

**Working Papers on
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Chief Editor

Dr. V.M. Subramanian

Editors

Dr. S. Sundarabalu

Dr. N. Vijayan

Dr. P. Sankarganesh



Department of Linguistics

Bharathiar University

Coimbatore - 641 046, India

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OFFICIAL NEGLECT AND TRIBAL LANGUAGES: ANALYZING LANGUAGE EXCLUSION OF GOJRI

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Abstract

Gojri speakers, i.e., Gujjars and Bakarwals, are the relatively deprived indigenous tribal communities and groups. The hegemony of dominant languages in significant fields such as polity, judiciary, and education accentuates the exclusion of tribal and minority languages. The study relied on secondary sources and mainly focused on Gojri speakers of Jammu and Kashmir, and India. We examined the indigenous Gojri language, its genesis, evolution, resemblance, geography, and diversity, and the plight of its neglect and exclusion from significant fields. We highlighted how Census operations, official languages of States/UTs, schedules of the constitution, parliament and judicial proceedings, pedagogical medium & school curriculum, language education policies, and initiatives contributed to such exclusion. The study expands our understanding of language landscape and diversity, hegemony and preference for dominant languages, and exclusion of minority and tribal languages. Considering the linguistic diversity of J&K and India, we believe this study can sensitize educational and language policy planners and practitioners about language bias, non-inclusive, discriminant, and unjust treatment, alienating Gojri speakers in different domains.

Keywords: *Gojri, Language Exclusion, Tribal Languages, Gujjar, Bakarwal*

Introduction

The linguistically diverse Jammu and Kashmir (India) is home to several ethnic & tribal communities. The diversity and plurality of ethnicities are marked by the varied languages, religions, traditions, cultures, practices, norms, castes, occupations, and regions. In Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), the indigenous ethnic groups explored by the Anthropological Survey of India are 111. The dominant indigenous ethnic communities are “Kashmiri, Gujjari, Pahari, Dogra, Kargil, Balti and Ladakhi” (population.com, n.d.), and other indigenous ethnic communities and groups include Pohul, Bakarwal, Hanjjs, Baba, Dogra, Mughal, Shina, Balti, Pakhtoon, Kraal, Sanur, Chimbe, Beda, Hunza, Brokpa and others (**Bhat & Mathur, 2011**). In the distinct and diverse J&K, the governance and administration, though alike, fail to give due recognition and space to accommodate the genuine interests of a few tribal communities. As a result of this partiality, many communities are being deprived and excluded from various provisions and basic rights. They face exclusion in social, educational, economic, linguistic, religious, and other spheres of life, significantly affecting their identity, culture, language, and survival. One such tribal community is *Gujjars* – one of the major tribal communities. Gujjars are tribal communities officially recognized as scheduled tribes by J&K Constitution (ST

Amendment Act, 1991). Gujjars are the largest groups among all tribes in terms of population as their share in tribal and total J&K population is 65.67 percent and 7.81 percent, respectively. They are found in almost all the districts of J&K. Besides J&K, Gujjars are also found in other Indian states and neighbouring countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The J&K is geographically and linguistically diverse. Different ethnic communities, both dominant and minority, habituate the diverse geospatial regions. These ethnic groups have distinct languages and dialects. The dominant indigenous groups and their languages in three respective regions are Dogra (Dogri), Kashmir (Kashmiri) & Ladakh (Balti). The indigenous minority groups along with languages are Gujjar (Gojri), Pahari (Pahari & Parmri), Dard (Shina), Pakhtoon (Pakhtu), Gilgiti & Hunza (Burukshaki), Punjabi (Pothwari), Sirami (Siram) and many more (Bhat, 2016). Besides the native languages, there are non-native ones that are dominant, like Urdu, English, Arabic, Sanskrit, and Persian. Two (Urdu & English) receive official patronage as official languages.

