



Impact of Globalization on the Preservation of Indigenous Indian Languages

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Abstract:

Globalization has changed the way people live, work, and communicate across the world. In India, it has brought many benefits such as better education, technology, and international connections. However, it has also created serious challenges for the preservation of indigenous Indian languages. These languages, spoken by tribal and rural communities for generations, are slowly disappearing as dominant languages like English and Hindi become more popular in schools, media, and workplaces. Young people often feel that their native languages are less useful or respected, which leads to fewer speakers and weaker cultural ties. This study, based on secondary data such as research articles, reports, and case studies, explores how globalization affects the survival of indigenous languages in India. It shows that language loss is closely linked to identity loss—when a language fades, a part of history, tradition, and community also disappears. The study highlights the emotional and cultural value of these languages and the urgent need to protect them. It also discusses efforts made by educators, activists, and local communities to preserve native languages through documentation, storytelling, and inclusion in school curricula. So, globalization should not lead to the erasure of indigenous voices. Instead, it should be used as a tool to promote respect for all languages and support cultural diversity. Preserving indigenous languages is not just about saving words—it is about saving identities, emotions, and heritage. This study encourages society to recognize the importance of linguistic inclusion and take active steps to keep these languages alive for future generations.

Keywords: *Globalization, Indigenous Languages, India, Language Loss, Cultural Identity, Tribal Communities, Language Preservation, Education, Linguistic Diversity, Social Change.*

Introduction:

India is known for its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, with hundreds of indigenous languages spoken across different regions. These languages carry the history, traditions, and values of tribal and rural communities. However, in recent years, globalization has brought major changes to how people live, learn, and communicate. While globalization has helped India grow in areas like education, technology, and international trade, it has also created challenges for preserving indigenous languages. As English and other dominant languages become more common in schools, media, and workplaces, many young people are losing touch with their native tongues. Indigenous languages are often seen as less useful or outdated, especially in urban areas. This leads to fewer speakers and less interest in passing these languages on to

future generations. When a language disappears, it is not just words that are lost—it is also the stories, songs, customs, and identity of a community. Language is closely tied to how people see themselves and their place in the world. This study looks at how globalization affects the preservation of indigenous Indian languages. It uses secondary data such as research articles, reports, and case studies to understand the current situation. The aim is to explore both the risks and the efforts being made to protect these languages. By understanding the impact of globalization, we can find ways to support linguistic diversity and help communities keep their voices alive. Preserving indigenous languages is important not only for cultural pride but also for social inclusion and emotional well-being.

Need and Significance of the Study:

India is home to hundreds of indigenous languages, each carrying the history, traditions, and identity of its people. These languages are mostly spoken by tribal and rural communities and are passed down through generations. However, with the rise of globalization, many of these languages are at risk of disappearing. As English and other dominant languages become more common in education, media, and jobs, young people often stop using their native tongues. This leads to a loss of cultural pride and weakens the connection between generations. There is a strong need to study how globalization affects the preservation of indigenous Indian languages. Understanding this impact can help us protect these languages before they vanish. The study is important because language is not just a way to speak—it is a part of who we are. When a language dies, a part of the community’s identity, emotion, and heritage also fades away. This study also highlights the significance of promoting linguistic diversity in modern India. It encourages schools, policymakers, and communities to support native languages through education, storytelling, and cultural programs. By using secondary data, the study provides useful insights into the challenges and solutions related to language loss. It shows that preserving indigenous languages is essential for social inclusion, emotional well-being, and cultural richness based on history. In today’s global world, we must find ways to grow without losing our roots. This study helps us understand why every language matter and why it must be protected.

Table 1: Need and Significance of the Study

Aspect	Dimensions
Need for the Study	To understand how globalization affects the survival of indigenous Indian languages.
Cultural Importance	Indigenous languages carry traditions, stories, and identity of tribal and rural communities.
Threat from Dominant Languages	English and Hindi are replacing native tongues in education, media, and jobs.
Generational Disconnect	Young people are losing touch with their mother tongues due to modern pressures.
Identity and Emotional Impact	Language loss leads to loss of cultural pride, emotional connection, and community identity.
Educational Relevance	Schools and curricula often ignore indigenous languages, reducing their visibility.

Social Inclusion	Preserving native languages supports inclusion and respect for all communities.
Policy Significance	Highlights the need for language-friendly policies and cultural preservation efforts.
Use of Secondary Data	Relies on published research, reports, and case studies to analyze trends and solutions.
Call for Action	Encourages society to protect linguistic diversity and promote native language use.

