



Editorial

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Language — A Living Spirit Of The People, Not A Tool Of Power

— Khurshid Alam, Founder-Editor,
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Language is not an invention. It is not a theoretical construct devised in a university seminar. Nor is it the outcome of scientific experimentation in a lab. Language is born of the people—shaped slowly over centuries, through daily use, communal rituals, shared struggles, and inherited memory. It binds people not by rule, but by rhythm—of feeling, of expression, of identity.

Every language is a tapestry of a community's inner life. It holds within it the songs of harvest, the cries of mourning, the

logic of local idioms, and the pulse of oral tradition. It cannot be imposed, theorized, or invented. When politicians attempt to enforce a language top-down—divorced from the lives of the people—it ceases to be a medium of connection and becomes a tool of control. History has warned us, repeatedly, of the consequences.

One of the clearest examples is the language policy in post-independence Pakistan. The central government's decision to impose Urdu as the sole national language—ignoring the deep-rooted linguistic and cultural identity of the Bengali-speaking majority in East Pakistan—was not just a political miscalculation. It was a cultural affront. Language became the frontline of resistance. The Bengali Language Movement of 1952 was not merely a plea for recognition; it was a struggle for dignity. The eventual secession of East Pakistan and the birth of Bangladesh in 1971 was, in part, the result of this linguistic imposition. The attempt to enforce a singular linguistic identity on a pluralistic society proved to be both culturally blind and politically catastrophic.

In contrast, history also offers examples of organic linguistic acceptance—where a language is adopted not under compulsion but through cultural exchange and mutual respect. Consider the case of Gujarati merchants and Persian traders during the early medieval period. Persian—then the language of courts and commerce—entered Gujarat not through imperial decree, but through interaction, trade, and intermarriage. Over time, it enriched the Gujarati language, leaving behind a legacy of shared vocabulary and literary forms. There was no imposition—only absorption. No conflict—only convergence.

Language binds people when it emerges from their lived realities. It cannot be assigned by decree, nor can it be codified fully by scholars. Linguists may study it, classify it, even theorize about its evolution—but the spirit of a language belongs to those who speak it. Attempts to dissect it too finely

often fail to capture its emotional charge, its musicality, its cultural resonance.

As editors and scholars, we must remain conscious of this distinction. Our role is not to police or prescribe language, but to listen—to its transformations, to its resistances, to its silences. We must support the preservation of marginalized languages, not simply for academic record-keeping, but because each language holds a unique way of seeing the world.

Let us, then, reaffirm the truth: a language lives because people live it. It flourishes in poetry, in protest, in lullabies, in street slang. It is a force of belonging, not bureaucracy. A heritage, not a policy. And most of all, it is a human inheritance that must never be reduced to a tool of power.

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