Background Studies

Many studies have shed light on language inequality, official neglect and discrimination in language policies, marginalization and exclusion of tribal languages, bias towards tribal languages, and ambiguity in national and provincial/state language policies. **Dotan-Eliaz et al. (2009)** stated that exclusion and conflict in social settings could stem from linguistic diversity and multilingualism. **Jernudd & Das Gupta (1971)** found that ethnic identification and language use do not coincide with national identity and language. In a multilingual society, government and administration are responsible for language planning. The political system and administration haven't been fair to languages. **Kroskrity (2000)** says linguistic policy affects ethnic groups' inclusion and exclusion. Language choice, beliefs, and attitudes are unjust because of polity, power relations, identity, ideology, and constant changes in socio-economic, political, identity, and ideological ascriptions (**Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004**). **Mohanty, Mishra, Reddy & Gumidyala (2009)** in their study, informed about, "The vicious circle of language disadvantage" and "death or murder of languages". The languages are threatened and murdered by excluding them from the significant fields of state like official, judiciary, polity, education, and business. The barring of language from important public spheres plagues its functions and development. The strength of a language is weakened by neglecting them from social, economic, educational, political, legal, official, and public usage.

Language issues and controversies are visible in policy considerations and operations like census operations, official languages, bi or multilingual education, native language rights at school & workplace place, preference for dominant languages in official settings, and the necessity of having multilingual legal business and proceedings (**Brandes, 2009**). The language sometimes develops ethnic stereotypes (positive and negative) among listeners about the speakers (**Miller, 2000; Ng, 2007**). English, "the language of global business or corporate language" (Neeley, 2012 May) and progress (**Phillipson, 1997**). In contrast, Gojri and other minority languages are looked down upon and considered inappropriate in many situations.

They are shunned by society, excluded, and treated poorly. When indigenous tongues are not utilised in commercial settings, they become endangered.

Students of different ethnic communities identify themselves with their respective mother tongues. The tribal ethnic communities, including Gujjars and Bakarwals, are denied schooling in their respective mother tongues (**Nambissan, 1994**). However, studies confirm that students' success depends on instruction in their native mother tongue. The educational success of tribal children is greatly impeded by the language medium in which they are taught (**Meshram, 2017**). The unavoidable compulsion of tribal children to receive education in dominant languages (Hindi, English, Urdu) significantly contributes to their low academic performance and high dropout rates, thereby excluding them from school and the education system (**Singh, 2014**).

The inclusion of dominant languages in education restricts the academic learning, achievement, and survival of tribal students in the educational system. The tribal children of Gadchiroli (Maharashtra, India) who speak Gond & Madiya feel burdened in studying the English language (**Tripathi, 2017**). **Mandave (2017)** stated that teachers face challenges in teaching English to tribal students. The tribal students also have to go through content and language barriers in textbooks that hardly represent tribal culture and experiences. **Challa (2016)** stated that the language barrier is the most pressing problem in tribal education since it affects both home and school-based learning and pedagogy more than any other factor.. The Japanese express themselves through gestures, while Americans do through words (**Peltokorpi, 2006**). The formal education system significantly contributes to “linguistic genocide” in the pious field of education by excluding the languages of ethnic tribal communities and groups (**Skutnabb-Kangas, 2001**).

Garcia (2015) identifies three stages (Shaming, Othering, Silencing) of minority group exclusion in language policy. African, Ghanaian, and Latino kids who speak vernacular are ridiculed for having bilingual education. Ethnic minorities are linguistically excluded from education and society because of their low academic and language ability. They silence the languages of ethnic minorities by seizing their power in the name of national identity and national legislation as that of France, Algeria, Whales, USA, where national languages are enforced on people who don't speak it. Gojri speakers in J&K go through the same three stages. **Mohanty (2000)** states about the notion of language inadequacy propagated by dominant languages, considering themselves superior, enforcing their language norms on the ethnic minorities, and bias towards bilingual and multilingual students in gauging language skills.

In this article, we analyzed the indigenous ‘*Gojri*’ language in the multilingual setup, its genesis, evolution, resemblance, its status at the national and state/provincial level, and the dynamics of its exclusion in various key aspects. We presented evidence of language exclusion and inequality of Gojri in significant social institutions and recommended fair and just language policies and practices in these institutions.