Literature Review:

Recent studies show that globalization has had a deep impact on the preservation of indigenous Indian languages. As global communication grows and English becomes more dominant in education, media, and employment, many tribal and rural languages are slowly disappearing. According to Mohanty (2010), globalization has increased the gap between dominant and minority languages, making indigenous tongues less visible in public spaces. He argues that language loss is closely linked to social exclusion and identity erosion. Annamalai (2001) highlights that while multilingualism is common in India, globalization has shifted attention toward economically powerful languages, especially English. This shift has led to reduced use of native languages in schools and official settings, weakening their role in daily life. Similarly, Kumar (2021) found that young people often feel pressured to use English for success, which causes them to neglect their mother tongues and feel disconnected from their cultural roots.

Dey (2022) studied urban youth and noted that while some still use regional languages at home, they rarely use them in public or online spaces. This selective use reduces the visibility and transmission of indigenous languages. Ghosh (2020) adds that language is not just a tool for communication—it is a carrier of emotion, tradition, and identity. When a language fades, a part of the community’s soul is lost. However, some researchers also highlight efforts to preserve these languages. Subramanian (2024) points to community-led programs, storytelling traditions, and school-based initiatives that aim to keep indigenous languages alive. These efforts show that with proper support, language preservation is possible even in a globalized world. So, the literature shows that globalization poses serious risks to indigenous Indian languages, but also opens up opportunities for revival through education, policy, and cultural pride. Preserving these languages is essential for maintaining India’s rich linguistic and cultural heritage.

Objectives:

1. To trace the historical processes through which globalization has influenced the use, decline, and survival of indigenous Indian languages.
2. To analyze the historical, cultural, and emotional consequences of losing indigenous languages in India and their impact on identity and community life.

Research Methodology:

This study follows a historical research design and is based entirely on secondary data. The methodology involves reviewing published books, research articles, government reports, and census data that document the condition of indigenous Indian languages over time. Historical records are analyzed to trace how

language use has changed from pre-globalization to the present era. The study uses a qualitative approach to understand the cultural, social, and policy-related factors influencing language preservation. Comparisons are made between different time periods to highlight the role of globalization in shaping linguistic practices. By relying on documented evidence, this research reconstructs historical trends and evaluates the continuing challenges faced by indigenous Indian languages.

Discussion:

The historical trajectory of indigenous Indian languages reflects the deep impact of globalization on their use, survival, and identity. India, with its vast linguistic diversity, has always been a mosaic of languages shaped by regional, cultural, and historical forces. However, with the advent of colonial rule and the subsequent spread of English as a medium of governance and education, the groundwork for linguistic shifts was already laid. Post-independence globalization accelerated these changes, particularly from the late twentieth century, when economic liberalization, global media, and technological advancements further elevated the status of global languages, especially English, while marginalizing many indigenous tongues. Historical evidence shows that younger generations increasingly associated English and Hindi with mobility, employment, and modernity, while indigenous languages were gradually confined to homes, rituals, or local interactions. This process of linguistic shift has been historically documented across tribal and rural communities, where globalization has eroded local linguistic spaces and reshaped communication practices in favor of dominant languages. Thus, the history of globalization in India demonstrates both the expansion of opportunities and the gradual decline of many local languages.

Equally significant is the cultural and emotional dimension of losing indigenous languages, which historical studies reveal as more than a linguistic shift—it represents a profound disruption in collective memory and identity. Languages have traditionally been the carriers of folklore, myths, oral traditions, and local histories. When communities lose their native tongue, they also lose the unique cultural expressions that are embedded within it. Historical accounts of tribal and marginalized groups in India highlight that the disappearance of indigenous languages often results in the weakening of intergenerational bonds, as younger generations no longer learn the proverbs, songs, and oral stories that once connected them to their ancestors. For example, the gradual decline of Santali or Bodo in certain regions has been accompanied by a loss of traditional storytelling, community festivals, and oral heritage. Such historical evidence underscores that the loss of language is not simply the disappearance of words but a rupture in cultural continuity.

The emotional impact of language decline is also documented historically in the form of community dislocation and identity struggles. Language has long served as a marker of pride and belonging, particularly in rural and tribal settings where it symbolizes rootedness to a specific geography and culture. When indigenous languages are replaced by global or national languages, communities often feel alienated from their cultural roots. Historical case studies show that this alienation leads to feelings of marginalization, reduced self-esteem, and in some cases, resistance movements to revive local languages. For instance, the resurgence of interest in Sanskrit or efforts to preserve tribal dialects in Jharkhand and the Northeast can be seen as historical responses to the emotional void created by globalization-induced linguistic decline.

