

Social inclusion or exclusion through language : A study on Khasi Community of Bangladesh

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Abstract : Social inclusion and exclusion are like two sides of a similar coin. This study aimed to explore the reasons and ways of social inclusions/exclusions through the Khasi language. The study focused on the Khasi peoples of the Moulavibazar district. It followed qualitative and quantitative methods and analyzed the social exclusion patterns that emerge through inclusion initiatives by the Khasi language. Findings that come from primary sources were analyzed under several themes. Based on the results, the author realized that the linguistic aspect of the Khasi language is rich itself that ignored.

Key Words: Social inclusion; Social exclusion; Mother language; MTB-MLE; Khasi community.

1. Background

The concept of social inclusion and exclusion figured prominently in the policy discourse in France in the mid-1970s. The idea was later adopted by the European Union in the late-1980s as a critical concept in social policy and, in many instances, replaced the idea of poverty. The progressive agencies broadly accepted the idea and advancement readings as an alternative technique of appreciative and decreased deficiency in the South (Jackson, 1999:125). Besides, the presentation of social exclusion to the cultures of the South is suggestive of a junction of societal strategy among North and South for globalization and global immigration (Maxwell, 1998, cited in Francis, 2000:75). Thus, it will stimulate a trend to measure southern certainties regarding the range to which they join or separate from certain 'standard' northern exemplary (Kabeer, 2000: 2). Similarly, Silver (1994) has discussed that the sense of social

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exclusion hinges on the features of the society, or the leading example of the culture from which exclusion happens (Francis, 2000:75), and it differs in senses in accordance to nationwide and philosophical milieus (Silver, 1994:539). As O'Brien and Penna (2007) pointed that, the concept has its origins in the functionalist theory of Emile Durkheim. O'Brien and Penna (2007) claim that the idea of social exclusion and the modern European exploration program on it learned by those difficulties related to retaining social direction and solidity (O'Brien and Penna, 2007). Aasland and Flotten (2001) state that the concept of social inclusion gained prominence in the policy discourse in Europe since it replaced the idea of poverty, taking into its fold more dimensions of people's lives than the poverty concept. To drive the concept of social exclusion precisely for practical scrutiny, they have made a joint-venture to investigate the association among traditions and some variables that they deliberate to be alternatives for social exclusion. The arguments neighboring inclusion/exclusion have climbed to a visible position in the contemporary partisan shift in Bangladesh, with some factions and groups voicing their demand for a voicing space. That's why the topic has currently arisen to be a part of everyday public speech.

Recently the government of Bangladesh has taken some initiatives to preserve the language and culture of small ethnic communities. The primary education through mother language to provide for these ethnic community people to protect their rights. It is indeed a process of inclusion. But, it will be an exclusion process if it does not run correctly. Though mother tongue-based multi-lingual education (MTB-MLE) started to some extent, the education policy of Bangladesh is yet to complete MTB-MLE that is relegating ethnic people's expectations and distresses. Also, by seeing what things are happening behind the scene? How and why those are happening? Are these initiatives fulfilling the rights of the ethnic community people? The persons who have achieved the privileges could not practice their languages. The only way to communicate with the 'mainstream' people is the Bengali language. Besides, the thoughts of these people about their community and other issues

are expressed through the mainstream people's language. As these things are standing on the opposite position of inclusion, they can be called exclusion. So, both the inclusion and the exclusion process are happening here. In this research, the study carried on the Khasi speakers. Significantly, the focus will be on either the social inclusion or exclusion process of the Khasi linguistic groups. If possible, this study will provide some factors that are responsible for social inclusion or exclusion. The study explores the reasons and ways of social inclusions/exclusions through the Khasi language in *the Moulavibazar* district. More specifically, this study analyzes the causes and patterns of social exclusion that emerge through inclusion initiatives.

Literature Review and Rationale

In his book 'Syntactic Structure,' Noam Chomsky said, 'Language is a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length, and constructed out of a finite set of elements' (1957:13). The term 'Identity in general means the behavior and personality of an individual by which the collective consciousness of a community emerges. It is related to the person's positions, relationships, roles, reputations, social dimensions towards the society that they belong to. Language and Identity are interconnected. And a society's culture can be expressed by the language in an exploratory way.