Gojri: Genesis, Evolution, and Resemblance

The mother tongue of Gujjars is Gojri (**Bashir, 2016; Bhat & Khan, 2020**) and it is spoken globally by 20 million people. Its origin is directly related to the historical roots of Gujjars. Rahi, cited in **Zaman & QI (2019)** stated that the source of Gojri dates back to the origin and the historical past of Gujjars. However, their history is circled by ambiguity (**Sharma, 2012**). There are two main viewpoints about their origin, broadly categorized into Foreign & Native Origin. The foreign view claims that the Gujjars were the indigenous people of foreign countries who immigrated to India. Their descentance is linked to the Huns (**Smith, 1909**), Khizir, Yuchi, Tochan, Kushan (**Cunningham**), Göçer (**Rahi, 2009, June 21**) Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty (**TRCF, 2009**), Aryans, Badao (**Shashi, n.d.**) and thus, were original residents of USSR (**Smith, 1909, Cunningham, 1862:65; Massica, 1991**), Gurjia presently Georgia (**Raina, 2002**), Turkey (**Rahi, 2009, June 21**), Central Asia (**TRCF, 2009 b**), Arab (**Shahsi, n.d.**), Greek (**Colonel Tort, n.d.**); Iran (**Kemiedy, 1907**), Grozni presently Russia. The Indian viewpoints have a religious basis where Gujjars were believed to have descentance or relevance with Lord Hanuman (**Ahmed in Raghavan, 2012**), Suryavanshi Kshatriyas (**Ojha, 1925**), Indik or Sanskrit (**Ghurye, n.d.**) and thereby has the historical basis on India caste hierarchy, occupation, and linguistic system. Gujjars can be traced to 465 A.D., when Huns immigrated to India (Smith, 1909) Evidence of a separate kingdom, "Gujjar Desh," in Rajasthan between the 5th and 9th centuries can be found in Haryana, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, and J&K. In the 7th century, "Gujjar" appears in Indian literature. Archaeological evidence, memorials, tombs, coins, historical documents, and literature indicate their subcontinental domination (Munshi, 1943:44:45). Persistent 11th-century attacks on Gujjar shattered their kingdoms, causing them to migrate to safer locations like Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Jammu and Kashmir (Ibbetson, 1916). Before Christ, religious inscriptions in ancient Indian languages represent Gojri, especially in the 1st century. Rahi wrote on his blog that Gojri is the "oldest and most prominent South Asian language." **Losey (2002)** noted that Gojri originated from the Sanskrit language. Gojri was practised before Sanskrit-speaking Aryan tribes immigrated to India. Indik or Sanskrit became the language of rulers, and other "Prakrits or Indo-Aryan" languages developed with small variations. Historians, linguists, and researchers believe Gojri is related to Mewati, Marwari, Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, Haryanvi, and Pahari. They view it as the mother of Gujrati, Rajasthani, Haryanvi, and Urdu. Up until the 15th century, Sufi saints and great poets supported Gojri in India. Amir Khusrau (famous Indo-Persian poet) included Gojri among 18 significant languages of his period (**Massica, 1991; Grierson as cited in Rahi, n.d.; Tufail, 2014; Sharma, 1982; Massica, 1991; Sharma, 2009; Sharma, 2002**).

Linguistic demography of Jammu and Kashmir

As per Census (2011) data published in 2018, a total of 122 [22 scheduled (SL) & 99 Non-scheduled (NS)] languages found their place in the current language schedule (8th) of the Indian constitution and achieved recognized status. Among them, 270 are mother tongues (123 listed in SL & 147 in NSL). Only five languages, "Kashmiri, Dogri, Urdu, Hindi, and