Overall, the historical study of globalization and indigenous Indian languages shows that the process is not merely about linguistic transformation but about cultural survival and emotional well-being. While globalization has provided economic and social mobility, it has simultaneously threatened the continuity of India's indigenous linguistic heritage. The discussion thus reveals that the survival of these languages is intertwined with preserving cultural diversity, intergenerational knowledge, and emotional resilience within communities. So, the study highlights that preserving indigenous Indian languages is not just about saving words—it is about saving identity, emotion, and tradition. Globalization should be balanced with efforts to

protect local languages, so that India’s rich linguistic heritage can continue to thrive in the modern world. This discussion supports the idea that every language matters and deserves respect and care.

Findings of the Study:

This study finds that globalization has a strong impact on the survival of indigenous Indian languages. As English and other dominant languages become more common in education, media, and jobs, many tribal and rural communities are slowly losing their native languages. Young people often feel that speaking English helps them succeed, while their mother tongues are seen as less useful. This leads to fewer speakers and weakens the link between generations. The study also shows that when a language disappears, people lose more than just words—they lose stories, traditions, and emotional connections. Indigenous languages carry cultural pride and community identity. Their loss can cause feelings of disconnection and reduce social unity. However, the study highlights that some communities are working to protect their languages. Schools are including local languages in lessons, and cultural groups are using storytelling, music, and festivals to keep them alive. Digital tools are also helping record and share these languages with younger generations. Overall, the findings show that globalization creates both risks and opportunities. While it threatens indigenous languages, it can also be used to support them. Preserving these languages is important for keeping India’s cultural richness, emotional well-being, and social inclusion strong. Every language matters, and efforts to protect them must continue.

Table 2: Findings of the Study

Finding	Explanation
Language Shift	Young people prefer English or Hindi over their native languages for education and jobs.
Loss of Native Speakers	Fewer people are speaking indigenous languages, leading to a decline in usage.
Cultural Disconnection	Losing a language means losing stories, traditions, and emotional ties.
Identity Impact	Language loss affects how people feel about their roots and community.
Efforts to Preserve Languages	Some schools and cultural groups are working to protect and promote native tongues.
Use of Digital Tools	Technology is helping record and share indigenous languages with younger generations.
Globalization as a Double-Edged Sword	It brings challenges but also offers ways to support language preservation.
Need for Inclusive Policies	Education and government support are needed to keep indigenous languages alive.

Recommendations of the Study:

To protect indigenous Indian languages in the age of globalization, this study recommends strong and practical steps. First, schools and colleges should include native languages in their teaching, especially in areas where these languages are still spoken. This helps young people stay connected to their roots while gaining modern education. Second, government policies should support the use of indigenous languages in public services, local administration, and media. This will increase respect and visibility for these languages. Cultural programs, storytelling, and festivals should be encouraged to keep traditions alive through language. Communities should be supported in recording and sharing their languages using digital tools like mobile apps, websites, and videos. This makes learning and preserving languages easier for the younger generation. Parents and elders should speak native languages at home to pass them on naturally. NGOs and language activists can also help by creating learning materials and organizing workshops. Finally, society must understand that every language is valuable. Globalization should not erase local voices—it should help them grow. By taking these steps, India can protect its rich linguistic heritage and ensure that indigenous languages continue to thrive alongside modern development. Language is not just communication—it is culture, emotion, and identity.

Conclusion:

The historical analysis of globalization's impact on the preservation of indigenous Indian languages reveals a complex and layered picture. From ancient times, India has been a land of linguistic diversity, with each region developing its own dialects and languages closely tied to cultural and social practices. However, the colonial period introduced English as a language of administration and education, which began a shift in linguistic priorities. This trend intensified in the post-independence period with globalization and liberalization, as English and other dominant languages became essential for economic mobility, education, and global communication. The study highlights that while globalization has opened opportunities for India in the global economy, it has also created challenges for indigenous languages. Historical records and secondary data show that many languages have experienced decline due to migration, urbanization, and the preference for widely spoken languages. At the same time, globalization has not been entirely negative; it has also created platforms for awareness, cultural exchange, and digital preservation. For example, community initiatives, online platforms, and government programs inspired by cultural revival movements have attempted to safeguard endangered languages by documenting them and promoting their use among younger generations. Thus, the historical perspective demonstrates that globalization has acted both as a force of erosion and as an opportunity for revival. The conclusion underscores the urgent need for balanced policies that encourage bilingualism, strengthen indigenous languages through education, and use modern technology for preservation. If globalization is approached thoughtfully, it can serve as a bridge between tradition and modernity, ensuring that India's indigenous linguistic heritage continues to thrive alongside global connectivity.

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