The language of that society generally expresses the history, past, and present condition of a society's culture and society. The member of the community, by practicing their language, can preserve the culture. In Bangladesh, except the Bangali, several ethnic communities lived in this territory for a long time. The number of such groups varied from one researcher to another. Shahed Hassan and others showed that there are "more than 45 small ethnic groups living in Bangladesh at present" (2011:07). Mongol Kumar Chakma and others pointed out "about 45 small indigenous communities" (2010:17), Mohammad Rafi claims "a little more than 70 in numbers" (2006: ix), Sugata Chakma (2000) stated it is more than 30. However, whatever the number is, these groups have their own culture and language.

From childhood, the community members practice their mother tongue. As the mainstream¹ people's language is Bengali, these people have to practice the Bengali language, and the medium of the education is mainly on the Bengali language. As a result, the ethnic people of this country have to practice both Bengali and English during academic life begins (Sikder, 2014). And the practice of the mother tongue is limited to oral tradition. Thus, Bengali and English words have been mixed up with the ethnic languages because the proportion of practicing the Bengali language is vast. UNESCO declared the 21st February as international mother language day in November 1999. The day was observed not only in Bangladesh but also all over the world. This declaration may inspire the ethnic peoples of the country, since 2000, they are demanding 'education through the mother tongue.' In 2010, the Government has declared 'the human rights and education policy and adopted National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Process, where MTB-MLE policy was mentioned. In the same year, the Bangladesh government has also inaugurated the International Mother Language Institute (IMLI) that has so far acknowledged only four languages of indigenous communities (Bhuiyan, 2016). However, the Government declared multilingual education as a mainstream method in January 2017. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs (MoCHTA), Directorate of Primary Education, National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), Hill District Council (HDC), Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council's (CHTRC) and the other like-minded organizations, INGO and NGOs are working on this issue (CAMPE, 2015).

Bhuiyan (2016) has pointed out that the vernaculars of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh have a shortage of strength because there are many difficulties in the determinations to protect them. He concluded that both parties (viz. Government and Indigenous peoples) should take required enterprises for preserving indigenous vernaculars, considering it as the basic outlet of human rights.

¹ Here the term 'Mainstream' refers to the significant proportion of the population in Bangladesh.

Tripura, Rahman, and Haider (2017) came up with the findings that the government of Bangladesh has taken some initiatives for education through the mother language by making some policies. And some of those were established but not correctly. Lacks are remaining, and these inclusions sometimes may be the reason for the social exclusion. The developments cannot be actual development if these are the reasons for the underdevelopment. The private sector is also playing a significant role in ensuring the linguistic rights of the Kokborok (language of the Tripura community) users. Sultana (2021) shows that Bangladeshi ethnic peoples point toward the existence of the 'mother-tongue and 'national language' is ideologically infused, layered, value-laden, relational, and paradoxical at the micro-level. She claims that it happens because these languages are accomplished and supported by the linguistically minoritized matters themselves.

Although there are some studies on how education in the vernacular can help understand and ground the cognitive and psychological abilities of the ethnic people. But, it is not addressed how the language can enhance the social inclusion or functional upbringing of social exclusion of the ethnic people. This study aims to reveal that social inclusion or exclusion through language fills the gap in existing works of literature.

This study's findings showed how the vernacular could influence the social structure between ethnic and not ethnic groups. The Bangladesh government has taken the initiative to let ethnic literacy through the mother tongue. Ethnic development and understanding related to this are severe developmental and programmatic agendas, both nationally and regionally. The understanding of ethnic issues and the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals are critical priorities of the government. A study compiled with the information mentioned above will be a crucial source to check the status of the ethnic people at the bottom. It will remain as the essential reference to start any intervention to benefit the Khasi people targeted to that particular locality. So, this study is very significant and a reliable guideline for the government for increasing more concentration on taking further initiatives about development

in the Khasi community. It will also meet the country's scholarly purposes and more significant interest and attract decision-makers, national and international donors, NGOs, and GO bodies of the country.



Map of the study area: Sreemangal Upazila, Moulavibazar district.

Source: https://http://www.bpedia.org/S_0520.php

2. Methods and Materials

The study applies both qualitative and quantitative methods for better analyzing field data.

2.1 Study Area: The study was carried out in three villages from two unions of Sreemangal Upazila under the Moulavibazar district. Khasi villages surrounded by the Bengali community were selected in consultation with the local peoples during the pilot survey. The fieldwork took place for twelve months, from July 2018 to June 2019.