English,” have received official patronage in J&K [The J&K Official Language Act, 2020 (Ind.)], and only the mother tongue of two communities (Kashmiri and Dogra) have been included in the 8th schedule. To have a complete understanding of the linguistic diversity of Jammu and Kashmir, we thoroughly analyzed ethnolinguistic communities (included in Census, 2011) habituated in J&K. The dominant languages spoken in J&K are Kashmiri, Hindi, and Dogri, with 53.27 %, 20.83 % and 20.04 % speakers and rest of the languages account for less than 1 percent. All the ethnic communities, in the pursuit of preserving their languages, culture, and ethnic identity, have nominated their respective native languages as their “mother tongue” in Census and surveys conducted from time to time (Warikoo, n.d.). However, the Censuses conducted from time to time merged specific indigenous languages of the respective communities of J&K with Hindi, as is the case with Gojri/Gujari. This has severely affected the ethnic Gujjars and Bakerwal communities, their identity, culture, and development, and has given undue inflation to Hindi speakers. Moreover, official languages like Urdu and English are merely spoken by 0.15 % and 0.0007 % of the population but have received official status and are being extensively used for* administrative, educational, and trade purposes.

The Gojri is spoken by 0.10 % of the Indian population. Gojri is not only spoken in J&K alone; it is also spoken by the ethnic communities of Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Gujarat, and Haryana in India and neighbouring countries like Pakistan (Bukhari, n.d.; Rensch, Hallberg & O’Leary, 1992; Shinwari, 2005), Afghanistan (Bahry, 2013; Liljegren, 2017). In J&K, Gojri as a separate language is spoken by 1,093,852 people, constituting 8.72 % (excluding Hindu speakers) of the population, making it the third largest ethnic community in terms of language speakers, after Kashmiri and Dogri.

Exclusion of Gojri

In this article, the author discusses the Gojri language's exclusion. Linguistic exclusion is a sort of social exclusion in which ethnic minorities are denied language rights, privileges, and development, conservation, and promotion. Jammu & Kashmir practises language exclusion. Gujjar and Bakarwal or Gojri speakers are excluded. Gojri speakers are denied language rights and benefits despite constitutional assurances of equal access for all populations. Political, educational, judicial, and bureaucratic systems reflect Gojri's linguistic marginalisation. Gojri speakers are excluded and vulnerable due to J&K's language regulations. J&K's Gujjar & Bakarwal community is concerned about language isolation. Exclusion of Gojri languages harms identity, culture, and education.

Exclusion from Census

The exclusion of the Gojri language in the Census of India had prevailed before independence, the census report of 1881 published by British colonists omitted Gojri from the list of mother tongues. The tradition of discrimination and exclusion of Gojri continued in subsequent census operations and reports till 1971. In the Census report of (1901:89) Gujari

or Gojri has been listed as a dialect under Rajasthani spoken by a total of 204,322 Gujjars (1,272 Central Province, 126,849 Kashmir, 76,168 Punjab & 33 other regions). Similarly, in Census (1921; 102-105) Gujari was put as a dialect of Rajasthani with 291,606 speakers in Kashmir and 22,637 in NWFP (Now in Pakistan). In Census 1941, the tribal Gojri language met the same fate. It was only in Census 1961 listed Gujari/Gojari as a separate independent language with 2,09,327 speakers in J&K. Still, in the following Census of 1971, Gujari/Gojri was declared as dialect and clubbed with Hindi, thereby neglecting Gojri and creating confusion, and disappointment among indigenous Gujjars. The double standards toward Gojri languages continued to exist even in the 2011 Census. In Census 2011, surviving under the umbrella of Hindi, Gojri again was neglected and excluded further, although its speakers in the country and J&K comprise 12,27,901 & 1,093,854 speakers, respectively. The notion of uncertainty whether the language belongs to Rajasthani or Hindi or exists as a separate language has seriously affected the progress and development of language in general and the Gujjar community in particular. The Gojri faces stepmotherly treatment in the census reports of India before and after independence.

