

# ***Kannada***

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## ***'Endangerment':***

***What is meant by this term for this language?***

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Harold F. Schiffman  
South Asia Studies  
U. Of Pennsylvania  
GURT 2006

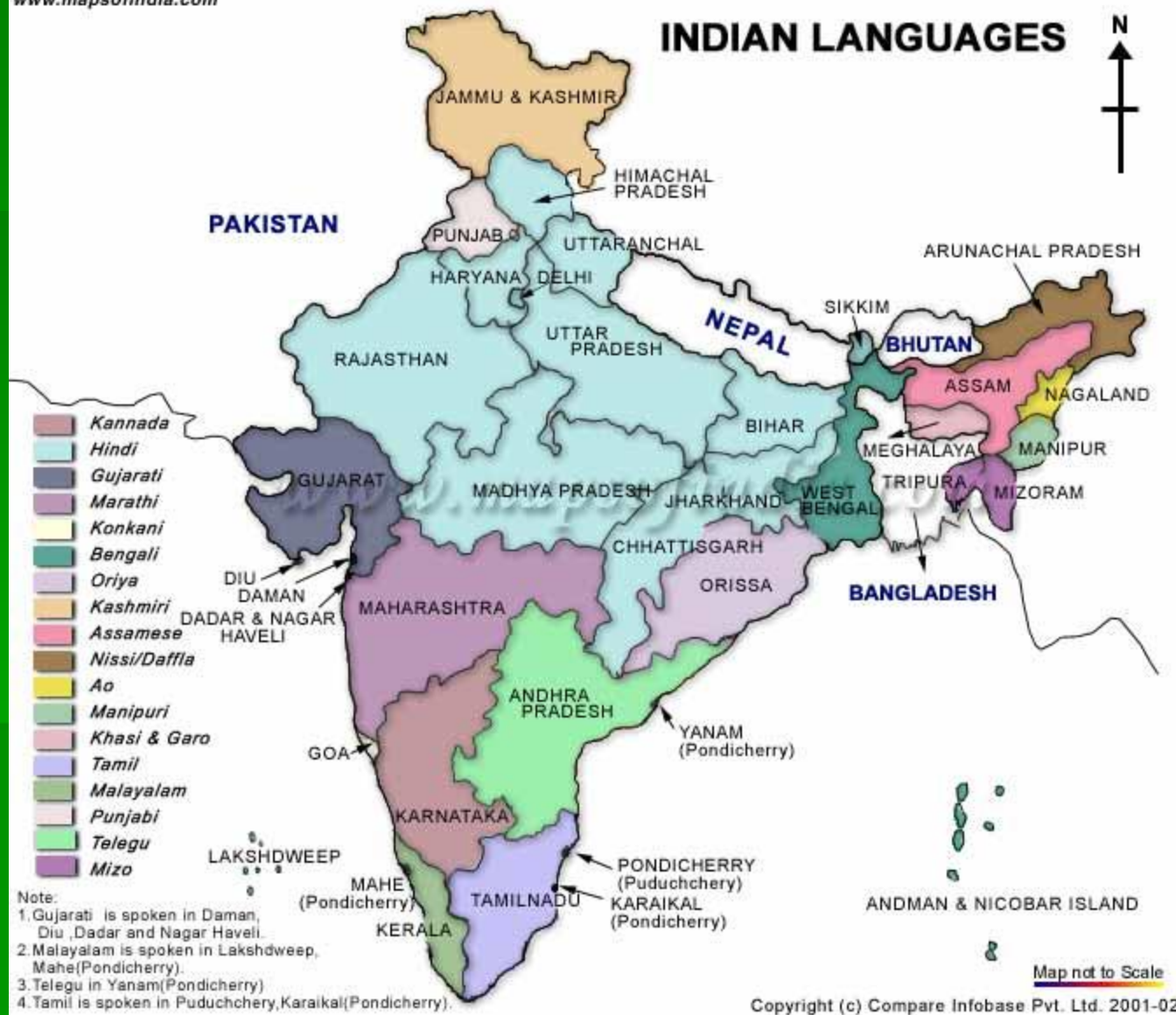
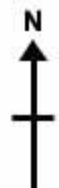
# ***Is Kannada endangered?***

- August 18, 2005: President of All India Kannada Sahitya Sammelan cites UNESCO list of 'endangered' languages
- Claims Kannada is 'endangered'
- Blames
  - 'excessive love of English'
  - Influence of 'other languages' and
  - Government 'indifference'

# ***Excessive love of English:***

- Karnataka government wants to introduce English from first standard instead of waiting until 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> standard.
- Central government had been asked to accord **classical** status to Kannada
- Funding from classical status could be used to help 'rescue' Kannada from extinction.