2.2 Sample Size and Selection Procedure: A total of 70 respondents were finally picked up using the purposive sampling technique. The participants were selected purposively based on *montry* (head of *Punji*), guardian (Father/ Mother), youths (on the study), dropped out children, teachers (learned person), and NGO workers. A cross-section study was conducted to elicit information regarding the inclusion or exclusion process.

2.3 Data collection tools and procedure: Data has been collected anonymously because of the empirical issue of the research topic. Observation, Case Studies, In-depth Interviews, Key Informant Interviews, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were the fieldwork methods. Besides, a systematic review was applied for secondary data collection.

2.4 Data Analysis: All data are transcribing verbatim from audio and analyze thematically manually (i.e. -no textual software was used) to ensure the data validity and reliability. Open codes were generated, and then we coded the text of all the transcripts through repeated readings. After all the initial coding of the interviews was performed, we looked for clusters of several codes— termed “themes” or “concepts”. To increase the validity of the coding system, triangulation of researchers and methods were performed by the authors independently coding a few transcripts, and then establishing a consensus after discussion.

2.5 Ethical Issues: This study is granted ethical approval by the institutional review board of the “Shahjalal University of Science and Technology.” We have developed an informed consent form to explain the study objectives and their importance, confidentiality, anonymity, potential loss and benefit, and participant rights. The written consent form is read out and the participants were encouraged to ask further queries concerning the interview process. We obtained written consent before conducting each interview.

3. Findings and Discussion

In this study, the development process for the ethnic community people has been observed. And these types of development steps are considered as the social inclusion of the ethnic community people. For these ethnic community people, the government and other NGO sectors have taken some initiatives. And these initiatives are considered as development projects that aim to protect the rights of ethnic community people.

According to a group of historians, sociologists, and anthropologists, the Khasi community has been settled in the district of Sylhet for 500 hundred years (Rahman, 2009).

Table-1: List of the Khasi punjis and their locations in greater Sylhet

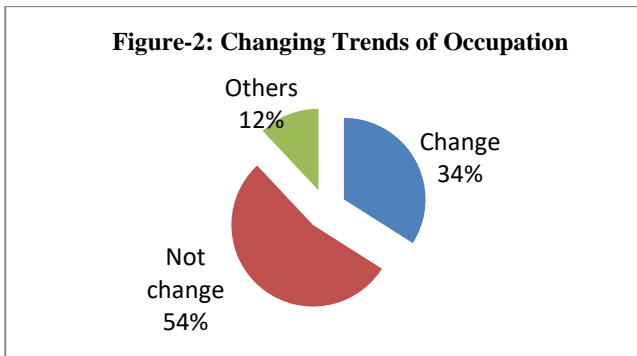
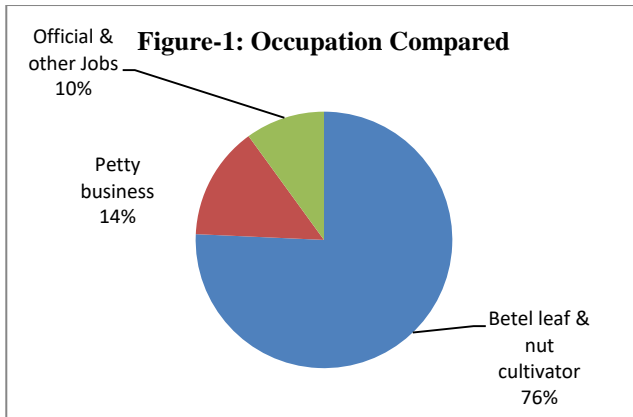
District	Upazilla	Number of Punji
Sylhet	Goinghat	05
	Janitapur	03
Moulvibazar	Kulaura	38
	Barolekha	11
	Sreemangal	07
	Kamalganj	04
Sunamganj	Taherpur	01
Habiganj	Bahubal	01
	Chunarughat	01
Total		71

(Source: Rahman, M.: 2004)

Usually, the *punjis* are isolated places, and in most cases, the educational institutions are located far away from the *punjis*. As a result, Khasi people, particularly the girls, face difficulty in continuing their education. Moreover, many of them still do not feel the necessity of education for livelihood. The number of colleges going male students is insignificant. The Bangladesh Khasi Welfare Association, since its inception in 1992, has been encouraging the young Khasis to enroll in educational institutions. But the fact remains that there is no primary school located in the Khasi predominant area. Currently, no school is running primary education through the Khasi language, although they have a rich vernacular of their own with the Roman alphabet (Gordon, 1907).

