

## Short Story

# Mouri's Story

By : Siam Sarower Jamil

I met her last when I was in class eight. Studied together just for a year then I moved. We had no contact for nine years. Now I'm a graduate. Doing job & primarily settled in life. Today I met her and just have shocked. Child Mouri is now a woman who is struggling with her daily life. I was surprised to see her in this situation.

She was very restless when we were together. She can move over stairs handle. It was a strange & a interesting move like a fairy coming towards you very fast! There's a mango forest next to our class room & she could climbed at the top of the tree very easily. Throwing the mango to me she ordered me to put in her bag and I always followed her instruction.

One day Another classmate was beaten by her. After that headmaster asked to meet her parents. I rescued her from headmaster by telling lie that time. Everyday during school time she ran through the full three storey building of school. I was acting all time like a perfect follower of her trail. Another day, Sohan, the most violent boy in our class. he was beaten by Mouri, in such a way, that The parents had to rushed to the police station at the end.

On that day, I had to testify to Head sir. I said, 'Mouri can't do anything like this, sir. She is silly but very good.' She looked at me with astonishment. Because, he had beaten me with a cricket bat two days ago! Nine years later, I am seeing her calm, untidy; who is very much matured too!

The identity is a saleswoman in a tea stall. There, I was a buyer of a cup of hard liquor & she was seller. She runs a tea, drink, cigarette shop. In her family, there are three children, a crippled house husband and an oldie mother-in-law. The responsibility of whole family is on her neck.

After meeting, she just asked about me, where I am living, what I am doing. Just updated her. I didn't know what she understand actually. Just shaking her head like saying yes!

We did not talk later and just gave a smile like a middle-class Bengali man. I thought once that I should ask her question, 'How are you?' But I'm not so brave man.

I asked to meet the bill, she did not take it. I did not force her second time. I thought, it would be unfair to not give her the opportunity

So, leaving the tea stall, I got up on the street. I saw the mirror image of her on many people in the streets. Touchiness moves on! Just said my mind. 'Yes, I'm still alive. Perfectly. I won't think of anyone!'

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Sunday, June 16, 2019,

## VEXED

By : Joyshre heinsam

Dear one  
I live on the surface of the unseen  
But I never have tried to let go of you  
Since the day I embrace you deep down, the bottom of me.  
Endless intermingling emotions dissolved me to flow out with you.

Will you please give me your hand?  
Let me wipe out the dirt!  
Never have I been so out of love  
All I really care is about our world.  
We live apart but you are always with me and again under the same moon.  
You rise up within me.  
I promise to keep your hands clean and protect you from the dirt.

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# Did Manipur Really Experience Cultural Genocide?



Dr. Sougajam Priyokumar Meitei

Do we have any single evidence for any extinct culture or any exterminated or deported community in Manipur. Not at all, I believe. Would have been any group name Y or Z in Manipur which had been disappeared or assimilated (the whole Y or Z) to Meitei group. I don't think so. I don't mean to some sub sections from a group merging to Meitei umbrella which would have been occurred in the past. It reminds us that we must not be psychologically victimised ourselves by future shock with selfish demands and protests. Our voices and demands should not be ethnocentric, demands should have potential and objective quality to stand alone on global platform which are acceptable

universally. Otherwise, the movement will be completely a nightmare overwhelmed by subjective emotions and sentiments.

Reconstructing the past, the Meitei Kings were almost having secular ideology. Cultural assimilation of Hindu Brahmins was recognized for performing rites and rituals of Hindu Meitei, while Meitei Maibas or traditional religious practitioners were also recognized to do rites and rituals of non-Hindu Meiteis. For the social requirements, some Muslim sections brought by king were given Meitei groups and expanded pan-Manipuris. The Muslim of Manipur are given the name as Meitei Pangals or simply Pangals and peacefully integrated to form Manipuri society. Meitei King had the idea of maintaining exterior caste, do have conscious on ill effects of close kin marriages including clan endogamy. King's court directly involved in it and offenders of incest taboo were exiled, referred as loi thaba either permanently or for a few years based on the degree of offences. From the early history, it is known that Meitei lineage (Yumnak) is one useful concept of kinship system

to trace the social history. For example, the art of blacksmith is as old as the formation of Thangjing lineage or earlier or as old as the evolution of Meitei. In due course, Yumnak or lineages were created responding to social and cultural purposes identifying occupation, address or so forth. From the evolutionary perspectives, the Meitei community was formed at a juncture by uniting some kings of different groups having distinct lineages. The legendry narratives often mention the kingship of Khuman Ningthou (king), Moirang Ningthou (king), probably speaking the same language with different dialects. Such reconstruction are always debatable because in the eyes of post-modernist thinkers, two or more meanings may be interpreted from this narrative. It may be happened that one of them was more powerful and built up a Meitei nation by uniting all. On the contrary, equally powerful kings or kingdoms (probably seven kingdoms or more) united through negotiation to build a federal state. The process of structuring the society could be necessarily integrative and liberal exemplified by diverse cultural practices which were carried forward down the line of evolution. Sanamahi worship was remained continued, no

evidence of enforcement to give up worshipping of Pakhangba, Pmoing, observing Lai Haroaba (emanation of god), no evidences of imposition in pork consumption during rites and rituals of Chakpa people who also fall into Meitei community.

