



Contributions of Bhasha Institute in moulding the reading habits of Keralites

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In the age of knowledge revolution and with the development of information technology the horizon of knowledge has widened and information become accessible to all. During the colonial period British introduced English education in India with the intention of creating a group of people "Indians in blood and colour English in their taste, opinion, moral and intellect". Unlike the other European powers Britishers did not believe in the mixed colony system and they remained ethnically, culturally and linguistically aloof from Indian population. With the spread of nationalism and subsequent development of Swadeshi movement the regional languages and its literature got an impetus. The literature of the regional languages were encouraged and it was promoted in universities also. After the independence the entire country was united on the basis of language even though English remained as the language in administration and the position and status of English language remained the same. In this scenario the importance of an institution to promote the regional language becomes a necessity. With the aim of promoting the rich and diverse literary paradigm of Malayalam, Kerala Bhasha institute as a cultural institution of the govt of Kerala was born. Now it passed 50 glorious years in its achievements. It is said that with the advent of modern technology and computers and use of mobile phones the knowledge is accessible in to the finger tips and reading habits is dead.

Objectives

- To trace out the colonial intervention in developing English as a medium of communication in educational and administrative arenas.
- To analyze the movements and initiatives for the promotion of regional languages after the linguistic reorganization of states.
- Importance of Kerala Bhasha institute in providing an insight to the development of Malayalam literature.
- To evaluate the contributions and achievements of Kerala Bhasha institute made throughout the 50 years of excellence.
- To view the changes and modifications made in new areas knowledge by translating scientific and technological books and creation of a university level of knowledge and research-oriented works.

The Kerala bhasha institute has published more than 2500 books over the 50 years in the diverse areas of knowledge. The institute has changed in its mode and nature with the changing needs of the society. The focus of books was shifted to scientific knowledge along with giving priority to arts subjects.

The State Institute of languages, which functions under the cultural affairs department, was established on September 16, 1968, as part of the central scheme aimed at publishing University level textbooks in the vernacular languages. The governing body was headed by the then Chief Minister EMS Namboothirippadu and N.V. Krishna Warrior was the first director. The institute has published books mostly in Malayalam. Approximately 5000 books covering language and literature, science, Technology and humanities. For the first time in its 50 year history, The Kerala bhasha institute (State institute of languages) is taking its books outside Kerala to promote the reading among the Malayali Diaspora.

The institute is organizing book fairs in major Indian cities including Chennai, Bangalore, Kolkata and Mumbai as part of a first of its kind “look beyond Kerala “ programme. The idea is to promote books published by the institute and to encourage the use and study of the Malayalam language. It is located in Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala. In Addition to book publication, the institute also runs translation camps, book festivals, computer training and seminars.

The first publications of the Institute included 16 glossaries (shabdaavali) including a Vijaana shabdaavali and Maanavikas shabdaavali. Such glossaries were made in keeping with the guidelines for technical terminology put in place by a standing commission dealing with the production of scientific and technical glossaries. In 1996, then the Computer Book Series scheme was initiated, the Institute changed its policies with regard to its glossaries. The institute aimed at reinventing the language so as to enable it to adapt to the changing needs of the times. There are limitations and issues in translation in its history and evolution of Kerala Bhasha institute throughout the 50 years. The contributions and achievements made by Kerala bhasha institute in developing Malayalam as an independent language. The Kerala state cabinet has approved the proposed Malayalam language bill. “Malayalam language was conferred the classical language status in 2013. The present paper analyses the need for an institution to promote regional languages’

Kerala bhasha institute has the legacy and history off more than 50 years and it made immense contribution in developing the knowledge paradigm of Malayalam literature even though major works or and research is not coming so far about its significance and contribution. It is an attempt to unravel the numerous possibilities of Bhasha institute in familiarize the scholarly literature and scientific works in to Malayalam and to create a new consciousness in to the reading generation. English being the global language it is a Himalayan task for the ordinary man to read and understand world classics and famous books of renowned writers of the west so that knowledge horizon remined inaccessible but the translations of those books were made available in Malayalam with low prices and without losing its essence gave fuel to the reading folk.

Even after independence the language English is continued to be used as a medium in educational and administrative purposes. The Keala Bhasha institute is a new venture which familiarizes the scholarly literature of other languages into Malayalam. The pioneering intellectual works produced and circulated by Bhasha institute made significant changes in the university level of education and reading public. The future possibilities of Bhasha institute in familiarize the epic works of world literature into Malayalam. The initiatives of Kerala Bhasha institute made it possible to change the administrative languages of states to their regional languages. When we look at the achievements of Kerala bhasha institute is a fact that how far our world has changed or the knowledge paradigm of the country change the role and feel of reading a book cannot replace our modern electronic gadgets. It proved that Reading never ends.

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