A great bulk of the Khasi-inhabitants lives on betel leaf and nut cultivation (Biswas, 2015). From the following graph, it is clear that most of the local families about 76% are directly or indirectly dependent on betel leaf and nut cultivation; the lowest 10% is in official and other jobs. In the study area, there have some alternative sources of income. If there are any alternative sources of income, 34% (the second highest group) of people will change their occupation while 12% will remain in a dilemma. The highest 54%

are satisfied with their current career because they believe that “It is sanctioned by God” and said they have nothing to do.



(Data Source: Field data, Sreemangal, Moulavibazar, July 2018 - June 2019)

The SEHD survey² (2007) finds that 89.29% of the Khasis depend on betel leaf cultivation; the central part is cultivated by themselves and a small part work as laborers and sharecropper. Given that 93% of the Khasi households, depending on land and agriculture, land-related problems are their primary concern. In the present study, the Khasi household heads and *punji*-leaders strongly expressed

² For detail, please see the book Gain, P., and Malik, A.- 2007, *The Khasis of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: SEHD, PP-20

their views to the researcher regarding land problems. The Khasis have achieved primary and secondary education mainly through the support of Christian missionary schools. However, very few attend college, university, or any other specialized educational institutions. This situation is due to a lack of opportunities and support. Direct government support is essential for higher education among the Khasi people. It has been revealed from several studies and observations that primary education is run through the Bangla and/or English medium among the Khasi community. As a result, Khasi children, accustomed to their own Khasi language, feel discouraged to have their education. The poor state of education amongst the Khasi community has a strong voice in this situation. Therefore, it is essential to understand the social inclusion and exclusion in the Khasi vernacular.

3.1 Social Exclusion through the *Khasi* language

The mother tongue of the Khasi community is 'Khasi.' It has no script of its own (please see box), they have first adopted Bengali script for writing. Later, Thomas Jones, a Christian missionary worker, introduces the Roman script in his missionary schools discarding the Bengali script. He published the first Khasi primer '*Ka Kitab Ba Nyngkong*' in 1841³. Although its literature is written through Roman letters, the Khasi language has

Box: Why Khasis do not have own script: a legend

U Blau (the God) first created the earth, then the human being. There was a great ocean in between the residence of U Blau and the human being. Someday, U Blau asked all the representatives from different religious groups to take up their holy books written in other languages from another shore. The Khasi sacred book was written in the Khasi language using Khasi scripts. When the representatives were coming back holding their books in one hand and swimming by the other, the Khasi representative found it impossible to swim anymore by one hand. In the midway, he started swimming with both hands. The book became wet, so it became even more difficult for him. Then he helped the book by his teeth and but he could not continue to the last. Being unable to hold the reader by teeth, the wise (!) Khasi representative took an instant decision and ate up the book. That is why; they do not have any book or any script of their own.

(As Quoted by Haider, and others, 2012:55)

³ Please see Language Information Service (LIS), India. <http://lisindia.ciiil.org/Khasi/Khasi.html>

many folklore and literature. In Bangladesh, Khasis are bilingual and sometimes multilingual. Most of them can communicate in Bangla, Hindi, and English as well. It does not mean that they are highly educated; instead, they have to learn those languages to survive and livelihood.

In a word, the quality of the Khasi education is pathetic. Teachers are often inadequately educated and trained. Missionary organizations recruit community members who are less educated as teachers to learn in their mother tongue. Though a few teachers are recruited from outside the Khasi community, they have a poor educational background. Thus, the Khasi children's learning foundations remain undeveloped, and most of them fail to compete for further higher education. Additionally, Khasi children are usually less able to pass the competitive enrollment test due to the inherent challenges throughout their primary education.

3.2 Initiatives taken by the Government

The government of Bangladesh has introduced compulsory primary education for all children of the country. In the Peace Accord Act (1997), the Bangladesh government signed an agreement with the ethnic communities. The arrangement of the primary education in the mother tongue and the Quota system for higher education is stated in this agreement. Section B-33(2) states the 'primary education in the mother tongue.' Also, part D, number 10, says the 'Quota reservation and scholarship'⁴.