# INDIAN LANGUAGES



# ***Who is doing more for Kannada?***

- PaPu: Kannada has won many awards
- Kannada is 'one of the oldest historical languages in the world'
- State government is doing more for English than for Kannada!

# ***Criteria for Endangerment:***

- The language in question is not being transmitted intergenerationally, i.e. has no young speakers
- Where language censuses exist, mother-tongue declarations of the language have been decreasing
- Literacy in the language in question is minimal, if it exists at all
- Mother-tongue speakers are all aged

# ***The 9 factors listed in UNESCO's Language Vitality and Endangerment paper:***

1. Intergenerational language transmission
2. Absolute number of speakers
3. Proportion of speakers within the total population
4. Shifts in domains of language use
5. Response to new domains and media
6. Materials for language education and literacy
7. Governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies,
8. Community member's attitudes towards their own language
9. Type and quality of documentation

# ***Kannada and the 9 factors:***

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|--|--|
| 1. Intergenerational language transmission:                        | 1. No problem  |
| 2. Absolute number of speakers:                                    | 2. 2001 census: 52,850,562                                 |
| 3. Proportion of speakers within the total population:             | 3. Percentage: 66.2%                                       |
| 4. Shifts in domains of language use:                              | 4. English in the higher registers?                        |
| 5. Response to new domains and media:                              | 5. Attempts to control media, e.g. language in cinema      |
| 6. Materials for language education and literacy:                  | 6. No problem  |
| 7. Governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies: | 7. Karnataka government seen as indifferent?               |
| 8. Community member's attitudes towards their own language:        | 8. Attitudes seen as problem, especially of <b>women</b> . |
| 9. Type and quality of documentation:                              | 9. Census data are not suspect                             |



# ***Distribution of 10,000 speakers by Languages (Karnataka):***

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- Bengali: 5
  - Gujarati: 12
  - Hindi: 197
  - **Kannada: 6,622**
  - Konkani: 157
  - Malayalam: 169
  - Nepali: 1
  - Oriya: 1
  - Punjabi: 3
  - Sindhi: 3
  - Tamil: 384
  - Telugu: 739
  - Urdu: 996
- (Source: 2001 census)

# ***Languages not Mentioned:***

- Previous table gives all-India 'official' languages
- Karnataka is home to a number of smaller languages:
  - Tulu: 1.9 million speakers
  - Kodagu: 120,000
  - Konkani: 4,000,000 (not all in Karnataka)
  - Other tribal languages: Badaga: 245,374; Betta Kurumba: 32,000; Sholaga: 24,000

# ***Where is the concern for these languages?***

- Literacy and education in Karnataka is usually in Kannada, unless facilities are provided by another state (Andhra for Telugu, Tamilnadu for Tamil, etc.)
- Kodagus, Tulus and others have historically been content to receive their education and literacy in Kannada.
- Why isn't somebody worried about *them*?

# **1991 Totals and Percentages: (remain stable in 2001)**

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- **Kannada:**
  - 29,785,004 speakers
  - **66.2%** of the population
- **Urdu:**
  - 4,480,038 declarations\* (cf. Khubchandani)
  - **10%** of the population
- **Telugu:**
  - 3,325,062 speakers
  - **7.4%** of the population

# ***Compare with Kerala: highest mother-tongue percentages of any state in India***

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- Malayalam:
  - 28,096,376
  - **96.6%**
- Tamil:
  - 616,010
  - **2.1%**
- Kannada:
  - 75,571
  - 0.3%

- Karnataka is the Indian state with the **lowest** percentage of titular speakers, and with its sizable percentages of speakers of other languages, a perception of **quasi-minority** status seems to be widespread