Exclusion from official and scheduled languages

India is an amalgamation of states characterized by federal and quasi-federal governance working in communion. Federal governments possess more autonomy in altering State boundaries, subjects in the concurrent list, and emergency powers than quasi-federal governments. However, quasi-federal states possess powers in state matters, including choosing official and scheduled languages. J&K was a quasi-federal state enjoying special status via Article 370 and having its constitution. The Part XI of the J&K constitution dealt with the official languages and made Urdu *de jure* and English *de facto* languages. Urdu is enjoying the status of the official language of J&K since 1889, despite being a secondary and contact/link language of all the communities of J&K. The official languages (Urdu & English) are spoken by less than 1 percent of the population of J&K (As shown in Table 2) and did not figure among the indigenous mother tongues of any of the dominant communities of J&K. The languages of major and tribal ethnic communities were neglected. The 6th schedule of quasi-federal J&K dealt with regional languages. The Constitution of J&K (26th Amendment) Act, 1999, S. 2. Included Gojri in the sixth schedule, thereby giving due recognition and status to indigenous Gojri along with *Kashmiri, Dogri, Balti (Pali), Dardi, Punjabi, Pahari, and Ladaki*.

The federal government altered the boundary of J&K in 2019 via Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act – 2019 and removed its special status by amending Article 370. Now, the affairs of J&K were governed by the federal government after August 2019. The federal laws, policies, and Acts, including language laws, became applicable to J&K. The shifting of autonomy and authority from the quasi-federal government to the federal government complicated the issues related to official, regional and tribal languages. The official language Act and Article 343. (1) of the federal government nominated Hindi in Devanagari Script as *de jure* and English as the *de facto* languages of the union but lack a

national language. The regional languages mainly spoken by dominant and tribal ethnicities of J&K were denied official status. The quasi-federal state of J&K possessed its language schedule, viz., and the 6th schedule, which recognized tribal languages (Gojri, Dardi, and Balti) till the federal government turned the state of J&K into a Union Territory in 2019. The laws, Acts, and policies of the quasi-federal government of J&K became inapplicable. As a result, the language schedule and laws of the federal government were imposed on J&K. The 8th schedule of the federal government notified 22 regional languages as scheduled languages and excluded *Gojri* from the schedule, even though the Gojri speakers from the 3rd largest ethnic community of J&K. For **Pattanayak (1986)** 8th schedule seems to be “anachronistic” and the Articles related to language, i.e., 341 & 351 seems to have worked much for development and promotion of Hindi rather than any other languages thus making the former inoperative and the later as recommendary (**Mallikarjun, 2021**).

Exclusion from Parliament, Judiciary, and other departments

All communication, including forms, titles, manuals, notice boards, plates, letterheads, court and parliament proceedings, and business between or in all Centre and State departments shall be done exclusively in Hindi or English (Official Languages Rules, 1976). Similarly, the J&K state also followed such steps vigorously. India and J&K governments gave undue recognition to Hindi and English in the business affairs of all departments and excluded Gojri, thereby showing inequality among languages. Including regional, vernacular and local languages in judicial verdicts, litigation, and governance of the Indian administration was advocated by the president (Ram Nath Kovind) and two former chief Justice of India (Justice Bobde and Ramana). Progress in this direction was unsatisfactory, and English is still overemphasized in these settings. Indian constitution only permits members of legislative bodies (Rajya/Lok Sabha) to communicate orally in mother tongues in assembly proceedings but fails to give due representation in written communication. The tribal mother tongues are not given due representation in written communication in assembly proceedings.

Exclusion from Education

A. Medium of Instruction

Despite the inclusion and recognition of the Gojri in the 6th schedule of J&K's constitution, Gojri has not been used as a pedagogical medium at any stage of education in J&K, be it primary, upper primary, secondary, or tertiary. Various educational policies from time to time supported the mother tongue as the pedagogical medium at the initial years of life and stages of education for better learning outcomes. However, the recommendations were not followed in toto. The concept of the “three language formula” propagated by NEP 1968, 1986, RTE-2009:201,3 and NPE 2020, where one Indian or regional language or mother tongue shall be used for teaching purposes without forcing any particular language. However, the school education department did not even use Gojri in schools with 100 percent tribal

enrolment, further exaggerating language inequality and discrimination, especially among tribal languages. Even the teachers well versed in Gojri are neither available nor trained.