In the 'primary education in the mother tongue,' the government announced to apply only five ethnic groups named Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Garo, and Orao. In National Education Policy (2010), the government stated about ensuring the educational rights and education in the mother language of the ethnic community people.

⁴ Until development is equal to another region of the country the govt. Shall continue reservation of quota system in govt. Services and educational institutions for the tribes. With an aim to this purpose, the govt. Shall grant more scholarships for the tribal students in the educational institution. The government shall provide necessary scholarships for research works and receiving higher education abroad.

In chapter one, 23 number policy⁵ detects that the language and cultures of the ethnic community peoples are the matter of concern more. In chapter two, the part of the aims of the primary education systems one policy shows the education through the mother language of the ethnic communities.⁶

With these aims and targets of the state, the state, along with many NGO sectors, worked together, and they prepared some textbooks for the pre-primary education in the mother language. And they declared for the five ethnic communities among the 45 ethnic communities, therefore. While working on this project, they took the help of the thirty members of these five ethnic communities to make the books of the pre-primary stage, and the experts of the NCTB (National Curriculum and Textbook Board) guided these persons (Tripura, 2017).

As the Khasi does not have any written form yet to be included in the government's new project, the community members continued their expression by using Roman letters (Majumder, et. al. 2015). The pre-primary books are plenty of the own literature such as riddle, stories, folktales, etc. 2015 was the target year to ensure that all children can complete primary education. To achieve the target, new schools were established, a large number of teachers have been recruited, free reading materials were offered, poor students received food for education, and budget allocation has increased. Indeed, these initiatives have a very positive impact throughout the country, but the Khasis remain excluded. Government primary schools are usually far from the *Khasi-Punji* (Khasi village). However, the Missionary schools have made some contributions to the current development of Khasi primary education. A SEHD (Society for Environment and Human Development) survey found that the average literacy rate among

⁵ To promote and develop the indigenous and small ethnic groups (National Education Policy-2010).

⁶ To facilitate learning in the mother languages of the indigenous peoples and small ethnic groups at the primary level of education (p.5).

the Khasi is 66.43%⁷. One of the reasons for a reasonable literacy rate among the Khasis is that Christian churches in the greater Sylhet area are good in number.

The quota in the higher education sectors is the reason for the increasing rate of education among the ethnic community members. By this step, the persons in these ethnic communities own the opportunity to be educated. The initials of the ethnic community people can be related to the 'Social Inclusion concept. That states, 'Social inclusion may refer to a process, encouraging social interaction between people with different socially relevant attributes or an impersonal institutional mechanism of opening up access to participation in all spheres of social life. Other definitions emphasize some aspects of this definition over others' (World Bank, 2013).

3.3 Initiatives taken by the NGO and the private sectors

UNICEF runs a project that ensures the primary education of ethnic communities. It establishes primary schools in the villages of the ethnic communities and provides primary education for free.

The BRAC (Building Resources Across Communities), one of the familiar NGO sector own another project that aims the pre-primary and primary education in the punjis of the Khasi community. Here the local teachers are recruited to teach the Khasi students. As the teachers can translate into the mother tongue, the students were introduced through their mother language. This initiative works but is not sufficient compared with the total people.

Apart from practicing the Khasi language, several local organizations are working tirelessly to sustain and preserve it, notable among them- 'Khasi organization of Kulaura, Borolekha, Rajnagar, and Juri (KUBRAJ), 'Khasi Welfare Society' (KWS), 'Khasi Students Association' (KSA). Besides Indigenous Peoples Development Service (IPDS), a national NGO and several local NGOs are working in the

⁷ Please see the book Gain, P., and Malik, A.- 2007, *The Khasis of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: SEHD, P.19

small range to promote human rights educations for women, youth, and children. IPDS started its project to improve the education rate of the Khasi community living in the Sylhet region.

