how Tulu had been regaining its status as a literary language. When compared to the surrounding Dravidian Languages, Tulu lacks their long literary traditions. The earliest available Tulu literature were narrations on Vedic texts like Devimahatmo, Kaverimahatmo and Mahabaratho dating back to 16th century. These texts were written in Tigalari script. The missionaries had resumed the literature in Tulu by using Kannada Script. These were mainly the religious works like bible translations and other texts. S U Paniyady wrote the first ever Tulu Novel Sati Kamale in 1930s. from then scattered literary production using Kannada Script was continued . it was comparatively low. The recent trend is the propagation of Tulu Literature in Social

Media. The Texts or literary works are mainly Tulu poems known as Kabithes. These works are also seen to be posted both in Tigalari and Kannada Script. It could be termed as an emergence of Online Literature in Tulu. Along with the intention of propagating the literature it should be viewed that the literature is also produced in the Tigalari. The Poems include Eminent Poets of Kayyara Kinanna Rai like Sare Esaluda Tamare, Which was written in praise of the Tulu language was invoked to gather momentum for the Tulu ethnic consciousness and retrieval of its glory. The ignorance of Tulu language and Culture could have resulted a new trend by propagation literature in an old dormant script in social media. This could be viewed as in association with the identity politics. The Pages that are actively posting the social media is encouraging on revealing the Tuluva population to unveil their identity. The labelling of the Tuluva as Kannadiga is fiercely resisted through social media. The posting of Tuluva literature in Tigalari script may have intended to create a conscious of segregation from the Kannada Dominancy. Certain Pages are labelling this as Kannadikarana or Kannadification. The Tulu literature, which was on the verge of negligence, is on the path of resurrection with a new Script to fade out the old claims that Tulu is Script less dormant language.

RETRIEVAL OF A SCRIPT

Tulu had remained merely as an oral language for a long time. The main reason that could be observed is that the region that is called to be the Historical Tulunadu was always under the reign of foreign dynasties. Majority of these dynasties including Chalukyas, Kadambas Rashtrakoodas, Ikkeri nayaks, Vijayanaga empire and Mysore sultans are either of Kannada origin or outside. Kannada was considered as the language of prestige that used for formal communication. This can be equated to the context of the Norman England, where French served as the language of formal conversation, academics, elites and monarchs whereas English was the language of the local low lives and Latin the language of the theology and church. Here Kannada was the language of the academic and monarchs but Tulu remained to be the language of the common people and Sanskrit were the language of Religion. The Tigalari script used by Brahmins are in the way back to resurrection as the effort of the Tulu cultural activism. Most of these activities are carried along with the online platform. The pages dedicated in the social Medias like Facebook are committed to the propagation of Tigalari script. Upon seeking the causes it became clear that the social media as platform serves as the best means of propagations. These social media pages are dedicated to familiarising the Tigalari script. The posts from these groups include writing of names, Places, Objects in Tigalari script along with the Kannada script. It could be observed as the primordial steps into introducing the script by elementary levels. The Kannada script that had been accompanied had the purpose of comprehending the words.

IDENTITY POLITICS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media serves as not only a platform of gathering but also as space for conferring the identities. The social media is considered to be useful in the healthy discussion it holds any of the topics regardless of its background. The different opinions that had been conferred on these topics remain intimate and reflect the opinion. When it comes to the identity politics, the defence of the identity becomes an important issue. The Tuluva community had been divided under the Kannada and Malayalam speaking regions since the linguistic reorganization of 1956. The Tulus are compelled to learn Kannada as the common tongue outside, in Education and formal purpose. The Tulu cultural activists considered this as an act of kannadification. The social Medias serve the purpose of identity formation which is distinct from a Kannadiga culture. The late historian, Dr Gururaj Bhat had identified five elements that are the characteristics of the Tuluva culture. They are Nagaradhane, Bootharadhane, Kambala, Yakshagana and Aliyakattu. It had been observed that these five elements represent the Tuluva culture and are fiercely defended in the social media. It could be observed that the identity building by invoking a separate ethnic consciousness is the motive behind these. The radical Kannada activists are constantly abusing Tulu

language and culture. In these pages active in social media views this a part of conflict between Tuluvas and the people above the Ghats. The desecration of the Boothas or lesser deities found in Tuluva culture through social media is common in social media. There had been observed a move to impose the Kannada language. The social media serves as the platform where fierce exchanges in defence of the ethnic Tuluva identity is observed. Apart from the move of being defending these cultural symbols, there are initiatives to propagate them in the social media to create awareness about the culture. These initiatives should be observed as a part of an elaborate attempt for an establishment of a separate Tuluva identity through the social media.

The Social media is acting as a cradle for the emergence of a recovered mode of writing along with the Online Literature. The identity politics is ambiguous in nature. Different aspects of the identity politics are founded to be considered in social media. The importance of being a common space the social media also have lot of advantages when compared to other modes. The Tulu language and Culture was long ignored and neglected. The new opportunities of the modern era had provided a chance of renaissance from the dark ages. The most important identity of a language is its mode of writing. Most of the world languages are facing endangerment because of this reason. A language is abundant in knowledge. Each and every language possess a unique stature which may not be found in other languages. Some languages are fortunate enough to have documentation of the knowledge whereas the other languages, minor languages only holds the knowledge through oral means. It would survive from generation to generation. Major languages suppressed Tulu. Although partially used, a script was there for Tulu.

The retrieval efforts of the culture accounts the rejuvenation of the Tigalari script also. The social media is serving as the perfect medium in achieving it. Elements of Culture involves traditions and the customs. Here propagation as well as defending the culture is observed in the social media. It could be concluded that social media act as platform of an identity formation. The combination of social media, culture and language offers a new whole area of discourse. The new advancements in the field of science and technology could be used for the nourishing of the culture. The misuse of the social media is only often highlighted in the mainstream Medias. However, such attempts in unifying a social group could also be possible. Although some of its aspects are political in nature.

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