B. Curriculum

The curriculum of the school education department of J&K includes subjects in languages like Kashmiri, Dogri, Punjabi, Persian, Hindi, and English. The Gojri as a compulsory subject is not included in the school education curriculum. Rahi, in his blog, mentioned the richness of folk & modern Gojri books and literature. During the past ten decades, thousands of books on poetry, Grammar, Encyclopaedia, folklore, agriculture, animal husbandry, sociology, education, and other aspects have been published in Gojri by renowned academicians, institutions, departments, and research scholars. The constant efforts of Dr. Rahi of the Academy of Art, culture, and languages (J&K) and Board of school education (J&K) helped to develop textbooks in Gojri up to the Elementary stage. Still, they were taught only in a few tribal pockets of the Rajouri & Poonch districts. In this way, Gojri was denied coverage to all the districts of J&K. Gojri, as an independent language subject, is excluded from the secondary and higher education curriculum. The teacher training programs of SCET & DIET also excluded Gojri as a language subject with a strong bearing on preparing and training preservice and inservice teachers who could not serve and teach indigenous Gujjar and Bakerwal communities.

C. Departments, Research Centres, and Tribal university

The higher educational institutes, i.e., Universities and colleges of J&K, have managed to include the languages (Kashmiri & Dogri) of the dominant ethnic communities and excluded the indigenous language of Gojri. Similarly, colleges (Degree colleges & teacher Training) in the same way neglected Gojri languages. These universities & colleges failed to represent the language needs of the third-largest ethnic community. They discriminated and excluded them by not establishing separate language departments or research centers for Gojri, which Gojri activists have been demanding from time to time. Among all universities of J&K, only one university, i.e., Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Rajouri, has a research Centre for Gojri, aimed to document, promote and research in Gojri as well as introduce courses (Short-Term, Orientation, Refresher and Post Graduate) in Gojri languages.

The UGC has established tribal universities in the State and Union Territory of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh (UGC, n. d.). The tribal population of the respective state/UT is 21.1 % and 7 %. (Census, 2011); while J&K has a tribal population of 11.9 %, settled in every district but is deprived of the tribal university. Memorandums from time to time have been submitted to the government of the J&K and UGC for the establishment of tribal university (Press Trust of India, 2015, August 30; Greater Kashmir, 2018, Nov. 19). The dual standards towards the tribals of J&K especially Gujjars and Bakerwals dominant ethnic communities after Kashmiri and Dogra.

D. Language Universities & Autonomous Institutions

The universities established in India on a lingual basis are six. These universities deal with the promotion and development of four languages, viz., Sanskrit, Hindi, English & Foreign Languages, and Urdu (MoE, 2021, July 13). No such initiative has been taken to establish universities to promote, protect, and survive dying tribal languages and dialects. India occupies a prime position across the globe with most (197) languages that are vulnerable (81), endangered (definitely 62, severely 7, critically 42), and extinct [5] (Moseley, 2010). Sengupta (2009) found a close association between language extinction, endangerment, and tribal regions. Most of the languages (vulnerable, endangered, and extinct) belong to tribal communities of West Bengal, J&K, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Orissa, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh (Immidiseti, 2021). Despite the rising number of dying languages, no languages universities in the above-mentioned tribal areas have been established, which adds further exclusion and extinction of tribal languages as well as their identity and treasure of knowledge.

The central government has set up various five autonomous bodies for the conservation, preservation, and promotion of classical and other languages like Tamil, Hindi, Sindhi, and Urdu (MoE, 2021 July 13) and neglected and discriminated literary rich tribal languages in general and Gojri in particular and have not set up the autonomous body in this regard.