3.4 'Inclusion' or 'Exclusion'

An appraisal of the inadequate literature available to the author has shown that social inclusion has not been well-defined. Social inclusion is seen to be defined concerning social exclusion. However, some analysts comment that academic debate on social exclusion has been relatively silent on its expected effect. There have been some notable contributions to a discussion of inclusion (cf. In particular, the essays on Askonas and Stewart, 2000), but this has not been closely integrated into the broader debate on exclusion. It, therefore, remains the case that in the majority of the exclusion literature, the nature and meaning of social inclusion are merely implied or asserted (Cameron, 2006 : 396). Only if the question of what constitutes inclusion is addressed can what constitutes exclusion be posed. Each question is mutually dependent on the other. (O'Reilly, 2005 : 84)

Case-1: Social inclusion through *Khasi* language speakers

Uo Soso Tham*, age 28, is a member of the Khasi community living in Lawachara. He is a service holder. He is glad to know that the education by Khasi language has been geared up as the UNICEF and BRAC has taken the initiative for learning through mother language. And for this, he will have the opportunity to express all thoughts and feelings in a particular written form. He loves to practice literature, and earlier, he was confused about how to write his language in Bengali or Roman script. But, now, after the initiation of the teaching through Khasi language, it will be easier for him to choose the correct way to learn and write. He also thinks that the new generation will also be benefitted from this step.

** Pseudonym used to protect the privacy*

Although the quota process made the ethnic people educated, especially in higher education, it lacks. As the comparatively small groups in the rural areas cannot compete with the larger groups, the facilities are only gained by the larger groups.

In the case of language, for higher education and coping with the mainstream people, the members of the ethnic community people are practicing the Bengali language. Also, English is being practiced by these people. For job and education purposes, the members have to practice the Bengali language as well. Most of the time, the ethnic people have to talk in the Bengali language, and for a few moments, they can practice their language while talking with the community members of the family persons through phone calls. As a result, the Bengali or the English language words are mixed up with the mother tongue.

"As this is a global era and we are using English words while talking in Bengali. So, it is widespread to use both Bengali and English words while talking in our language. As I live in Dhaka the maximum time of the day, I prefer to talk in the Bengali language."

(Field Interview, 20th December 2018)

The quoted speech of a respondent expresses how the Khasi language users are borrowing the Bengali and English words. Also, the tendency to speak Bengali excellently is seen among the Khasi community people (Fieldwork, 2018-1019, Sreemangal). Besides, the parents also eagerly want the children to learn both Bengali and English. To cope with others, it must be needed to learn a common language (See Case-2).

It can be seen as in the 'Linguistic Hegemony.' The theory of 'Hegemony' by Antonio Gramsci states, 'The relationships of power and the concrete ways these are lived.' The realities of power are central to Gramsci's theorization of subaltern culture and

Case-2: Social inclusion or exclusion through Khasi language

Reva Surong*, age 19. She is an undergraduate student. When she talks in her language, she has to use both Bengali and English words, and she thinks that this happens because, from childhood, she had to speak in Bengali most of the time significantly, for academic purposes. And her parents also wanted her to talk Bengali fluently as she has to communicate in this language. The process of education through mother language was not established in her time. However, this initiative has been taken recently, but there are no facilities provided for her age.

** Pseudonym used to protect the privacy*

consciousness. For him, consciousness could not be an impoverished and unsystematic one precisely because of the subaltern's relative powerlessness' (Gramsci, 1992). As the hegemony is occurring through the language, that can be known as linguistic hegemony.

The education in mother tongue if observed, at first it is written the 'education in mother tongue' whereas the ethnic community people's claim was 'educated through the mother tongue.' The mother language is gained automatically from childhood. And while these children go to school cannot cope up with the local language. To avoid this situation, the communities together claimed the demand. Besides, this procedure seems more extended, and it took about 22 years since the peace accord agreement had been signed. The government did not start the process until the different ethnic communities raised their voices. And after that, in the year 2010, the Bangladesh government decided to start primary education in the mother tongue for only five ethnic communities whereas, there are 45 ethnic communities.

After working nine years, finally, the state can print the books on the mother tongue of the ethnic community people, although it is only for the pre-primary stage. The other classes' books are still under construction. Also, the books are not reached all over the country. Only Chittagong Hill tracts areas are on this. And only the government primary schools have the facilities; thus, the private schools are remained out of the list. In the cities, maximum students are being admitted to these Kindergarten schools, and these children are not having the facilities instead of these are badly needed for this. Comparatively, the children from villages practice the mother tongue than the city. Also, all the villages of the Khasi people do not get the chance. Besides this, the NGO sectors can be observed. Although leading private organizations are taking education for free projects, only one can ensure education in the mother tongue. And it is applied in a few areas rather than all over the country.