The more we dig deeper, the more will we get. History of Manipur needs to be supplemented by the social history to make us free from positivist fallacy - the logical error, sometimes made by historians, when they confuse 'what happened' with 'that for which we have evidence'. If we assume that destruction of cultural heritage, artifacts, books, arts etc. took place in the past, then revealing something from the presently available history has limitation since it was made by the then rulers based on the limited reachable data. There could be loopholes in recollection of information which were beyond positivist observation. Also, most of the politically unfavourable events or evidences were likely to be underreported during those days. Therefore, in this situation, it is those anthropologists who will be able to trace the social and cultural history to reconstruct the past from the little evidence we have by using the wealthy anthropological skills.

# Pushing Hindi as Politics, Not Hindi as Language

Courtesy The Wire  
By : Akshya Saxena

There's always the risk of a little tedium when it comes to language debates in India. The ardor, anger and arguments all have a long history, and can feel irresolvably familiar. But as I follow the recent uproar at the perceived attempt to impose Hindi in the first draft of the National Education Policy (NEP), one thing is clear: the brouhaha has nothing to do with Hindi. The desire to impose or reject Hindi is about many things - Hindu nationalism, religion, caste and an uneasy attachment to English - but it is not about the language named Hindi. Take, for example, the rally of angry and conciliatory tweets in Tamil by Nirmala Sitharaman, S. Jaishankar, P. Chidambaram, A.R. Rahman and others. The news channels informed me that Sitharaman's and Jaishankar's tweets were nearly identical. I wouldn't know. I wouldn't know because, growing up between Uttar Pradesh and New Delhi, I am the kind of Indian who speaks only two languages: a mash up of Hindis and a mash up of Englishes.

As someone who spent all my formative years in Delhi, I do sort of understand several other languages. I can eavesdrop, make jokes and swear in some of them, but I am not functionally literate in any. Just as well, though. Sitharaman's and Jaishankar's tweets were not meant for me. In fact, they were specifically crafted to defuse the looming threat posed by "north Indian Hindi speakers" such as myself. As I scanned the Tamil tweets embedded in almost all news articles on the NEP, my interloping non-Tamil-reading eye noticed something. While saying whatever it was saying in Tamil, Sitharaman's tweet carried a Hindi-language hashtag in the Roman script: #ekbharatsreshthabharat. This hashtag has been a part of the technoscriptural arsenal of the BJP's campaign, much like #betipadhaopetibachao and #swachhbbharat. But in this specific instance, the hashtag struck me as particularly devious, for resituating Hindi while performing its removal.

The necessary Tamil of Sitharaman's and Jaishankar's tweets was a reassurance to Tamil-speakers that worry not, the government does not intend to erase your Dravidian linguistic identity and heritage. It was a way to secure their trust by demonstrating a direct line of communication between the allegedly Hindi-promoting government and its Tamil-speaking people. It was a politic move to speak the language of the people. But the hashtag classified this message under the sign of Hindi. If the DMK and AIDMK were pushing back against the three-language formula, then Sitharaman's placatory tweet literally

modelled that contentious formula. What is it about Hindi and the three-language formula that they prove so inadequate and so necessary to the idea of India? Statistics upon statistics tell us that Hindi is not the most widely-spoken language in India. Hindi speakers from the Hindi belt would scarcely recognise the language when it is spoken at 30,000 feet or written in *sarkari daftras*. So, what gives?

According to the revised draft of the NEP, the three-language formula is about cognitive development and national integration: "A multilingual India is better educated and also better nationally integrated." India is richly multilingual. This is a boon for our minds but a bane for national integration. It is impossible for everyone in India to learn all the languages in the country.

To manage matters, the NEP now proposes that all students in Class 1 and beyond learn three languages. While the revised draft does not stipulate which three languages, it does suggest three tiers of language learning that map on to the regional, national and global. In the initial draft, this meant that students would learn English to be global and Hindi to be national.