Discussion

The study gives a comprehensive understanding of inequality, discrimination, neglect, and exclusion of the Gojri language and how different institutions like polity, education, judiciary, and government policies and initiatives from time to time have significantly contributed to the process of language exclusion of Gojri. The study reflected Gojri language has a rich historical past and is among the oldest South Asian and Indian languages. Gojri has significantly contributed to Indian folklore, language, and literature. Gojri has been considered among the eighteen prominent languages of his time by noted poets. Gojri did not flourish as other languages did after the 11th century. The stepmotherly treatment by Mughals after the 11-12th century downfall of the Gujjar Kingdom led to the exclusion of the Gojri language and the promotion of Arabic and Persian. The Mughals butchered and displaced Gojri speakers to isolated hilly areas in J&K.

The census reports also show partiality with tribal Gojri language by not incorporating Gojri as a separate language in census reports before and after independence except the Census report of 1961. Mallikarjun (2021) stated that minority languages face the disadvantage of being engulfed by the dominant language or tarnished by the geopolitical system in other regions. Few languages (Rajasthani, Hindi) received greater attention at the expense of others (Gojri); living under the shadow of Rajasthani and Hindi puts the existence

of the Gojri language in danger. The census reports gave an inadequate representation of Gojri and other tribal languages.

The language policy adopted earlier by the federal government mentions 5-point criteria (Indigenous, spoken by a substantial population proportion, popularly used in educational institutions, literary rich, traditional and national heritage, script) to designate official status to any language (**Gandhi, 1984**). However, the recognized/listed languages do not qualify for that criterion. The federal government appointed Pahwa Committee (1996), Mohapatra (2003-04), and Inter-Ministerial Committee (2012) to lay down objective standards for the recognition of languages in the 8th schedule. But they failed to finalize any final criteria. They cited dynamism in the genesis of languages and dialects and the political, social, and economic influences as the main issues in deciding the criteria. Presently, the federal government has no fixed criteria for recognizing languages in the 8th schedule. This shows the inherent bias and disregard towards tribal languages/dialects gradually sent into the walls of unconsciousness and extinction. There are ten scheduled languages (Sindhi, Bodo, Dogri, Kashmiri, Konkani, Nepali, Manipuri, Maithali, Sanskrit, and Santhali) with less than 1 percent of speakers. The federal government ignored the multilingual ethos of the Indian society and presented a deceptive eighth language schedule, downgrading tribal mother tongues and minor languages. **Saxena (1997)** stated that various languages were not considered in the 8th Schedule. The schedule to empower a few languages has belittled, relegated, and excluded other languages. Moreover, the excluded languages were attached with the tags like inferior unstandardized dialects, tribal, or minority languages. The preference is given to standardized scheduled languages in key spheres of Education, administration, judiciary, business, and communication between The States and the Centre. The local/tribal mother tongues are ignored and demeaned, and foreign language receives appreciation, support, prestige, and inclusion (**Saxena, 1997**). Inequality prevails in the inclusion and exclusion of languages in scheduled languages. Language status (Upgradation or Degradation) is/are primarily shaped by political influences at national and state levels (**Khan & Khan, 2018**).

The linguistic abilities of tribal communities differ, and when the national and provincial/state sets or adopts the official language and in using these set languages, differences in linguistic competencies can be observed. In using national/state official languages in different domains, some communities have the upper hand as they are fluent in that language/s, while others are disadvantaged and poor. Such apparent differences could result in inequality in key spheres of nation/state. **Kibbee (2020)** found linguistic inequality in court transactions where individuals speaking languages other than official ones are denied equal opportunity and justice. There are increased job opportunities for English-speaking/knowning job aspirants compared to non-English.