The establishment of the Indigenous languages in the 'constitution' has not been established yet. These are considered as the languages

of the ethnic minority groups as well. Prashant Tripura (2015) discusses the constitutional rights of ethnic people. The Bengali language is considered the state language in the constitution, but here, different languages also belong, and these are not mentioned anywhere. Rather, some offensive words have been used in the constitution about ethnic people. For example,

- Khudra nrigoshthi (small ethnic group)
- Upojati (tribal)
- Jatisotta (races)
- Nritattik jonogosthi (Anthropological Peoples) in the 15th amendment of constitution section 23A

'The State shall take steps to protect and develop the unique local culture and tradition of the tribes, minor races, ethnic sects, and communities.' The word 'Indigenous' is not used in official sectors in recent years as the government established the term '*khudra nrigoshthi*.' It is also a reason for disrespecting a community as well.

Also, the *Khasi* language users have to practice the Bengali Language as the education through the mother language has not been established appropriately yet, and the members have to continue education through Bengali or English language in higher studies. Thus, the power of a language shows here that can be related to Michel Foucault's 'Power' concept. According to Foucault, 'Power is everywhere and 'comes from everywhere,' so in this sense is neither an agency nor a structure (Foucault, 1998: 63). If we cross-culturally examine it from Myanmar where Lall stated that -

'Given the predominance of Burmese as a marker of power of the Bamar majority, it is, therefore, not surprising that MTB-MLE is not seen by the government as an acceptable option.' (2021:205)

Although many initiatives have been taken before, the problems of the ethnic community people are not solved properly. As some gaps are remaining on these steps, that are creating the exclusion, and thus the processes known as the social inclusion may emerge the exclusion process. Amartya Sen stated about social exclusion "it is, of course, possible to make the rhetoric of 'social exclusion' cover 'unfavorable inclusion' as well. Thus extended, 'exclusion' can

include 'exclusion from equitable inclusion,' or even exclusion from acceptable arrangements of inclusion." (2000: 29).

4. Conclusion

Social inclusion was first integrated into the formal policy speech of Bangladesh in 1972 (after the emergence of a constitution of Bangladesh); the constitution⁸ includes references to socialism, Islam, secular democracy, and the Bengali language. Of course, it provides the framework of the Bangladeshi republic with a parliamentary government, fundamental human rights, and freedoms. Still, there was no space for the other ethnic communities to promote their education through their mother tongue. The issue of whether or not having the 'own alphabet' of ethnic communities in Bangladesh - such as the question of ' education through mother tongue ' for indigenous children- is being considered at various levels (Tripura, 2020:108). Different scholars discussed this matter at different times; after that, the topic has grown substantial exchange. The debate of social inclusion/exclusion has now diffused to both the theoretical and development policy discourse of the country.

Bangladesh is a state where different cultures are practiced, and the portion of cultural diversity is high here! The indigenous people who are living in Bangladesh belong the right to practice their own culture. As language is a representation of culture, studying and practicing the mother language is acquiring rights. From childhood, the members of ethnic communities should practice their mother tongue, both oral and written. To protect the rights of the indigenous peoples, it is essential to be clear about their language and culture. That helps us to create our natural history of the Bengali nation.

The government has taken some initiatives by making some policies. And some of these are established but not correctly. Other

⁸ Please see <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-367.html>

shortages are remaining, and these inclusions sometimes may be the reason for the exclusion. The developments cannot be called the actual development if these are the reasons for the underdevelopment. The private sector is also playing a significant role in ensuring the linguistic rights of the Khasi language users. But, the limitations could not make it appropriate. The initiatives that are taken for education through mother language should be more controlled. It is needed as the ethnic child needs to be taught through mother tongue rather than Bengali, and if it happens, the mixing up of the language will be reduced, and the children will learn lessons easily.

In this study, the Khasi community is studied. Since the time and the budget were less, all the Khasi community members from the Sylhet regions could not be observed. Only a few people from different areas are selected. If this work could do that, the data would essentially be more valid and detailed as other people's perspectives are different.

The researchers encountered many problems and limitations while conducting an empirical investigation. For example, validity was not tested; reliability was not measured by further study; the study included a small sample proportionate to the population; only non-parametric tests were used to elaborate information. Here only the linguistic part, especially the education in the mother language, has been focused. But, the linguistic aspect of the Khasi language is rich itself that is not observed adequately. The practice of language in everyday life, the mixing up of languages if were studied in detail the work would be more perfect and pragmatic.

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