

**Office of PRO-Media Coordinator  
Jamia Millia Islamia**

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Press Release

**JMI organises Online Panel Discussion on “Mother Tongue: Issues, Perspectives and Prospects” to celebrate International Mother Language Day**

To commemorate the International Mother Language Day, the Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Education, Jamia Millia Islamia(JMI) organised an Online Panel Discussion on the topic, “Mother Tongue: Issues, Perspectives and Prospects”, on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2021.

Prof. Aejaaz Masih, Head, Department of Educational Studies & Dean, Faculty of Education, JMI was the convener of the program, while Prof. Shahzad Anjum, Head, Department of Urdu, JMI, chaired the discussion.

The panelists included Dr. Gyandeo Mani Tripathi, Dean, School of Educational Training & Research, Arya Bhatta Knowledge University, Patna; Dr. Sanjeev Rai, Adjunct Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai; and Dr. Kamal Malhotra, Head of the Department, G. D. Goenka Public School, Model Town, New Delhi. Dr. Sajjad Ahmad and Dr. Md. Jawaaid Hussain, Assistant Professors at the Department of Educational Studies, JMI coordinated the panel discussion.

After welcoming guests and setting the broad agenda for the subsequent deliberations, Prof. Aejaaz Masih talked about the linguistic diversity of India and presented empirical data to establish how several Indian languages have remained marginalized even after more than seventy years of Independence. He further talked about the cultural embeddedness of languages and how unaffected they remain by considerations of religion, etc.

He also highlighted the importance of language in the social and intellectual life of human beings and put fresh light on how the language question has been raised in educational policy making in India since the time of University Education Commission (1948). In this regard, he appreciated the current policy thrust on addressing the issues of education in mother tongue and other Indian languages.

Prof. Shahzad Anjum, in his opening remarks as the Chair of the discussion, talked about the concept of mother tongue, its importance in cultural and educational lives of people, the status of several Indian languages including Urdu & Hindi, the strengths of education in mother tongue and the problems encountered in such endeavours.

After his opening remarks, Dr. Gyandeo Mani Tripathi, Dr. Sanjeev Rai and Dr. Kamal Malhotra presented their ideas followed by remarks by the chairperson.

The three panellists talked about the issues of mother language, its connections with culture, identity, epistemology and power. They also challenged the false dichotomy made by some

people between languages and dialects and deliberated at length about the politics of English medium schools and traced it back to the Macaulayian ideas on education.

The speakers also lamented on the fact that to most of the Indians education in their respective mother tongues remain inaccessible. They also deliberated upon the hegemony of some languages versus others and the idea of making education available in all possible Indian languages up to University level. They expressed their hope that the recently promulgated National Education Policy—2020 will take greater care of these issues while implementing the policy.

The Panel Discussion attracted as many as 250 audience from many parts of the country including audience from many universities such as Ambedkar University, Delhi, University of Delhi, Sagar Univeristy, Madhya Pradesh, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, L. N. Mithila University, Darbhanga, Mahtama Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishvavidyalaya, Wardha, and Jamia Millia Islamia. The audience raised critical questions related to mother languages and education which was responded by the panelists.

At the end of almost two hours of discussion, Prof. Aejaaz Masih expressed his heartfelt thanks to the Prof. Najma Akhtar, Vice-Chancellor, JMI, in absentia. He appreciated that despite being physically away from the program, the Vice Chancellor has been a constant source of motivation and guidance for all of us.

Prof. Shahzad Anjum congratulated the coordinators on the successful completion of the Panel Discussion and wished that such deliberations will continue taking place in all formal and informal spaces.

**Ahmad Azeem**  
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