Provincial quasi-federal governments can set language policies and schedules. It sometimes led to disputes between federal and quasi-federal governments over language use. The quasi-federal/state governments acknowledge provincial/regional languages in their

language schedules and enable their use everywhere. Language schedules also include prominent tribal languages. Gojri was recognised in J&K's 6th language schedule. Gojri was not recognised as a regional/provincial language when J&K became a Union Territory. Federal and quasi-federal decision-making power-sharing hurts mother tongues and tribal languages. The quasi-federal governments remain in fear of federal government imposition or monopolizing language (**Sengupta, 2017**). He further stated that The federal government orders quasi-federal states to make Hindi mandatory in schools. The order breaches the student's right to receive education/instruction in schools in their native language, as granted by NPE, 1968-1986, RTE Act, 2009-2013, and NEP-2020. It supports non-native languages like English and Urdu and excludes provincial tribal languages. De jure minority/tribal language rules in quasi-federal administrations are strategically ambiguous. Social actors copy, defend, or fight officialness conceptions. Language policies are tied to sovereignty (**Hawkey & Horner, 2022**).

Language policies in education are directly connected to the linguistic scenario of any national, state, and region and also ensure education/pedagogy in native mother tongues. In education, language generally plays dual roles. One studying it as a '*subject of study*' and another taught as the '*pedagogical medium*.' Language choice, in both cases, affects language policy in educational aspects and is deeply connected to empowerment, prestige, and status of languages (**Koul, 2005**). The pedagogical medium of provincial states failed to address the needs and aspirations of tribal languages. Empirical studies found a mismatch between the pedagogical medium in schools and students' mother tongue (**Nambissan, 1994; Mohanlal, 2001; Mohanty, Mishra, Reddy, & Gumidyala, 2009**). Tribal language speakers usually come from poor socio-economic backgrounds and rural areas, hence disadvantaged. Persistent impoverishment and exclusion from essential domains (School, official, economic) contribute to their frailty and underdevelopment, which are stated as causes for their exclusion from education. Socially structured exclusion is mirrored in institutional discrimination in important sectors (**Mohanty, 2008**). Primary school Gujjar/Bakarwal children even have Gojri textbooks. Still, schools with 100% Gujjar/Bakarwal enrollment don't teach them. Instruction in official dominant languages is the main cause of failing schools, increasing inequality (**Tomaševski, 2004**). The macro policies of nations and governments value majority, minority, and community languages differently. When hiring, community and regional minority languages are secondary to majority languages (**Easlick, 2022**). States like Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and others extended the application of mother tongue in pedagogy to students; especially those who speak languages enlisted in the 8th schedule but denied such instructional facilities to the students who speak minority or tribal languages (**Mallikarjun, 2021**). Such a discriminatory approach of States with tribal or minority languages not only declines their speakers but also hinders their progress and promotion.

Conclusion

The existing language policies and practices in different societal institutions are unfair, unjust, and non-inclusive, further excluding and marginalizing Gojri speakers. The

manifestations of language exclusion of Gojri have been revealed through their non-inclusion in census operations and clubbing with dominant languages like Hindi & Rajasthani, barring from official language lists, schedules of the constitution, proceedings of various vital departments, ostracism in institutional, educational, and language policies, programs, and practices, non-adherence of policy norms in matters of mother tongue and differential attitude of individuals, society, institutions, and government towards tribal and minority languages.

The chances for correcting physical or natural inequalities are limited, but social and linguistic disparities can be rectified and addressed through equitable and just policies. Diverse and inclusive language strategies, interventions, policies, initiatives, funding, recognition, advocacy, official cum legal support, security, and status are needed to mitigate language discrimination, inequality, stereotyping, stigmatization, favouritism, the hegemony of dominant languages, neglect, and exclusion of minority and tribal languages and mother tongues. Language exclusion of Gojri speakers, as reflected in different direct and indirect educational policies and practices, hampers their identity, culture, and educational opportunity and learning in addition to the sustenance and progression of Gojri. The administrative, academic and social policies and practices are such that Gojri is given equal treatment and is heartily accepted in multilingual social institutions. Improving the linguistic competencies of Gojri-speaking communities can be best addressed through the inclusion of their native language along with official languages in educational institutions, colleges, and universities.

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As per Gierson, the Inner Sub-Branch is made up of three groups of languages: Eastern Pahari (Nepali), Central Pahari (Kumauni and Garhwali) and Western Pahari (includes Jaunsari, Sirmauri, Kullui, Mandiali, Chambiali etc.)