The championing of Hindi as integral to the three-language formula is about what it means to belong to the nation of India and who gets to belong. The language is not richer or older or more scientific or more authentic than any other language in India, to merit representative status. In fact, as scholars have repeatedly shown, it is objectively none of those things. In its politically engineered life, however, Hindi is Sanskrit, Hindu and 'upper' caste. As such, it does important political work. Any perceived or real desire to push Hindi, thus, has nothing to do with the exceptional qualities of the language but has everything to do with identity and power.

**1. Hindiarises Urdu**  
The institutional push for Hindi erases the shared cultural histories of Hindi and Urdu. Hindustani (a more populist "Hindi-Urdu" with Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit words) was long a strong contender for the role of independent India's "national language". Gandhi himself was a vocal advocate for it.

But the already-tricky question of India's prospective national language (and later, "official language") got trickier with the likelihood of the formation of Pakistan. A newly independent India wanted to define itself not only against the shadow of the British, but also against Pakistan.

Urdu was typecast as Muslim and Muslims a minority. Hindi was purged of its Arabic and Persianate vocabulary from Urdu and presented as more Sanskrit.

The revised NEP draft carries exactly two references to Urdu that further this mischaracterisation of Hindi-Urdu. In one instance, the document calls Urdu a variant of Hindi and in the other it refers to Urdu as the language of the Muslim minority.

**2. Hindi legitimises English**  
The investment in Hindi buttresses the continued but grudging attachment to English. The revised NEP draft spends considerable time detailing why the teaching of English is a misguided endeavour in India. Not only is English unscientific and unphonetic, it is also the language of a mere 15% Indians who use it to police class distinctions. This "unfortunate" situation, the document claims, "has created an *unnatural* aspiration" among parents as they want their children to "learn and speak languages that are not their own".

In an ironic homeopathic class war, the NEP suggests teaching English to everyone to thwart the English-knowing elite minority. But to teach only English will be elitist and unnatural, and to teach only Hindi or other Indian languages would do nothing for class mobility. English and Hindi must be taught together to compensate for the fraught compulsiveness of our colonial heritage.

**3. Shuddh Hindis is a caste project**  
The institutionalisation of a *manak* and *shuddh* Hindi is a caste-marked project that aims to "purify" a language into an 'upper'-caste standard. The revised NEP draft claims that Indian languages have "a certain home-feel and an *apnaapan*" that makes them easier, more relatable, and more relevant".

This is not true. Dalit writers, for instance, have repeatedly noted that in a classroom, Indian languages are just as alienating as English, and oftentimes more.

**4. The hegemony of Hindi affects north Indians too**

Besides the fact that north Indians speak many different languages (not just Hindi), the Hindi that is spoken is also not the Hindi enshrined in the constitution. There are several different linguistic cultures such as Awadhi Braj, and Khadi Boli in north India. When the revised NEP draft suggests that "excerpts from the rich traditions of Khariboli, Awadhi, Maithili, Braj, and Urdu literature may be included in Hindi courses

for inclusivity and enrichment", it speciously advances Hindi to the status of a language while relegating the others to its variants and dialects.

**5. Languages are not tools**  
The revised NEP draft considers all languages simply a means of communication. The vocabulary of functionality, usefulness and "language as vehicle" reduces language to a tool. But that's not the full story.

Language is not quantifiable but something lived. Its meanings arise between knowing and unknowing, power and powerlessness. Language gives shape to what we know, what we desire and what we can desire. Yes, language is the repository of cultural and familial histories, but it is also something that consistently defies them.

**6. National integration is not a mathematical equation**

The revised NEP draft completely misrepresents (and misrepresents) how languages circulate in India. It plans a "fun course on 'The Languages of India'" where students will learn names and regional locations of all Indian languages. Students will also learn "greetings and other useful or fun phrases in every major language of India" and "a bit about the literature of each". These simple phrases and literary trivia will serve as "wonderful icebreakers their entire lives as they meet people from other parts of India".

While states in India are linguistically divided, languages do not remain restricted to a region. Of the thousands of languages in the country, only a handful qualify as "major languages". There are so many languages that do not even have a script. At a time of heightened censorship, there are also so many literatures that are not recognised as literature.

Our political conscience cannot rest on the sum of our linguistic parts, when linguistic experiences in India constantly elude mathematical formulations. National integration cannot just be the ability to casually speak other languages, but must also be the ability to listen without prejudice. And it can certainly not be achieved by knowing how to say hello and goodbye in "major" languages, when there are so many Indians that simply don't meet.

Akshya Saxena is an assistant professor of English at Vanderbilt University. She is working on a book titled *Vernacular English that brings together law, literature, and film to examine the life of the English language in post-independence India*.