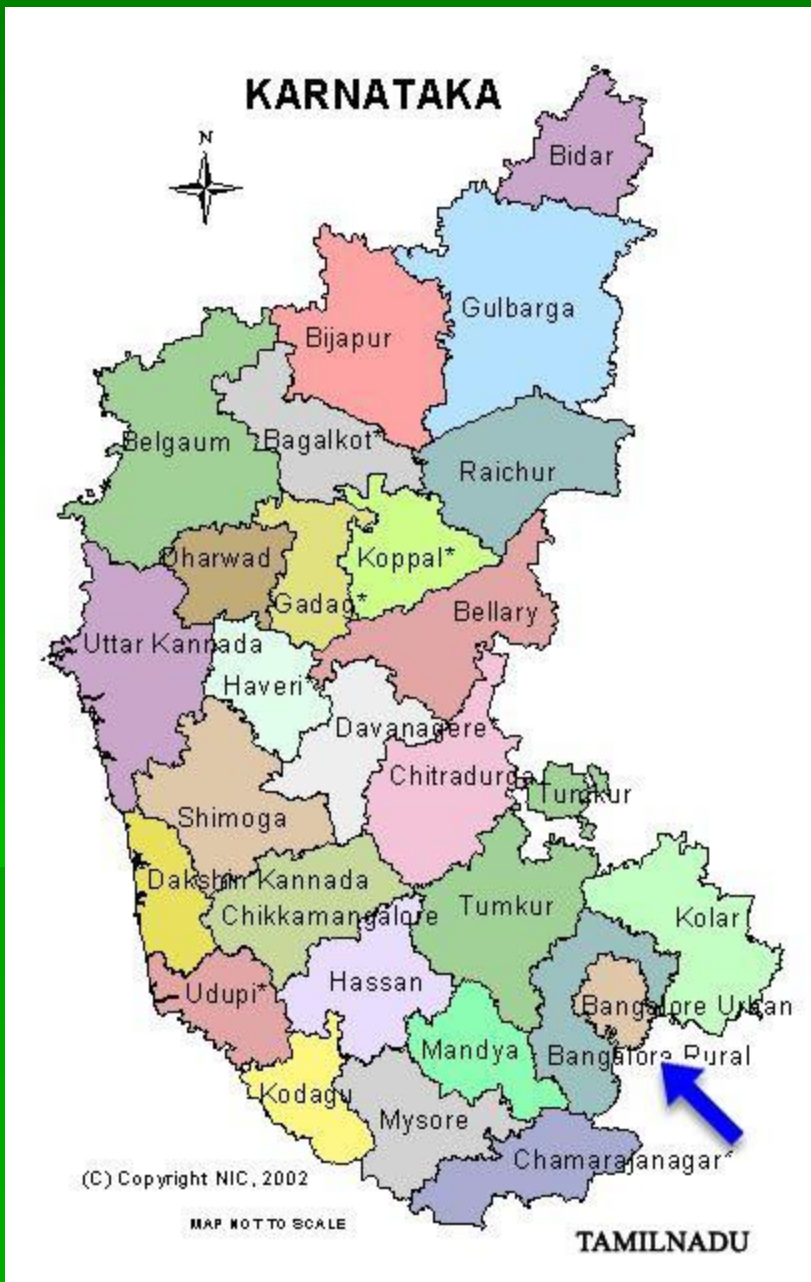
# ***Tamil in Karnataka:***

- Fourth largest minority, after Telugu and Urdu: 3.84%
- But perceived as **larger** threat!
- Historical reasons:
  - British did not incorporate Mysore into the Raj
  - Established a 'cantonment' at Bangalore
  - Brought Tamils from Madras Presidency to be its civil servants

# ***Post-Independence: States Reorganization in 1950's:***

- Karnataka (Mysore State) acquired territory from Bombay and Madras
- Name changed from Mysore to Karnataka in 1973
- Capital moved from Mysore City to Bangalore
- But Cantonment with its Tamil population was still 'a thorn in its side'
- With development of Bangalore as IT capital, more non-Kannada speakers moving in—live in enclaves, isolated from Karnataka and Kannada





- Proximity of Bangalore to Tamilnadu

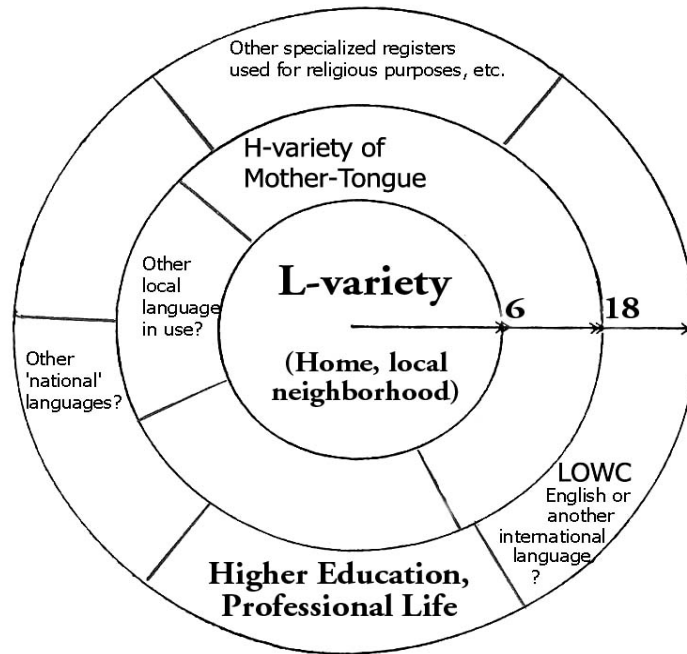
# ***Tamil still seen as major threat***

- English is also seen as threat: resistance to teaching it from first standard
- Boycott of movies with non-Kannada soundtracks (Hindi? Tamil? English?)
- Veerappan (a Tamil smuggler and 'brigand') kidnaps a Karnataka minister, who dies.
- Kidnaps a Kannada movie star, demands a ransom:

# ***Ransom conditions:***

- Make Tamil a co-official language of Karnataka!
- State agrees to do so, then reneges when Veerappan is caught (and killed)
- Immediate danger of Tamil 'takeover' is avoided, but...
- **Perception of endangerment remains.**

# ***How to represent multilingualism and its domains in India:***



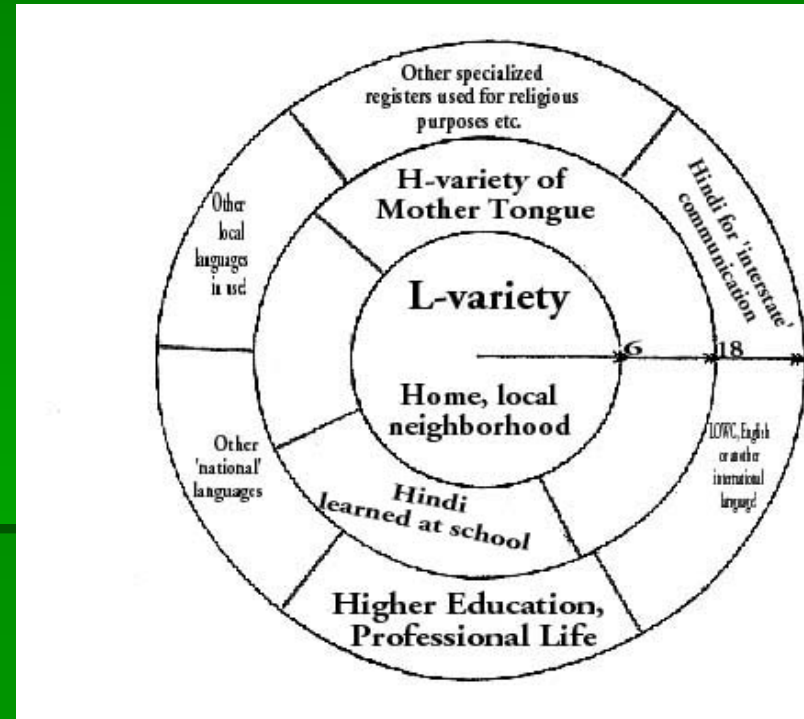
# ***Languages and their domains:***

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- Concentric circle diagram allows for representation of early childhood language in monolingual setting
- As maturation proceeds, schooling introduces restricted domains for other languages, including Literary variety of Mother Tongue
- Other languages (Hindi, English) are introduced gradually, but are intended to remain in OUTER circles only

# India post-1968: Three-language formula

- L-variety used in the home, locally
- Hindi and English introduced at school
- Other languages may dominate **restricted** domains of outer circle only



# ***Perception of Endangerment:***

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- Endangerment is perceived if some non-mother tongue language is seen to invade **inner circles**
- Metaphor of the **Virus**: a killer language invades inner domains, kills the mother tongue, replicates itself!
- Such languages must be kept in the OUTER CIRCLE where they can do no damage.
- Inner 'sanctum' is protected, mother-tongue remains safe.

# ***Why is Tamil so feared?***

- Tamil is perceived to dominate Bangalore cantonment and the IT sector
- Tamilnadu is contiguous to Bangalore Urban, and could be incorporated into Tamilnadu State
- Territorial issues have plagued Karnataka since States Reorganization.
- Kannada is seen as a 'minority' in its own state
- Tamils are 'arrogant' and 'domineering'
- 'Endangerment' issue seen as a way to sound alarm bells, get action



# ***Conclusion:***

- Endangerment is in the eye of the beholder
- Endangerment calls up 'life or death' metaphors
- In a nation with over one billion inhabitants, 52 million speakers is only **5%** of the population